

THE

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What Would Jesus *Really* Do?

Dear Brethren and Friends,

As I write this, my wife Sheryl and I are just back a few days ago from a *wonderful* Feast of Tabernacles observance. Brethren experienced an excellent Feast everywhere around the world—from all reports. There were outstanding activities, loving fellowship and inspiring sermons. *But*, we must be sure to *keep that enthusiasm going!* We must not let down. For our God wants us to *fully reflect* Jesus Christ in *everything* we think, say and do.

So now that we are back from the Feast, how can we best gain the spiritual strength to do this? Do you remember the “WWJD” bracelets the young people used to wear? *Many* professing Christians assumed that they *want* to follow Jesus Christ’s example. But *do* they, *really*?

This is a *vital issue!* For the inspired word of God makes it very clear that a genuine Christian will follow the inspired example set by Jesus Christ. In 1 Peter 2:21, God’s word tells us, “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example**, that you should follow His steps.” In 1 Corinthians 11:1, the Apostle Paul was inspired to tell his fellow Christians, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” In 1 John 2:6, obviously speaking of Jesus Christ, the beloved Apostle John tells us, “He who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk *just as He walked.*”

Those are only a few among the *many scriptures* indicating that we should follow Christ’s example and live as He lived. In addition, most of you know my “favorite” scripture: Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I

live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (KJV). This explains the foundational concept that Christ must live *within us* through the Holy Spirit. For Jesus Christ was the “light” that God sent

into the world. He now makes it possible for us to truly obey God and “walk with God” by **living His life** within us through the Holy Spirit. Frankly, that is the **only way** to become truly Christian. And it is the *only way* any of us can truly overcome our human nature and actually obey the Ten Commandments. That is what *real* Christianity is all about!

Actually, since Christ and the Father are “one,” they *both* live within us through the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23).

And Jesus Christ repeatedly challenged His followers to actually **do** what He taught them: “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).



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A TOTAL SURRENDER INVOLVED

So, dear brethren, will we **surrender** ourselves to actually **do** what Jesus Christ taught? And will we genuinely *surrender* to let *Christ live His life* within us through the Holy Spirit? Remember also, Christ does not (and will not) **change** in any basic way His character and approach as He lives within us. For God inspired the Apostle Paul to tell us

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in Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ is the **same** yesterday, today, and forever.”

If you, personally, have proved to yourself that the Bible is the revelation from God and is—in a very real sense—the **mind of God** in print, then you will want to live by every word of God just as Jesus Christ instructed (Luke 4:4). In that vein, when **anything** of any consequence comes up in your life, you ought to sincerely and earnestly ask yourself: “What would Jesus **really** do?” Over the years, for instance, a number of brethren have expressed the desire to “get away from it all” and move up to some remote location in the mountains of the northwest. Is that **wrong**? Not necessarily so. *But*, how would this new location help your *children*—if you have any—to have the proper schooling and proper opportunity to have normal relationships with other young people—*especially in God’s Church*?

And what about you? Is there a congregation of the Living Church of God close by? Or do you think you can “get by” just as well without attending Sabbath services? *Most of you know better*. Frankly, all of us **need** the regular association of God’s Church and fellowship with God’s people in order to grow and be balanced in our Christian lives. And we need to be able to express the opportunity to serve by actually *doing this* in a regular way by being around other Christians—even though, *theoretically*, we might “feel” more “peaceful” and “spiritual” by being all alone out in some uncluttered mountain setting.

Did Jesus Christ go out into the mountains and *stay there* all alone for months or years at a time? No! *All day long* He was with people and was helping, giving, serving, healing and teaching them the *way of God*—plus setting the *example* He did for all of us.

If you are faced with the opportunity to “make more money” by changing careers or going into a new job, again, ask yourself, “What would Jesus **really** do?” Does the new job—despite its extra salary—involve making compromises

with you keeping the Sabbath day, with being around good and decent people rather than those who may be drinking, cursing, telling dirty jokes or otherwise dragging you down spiritually? Think of **all** these things before changing careers or changing households or whatever!

For, if you are sincere in all of the above, you want Jesus



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Christ living **within** you in every phase and facet of your life, and in **everything** you do! Are you going to have a baby? If so, have you considered that even many modern medical reports say it is generally preferable to “go natural” in being sure that the mother *breastfeeds* her child? From Scripture we see the examples and the general principle is that it is better to “go natural” in nearly everything you do, in a balanced way, since that is obviously what Jesus Christ and *His human parents* did and what God provided for *His own Son* who came into this world in a manger and was born *naturally*. Yes, we can and should take advantage of actual improvements in health care and sanitation and so many other practical developments since Christ’s time on the earth. But, rather than blindly following all kinds of “modern” ideas about genetically modified foods, popular psychology and other human reasonings, a

Christian will find it better to see what the Bible *actually says* in really living Christ’s way, which includes not only *living* God’s way but *training* your children to do so—bringing them up according to what the Bible actually says, and not what some modern liberal psychologists have proposed. Yes, this even means *punishing them* when necessary for *their own good*, in the *loving* application of godly discipline!

Think!

For most of you are literally **surrounded** by all of this modern “psychobabble” which tells you that you should not chasten your son; you should not “go natural” in breastfeeding and should not acknowledge that the man is to be the head of

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Is PERSECUTION Coming?

All around the world, professing Christians are being persecuted. It is now happening with increasing frequency. *The Telegraph* recently reported, “Most Australians have no idea how many Christians were killed for their faith in the 20th century and are still being killed today. Todd Johnson, an expert with World Christian Database, has estimated that there were 100,000 new Christian martyrs each year between 2000 and 2010, many from the Sudan and Congo. An Italian sociologist has claimed that a Christian is killed every five minutes.... Today, the situation is not improving. Last week, in response to the military crackdown in Egypt, supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood targeted Coptic Christians, destroying at least 47 churches and attacking Coptic schools, hospitals, monasteries and businesses. Coptic families have been attacked and... Pope Tawadros II has been unable to leave his home or to celebrate Mass in his cathedral because of death threats. Perhaps 1,000 people have died” (August 24, 2013).

But are we in the true Church of God going to be protected from all of this? Brethren, even though God will protect the vast majority of zealous, “Philadelphian” Christians from the coming Great Tribulation, God *nowhere* indicates that none of us will be individually persecuted for our Christian faith. In fact, the Bible says *quite the opposite!* Speaking about His true followers at the end of this age—and after describing the coming world wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes—Jesus said, “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many” (Matthew 24:9–11).

Jesus Christ Himself *specifically predicted* that His true followers **would** be persecuted. We who are zealous for God will be doing such a powerful Work in warning people of what is yet to come that we, my brethren, “will be **hated by all nations.**” As I have stated so many times, *somewhere on this earth* a true people of God will exist who will powerfully warn our peoples of what is ahead, and powerfully preach the message of God’s coming Kingdom, or Government, based on His laws. We must be *very thankful* to be among those people!

Yet, we must *also* be willing to go through whatever trials and tests God permits. For it will draw us *much closer* to God and bring about a truly *awesome* eternal reward if God sees that we really do *fully surrender* to Him—even in *giving our very lives* for Him if necessary.

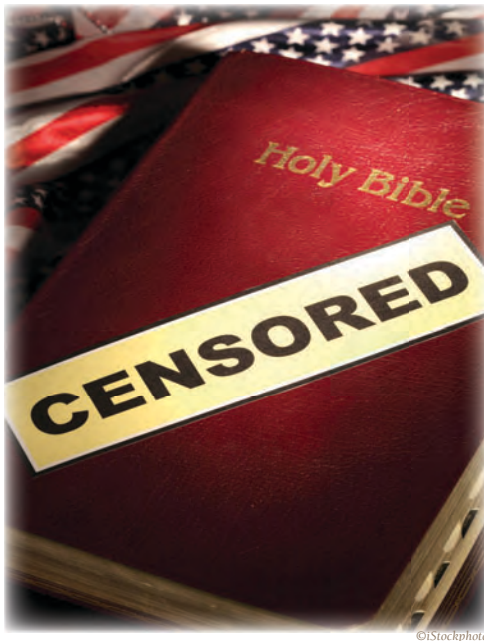
The Eternal God inspired the Apostle Peter to tell us, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified” (1 Peter 4:12–14). It is almost anathema in our “spoiled” society here in America, especially, to think about genuine suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ. We, my brethren, must begin to grow in *the mind of Christ* as revealed in the inspired word of God! We must be learning more about the concept of partaking of *Christ’s sufferings* so that we may be **glorified** when He comes back as King of kings!

For Peter tells us **not** to suffer because we have done *wrong*, or been a “busybody in other people’s matters.” But, Peter continues, “Yet if anyone suffers *as a Christian*, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (vv. 16–17).

If we truly suffer “as a Christian,” we are to **glorify God** in this matter. We are to realize that “judgment” is beginning at the house of God and that God Himself is beginning to sort out those who are *truly* “with it” and those who are simply “going along for the ride.” For Peter continues, “Now ‘If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?’ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator” (vv. 18–19).

WILL YOU PASS THE “TEST”?

Dear brethren, I know that this is not “fun stuff” for you to read! But, as God’s human servant to lead this Work,



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I *cannot* fulfill my responsibility unless I sincerely and strongly warn you of what lies ahead! Persecution really is coming sometime in the next several years. Most of us in this age have *never* experienced the kind of persecution that literally *hundreds of thousands* of professing Christians have suffered all over this earth! Are we as Christians—who should have and be using God’s Holy Spirit—willing to go through these kinds of *trials* because we believe and understand the **Truth**?

Think! If Jesus Christ is in you and me, we really must “knuckle down” and be *willing to suffer* for Christ’s sake—that is what our Father in heaven requires. We really do need to go through trials and tests to “toughen us” and prepare us for **eternity** in the very Kingdom of God. God needs to “test” us as He did Abraham. For, when God “tested” Abraham, He told him to be willing to sacrifice his **only son** as a burnt offering! **Wow!** Think about the *reality* of that day when Abraham rose up in the early morning, saddled his donkey and started toward that mountain knowing what lay just ahead (Genesis 22:3). But he was **willing**. He knew that God was **real**.

As he bound Isaac and laid him on the altar of wood, and stretched forth his hand to slay his son—looking to God in **faith** to make it work for good, a voice came out of the sky, “Abraham, Abraham!” (v. 11). God told him, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; *for now I know that you fear God*, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (v. 12).

For, when Abraham passed this test, God was able to say to Him, “now I **know** that you fear God!” He was now fully convinced that Abraham had the tremendous reverence and **awe** of his Creator—the attitude of total love, trust and **faith** which God required in one who would become the “father of the faithful” (Romans 4:16).

Since we are not all called to be the “father of the faithful,” God will not put any of us through that exact same test. But we do have to be willing to “go all out” for our Creator. We do need to learn to meditate and *think things through* and quietly but firmly realize that we must show our Creator that we really “mean it” when we call ourselves His followers! Nearly all of us probably remember the biblical passage that is so vital when preparing for baptism: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26–27).

We truly must learn to “love less” our own lives in comparison to the great God who gives us our life, our

breath, all our talents, all the beautiful things around us and the people we love. For we must *worship* Him, *adore* Him and *obey* Him with *all our hearts*! As Jesus said to those who casually “professed” His name: “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

DO NOT MERELY “PLAY CHURCH”!

Each intelligent young man who joins the United States Marines “knows” that he is going to go through all kinds of trials and tests and “obstacle courses” before he is able to be a leader among his peers in the Marines! We in God’s Church who aspire to be literal **kings** and **priests** for all *eternity* in God’s Kingdom must realize that we are going to be “tested” in the process of becoming those eternal leaders. So we had better begin the process of really proving to ourselves that God is “real,” and learn to put our total **trust** in Him! I have written quite a number of articles and preached quite a number of sermons along the lines of genuine *faith* and **trust** in the Creator God. Some of you may need to reread those articles and beseech God to put that kind of trust in you!

For we are **not** here to “play church” and to have a nice “social club” where trials and tests do not exist. For *they will exist* in the life of any true Christian. Dear brethren, as I watch world events very carefully and see the clouds of violence, war and persecution building on the horizon, I **know** that trials and *persecutions* are certainly on the way before too many more months or years. May God help *you* to understand to “ready yourself” to go through those trials and emerge on the other side with flying colors. The Apostle Paul told Timothy, “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:3–4). Like the young evangelist Timothy, each of us must learn to “endure hardship”—for we also are to be good “soldiers” of Jesus Christ. And we must learn not to “entangle” ourselves too much with the affairs of this life, so that we are able to *focus completely* on the Kingdom of God as Christ commanded us to do.

In what to me is one of the most meaningful passages in the Bible, the Apostle Paul tells all of us, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:1–4).



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You should truly “set your mind” on the things above where God is *right now* watching over you, guiding your life and “preparing” you through various situations, trials and tests to be His **full sons**. For Paul says that, if we do this, then when Christ “appears,” “you also will *appear with Him in glory*” (v. 4).

Dear brethren, we need to focus our minds so much on the **reality** of God—and the reality of that coming **glory**—so the trials and tests of this life do not seem as awesome or “scary” as they otherwise would. For we will be “walking with God.” We will be “crying out” for Christ to literally **live His life** in us through the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20). And so we will *know* that there is a **supreme purpose** in all the trials, tests and persecutions we **will** go through.

Brethren, always remember to *meditate* on Jesus’ inspiring statements: “Blessed are those who are *persecuted* for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

As the Apostle Paul was inspired to tell us, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:18–19).

Blessed are you when they revile and *persecute* you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they *persecuted* the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:10–12).

As I have told you in my sermons in the past, *many times* in the early years of this Work, Raymond McNair, Herman Hoeh and I and others were often literally confronted with violence and with a **loaded gun** pointed right at us on the baptizing tours! We had to have **faith** that God would take care of us. For Mr. Armstrong often preached so powerfully that some of the people in the “Bible belt” were *stirred to anger* by what he said. When we appeared at their door—especially if it was only the wife requesting baptism—sometimes the man of the house would come forth with a gun, a stick or even a chair and yell, “**Armstrong!** You men get out of here. Take your Armstrongism away!” So we had to have **faith** back then that God would take care of us. He *always* did. He will *always* take care of us now and bring us into His everlasting Kingdom.

As Jesus said, “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:28–31).

Later in this same passage, Jesus tells us, “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it” (v. 39). So if we “find our life” by becoming part of

this world, *watering down* God’s way of life and turning away from God, we will eventually **lose** the very life we are trying to save!

Though we did go through trials and tests of all kinds on those early baptizing tours—often *losing sleep, missing meals*, and putting ourselves in *physical danger* on many occasions, we did not even begin to go through the kind of trials and tests and **sufferings** which Jesus Christ did and which the Apostle Paul did. For the Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 11:24–28 of some of the “tests” he had to go through: “From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness

and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.”

Are you, personally, *willing* to go all out for eternal life in the Kingdom of God? *Now* is the time to really think about it and “count the cost.” Brethren, it would be much “easier” for me to say that “all will be well” and that we will **not** have to go through these kinds of trials and tests and *persecutions* that are truly coming. But they *are coming!* And we have to be willing to look beyond them to the **glory** that God has in mind for us.

As the Apostle Paul was inspired to tell us, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:18–19). When we really meditate and think through the whole matter of *God reproducing Himself* and the ultimate **glory** we will soon have as kings and priests in His Kingdom, it should all be worth it. For we are called to be **full sons** of God. Our Father in heaven must “know” where we stand, as He told Abraham, “Now I **know**” that you fear God (Genesis 22:12). So we must show God that we also are *truly surrendered* and will **obey** our Creator and *walk with Him forever*. May God help *all of us* to see the “Big Picture” of this whole matter and *prepare now* in our Bible study, our thoughts and our prayers to be willing to go through—in **faith**—whatever trials and tests it takes to become **full sons** of the great God who created the heavens and the earth! ■

Do You Want To Change The World? LYC 2013

By Sheldon Monson

If we hope to change the world, we must first make changes in our own lives. Summer camp can help you develop the skills you will need to change the world!

Noted columnist and minister Amos Purnell Bailey once said: “A Chinese general put it this way: If the world is to be brought to order, my nation must first be changed. If my nation is to be changed, my hometown must be made over. If my hometown is to be reordered, my family must first be set right. If my family is to be regenerated, I myself must first be.”

If we hope to change the world, we must first make changes in our own lives. Summer camp can change lives! For many young people in the Church of God, summer camp has had a lasting and positive effect. Others, who are now adults, will tell you that camp was a turning point in their lives.

In life, we are confronted with two paths or courses of action. We find both of them in the Bible. The Bible shows that blessings and life result from right decisions, and that curses and death are the result of wrong ones. Moses challenged the Israelites: “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 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).

Did you notice what Moses was inspired to write?

First, we have decisions to make. God wants us to choose the path that leads to life, but He will not force us to do so. He did not intend for us to be automatons, without personality, originality or character. We have freedom of choice. God could force all of us to make all the right decisions, all of the time, but He chooses not to. He loves us and cares about us. He wants us to choose life, but He leaves the choosing to us. Our Creator desires for us to make sound decisions and right choices, because we love Him and His laws, and because it is in our heart and mind do so.

Second, God said, the present generations’ choice would determine the direction of future generations. Yes, the decisions we make not only affect ourselves but our descendants! Notice what God said in Exodus 20:4–6 in this regard: “You

shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” These scriptures plainly show effects that idolatry brings to an idolater’s descendants. Truly, God’s mercy is greater than His wrath, and this verse demonstrates that the lingering effects of righteousness will outlast the lingering effects of wickedness. But it is important

to consider this cause-and-effect relationship when making future decisions.

Humanity as a whole has made, and is making, wrong choices. So, the world suffers and will continue to suffer as long as it continues down this path. There is much pain, suffering and heartache in the world. Tens of thousands are starving, while millions more suffer with horrible diseases and sickness. War, violence and destruction wreak havoc throughout the world. It is

because of sin that all of this has come about. Would you like to change the world? Would you like to teach people a way of living that results in peace, happiness, and abundant blessings? Most people would. They would like to see a better world for their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

The word of God says that this world is going to be changed! Christ is coming and He will restore the Kingdom of God on earth! We can be a part of the solution to the problem.

So how do we prepare to rule with Christ? We prepare by learning to live God’s way of life now. With Christ’s help, we develop holy righteous character. We must learn how to interact with others, how to build and strengthen relationships, and how to lead. It is also necessary to learn all we can about God’s way of life, and put it into practice, so we know what to teach, how to teach it, and can be good role models. We cannot teach what we do not know, and the best leaders lead by example. Summer camp is one place where both the campers and the members





of the staff can learn many of these lessons. At camp we learn how to develop godly relationships, and how to properly interact with others. Dorm life presents many exciting and educational challenges in dealing with people. One benefit is that all of the other kids at camp have also been given understanding of God's plan. They are on the same wavelength as you are, and they look forward to tomorrow's world—and changing today's world, too! One note of caution: You will experience peer pressure—but do not worry, it is positive! Your friends at camp will expect good things from you, and you can expect good things from them. There is a lot of negative peer pressure in the world today. Negative peer pressure is when your friends persuade you to conform or do something you do not want to do, like lie, or steal, have sex, do drugs, swear, dress inappropriately, gossip or vandalize. Negative peer pressure is not tolerated and will be addressed if it rears its ugly head at camp. Therefore, summer camp is a wonderful place for future leaders to come together, build strong relationships, and prepare to change the world!

All of our camps also provide opportunities to develop leadership skills. Members of the staff develop their abilities to teach and lead. Older campers supply leadership for the younger campers in their dorm. Leaders are teachers, so it is no surprise that being “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2, see also 2 Timothy 2:2, 24) is noted as one of the qualifications of Church leaders. If we have God's Spirit in us, and we allow God to mold and fashion our character now, we will be kings and priests (Revelation 5:10) in the future Family of God. As a young person, even if you are not yet baptized, God's Spirit is with you (John 14:17), you have been “set apart,” and you can learn about God and His way of life. Physical leaders will be needed in the Kingdom of God, and you should be preparing now for this opportunity that awaits you. There will be ample opportunity to teach, as noted in Isaiah 2:3: “Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths,’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” Also notice what the prophet Isaiah was inspired to write later in this book: “Yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:20–21). The world will at last listen to the servants of God. We will have the ability to effect positive change in the world at that time. Why not take advantage of every opportunity we have now to prepare for this prophesied event?

Studying the word of God is a daily priority at all of our pre-teen camps, our adventure camp, and teen camps around the

world. The camp administration understands that your parents have the primary role in your spiritual education. With the intention to support them in this effort, we cover Biblical topics of special interest to kids your age. Camp Bible Studies are designed to help identify and make changes in your own thinking and acting that will align you more fully with the path that leads to life. You are the next generation, and the future leaders in the Church now, and in the Kingdom to come. Timothy was commanded to commit Paul's teaching to faithful men who in turn would have the responsibility of teaching others. This would be the way of passing the truth down from generation to generation. “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). Knowing and understanding the truth—and having the wisdom to apply it correctly—is critical for anyone that will be used by Christ to transform the world to come.



Camp is fun, positive and exciting! God's way of life is this way too. Christ said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Scripture shows that young people will be having “fun” in the Millennium. In the book of Zechariah we find that, during the Millennium, children will be having fun playing in its streets. “The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets” (Zechariah 8:5). In life, we

will encounter those people who live life to the full, and those who just exist. Do you know people who live full and exciting lives—people who are fun to be around? What about negative, unhappy people—do you know any of these? Which are we? As Christians, “joy” is a fruit that should be borne in our lives (Galatians 5:22–23). Being around enthusiastic and caring counselors, campers and members of the staff can positively change our perspective, and attitude toward life. W. Clement Stone—a businessman, philanthropist and author—once said, “There is very little difference in people. But that little difference makes a big difference. That little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative.” We understand God's Plan, and have the “Good News” of the Kingdom of God; this knowledge should inspire us and give us hope for the future. God's people are positive and optimistic. They are fun to be around, and their optimism is contagious. By developing a healthy attitude, you can learn to take difficult situations in stride, learn from the experience, and prepare for the next challenge. It is a great approach and fosters a successful lifestyle.

Do you want to change the world? Come to camp and meet other young people who would like to make the world a better place. Let us work together to prepare for the opportunities that lie ahead. ■





Festival 2013: TRAINING TO BE TOMORROW'S TEACHERS!

Nearly 9,500 of God's people gathered at 48 sites around the world this year to celebrate God's Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day. From the evening of September 18 through sunset on September 26, brethren enjoyed meaty spiritual food and uplifting fellowship. Below are reports from most of those sites.

Anchorage, Alaska: With a final registered total of 243, Alaska Feast-goers joyfully celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles



2013 in one of the most beautiful places of God's handiwork anywhere, with breathtaking mountains, rivers, lakes, glaciers and wildlife—truly a Millennial setting. Various kinds of fowl, moose, deer, otters, muskox, antelope, bears and even whales

were sighted from our tours, and also at our enjoyable Family Day Brunch, hosted by our Alaskan brethren!

Feedback from attendees listed the spiritual messages, location and stunning natural beauty, phenomenal glacier cruise and varied activities as the strengths and highlights of the Feast in Anchorage. Other highlights included the organization of the site at the Hotel Captain Cook—and just being with God's people in a family atmosphere, enjoying activities together with something for everyone to choose from. God additionally blessed us with cool, comfortable days, lovely special music, a great attitude of service for one another, a challenging family "Bible Baseball" and a thought-provoking Friday evening Bible Study. The messages were inspired, on-point and spiritually focused.

Brethren clearly let their lights shine everywhere, setting great examples. Guests attending Church services and tour operators alike were very impressed with the character of God's people. Hotel staff also commented a number of times that they hoped we would come back and how much they appreciated us. Some requested information on the Church, and two individuals from the hotel also attended Church services!



Many thanks, truly, to all who served so diligently to make it work smoothly, as this was indeed a Feast dedicated to our Supreme Creator and His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ!



Boerne, Texas: Though the Feast began with rainy weather, it did not dampen the joy of 347 registered Feast-goers! By the third day, the weather had cleared to blue skies and warm temperatures!

Inspiring sermons, sermonettes and fellowship topped the list of highlights

expressed by the brethren. As one member stated, the sermons were "powerful" and "spiritually driven." Sermon topics

given at the Feast included our glorious inheritance and the journey into God's Kingdom, the power of righteousness, God's solutions to the world's problems, teaching our children God's way and the rivers of living water that will flow during the Millennium.



Other highlights included Family Day at Enchanted Springs Ranch with barbequed brisket and

chicken, bowling and pizza for the teens, a Singles' Mingle and activity, Family Fun Show and Dance, and the elegant DELS and Seniors Luncheons at the Helene House. As you can see, God blessed the Feast in Boerne with wonderful inspiration, fun and joyous fellowship that will keep us inspired until the next time we gather together at His Feasts.

Chattanooga, Tennessee: The brethren attending the Feast in Tennessee were truly blessed with spectacular weather, messages and fellowship and God's presence was very evident among us at the Chattanooga Choo Choo where the Feast was held.



Over 550 (with a high attendance

on the Last Great Day of 604) of God's people (several there for their very first Feast or the first in many years) enjoyed an atmosphere of true family togetherness reflected in many comments made. Well over half those attending took part in the luncheons on both Holy Days; 155 enjoyed the Seniors Luncheon and heard an address from Dr. Winnail, as did the 84 that attended the DELS luncheon. At the Family Dinner Dance, the DJ kept the dance floor full throughout the evening, with all ages participating and having a great time.

Family Day and lunch at Rock City was attended by over 225, followed by a scavenger hunt that challenged many to find easy-to-miss details in the majestic natural beauty of the mountain-top park. On the last day of the Feast, 300 went on a Tennessee Valley Railroad train ride. A delightful group of teens enthusiastically participated in activities that were

enjoyed by them and maybe even more by the parents and other adults watching. Special Music was definitely inspirational. Mrs. Theresa Fischer effectively organized a variety



of vocal and instrumental performances, including a Ladies' Ensemble as well as the always-charming Children's Choir that sang on two occasions during the Feast.

Overall, the most frequent comments made were about the inspiring, uplifting and encouraging sermons and sermonettes as the highlight of everyone's Feast. We were privileged to have two sermons from Mr. Martin Fannin at the beginning, two from Dr. Douglas Winnail in the middle and then two from Mr. Richard Ames at the end. All of these messages and more made it a true Spiritual Feast, and helped us all have a clearer vision of God's soon-coming Kingdom and a sharper focus on the Work to be done until then.

The Feast of Tabernacles 2013 in Chattanooga was one of unity, outgoing concern and service provided by so many and will be a Feast to remember for years to come.

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Dells provided a beautiful backdrop for Feast-goers eager to learn more about the magnificent changes to take place during the Millennium. With the Feast falling so early in the fall,



temperatures in the Dells averaged in the 70s with sunshine dominating throughout!

All through the Feast, inspiring messages painted the Millennial picture in our mind's eye. We heard early on that the Feast is a "Feast of the senses," and that the physical blessings during the Feast point to the much more important spiritual blessings the whole world will experience during the reign of Jesus Christ and the saints. We also learned that God's people are a "demonstration of the glory of God" now and that we



will be a future demonstration of His glory to the whole world when we have fulfilled our ultimate destiny.

We were privileged to have two special traveling speakers. First was Regional Pastor Lambert Greer who spoke



of the return in power of the coming King, Jesus Christ! He also stressed how God looks on our hearts, therefore our focus has to be *changing* our hearts now. Mr. Greer also provided a fascinating look into the true teachings of the Apostle Paul. We were very privileged to have Mr. Martin Fannin as a traveling speaker for the last half of the Feast.

Mr. Fannin spoke on

the “Unlimited, Absolute Power of the Family of God” and brought many to tears on the Last Great Day with his moving explanation of the meaning of the day.

All of the messages were very encouraging and provided fascinating insight into the great plan of God right now being fulfilled and soon to be a reality for the entire world! Thank you to all of the speakers who allowed God to work through them at this Feast.

We met for the first time at the extensive Kalahari Resort and Convention Center. In spite of a few challenges in our main meeting room, the venue provided mouth-watering meals for our special planned activities throughout the Feast. The Kalahari provides many amazing amenities, including the largest indoor waterpark in America and an indoor theme park complete with Ferris wheel, laser tag arena, exciting rope challenge course and many other family-friendly games and rides.

At the Seniors Luncheon on Friday afternoon, the teens helped serve the meal. Mr. Phil West provided the message titled, “Honor is Due!,” explaining God’s view of senior citizens. Mr. Lambert Greer gave a very encouraging message at the DELS luncheon on the Sabbath. On Sunday, a large crowd gathered for our Family Day at the Timbavati Wildlife Park and we enjoyed a picnic meal and activities for all age groups. Some considered hand-feeding the giraffes and camels a highlight of the day while others enjoyed getting their pictures taken with a baby tiger or kangaroo. This family day was a success and the park proved to be a worthwhile visit for those who attended. Other planned activities included riding the Dells Army Ducks and Tuesday evening’s Family Dinner Dance, which was another highlight of the Feast. Over 200 enjoyed beef short ribs and mango-grilled mahi-mahi, dancing, and an interlude provided by nine talented musicians and entertainers among us.

God certainly provided outstanding blessings at the Feast in the Dells. We thank Him for the very fine team He assembled to make this Feast the best ever!

Indian Wells, California: A new California Feast site for 2013 provided a taste of the Millennium, both in physical beauty and spiritual atmosphere. The Miramonte Resort & Spa in Indian Wells provided a millennial setting with its eleven acres of olive trees, citrus groves and rose, herb and flower gardens.

We were privileged to have Dr. and Mrs. Meredith with us for the entire Feast. Dr. Meredith addressed the more than 300 in attendance a total of four times, giving the opening and closing messages of the Feast, as well as speaking on the first day and the weekly Sabbath. Mr. and Mrs. Rand Millich also were in Indian Wells for the last half of the Feast. We received a wide variety of messages relating to the Feast of Tabernacles and our preparations to rule with Jesus Christ.

From a teen pizza/pool party to a Seniors Luncheon, we had a wide range of activities for everyone. The Miramonte Resort banquet rooms and terraces provided beautiful settings for our luncheons and receptions. The Family Dinner Dance was a highlight of the Feast, with a fine dinner of herb-roasted sirloin and rosemary garlic chicken along with dancing into the evening. An activity unique to the Indian Wells area is the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, which utilizes the world’s largest rotating tramcar. The tramcar actually rotates as you ascend up the mountainside. It was a ten-minute ride up the side of Mount San Jacinto to the tram’s “Mountain Station,” which has an elevation of 8,500 feet. Cool crisp mountain air, pine trees and streams at the Mountain Station contrasted with the desert valley below.

God’s blessing was obvious to those attending the Feast at Indian Wells. It was truly a physically rejuvenating and spiritually uplifting Feast. We look forward to God placing His name at Indian Wells once again in 2014.

Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri: What a beautiful setting for God’s people to observe the Feast of Tabernacles! And just over 650 people did *exactly that*, joined each day by about 50 people watching the services online!

Messrs. Karl Beyersdorfer, Phil Sena and Wallace Smith provided sermons, joined by Mr. Richard Ames, who visited Missouri during the



middle of the Feast. Supported by a number of men who provided timely sermonettes, the messages concerning God’s Festival, the world ahead of us that it pictures, and how the vision of that world impacts our lives *now* were a highlight for all who attended! Those outstanding messages were

supplemented by two “tag team” Bible Studies conducted by Mr. Smith and Mr. Sena: One focused on child-rearing issues, and another for teenagers (and their families) was devoted to questions raised by the teens themselves.

In addition to the rich spiritual messages, there were a number of activities enjoyed by one and all! Singles enjoyed an early mixer and a historic lake cruise. Seniors enjoyed a tasty luncheon, a special address from Mr. Beyersdorfer and beautiful music, and our ordained members also enjoyed a luncheon with a musical program and an appreciative address from Mr. Smith. Family Day featured a digital scavenger hunt, a display of many works of art handcrafted by Church members of all ages, a family fun show, a fabulous dinner, and a family dance at which the dance floor was busy all evening long! And by the end of the Feast, two families shared the prize of “FOT Putt-Putt Champions” in our fifth annual (still unofficial) LCG miniature golf tournament!

God’s people were abundantly blessed at the Feast in Missouri. And our presence there was a blessing for the staff as well! As a waitress told us at one of our luncheons, “It is so refreshing to see a group of people who not only say they are Christians and dress like Christians, but who also *act* like Christians!”

Newport, Oregon: Atop a high bluff, watching blue sky touch white-capped cerulean waves, 215 Feast-goers in Newport enjoyed the views while catching the vision of



Christ’s millennial reign. The God-inspired sermons will continue to provide study material throughout the year. Mr. Greer, Central Regional Pastor and traveling speaker, admonished us

to be more careful students of the Word with his helpfully detailed sermons. We were given a glimpse into the spiritual realm and were encouraged to hear Dr. Meredith’s powerful addresses.



We only had one baby for the Blessing of the Little Children and our Children’s’ Choir was a fine little girls’ quartet, but the Seniors Luncheon boasted more than 88 diners. This was our seventh year at the Hallmark Resort and the staff was as loving and helpful as always. Most activities were held at the Hallmark: Family Day, the Talent Show/ Craft Display, Senior and DELS luncheons, Formal Family Dance, Children’s Activity, Fellowship Gatherings and the Coordinator’s Reception. Georgie’s, the outstanding on-site restaurant, bent over backwards to accommodate us, and even provided beef bacon! It was the perfect location for the elderly or those with special needs to fellowship right outside their rooms in the Salon each evening.

God demonstrated His splendor in spectacular ocean sunsets and roiling waves crashing thunderously on the rocky shore. Morning walks on the long, exclusive beach were conducive to talks with



our Creator. Loudly barking sea lions entertained at the picturesque bay side of town. The superb Aquarium helped us delve into the alien undersea world God designed and created.

A harmonious spirit blended all the volunteers who labored so selflessly to provide a seamless Feast. We are grateful to them, but most of all for the blessings of our Great God.

Palm Harbor, Florida: The Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club was the first-time site for the Feast of Tabernacles in Palm Harbor. The facility proved to be an excellent location for 779 attendees who traveled from across the United States, Canada, Europe and the Caribbean. Though near the city of Tampa, the resort seems remote since it is bounded by acres of tall pines and oaks. The manicured grounds, lakes and trails created a truly millennial setting far removed from the hustle and bustle of a metropolitan area. Services were held in the beautiful Inverness Hall, which provided more than ample room for fellowship and services. One highlight of the



auditorium was a beautifully decorated stage intended to convey a paradise-like tropical setting.

We were privileged to hear two sermons each from Mr. Richard Ames and Dr. Douglas Winnail. Other sermons by Messrs. John Strain, Ray Clore and Joe Brown covered subjects on preparing to teach, reconciliation with God, and not neglecting God’s calling.



Traditional activities included a Family Day, a Family Dinner/Dance, and a Seniors’ Luncheon. For Family Day, about 350 brethren gathered at a nearby park to enjoy an old-fashioned “ice cream social” and a great chance to fellowship. One unique activity has

become something of a Florida tradition—one family again provided a spaghetti dinner for all comers, and all comers loved it. We offered live video streaming from Palm Harbor, averaging around 65 “attendees” each service. We even had one e-mail of appreciation from a gentleman “somewhere in the Indian Ocean.”

Inspired messages, an awesome setting and absolutely spectacular special music all combined to give attendees a Feast to remember.

Park City, Utah: Almost 300 brethren from all over the United States, Canada, and even Ireland made the journey to the Wasatch Mountains to celebrate God’s Feast of Tabernacles in beautiful Park City, Utah. Basking in the beautiful weather, serene surroundings with some of the scrub oaks turning red, brethren could breathe the fresh air of the Rocky Mountains where they were able to worship their Creator in awe and splendor as well as engage in warm



and loving fellowship. Brethren were fed spiritually by the complementary sermonettes and sermons that admonished

them with such topics as the Pearl of Great Price, our responsibility as the benevolent people of God, patriarchal government, the power of God and the joy of being in God’s family, as well as the tremendous meaning of the Last Great Day. The messages were truly meat in due season.

Brethren were fed physically by the many wonderful restaurants found in the mountain resort, and were inspired by the activities put together by the Festival staff. These activities included a trip to the Salt Lake City Zoo, where we were privileged to see one of 200 Amur Leopards left



alive on the face of the earth, spider monkeys, gorillas and even a sleeping tiger! Other activities included ice-skating, bowling, a train ride and a Western-style dinner and square dance where all could have a marvelous time. The Feast in Park City was a tremendous and special event for all involved.

Snowshoe, West Virginia: The morning fog lifted to become tendrils of “smoke” flowing up the canyons and curling around the trees, making each day a kaleidoscope of



ever-changing designs and patterns. Temperatures were in the mid-70s and scenery in the range of gorgeous! Even the deer seemed to pose for tourists to take their pictures.

About 250 brethren participated in activities that included a train ride up the mountain, with singles meeting and gaining new friends. Children played and sang new songs, and teen activities were met with much enthusiasm, with many saying the activities were their “favorite yet.” Activities let participants interact with God’s creation, while building close, lasting relationships for now and into the Kingdom.

Seniors' sociable interaction convinced several that growing older can be golden.

The themes of this year's Feast were *Vision* and *Building Skills for the Kingdom*—and Snowshoe, West Virginia certainly



gave us all a foretaste of our future roles. Excellent speakers whose love of the Truth sketched images of what it will be like in just a few short years, and admonished us to tenaciously keep the Vision alive in our hearts, minds and souls.

Most of the brethren served, in one capacity or another, and we learned that no matter how tiny the widow's mite or small the helping hand, it is all bound up in the heart of God. He sees the hearts of those who give a kind word, a gentle admonition, a portion of themselves to serve another. In practicing on each other, we learn to help those who will come out of great tribulation—whose minds, hearts and bodies will be shattered with grief and unimaginable horrors. This, indeed, is growing in Christian maturity. Leaders need character, courage, compassion, consistency, counsel, common sense—and vision! We learned that God's children are normal even if the world doesn't know it—we are just ahead of the curve.

And all the saints “spoke oft to one another,” remarking how thankful we all are for the Special Invitation we have been given from God Almighty. As Dr. Meredith observed, “Satan seems to be winning the war now—but in the end, we win!”

Tannersville, Pennsylvania: Almost 300 brethren enjoyed ideal weather—warm sunny days and crisp nights—at the Feast in Tannersville in a picturesque facility overlooking a lake with swans and ducks and surrounded by mountain greenery with wandering deer.



Warm fellowship prevailed right from the beginning as the Lord “prepared a table for us,” with messages served up about the coming Kingdom of God, and how to serve well once it arrives! Besides the messages, choirs and special music, other Feast highlights were a Men's Seminar contrasting aspects of society with biblical teaching; a Progressive Fellowship Afternoon, designed to help brethren meet and get acquainted; a Family Day outing to a living historic farm from the 19th century where—



after viewing the farm and demonstrations of life from that period—the brethren enjoyed a Cajun gumbo dinner served up by some of our group from Louisiana.

There were also area activities to enjoy, and the Feast was capped off with a formal dinner and dance with music for all ages. Probably the greatest highlights of the Feast were the four baptisms, adding new members to God's family while angels rejoiced!

Collingwood, Ontario, Canada: The beautiful Blue Mountains provided the backdrop for the celebration of God's Feast for 237 brethren in Collingwood. Feast-goers representing three nations and many nationalities celebrated the unity of God's Spirit in a truly majestic setting. They met where the slopes of the Niagara Escarpment fell precipitously over 1,000 feet to the azure waters of the Nottawasaga Bay of Lake Huron below. Spectacular weather, instructive



festival messages, warm fellowship and a godly atmosphere combined to establish a microcosm of God's kingdom on earth.

Attendees enjoyed a variety of activities highlighting various features of the area.

Seniors enjoyed a traditional luncheon accompanied by a presentation from Mr. Winston Gosse and the lively dance music of the Jim Kinnear Trio. Teens and others enjoyed the Timber Challenge high ropes course set in lush forests overlooking Collingwood and the bay below. The adventurers cheered one another through this test of confidence and stamina that concluded with an intimidating 65-foot vertical “leap of faith.” Meanwhile, singles headed to the Cascade Putting Course and then many took to the more daring Ridge Runner downhill mountain coaster.

Family activities included an elegant family dance set to the music of the 17-piece Georgian Sound Big Band, a

trip to Scenic Caves Nature Adventures where stunning views accompanied walks along deep crevices and caves. The family picnic on a sandy beach by clear bay waters offered food, fellowship and fun for all ages. Many enjoyed beach volleyball and other games while younger attendees enjoyed the well-equipped playground.



God's blessing of amazing weather and magnificent setting combined with the wonderful message of His coming government to create a truly remarkable shadow of the Millennium to come in God's Kingdom.

Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland, Canada: Fifty-eight of God's people assembled in the little fishing village of Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland for the Feast of Tabernacles and enjoyed fall weather and the spectacular mountain scenery of beautiful Gros Morne National Park, dressed in the yellows, reds and browns of changing leaves.



Feast-goers were treated to messages by evangelist Gerald Weston, Montreal pastor Jacques Secours, Headquarters minister Gary Ehman and Festival Coordinator Frank Best.

One highlight of the Feast was the ordination of Mr. Mike Korzyniowski as a deacon. The Newfoundland brethren treated everyone to a "Newfie Scoff," complete with a "screech in" in which twelve people were initiated as honorary "Newfies." A planned ocean fishing trip had to be cancelled due to high winds.

Many people mentioned the affectionate attitude of the people in Rocky Harbour. At the Fisherman's Landing Inn and in the restaurants the brethren were treated with phrases like, "What would you like, my love?" "Yes, my love," or "No, my love."

We look forward to the day when God will once again place His name in Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland.

Shawinigan, Quebec, Canada: For the second year in a row, God clearly placed His name in Shawinigan. Nearly 100 grateful Feast-goers kept the Feast of Tabernacles in a hotel beautifully located alongside a peaceful river with a lovely

promenade along the bank. Abundant and nourishing spiritual food, plus delicious physical fine cuisine made the Feast a delight! Three ministers served the brethren. Messrs. Wyatt Ciesielka, Jacques Secours and Yvon Brochu gave the sermons. Messrs. Jean Matte, Walter Hehle and Randy Wettreich delivered excellent sermonettes. On the first day of the Feast and on the Last Great Day, all enjoyed a banquet-style lunch together between the morning and afternoon services.

Throughout the entire Feast, an attitude of serving and sharing prevailed everywhere among this small portion of God's royal Family. The brethren set good examples and really let their lights shine.

God clearly manifested His loving presence in bestowing numerous spiritual blessings, and physical blessings for some severely suffering members, who were delivered from their pain after being anointed.

In Shawinigan, the foretaste of the coming Millennium became very real: it produced stronger family ties, joy, enthusiasm and vision. This truly was one of the most serene, peaceful, warm and unifying Feasts ever!

Kimberley, British Columbia, Canada: One hundred and eighty brethren gathered in the very beautiful alpine town of Kimberley, in the Rocky Mountains of southeastern British Columbia, keeping God's command to observe the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. This peaceful and magnificent setting, known as the Bavaria of the Rockies, was a fitting backdrop to be reminded of the beauty and harmony that will prevail on the earth under the Government of God in the age soon to come.



The highlights of the Feast here were the sermons, all of which spoke not just of the glory of the world under the rule of Christ and His Family, but what we as the called out ones of God must do to ensure this vision becomes a reality for us. The sermons emphasized the value of our calling, the need for perseverance and the need for us to faithfully support God's Work in humility, with an attitude of service. On Friday evening Mr. Elertson gave a very inspiring Bible Study on the Bride of Christ, showing how God, through the analogy of marriage, describes the role of God's Church and its members today, and in the future.



Brethren also had opportunity to fellowship in activities that served to bring everyone closer together. There was the Seniors Brunch, the Deacons and Elders Dinner, and a great afternoon of bowling attended by over half of the Feast-goers. The social highlight was the Dinner Dance, which was combined with a Fun Show and Kraft Korner. The theme for the evening was the era of the 1950s. Tables were served by members who took orders and served up a culinary fare of root beer floats, great burgers and fries. This was preceded by the Not-So-Newlywed Game, where those married for 25 years plus showed what they knew about their spouse. The high point of the evening however was the Kraft Korner, where many brethren donated some amazing crafts for a silent auction, with the proceeds to be put toward the offering.

The Feast of 2013 was one of harmony, peace and inspiration, and was truly the spiritual highlight of the year.

Buxton, United Kingdom: Two hundred and eighty brethren from many nations gathered to keep the Feast in the Victorian town of Buxton in the English Peak District. A spirit of unity, uplifting fellowship and a loving family atmosphere was present throughout the Feast. Many brethren stayed at the Palace Hotel and enjoyed sharing meals and the extra opportunity for extended fellowship.

A range of planned activities included a coach (bus) tour to Haddon Hall—a fortified medieval manor house—an afternoon walk around the Goyt Valley Reservoir, Go-Karting, an evening dance, a sports afternoon, a children's party, children's art activities before two morning services, and a biblically based entertainment evening "Game Show" quiz entitled "The Pearl of Great Price."

The Feast messages looking forward to the Kingdom of God blended together as they can only do when inspired by God. Mr. Dexter Wakefield, our guest speaker for the first half of the Feast, discussed mountains and the Kingdom of God and the Sabbath and the Millennium. Other speakers



included Area Pastor Adam West and visiting U.S. elders Wayne Tlumak and Dennis Chornomaz, as well as Festival Coordinator Simon Roberts and Mr. John Meakin. All of their messages were supported by

sermonettes providing meat in due season and beautiful special music provided by soloists and the Festival, Youth, Children's and Croydon Choirs.

The opportunity for encouraging and uplifting fellowship with brethren from thirteen different countries was a highlight for many this year. The strong spiritual meat, along with the fine regal surroundings of the Palace Hotel, made for a



successful Feast and we are thankful for the three years we have spent at this site. Next year God has placed His name at a new location and we will be keeping the Feast in Great Malvern, Worcestershire.

Victor Harbor, Australia: One hundred and eighty-five zealous brethren from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Canada and the United States gathered in the coastal town of Victor Harbor to observe this year's Feast. The spectacular views of lush green hills and sparkling ocean afforded beautiful panoramas in a truly Millennial setting. We also had the added blessing of meeting special guests, Mr. and Mrs. Rick Stafford, who visited with us for the last half of the Feast.

Inspiring sermons were given by Regional Director Bruce Tyler, and Messrs. Rick Stafford, Rob Tyler, Martin Montgomery and Dan Love. Brethren enjoyed a variety of scheduled activities, starting with a "Bible-themed craft activity" for children under ten, and a "Car Rally" afternoon for the singles, where only a handful of participants got "well and truly lost"!

The Seniors Afternoon started with a ride on the historic Cockle train, which ambled through the picturesque coastline to Port Elliot where a luncheon and fellowship were shared. At the same time the teens were enjoying an invigorating and challenging afternoon of team-building activities.

A major social highlight of the Feast was the Dinner Dance, held at the Golf Club. Arriving brethren were greeted with background music, a beautifully decorated black and silver themed room, exquisite centerpieces, silver menus and place cards. Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal and danced to a live jazz band throughout the evening.

The Family Fun Day was attended by about 120 enthusiastic members who enjoyed a BBQ lunch and lots of great fellowship. For the young (and young at heart), there were lots of games and activities that were made all the more memorable by the millennial setting at Horseshoe Bay. Other activities included the Talent Show, "Get to Know Your Neighbor" evening, Singles Breakfast and a Seniors Breakfast.

God's presence and blessing were evident throughout the Feast. From the beautiful weather, surroundings and physical food to the spiritual meat provided by God's shepherds, we truly had a foretaste of the wonderful Kingdom to come.

Paihia, New Zealand: There was much excitement greeting New Zealand Church brethren not seen for a year and

also those who were new to us as we gathered at the Scenic Hotel in the seaside village of Paihia for a second consecutive year. There was a happy contingent from Australia, South Africa, and the United States of America comprising toddlers right through to those who remember Box Brownie cameras! With 120 registrations, we soon felt part of the same family, as we reflected on the stirring sermons and useful suggestions from zealous ministers that God blessed us with.

Mr. Rick Stafford from Texas exhorted us to develop the heart of a shepherd and listed seven qualities of faithful shepherds, which we also should develop. This was the



The Spirit that motivates us was again shown during the Feast by the inspiring sermons given by the ministers of God in the Living Church of God.

Côte d'Azur, France: The full-on fellowship really made the Feast so enjoyable for the brethren in France this year. With the balmy Mediterranean climate at a wooded resort with bungalows, surrounded with majestic views of the surrounding coastal hills, what more could one ask for?

Besides the usual convenience of everyone being housed on site, the Atrium situated next to the Auditorium offered a 24/7 coffee bar where most brethren gathered to fellowship every day! There was also a sunny terrace, where we also enjoyed three grilled meals during the Feast. Another advantage was having all-inclusive buffet meals with waters and wine... and total exclusivity. We felt like the whole site belonged to us throughout the Feast.

All facilities were within a short walking distance or an easy wheelchair ride, since the site is situated on the Maures Hills. Regional Director Mr. King was on site for the whole Feast. Having Mr. and Mrs. King there really added so much to the festival. Mr. King spoke three times, with his characteristically profound, kind and loving manner. One family from Canada remarked, "How warm and kind were the messages he gave, and being so friendly, how could you not love him?" Mr. King spoke of our vision of the future and talked about Bible heroes, following up with encouragement in our quest for the Kingdom. Mr. and Mrs. Wakefield joined us during the Feast.

There was a real family atmosphere. Even the staff felt like we were all part of a huge family! Both members and staff voiced their desire for us to be together next year! The activities were primarily family oriented, with activities appreciated by families with children of all ages.

The excursions included a bus trip to Fragonard Perfumery in Grasse, and a visit to nearby Frejus with a guided tour of the Roman village. We had an LYC film evening, viewing a show of the recent camps in South Africa and Belgium. Mr. and Mrs. King hosted the 3x20 afternoon tea with the theme "Remembering your example," thanking everyone who helped the Feast run so smoothly. The talent show hosted by Eric Boyer and Samuel Ribeiro amazed everyone, and the evening finished with swinging, soft-shoe dancing.



first of a series of three hard-hitting sermons in which Mr. Stafford set us a challenge to have realistic expectations of the rigors in the early years of the Millennium ahead. Australasian Regional Director Bruce Tyler reminded us of why we were at the Feast and also gave us a fundamental understanding as to the meaning of the Last Great Day.

The weather unusually made its mark with rain, wind, and a long spectacular lightning and thunder display. However, it did little to deter the activities, although participants in the sports afternoon had a bit of mud to contend with and the "sailors" on a cruise endured a bumpy ride as high winds caused a choppy sea with a big swell.

The social highlight undoubtedly was the "Island Party" which our Auckland "Island" brethren organized for us all. The memorable night included wonderful Island (South Pacific) food, dancing, singing and an education about what wholesome Island culture was all about.

All too soon we were listening to Dr. Meredith's closing message, as we were moved by his deep love and concern for us all in the days to come.

Wewak Town, Papua New Guinea: We truly enjoyed the Feast in Papua New Guinea, with over 48 brethren and their families.

We had our picnic at the Second World War memorial park at Wom beach. The war memorial park has the names of the allied soldiers killed during the horrible fighting with the Japanese army in the battle of New Guinea.

With more than a third of attendees being single, the activities were well-frequented. Mr. Samuel Ribeiro organized the first one on the evening of the First Day of the Feast. The objective was to break the ice as quickly as possible in order to improve the communication between all the young adults during the Feast, and the discussion naturally included questions about being single in God's Church today. But, the situation changed later when some younger people joined us for some entertainment, and we started a mime game. We can say the evening was successful and the objective fulfilled, but with a little difference: the ice was not broken; it melted with the warmth of our laughter and camaraderie!



Merlo, Argentina: We are thankful to God for providing such a wonderful site in the city of Merlo, Argentina. We enjoyed a peaceful ambience full of unity and harmony in the Hotel Rincon del Canadal for the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. All this was only possible because of the faith of Jesus Christ. It was especially exciting upon arrival that, after seven years, the congregations of Chile and Argentina celebrated the Feast together. Both congregations made a true effort, traveling for hours by land until they arrived at a convenient place for both countries. The encounter by everyone was exciting and appropriate for a loving family. We enjoyed every day as a true family, sharing meals together and *yerba mate* tea. Truly it was a chosen place for God to place His name. One of the highlights of the Feast was the Chilean Choir, which delighted us each day, and we also had the opportunity to enjoy the delicious traditional Argentinean *asado*.

God inspired us to hear motivational messages about His plan for humanity, the importance of being united, to love one another, to serve and help our fellow brethren, contributing to the Work of God and to prepare ourselves to be part of God's family that He is creating in us to establish His Kingdom on earth.

Our goodbyes were full of nostalgia for the good moments lived, with many hugs and tears from our eyes but with full

encouragement to keep on going with faith and hope that we will meet again at another Feast, and in the future Kingdom of God.

La Tebaida, Colombia: The Feast of Tabernacles in Colombia was celebrated in La Tebaida in the municipality



of Quindio by more than 70 brethren from Colombia, Spain, Argentina, Puerto Rico and Mexico. Quindio is the main coffee-growing center for Colombia, and also produces tobacco leaves and citrus fruits. South of Quindio is La Tebaida. We have services in the Hotel Portal del Sol. The Feast coordinator was Mr. Edgar Guerra, and Mr. Antonio Mora was the visiting minister. We enjoyed pleasant weather and rejoiced in a family atmosphere full of harmony and cordiality.

Punta Leona, Costa Rica: In the midst of a lush tropical jungle paradise, 56 brethren from Costa Rica, Panama,



Guatemala, the United States and Canada gathered to celebrate the coming Government of God on this earth! They were accompanied by a millennial overture of indigenous wildlife including monkeys, iguanas, macaws, parakeets, coati and more!

The ultimate highlight of the Feast was the enriching spiritual banquet served through powerful sermons, meaty sermonettes, inspiring song services and a Bible Study designed to help parents teach children godly character. The Behind the Work video, "A Year in Prophecy," was equally inspiring and sobering. Sermons and split sermons in both English and Spanish (with translations) were delivered by

Messrs. James Sweat, George Schaubek, Jorge Schaubek, Ismael Hernandez, Jonathan Fike and David Lujan, focusing on our purpose for being called now, our obligation to rejoice and fear God always, visualizing the Kingdom and the happy world under God, our co-inheritance with Jesus Christ, getting ready to be the Bride of Christ and the coming restoration of all things.



Many participated in the variety of activities offered by the resort, including two ocean beaches, swimming pools, athletic courts, ocean kayaking, horseback riding, deep sea fishing, a butterfly house, a day trip to the nearby town of Jaco, whale watching and a night walk in the rain forest. The most thrilling activity was the crocodile tour. More than 30 amazed Feast-goers watched wide-eyed as the “Crocodile Man” braved the swampy bog to hand-feed ferocious hungry crocodiles as much as twelve feet long. It is encouraging to know that God will change their violent nature and even little children will feed them when Jesus Christ and His saints rule the earth!

The challenge to communicate at this bilingual site was overcome by the universal language of God’s love and unifying spirit experienced by everyone present. This year’s Feast in Costa Rica will go down as one of the most memorable ever!

Tequisquiapan, Mexico: This year, once again, 130 brethren from Mexico and the United States celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in Tequisquiapan. We heard both inspiring and edifying messages such as the opening night and Last Great Day by Dr. Meredith, the Behind the Work film, messages by

without any problems. The highlights of the activities were a children’s fiesta, a mine visit for the youth, a “bohemian” night, and a formal evening. It was an encouraging Feast full of God’s word and fruit for the following year, and our hope is that the best is yet to come!

Crown Point, Tobago: The Feast of Tabernacles in scenic Crown Point was truly a joyous occasion, with a high attendance of 146 brethren and guests. Brethren from the U.S., Canada, Barbados, Grenada and Trinidad gathered together to rejoice before and learn to fear the Lord our God.

The Festival overall went very well, permeated with a general feeling of brotherly love, warmth and camaraderie. The spiritual meals satisfied the appetites of everyone, with meat in due season for everyone’s plate. The messages presented a clearer view of the “Big Picture,” putting many pieces together and creating a sharper image of who Christ is and where we fit into His plan.

There were some delightful activities to edify, thrill and entertain the brethren, beginning with a Sabbath evening Bible Study on family, and specifically focused on inculcating



children with godly qualities. This study was quite interactive and instructive.

On Sunday, 81 brethren assembled at Trims Meeting Hall and then headed for Argyle Water Falls. The journey took one hour, after which they took a sunny afternoon hike with the assistance of two tour guides. Everyone enjoyed the picturesque flora and fauna along a trail that ended at a beautiful natural pool. On arrival there, some brethren decided to bathe under the water falls while others used a trail to go higher.

One hundred and fifty brethren gathered for Family Fun Day at the Canoe Bay Beach Resort on Monday. After a hearty lunch, God gave us a brief rain shower, which kept the area cool and perfect for an afternoon of fun and games for all ages. The day’s events ended at five o’clock, with some electing to take a dip in the Bay. We were all thankful

to God for the experiences.

Then came a highlight of the Feast, the Festival Ball, a formal dinner and dance featuring a live band. This was



Mr. Mario Hernandez and Mr. Gabriel Ortega. The brethren were well fed with meat in due season. Our Father blessed us with good weather so we could participate in activities

held on Tuesday. One hundred and forty-five brethren came out arrayed in their finest. Everyone enjoyed the sumptuous meal provided and the live band brought music that had dancers moving until the last song. The spirit of service was certainly alive on this night, as the brethren sprang into action to serve soup and drinks and also to reset the hall for services the next day.

On evenings with no planned activities, brethren took the opportunity to invite each other over for food and good fellowship, developing bonds of friendship that will no doubt last on into the Millennium.

Christ Church, Barbados: One hundred and twenty-one brethren from the United States, Trinidad, Tobago and Barbados rejoiced together in harmony at the Feast. Brethren



heard inspiring messages from the Feast Coordinator, Dr. Wilner Pierre, and the assistant Feast Coordinator, Mr. Marc Arseneault. Brethren also heard inspiring sermons given by Dr. Donald Roach and Messrs. Vincent Lardé, Marcel Ginier and Etienne Duval.

Feast activities included an afternoon of swimming at the children's waterfall pool along with arts and crafts for ages 2–6, a pre-teen activity that offered free tennis lessons for ages 7–10, a teen activity of horseback riding through trails and hills around the resort, and a singles activity to explore seven famous waterfalls. Singles swam through narrow gorges of crystal clear mountain spring water, while jumping and sliding into pools of water formed between limestone cliffs.

During the Feast, Deacons and Elders enjoyed an evening of fellowship and relaxation over dinner at the Casablanca Restaurant. Our seniors spent an afternoon together over lunch at the Pearl Restaurant.

One of the highlights of the Feast was the Talent Show organized by the brethren from Canada. Mr. Stan O'Brien was the host, while Paul Arseneault provided translation. Acts included musical performances and dance numbers performed by brethren from Canada, the United States and Jamaica. The crowd was moved by the little Jones Family Singers, who sang a song about the Ten Commandments. All the performers were dressed like Moses. The brethren from Martinique dazzled the crowd as they jumped off the stage performing three dances in their colorful native costumes.

Another highlight of the Feast was the Church Family Dance. Mr. Ronney Downs from the Chattanooga, Tennessee congregation and Mr. Ray Pereira from Headquarters selected a variety of musical hits that kept everyone dancing.

This year's Feast of Tabernacles was a wonderful learning experience for everyone as we celebrated the true spiritual meaning of the Feast and prepared to rule under Jesus Christ in Tomorrow's World.

Georgetown, Guyana: Georgetown is known for its rich culture and colorful history. The capital city and principle port of Guyana still retains much of the striking wooden architecture of its colonial-era past, first as a Dutch and then a British colony. The imposing St. George's Cathedral, in downtown Georgetown, is one of the tallest wooden structures in the world. Within sight of this cathedral, however, something much more interesting and significant began on the evening of September 18! Forty-eight of God's



came to observe the Holy Days at the Barbados Beach Club, Maxwell Coast Road, Christ Church.

We experienced God's rich blessings of fine sunny weather. Thought-provoking sermons were given by our visiting minister, Mr. Bill Whitaker, and Regional Director Roderick McNair, and were further supported by some wonderful sermonettes.

We fellowshiped intensely, youth and seniors alike. A special musical presentation was given by our youth to the elders in the beautiful Reef View Restaurant.

We truly lifted our voices in song during services and in laughter as we enjoyed Family Day, the cruise, the island tour stopping at the cool tropical Welchman Hall gully, and the scenic Hackleton's Cliff.



Appearing before our God has satisfied us with a banquet of spiritual and physical food, giving us the rejuvenation needed to continue the Work.

Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic: This year, for the first time, the Feast of Tabernacles was held at the Lifestyle Vacation Resort in Puerto Plata, a small town by the Atlantic Ocean in the Dominican Republic. There were 187 brethren from various parts of the United States, Canada, France, Martinique, Haiti, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Puerto Rico and St. Maarten.

future kings and priests gathered at the nearby Tower Hotel to celebrate God's Feast of Tabernacles! Visitors from French Guiana, the United States, Trinidad and Tobago were greeted with warm smiles and embraces from local brethren as the spiritual highlight of the year began.

On the first day of the Feast, Caribbean Regional Director Rod McNair challenged brethren to value their calling as a chosen and special people, as he asked them, "Why did God choose you?" He also exhorted those gathered to grow in emotional leadership in preparing for the Kingdom of God. A tasty luncheon on the first day gave everyone the chance to enjoy a meal together and extend their fellowship.

The next day, Friday, featured an interesting and informative trip to a local museum. This and other activities were organized by local Georgetown congregation host Deonarine Arjune. On the following Monday, brethren were delighted to visit the beautiful Promenade Gardens. As Guyana is blessed with an abundance of lush rain forests, mighty rivers, and magnificent waterfalls, its botanical gardens are considered to be among the very best in the world.

Pastor Bill Whitaker from South Carolina, U.S., later joined the brethren, animatedly providing attendees with inspiring and energizing spiritual food. He spoke about having the fear of God, and on the Last Great Day explained the glorious hope of the Resurrection. Mr. Whitaker also spent the Sabbath after the Feast with the brethren in Georgetown, encouraging them to "Remember the Sabbath Day, to Keep it Holy."

On Day Six of the Feast, brethren traveled to Splashmins Resort for outdoor services and an afternoon of family-friendly activities. Splashmins is a 163-acre resort built to provide a place for the local Guyanese population to relax and enjoy the spectacular flora and fauna of the country, with water and outdoor activities for the more energetic! After the outdoor service, lunch and cool drinks were served, followed by good fellowship, swimming in the Madawani River and friendly cricket games.

The Feast of Tabernacles in Georgetown was once again a highlight of the year for brethren who gathered to obey God and keep His Holy Days. Our great God certainly blessed the Feast in Georgetown with agreeable weather and brotherly fellowship, but most importantly, with powerful and uplifting spiritual messages.

Miragoane, Haiti: One hundred and nineteen brethren enjoyed the Feast of Tabernacles in Miragoane, located in the southwestern part of Haiti. The weather was warm and sunny throughout the Feast.

Aside from Dr. Meredith's messages, Dr. Wilner Pierre and Mr. Jove Jean-Pierre spoke of the need for dedication, commitment and appreciation for God's way of life. A sermon titled "What Will Marriage and the Family Be Like in Tomorrow's World?" provided examples of what we can do now to build and maintain a happy family life.

The brethren enjoyed daily buffet meals, and also the opportunity to fellowship and participate in the Family Day activity, excursions, children's activities, and activities for the singles during the Feast. New members of the Church expressed how much they look forward to next year's Feast after realizing how God has set aside the Holy Days for His



Church to understand the plan of salvation for all mankind. This was truly an inspiration to us all.

We are very grateful for God's blessing in providing good weather, great activities and good spiritual food during the Feast. What a time to rejoice!

Cuzco, Peru: God's appreciation for diversity and the bond of His Spirit was evident in Cuzco, Peru where 76 brethren from several different nations joyfully kept the Feast of Tabernacles! Surrounded by the majestic Andes Mountains, God's people enjoyed spectacular views. It was



truly a millennial setting, displaying the "mere edges" of God's magnificent creative power (Job 26:14). The sermon messages were spiritually filling and included topics such as ability to judge and how to be good teachers. Mr. Gene Hilgenberg gave a helpful question-and-answer Bible Study the evening of the Last Great Day. Other highlights were archaeological excursions to the Tipon terrace complex, the Maras salt mines and the famous Incan ruins of Machu Picchu. Perhaps one of the most enjoyable aspects of the Cuzco Feast site was the warmth and appreciation the Peruvian brethren extended to visitors throughout the stay. It was a delightful glimpse of what eternity might be like in the family of God.

Montego Bay, Jamaica: For the fifth successive year, we celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in the north coast resort

town of Montego Bay, the island's main tourist destination. Brethren from Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom and the United States joined the Jamaican brethren to celebrate the Feast at the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort. The pervading atmosphere was filled with excitement.

The messages received were future-focused, beneficial, encouraging and inspiring. They outlined what the Feast pictures, what we should be doing now in preparing for Christ's return, how we are to respond to God, lessons to be learned from one parable about the Kingdom, the abundance God's way of life produces and a reminder that we are going to rule the World. The Feast was truly a time of rejoicing and this was evident in how enthusiastically the brethren sang.

There was great fellowshiping before and after services and a sense of family prevailed at meal times and at the other activities. We had a very good gathering at our premier activity on day five, the Family Cookout and Fun Day, where



the brethren enjoyed mouth-watering local foods, played various games (table and field) and a few went rafting at the picturesque Martha Brae Rafting Facility. Other activities at the Feast included a Pre-teens/Teens and Singles Mingle, an off-site Games Evening get-together with our visiting brethren and the Jamaican brethren not staying at the Holiday Inn, a Night of Biblical Presentations (Bible-based skits), a Family Bible Study, a Seniors Luncheon and a Hymn Sing. Day four was designated a 'tour day' to visit the local attractions.

The average attendance was 286. Most of the comments from the brethren were that they were having a wonderful Feast. They also commented on the inspiring messages, fellowship with the brethren, the warmth and friendliness of the Jamaican brethren and looking forward to the time when we will never be separated but will be together in the Kingdom of God. The 2013 Feast was positive and memorable—truly special.

Port Shepstone, South Africa: From seven countries, 117 joyful brethren gathered to celebrate God's Feast of Tabernacles at the Banana Beach Holiday Resort in the millennial setting of Port Shepstone on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Attendees included visitors from Ireland, the U.S., Australia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Messrs. Henry Cooper, Louis Bouwer, Gaylyn Bonjour and Lawdi Ferreira provided inspiring sermons that helped

to paint a mental picture of our great future reward in God's coming Kingdom, and encouraged us to take the steps to prepare for the time when God will fulfill His promise.



An unforgettable family atmosphere and unity were experienced with everyone staying close to each other and the meeting hall. There were swimming pools located in the resort itself and a restaurant within walking distance.

An outstanding feature of the Feast was that all attendees, irrespective of age, got involved in activities. On Sunday all the brethren enjoyed the annual family day barbeque. Whilst the barbeque fires were battling to roast two sheep, sausages and kebabs, the children participated in fun and games and the young at heart enjoyed volleyball, table tennis, swimming and joyous fellowshiping.

Apart from a board-game evening and a bring-and-barbeque event at the resort's swimming pool, some of the experiences shared were outings on two occasions to the scenic Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve. On Tuesday young and old enjoyed an afternoon picnic in the nature reserve after the brave crossed an 80-meter suspension bridge. On a different occasion the youth and singles enjoyed the longest zip line in South Africa: 4.5 kilometers across a gorge.

With the inspired messages about peace and prosperity in God's Kingdom, the calming sounds of the ocean, a beautiful sea view from the accommodation units and humpback whales playing on the coastline, we got a small glimpse of the peace and tranquility that awaits us in the Millennium.

As one of the members commented: "In a nutshell, this year's Feast fulfilled God's command to **enjoy!**"

We thank Christ, as the Host of a memorable Feast, for all the love and unity that everyone again enjoyed at Port Shepstone.

Glentana, South Africa: With thunderous waves spilling onto a pristine beach and melodious birdsong filling the air, the beautiful village of Glentana welcomed back 123 of God's



people for the Feast of Tabernacles. The moderate, sunny weather allowed long walks along the beach and outings to surrounding tourist attractions. On the second day of the Feast, the youth, singles and senior citizens events took place.

The youth went canopy touring at an adventure resort and the singles had an afternoon of teambuilding activities, which ended with canoeing. The senior citizens were treated to a lunch at a restaurant in a neighboring village, Great Brak River. On both Holy Days brethren enjoyed catered lunches under the trees at the meeting hall, where the family day *braai* (BBQ) also took place on the Sunday. At the family day the smaller children participated in and had fun with a treasure hunt and the youths played volleyball and tug-of-war, followed by fun and laughter in the sun on the beach. Later that afternoon all joined in the happy and fun sing-along that followed.



Although all the physical blessings were greatly enjoyed, the main focus of the Feast was on the spiritual blessings, provided by sermonettes, sermons and uplifting fellowshiping. For the first half of the Feast, guest speaker Mr. Gaylyn Bonjour shared his messages contrasting how things are now and how it will be in the Kingdom and he also gave us some keys for entering the Kingdom. Mr. Bonjour travelled to the Port Shepstone site for the last half of the Feast, while Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cooper from Ireland exchanged places with him. The parents and grandparents appreciated the Bible Study during the Sabbath on laying the tracks for our children to the Kingdom. Other messages included explanations on what God is going to do for mankind, our awesome rewards in the Kingdom, our inheritance and the past and future of Jerusalem.

Imphal, Manipur, India: We really thank our Lord for establishing His Church in this hilly border state and helping us to keep His Feast here. This year's Feast site was at Retreat House, Mantripukhri. This is a nice place four miles from Imphal, located at the base of a foothill with clean and tranquil environment. Forty-five persons, including guests and children, kept the Feast with joy. The important events that pictured the Feast were sermons, a Bible Study report, hiking, sports, a talent show and a Bible Quiz.

During the Feast all the brethren divided into three groups to serve their duties, like room and compound cleaning,

washing dishes and cooking at the temporary kitchen on a roster basis day by day. We really give our deep respect and thankfulness to the LCG Headquarters and Regional Office for sending us Feast DVDs and CDs in a timely fashion. We



thank God for His merciful blessings given to us, allowing us to have such a wonderful Feast.

Batu, Indonesia: Once again a very successful Feast of Tabernacles was held in Indonesia at a villa in the highlands resort city of Batu, East Java. A total of 24 people kept the Feast, comprising 22 locals and two visitors from Australia.

The spiritual food was abundant with DVD sermons, as well as uplifting sermonettes urging the brethren to push on to see the reality of the Kingdom of God. The Behind the Work DVD provided the local brethren with a much-needed insight into biblical prophecy and its fulfilment, as the outside world and prophecies regarding Europe are difficult concepts for them to comprehend.

From a physical point of view the location for the Feast was comfortable and the mild weather enabled many



activities to be conducted. These activities included a visit to the East Java Park, which includes a museum of natural history, the Batu Secret Zoo and a small theme park with fun rides. The Batu Secret Zoo is considered one of the best of its kind in Southeast Asia and the range of animals is vast. All of those who attended were greatly impressed by the wonders of our God's creative power and imagination. Also a visit to a local water theme park called Selecta was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. This park has

several swimming pools and a bucket that tips water on the swimmers below, as well as a beautiful flower park containing a wide range of flowers.

The Feast experience was further enhanced by the local brethren practicing their newly learned English language skills with the Australian visitors. Although there were a few blank stares, overall both sides of conversations could be understood. The local brethren are trying hard to learn English and have lessons most weeks.

Without doubt this was truly a Feast to remember and the location provided a glimpse of the wonderful Tomorrow's World that will soon be here.

Penang Island, Malaysia: The Feast of Tabernacles 2013 was held at the Rainbow Paradise Beach Resort. A total of 125 people, comprising 75 Malaysians and 50 visitors from Australia, the Philippines and England assembled together



to observe the last two annual festivals of God. We were privileged to have two visiting ministers, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gill and Mr. and Mrs. Mal Jennings from Australia. We had three pairs of twins in attendance!

During the opening night service, the Festival Coordinator, Mr. Rajan Moses, warmly welcomed all the brethren, seeing the excitement written all over their faces. We had excellent weather throughout the Feast.

Spiritual food was provided to the brethren via the live sermons and sermonettes by the ministers throughout the festival. The attendance at each Church service spoke volumes of the enthusiasm prevalent among the brethren.

This year also saw new faces in the form of solos presenting special music during services. This was in addition to the power-packed performances of the festival choir and proved to be a wholesome treat for the congregation. Three combined luncheons and a barbeque were organized, providing a wonderful opportunity for all in attendance to share meals together while fellowshiping.

Numerous activities were held. The youth found satisfaction at the bowling alley. The beach games were instrumental in bringing the Church together for some wholesome joy. A special treat was the Seniors' Luncheon, where 22 seniors took part. On the Last Great day we had the Blessing of the Children. Ronald Moses' daughter Beverly Lisa was blessed by three ministers.

The highlight of the activities was the traditional talent show, where the children, youth and adults showcased their many gifts and skills to keep the audience fascinated. There were a couple of solos and Philippine sketches that were presented.



The hallmark of the festival was the intense and heartfelt fellowship of the brethren. The theme for the festival this year was "The Coming Kingdom of God."

Baguio City Manila, Philippines: More than 225 people of God gathered in the scenic mountains of Baguio, north of Manila, to rejoice in God's Feast. The cool and breezy weather of the city was perfectly complemented by the warm greetings of welcoming love from the brethren coming from different congregations and video groups in the Philippines and even overseas. This brotherly love made the whole atmosphere even more joyful.

From start to finish, the messages during the Feast services were all very motivating and inspiring. Mr. Kinnear Penman, the Festival Elder, Mr. Basilio Osillos, Festival Coordinator, and Mr. Jesus Puzon, Assistant Festival coordinator, all gave sermons that urged the brethren to be steadfast in faith and works as preparation for the coming thousand-year reign with Christ, the very event that the Feast of Tabernacles



represents. Sermon topics included liberating the planet from Satan's influence, qualifying to rule through service, the New Jerusalem and God's eternal purpose. Mr. Dayrell Tanner, Regional Pastor, arrived in the middle of the Feast (coming from Malaybalay) and gave sermons on the 6th and 7th day on the basics of Christianity. The services were made even more inspiring by the special music from the Festival Choir and other talented Church members as well.

Several activities and programs were prepared to make the Feast memorable and fun. The "Getting to Know You" activity was held at the Benitez Hall on the second night of the Feast to strengthen the ties between the brethren and help them become acquainted with new faces, including Mr.

and Mrs. Penman. The other activities include the Children's Party, Widows' and Widowers' Dinner at the Manor Hotel, Baguio tour, Spokesman Club Ladies Night, Youth and Singles' Amazing Race Activity and the Sports and Family Day. On Monday evening, the brethren danced the night



away to the live music of the Los Amigos band. This formal Dinner and Dance Night provided a wonderful opportunity to fellowship and have a wholesome and enjoyable evening. Another wonderful highlight of the Feast was the Talent Night, held on Tuesday evening.

The very young as well as the senior brethren showcased their God-given talents to impart happiness and enjoyment to the eager and appreciative audience.

The Last Great Day message was given by Mr. Penman. Definitely, with the spiritual nourishment, loving service and



wonderful fellowship, this Feast was a truly memorable and inspiring one at Baguio City.

Malaybalay, Philippines: A total of 323 eager and enthusiastic brethren from all over Mindanao, Philippines, combined to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in just one Mindanao location—Kaamulan, Malaybalay, Bukidnon.

The brethren from Mindanao are mostly Cebuano dialect speakers, with a limited knowledge of English, so all the services are delivered in their language, either directly by the local ministry and deacons, or using translators. To ensure that all the brethren understood Dr. Meredith's opening night and final messages, they were translated into the Cebuano dialect by Mr. Felipe Casing and Mr. Gideon Benitez. Dr. Meredith inspired everyone about God's plan for us to be kings and priests and our role to help humanity. He sent us home with a stirring call to action ringing in our ears.

Regional Pastor, Dayrell Tanner (along with his wife Jeanette), spent the first half of the Feast with us. His translated messages encouraged us to pursue the Kingdom and never to forget the basics of Christianity—faith, humility, total surrender and zeal. Mr. Felipe Casing spoke on healing

the world and how necessary it is to know God, our Father, and to build a closer relationship with Him. Mr. Freddie Benitez preached regarding the Sabbath and the Millennium, and learning what and where is the true "Church of the Living God." Mr. Gideon Benitez taught us about unconditional obedience.

The services were enhanced by the Special Music presenters from all over Mindanao. During one service, the ten ministers present took part in the blessing of ten delightful children.

There were many activities during the Feast. An enjoyable dinner was held at a new resort and much fun was had by all with singing and dancing, and plenty of laughs. This served to instill warm friendship and fellowship amongst all who attended.

Children, youths and adults shared their talents during the talent night, and everyone really enjoyed the effort and service of those who participated. On another occasion, the brethren enjoyed a film showing "God of Wonders" and other movies with true to life lessons. A Bible Study by Mr. Felipe Casing and Mr. Freddie Benitez, about teaching children God's character, discussed precious insights to help parents develop their children's character for the future.

Team building, warm fellowship and friendships were built during the sports day and picnic activities. Many brethren, especially the young ones, enjoyed swimming in the cool pool water. The different age groups were given the chance to be together and to get to know each other in fellowship. A camaraderie was evident among all.

Sixty seniors enjoyed a special night of fellowship and fun together, and despite their advancing years, they never showed weakness or tiredness when they met together. They shared their talents and some life experiences, and some even briefly encouraged the others with personal stories of where they have been these past several months in their journey through their Christian life.

Many lessons were gained and learned from every activity during the Feast. This Feast was most valuable to all who attended in Malaybalay 2013.

Mae Sot, Thailand: We were blessed to hold the Feast in the peaceful environment of Pha Charoen Waterfall National Park, near Mae Sot, Thailand. Two large cabins at the park were able to comfortably accommodate all seventeen in attendance, and allowed us to share the experiences of the Feast as one family. We enjoyed sharing many meals and the children had daily opportunities to play and laugh together.

Frequent rain showers kept us indoors, but also helped keep temperatures pleasantly cool. When the skies cleared we were able to take walks in the park and enjoy tropical flowers and a beautiful waterfall. Being surrounded by jungle, at night we heard concerts performed by a chorus of ten thousand insects and amphibians.

Members commented that the highlight of the Feast was being able to hear messages in their own language and grow

in understanding. Some of the messages focused on reviewing the major events that will occur before Christ's return and in the early decades of the Millennium, encouraging the youth to use the vision of life in Tomorrow's World to guide the decisions and choices they make now, and contrasting China's Forbidden



City with millennial Jerusalem. Other sermons covered included: seeking a crown in God's Kingdom, the gospel of the Kingdom of God and what should be our dream for the future.

As always, the eight days of rejoicing came to an end too soon—but having been rejuvenated, we wait anxiously for the day that will last a thousand years—and beyond that to New Jerusalem where we will live for eternity!

Sakhan Gyi and Kalamyo, Myanmar: This year we had 80 brethren attend the Feast in Myanmar. They were split over two Feast sites—41 in Sakhan Gyi and 39 in Kyarinn (Kalaymyo). We were very excited to be together again and hear the inspiring messages by our leaders translated into Chin and Karen. The Feast was kept with a unified spirit of love and togetherness, as we all ate and stayed together. Our days were filled with wonderful blessings including wonderful

foods that we would not normally enjoy during the year. It was a great opportunity for the brethren to draw closer together as a family and



operate as a team. All in all, it was a very rewarding and very memorable Feast that made saying goodbye very difficult after spending eight days together as brothers and sisters in Christ.



Ahangama Bay, Sri Lanka: For the second year, the Feast of Tabernacles in Sri Lanka was celebrated in the Hotel Insight on the southern coast resort town of Ahangama

Bay, in Galle district. Brethren from Melbourne, Australia, and North Carolina and Ohio, U.S., joined the Sri Lankan brethren in the beautiful and very Millennial setting located

adjacent to the beach, with wonderful scenery of the ocean, palm trees and the beach itself.

The Insight Resort was both very comfortable and economical, with clean rooms and three inclusive buffet-style meals each day. All of the staff were very friendly, and always accommodating.

Activities included a Senior Citizens' Lunch, Family Night, Family Bible quiz, uplifting family games and a boat trip to famous Madol Duwa Nature Park. Family Day was held on the lawn adjacent to the beach, and it was a joy to see brethren of all ages participating in the games. The talent evening showcased the majority of the brethren through vocal, violin, guitar, skits and even an international "tour" of desserts, along with humor by the MC and his assistants. God definitely blessed us with wonderful weather, quality service from the hotel staff and delicious physical food.

Spiritually, it was very touching to see God at work at this Feast. The kindness, generosity and hospitality of the local brethren were on display in abundance. The brethren were so excited to see the extended spiritual families from overseas that they just wanted to spoil them. Hearing the stories of how the various members came into the Church exemplified



how God chooses each of us, regardless of where we live or which country we call home. This really was inspirational. It was great to be with so many people of like mind who would otherwise be a world away. Our God is truly an awesome God!

The sermons prepared were so meaningful and instructive, emphasizing the Feast being both a foretaste of, and our training for, God's Kingdom. Sincerity and love for the brethren were obvious, and we appreciate all the efforts in making this truly the best Feast ever. One could not help but be left with, as Mr. Svalbe would put it, a desire for "the delectable delicacies of the word of God."

Luganville, Vanuatu: The mountain-covered and rain-forested island of Espiritu Santo (Holy Spirit in Spanish) was the millennial setting for the Feast of Tabernacles 2013 in Vanuatu. Luganville is known for its world-class diving and snorkelling and its beautiful sandy beaches, with Champagne Beach being voted one of the world's top ten beaches. About 80 of us assembled at the conference centre of the National Provident Fund, fully air-conditioned with comfortable

seating. Most of the brethren, including the pastor Mr. Jerry Sam and his wife Collette and family, came from the island of Malekula, a three-hour boat ride away. There were seven overseas visitors, four from New Zealand and three from Australia, including visiting minister Mr. Graeme Hemphill and his wife, Jan.



Services were conducted in English, French and Bislama (a type of pidgin English). The Feast messages included topics such as moving towards godly perfection, ruling under Christ, being a good steward of the environment and the Great White Throne Judgment. We enjoyed special music every day. On the first day and the Last Great Day everyone went to “La Place,” a local park overlooking the ocean, for a delicious hot meal prepared by local women in one of the many public huts containing cooking facilities. Afterwards, brethren sat under the coconut palms to enjoy more fellowship.

Activities included a bus trip to “the Blue Holes,” which are a very deep and pure freshwater source for local villages. A wooden ladder with a swinging rope on the embankment provided great entertainment for both those who were brave enough to participate as well as the onlookers! At this breathtakingly beautiful spot Mr. Samuel Liben and his wife Sylvie were baptized by Messrs. Hemphill and Sam, witnessed by all of the brethren. Another special event was the Blessing of the Children where the two sons of Albano and Nadege Molsul were blessed on the Last Great Day.

On another day everyone took a bus trip to a small, private beach at Palekulo Bay, where a locally constructed hut with thatched roof provided shelter and privacy for Sabbath services. The highlight was when Mr. and Mrs. Raymond and Ginette Naguy were baptized in the ocean by Messrs. Hemphill and Sam.

The Talent Show on Tuesday evening showcased the musical talents of the brethren and their warm fellowship with each other, and even the smallest children were involved.

On Sunday, Mr. Graeme Hemphill performed a wedding, with translation provided by Mr. Jerry Sam at a local village venue. Under a large thatched-roofed canopy with timber seating along each side, the groom, Norbert Tarey and his bride Melissa were congratulated with a handshake from each of the

many guests who also presented their gifts. A traditional “lap lap” was later served—a meal of root vegetables with coconut milk cooked in large banana leaves in the ground in a rock oven.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Sam set a very positive example of service to their brethren. All activities and services were fully supported, reflecting the dedication and focus of the Church in Vanuatu. The brethren would like to see more international visitors at next year’s Feast to share in this wonderful experience.

Badagry, Nigeria: Badagry, a historic town in southwest Nigeria and which is less than 30 kilometres from Lagos, played host to 23 Feast-goers from Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. Five brethren came from the Republic of Benin and had their first experience of the Feast of Tabernacles with their 18 Nigerian brethren. Worship services were at the Soketta Hotels where the brethren had secured accommodation for nine nights.



After heartily appreciating the Opening Night message, the brethren enthusiastically settled down to relishing the surfeit of spiritual meals prepared for them in the form of sermons and Bible studies. God gave us very good weather throughout the Feast and the power supply at the hotel was stable, which was particularly appreciated by the brethren. An excursion and guided tour of slave trade relics and monuments in Badagry vividly showed why we should be eternally grateful to the living God for granting us freedom that lasts. It was in this mood that brethren enjoyed the camaraderie that came with indoor games and sing-alongs. The highlight of the Feast was the baptism of three prospective members from the Republic of Benin on the Fourth day, for which all the brethren were thankful to the living God.

The hotel management could not help but remark on the unity and peacefulness that God allowed to grow among the brethren during the Feast. For, on the fifth day, the hotel owner approached me to say: “Your people are a very peaceful group and exceptional to have as guests.” Just as we concluded the afternoon services on the Last Great Day, the hotel manager echoed the same sentiment. He told me that he and his team have been impressed with us and have been talking among

themselves about us being the kind of customers they would like to have. He urged us to return next year.

Contributions by: Rodger Bardo, Dan Hall, Ron Poole, Phil West, Scott Winnail, Darrell Lovelady, Wallace G. Smith, Glen Gilchrist, John Strain, John Whitfield, John Hunter, James Ginn, Frank Best, Yvon Brochu, Stuart Wachowicz, Simon Roberts, Sally Crouch, Monica Sullivan, Peter Devis, Rees Ellis, Armando

Orrego, Sabino Mora, James Sweat, Gabriel Ortega, Fitzroy Greeman, Clyde Skeete, Rod McNair, Wilner Pierre, Jonathan Bueno, Lascelles Fraser, Lawdi Ferreira, Morne Stander, Arius Nusantara, Ian West, Rajan Moses, Rouella Fajardo, Connie Casing, Felipe Casing, Ryan Foster, Thomas Hoe, Bill Snodgrass, Kuma de Silva, Jan Hemphill and Oladele Akin-Ogundeji. Compiled by William Williams.





ISRAEL FEAST TOUR 2013

The 2013 Feast in Israel was truly a unique and memorable experience for the 164 brethren from around the world who attended! In spite of Satan's attempts to keep the group from traveling to Israel, God intervened so that we could keep His Feast in peace and safety in the place He had chosen.

Brethren flew into Tel Aviv, a modern city on the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and touring began early Tuesday morning. Even though we split into four groups for the tours, we were all together for services and meals each day. Each group was assigned to a comfortable air-conditioned motor coach (with free Wi-Fi) and a knowledgeable guide. On our first day we visited Caesarea Maritima, Carmel and Nazareth, before arriving in Tiberias. The Caesar Hotel, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, became our temporary dwelling for five nights.

The following day we drove north near the Lebanese and Syrian borders. Our first stop was Hazor. From there we went to Tel Dan, Banias—also known as Caesarea Philippi—and Banias Waterfall, before returning to our hotel for dinner and the Opening Night service.

We were blessed with inspiring messages throughout the Feast from Dr. Jeff Fall, Mr. Paul Shumway, Festival Coordinator Mr. Jim Meredith and other ministers. We also had an abundance of talented musicians that performed special music throughout the Feast. After nourishing spiritual food on the First Day we took a short sunset boat ride on the Sea of Galilee before sharing a delicious family-style meal.

After morning services on Friday, we traveled around the northern perimeter of the Sea of Galilee to the ruins of Capernaum, Korazim and Katzrin, where we saw the reconstruction of a Jewish village from Mishnaic times.

After a nice Sabbath rest, we enjoyed a meal of grilled beef, lamb, chicken and fish at Deck's, a well-known Tiberias establishment. The restaurant owners gave a special welcome to the Living Church of God and treated us to a brief fireworks display over the water.

Early Sunday morning we rode buses to Bet Shean, an Egyptian and Canaanite stronghold where historically Saul and Jonathan's bodies were nailed after they were killed on Mt. Gilboa. From here we went up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast, just as Christ had done over 2,000 years ago. The first glimpse of this renowned city brought a wave of emotion to us all. Our first stop in Jerusalem was the Israel Museum. We were able to see a newly opened exhibit devoted to the archaeological legacy of King Herod the Great, displays of the Dead Sea Scrolls and a scale model of Jerusalem during the time of Herod.

After Jerusalem, we spent the remainder of the Feast at Kibbutz Ramat Rachel, situated on a hilltop overlooking the magnificent panorama of Jerusalem's Old City and the Judean Hills.

Since the Arabs control the Temple Mount, they only allow non-Muslims access to it in the mornings each day. Therefore, early Monday morning we boarded our coaches and drove to the Old City for a tour of the Temple Mount. We then visited the Pool of Bethesda



and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. After lunch, we returned to Ramat Rachel and had another inspiring service. That evening we went to dinner in the Armenian quarter of the Old City and then to a light show, depicting the history of Jerusalem from the times of the Israelite kings to almost present day, at the Tower of David Museum.

On Tuesday we headed to the Old City. We toured the City of David archaeological site and then waded through the cool water in Hezekiah’s Tunnel. We exited the tunnel at the pool of Siloam and walked to the Davidson Archaeological Center by the South Temple Wall. We then walked to the Temple Institute where we saw temple vessels and priestly garments constructed after Biblical instruction for use in future temple sacrifices. That evening we went out to a delicious dinner at the Colony Restaurant and then to the Old City to see the Western Wall (“Wailing Wall”) and tour the Western Wall/Kotel Tunnels.

On Wednesday morning, we drove to the Old City and then went to the top of the Mount of Olives. From there we went to the Garden of Gethsemane and one of the possible locations of Golgotha. We then returned to Ramat Rachel and enjoyed another delicious meal together in a private dining room.

On the Last Great Day we were blessed with more inspiring messages and special music. We shared a group lunch together, and afterwards many strolled the grounds of the kibbutz and watched the sunset over Jerusalem before dinner.

After spending an amazing Feast together, we felt like one big family. There were a lot of tears and hugs as we said goodbye in the hotel lobby that night to those boarding buses for the airport in Tel Aviv.

The remaining 120 of us got up early the next morning and boarded three tour coaches to begin our post-Feast extension trip. After a brief stop at Qumran and view of the cave where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, we traveled on to the Ein Gedi Spa at the Dead Sea. We had the opportunity to float in the Sea’s salty, oily water, cover ourselves with mineral rich mud and soak in the spa’s mineral baths. After much-needed showers, we drove south to the stronghold of Masada. The most adventurous of the group climbed to the top of the fortress in 97-degree heat, while others took the tram. After touring the excavation and having lunch, we drove to

Eilat, a southern Israeli coastal town on the Red Sea, at the tip of the Gulf of Eilat (Aqaba) and near the borders of Egypt and Jordan.

Once again, the travel-weary brethren enjoyed a relaxing Sabbath, and on Saturday night a number of individuals enjoyed walking around the city of Eilat.

On Sunday morning, we left the hotel early to cross into Jordan. After switching buses, we drove to the city of Petra, and toured the ancient city carved into sheer rock by the Nabateans. Entrance is through the Siq, a narrow gorge flanked on either side by soaring cliffs. We saw the famous treasury, royal tombs, burial chambers and numerous caves. Some chose to ride horses, donkeys, and/or camels while others walked. Late that afternoon we left for a three-hour ride to Amman, where we checked into our hotel and had dinner.

On Monday morning we began our last day of touring. We went to what is believed to be Mt. Nebo, where Moses was given a view of the Promised Land. That afternoon we toured the Roman Theater, Citadel and Archaeological Museum in the old city of Amman before returning to the hotel. Most of the group departed for the airport in Amman late that night or very early the next morning.

The following morning, seventeen of us boarded a coach and crossed the Jordanian/Israeli border into Israel via the Allenby Bridge. We passed Jericho, drove through Jerusalem, and on to Tel Aviv. We more fully appreciated the beauty and cleanliness of Israel as we drove back to the Dan Panorama Tel Aviv Hotel where our tour began. After an enjoyable afternoon in this beautiful city on the Mediterranean Sea, about half of our small group departed for the airport. Those remaining spent a final day in Tel Aviv before leaving for home.

We were blessed with inspiring messages and special music, wonderful fellowship, beautiful weather, and delicious food throughout the Feast. We learned so much and the Bible truly came alive for each of us.

The Feast in Israel was truly a taste of the Millennium and beyond! For those of us who had the privilege of being there, we truly yearn for the day when Jesus Christ returns and stands on the Mount of Olives, when all people will “go up” to worship Christ and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles!

—Jim Meredith



LOVE AND PERSEVERANCE

As the end of the age of Satan's rule over

mankind approaches, perilous times will test the followers of Jesus Christ. Our faith will be tried, and many will be persecuted for believing in God's word and supporting the Work of preaching the Kingdom of God to a world that does not want to hear the Ezekiel warning message.

If we know the Truth, and have followed Christ's command to repent and be baptized, our hope for God's help and protection is to move forward with the Church that is proclaiming Christ's return. To draw back in the face of persecution may result in a temporary respite, but in the long run will result in spiritual shipwreck! "This is a faithful saying: 'For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself'" (2 Timothy 2:11-13).

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy regarding two individuals who fell away, thus forfeiting the protection of God. "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Timothy 1:18-20).

CHRIST'S WARNING

Jesus Christ personally warned of the dangers of failing to follow through on our calling and the commitment we made at baptism. "Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' [If the man's father had not yet died, it might have been a long time before he acted on Jesus' invitation.] Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead [those not being called at that time] bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.' And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' [His unconverted relatives would have tried to talk him out of what they would have perceived to be his foolish decision] But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Luke 9:59-62).

How do we know we are fit for God's Kingdom? The Apostle John wrote, "If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know

that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And

we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:12-16).

That love is not some abstract "feeling" in our hearts. If we as "Philadelphia" Christians truly love God, and submit to His plan for our lives, we will practice outflowing concern for the billions of people around us who are presently without hope. The Work of the Church of God is to announce the coming of Christ's government, even at personal peril. Our support of the public announcement of the coming Kingdom of God is a fruit of that loving, Philadelphian spirit.

Once we have responded to the Father's calling, and have accepted the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our past sins, we dare not go back to Satan's world and again partake of those things that separated us from God. "As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly" (Proverbs 26:11). Jesus knew that most of those who heard the Truth of God would not be able to follow through, under the stress of severe adversity and persecution. "But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation [which includes persecution] fall away" (Luke 8:13).

What, then, awaits those who learn and act on the Truth of God—and who are baptized into the body of Christ, if they later turn away from their Creator and by their actions, repudiate and sever contact with Jesus of Nazareth? "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6). Without Jesus Christ, they have no hope of salvation! "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

So, should we live in fear of losing our salvation? If you have received the Holy Spirit, you now have the power and help to respond to God's call, and to withstand whatever persecution may come. Notice the example of the first Christian martyr, the deacon Stephen, as recounted in

chapters 6–7 of the book of Acts. He was fearless in his zeal for the Truth and firm in faith toward the Father and Jesus Christ. When dragged before the Jewish religious authorities, he bravely articulated, with power and authority, the truth of God. When reading the account, we can gain a sense of admiration at how Christ guided Stephen's mind, as he witnessed to the authorities who had, not long before, orchestrated the illegal execution of the very Son of God!

As his discourse was about to end, Stephen was given a special vision to encourage and strengthen him for what was obviously the next and final act in the martyrdom he was about to suffer. "When they [the members of the Sanhedrin] heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God'" (Acts 7:54–56)!

up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Mark 13:9–13).

In the book of Revelation, God gives a message for the "Philadelphian" Christians of our day. He explains that He knows their deeds; that they have a little power and have held fast to His name. Because of their steadfastness, He promises to protect them from the worst of the Great Tribulation. Any Philadelphian who overcomes, He will make "a pillar in the temple of My God" (Revelation 3:7–

Notice! When persecution comes, we will not be alone! Christ will be at our sides, holding our hands and giving us the words to speak. If we are faithful to that calling, glory and great reward will await us in the first resurrection. "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you."

This final revelation was too much for the murderers of Christ to bear. "Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him... And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (vv. 57–60).

FORGIVE AND OVERCOME

Could each of us forgive those who might be plotting to murder us for our faith? Or would we respond with fear, anger and hateful vindictiveness? Consider God's words as recounted by the prophet Isaiah: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; they shall be as nothing and those who strive with you shall perish... For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you'" (Isaiah 41:10–11, 13).

Jesus Christ, the coming King of the Kingdom of God, told His followers that at the end of this age, difficult times would be ahead for those who worship God in spirit and truth. "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you

13). This is the reward awaiting those who are now doing the Work, supporting the proclamation to the world of the good news of Christ's soon-coming government which will bring an end to a time of worldwide catastrophe.

Notice! When persecution comes, we will not be alone! Christ will be at our sides, holding our hands and giving us the words to speak. If we are faithful to that calling, glory and great reward will await us in the first resurrection. "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world [the great tribulation], to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:8–13).

—LCG Editorial Staff

Woman to Woman

By Faye League

More Easily Deceived?

Recently I heard a sermon in which the speaker said that women tend to be deceived more easily than men. The speaker hastened to say that he did not mean to offend, but it is not surprising that some women took offense at his statement.

As mature Christian women, we know that the truth may sometimes “sting” a bit, but we also know that it sets us free if we acknowledge it. So, instead of being offended by the idea that men and women may have different strengths and weaknesses, let us consider some ways in which we as women can overcome and grow and be much less prone to deception in certain areas.

When women look at the world from a human standpoint, it can at times seem very exciting, scintillating and desirable—with all of its abundance, choices and dreams of success, power and riches. If a lady is not careful, she can find herself being tempted to get caught up and enamored by the sheer magnitude of it all. In order to understand this more fully, we need to take another look at the example of mother Eve who was very easily deceived. We begin in Genesis 3:1. “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”’” The serpent was drawing the woman (Eve) into a conversation with a lie. “And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.”’” (vv. 2-3). So the serpent, realizing that he had her undivided attention, seized the opportunity to deceive her with another lie. “Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. (v. 4) For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’” (v. 5).

By this time the woman was so intrigued by what she was seeing and hearing that she lost all sound reasoning and let the desires of her flesh take over. The serpent had convinced her that God was lying to her and was withholding the fruit of this tree from her because He did not want her to be wise like Him. So she allowed herself to be thoroughly deceived. We read in verse 6, “So when the woman saw that the tree

was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” And of course we know the rest of the story. It appears quite evident then, that this type of character weakness—being more easily deceived—has been a problem for women ever since the time of mother Eve (Genesis 3:13; 2 Corinthians 11:3).

In this modern day and age in which we live, there are various ways in which this character weakness can manifest itself.

The temptation to overspend. Most women I know enjoy shopping. Shopping can be an enjoyable experience, if one is balanced and can avoid certain pitfalls. For instance, walk into most any high-end department store and the first displays are usually designed to appeal to women. The purpose I suppose is to put the woman into a “shopping mood”—enticing her to spend, spend, spend! To shop to the max! First there is the cosmetic counter with its various beauty products to “beautify” and to make women look and smell fabulous.

Then there is the dazzling display of fine and fashion jewelry, then on to the different brands of designer clothes, shoes, purses, scarves and all types of other fashion accessories. All of this can be attractive, tempting and deceptive to vulnerable women and can lead to overspending. I suppose that most of us women have spent more than we meant to on occasion, but if we can learn from our mistakes, then this experience can be tremendously helpful in the future.

Helpful questions to ask ourselves while shopping: 1. Do I really need this item? 2. Will I use this item on a regular basis or at least on occasion? 3. Does the quality justify the price? 4. Will I possibly regret buying this item?

In any type of shopping, whether it is for apparel, groceries, household items or other things, I have found that it is wise to follow these three guidelines: 1. Prayerfully plan ahead. 2. Exercise self-control. 3. Avoid impulse buying. These guidelines can be used to help avoid costly mistakes.

The misuse of charm and beauty. It is a well-known fact, and common knowledge, that women can use their charm and beauty to take advantage of others, especially the opposite sex. We read in Proverbs 31:30 that charm can be deceitful and beauty can be vain.



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This type of behavior can even begin in childhood. While it is fine to be daddy's little girl (girls can be so sweet and precious), it doesn't take some little girls long to figure out how to take advantage of this close relationship in order to get their own way. I have quite often heard mothers smilingly say that, "She (the little daughter) has her daddy wrapped around her little finger." While on the surface, this type of behavior may seem to be cute, humorous and harmless, in reality it is not and can possibly lead to a pattern of the misuse of charm and/or beauty, allowing the self to be deceived into thinking that this way is right.

Referring to the Garden of Eden again, one can only imagine the extent to which Eve must have gone, using her charm and beauty to persuade her husband, Adam, to partake of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:12). Being easily deceived, she may have meant well, but she paid dearly for her actions. "And the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate'" (Genesis 3:13). "To the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you'" (v. 16).

In 1 Kings 11:1–4 we read of the foreign pagan wives of King Solomon, who were not only deceived by the worship of pagan gods, but took advantage of King Solomon's love and generosity, using their charm and beauty, no doubt, to persuade him to build temples to their pagan gods, turning his heart away from the true God. "For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David" (v. 4). These deceived women persuaded Solomon to veer from the path of righteousness.

The attributes of charm and beauty are gifts from God and if used graciously and in a godly manner can enhance a woman's life and the lives of others, glorifying God in the process.

I have had teachers and mentors who, through the proper use of their charming methods of teaching, have influenced and encouraged me in positive ways and brought out the best in me. A mother can also use this tool properly to teach her children and bring out the best in them. This tool of charm if used properly, will garner many more positive results than demands will any day.

Unlawful assumption of authority. One of my husband's relatives (now deceased) was a very self-assured and dominant type of woman. She had three brothers who served in the army overseas in World War II. They had a close friend



who served with them. After they all came home from the war, this friend married the sister. Little did this friend know what was in store for him! I met them during the early years of their marriage. They seemed fairly happy in those early years, but as time went on, the wife became increasingly self-willed and controlling, especially after they became involved in a religion. Over the years she took complete charge of the family and slowly but surely robbed her husband of his confidence and manhood. It was a very sad thing to observe. The relatives would laugh at him behind his back and call him a hen-pecked (wife-controlled) husband. How ironic that this ex-soldier could fight in a war against Hitler, but could not find a way to deal with this controlling woman. This is an extreme example of the unlawful assumption of authority and this couple did not know God's truth concerning the proper roles for husbands and wives. We as Christian women do know this truth and we realize that it is incumbent upon us to fulfill our roles (Ephesians 5:22–33).

Through the years in my husband's service in the ministry, I have seen several situations where the wife of a couple who is interested in the Church has in the marriage assumed unlawful authority over the home. Then upon repentance, counseling and baptism, this upside-down situation is supposed to begin to change, but somehow never does. Even years later, there is still no sign of change in sight. The lady just simply refuses to hand over the reins and to fit into her proper role in the home. Sooner or later she will have to do her part to rectify the situation, if she is to grow in this area.

I have come to realize that to reason around God's word or to continue to put off needed character changes is tantamount to skating on thin ice, which is a very dangerous thing to do. No one in the right frame of mind would dare to take such a risk. "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever" (Psalm 103:8–9).

So, as we wait for Christ's return, if we are on guard against being easily deceived and are determined to make the needed character changes as God reveals them to us, we will continue to grow in godly character. When Christ returns in all of His glory, power and majesty, we will be tremendously glad that we prepared ourselves. ■



What Would Jesus Really Do?

Continued from page 2

the family—or literally *hundreds* of different facets of life that are slowly but surely being perverted as Satan’s society takes over and has far greater impact than ever before!

When—perhaps under Satan’s clever influence—you begin to think that it is “too difficult” to fully keep the Sabbath day, be sure to ask yourself again the basic question: “What would Jesus really do?” For **God Himself** came down into the human flesh not only to die for us—showing His ultimate love—but to *set us an example as to how we ought to live* in nearly every detail. Jesus certainly kept the Sabbath on a regular basis (Luke 4:16). Jesus *took the time* in the early hours of the day when it was still dark to rouse Himself out of bed and *pray fervently* to Almighty God on a regular basis (Mark 1:35).

When faced with a major decision, Jesus “went out to the mountain to **pray**, and *continued all night in prayer to God*” (Luke 6:12).

When faced with huge emotional and spiritual trials, Jesus often prayed fervently and literally **cried out to God** with great emotion and fervor. For the Bible speaks of Jesus, “who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with *vehement cries* and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” (Hebrews 5:7).

Have you, personally, worked on developing the habit of *getting up early* to **pray** on a regular basis? Have you, personally, learned to **cry out** to God and *put your whole heart* into your prayers in times of stress and need? What would Jesus do? Jesus Christ **did** do those things—setting you and me an example! If we truly *surrender* to let Christ live within us, we will study His **example**, study **all** of God’s word and actually **do** what it says!

DO YOU GENUINELY FORGIVE OTHERS?

A basic problem that many of God’s people have had for decades—and even centuries and millennia—is their avoidance of *genuinely forgiving others*. Jesus Christ instructed us, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14–15). Each one of us must follow this instruction and **genuinely forgive** those who have hurt us, learn to “get over it” and move on with our lives. This is what God’s word clearly tells us in many different instances. It is what we *must learn to do*!

Do not always try to “vindicate” yourself and find out who said what in some bad thing you heard and then try to track down who said it, and why, and somehow “get even” or “vindicate”

yourself by making it turn out well for you. *That is not necessary*. In fact, it often only “stirs the pot” and causes the problem to become much worse in the end. Remember, God Himself will definitely vindicate you in the end **if** your heart is right. God’s word tells us, “Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him” (Proverbs 26:27).

Also learn to **forgive** even your husband, your wife, your children or co-workers—those who are always around you—even over “little” things that may become irritants over time. Learn to be *genuinely humble* and realize that you, also, probably “irritate others” from time to time. So learn to **love** these other human beings as fellow sojourners on the path of life and **forgive** the little irritations and inadequacies. Keep your mind on the “Big Picture” and remember that these precious human beings are also made in God’s image, to be part of His family **forever**—along with you. So, you **must** learn to forgive them!

In the future, God’s word certainly indicates that we will be *terribly persecuted* as a Church and individually as well. Learn to **forgive** even truly “evil” men who may later persecute us, torture us or even harm our own children! Remember how even the Son of God, while He was dying a torturous, *terribly painful* death, cried out to God, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Will you follow Christ’s example when things become really tough?

GLORIFY CHRIST IN YOUR MIND AND BODY

In 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, the Apostle Paul was inspired to challenge us: “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Certainly, we must truly “flee” fornication and every foul temptation or way of life that will cut us off from God Almighty! In addition, we should sincerely want to **glorify** our Creator by the way we take care of our body in a positive way. *Will we* honestly take care of the wonderful bodies that God has given us in this life? *Will we discipline* ourselves to do a proper amount of **exercise** nearly every day? Many in God’s Church simply **do not** do that! They become placid, fat, and awkward in the way they walk or act because they simply **will not move** very much in their daily lives! *It is obvious*. *Hundreds* of articles and booklets have come out over the last few years telling us of the **imperative** of learning to exercise our bodies nearly every day. We must learn to spend at least 15 or 20 minutes walking, doing calisthenics or in some way exercising



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our bodies to keep them in proper shape so that we may be able to live a productive life and *serve others* as well as our Creator.

Will *you* discipline yourself to eat properly and eat carefully? Even in God's Church, many *thousands* of people—certainly in the wider overall Church of God—often drink sugar-filled soft drinks, and eat a lot of candy, ice cream, white flour products and other foods that are absolutely known to *tear down* the body—the temple of God's Spirit.

Why do they do that? Because it is an ingrained habit and they simply do not “fear” or *deeply respect* the Creator enough to want to follow Christ's example in that way! Some in the Church will even compromise occasionally, and eat unclean foods or foods that have been doctored up with unclean things *when they should know better!* Also, some simply *drink too much alcohol*, or lapse into smoking cigarettes, etc. **Stop this!** If you truly want Christ to live within you, you simply will **not** do this kind of thing and will rather **cry out** to God to help you stop and to glorify God in your body!

In Philippians 2:5, the Apostle Paul tells us, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Through God's Spirit, we have the opportunity to have the very **mind** of God in us through Christ **living** within us. We can learn to think as He thinks, act as He acts and **do** what He actually did when He came into this human flesh to *set us an example*.

Jesus Christ instructed us: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matthew 5:21–22). Then He continued with this theme in verses 27–28, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Obviously, we must not kill another human being. But Christ even commands that we must not even let our minds drift down the valley of rebellion and selfishness so that we have **hate** in our hearts or even want to kill!

And not only must we **not** commit adultery; we are not even to allow our minds to dwell on a beautiful woman to the extent of **lusting** after her. For this sexual lust involves the attitude of **adultery**—in that way **breaking** one of the great Ten Commandments of God! We are to guide our minds in a right way so that even if a “convenient” opportunity came to commit adultery or to kill, we would simply **not** under any circumstances take that kind of vile action. **This** is what the Bible means by bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Therefore, each of us—especially our **young people**—must learn to simply **avoid** watching the kind of television shows or viewing “stuff” on the Internet that involves or would tempt them to involve themselves with such vile behavior as described above! Simply stay away. Simply *do*

not do it—if you truly want the real Jesus Christ living His life within you!

Almighty God gives us wonderful and inspiring information in Philippians 4:4–8: “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

In the above passage, we are commanded **not** to worry or fret about physical things or problems but simply *go to God* in **faith**—**knowing** that He will take care of us. Then, the “peace of God which surpasses all understanding” will be with us in a way simply unknown to most of this world!

Finally, then, we are told to *meditate* on those things that are simply true, noble, just, pure or of good report. Brethren, please ask God to help you actually **do this** and to *guard your mind* and think on the positive things and not constantly let negative or evil thoughts direct your mind in a way that will surely **cut you off** from God if not stopped at some point!

Rather, learn to focus on the wonderful promises of God and the **magnificent** reward He has for us in the future. As the Apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 3:2–4: “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

Let us genuinely **follow** these instructions and constantly fix our minds on the future offices and opportunities to serve we will soon have—in God's coming Kingdom—to serve the whole world! Let us realize that our old self should have “died” in baptism and that our true life is only through Christ within us. Then, “when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in **glory**.”

Brethren, please learn to really **think** on these things, **picture** these things and **meditate** on the awesome opportunities and absolute **glory** we will share with God and Christ through all eternity as full sons of God—if we do, in fact, surrender fully to let Jesus Christ live *His very life* within us! Every trial and test along the way may be difficult. But it is more than worth it if our surrender to Christ brings us the kind of magnificent glory and unending joy we will share through all eternity with God, with Christ, and with the “spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23).

With Christian love,



LOCAL

CHURCH NEWS

ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. and Mrs. Frank (Joan) Henchey of the Cincinnati, Ohio, congregation celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 31, 2013. Mr. and Mrs. Henchey have been a part of God's Church since 1970. The congregation presented them with a cake and gift in honor of the occasion and the entire Cincinnati congregation rejoiced.

Mr. and Mrs. James (Susie) McCrimmon celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 9, 2013. Mr. and Mrs. McCrimmon are from Savannah, Georgia, and attend the Walterboro, South Carolina, congregation. On Sabbath,

August 10, the brethren honored them with a gift, a card, and a cake to recognize this significant milestone.

Mr. and Mrs. Errol (Winola) Pitre celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 14, 2013. The Pitres have been baptized members of God's Church since October 1983. The Lafayette, Louisiana brethren honored them during a meal on October 12 with a special reception, anniversary cake and gift of remembrance. Area Pastor Glen Harrison acknowledged their wonderful example of a long, happy marriage and also thanked them for their dedicated service to the Church.

WEDDINGS

Mr. Jesse MacDonald and *Miss Julie Robillard*, members in the Bonnyville, Alberta, Canada congregation, were united in marriage in Cold Lake, Alberta, on July 11, 2013. Mr. Stuart Wachowicz performed the ceremony. The couple now reside in nearby Pierceland, Saskatchewan.

Mr. David Mwanzia and *Miss Whynant Prince* were married on September 24, 2013, during the Feast in Kenya. Mr. Mwanzia is an LCG elder in Kenya.

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel (Ada) Sánchez of the Akron, Ohio, congregation are happy to announce the birth of their daughter *Samaris Sánchez*. She was born June 3, 2013, weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and measured 19 inches. She joins two brothers, Siramyl (14 years) and Samyl (9 years).

Mr. and Mrs. Darryl (Hope) Harris of the Akron, Ohio, congregation are happy to announce the birth of their daughter *Adriel Grace Harris* on July 10, 2013. Her seven-year-old brother, Samuel, is happy to have a little sister.

ORDINATIONS

Messrs. David Lujan and *Jorge Manuel Schaubek, Jr.* were ordained as deacons by Regional Director Mario Hernandez after the Bible Study in San José, Costa Rica, on August 8, 2013. Mr. Lujan and Mr. Schaubek serve in the Santa Ana, Costa Rica, congregation.

Mr. José Nelson Monti was ordained a deacon on the Sabbath of August 10, 2013, in San Salvador, El Salvador, by Regional Director Mario Hernandez. Mr. Monti serves in the San Salvador congregation.

Mr. Roy Dupepe was ordained a deacon on the Sabbath of August 17, 2013 by Area Pastor Ed Breaux and elder Steve Climer. Mr. Dupepe serves the brethren in the Ocean Springs, Mississippi congregation.

Mr. Ray Joffrion was ordained an elder and *Mr. and Mrs. Robert (Stephanie) Bradford* were ordained deacon and deaconess on the Feast of Trumpets 2013 by Pastor Glen Harrison and elder Keith Wheelahan. Mr. Joffrion serves the brethren in Baton Rouge,

Louisiana, and Mr. and Mrs. Bradford serve in the New Orleans, Louisiana congregation.

Mrs. Mary Jo Oswald was ordained a deaconess on September 7, 2013 by Presiding Evangelist Roderick Meredith, Regional Pastor Rand Millich and elders James Wells and William Oswald. Mrs. Oswald serves the brethren in the Columbia, Missouri, congregation, where her husband, Clay, is a deacon.

In Loving Memory

Julius Bernhard Vos, 72, died March 23, 2013, at his home in Moore, Oklahoma. Mr. Vos was born in the Netherlands and immigrated to the U.S. in 1967. He worked for General Motors in Lansing, Michigan and in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and retired in 2008. He is survived by his wife Ilonka, a daughter, son-in-law, two grandsons, a stepson, two brothers, two sisters, two sisters-in-law, mother-in-law, two brothers-in-law and many nephews and nieces. His wife and stepson attend the Oklahoma City congregation of LCG. Mr. Vos was a longtime member of God's Church and faithfully served the local congregation in a number of capacities over the years. He was greatly loved and is greatly missed. Memorial services were conducted by Mr. Gene Hilgenberg on April 4 in Moore, Oklahoma.

Two sisters in Montana, longtime members of God's Church, died within six weeks of each other in the summer of 2013. **Velma Morgan**, 91, died June 14 and **Dortha Harrod**, 95, died July 25. Their parents, George and Ruth Hix, were baptized into God's Church (Radio Church of God) in 1963. Mrs. Morgan was baptized in 1974 and Mrs. Harrod in 1985. Through her 39 years in the Church, Mrs. Morgan was able to travel around the U.S. and attend international Feast sites. She worked up until she was in her seventies. Mrs. Harrod and her husband, Dale, lived in a sheep wagon and herded their sheep in the rugged country of western Montana when they were young. The last few years of her life she was unable to attend services but was always faithful and aware of world events and where we are in prophecy. The sisters spent the last number of years of their lives living in the same small town. They were each buried with a private family service.

Mr. Carl M. Larsen of the Thermopolis, Wyoming, congregation died on July 12, 2013, at the age of 80 years. Mr. Larsen was born in December 1932 and baptized in 1967. He was a longtime faithful deacon in God's Church. Mr. Larsen is survived by his wife of 58 years, Nora, as well as one son and daughter-in-law, four granddaughters, and six great-grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by family and friends. Mr. Ben Whitfield officiated at his memorial service on July 19.

Mrs. Florencia Osillos, 75, of the Quezon City, Philippines congregation died August 5, 2013 following a period of declining health. She was baptized into God's Church in

1971. She is survived by her husband of 49 years, Area Pastor Basilio Osillos, Sr., eight children and a host of other relatives. Mrs. Osillos will be remembered as one of the best and most tireless cooks in the Church, who actively served in Church Youth Camps and other gatherings as a head cook, especially during her younger years. During the Global Church days, she was also the main flower arranger for Church services, later training her daughters to do the job so she could dedicate her time to assisting her husband. Elder Jes Puzon conducted the funeral service on August 11 which was attended by over a hundred people. Mrs. Osillos, "nanay" or mother to many, will be sorely missed by family, friends and brethren.

Alton Wright, age 75 of Midland, Texas, died August 29, 2013. Mr. Wright was born February 11, 1938 in Campbellsville, Kentucky. He is survived by his wife Lois; three sons Guy, Roger and Zane; one daughter Loretta and grandchildren. Mr. Wright was a longtime and faithful member of God's Church. He suffered for many years with health issues but was always positive, his eyes focused on God's coming Kingdom. Mr. Dan Hall officiated at his memorial service on September 9, 2013.

Mr. Reiner Luken, 73, finished his race on September 12, 2013. He was born in Germany in 1939, baptized in 1989, ordained a deacon in 2008 and an elder in 2012. He lovingly served the brethren for many years, until pancreatic cancer prevented him from continuing. Mr. Luken was a U.S. Air Force Viet Nam veteran and worked in the insurance business for many years. Mr. Luken will be missed by many around the country and around the world, having attended international Feast sites for years. Mr. Luken was preceded in death by his parents and one brother. He is survived by his wife, Sharon, to whom he was married in 1968, and by one son and one daughter. Mr. Phil West conducted his funeral service on September 16.

Mr. William (Billy) Voshell, 69, died of a massive stroke on September 26, 2013. Mr. Voshell had served in the U.S. Marine Corps and was a plumber by profession. He was a faithful member of God's Church for many years and served in the Jacksonville, Florida, congregation in any way needed, including giving sermonettes. He will be greatly missed by family, friends, and brethren.

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COMMENTARY

RISE ABOVE!

I would be surprised to meet someone who has not felt depressed or unhappy at some point in life. How about you? Some fall prey to these feelings worse than others, true enough, and if we went through our lives never expecting to have problems, we would surely be disappointed. But does knowing this really help? Why is it that the proverbial, “Could be worse!” more often feels like salt on an open wound?

It takes more than resignation or acceptance that “life is hard” to truly rise above discouragement and trouble. “Expect the worst and you’ll never be disappointed,” as the saying goes, or someone might say, “No matter how bad your troubles, there’s always someone worse off than you.”

Not very helpful, right? Few trials seem small while you are going through them, and there are plenty of us who know this by hard experience. Pain is pain, whether it comes from the “little things” or from life-changing—even life-threatening—events. But all suffering, great or small, has the potential to shape the life of the sufferer.

I know of few people who accomplish more when their feelings are crushed or depressed than when they take a positive outlook, despite their troubles. So, how do you change your perspective, and avoid falling into the vicious cycle of wasting time *worrying or indulging negative feelings*, which in turn wastes time, clouds judgment and *leads to more worry*? You do it by setting a higher goal than anything this life has to offer, and making it the main focus of your life.

What is that goal? The Apostle Paul described it: “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12–14).

Paul was well acquainted with grief; he had been beaten, stoned, ostracized, imprisoned, starved, shipwrecked and more. He frankly described his trials (2 Corinthians 11:23–29). And yet, as an imperfect man in an imperfect world, Paul never gave up.

God rewards those who “diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6) and He equips them with the strength and knowledge they need to control their feelings and overcome any trial (2 Corinthians 10:4–5; 2 Timothy 1:7; 3:16–17). God’s way is a *provable, successful* way of life, if one is willing to test it and find out (Malachi 3:10).

Just as the cycle of worry and depression leads only to *greater* loss and inability to cope with future trials, a continual application to His word and His “upward call” *reverses the tide* of negative feelings that can so easily ensnare us. At the same time, God’s word, when properly understood, gives us a perspective that sees beyond *any human struggle*—great or small, reasonable, unforeseen—or self-inflicted.

This is the path to happiness, positivity and success—in this life and beyond.

—William L. Williams