



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The official newspaper of The Church of God International

Vol. 45, No. 4

“Put on the whole armor of God”

Winter 2024

In This Issue

Iron and Spiritual Development

The strength and durability of iron and how the metal relates to other components of the environment compare well with what God wants to see in us. **Page 1**

Christian Nationalism: Good or Bad for America?

Just what is “Christian Nationalism”? It sounds like a good thing—but is it? **Page 1**

When is Enough, Enough?

With so much evil going on in the world, you may have wondered when God might say “Enough!” and send Jesus Christ back here to restore creation and bring an end to the madness. We don’t know for sure *when* that will happen—but we do know it *will* happen! **Page 1**

Traits of a Godly Woman, Part 2

This final installment discusses five more traits godly women need to make life work as God intended. **Page 4**

Why We Should Control Anger

Anger in itself is not bad, but failure to control it when it arises can lead to some very bad outcomes. **Page 7**

Feast Reports 2024

Reports are in from Feast of Tabernacles sites in Auburndale, Florida; Galveston, Texas; Medina, Ohio; Hot Springs, Arkansas; Kenya, Africa; Orleans, Ottawa; Collingwood, Ontario; and the Philippines. **Page 9**

And Much More...



Iron and Spiritual Development

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17

By ARNIE FONTAINE

Iron is an interesting metal. In this installment I would like to explore it in regards to our spiritual development.

If left alone in the open air, iron will oxidize—that is, it will begin to rust. That process could eventually reduce the iron to an unusable piece of junk. On the other hand, if it is crafted and honed, it can become a usable cutting instrument. For that to happen though, it must come in to contact with another piece of iron or stone. A common practice for keeping a knife sharp is a whetting stone. Moisture is

added to a stone and the knife is pressed at a particular angle on that stone to put an edge on it. To keep that edge straight a steeling rod is used. In all this process, the knife must make periodic contact with metal or stone. There is a saying that a sharp knife is a safe knife. This could be an axe as well. Those of us that have chopped wood know the value of a sharp edge on that axe we swing. Further, back then, it took time and effort to get that “edge” without our modern technology. In the process of sharpening that cutting tool, bits of metal come off. The result is new life to a dull tool.

Then of course there is carbon. Adding the right amount of carbon to iron transforms it into steel, which is stronger and more resistant to rust and decay. You’ve heard the expression to “steel your resolve.” So, in the combination

See IRON, page 2

Christian Nationalism Good or Bad for America?

By MIKE JAMES

On its face the title of this article would seem to have an obvious answer. Of course, if Christianity was our national religion, many would agree it is right for America and every other nation on earth. But as with many questions, this one is a bit complex when we start to lay it out.

Let’s begin by understanding what we are talking about. What is Christian Nationalism?

Here is one definition of Christian Nationalism from a *Christianity Today* article:

“Christian nationalism is the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should take active steps to keep it that way. Popularly, Christian national-

ists assert that America is and must remain a ‘Christian nation’—not merely as an observation about American history, but as a prescriptive program for what America must continue to be in the future. Scholars like Samuel Huntington have made a similar argument: that America is defined by its ‘Anglo-Protestant’ past and that we will lose our identity and our freedom if we do not preserve our cultural inheritance.”

Here is another definition from the book, *American Idolatry*:

“Christian nationalism is a cultural framework asserting that civic life in the United States should be organized according to a par-

See CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM, page 2

When is Enough, Enough?

By W. ADAM BOYD

The rise in despicable crime without justice, the degradation of morality, the minimization of family, the proliferation of ignorance and hedonism, the obfuscation of history and truth, the attempted eradication of God and the Bible, and the disregard for even human life and biological anatomy itself—we see all of these occurring right now in the world.

Do you often ask or ponder when God might say, “Enough!” and return to Earth and fulfill the plan of His restoration of the coming Kingdom? Likely, many of us have been involved in a conversation discussing this very matter. However, we also know that, as Matthew 36–39 tells us, “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” So, we understand that nobody knows when this event will occur except for the Father Himself—not even Jesus or the angels know!

When I was younger, about 20 plus years ago, I often heard of how we were living in the end times. If you grew up in the Church as I did, you likely remember that your parents lived through a time in the 1970s where some thought the same thing. I remember going through the tragic events on September 11, 2001, thinking it was a significant shift in time catalyzing “the end.” That was 22 years ago! Yet, we are still here watching, waiting, and pondering. The recent events in Israel are no doubt increasing these discussions and

See ENOUGH, page 4

IRON*Continued from page 1*

of sharpening the iron and improving its composition we have a higher quality of metal.

Friction in a relationship is a blessing, not a curse.

This brings us to the Scripture that this introduction leads us to, **Proverbs 27:17**, a metaphor. As iron sharpens iron, this is what most remember, but the next portion gives it meaning. So, a man sharpens the countenance of his friend. "It takes two to Tango." We have three parts here, a man, countenance, and a friend. Countenance is the face. It reveals so much. The furrowed brow, the bright eyes, the frown, and the downward gaze all reflect the inner man. This is noticed by others. Have you ever looked into another's eyes and seen "inside"? A friend will pick up on some subtle changes and act. Becoming a friend can be time-consuming as the relationship develops and a level of trust follows. David and Jonathan come to mind, as do Nehemiah and the king. It requires actual face-to-face contact, eye contact, reading body language, listening, and discussion. It is at this point mutual edification can take place. Edification is a building process.

Ecclesiastes 4:12: "And a man may prevail against him who is alone, yet two shall withstand him; and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken."

We are not talking about "how was your week" chatter, but moving on to spiritual, biblical discussions to reinforce each other's faith. The New Testament is replete with instructions concerning how believers should relate with one another. In each quote, to whom is Paul speaking? Anyone reading the passage.

They are to do good to each other.

Galatians 6:10: "So then, as we have opportunity, we should do good to all, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Bear each other's burdens."

Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's

burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Forgive each other."

This Scripture reflects Ecclesiastes 4:12 (quoted above).

Colossians 3:13: "Forbearing one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you should forgive."

Restore each other.

Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in some offense, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted." Encourage each other.

Restoring can be equated as honing or sharpening.

1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Therefore, encourage one another, and edify one another, even as you are already doing."

Admonish and exhort each other.

Hebrews 3:13: "Rather, be encouraging one another each day, while it is called 'today,' so that none of you become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Pursue peace and mutual up-building.

Romans 14:19: "So then, we should pursue the things of peace and the things that edify one another."

Stir one another on to love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:24-25: "And let us be concerned about one another and be stirring up one another unto love and good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, even as some are accustomed to do; but rather, encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

The Body of Christ, believers, should be encouraging and edifying one another. When they do, they are like *iron sharpening iron*. Each believer becomes more effective in his call-

ing. He comes to know God more and to more effectively carry out the good works for which he has been made. Recall the bits of metal that are removed in the sharpening process as we shed misconceptions and clarifications to be stronger Christians.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them."

I ask again, to whom is Paul speaking? Paul is addressing every member of the family and exhorting every member to sharpen another with the Word of God. Is God paying attention?

Malachi 3:16-18: "Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, each man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name. 'And they shall be Mine,' says the LORD of hosts, 'in the day that I will make up My own special jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.' Then you shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve Him."

What is God writing down about us as we go about our lives? When He returns, what will be the accounting? It is not enough to be steadfast in our faith, but building up our brothers and sisters is expected with the Word of God, which is a well-honed, double-edged sword.

Some will say that is the purview of the "ministry," but Paul was addressing the entire Body.

Hebrews 5:11-12: "Concerning Whom we have much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For truly, by this time you

ought to be teachers, but instead you need to have someone teach you again what are the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food."

They became lazy and comfortable in "knowing the truth." They weren't growing.

Returning to the analogy, if a knife is blunt, it still continues to be a knife, although it is less effective, less useful in service. It is also dangerous because its dullness makes the holder more apt to have an accident while using it because it takes more effort to do the job. Let us therefore be encouraged to spend more time together, exhorting, encouraging, praying, admonishing, sharing God's Word, and praying over God's Word and the needs of our local church, that we become sharper, more cutting in the ministry that the Lord has assigned to each of us. Too often what passes as fellowship in the modern church is centered on food and fun, not on sharpening one another with the Word of God. In far too many instances, the only knives being sharpened are the ones used at potlucks.

Finally, a knife that has been sharpened will also shine more because all the dullness has been rubbed off its surface. Recall the bits that come off the well sharpened knife. Likewise, we will shine better for our Lord if we do the things mentioned above consistently, all of which will unite us in harmony. Might I add that carbon is to iron as our faith is to our resolve, or "steeling," if you will.

Psalms 133:1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

There comes a point when the sword has passed dullness and begins to rust. The end result is a useless weapon fit only for the fire.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:**February 15, 2025**Submissions may be sent to vancestinson@cgi.org**THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

3900 TIMMS ST., TYLER, TX 75701

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS is the official newspaper of The Church of God International. World headquarters, Tyler, Texas, USA. Copyright © 2024 The Church of God International. All rights reserved.

Editor: Vance A. Stinson

Contributing Writers: Michelle Algarra, Pam Barnes, W. Adam Boyd, Clifton Buchanan, Jean Dionne, Jeff Flanick, Arnie Fontaine, Mike James, Alice Edwards Lauria, Maria McLaughlin, Robert Onsando, Ferdie S. Padilla, John Woodard

Production: Vance A. Stinson

Business Manager: Benny Sharp

NOTICE: *The International News* welcomes submissions of articles, features, church news, pictures, or manuscripts. However, it cannot be responsible for the return of unsolicited materials. Materials may be sent through the postal service, but electronic submissions are preferred.

INTERNATIONAL OFFICES:

- Australia: The Church of God International, PO Box 171, Boonah, Queensland 4310, Australia
- The Church of God International Canada, PO Box 32009-RPO, Northland, London ON N5V 5K
- Jamaica: The Church of God International, 60 Cairncurran Ave., Western Dist. PO, St. Andrew, Kingston, Jamaica
- The Church of God International, Philippines, P.O. Box 2450 MCPO Makati City 1264 Philippines; email: cgiphils@yahoo.com
- Africa: Kenya: Kehancha Town, Manga Plaza building, first floor. P.O.Box 152 - 40413. Kehancha. Email: onsandorobert@gmail.com.

CGI Website: www.cgi.org

CGI E-mail: info@cgi.org

Phone: (903) 939-2929

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM*Continued from page 1*

ticular form of conservative Christianity."

Christian Nationalism is a concept that has existed throughout the history of the United States and it has manifested in different ways throughout that history. The most recent manifestation is occurring probably due to the major changes that are occurring in our country.

Throughout our history, preachers, teachers, leaders, and politicians have pushed a narrative that the United States (US) is a Christian nation that has been blessed by the God of the Bible. There is also no debate over the fact that since we have been a nation most of the population has claimed the Christian religion.

Some of the early Christians in the United States believed they were the "new Israel" and America was the new Promised Land. Their journey across the Atlantic was like the ancient Israelites crossing the Red Sea. Just like the ancient Israelites had to conquer the land of Canaan, early New Englanders found a similarity in their battles with Native American people.

The history of Christian Nationalism in the US has been championed by the Protestant establishment up until the later half of the twentieth century. Since then, conservative evangelicals have led the charge. Old Christian Nationalism in the US had more of a white racial aspect too. The latest manifestation is inclusive of any race or Christian religion.

Continued next page

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM *Continued from page 2*

One other distinction I think our readers need to understand is that Christian Nationalism is not the same as US/UK-in-prophecy theories you may be familiar with in the Church of God movement. There may be some connections and similarities we can draw, but these are two distinct concepts.

One major problem with *Christian Nationalism* is who gets to define what is meant by “Christian.” Would you want to support something that promotes Sunday observance as the Sabbath or Christmas and Easter observance? Obviously not, and it remains to be seen how far some Christian Nationalists would want to go, but I cannot support something that teaches things that are not true.

To get a better handle on this, let’s look at a couple of recent examples in the news. In June, Oklahoma’s State School Superintendent mandated that all public schools teach the Bible. It was not clear how the Bible would be taught, but it would be part of curriculum for fifth to twelfth graders. School Superintendent Ryan Walters wrote in his memo, “Immediate and strict compliance is expected.”

Critics of Oklahoma’s new requirement are saying the move is unconstitutional. Americans United for Separation of Church and State is going to fight the directive. “Americans United will do everything in our power to stop Christian Nationalists like Ryan Walters from trampling the religious freedom of public-school children and their families,” Rachel Laser, president and CEO of the advocacy group, said in a statement.

Meanwhile also in June of this year Louisiana passed a law requiring the display of the Ten Commandments in all state-funded schools and universities. The law says the following:

Public schools are required to display a poster or framed copy of the Ten Commandments in every classroom, school library, and cafeteria.

They must be displayed on a poster of minimum 11×14-inch (28×35.5cm) size and be written in an easily readable, large font.

Schools are authorized to accept donations or private funding to cover the costs of the posters.

The deadline for this requirement would be the beginning of the new school year in 2025.

In the 1980 Supreme Court decision *Stone v. Graham*, the Supreme Court struck down a similar Kentucky law. Nine plaintiffs have already filed a lawsuit claiming the Louisiana law violates parents’ rights. The Louisiana Governor says he welcomes the challenge.

These two initiatives in Oklahoma and Louisiana are influenced by Christian Nationalists, but is this what Christians should be concerning themselves with—politics? Some of these

Christian Nationalists are part of dominionist groups that believe Christians should seek to take over positions of power in culture and government.

In his 2008 book, *Dominion! How Kingdom Action Can Change the World*, C. Peter Wagner writes that God had commanded true Christians to gain control of the seven areas of civilization to include government, business, education, the media, the arts and entertainment, family, and religion. Wagner believes Christians have a “responsibility for taking dominion” over “whatever molder of culture or subdivision God has placed them in,” which he describes as “taking dominion back from Satan.”

But let us just think about this for a moment. It sounds like some Christian Nationalists believe in a Kingdom of God that slowly and inexorably takes control of the world from the forces of evil already entrenched. This is one view of the Kingdom of God. That God will not return until after God’s forces have taken back the world for God. Well let me assure you there is another way of understanding the Kingdom of God.

The Church of God believes Christ will literally return to this earth to set up his Kingdom here. The world will not continually get better until that occurs. In fact, towards the end things will be worse in the world than at any other time in history. No wonder some of these Christian Nationalists are so wrapped up in politics; they don’t have a proper understanding of Scripture.

The change many Christian Nationalists are seeking is not coming from politicians, think tanks, congressmen, senators, or the president. True change will only occur when Christ comes back to wrest control of this world from Satan.

In **Daniel 2:34–45**, we read about Daniel’s interpretation of a dream King Nebuchadnezzar had. The dream explains that there will be major kingdoms on the earth and a final kingdom. When that final kingdom is ruling, Christ (the Rock) will return and wrest control from the kingdoms of this earth to set up His own Kingdom. When you begin to put this prophecy together with **Revelation 19** you understand Jesus Christ’s Kingdom is not going to be set up on this earth through an earthly political process but through supernatural means.

Some of the early Christian Nationalists (nineteenth century) had a postmillennial perspective. Here is how it is described in the book *The Flag and The Cross*:

“Christ would return only AFTER the Kingdom of God had been established on Earth for a full thousand years by means of gradual social and moral reform led by the Christian churches. Northern theologians such as Horace Greely (1811-1872) and Josiah Strong (1847-1916) then combined this new postmillennial view of the End Times with the old Promised Land story. The

result was the doctrine of ‘Manifest Destiny.’”

This is a major point to understand. We in the Church of God believe and teach that Christ will usher in the Millennium and the Kingdom of God on earth. Many within the Christian Nationalist movement believe they must bend the government to the will of God and that will usher in the Kingdom on earth. No wonder these people are so politically engaged. They think they can shape the world toward God. They need to understand their Bibles better. Satan is the god of this world (**2 Corinthians 4:4**), and He will only relinquish that control when Christ returns to put him away for a thousand years (**Revelation 20:1–3**).

Remember what the Bible has to say about the future Kingdom of God. In **1 Corinthians 15:50** we read that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom only arrives when Jesus returns and changes the dead in Christ into spirit beings (**1 Corinthians 15:51–54**). We know that has not occurred yet, so the Kingdom will not come about through human political or governmental means—it will only happen by supernatural means.

Listen, I probably agree with many Christian Nationalist positions. But one of the problems with Christian Nationalism is they can turn politicians and our nation into an idol. We can’t expect any nation or any leader to be a Messiah figure or an answer to all that ails our country. The Bible is definitive and clear: Christ is the only answer to the problems our nation and the world is experiencing. Be careful that you don’t turn your nation into an idol (**Deuteronomy 5:6–7**).

An idol can be whatever you place more faith in than God. The story of the Bible involves the need for humans to place their faith in God and God alone. We begin to get into trouble when we rely on foreign allies, the king, the army, other gods, and the like.

Why is this a growing topic of discussion in America today? The reason may be due to the fact American culture is beginning to go through a major transition period. Looking back on statistics, the US in the 1950s reportedly had over 90 percent of our citizens claiming to be Christians. More recent polling has brought that number down to about 65 percent. Still a majority, but a quickly reducing majority.

That major change in demographics has impacted those Christians who never saw any push back on Christian cultural norms. Today we have homosexuality, transgenderism, other religions, and those who have no religion promoting their views and agendas. Governing officials are also promoting these other agendas. With any major changes there will always be push back from one side and then the other. Perhaps Christian Nationalism is manifesting more prominently today because the “old guard” is feeling a sense of loss and concern about how they viewed America.

Some within this movement hearken back to the “good old days” when things were better. Now I understand the sentiment, but let’s just go back to the good old 1950s. Would all American citizens agree that things were better back then? Some might, but the black American experience was not better back then. The civil rights progress that was achieved in the 1960s had not yet occurred.

Please recall what Jesus Christ said in **John 18:36**: Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

Also recall the temptation of Christ by Satan in **Matthew 4** and **Luke 4**. When Satan asks Jesus to bow down and worship him, he offers in return to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. This suggests that Satan has control in some way of all these kingdoms.

Now someone might argue that if the US would repent and follow God we would receive blessings from God. And legislating changes into our law promoting Christian ideals could help this. But think back to who is pushing the Christian National agenda. Will these people require keeping the Saturday Sabbath? Will they honor God’s holy days? I don’t think so.

One other important scripture in this discourse is **Matthew 26:52–54**. When Jesus is about to be arrested and later crucified, Peter takes out his sword to try and protect Christ. Christ rebukes him and tells him that if He wanted to, He could have twelve legions of angels help Him instantly. But the reason He does not do this is Jesus has to follow what has been laid down in Scripture.

In other words, God is in ultimate control of the world and the direction it is going. He will bring it all back in the right way to work out His plan. Kingdoms and governments on the earth are merely pawns in the great spiritual battle being played out by God and Satan, a battle we have very little data on.

That other place where Christ’s Kingdom dwells right now is in heaven. But we know from numerous scriptures that His Kingdom is coming back to this earth, and He will reign and rule. Please keep in mind the line in the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Don’t hear me wrong. If you have the right to vote, there is nothing wrong with exercising that right, especially if you can elect someone who will try to uphold the rights of our citizens to continue to worship God in freedom and peace. But please make no mistake about it, violence to try to achieve Christian political power has no part in the actions of a Christian. Remember, Jesus rebuked Peter for cutting a man’s ear off when He was being arrested (**Luke 22:50–51; John 18:10–11**).

Continued next page

Traits of a Godly Woman

Part 2

By JEAN DIONNE



Trait #5: Chaste

CHASTE: “Innocent of unlawful sexual intercourse, virtuous, pure, pure in thought, modest, simple in design. Having or showing moral virtue. Virtue... strength, conforming to a standard of right, morality, moral excellence, courage, a commendable quality, merit, chastity in a woman, a quality of a state of being chaste, sexual purity.”

Proverbs 31:10 says, “Who can find a virtuous woman?” Isn’t this pertinent in today’s world? Every day the standards for morality are weakened and lowered to the point where we too can say with God, “Who can find a virtuous woman?” Those of us who have been washed in the blood of Christ and have been called to be “lights” to the world must be vigilant to be moral and walk in a manner worthy

of this calling. You’ve heard the story of the frog that was put in water, and the heat was turned up, and now it is to the boiling point. But the frog did not notice the gradual increase in heat all the time and is unaware of the danger. The world is in danger. Our loved ones are in danger. We are in danger!

We are told not to be of the world. But we are in the world. There’s a big difference and a big responsibility! Are we not to teach others? How? We know as mothers that we are to teach our children. Even if we are not biological mothers, we find ourselves in the mother’s role many times. But, we have the responsibility to teach others by our example with our lives. Unfortunately, we may be the only Bible they may ever read! It’s a very tall order; we all fall short. It has been said, “I’d rather see a sermon any day than listen to one.”

We have a few things to remember about being chaste. It involves sexual purity, morality, and modesty. I think we get the point. A book called *Created to be His Help Meet*, by Debi Pearl, is very good reading, especially if you are mar-

Continued next page

Continued from page 4

Galatians 3:28 tells us that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek.” What this means is when you commit to Jesus Christ first and foremost in your life you now belong to Him and His Kingdom. Any other group you are a part of (nation, ethnicity, club, organization, church, town, or family) pales in significance and could become an idol.

Be careful how closely you align yourself with Christian Nationalists’ principles. Some aspects of this movement contradict clear biblical teachings.

Sources

“What is Christian Nationalism,” by Paul D. Miller, *Christianity Today*, February 3, 2021

“Oklahoma Must Teach Bible From Fifth to Twelfth Grade,” by Anumita Kuar, *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2024

“Well Before La’s Law, Ky Parents Won a Major Ten Commandments Case,” by Anumita Kuar, *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2024

“What is Louisiana’s Ten Commandments Law and Why Is It Controversial?” by *Al Jazeera*, June 28, 2024

The Power Worshipers by Katherine Stewart (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

Taking Back America for God by Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

American Idolatry by Andrew L. Whitehead (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2023).

The Flag and the Cross by Philip S. Gorski and Samuel L. Perry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

American Heresy by John Fanestil (Frontress Press: Minneapolis, 2023).

ENOUGH, continued from page 1

speculations of where we are in the prophecy timeline and perhaps bringing back some of the same thoughts as two decades ago.

This notion, “when enough is enough,” transcends through much of our lives. We often face difficulties, challenges, and hardships, sometimes daily. Some deal with long-term health infirmities, disabilities, and other struggles beyond their immediate control. In the workplace, we’ve all had to deal with a negative coworker or the person that is not doing their job well, and we think, *How much longer will this go on?*

I recently met and spoke with an elderly man whom I saw as a patient, and he was discussing how he had a lot of medical problems. He was telling me all about his medical issues—one of which was severe anemia. What struck me, though, was that during our conversation, he asked me, “When do you call it quits—at what age do you just let people die?” I was very astounded at the question. He added that he “figured it was just his time to go.” You see, this gentleman had tried to convey to me that he had had enough. He was tired of fighting. We have all probably encountered similar stories of older friends and family who

have felt the same towards the end of life. Before we finished talking, I answered, of course, we don’t ever give up and let people die no matter their age. He ended up taking the advice I gave him and headed straight to the hospital across the street, received a blood transfusion, and did very well afterwards. I saw him for a follow up visit in my office, and he had a vastly different attitude. He was very jovial and spirited. He thanked me for caring about him, and we shared some nice conversation, even discussing God and giving Him the praise. Thankfully, we were able to uncover his problem and treat him successfully, and he is doing well.

I give this example because it shows how sometimes we feel like we cannot keep going, don’t want to, or don’t understand how we will move on to the next point in life. Most of the time, we do keep going even if we don’t understand how. Importantly here, it was the help of someone other than just us that played a role in “keeping going.” We need to remember that when we feel like this, we can always call on our brothers and sisters to help us get through if needed, and of course pray as always. When we continue to do this repeatedly, it builds *resilience*, which is paramount to our lives here on Earth and our walk with God. Many

small victories lead to a larger victory!

We can think of many people in our Bibles who have likely thought to themselves, *When will it be over?* or *When will this end?* Joseph, for example, went through wrongfully being imprisoned even after doing the right thing when he was tempted! However, didn’t he end up in a better place? Wasn’t he rewarded for his patience and faith?! It is fair to think he must have pondered for years whether or not he would ever be free, but he kept his faith even though he did not understand what was yet to come. We can recall several other examples of long-suffering and resilience, such as the story of Job, and also Jesus Christ our Savior! “About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’)” (Matthew 27:46).

I have always wondered why Jesus said this. What I have come up with in my adult life is that He was a man. He was suffering. He had had enough. We know that shortly after, God took Him and ended His suffering (Matthew 27:50). So ultimately, God knows when we’ve had enough, and in such times He *can* take action.

We often come to the conclusion that sometimes things are just out of our hands. We pray and leave it to God. We

know God will act when He decides it is time. However, we must not forget that we were created in His image! We, too, can take action to help others and ourselves when we feel enough is enough. Perhaps a better question we should be asking ourselves is, “Am I doing enough?” In that sense, there can probably never be enough. There’s no limit to charity and doing good works for God and for our fellow brothers and sisters. No matter how bad things get out in the world or in our own lives, we must remember there is still work to be done.

We are still here watching, waiting, and pondering—but we should be growing, learning, teaching, serving, helping, and emboldening each other. We should share not only our triumphs and victories but also our hardships and tragedies with each other. This is part of fellowship and strengthens us. Instead of lamenting that bad coworker, we can approach them lovingly and offer guidance or advice. We can help those suffering, and reach out for help when we are suffering.

God tells us to be ready for we do not know the hour, so make the best of what you have, prepare yourself, examine yourself, and always work to be better—then, when the time comes, you will be ready for enough to be enough—no matter when that time is.

Traits of a Godly Woman, *continued from page 4*

ried. Married or single, we all relate as women. Though our situation may change, our purpose never really changes. The fact remains, WE ARE WOMEN, and as a woman we think, act, and identify with each other.

First Timothy 2:9–10: “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.”

What is propriety? Propriety is the standard of what is socially acceptable in conduct and speech of a polite society. This is also a comparison. The principle being, the inside beauty is of more importance than the outside beauty. This can be misleading. God is not saying He wants you to have no style of dress, fashion, quality clothes, nice jewelry, or hair style. The point of the matter is, it should not be used to judge how you measure up by how you dress up.

Image can be a very funny thing. Impressions can be very powerful. But what you see isn't necessarily what you get. Think about it! It can and has been used in the reverse. A person can, by dressing extremely modest or drab, give the impression as to appear pious or religious. But does that make them more righteous? No. Look around in the world and see how many of the religious leaders dress. It can be used as a cloak of righteousness and a sense of false humility (a dress code that gives a pious impression and then lives an immoral lifestyle, produces deception, and leads to disaster).

Again, don't let the outside appearance gain the attention, but rather focus on the inside person which shows forth good fruit by your good works. This is not meant to stifle your own style, good appearance, and dress. Being modest in your apparel is being careful not to intentionally attract public sexual interest (leave that for your own husband in your own private life). God does have dress standards. There is a proper way to dress and there is an improper way to dress. “Do not let your adornment be *merely outward*—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or

putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands” (1 Peter 3:3–5). Did you notice the words “*merely outward*” in this scripture? Men were created visual and women were created with feminine charm. God made it so and said “it was good.” It is also natural for a man to desire to give gifts, nice things, and jewelry to their woman and it is natural for a woman to love them. As the bride of Christ (male or female), does not God also desire to array us in beauty? It's all about the intent! In Isaiah 3:16, we see the wrong intent. (We don't want to be like this!) “Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet” (arrogant and immoral intent). “In that day the Lord will take away the finery: the jingling anklets, the scarves, the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, the veils, and the headdresses...” (verse 18). You get the picture. They thought they were really something! Arrogant, puffed up, and seductive. They used their fancy apparel, with all the importance it made them feel, and adorned themselves for the purpose of evil. They forgot to be humble and thankful to God for all their blessings. God was not happy with them! They were *merely* interested in the *outward* appearance.

There have been issues about make-up in the church in the past, debated in the ministry. This was individual preference and should have been left as such. The same principle applies. It's all in the intent. Was it to beautify or seduce? It is the motive of the heart that is in question. Let God be the judge, not us. Our God looks on our heart. Whole churches have split up on this topic alone! Using or not using make-up does not make one more or less righteous than another. It is a matter of preference. Your style is simply your style. Proper attire and good hygiene not only show respect for you but also for others.

Also discussed in churches in the past was whether or not women should wear pants, especially to church services. It's not a major issue now, but many remember when it was quite the topic. Again, it is a matter of preference and culture. A lot of the reasoning behind it in the ministry had to do with the fact that a woman should be a woman and man a man. God's Word teaches that. But, in the Scriptures, it really had to do with cross dressing and homosexuality which is condemned in the Bible in Deuteronomy 22:5. Also, the Word teaches us that it is wrong for a woman (wife) to have the authority over the man in I Timothy 2:12. Hence, the expression “Who's wearing the pants?” The pants in the past was a male symbol in our culture. Today, nothing could be farther from the truth. The wearing of pants for females is not only acceptable in our culture today; it can be a lot more modest than the short skirts. We would not expect our men to dress in our culture today in a skirt or tunic, which was perfectly acceptable in other cultures in the past. So, let us just leave that judgment of intent to God and let the women be feminine and the men be masculine and be thankful for the difference. These are big issues of small significance in churches.

BE CHASTE so that the Word of God be not blasphemed. Remember it is about

sexual purity, morality, and modesty. Live in the beauty!

Trait #6: Keepers at Home

KEEPERS: Being on guard, watching, and a caretaker.

HOME: Seat of domestic life

How important is this? For a mother to leave her commanded post, even though the need of another seems greater, the Word of God will be blasphemed. Strong words! Why is that? Don't you realize what can happen to children in no time at all without a watchful eye of a loving, responsible adult? Yes, and it is even more important for young women today. Now, more than ever, it is so important to WATCH over their family. The wickedness in the world is alarming. Precious is the oversight of our small children under the care of a “keeper at home.” A young mother's place is in the home, keeping it, guarding it, and watching over those entrusted to her.

There are pressures of our modern day life and sometimes the necessity for a second paycheck. The rising cost of living, taxation and just about everything is overwhelming. God understands it all. He will make a way when there seems to be no way. The protection of the children against the onslaught of evil in this world is REAL. If you need to work, you may be able to stay at home and be creative in some kind of work that will provide extra income. Maybe even the children can participate in some way that will help you bring in that extra income. Some cut backs on expenses to stretch your husband's income more can help, or you may be able to save money on unnecessary expenses. Be creative! Anything that you can do to allow you to be a “keeper at home” will be important. There are many books and ideas on this topic alone as a resource. It will also help to talk with other women of like mind.

It won't be very long before the children are in school and things will settle down. You will have more time then. The value of child rearing is priceless. Do you realize how much it would cost to replace a mother at home? More than you could ever imagine or make working outside of the home. Your attitude will be important also; to be frugal and content. Of course, if a mother has to work outside the home, it will be important to make sure that she and her husband remain watchful and choose the right person to take care of the children. Someone who will take their place keeping their family loved, protected and cared for and be able to truly replace you. Sometimes parents have to juggle their time and trade off time, but it can be done. Always be sure that the children are in good hands.

First Timothy 5:14 talks about young widows;

however, the principle applies to women in general: “I would therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” What does it mean to speak reproachfully? To be known as a neglectful mother and wife is a reproach. How will others think of you? How could this woman claim to know God? What kind of example is she teaching to her children? What does her husband think of her? How can she be taken seriously or viewed in a positive light? You can answer those questions yourself. Satan has a field day with all of this. Remember the word *blasphemed* in Titus 2:5 is pretty strong language. To be a reproach and to blaspheme the Word of God is not something to be taken lightly.

We are admonished “not to be idle, wandering about from house to house, or to be busybodies.” Being industrious and productive is the opposite of idle. There is so much to do to maintain a home. It is not proper to loaf around and do nothing but watch TV, play on the computer, or just find your own entertainment while the home is being neglected. Visiting others is a good thing, especially in a wholesome environment. It can be uplifting, refreshing, encouraging, and a blessing for you and others, as long as you do not wear out your welcome. We are talking about the spirit of laziness, getting involved in other people's business where you don't belong, and being known as a troublemaker. Your time should be spent being helpful, not hurtful. You cannot keep your home and keep everyone else's home too. Just staying at home does not make you a keeper of the home. You can sit at home in body while traveling in spirit by means of the telephone or the computer. There is a negative and positive side to this, depending on the spirit of intent. Of course, there is a time for rest, relaxation, and enjoyment of activities. The whole idea is about proper balance. Women can get very overwhelmed maintaining the home and can feel like their job is never-ending. It will be very important for you to get your proper rest and play time in too. Keeping the home is more than staying at home; it is a heart that is fixed on the home. If the man is the head of the home, then the woman is the heart of the home. Matthew 6:21 says, “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Do you treasure your husband, your children, and your home?

Let's not forget hospitality. First Peter 4:9 it says to “Use hospitality one to another without grudging.” Hospitality is a wonderful thing. It makes you feel wanted and loved. It makes the giver feel good and the receiver feel good too. What better place to be hospitable than home with your family and your friends.

It's time to get serious with God. Women have an important role to play. Our

VISIT JEAN'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL:

www.youtube.com/@JeanDionne7

Click on “Videos,” and all Jean's presentations will pop up.

Continued next page

family and our home is our priority!

Trait #7: Good

What is good? Mark 10:17–18 says, “And when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, why do you call me GOOD? There is none good but one that is, God.” Yet the Bible is loaded with scriptures that address the difference between GOOD and evil from the very beginning. We know we begin with the keeping of the commandments and then move on to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. But let’s get back to our topic of a GOOD woman. A GOOD woman is genuine, joyful, virtuous, valuable, competent, ready, kind, benevolent, merciful, hardworking, agreeable, pleasant, congenial, honorable, faithful, gracious, and wise. Wow! That’s a big order!

Make yourself a promise to read Proverbs 31, which is all about the traits of a GOOD woman. Make yourself a cup of tea or coffee and take some quiet time and read, analyze, and study this proverb. There is so much wisdom in that proverb to think on. Verse 10 says, “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.”

Proverbs 19:14 states that “a prudent wife is from the LORD.” And Proverbs 12:4 says, “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that makes ashamed is as rottenness to his bones.” Let us be mindful to be the kind of woman that God approves of and the kind of woman that would bring honor to our husband, for the days we are living in are evil. Galatians 5:22 states, “but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, GOODNESS, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.” Notice GOODNESS is one of the fruits of the Spirit. So, a “help mate” helps!

In Debi Pearl’s book, *Created To Be His Help Meet*, Ms. Pearl gives the ABCs of being a help.

Calling all Christian women! The world is a stage, and the world is watching you. But even more important, GOD IS WATCHING! Who among us would want to be told that we were guilty of blaspheming the Word of God! So let us always be mindful.

Trait #8: Obedient to Their Own Husbands

Okay, now tell me that doesn’t give you a bit of anxiety? We’re independent women, right? We have good instincts and know pretty much what to do. Being obedient to your own husband can be quite a challenge. Don’t you think? Many situations will arise in a married relationship, such as those over kids, money, time, work, extended families, schedules, religion, politics, social situations, etc. You name it. The list is endless. Did God really mean this? We cannot possibly agree on everything.

CAUTION: This does not mean blind obedience involving illegal, immoral, or abusive acts in a marriage. We have civil laws that protect against this and also the laws of God that condemn unacceptable behavior. We must answer to a higher authority.

That being said, let’s continue. “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman [wife] is man, and the head of Christ is God” (1 Corinthians 11:3). Does that mean any man? No, only to your own husband. There is no man, pastor or minister higher than your husband. It is easy to follow a man who is following Christ because the head of the husband is Christ. Unfortunately, that is just not the case for all marriages, whether they are inside or outside the church. Quite honestly, I can remember thinking during my many years in the church, after encountering the behaviors of some of the men, that I was glad I was “married to an unsaved man!” I think you know what I mean, and you get the picture.

There are some husbands that can be overbearing, overpowering, and disrespectful. That’s too bad. The Bible has something to say about this too. I know it is hard to honor a man who does not seem to deserve such honor. But sometimes the goodness of a good wife can lead him to repentance. “And the woman who has a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, for what knowest thou O wife, whether you shall save your husband?” (1 Corinthians 7:10–16). Tough to do, but it can be done. Since God is in control, He may be doing a great work through you. God is in the business of changing hearts, and if it is not meant to be, He will make a way.

God commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the church. God also has something to say about men not treating their wives right. “Because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously: yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant” (Malachi 2:14). God will not be mocked. Have faith if you are in a bad situation.

If a husband is submitting to the Lord who delegated this authority, then the wife’s submission in recognizing that authority is, in reality, submitting to God. He is her divinely appointed head. Eph. 5-33 -“Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she RESPECTS her husband” (Ephesians 5:33).

Also, in Ephesians 5:22–24 we read: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord....so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” What? Everything? That can be a bit unsettling. Let’s talk a little

about that. Does that mean you do not have your own opinion, your own identity, your own personality, and your own unique style and everything else about you that makes you different? No, not at all! What God is saying has to do with function and respect; for we are equal partners in salvation. God is not a respecter of persons. Acting as one and being a team player in our marriage and recognizing that God has made the husband the head of the household should not be a problem. We know that even in the world, corporations and organizations have presidents and heads of office. We were created to be his (husband’s) help mate. Will that always seem fair or be fair? No! But in submitting to Christ, we will submit to our own husbands and God will honor and listen to our prayers. Now that’s important!

The Bible tells us not to be unevenly yoked with unbelievers. That same principle would apply in sharing your life with a man who does not have your core values and who could be very detrimental to your overall mental, emotional, and physical well-being. So be very careful who you marry. There is a difference between a good man who does a few bad things and a bad man who does a few good things. Again, if you think marriage can be hard, try divorce. The devil laughs and the children cry. With the help of God and two people pulling in the same direction, God can create a heavenly marriage for you.

Trait #9: That the Word of God Be Not Blasphemed

BLASPHEME means to speak of or address with irreverence. Blasphemy is the act of expressing lack of reverence for God or irreverence towards something considered sacred.

Your marriage is sacred and God has instructed in Titus 2:4–5 how He wants his daughters who are married to behave and be an example for the unmarried. Are you acting sober? Do you love your husband? Do you love your children? Are you discreet? Are you chaste? Are you a keeper of the home? Are you good? Are you obedient to your own husband? This is a serious matter when it comes to the Word of God. Why did the Apostle Paul say that if you don’t do these things, you are in danger of blaspheming the Word of God?

Again, a wife does not owe her husband blind obedience involving illegal, immoral, or abusive acts. God condemns unacceptable behavior; we also have civil laws that protect us, whether you are a woman or a man. This is NOT what we are talking about here. Also, Mark 3:29 mentions blaspheming the Holy Spirit and the serious consequences of that. This, also, is NOT what we are talking about here. What we are talking about is the eight behaviors spoken about in Titus 2:4–5 that God looks very seriously on regarding your behavior as a married woman.

Let’s take each topic and give an example of how the destructive force of the opposite behavior can affect not only your home, family, and relationship with your husband, but mostly your relationship with God and His Word.

Eight Behaviors Described in Titus 2:4–5

SOBER: to do one’s duty, to be moderate, self-controlled, thoughtful, and to learn to make wise decisions and judgments; also, not given to much wine.

Bad Example: A young wife is tired of the chores and the minding of the small children, so she decides to have a little fun tonight. Her husband is working late again. She leaves her children sleeping alone and then slips out of the house to have a few drinks at a local bar. She has done this many times before when he worked late and it never was a problem before. The kids usually sleep through the night. Unfortunately, this time she had way too much to drink at the bar! You fill in the rest of the story and use your imagination of what could happen. Blasphemy?

LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS: Love is a strong affection, warm attachment, attraction based on sexual desire, a beloved person, unselfish loyal concern for others, to cherish, to feel passion, devotion, tenderness, to caress or to take pleasure in.

Bad Example: She just loves the way her neighbor’s husband treats his wife. He appears to be just so kind. She starts fantasizing what it would be like to win his affection. She flirts with him when her husband is working and when the neighbor’s wife is away. They have an affair. Now she has distanced herself from her own husband and is indifferent towards him and speaks to him with hostility. She has every excuse for not wanting to be intimate with him or satisfying any of his other needs in any way. She has no respect for her husband at all. She has a long list of excuses. Blasphemy?

LOVE THEIR CHILDREN: A good mother soberly considers the needs of her children before her own interests. She provides comfort for their daily necessities, their happiness, and their health. She invests her time in training them how to do many things and teaches them to be considerate of others. She also teaches them the ways of God.

Bad Example: It was so nice before the kids were born. With three little ones to care for now, it just seems like there is no time for herself. She remembers her single life and how simple it was then and how she had all the time to do whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted. Spoiled maybe, but she longed for those days. She becomes angry with her children for stealing her time and energy. A close girlfriend who is single and lives in another state understands her feelings and encourages her to come live with her. She leaves her home and children and goes to look for greener grass. After all, the children have a good father. She

feels he did not put in the time with the children like she had to when they were young, and he never realized all that she had done.

Her husband was always working and it's time for him to see what she has had to put up with all these years. She thinks that the kids can fend for themselves now. Everyone else can pick up the pieces too, including her mother-in-law, who doesn't have to work anyway. She is going; she has had it. It's her time now, she thinks.

What do you think the consequence for that behavior will be for the children? Think about it. Not uncommon today! Blasphemy?

DISCREET: to show good judgment, capable of observing prudent silence, cautious, and sensible.

Bad Example: Harry was always telling Sally he used to like it when she wore silky nightgowns to bed instead of the flannel ones she uses now after ten years of marriage. It seemed like such a small request, but she just thought it was just asking too much of her.

Sally and Harry fought a lot about many things, but this last argument this morning was pretty serious. Sally decided that she was going to make it better so she bought some cute bedtime wear. She found a little red "hot number" at Victoria's Secret. She thought it looked great on her and she knew Harry would definitely like it. She had an idea! That night when Harry came home from work, she would serve him dinner in her new red attire, heels and all. What a surprise for him! Just before dinner, Harry called home to ask if she would mind if he took Jim home with him for dinner. Jim was the minister at his local church where he attended alone because Sally never wanted to go with him. She told him it would be fine and that there was plenty of food. She thought her husband's minister would get a kick out of this too; after all, he is a guy! Can you picture the scene? Blasphemy?

CHASTE: innocent of unlawful sexual intercourse, virtuous, pure, modest, simple in design, and moral virtue.

Bad Example: She was always reading *Cosmopolitan* magazine in her spare time. There was an article about wife swapping that really intrigued her. She would have to convince her husband to try it. It would be good to "spice it up a bit," according to the article. She also met some new friends at the gym that talked about this topic and she joined in the conversation. They invited her to join their inner circle. It just seemed so exciting! It really didn't take too much convincing for her husband to try it. They both understood that this would only be a game of fun and pleasure and that it had nothing to do with their love for each other.

The next week it was all set. However, she needed a babysitter for her two young girls who were 10 and 11 years old. Her usual babysitter was unavailable; one of her new friends at the gym suggested that they could use her young teenage son who was around 14 years old. Everything was all set to go. Think of all the things that could go wrong here with their marriage, their children, and their home. Blasphemy?

KEEPERS AT HOME: It means to be on guard, to watch and take care of the home.

Bad Example: The house was unkempt; the dishes were piled high in the sink. There was not much food in the cupboards either, let alone something in the refrigerator to make a quick sandwich, or anything for that matter. The laundry was piled high near the washer. The kids and her husband knew how to use a washer. Even though he had to go to work every day and the children had to go to school, she thought they could still fit that into their schedule too.

Nancy just felt that she wasn't put on this earth to serve anyone. Besides, she

had to take care of her body too. She wasn't getting any younger. She didn't want to work outside of the home either. After she got up late, her usual routine was to go to the gym and then go out for coffee with some of her friends.

There were always so many appointments for her to keep, like her hair, her nails, her shopping, whatever she had to do for herself. After all, everyone should be taking care of themselves, including her husband and her children. The home was just a pit stop to her. She usually got home after dinner and watched some movies or went out again with her friends. That was her typical day, except for the weekends when she really slept late. Friday and Saturday nights were late nights because she liked to drink and go to nightclubs alone. Blasphemy?

GOOD means the opposite of evil. A good woman is genuine, joyful, virtuous, valuable, competent, ready, kind, benevolent, merciful, hardworking, agreeable, pleasant, congenial, honorable, faithful, gracious, and wise.

Bad Example: Mary had a next door neighbor who was very old and lived in the house right next to her. She never saw family or visitors coming to the home and just assumed that her neighbor was all right. One day at the store, someone from her neighborhood mentioned that the lady next door to her was very sick and probably could use a little help. Mary went over to see what was going on. She found a very old feeble woman near death who did not have children or family. She was a widow of many years and had been very independent in the past.

Mary had a plan. She would help and befriend her and then she believed she would be able to convince the widow to give her house to her for her kindness. Mary hoped that the woman would not live too long and that she would have enough time to make her plan work. No one knew what she was doing, except God! Everyone thought she was so good to help her. Blasphemy?

OBEDIENT TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS: Obedient means submissive to the restraint or command of authority.

Bad Example: Sometimes at bingo with her friends, Sue would get carried away and try to play up to six cards of bingo at one time. It was hard for her not to do that. She just loved to win! Her husband was getting a little frustrated with her because all she seemed to want to do is go to the bingo games. If she could do that every night, she would. He told her that enough was enough, and that he wanted her to stop this behavior. "It only leads to something worse," he explained. He saw the way she used to like to play cards before and she always wanted to play for money. There was always an argument about it in the past and it was a sore spot with friends too.

Card playing was no longer fun. It always ended in hurt feelings or problems between their friends over money. Her husband always kept telling her she had a possible addictive personality and that she should not be getting herself in a situation that was similar to gambling.

One night she said she was going to visit a sick friend and would be late. Instead, she went to a local casino and had a ball! The problem was that she took her credit card and went overboard. She lost big time and would have to face her husband. This would mean a financial hardship for the family. Blasphemy?

All of the above are bad examples and possible blasphemy against the Word of God. If the world does these things, it is still against the Word of God, but when a Christian woman does these things, it is blasphemy!

And so let us look to the good examples like that of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and that of Sarah, the wife of Abraham. May our Heavenly Father, richly bless your marriages and your families.

Why We Should Control Anger

By MICHELLE ALGARRA



When two people get angry with each other, discussions turn divisive and disputes occur. A shouting match usually ensues, wherein each party tries to outdo each other in argumentative fashion. Sometimes, the hurtful words increases the aggression, even to the point that the parties concerned harm each other physically, including doing damage to property or each other's possessions.

Christians should learn to minimize conflict by practicing patience, tolerance, and understanding, which are fruits of the Spirit. We should not act like pugilists in the arena trying to

outdo each other by inflicting pain or harm, where the person who gets hurt the most loses the fight.

Slander, calumny, bickering, and backbiting are un-Christian attitudes that need to be rooted out. It takes a huge dose of humility to allow others to hit us verbally or worse, even below the belt, without striking back. Pugilism is not a Christian "sport" and should not be practiced by true Christians in their relationships with one another.

Though extremely difficult to practice, the Bible teaches we must learn to forgive others infinite number of times, to turn the other cheek, and bless when reviled rather than exchanging reviling for reviling. We are not taught to be pushovers, however, and can defend ourselves in a loving, reasonable fashion in the midst of discussions. In the arena of

warfare, we are allowed to try to inflict some form of physical harm to defend ourselves for the sake of self-preservation.

We can defend our Christian beliefs amongst unbelievers, for example, in a calm and reasonable way without being hostile, belligerent, and aggressive, and without manifesting arrogance or conceit, or a know-it-all attitude.

If these behavioural problems have become habitual and part of our personalities, they may be difficult to root out. But God can develop our character and even change our personalities if necessary, and at the same time help us overcome bad habits.

We must pray to God to help us overcome anger and hostility, conceit, and pride. We must train ourselves not to be vindictive, divisive, and

prone to tactlessness. We can teach ourselves to meditate on Scripture and practice being polite, patient, and understanding.

Words, not only actions, can and do hurt, but we must learn to restrain the impulse to get angry even when hurt or offended, even when insulted and scorned.

By learning to bear up with the faults and weaknesses of others, we are teaching ourselves to be loving Christians, learning to love our neighbor as we do ourselves.

If we truly love God, we must learn to love our fellowmen also, even the evil ones, for we are all God's children, created in His image and likeness. But we must do so without compromising with God's commandments, for God comes first over and above everything else.

In Loving Memory

Errol George Francis, Sr.

February 7, 1955 – August 19, 2024



Errol George Francis (affectionately known to his family as Keith), was born on February 7, 1955, in the parish of Clarendon, Jamaica, West Indies, to Mable King and Martel Francis. He fell asleep in the Lord on August 19, 2024.

Errol is survived by his beloved wife, Delores, son Errol Jr., daughter Antoinette, son-in-law Marcus, granddaughter Deviyani, and his granddog Tristan. He is also survived by his brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, in-laws, and countless friends and loved ones who were blessed to know him. Though he may no longer be with us in body, his spirit will continue to guide us, reminding us of the importance of faith, family, and love.

From an early age, it was clear that he possessed a spirit full of curiosity, determination, and passion—a combination that would define his life and leave a lasting impact on those who knew him.

He began his educational journey at Trout Hall Basic School and later attended Park Hall All Age School in Clarendon. At the age of 12, he sat for the Common Entrance Exam, securing a place at the prestigious Frankfield Comprehensive High School, now known as Edwin Allen High School. During these formative years, his love for sports, particularly cricket and volleyball, truly blossomed. Not just an enthusiast, he excelled on the field, earning widespread recognition as one of the best fast bowlers in his school. His skill and dedication were so remarkable that he represented his school in the George Headley Cup Competition, a prestigious tournament.

His athletic prowess was matched by his intellectual curiosity. With a keen, investigative mind, especially when it came to technology, he was fascinated by the methods of communication, particularly how radio waves could transmit sound over great distances. Often, he would take apart transistor radios, meticulously studying their inner workings, and then expertly reassemble them. This early fascination with technology eventually led him to a career in telecommunications.

After graduating from high school at 18, he joined an on-the-job training program with the Jamaica Telephone Company in Kingston. His natural aptitude and dedication quickly led to a permanent position with the company. Through this affiliation, he attended and graduated from the Jamaica College of Arts, Science, & Technology (CAST), now known as the University of Technology (UTECH). His career then took him to Mandeville, Manchester, where he lived and worked for several years, not only achieving professional success but also building strong relationships and earning the respect of colleagues and friends alike.

In December 1980, seeking new opportunities and experiences, Errol made the life-changing decision to immigrate to the United States. Even as he navigated this new chapter in his life, he remained deeply connected to his roots, always carrying with him the values and memories of his upbringing in Jamaica.

On July 17, 1982, he married the love of his life, Delores May Rosalee Francis, and together they built a strong and loving family. As a proud father of two children, Errol Jr. and Antoinette, he cherished every moment with them. He was a father who offered guidance, encouragement, and unconditional love, always putting his family first.

In his professional life, Errol was renowned for his meticulous work ethic and his ability to connect with people, making him a cherished colleague and friend. From 1981 until October 1984, he was employed by Custom Antenna. He then joined C&P Telephone, later known as Bell Atlantic, where he worked from October 1984 to May 2000. In June 2000, Errol ventured into entrepreneurship by founding his own telecommunications business, Francis Telephone Service. His company provided top-tier telecommunications services to a diverse clientele, including lawyers, physicians, and other prominent professionals, who valued his expertise, reliability, and personal touch. He maintained this business until his passing, earning the respect and admiration of his colleagues for his kindness, loyalty, and humility.

Beyond his career and family, his greatest joy came from sharing his deep faith in God. A true evangelist, Errol was dedicated to spreading the Word of God and inspiring others to live a life of purpose. His patience, kindness, and ability to listen made him a beloved mentor and friend to many. Whether through his involvement in the church or in his everyday interactions, he touched the lives of countless people, always offering a kind word or a helping hand.

For those fortunate enough to know him, Errol was a source of inspiration. He taught the importance of perseverance, of following one's passions, and of maintaining a sense of curiosity about the world. His life was a testament to the power of faith, hard work, joy in sportsmanship, and the value of close-knit family ties. He was a beloved son, brother, uncle, husband, father, grandfather, and friend whose presence brought joy and comfort to all who knew him.

We remember not just Errol's accomplishments, but the essence of who he was—a man of unwavering love, faith, and commitment. His legacy will live on through the lives he touched, the inspiration he provided, and the deep love he shared with his family.

Though your journey has come to an end, your legacy lives on in each of us who had the privilege to know you. Errol, you will forever be in our hearts; until we meet again, rest in eternal peace.

Roger King, Jr.

July 22, 1939 – October 15, 2024



We are sorry to announce that on October 15, 2024, Roger King, Jr. died in his home in Raleigh, North Carolina. Roger was born on July 22, 1939 in Linden, North Carolina, to parents Roger King, Sr. and Carrie Buie King. He joined the Air Force in his early years and was stationed in the Philippines, Thailand, and Greenland. He was in the Philippines when he found out about keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days, and this discovery led to his leaving the military as a conscientious objector. He later joined the Church of God International and, as one of the Church's elders, gave his heart, mind, body, and spirit to ministering to the people of God. During the decades of his ministry, he served congregations in the United

States and was sent to Australia, Canada, Jamaica, and the Philippines to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles with brethren in those countries. He also served for several years on the Church's Ministerial Council.

A funeral service was held at Dafford Funeral Home (Dunn, NC) on November 18.

Roger was married to the late Charlotte Saunders King of Four Oaks, North Carolina, and together they had three children, the late Roger Durhyea King, Sonya King Griffin of Mississippi, and Murial C. King of New York. He is also survived by nine siblings: Elijah King, Bettie Vann, Julia Hill, Burness King, Dwight King, David King, Uretha Brown, and Calvin King. He is preceded in death by siblings Laura King, Robert King, and Toni King.

Roger is also survived by seven grandchildren: Helen King, Debi King, Murial D. King, Ryan Griffin, Caroline Griffin, Hannah Griffin, and Lindi Forsley. And he is survived by two great-grandchildren, Jin Lee Thomas and Terri Janelle King. He is preceded in death by great-granddaughter Maddison Lee. Mr. King is also survived by his second wife, Mary Payne King, and by a host of friends and other family members.

Roger was a loving father, businessman, and life-long learner who lived a very full life. He studied at Shaw University and North Carolina University and once owned both an accounting firm and temporary employment agency. He was also a retiree from the Office of the N.C. Secretary of State, where he had worked as a programmer.

Roger also had several hobbies, one of which was flying small planes, a skill he had picked up in the Air Force. Though he suffered cognitive issues in his later years, he kept his mind active through self-study, fellowshipping, and offering words of wisdom to his daughters.

Last but not least, Roger was a servant of God who enjoyed keeping the Holy Days and who could be relied upon to deliver a sermon or provide special music by singing and playing the piano.

Roger was a dear friend and wonderful brother in Christ. We miss him, but we know we will see him again when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to receive His own unto Himself.

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

1 Corinthians 15:52

Feast Reports 2024

Auburndale, Florida

The Feast of Tabernacles that took place in Auburndale, Florida was one to remember. We only had a few weeks to pull this feast site together. Hurricane Helene and Milton made the St. Pete Feast site impossible due to the all the damage the area sustained.

We were so blessed that everything fell into place like it was meant to be. The planners of all the activities kept saying God had His hand in every aspect of this site. We were able to have services every day at the local church building and hold many other nightly events there too.

We were never at a loss for speakers or entertainment. We had speakers every day, and there was an abundance of people willing to sing special music each day.

Many events took place in the surrounding area such as a guided boat tour of the local Chain of Lakes followed by an amazing dinner and a lovely picnic at beautiful and historic Bok Tower in Lake Wales.

We had bowling take place one afternoon, movie and popcorn at the church one day, a family fun night with Bible trivia games, karaoke and tons of pizza, a yard party for the children with hotdogs and snacks, and a Bible study.

We had brothers and sisters from Georgia all the way to the northeastern United States travel to Florida for the Feast of Tabernacles. We had members that had lost most of their worldly possessions still show up and keep the Feast with us, just as we are commanded to do. The Feast of Tabernacles had an abundance of fellowship and spiritual growth and learning taking place. How everything fell into place was remarkable and a special blessing to all of us!

Pam Barnes



Great teaching, great food, great music, and great fun made for a great Feast of Tabernacles in Auburndale, Florida!

Galveston, Texas

The 2024 Galveston Feast of Tabernacles was held at the Historic Tremont Hotel, where we enjoyed fellowship once again with various independent groups present, including Church of God International-Houston, United Church of God, Living Church of God, Tomorrow's Church of God, Hebraic Roots, Hebrew Israelites, Seventh-day Adventist, as well as other independent Churches of God.

The Feast began with a Praise and Prayer service Wednesday evening. The High Holy Day Sabbath was highlighted by a Love Fellowship meal with over 50 believers enjoying breaking bread together immediately following the first day services (see photos).

The Feast theme "Secrets of the Holy Days," provided a host of prophetic understandings according to scriptures as highlighted daily within the sermons and seminars delivered by uniquely diverse servants of God serving the Galveston Feast site.

The Feast messages were spiritually fulfilling beginning with the First day Pastor Clifton Buchanan opened with a warning message concerning the Time of "**Jacob's Trouble**" illustrating through several scriptures what the prophecies foretell the people of God are to be prepared to overcome. Day 2: Pastor Ray Hall gave a "**Vision of the Kingdom of God.**" Ray provided comforting words illustrating a time when there will be no more war, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more death. Day 3: Deacon Jacques Russell presented the wonderful vision of "**One Flock, One Shepherd**" when all the children of God will be gathered together under the



prophesied Shepherd King from the House of David who shall reign under Almighty God and Jesus Christ the King of Kings. Days 4 and 5: Map Candidate Deacon Albert DeBolt presented a prophetic illustration detailing the "**Mystery of the Two Olive Trees.**" This two-part lesson outlined the biblical secrets identifying the identity of the two anointed ones who will rise up during the impending "time of Jacob's trouble." Day 6: Elder Ruben Rios followed up with a message of encouragement, "**Rebuilding The Old Waste Places.**" Ruben utilized prophetic scriptures to describe the role the faithful called-out chosen ones

will play in the rebuilding of the old waste places as spoken of by the prophets outlining preparing the planet for the future reign of Almighty God our Father and Jesus Christ our King of Kings. Day 7: Pastor Clifton Buchanan presented "**Atonement in Prophecy,**" where Clifton detailed scriptures associated with the prophetic fulfillment of Atonement, when Jesus Christ will truly be our Yom Kippur (our covering), showing how we, the people of God, under the ministry of reconciliation directed by the two witnesses as they are inspired by God, are brought under the New Covenant covering of Jesus Christ our High Priest. The Last Great Day message was given by Pastor Clifton Buchanan, "**Judgment Day,**" where Clifton made the prophetic case for the final destruction of the adversary, Satan the devil. Clifton also portrayed that Jesus Christ shall reign until He has put all enemies under His feet, including the last enemy to be destroyed, death. As written in Scripture, death shall be no more, and the sting of death will be remembered no more.

Clifton Buchanan Pastor of Houston CGI and Festival Director of the Galveston Feast Site presented the following Seminars: Friday: **Jacob's Trouble**, covering the prophecies in detail outlined in the Bible concerning the events connected to Jacob's Trouble. Monday/Tuesday Seminars: **Feast of Trumpets in Prophecy**, illustrating through Scripture what we as believers can expect as the prophecies of Trumpets play out in our lifetime. Wednesday Seminar: **1 Corinthians 15:52** was expounded, breaking down every single word and its proper meaning according to the Scriptures.

Overall, according to those who were in attendance, the Feast in Galveston provided a warm place of fellowship with a wide variety of Kingdom of God centered prophetic messages energizing all who had the pleasure of attending. Total attendance was over 67 registered guests, with an average of 35 daily atten

Clifton Buchanan



Salt Lick, Kentucky

When is the last time you attended a family reunion? How long did it last? Were there members there of all the live generations? Was everyone happy? Was there any friction? When will there be another reunion?

October 17–23 was this year's date of God's commanded Feast of Tabernacles, and October 24 was the Last Great Day. For this article I will refer to that Feast as a family reunion.

That sunny first day we gathered in anticipation of greeting family we don't get to see that often. Then having a meal and fellowship before we went our separate ways to get settled in our rooms at the lodge or cabin.

The messages were well informed as to what has been predicted and what we will experience before and when Christ returns. We were warned about scoffers, who is really in charge of the beast, the two masters, and how we most likely will suffer before we enter God's Kingdom.

As noted earlier, the first day was sunny, but it was sunny and a degree or two warmer each day. The warm degrees were most welcome as we had two baptisms Wednesday. A highlight of any reunion.

Not only was a majority of our family from the local area and other parts of Kentucky, but they came from West Virginia, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. And we ranged in age from eight to ninety-four.

We began each day with a catered breakfast at the lodge. After service and a catered meal there were activities we could all enjoy. One day we went to the Gateway Museum, a miniature museum that has a new exhibit approximately every other year. It is amazing what the artist have been able to do. It takes a lot of patience and a steady hand to do the work we viewed. After Sabbath Day it was sitting around the campfire with a meal of hot dogs and hamburgers. Does anyone like flea markets? Well,

that activity happened one afternoon. And then came the big night. Bingo. Just about everyone scored. One fellow wasn't so lucky. But there is always next year.

The next afternoon we traveled to Bardstown for a ride on the dinner train. It was a three-hour ride. And when I say dinner, I mean dinner. We had a delicious meal and some of the best service I've ever experienced.

After the baptisms, we had a fish fry. You probably have a question after all of that eating: How much weight did we gain? I'm not telling on myself or anyone. It was worth every bite.

The Last Great Day we said our goodbyes with the hope of being together the next year. Our thanks to those who worked to make it such a pleasant experience. Their effort is very much appreciated.

A personal note. Traveling between the Kentucky hills this time of the year is such an amazing experience. It causes me to think of the foundation of

God's city: "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a

topaz; the tenth, a chrysopterus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst" (Revelation 21:19–20). Only the Father can create such beauty that no one can duplicate.

These eight days were a family affair. A few of the family stayed and kept the weekly Sabbath with us.

That was nice.

It was wonderful seeing all the family together and adding to it. We are planning another family reunion next year. You would be more than welcome if you would like to join us.

Alice Edwards Lauria

Medina, Ohio

The fall weather in northern Ohio was beautiful for the Medina Feast of Tabernacles celebration. Quite the fitting backdrop for a wonderful gathering of brethren who came together to observe God's Holy Days as commanded by the Scriptures. Feast coordinators Tony and Angie Buchert once again offered worshippers a wonderful Feast, full of presentations and activities encompassing the eight days. Attendance in Medina was enhanced by the cancellation of the St. Petersburg, Florida, CGI Feast site due to hurricanes Helene and Milton. There were plenty of opportunities for fellowship during the Feast, including a luncheon on the first day, a Sabbath afternoon picnic, as well as a karaoke night at the church later in the week. Many attendees participated in off-site events that included autumn activities at a farm, dining out at scenic restaurants, and other small informal group gatherings.

Worship services took place each day, allowing for praise and worship of our Great God through hymns and singing, as well as offerings of special music by some of the brethren. Of course, sermon presentations and Bible studies were core components of the Feast's agenda. Day one had Pastor Mike Reis of Gaithersburg, Maryland speaking after an offertory message by Tony Buchert, pastor from Columbus, Ohio (Tony also being Medina's associate pastor). Mr. Reis opened his sermon referencing a talk he had with his niece as she asked him, "What would the return of Christ look like?" He used this question as a springboard to discuss the Tabernacle in the days of Moses, as well as the days when our Messiah tabernacled among men here on earth. Brethren were told to look forward to the time in the future, as described in Revelation, when the Tabernacle of God will be with His people. Pastor Reis also pointed out that all people will have an opportunity to hear, and react, to God's Truth, even the most evil and infamous persons in history. On day two, Jeff Flanick's presentation topic was, "Feasts of the Past: A Look at the Times of Ezra and Nehemiah as a Pattern." Jeff focused on Nehemiah chapter eight when God's people returned to Jerusalem after exile in Babylon. Ezra stood and read the *Book of the Law* to the people as commanded every seventh year in chapter thirty-one of Deuteronomy. Jeff pointed out the endurance of the people and their welcoming heart to hear the Word of the Lord. In similar fashion, Jeff read much of the *Song of Moses* to the brethren as recorded in Deuteronomy thirty-two. *The Song of Moses* gives us a bird's-eye view of the plan of God. The Book of Revelation notes that those who enter God's Kingdom, individuals who overcome this world, will indeed "sing the *Song of Moses*, the servant of God, and the *Song of the Lamb*" (**Revelation 15:3**). Medina's Pastor Bill Watson led a Bible study in the evening of day two where he discussed and unpacked the seventeenth chapter of John and Ephesians chapter four. Bill stated how each of us are at differing points along the pathway toward our ultimate conversion. We need to reflect on our adherence to the Father's Will, and His Ways in our behavior each day. Believers should walk worthily of their calling, striving to become a new person in Christ. Day three saw split-sermons by Dave Bezon and Pastor Mike Reis. Dave's message used "sea glass," those brilliant smooth pieces of glass washed up



along the beach shore, as a metaphor for the trials and tribulations a believer may experience in their lives on their way towards overcoming and eventually entering the Kingdom of God. We must take hard knocks in this life on our way to being refined and transformed into becoming someone acceptable to God for His purposes. Pastor Reis explained we must make choices, make sacrifices to be obedient in serving our Mighty God. Obedient believers are promised the Kingdom when Messiah returns. Those choosing to love and obey Him are from the mixed multitude (as was in the days of Moses.) "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God..." (**Ephesians 2:19**).

In striving for the Kingdom, we should be sure to get our message out with the technology we have at our disposal, to reach as many people as will come to hear the Word of our God.

On the fourth day of the Feast, Russ Camp, a strong supporter of the Medina congregation from Tennessee, spoke to the brethren. In a very relatable way, Russ spoke of the need to watch what each of us consumes. First, we should think of what food we put in our bodies. Part of America's health decline stems from the unhealthy industrial processed foods we are inundated with. Next, Russ warned us to guard what we put into our minds via the entertainment and media we consume. We need to spend more time in God's Word and less time on things of this world. To stay healthy physically, we need to exercise; to protect our spiritual health, we need to engage in prayer, meditation, and fasting. We must remain focused on the goal of the Kingdom of God. Pastor Bill Watson's message on day five began by



discussing today's church's vulnerability to accept misinformation. Since its inception, the church has been susceptible to Satan's *misinformation* concerning God's plan for mankind. Believers need to focus on the clarity of where they are going, and to understand that God is reproducing Himself to create a God Family in His glorious future Kingdom. To reach our potential, we must eradicate sin in our lives, always reflecting God in our deeds and actions. Day six had Pasadena's Pastor Mike James visiting Medina with a message centered on "keeping the fire burning in your tabernacle." We in God's assembly must be purified and tested through the trials in this life, so that we can be transformed into what God calls us to be: individuals acceptable for use in His service. Fire symbolizes burning up the impurities of the *old you* on the way to being refined into a new creature for Christ. Fire also represents the Holy Spirit imparted to believers after baptism. We need to use this gift of the Spirit and keep throwing "logs on the fire" (so to speak) in our passion for

Continued next page

God. We must remain diligent in His Word to keep our flame from going out.

Associate Pastor Richard Wright of the NYC congregation spoke on day seven of the Feast. Mr. Wright told us our work is to *bear the image of God now*, as we wait for the completion of this work in us, at the beginning of the Millennium. There is only one way to the Father, and this is through Yahshua, represented by the Tree of Life. Daily, we must do our Father's work, not our own, working out our

own salvation with the Spirit's help. The choices we make each day show the love we have for our promised **birthright** as children of Abraham. Bill Watson and Tony Buchert hosted a Bible study Q&A shortly after sunset, as the Eighth Day of the Feast commenced. Discussion took place concerning what do we believers call ourselves. Are we Christian? Does that category fit us, considering all the baggage associated with traditional Christian beliefs? Among other topics discussed were: Who is the "Us" in

Genesis 1:26? And what would have happened if the Messiah had failed?

The Last Great Day, the Eighth Day, saw longtime Kentucky member of God's Church, Larry Carmichael, give a very insightful sermon to the attendees at Medina. Larry asked, why are we here on this eighth day? Do we understand the Father's plan of salvation as summarized in Leviticus chapter

Continued next page

Hot Springs, Arkansas

This year was our fourth year to observe the Feast of Tabernacles in beautiful Hot Springs, Arkansas. The site was co-sponsored by the Church of God International and Christian Educational Ministries, with Blake Silverstein and Skip Martin serving as festival coordinators. Both organizations worked together seamlessly to provide a wonderful festival experience for all of the brethren. Registration totaled 149 this year.

The Hotel Hot Springs ballroom served as the center of activities for the Feast. Opening night began with a Welcome Service by Blake Silverstein. After holy-day services the following day, a BBQ Lunch was provided for everyone. Friday evening began the Sabbath with a Hymn Sing-Along with Dave Kern, followed by an Interactive Bible Study with Charles Groce. Other events during the Feast included a Pie & Ice Cream Social, Ladies Luncheon, Fellowship Dinners, Church Picnic & Games (with fried chicken and all the fixings), and Movie Night (with pizza). These events were well attended and enjoyed by all. In addition, our community service project was once again to collect goods to benefit Changepoint Ministries, which assists mothers with at-risk pregnancies who choose life over abortion.



Worship services were conducted by John Beasley and Dave Kern, and each day featured a Scripture reading and special music. Sermon speakers included John Reedy, Joe Weicks, Wynn Skelton, Barney Rehm, Bill Rollins, Bill Jacobs, Brent Kern, and Blake Silverstein. Seminars held prior to services were conducted by Colleen Noggle, Cynthia Saladin and Blake Silverstein, Ron Saladin, Donald Edinborough, Pam and Barney Rehm, and Skip Martin. Also prior to services, Linda Benton and Cynthia Saladin coordinated the Sabbath School

team to provide our youth with Bible-based lessons and many fun activities. Speakers, teachers, and volunteers all contributed to a very uplifting and edifying Feast for all age groups.

There were a number of attractions available to Feast-goers, including Garvin Woodland Gardens, Bathhouse Row, and the Mid-Americas Science Museum. Other things to do included seeing the view from the Hot Springs Mountain Tower, zip-lining at Adventure Works, Fun Trackers Family Fun Park, Duck Boat lake tours, hiking at Lake Catherine State Park, fishing at Blakely Mountain Dam, and trolley tours of Hot Springs National Park.

It has already been confirmed that we will be meeting at the same location for 2025, so make your plans now to join us next year for the Feast of Tabernacles in Hot Springs!

John Woodard



MEDINA REPORT, continued from page 12

twenty-three? God is *not* a failure: He has a plan to save most of humanity. The Sacrifice of His Son is a **huge investment** with the goal of saving mankind. Traditional churches do not understand God's plan, and thus, fail to realize the vast opportunity that awaits the unsaved *after* the Millennium. When Jesus spoke at the water ceremony on the Last Great Day, He was making a bold statement: "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink'" (**John 7:37**). This is speaking of the time when the eyes of those who died without the opportunity to know God's Truth will have them opened. These resurrected people will have a genuine opportunity to choose God's ways and life everlasting.

All these sermons and Bible studies are available on the internet for your edification. There are multiple platforms of distribution. The Medina congregation's **Rumble** channel contains these Feast presentations (as well as *all* Medina content). Please visit <https://rumble.com/user/COGMedina> on the web.

The Church of God International's webpage <https://www.cgi.org> also contains links to these presentations. From the CGI homepage, select the "Media" tab and drop down to select "Sermons." The "Feast of Tabernacles Archive" button is featured prominently at the top of the sermons page. Upon clicking the *Feast of Tabernacles Archives* webpage tile, you will see Feast presentations from not only Medina but other locations in the CGI family as well. Another option for access is using the website <http://fotwebcast.org> to view replays. Here you will find Medina presentations, along with those from other Feast sites.

It was a great surprise to have brethren from CGI Canada attend Medina services on the first Sabbath after the Feast. The Canadian group dropped by Medina as they journeyed on their way home from the Gatlinburg, Tennessee, Tabernacles celebration. Pastor Murray Palmatier and Deacon Jan Kowalczyk of Burlington, Canada, along with their families, stopped by for services and fellowship on a wonderful fall day.

One of the highlights of this year's Medina Feast

was the baptism of Jacob Collins, visiting his Ohio home from Texas. Jacob was baptized by his grandfather, Pastor Bill Watson (with the assistance of Jacob's father Darren Collins) in the brisk waters of Lake Erie. A large contingent of Feast congregants came to Cleveland's Edgewater Park Beach and witnessed this glorious event—the addition of another member to God's family by his partaking in the waters of baptism on the pathway toward becoming a child of God.

The Feast, the Holy Days, and the weekly Sabbath all help point us in the right direction, cycle after cycle. As **Matthew 28:19-20** tells us, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen."

Jeff Flanick

Jeff Flanick attends the Church of God International, Medina, Ohio. Comments/feedback may be sent to jeffrey.flanick@gmail.com.

Kenya, Africa

Two-year preparation results

It took us over two years preparing for these Feasts of the Lord in Kenya. We have all the reason to praise God for making this dream come true. I remember vividly traveling to the US to have a hands-on experience how Feasts are conducted. I was given the opportunity to speak at the Feast at Hot Springs, Arkansas, USA.

Special thanks to Elder Blake and Linda from CEM and CGI leadership for making this possible.

FOT 2024 invitation and advertisement

This journey started by inviting friends and brethren in person, as well as through an advert in my YouTube channel. As a result, many developed interest in joining us at the Feast in Kenya. My advert with the elephants generated more interest.

Finally, the Feast season came!

Our guests started arriving on the October 7. A team of 11 from the USA came in a week or so before the Feast of Tabernacles. Later, on the October 14, another 9 landed, making it 20 from the US. 21 brethren arrived from Tanzania, one from Malawi. We expected three from Uganda, but due to unavoidable circumstances they never made it. We had a spectacular team from our Nairobi congregation, a team I appreciate for receiving all our guests from the Lomo Kenyatta Airport, ensuring they had accommodations, meals, and transport to the Feast site, at the outskirts of Masaai Mara. A medical institution from around the area attended with over 80 participants. The Last Great Day, which doubled as a graduation day for the Christian Bible students, attracted 124 attendants. On most days the hall was full.

Programs during the Feast

Programs were tailor-made to touch the hearts of brethren who attended with diverse backgrounds. We were flexible enough to make changes whenever necessary. Among the presentations: daily sermons from different presenters touched many people, and what made a lot of sense was the Question-and-Answer session after each sermon. The "Remove the Glasses" presentation by Brian became an eye-opener to many attendees. Special and congregational songs captivated Feast attendees. The team from Tanzania invigorated the hall with the skillful use of music instruments. At one point, my son Kevin tried his singing skill with Dianne Webb, the founder of Tabitha Outreach Foundation Academy. All was amazing and fun.

26 souls were baptized

The climax of the Feast was marked with 26 souls accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior and being baptized into His name. 12 of these were baptized during the Feast, while 14 were baptized the previous week at Tabitha Outreach Foundation Academy. One among the souls was former Seventh-day Adventist Pastor Verenabilis (at the far end in the photo), who was baptized with his wife.

52 Christian Bible Centre students graduate

The Last Great Day came in handy with 52 students graduating after successfully completing 9 modules approved by the Church of God International and the Registrar of Societies,

Government of Kenya. Among them, 6 ladies went through the same training and completed the 9 modules, becoming part of the team that graduated, which included the trained former Seventh-day Adventist pastor who decided to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Robert Onsando



Above: Group preparing for baptism. Below: Elder Onsando performing a baptism.



Graduation day for Christian Bible students

Orleans, Ottawa

The Feast here in Ottawa offered us such beautiful weather as we feasted on the magnificent fall colours as well as on the services from our main Feast site in Collingwood with great music and edifying and enriching sermons—all coming to us via YouTube link!

Ten people, on most days, joined together at the Holiday Inn in Orleans to worship God. We shared many delicious take-away meals and enjoyed wonderful fellowship together in the Avalon Room. We also received and sent Feast Greetings to brethren in Collingwood and in the UK.

In the afternoons a few of us visited a couple of the Art Galleries in the Shenkman Art Centre right across from the Holiday Inn, and we toured the Supreme Court of Canada that include a mock trial that finished with Sister Lila pronouncing The Verdict sitting in the chair of the Chief Justice of Canada!

In the evenings we enjoyed good fellowship, a Bible Study with David, plus a biblical research report with Lila. All topped off with a Bible Quiz led by our Quiz Master, Ernie Marion!

We also got involved in a Service Project mak-



ing beautiful quilted Comfort Cushions and Treasure Chests for jewelry for A New Day—a charity in Orleans who rescue and care for girls who have suffered human trafficking right here in Canada! We'll be offering a copy of Pastor Horane Smith's recent publication, a novel entitled *The Queen That Wears the Crown* to thank Irene, our

Visiting Expert Quilter!

The Holiday Inn in Orleans staff were so welcoming and went far beyond the call of duty throughout the Feast because there were a few bumps along the road but we were conscious of God's hand of protection and we came to the Last Great Day praising God!

Collingwood, Ontario



The Feast of Tabernacles was held at the Georgian Bay Hotel in Collingwood, Ontario from Wednesday, October 16 (Opening night) to Thursday, October 24. There was a total of 116 people in attendance consisting of persons from our local congregations and a few persons from as far away as Timmins, Ontario and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Each morning before the start of service there was a reading from the Book of Deuteronomy (Chapters 1 through 34). On Opening Night (Wednesday, October 16), Jim French delivered a warm welcome message, and the evening ended with fellowship and refreshments.

Day 1: Thursday, October 17—Bernard Wilson delivered the offertory message titled "What's it like to be in the Kingdom of God?" He advised that the Feast is to be enjoyed to the fullest. He stated that in the Kingdom, righteousness will be everywhere in everyone. We are to rejoice and offer willingly. His message was followed by the Toronto Group who sang "The King is Coming." Horane Smith delivered the sermon titled "Behold I Create New Heavens and a New Earth." He admonished us to get ready because God will deliver what He has promised—a new Kingdom is coming, and we are called to teach the nations. Our hope is in Christ our Source. After service, all were invited to enjoy the Welcome Lunch that was provided by CGI, and lively fellowship followed.

Day 2: Friday, October 18—Kenroy Allen delivered a sermon titled "AI—Ambassadors & Intercessors." He reminded us that God has called us to be intercessors and ambassadors for this world. God wants us to be change agents, and there is a

reward for being a faithful ambassador. In the afternoon, there was an activity, "Praying in Colour," hosted by Sandee Willshaw. In the evening, Horane Smith did a presentation on "Jesus—The Christ" describing the person and role of our Saviour in more detail.

Day 3: Saturday, October 19—Frank Jesic gave a sermon, but no title was provided. He spoke about how we must make our truth stand in a world that does not respect truth, and we must use our teachings to get to the unbelievers. His sermon was followed by the Feast Choir singing "Total Praise." Bernard Wilson delivered a sermon titled "The Mountain of God." He spoke about how the only hope for this world is "Thy Kingdom Come," and no political solution will help the world. God has the solution, and many will go up to the mountain of God. In the evening, Lois Keane hosted a Family Fun Show where brethren had the opportunity to share their entertaining talents.

Day 4: Sunday, October 20—There was a split sermon, with the first delivered by Heinrich Peters, whose message was "The Kingdom Within the Gates of Our Hearts." He explained that our God is a God of family, and He is about relationships and family. We are to be imitators of Him and reflect His glory. The second sermon was delivered by Courtney Scarlett, whose sermon title was "Will This Be Your Last Feast of Tabernacles?" He asked the question, "What can we do to make it back next year?" and advised that we must set our minds on things above. There was a presentation by the Youth Dance Group, and after service the parents were invited to bring their children up for a blessing by the elders. In the

afternoon, families and individuals attended Family Day at Rounds Ranch where they picked their own pumpkins and enjoyed many other fun activities.

Day 5: Monday, October 21—Jim French delivered the sermon titled "Don't Blow It!" He provided a handout that outlined his sermon, and he admonished us to be careful we don't miss the opportunity to enter the Kingdom because of how we're living. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."

In the afternoon, brethren enjoyed an opportunity to use their creative talents in a Sip & Paint event hosted by Samar Smith. In the evening, brethren came together to have fun during a Games Night and test their knowledge in a Bible Quiz.

Day 6: Tuesday, October 22—Stephan Willshaw provided the sermon titled "God Is..." Stephan stressed that we need to know who God is. We base everything on our faith and beliefs, and we are to keep His commandments to a thousand generations. In the afternoon persons attended "Crock-A-Doodle" to paint pottery pieces, and in the evening, there was a Country Jamboree where the brethren played instruments and sang to country favourites led by Lorreta Jasper and Reg Benoit.

Day 7: Wednesday, October 23—The sermon was delivered by Dwight Chin. There was no title provided but he spoke about the permanency in the Kingdom of the Eternal. He reminded us that our destiny is to kings and priests, and we must be patient for that coming Kingdom as we are now in temporal dwellings, but we are promised permanence—mortality to immortality. In the evening, Kenroy Allen provided a presentation, "Spiritual Warfare," outlining the many spiritual attacks we are

likely to experience as Christians.

Day 8: Thursday, October 24—On the Last Great Day Jim French provided the offertory message with some handouts. He thanked the Feast Committee and all those who helped to make the Feast a successful one, and he encouraged the brethren to provide feedback on their Feast experience. He stated that giving an offering is worship to God, and God loves a cheerful, prompt, willing giver as it reflects a genuine and willing heart, eager to support God's work. The Feast Choir presented "Revelation 19:1" in

song, and Kenroy Allen gave the sermon. He asked, "What does the Last Great Day mean or signify?" He spoke about the coming Great White Throne Judgment and stated it was God's desire that none should perish. This is our day of salvation, and we can have peace knowing our loved ones have a chance for redemption. We are being judged now, and we are called to share the Word with all who we encounter. God helps us to stay faithful.

Wolson Stowe provided a summary of all the messages during the 8 days as follows:

We are called to prepare for a new heaven and a new earth as ambassadors and intercessors of Yah, representing His will on the earth. The Kingdom of Yah is not only coming but is already within the hearts of His people. On the Mountain of Yah we groan for the coming Kingdom, the ultimate solution to all things. As we wait, don't blow it! Yah is, and His plan is unfolding before us. Prepare your hearts and life for the fulfillment of His promise.

Submitted by Maria McLaughlin

The Philippines

The CGI Philippines welcomed and celebrated with much joy and gladness this year's Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day in four different Feast sites spread across the three main island groups of the nation: Tagaytay City (Luzon), Cebu, Iloilo (Visayas) and Misamis Oriental (Mindanao). The main festival site is at Summit Ridge Hotel, Tagaytay City. Brethren from the Malolos, Manila, Alabang, Naga, and Masbate congregations converged at this site. We were joined at this site by a visitor from the UK CGI congregation. All in all, 249 joined the celebration in Tagaytay.

Summit Ridge Feast Site

Feast Activities

The church, as a family, enjoyed the activities that were lined up for the Feast. We all enjoyed delicious, sumptuous lunches, which were sponsored by generous brethren. They unselfishly shared their blessings with us so we could enjoy the Feast. For the first time after the pandemic, we were able to hold the traditional *bayanihan* night at a local restaurant. We all shared enjoyable moments, thanks to the able hosting by our Naga brethren. Food was abundant as the different congregations contributed viand, fruits, and desserts, in addition to the one catered for us by the restaurant. The Seniors Day, hosted by our Alabang brethren, was memorable, and there was an emotional moment to it. The place where it was held was picturesque and afforded those who love to take pictures with family and brethren with the picture-perfect background. And, of course, our yearly Family Night and talent/variety show was spectacular, with us donning our best *ilustrado/Filipianana* or Gatsby attire. This year's Family Night showcased great acts (mostly singing or dancing), and for the first time there was an added twist to it. We had a fun game involving the whole congregation. On hindsight, these activities helped build team work, foster stronger camaraderie, and create stronger church bonding. After all, we are family. All of these activities were successful precisely because there was a lot of behind-the-scenes planning and coordination involved, not only to those who were leading the subcommittees involved but also those who had participation in the programs as hosts, performers, or as support teams. All of this was the result of good teamwork and contributed greatly to a pleasant and wonderful Feast experience.

Daily Services

The festival messages were all great messages. Somehow, these messages share the same theme and can be summarized as follows:

- 1) We are called out by God. One of the things we have learned about the Feast of Tabernacles is that it is a pilgrimage festival. That means we are to go out of our homes and go to a designated place where God chooses to put His name there and live in temporary shelters (Deuteronomy 16:15; Leviticus 23:42). This highlights the symbolism of the temporariness of everything we

have. But God called us out to become part of something that is eternal. We are given to understand that the faithful of the Bible understood this and so they longed for the coming of that which is permanent (Hebrews 11:13–16).

- 2) We who are called out are the family of believers, God's family. Several messages dwelled on or touched on the theme of family. When we consider this, we will find that our being called out as pilgrims on this Earth ends up in an even better place. Those called out will become brothers and sisters of Christ (Romans 8:28–29). There is now a shift to a family context.
- 3) We as God's children are to remain faithful to God forever. As family members, we are reminded that we are to remain faithful to God. We show that by obeying and keeping His commandments. When we obey and keep God's commandments, we are demonstrating faithfulness to God. True faith is manifested by a corresponding action (James 2:14–17). And when that is done, we become faithful.
- 4) We should be aware of certain prophetic events that are yet to happen and be warned against false teachings. The "being faithful" theme is being highlighted in the recent Feast because there will be perilous times ahead as prophesied. Two of the thought-provoking messages of the Feast were prophecy related (Revelation 11). There is a warning for us now to be cognizant of future events just before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is crucial that we recognize the importance of knowing the conditions during the last three and one-half years and three and one-half days before the return of the Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ will not return prior to these years and days, so we should not be influenced by many false teachings. We are not left without a signpost to know when this will happen. The abomination of desolation and the appearance of the two witnesses are crucial signposts to note.

Our daily services were made more uplifting with wonderful, inspiring, and powerful renditions of opening songs provided by the combined Manila-Malolos choir during the First Day of the Feast and Last Great Day. Special music was provided by the different congregations on a daily basis. It was all beautiful to listen to.

Other Feast Sites

We can be sure that the same happiness, joy, and camaraderie were experienced in the other Feast sites:

Visayas Sites

- 1) Bayfront Hotel, Cebu City—Brethren from Sagay, Maranding and some from Alabang, Manila and Naga congregations joined the Cebu brethren in their celebration of the Feast. There were 90 attendees. Among the congregational activities that made the Cebu celebration mem-

orable and enjoyable were the Family Night, Ladies Luncheon, and a beach outing.

- 2) Midtown Hotel, Iloilo City—About 18 attended this Feast site.

Mindanao Site

JM Horizon Resort, Initao, Misamis Oriental. The Maranding and Kiara congregations, joined by some from Alabang, celebrated the Feast at this site. Peak attendance was 62. As part of their celebration, they also had a Family Day, Ukay-ukay and barbeque night.

Other Highlights—Bible Studies and Baptisms

This year's Feast also included formal Bible studies in Tagaytay and Cebu using a Q-and-A format. At the Tagaytay site, questions pertained to proper observance of the Sabbath, faith, where the human spirit goes after death, and the fate of the rest of mankind, among other topics. The ministers shared their insights to these questions.

At the Tagaytay site, we joyfully welcomed to the fold of the church of the firstborn, Lehlee Amor McNiven, after she decided to be baptized. Prior to the Feast, there were two baptisms from the Naga congregation—Jonathan Osillos and his wife Melanie Osillos.

An Unexpected Event

During the Feast, we met with an unexpected turn of event. A strong storm locally known as Kristine battered the country and spawned massive flooding in the Bicol region where our Naga and Masbate brethren reside. Unfortunately, back home, some of the brethren from this area had their houses flooded and possessions damaged. Immediately, the church leadership initiated opening a *bayanihan* fund (invoking the Filipino spirit of communal unity and cooperation—*bayanihan*) to help them out. Amidst this challenging situation, those affected are all hopeful that they can get back on their feet and grateful still that God protected their loved ones and relatives. With the support of the brethren, we are sure they will be able to get through this difficult time.

The Countdown Begins

As soon as the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day were over, the brethren began anticipating next year's Feast. And so, the countdown begins.

As we look back to a most wonderful celebration, we give credit to where credit is due for the successful staging of everything to help create a beautiful Feast experience. So, we thank those who provided special music, to those who shared their wonderful talents, to the speakers, to the generous sponsors, the media and technical team, the Festival coordinators and committees, and to all the members who actively participated in the activities, sang their hearts out during the hymn singing, listened actively during the services, and by just staying joyful and positive helped create an atmosphere of rejoicing.

Ferdie S. Padilla

See pictures, back page



BRETHREN OF THE CGI-PHILIPPINES gathered for the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day at festival sites in Tagaytay City (above), Misamis Oriental (right), Cebu (below left), and Iloilo City (below right).



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

3900 TIMMS ST., TYLER, TEXAS 75701

Published by The Church of God International

www.cgi.org

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Texas 75701
Permit No. 254

Winter Issue

Check us out on the Web: www.cgi.org