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"Put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:13)

Winter 2009

God Is Not a Capitalist or a Socialist

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD (Isaiah 55:8)

by Lonnie C. Hendrix



Lonnie C. Hendrix

In the atmosphere of rancor and poison that permeates our political discourse, do we Christians sometimes forget that this is not God's world/system? (2 Corinthians 4:4). Over the last decade, we have all heard various people state or imply that capitalism is GOOD and socialism is EVIL. Nevertheless, we as Christians have to remember that both of these systems were created by men influenced by Satan the Devil, and that neither one of them represents the ideals and ultimate designs of our Creator. Actually, from what is revealed to us of God's mind in Scripture, we can safely assert that God's Kingdom will not be a capitalist or a socialist society! That is not to say there will not be elements of BOTH systems present in God's system.

Capitalism has been defined as the *private* ownership and control of capital—where goods and services are traded in a market, and profits are paid to the owners of capital, who then reinvest them or pay wages to labor. Moreover, capitalism has been associated with what Adam Smith referred to as the "invisible hand" of the marketplace—the notion that the pursuit of self-interest tends to the benefit of everyone. For Christians, this notion should raise an immediate red flag. The entire basis of Christ's teaching was against selfishness; remember the Golden Rule? (Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31). Even so, the principles of private ownership and payment for labor rendered are also clearly established throughout Scripture.

Likewise, socialism has been defined as *governmental* or *collective* ownership and control of capital—where the value of goods and services are not dictated by the market. Socialism and communism have long been associated with the famous principle laid down by Karl Marx, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." The underlying premise is that capital or wealth should not be concentrated in the hands of a few, and that it should be redistributed by some central authority whenever it does begin to concentrate. However, it should be obvious to Christians that mankind has individually and collectively proven his *inability* to administer

any system fairly or impartially. Who, then, is to decide how wealth is to be distributed? Even so, the principles of equality before the law and fair treatment for all people are also clearly established throughout Scripture (Leviticus 19:15, James 2:1–6).

God's system is *different* from both of these systems existing in various forms and degrees throughout the present world. God's system is based on love and outgoing concern for God and each other (1 John 4:7–21). It is *not* based on greed and self-interest. God's way includes fair wages, impartiality, loaning without usury (interest), and helping and giving to the poor. *Everyone* is expected to contribute.

For those of us who might think that God is strictly a capitalist, or that He favors that system, we would do well to remember what God has to say about the fate of a society built on the backs of the poor with greed and profit as the principal motivators of their actions (Amos 4:1; 8:4–8). We should also remember what God has to say about not paying your workers a fair wage (Leviticus 19:13, Jeremiah 22:13, Malachi 3:5). See what God has said about charging interest on money, and how that applies to modern banking and lending practices (Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:35–36, Deuteronomy 23:19, Proverbs 28:8, Ezekiel 22:12). Proponents of capitalism should read God's instructions to the farmers of ancient Israel about not harvesting *all* of their crops, but leaving some for the poor (Leviticus 19:9–10, 23:22). Moreover, God has clearly instructed His people to help the poor in both the Old and New Testaments (Deuteronomy 15:7–11 and 1 John 3:17). Yes, we are our brother's keeper. However, unlike many of the "socialist" persuasion, God *does* expect everyone to work and contribute—laziness is not tolerated as part of God's system (2 Thessalonians 3:10)!

What is the end of the matter? This world and its systems are NOT God's world or systems (Revelation 18:4). We should be among those who confess that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" and that we clearly seek another country (Hebrews 11:13–14). That is precisely why Christ instructed us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Brethren, in spite of any patriotic or sentimental attachments we might have to a particular system, we should all remember that God is not a capitalist, socialist, Republican, or Democrat. Ω

Old Shoes

And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God. Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness (Ezekiel 20:20–21)

by Jean Jantzen

The New Generation



Jean Jantzen

Husbands and wives both work; children run to and fro to a myriad of activities. They eat on the run, talk on the run, and sit in front of countless technological boxes. They are truly a people on the go, riding a treadmill that's hurtling out of control. The excuse is, it takes two incomes to raise a family—to have all the stuff we need, the places we need to go, the people we need to meet. They all have closets full of clothes, money for endless shoes they never wear, freezers full, cupboards bursting, garages and basements overflowing with stuff. The only thing they don't have is time. They are cranky, frustrated, and frazzled. Their lives and minds are as cluttered as their homes. They can't drag their foot out of the rat race. Satan has got them all tied up in his back pocket, just where he wants them.

"It's the age we live in; it's different now," they say. "God will understand if I am too busy for regular Bible study or prayer. He will understand that we need to support our families. He knows I'm working and can't really prepare properly for the Sabbath day. I am utterly exhausted and haven't the energy to get overly enthusiastic about it, but I go to services, don't I? My heart is in the right place...God understands...He loves me." But sadly, they don't know they've lost their footing!

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Are You Healed?

by *Ronald C. Bachner*

Did you go to the Feast of Tabernacles hoping to be healed by the love, fellowship, and compassion of your fellow brothers and sisters? I did. The Feast and my attendance continue to deepen and inspire my commitment to God. The love, fellowship, and compassion the attendees have shared with each other seem to be released more at the Feast than at any other time. This year was a time that I truly valued.

Our time away from our regular routine of life allows us to reflect on our lives and to determine if indeed our lives are on course and whether we are proud of our faith, calling, commitment, efforts, and submission to God and His Son Jesus Christ. It is a time to look deep into ourselves and ask if our relationship with God is real or a cosmetic "wannabe." Are we doing the best we can? There is no shortcut to building a relationship that is solid and will endure the trials and tests of a lifetime. It is done one step at a time, and thousands of decisions over time. It is built on faith (Matthew 9:22) and hard work. There is no substitute for this walk; no one else can make it for us. We must make the walk ourselves every day of our lives.

While I attended the Feast of Tabernacles in Niagara Falls, Canada, I and some others who attended felt the healing and love of Jesus Christ that was present and received. As we are returning home and returning to our daily lives, we should remember to live our lives with integrity, respect, love, and godly principles. God is a Healer who will heal you from the trials of life whether they are broken relationships, illnesses, misunderstandings, or just getting off course in this ungodly world.

While it may sound redundant to repeat again, God and His Son Jesus Christ should be the foundation of our lives. It is the thread running through our lives that helps bring successful relationships, heal our afflictions, protect our families, and bring us success in dealing with our daily trials as we walk through the hills and valleys of life. You must start one day at a time with small steps in building this faith-based foundation. Make sure your relationship is as real, genuine, and from the heart as you can make it. Do not deceive yourself or take shortcuts. Pray for God's continued guidance. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God instructs His people to humble themselves, to pray, to seek His face, and to turn from their wicked ways. If you do your part, He will do His part and heal you from your afflictions, which will make your walk easier. We must learn to trust God and His Son Jesus Christ more.

May God and Jesus Christ guide us all during our daily struggles. May you find peace and comfort in your life so that you can enjoy your Kingdom walk and the pleasures and fruits of your relationship with God and His Son. The church of Jesus Christ is not a club you join. We become a part of it by accepting a calling (an invitation) to devote our lives to the service of God our Father and Jesus Christ our Savior. Do not look backward as you seek the Kingdom.

I hope all Feast attendees and church members received a little healing in their lives from their observance of the Feast of Tabernacles. I did! Ω

Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if you, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and photos.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800-1000 words in either .doc, .rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent to either vancestinson@cgi.org or lloyd Cary@gmail.com (or both).

DEADLINE for the next issue is **February 15, 2010.**

We look forward to seeing you... *in print!*

Tabernacles

by *Richard Peterson*
Waterloo, Iowa

Let's all go up to keep God's Feast,
I heard the pastor say,
To meet with fellow pilgrims
Along life's narrow way.

In temporary dwellings,
Eight days we shall abide,
Rejoicing in God's holy Word,
With brethren by our side.

Enjoy the finest food and drink,
Take in the sights and sounds.
Spend time with fellow Christians,
That God's love may abound.

We set aside the cares back home,
How sweet this time away.
The fellowship of kindred souls,
I wish we all could stay.

The time will fly away too soon,
So savor every day.
Make new friends, extend a hand,
Let Christ's love show the way.

That Last Great Day, God's children,
Will gather once again,
To hear our Savior's precious words,
And sing one final hymn.

The tears will flow from several eyes,
As we prepare to leave.
It's hard to go back to the world,
For those who now believe.

How bittersweet the parting,
Of those whose hearts are true.
Hold fast the faith of Jesus,
His love will see you through.
HOLD FAST THE FAITH OF JESUS,
HIS LOVE WILL SEE YOU THROUGH! Ω

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A World In Transition

Many today are wondering what is going on around the world. It appears socialistic principles and trends are transforming the whole world. Over the last year, democratic “free market capitalist” nations have purchased overwhelming portions of their own business sectors under the notion of saving the global economies.

by Bill Watson



Bill Watson

Some of the most outlandish acquisitions and international “currency counterfeiting” ever to occur in Western free market democratic economies have been conducted over the last year. It is amazingly outlandish because of the unbridled printing of money and business takeovers that have been so blatant and out in the open. Here in the United States, General Motors (GM), recently subsidized (or acquired, depending on your point of view) by the U.S. government is now called, sarcastically, “Government Motors.” Incredibly, Abraham Lincoln once said that if the United States and its free market ways were to fail, most assuredly it would begin from within. It appears that statement was more prophetic than even he imagined.

How did this happen? And more importantly, why is it happening concurrently, around the world? These are complex questions that are multi-faceted and have to do with a relentless well-orchestrated and thought-out conspiracy (that’s right, I said “conspiracy”) that has been going on for a long time. Surprisingly, the patterns are traceable back to the origins of mankind. The strategy has been much the same over the centuries, causing God to flood the world during the time of Noah, and then again, confounding the languages at the tower of Babel. What is this strategy? Plainly, it’s been mankind’s consistent sins and endeavor to centralize his hegemony, culture, and political power across international lines. It’s been going on since humanity began to organize into social structures.

How Does This Happen?

The historical record of this human effort to centralize power has been highly influenced by mankind’s carnal nature. In the book of James we read, “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war... Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:1–3). This fundamental element within our carnal nature is core to what drives humanity to nationalize his social systems.

At the heart of some of the world’s most horrendous dictators, tyrants, and socialists was the insatiable appetite of ambition for power and control. Again, notice what James says: “Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” (James 4:5). Undeniably, the Scripture is right! Our spirit does lust enviously for things which belong to others. This has been at the basis of all warfare and control for cultural and social dominance throughout humanity’s history.

Presently, tensions of war and renewed terrorist threats are building again. How and why is this happening? There are many causes “in play” that contribute to the surrounding geopolitical stress—far too many to enumerate in this short article. However, it is interesting to consider some principles and trends that have been instrumental in developing the conditions we find ourselves in today. Perhaps, if we can understand the principles at work and trends that are unfolding, we’ll be able to improve our insight about where all this is leading, who’s behind it, and how it connects up with the prophetic words of God.

Understanding Some Principles At Work

There is a new term becoming more prominently used among what formerly were free-market nations: it’s called *State Capitalism*! This term is growing among free world economies because it best describes what is happening, and, at the same time, is more politically correct and acceptable than the real term: *Socialism*. Due much to the economic intercourse with communistic and socialistic nations like China, Russia, Venezuela, and a

variety of others, this term is now becoming more widely used, accepted, and obviously, more politically neutral.

This incrementally improved political expansionism with socialistic nations over the last two to three decades especially, in combination with the continuing emergence of these new markets, has resulted in accelerated motivation to develop greater trading relationships. This has underscored the reason for much of the progress in this area. Specifically, in China’s case for example, they now own almost a trillion dollars in U.S. Treasuries, and together with the U.S., continue to account for approximately 35 percent of the world’s GDP! Presently, Chinese exports to the United States alone amount to approximately eight percent of China’s GDP.

Actually, you could make the case that this imbalance of trade between China and the United States also had a contributing role in the present “global economic meltdown.” We shouldn’t forget that as far back as 2002, U.S. monetary policy stimulated an existing excessive U.S. demand for goods, which served as an expanded market outlet for an equally excessive Chinese supply of goods. Beijing directly contributed to the prevalence of “loose money” in the U.S. by recycling U.S. dollars earned from their trade into U.S. bonds. This strategy came from Beijing due to their decision to keep China’s capital account closed and the yuan (China’s currency) not freely convertible. They did this to avoid revaluating their currency. Obviously, this gave them the competitive trading advantage they were determined to maintain.

However, what many in the free world don’t realize is that when you conduct trade with socialistic/communistic nations, you’re doing business with and contributing to the success of the national political agendas of those in state (government) power. The reason for this is because so many of the companies are federally subsidized by the state (government); hence the new term, *State Capitalism*. Much of the broad-based economic policies of growth in many of today’s nations throughout the world are currently led explicitly by the state (government), fueled through investments by state-owned entities, and accompanied by powerful regulatory legislation intended to ensure the government’s dominance of the economy. This arrangement and structure ultimately leads to the destruction of the free market because the private business sector cannot legally compete, or “size up” to the unfair marketing advantage the government has over private business. Cuba, in years past and presently, and the revivals of socialistic policies in Brazil, Venezuela, and Russia, are good examples of this.

This alleged NEW *State Capitalist Model* (or in plain English, *socialism*) is fast becoming the dominant global economic model among many nations of the world. But why, you may ask? Simply because trends are becoming apparent; it’s the only way to compete in the global economic business community. Now there is a major reason for this. Essentially, it’s due to the vast amounts of socialistic political activity and principles implemented around the world; but additionally, and more importantly, this has led to national (government) wealth funds, otherwise known as *Sovereign Wealth Funds*. The development of this new type of financial portfolio is a SERIOUS THREAT to the “Free Market Capitalist Model.” Let me explain.

Many things have contributed to this, but there is one fundamental item that has given rise to this kind of national, or *State Wealth Fund* that in the past was not available for these developing socialist states. It’s real simple: **MONEY!** That’s right, Western revenue from the free markets is now shifting to parts of the world that never in their history had such prodigious amounts of disposable cash and capital. This trend is reshaping the international, political, and economic landscape. The Western “free market” model is under fire and fast becoming “outdated”! It no longer can compete with these changing economic trends that are redefining the way the world does business. *State Capitalism* is fast becoming the new “model” and fashionable way to structure your “national economy” if, as a nation-state in the community of the “World’s Order,” you want to compete in the global market.

There are many young governments that have launched into some very progressive (liberal) reforms, which have been instrumental in driving their economic engines, developing into some formidable markets.

Today, the reality is, emerging international markets like Abu Dhabi, Ankara, Saudi Arabia, Beijing,



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Brasilia, Mexico City, Moscow, and New Delhi make *economic decisions* about strategic markets. This trend has given rise to a new design of global competition that is not so much between political/ideological rivals anymore, but instead, competing economic models. Admittedly, when you *merge* economic policies of these particular “types” of trading partners whose obvious political agenda are in the backdrop, it makes for a whole new set of winners and losers. And that is what we are now beginning to see take place.

Unfortunately, with the present worldwide financial crisis and international recession, the conditions have been exacerbated, opening up extraordinary opportunities for “State-Managed Capitalism” (socialism) to become a potent challenger to the “Free Market Capitalist” system the West has been so used to over the last century, with the United States setting the course. However, that is no longer the case, especially since the U.S. has become the world’s largest debtor nation! Remember what God warned to those who would concede to borrowing from others? “He [foreigners] shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he [foreigners] shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail” (Deuteronomy 28:44). In Proverbs we are also reminded that “...the borrower is servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7).

An example of how “State Capitalism” affects the world can be understood by examining the present circumstances surrounding the *oil* industry. When those of us in the West think of big oil companies, we think of Chevron, Exxon, Mobil, or perhaps Shell. These are the big multi-national companies of the West. But these are hardly comparable to some of the largest *government-owned* oil companies of the world. Incredibly, sovereign state governments own the thirteen largest oil companies of the world. For instance, Aramco, owned by Saudi Arabia; Iran’s national Iranian Oil Company; Gazprom and Rosneft, owned by Russia; the China National Petroleum Corporation; Malaysia’s Petronas; and Brazil’s Petrobras. All of these, to mention a few, are owned by their governments (state owned). All of them have been nationalized to varying degrees.

The *magnitude* of this trend can only be realized by comparing the size of “market share” between the *privately-owned* oil corporations (multi-national companies) with the *state-owned* companies. Unfortunately, the privately held companies presently produce only ten percent of the world’s oil and hold only three percent of the world’s reserves. Comparably, the *state-owned* oil companies produce and hold in reserve 75 percent of the global oil supply! But this is only the “tip of the iceberg.” It gets more stunning and more sobering!



Understand: the oil industry is only one business sector. Unfortunately, for the Free Capitalist Model, *state-owned* corporations are now expanding into a variety of additional business sectors, from steel, power, mining, port management, shipping, aviation, automotive, telecommunications, heavy machinery, toys, and yes, even weapon sales. Undeniably, this growing number of *government business encroachments* obviously adds to the leverage of bolstering political positions of these nation-states, strengthening the growing “State Capitalist” (socialistic) trends that are presently underway.

Another Troubling Worldwide Socialistic Trend

This has led to another serious and troubling trend confronting Free Market Capitalism—it’s called *State (government) Funded Business Consolidation*, or perhaps more correctly, *Business Monopolization*. Admittedly, this is an extremely distressing principle that has developed, empowering these emerging worldwide socialistic initiatives!

What this means is, *State Capitalist* (socialist) nations are no longer satisfied with just competing on the economic level. Instead, they are intent on using their “market dominance” to further their political agenda, by leveraging the economic influences of their “state-owned enterprises” within the nation-states they do business with. In so doing, they are able to gain control of certain markets, generate enough revenue to buy out whole business sectors, or acquire assets of the “host nation” under the guise of “development,” as China is presently doing in parts of Africa. The obvious result is that over

years of economic intercourse, *political influence* is steered toward favoring policies that generate more profits through trade (economics), which then ultimately result in *political compromises, leading to government policy changes of the host nation*. It acts just like a virus, or the proverbial “Trojan horse”!

How it works is, these state-owned companies help facilitate these initiatives by providing government money to consolidate. For instance, consider Angola’s Endiama (Diamond Co.), Azerbaijan’s AzerEnerji (power generation), or Kazakhstan’s Kazatomprom (uranium), just to mention a few. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of companies now going through this transformation (takeovers), which is resulting in “state-owned” corporations becoming the dominant players in multiple business sectors. Obviously, some of these have grown enormously large and have become monopolies in certain business segments, blocking any and all would-be competitors from the private sector.

Some examples of this are: Russia’s fixed-line telephone and arms export group; China’s aluminum, power-transmission, telecommunications, and airline monopolies; or India’s national railway system, employing over 1.4 million people. These are enormously large companies, and cannot be competed against when one understands the governments of their countries own them. Clearly, this is extremely disruptive to the “Free Capitalist System,” because so often the rules are designed to favor the government enterprises at the expense of the privately owned enterprises.

Many don’t realize an *additional* item working *against* the private business sector, and that is, companies that *do* remain in the hands of private

God... has unconditionally
blessed our nation with so much
affluence and material wealth
because of promises He made
to our forefathers!

business people also rely on government patronage, credit, contracts, subsidies, and/or loans. Plainly, then, it’s easy to see that if your privately-held company is not on good terms with the government, who is in control of the legislative branch and is often in conflict with private business, just maybe [wink-wink], you might find yourself out of business, or your corporate assets frozen one day because your privately-owned company didn’t comply with some specific regulation designed by some government bureaucrat.

Undoubtedly, there is definitely an immense geopolitical movement of colossal proportions and consequence presently in progress. Currently, the world is turning into and moving toward becoming a “hodge-podge” of varying degrees of “Socialistic States” that are structured to do business with each other as though they were singular corporations. The fact is, businesses and countries are *consolidating into larger blocks* of economic and political influence. Obviously, as these trends grow and become greater in scope and size of scale, it becomes clear that unless your country gets with the program, it will find it more difficult to remain competitive in the world market of the 21st century. This is unquestionably due to the fact that the countries of the world are becoming a conglomeration of their business sectors, directly due to government acquisition, or indirect government ownership (via silent government partnerships and/or phantom government backers).

Therefore, it’s becoming plain: if you’re in private business and want to compete and survive, you’d better be in *good standing* with the government of your country. And secondly, the “National Government” had better be in control of large segments of a variety of business sectors if it expects to compete in today’s world market. In other words, the more socialized your country is, the better chance it has to compete in the global markets of today’s developing “World Order.”

What Is the Prophetic Significance?

What’s becoming more apparent each day is that the United States of America, the last bastion of “Free Market Capitalism,” is losing its appeal, compatibility, and most importantly, *credibility as a desirable and workable system*. We need not belabor the issues of the last two years of financial malaise and the pathetic socialistic compromises that have occurred by those politicians (both Republicans and Democrats) who have attempted to fix the malfeasance. It’s been a sorry effort by all those leaders within the political, banking, insurance, and industrial business sectors, and has only served to illustrate how out of step and inept the United States is with the world, and unfortunately, its own secular Constitution and “Christian” moral integrity.

The United States of America, during this same time, has had tremendous opportunity to *revisit* its origins and look deep within its *cultural soul, redressing* its relationship with those principles that have been so instrumental in its ascent to greatness. Regrettably, it has failed to do that, because, as a nation, one specific relationship during this intensely bad

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time has been consistently ignored: our relationship as a culture of people with our God. Yes, we have in many aspects of our society today abandoned the God of our Judeo-Christian Bible. As a Christian culture (and we are, fundamentally, a traditional Christian culture, regardless of President Obama's assertion that we are not), this is a major mistake and perilous oversight we are making as a nation that has indeed been blessed by the God of our Bible.

For us to marginalize this living God, who unconditionally has blessed our nation with so much affluence and material wealth *because of promises* He made to our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is just stunningly indifferent and derelict on our part as beneficiaries. Sadly, as a nation of people, we will be corrected for this unbelievable apathy. (Write in for our FREE 12-hour lecture series titled *The Biblical Origins of the British Commonwealth and United States of America*.)

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end (Deuteronomy 32:29)!

Conditions are building and circumstances are developing that will test the will of the American people again. Never in its history has it had to face such indifference and opposition to the fundamental principles of what underlines its social fabric. There are many forces at work, *within and without*, dedicated to taking down the United States of America. Lamentably, it appears that this time the global size and scope of the forces at work are well entrenched and may just be too ensconced and entangled to combat and resist with the "Non-Progressive Free Capitalist Model." It's as if the world is repositioning itself and becoming *one large socialistic environment*, which unfortunately, is revealing the "Free Market Capitalist System" of the United States and other free world nations, are no longer globally compatible in the new neighborhood of emerging *socialistic* nation-states that implement the "State Capitalist" model.

Over the last year, the U. S. has struggled with enormous fundamental compromises to its Constitutional foundation never before experienced. Many are saying that "the Republicans set the table and the Democrats are now serving dinner!" But regardless of our political opinions or observations, we need to be *brutally honest* about asking this question: do we as a nation and culture of Free Market Capitalists have a choice, when considering the direction of the global business contingencies now becoming apparent?

What are the alternatives we have as a "Free Democratic Republic" in the face of such gargantuan geopolitical socialistic (state capitalist) trends and changes?

Consider the current *progressive* trends outlined throughout this article that are *actually happening, right now*, all around us. Then, bear in mind the recent acquisition of the banking and insurance industry by the U.S. Federal Government, and in addition, some automotive companies/unions, in combination with "government friendly" corporations like General Electric, Fannie Mae, Freddy Mac, and the pending legislation of additional government encroachments with *unsustainable financial obligations* that are all designed to *further socialize* the government of the United States. Is it perhaps just possible our leaders see the handwriting on the wall and are simply positioning the United States for the ultimate compromise they now understand is a natural development and forgone consequence: *surrendering our sovereignty to the World Order*? Now I know that statement may come as a shock to some of you. Admittedly, it's startling to me, too. But here's what I mean by that.

Without becoming fanatically conspiratorial, or overtly pre-occupied with secular intrigue and extreme suspicion in our observations, we need to start honestly asking some very *serious questions*.

For example: is it even possible the American people would allow such a concession of sovereignty without a full-scale revolution? And what if we don't concede as a nation of free market capitalists to the socialistic trends that are gaining worldwide momentum and acceptance? Will we be able to survive and function as a nation-state within the socialistic competitive economic world environment? Or will it work to our disadvantage?

And additionally, if a new world currency were to be implemented, replacing the American dollar as the world's standard reserve, would the United States concede and adopt that currency? And if not, could the United States resist and still maintain global competitiveness? Would the American people stand for it? What would it mean for the exchange-rate value of the dollar abroad and here at home? What would the consequences be for the national debt and those foreign nations holding billions of dollars in U.S. treasuries? Would the Central Bank, issuing the new currency, forgive the debts (like a quasi Jubilee year of release), or would the nations holding the debt sell it off in mass quantities before the implementation of a new world currency, thereby collapsing the U.S. economy? What would the impact of a new world currency be on prices for goods and services imported from foreign nations, especially in areas of energy, like oil or natural gas? These are questions which just a few years ago would have been unthinkable to consider. However, with today's developing circumstances and conditions, they are becoming reasonably plausible and are gaining legitimacy and building momentum.

It's time we begin to recognize these are *actual existing circumstances* that do indeed surround us! Even Warren Buffet said, "The patient that's on the floor with the cardiac arrest is not Wall Street. It's the American economy." And Gerald Celente, renowned economic trend forecaster, believes the United States is on its way to becoming a Banana Republic, which will be marked with internal strife and anarchy over "taxation without representation," unemployment, and shortages of life's staples, like food, water, and shelter. This is not a very encouraging picture of the world's once greatest superpower, which is now the largest debtor nation of all nations of the world. History has proved that once a nation begins to lose its currency value and becomes weak economically (Babylon, Greece, Rome, etc.), it is destined for ruin. It's an oxymoron to consider a nation a "superpower" when in reality its economy and currency is weak, and additionally, is indebted to multiple nations of the world.

With that being said, where is this really leading us? What's next? Are there prophetic events ahead that need to be considered with *renewed perspective*? And what is this conspiracy mentioned at the beginning of this article? Who's behind it? Who's running it? And where are "they" taking us? Ω



Storm clouds on the horizon...
What lies ahead?

TO BE CONTINUED....

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Old Shoes, continued from page 1

The Old Generation

Some of us have been in the church our whole lives, or for many more years than we'd like to admit. We know the ropes, and we've been keeping the Sabbath for years and years. And to us old timers, the church can be like old shoes, comfortable and familiar. We know the Scriptures so well we no longer have to look them up. We know what the minister is going to say before he says it. We're familiar with the truth, yet we've lost that zing—our zeal, our drive, our enthusiasm. There is nothing new under the sun. Familiarity does breed contempt. Yet we've convinced ourselves we're okay. We must dig deep and ask ourselves: *Do we take the truth, the Sabbath, for granted?* The Israelites were put into captivity because they profaned the Sabbath. To "profane" means to treat with contempt, to trample on that which is holy. We need to realize that we are in a Laodicean attitude, and may suffer from all that implies. If we have that Laodicean attitude, we don't know we are walking all over holy ground with our old shoes on.

Jesus Christ addressed these lackadaisical Christians whose doctrines and practice of their faith were influenced too much by the culture around them. They had no zeal for the truth. They couldn't take their eyes off their culture's polluting values of wealth and self-reliance. They apparently thought they were "good to go." They were just going to slide right into God's Kingdom with little effort. Sounds like our day, doesn't it?

In Revelation 3:17, Jesus explains their problem: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The problem was they lived like everyone else in the culture, seeking self sufficiency (not God sufficiency), self reliance, focusing in on wealth, the true source (in their minds) of comfort, peace, and happiness. They were keeping the Sabbath in a way they thought was okay. Do we make these same blunders without realizing it?

God was very specific about His instructions concerning the Sabbath: "Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily...And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning [but some went out anyway]...And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days..." (Exodus 16:4,5,23,28,29). They failed the test. This is why we call the Sabbath a test commandment. It is a test for us today, too. We are tested as to whether we will work and do our own pleasures on that day, or keep it holy. Only those who have surrendered to God and obey God will have this sign.



Instead of being zealous and appreciative and prepared for this special holy time, we find ourselves barging headlong into Sabbath time, arguing over what we can legitimately do on that day. Throughout human history, man has always attempted to justify his behavior by cloaking it in acts of goodness. We cloak our "doing good on the Sabbath" in order to do what we want—like being called in to work for what we think is a good cause: health, fire, doctor, nurse, manager, etc. While the Sabbath is a sign to *us* identifying who the Creator is, it is also a sign to *God*, identifying who His people are. Through it, the Great Creator of heaven and earth not only sees who keeps His Sabbath, He sees the way in which it is kept. Our conduct on the Sabbath is a sign to Him. Do we put Him first, or is impressing others with our own goodness first and foremost? It reveals the degree of our love and dedication to His way. To see it as anything else is a great mistake. We should truly examine ourselves, "buy salve to open our eyes," and see clearly what we are doing—then repent and be zealous as God instructs the church in Laodicea. And if we think we are okay, we should ask God to reveal our mistakes and attitudes to us.

So to you younger generation: Examine yourselves—stop working so much, slow down, simplify your life, and put God first. Realize God will provide your needs and the needs of your family; take time to do what is eternally important—you'll store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

And to you older generation: See yourself as God sees you; get out of your comfort zone, throw off the mustiness, throw the old shoes out and walk softly, delicately on that holy ground. Turn the heat up on your zeal. Read the Bible cover to cover again, do an in-depth study of a particular subject that fascinates, excites, and interests you. Put special effort into making the Sabbath a delight.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 3:22). Ω

Baby Steps!

by Jean Jantzen

The saints are sinners that keep on going.

Robert Louis Stevenson

"I'm just not good enough to go to church. I feel like such a rotten sinner." Where would anyone get the idea they need to be perfect in order to start attending God's Church? Are those within flawless? What does God expect from us? What kind of people does He call—the rich and famous?—the intellectuals?—the righteous?—the do-gooders?

The first people Jesus called into His church were His disciples. What were they like? Who were they? And most importantly, were they perfect?

Most of the disciples lived in the region of Galilee, which was predominantly rural, consisting of small towns and villages. Galilee's residents weren't the cream-of-the-crop people—they were common folk, mostly farmers and fishermen. Yet Jesus chose all His disciples (except for Judas Iscariot) from Galilee. Christ deliberately passed over the religious and influential, instead choosing a group of common sinners to be His disciples.

John D. Payne writes, "Matthew 10:1–4 names the 12 men who are chosen by Jesus and sent on God's mission to humanity. The 12 names, however, are a litany of dysfunction and weakness. Peter is emotionally unstable, given to fits of temper and totally unreliable. Matthew's employment is morally and socially reprehensible. James and John are ill-tempered and place selfish interests above group loyalty. Simon the Cananean hates Jews who collaborate with the Roman occupation. We might say that Jesus' 12 disciples are his "dirty dozen"! ("Were 12 Disciples Original Dirty Dozen?" *Times Record News*, August 11, 2008).

Let's look at one man Jesus called along with his brother Andrew, and brothers James and John, all fishermen. Simon Peter was a hardworking fisherman—probably put in 12–16 hour days—used to getting his hands dirty and smelling of fish. He's not so sophisticated or insightful or successful or holy that we can't identify with him—not if we get to know him in the Scriptures instead of through our iconic stained-glass portrayal of him. Jesus finds him in a boat discouraged, maybe depressed, maybe in a bad temper, after working all night with nothing to show for his labour. Jesus tells him to let his net down. Peter obeys—first baby step in the right direction. Of course the nets overflow with fish. Jesus had miraculously filled the nets and at the same time demonstrated to Peter and his partners that He was no ordinary man. Recognizing who Jesus was, was baby step number two. Peter fell down on his knees and said what we all think when called by God. "...Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). We who need Him the most try to send Him away thinking we are not good enough, which is fine, because baby step number three is recognizing what we are.

We see Peter's fumbling attempts to follow Jesus (baby step number four) and can feel less self-conscious about our own failings. If we take the call of Peter seriously, we might begin to realize that discipleship isn't about being perfect, having all the answers, or even knowing all the doctrines. It's about grasping the knees of the One we're not worthy of, and rejoicing that He's chosen us anyway, and thus living in daily gratitude. It's about knowing that we can't do anything without Him, but with Him, we can do anything! Matthew is next, an unusual choice—a tax collector, hated by religious Jews for collaborating with the Roman occupation. The Jewish Talmud taught that it was righteous to lie and deceive a tax collector, because that was what a professional extortioner deserved. For a Jewish man like Matthew to be a tax collector was even worse. His occupation made him a traitor to the nation, a complete social outcast. He would also have been a religious outcast, forbidden to enter any synagogue, and forbidden to sacrifice and worship in the temple. He was in essence worse off religiously than a Gentile. Also notice in the Gospels the term "tax collector" is always grouped with the word "sinners" in the same phrase.

Matthew was well-to-do though, and held an enormous banquet at his house in Jesus' honor. And who was invited? People like himself—tax collectors and sinners—the dregs of society. Yet they were the only friends Matthew probably had, and he wanted his friends to hear about Jesus!

Luke 5:29–32 says: "And Levi [Matthew] made him a great feast in his own house: [Step number five is rejoice! Christ is among us!] and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:29–32). Jesus' purpose was not to hobnob with the rich and famous and the religious bigots, but to serve those who actually needed Him. He saw their potential and was preparing them for a job He knew each of them could handle.

Luke 7:29 says after Jesus commended John the Baptist's ministry, "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Luke 7:29).

Jesus admonished the religious leaders with these words: "...Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before

Baby Steps, continued on next page

In loving memory...

Jerry Bowles

Jerry W. Bowles

July 24, 1935—September 29, 2009

Jerry Bowles, 74, of the LaRue, Ohio area, died Tuesday, September 29, 2009 after a six-month courageous battle with cancer.

Jerry was born July 24, 1935 in Marion, Ohio to the late Jerome L. and Georgie A. (Burnside) Bowles.

On May 6, 1978 he married Linda L. (Medley) Bowles, who survives in the LaRue area.

Jerry was a member of the *Church of God International* of Worthington, Ohio and the Hicks and Chicks Square Dancing Club. Jerry was a former Ohio State Trooper, and was employed over the years at Tecumseh, Whirlpool Corp., M.C.I., and N.C.C.I. as a correction officer until his retirement in 2000.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Linda Bowles of LaRue; his nine children, Scott (Brenda) Bowles of Corpus Christi, TX; Jay (Sandy) Bowles of Lewiston, OH; Chuck (Kay) Jones of Marion, OH; David (Oakley) Jones of Marion, OH; Julie (Candy) Bowles of Toledo, OH; Joe Preston of LaRue, OH; Shelley (Don) Fyffe of Marion, OH; Christy Powers of LaRue, OH; Becky Clark of LaRue, OH; fourteen grandchildren; ten great grandchildren; a brother, Richard (Carol) Bowles of Houston, TX; a sister, Kathy Sansome of Houston, TX; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services for Jerry were held Friday, October 2, 2009 at 11 AM at the Boyd-Born Funeral Home. Burial took place October 17, 2009.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society.

[A photo of Jerry was not available at the time of this publication.]

Ω

Submitted by the Columbus, Ohio congregation

Those we love don't go away.
They walk beside us every day.
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
Still loved, still missed and very dear.

Baby Steps, continued from previous page

you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matthew 21:31-32).

Susan R. Garrett, professor of the New Testament, writes in *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel*, 1998: "When modern critical scholars read Mark, they ask, 'Why did Mark portray the disciples in such a bad light?' But Mark's earliest readers would have focused not on Mark's literary strategies but on the events depicted in the narrative. They would have asked something like this: 'What could it mean that the disciples whom we know as great leaders once acted so shamefully?' And the answer to that question would have been obvious: God had opened the eyes of the disciples, and had transformed them from ones who misunderstood and tested Jesus into worthy servants, even fearless leaders."

The Apostle Paul reminds us, "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (1 Corinthians 1:26-27, NIV). This was to give everyone hope.

Jesus built His church as a training vehicle for you and me—just ordinary people—ordinary sinners. With God's help, we can take those first baby steps and begin to change. The angels in heaven shout for joy over one sinner who repents. Be patient with yourself; God is. Conversion is a process that takes place over a lifetime, and at the end, we will be transformed into that perfect man. So to those who sit on the sidelines worrying about being perfect, Jesus says quit worrying and take that first baby step. Go to church. Peter, understanding this, writes, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

Ω

Tony Fontao

Good and Faithful Servant

Antonio "Tony" Fontao
September 16, 1950–
October 18, 2009

Tony Fontao was born September 16, 1950 in Havana, Cuba. He died October 18, 2009 in Miami, Florida. Funeral services were Monday, October 19, at Bernardo García Funeral Home in Miami, Florida. Burial was at Graceland Memorial Cemetery with Mr. Bill Watson and Mr. Ben Faulkner officiating.



Tony Fontao

Tony Fontao was the pastor for the Church of God in Miami and the Feast Coordinator for the St. Petersburg Feast site. He came from Cuba to Miami when he was 11 years old, and lived there the rest of his life.

Tony is survived by his wife, Aleida Fontao; daughter, Annette Tellechea; son, Alex Fontao; mother, Olga Fontao; sister, Margarita Fontao; and granddaughters, Natalie and Nicole Tellechea, all from Miami, Florida.

Ω

Submitted by Aleida Fontao

A Giant of a Saint

Tony Fontao will be sadly missed by the many members of the Church of God who had the opportunity to interact with this giant of a saint. We deeply mourn his passing with his wife Aleida, his children, and other members of his family. His last major undertaking was for the glory of Christ as he labored to coordinate the Feast of Tabernacles in the Florida area. We are comforted by the hope of his resurrection. I will long remember him as a champion of the cause of Christ through the Miami Church of God. I recall him as a warm, friendly, selfless and hard-working personality who had a deep passion for the spreading of the Gospel. I knew him as a cordial and caring minister to the saints. He was uncompromising in upholding the beliefs of the Church. My last encounter with Tony was three years ago, but his presence has always remained with me. On behalf of the leadership and membership of the CGI in Jamaica, I convey our condolences to his family.

Ω

Submitted by George Ramocan

Gone is the face we loved so dear,
Silent is the voice we loved to hear,
Gone for now from sight and speech,
But not too far from our thoughts to reach.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

Church News

A Fond Farewell



The Clearwater, Florida CGI Congregation



Terry and Robert Balsamo

Members of the Clearwater CGI congregation gathered together following Sabbath services on October 17, 2009 to say their good-byes with tears, hugs, and plenty of laughter for Robert and Terry Balsamo, who moved to the vineyard area of Santa Rosa California. Robert and Terry have been the faithful hosts of the Clearwater congregation for ten years, and will be greatly missed, but their move

provides an opportunity for them to live close to Robert's office and workplace. The event was topped with a cake which read, "Santa Rosa's Getting a Grape Couple." Don't be surprised if you see a CGI Santa Rosa congregation sometime in the future. We wish them bright horizons and many blessings, and look forward to seeing them at the Feast of Tabernacles. Ω

Submitted by Mike Roy

Penticton Family of God Endures

The future of the *Church of God International* in Penticton, BC, Canada will undoubtedly be like its past—enduring.

Eric Jantzen, visiting from Nanaimo, BC, facilitated Sabbath services February 14, presenting a moving sermon titled "My Way or God's Way." After services, brethren enjoyed coffee and serious fellowship. "It's always such a pleasure having a visiting speaker," stated long-time member Betty Riel. Ray Goodrum stated, "I really appreciate the opportunity to ask questions and discuss spiritual issues, which cannot be done when simply viewing a DVD or listening to a CD."

On March 14, Pastor Alex Kennedy from Winnipeg, Manitoba will be visiting Penticton, and Eric Jantzen will return after the Passover season, on April 25. Brethren look forward to personal monthly visits.

Over the years (1960s to present), membership has fluctuated from high dozens to low half dozens, but the spirit of members continues unabated. Pastors Bronson James, John Coish, and Alex Kennedy have each spoken in Penticton, and prior to his death, 17-year CGI Pastor Desmond Burke from nearby Summerland assisted brethren. Prior to her death, Emily Moore coordinated local Sabbath and holyday services. Members Gertie Moore and Olivia Kiewitz hope Mr. Bill Watson can make a visit for a Sabbath service and a public Bible Study to help rejuvenate the local congregation. "The public is always cordially invited to join us, and it is always nice to meet new 'Family of God' enthusiasts," said Gertie.

Historically, the city of Penticton and the Church of God have maintained a 40-year relationship. The first of many sunny Okanagan Feast of Tabernacles was held in 1969, with over 8,000 attending. Even while change impacted the Church of God, Penticton has continued to be a "melting pot" of sorts with brothers and sisters from WCG, LCG, PCG, CEG, UCG, and CGI peacefully co-existing. James Ludvigson, baptized in 1974, states "The annual Night to be Much Observed is a cherished time for many of us, because although it is both a solemn yet joyous time, it's a blessing to convene in a bi-partisan manner as the 'Family of God' and truly rejoice about our common calling." Ω

Submitted by James Ludvigson



395 Celebrate Trumpets in Jamaica

The CGI Jamaica Feast of Trumpets was an unforgettable high day in more ways than one: in attendance, in worship spirit, and sermon impact.

The Sagcor Auditorium in Kingston was standing room only as a holyday record attendance of 335 members and visitors excitedly celebrated a most memorable Feast. This included eight visitors who had attended the recent campaigns on the Sabbath held in Spanish Town by Pastor Ian Boyne. The previous holyday attendance record was 331 on the First Day of Unleavened Bread earlier this year.

There were also 60 persons in attendance in the Western parish of St. James.

The energy was high as worship leader and conductor Deacon Chris Hendricks led the congregation with inspired hymn selections and readings, and uplifting praise and worship songs with his team. The dynamism of the congregational singing was refreshingly complemented by the solo and ensemble musical offerings, concluding with a vibrant choral medley of *In Majesty He Will Come* and *Majesty, Worship His Majesty* by the choir.

In his riveting message, Pastor Boyne pointed to the glaring discrepancy between Christendom's expressed anticipation of Christ's return, and their rejection of a biblical festival which symbolizes this most signal event in mankind's future. Referencing several New Testament texts showing the inextricable connection between the Feast of Trumpets and Christ's Second Advent, Mr. Boyne reaffirmed the biblical soundness of the Church of God's doctrine on Trumpets.

From this foundation, Mr. Boyne pointedly addressed visitors, youths, and members on the dual outcomes of Christ's return. For those who have been called, who continue their rebellious violation of God's laws, by using his grace as license to sin, Christ's coming portends a dreadful penalty of God's wrathful judgment. For those who respond to God's call with a sense of urgency and a commitment to godly faithfulness, the return of Christ is a glorious hope. Using the book of Zephaniah as the backdrop, Mr. Boyne painted a terrifying depiction of God's awful wrath that is sure to come on those who would defy the Lord. He, however, juxtaposed this with a hopeful sketch of God's promise to "shelter a remnant of the house of Judah" who would "humbly seek the Lord and do what He commands."

He left listeners with words of hope that God will rescue His own people, and the encouragement to be a part of the faithful remnant who worship God in truth and righteous obedience.

For one young man who has been visiting for some time, this Feast of Trumpets was "the best Feast day" he had "observed up to now." It was indeed a high note on which to start the fall holyday season for all of us. Ω

Submitted by Elder Glenford Smith
From News of the Work 10/02/09

Church News

Chicagoland CGI Couple Weds



Kim and Jim Patterson

Chicago Church of God International members **Kimberly Dawn Kozak and James William Patterson** were united in marriage on July 11, 2009.

Duane E. Nicol officiated the ceremony at the over 100-year-old, quaint, historical chapel of Naper Settlement in Naperville, Illinois. Ms. Kozak was given in marriage by her mother, Mrs. Carolyn (George) Kozak, and by her sisters, Michelle and Rebecca Kozak. The groom's mother is Mrs. Carol (James) Patterson of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Ms. Diane Willett attended Kimberly as her maid of honor, and Mr. Victor Salcedo served as best man for Mr. Patterson. Special guests included Elder Alex Kennedy, of the Winnipeg CGI Canada church, Elder Benjamin Chapman, Ohio CGI minister, and CGI President, Elder Charles Groce and Betsy Groce of Tyler, Texas.

Following the ceremony, the couple hosted a dinner reception at the Bolingbrook Golf Club in Bolingbrook, Illinois.

Mrs. Patterson is a Claims and Scheduling Manager with HNTB. Kimberly has a BS Civil Engineering degree from Purdue University. Mr. Patterson is an Engineering Manager with Price Noise Control of Winnipeg, Canada. Jim holds a BS Mechanical Engineering degree from the University of Manitoba, Canada. The couple resides in the Chicagoland area. Ω

Wedding Announcement



Catherine and Curtis Jantzen

Family, friends, and brethren from many Churches of God came together to attend the wedding of Curtis Jantzen, son of CGI elder Eric and Angela Jantzen of Nanaimo, and Catherine Zach of Pennsylvania in a lovely ceremony at 4:00 Sunday afternoon, September 6, 2009. Cathy's mother, father and three sisters came a week before the wedding to help with preparations. Cathy thought only two sisters were coming to her wedding, but the groom arranged a wonderful surprise by providing for her married sister and niece to come also. Cathy's good friend Katy Plunkett came all the way

from Peru to be her maid of honor. Seven girls (Cathy's sisters, Stephanie, Elizabeth and Evelyn, Curt's sister's Sam and Amy), and his Aunt Nomi (matron of honor), two flower girls (Zoe and Avelyn), and six guys (five brothers of Curt: Ben, Josh, Alex, Ike, Paul), and Jeremiah Patton as best man, were in attendance. Curt and Cathy reside in Nanaimo. Ω

Submitted by Jean Jantzen



A New Arrival in Nanaimo, British Columbia!



Florida Couple Weds



On Sunday, October 26, 2008, Rachel Wendle, daughter of Ray and Angie Wendle, and Jonathan Simpson were married at the beautiful Mystic Dunes Resort in Celebration, Florida. A violin trio performed the music. Following the wedding was a wonderful reception with food, music, champagne, and dancing.

Jonathon and Rachel live in Orlando and attend the CGI, Auburndale, Florida congregation. Ω



Eve Anita Jantzen says... "I was born on October 24 at 4:10 in the afternoon to proud parents Thai and Alex Jantzen. I weighed 6 lbs., 13 ounces, and they named me Eve Anita."

Addendum: "I am a Great Grandma! Our first great!" Ω

Submitted by Jean Jantzen

Church News

Baptism in Long Island



I'm Gary Shakerdge (pronounced Shaker-ge). My journey for the truth began in 1972 when I heard the radio broadcast, "The World Tomorrow," with Garner Ted Armstrong on a New York radio station. He was talking about a period of peace and prosperity, but he did not say how this would happen. I wrote away for the booklet he was advertising. It was called, *The World Tomorrow: What It Will Be Like*. In the booklet, I learned about the Kingdom of God and the very disturbing time leading up to it.

Throughout the '70s, I continued to receive literature from the *Worldwide Church of God*. Then in 1979, I learned about the tragic departure of Garner Ted from the WCG. I lost contact with him. But in 1982, I found him again on WCKY radio in Cincinnati! Oddly enough, he followed his father, Herbert W. Armstrong. So I took this as a sign that I should go from the father to the son. I've been on the CGI's mailing list ever since then.

Flash forward to October 30, 2009! I was baptized by Mr. Mike James here at the Komanoff Center, a nursing home in Long Beach, Long Island. Since I couldn't be baptized in the regular way, Mr. James sprinkled my forehead with water, laid his hands on me, and said a prayer. I'm thrilled that I was able to get baptized, because I believe in the Christian faith.

The reason why my mother, Mildred, and I are in the Komanoff Center is because of a tragic accident nine years ago, and my Mom's stroke in 2004. A car ran us down on our own street, which is a side street. We were walking in the street when we had a head-on collision. This left me with a spinal injury. The impact of the crash was so great that it broke my wheelchair in half! I have cerebral palsy as well. My mom has dementia now. I know I'll be reunited with her in the Kingdom of God!

Ω

Rachel Simpson Baptized



My name is Rachel Simpson. I am 25 years old, and I was born and raised in Florida with quite a large family of five brothers and sisters. I am currently a college student studying accounting with two years to go before graduating with my Bachelors. I hope to further my education with a Masters in accounting and become a CPA one day. My husband and I live in Orlando, Florida with our two dogs, Jessie and Atticus.

Within the past year, I have achieved two milestones that have always been very important to me. October 26, 2008, I married my wonderful boyfriend of three years, Jonathan. All our family and friends came together to celebrate one of the happiest days of our lives. Then, almost a year later at the

Feast of Tabernacles 2009, I was baptized. Both of these events were very special for me. I got to spend these special times with my family and friends. I had the pleasure of having Duane Nicol marry Jonathan and me, as well as baptize me at the Feast. Even though Duane lives in another state, he has been such an inspiration and role model for me that I could not think of anyone else to be by my side on both occasions.

In the short term, I am focusing on finishing school, being a good wife, and becoming the best Christian I can be. In the long term, I hope to have a family of my own and a career in the accounting field. To make all of these things possible, I know that I need my family, friends, and most importantly, God. With the combination of these three, I know that I will succeed at anything I want to do. Ω

Amy Nass Baptized



When I entered the church hall at Myrtle Beach, I was greeted by Debi and Jason Nass. They were excitedly telling me about Amy wanting to meet me. She had seen/heard some sermons and was delighted that I was going to be there. Later I did meet Amy and her husband, Jake. We talked about personal issues and the subject of baptism was introduced. Amy was very hesitant and did not believe she was ready. I talked more and told her to think it over and that Marcia and I were going to Jamaica and would be back the following Friday. When we came to services on Friday, I looked for Amy, and when I found her, she said with delight she would like to be baptized. So we performed the ceremony that afternoon. She was also helping my daughter Debbie with Sabbath School and doing a fine job. Now here is information about Amy:

Amy lives in southern New Jersey with her husband, Jake. They have been married for over eleven years. She has two boys, Jacob and Jonathan. She has been studying God's truth about five years. Amy has a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Psychology. She is a certified K-8 teacher in New Jersey. She also has a Master of Arts in Administration, Supervision, and Curriculum Planning, with a Business Management Specialization. After her first child, she resigned from teaching to be a full-time mother. About six years ago, she started TelecomGiant, an IT consulting firm. She says that she and Jake make a very good team for the business. Their idea was to have a business that focused on customer service, with a staff of professionals who would be experts in different areas of IT.

When in high school, Amy was an overachiever, and became class president, captain of the cheerleaders, and salutatorian. She is the planner and Jake is the "make it happen man!" After losing her father, and Jake having cancer (he has been clean for five years), she has a different perspective on life. She is very outgoing and is a definite "people person," which works very well in God's family of believers. She is always looking for more tasks and exciting challenges. With Amy's personality, education, desire for duty, and now baptized with God's Holy Spirit, she will be a shining light for all of us to enjoy.

The baptism of Amy was a heart-warming experience for me personally. I had an opportunity to talk to Jake and her, and learn about them, their family, and business. She demonstrated a powerful desire to do right, and was conscientious and very understanding of her duties. I pray for her success in business, child rearing, and in God's church. Ω

Carol Penny Baptized



Carol Penny of Monroe, Wisconsin was baptized on October 29, which also happened to be Carol's birthday. She was doubly delighted to become a part of God's family by being baptized on her birthday. Double congratulations, Carol!

Ω

Three Baptisms in Myrtle Beach

We are delighted to announce that three new creations emerged from the waters of baptism during the Feast of Tabernacles in Myrtle Beach, SC. Sharon Ferguson from Virginia, Larry McCoy from Missouri, and Rachel Simpson from Florida were baptized into the body of Christ. May God continue to bless them and strengthen their commitment to live for Him. [Unfortunately, photos were unavailable at time of publication.] Ω

Repent,
and be baptized every
one of you in the name
of Jesus Christ for the
remission of sins, and
ye shall receive the gift
of the Holy Ghost!
(Acts 2:38)

Church News

Jim Patterson Ordained Elder



Jim Patterson's Ordination
at Myrtle Beach, SC

Mr. James Patterson of the Chicagoland CGI church was ordained an elder in the *Church of God International* on October 3, 2009, at the Feast of Tabernacles in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Duane E. Nicol conducted the ordination prior to the afternoon high holyday services. Participating ministers included Mr. Benjamin Chapman, Mr. Alex Kennedy, Mr. Mike Nolen, Mr. Tom Kauffung, Mr. Bob Alcorn, Mr. Wayne Hendrix, and Mr. Mike James.

Jim Patterson entered the M.A.P. program under the guidance of Mr. Nicol in January of 2005. During his apprenticeship program, Mr. Patterson produced extensive Bible Studies given to the local Chicagoland congregation and then formatted for posting on the Chicagoland CGI website for others to enjoy and study. Mr. Patterson travels to other congregations in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, and Canada to speak at services with fellowship groups in those areas, as well as at the local Chicagoland church. Mr. Patterson has been very instrumental in developing the DVD ministry of the local church with his sound and digital technology expertise.

Friends and family gathered together on the Sabbath evening to celebrate Mr. Patterson's ordination. He was presented with his Certificate of Ordination from CGI headquarters and a New English Standard Version Study Bible from his local congregation. Ω

Submitted by the CGI Chicago Congregation

Bobby Whitt Ordained Elder



Bobby Whitt's Ordination
At Land Between the Lakes, KY

Bobby was the first of a large family to be baptized into the Church of God. I was acquainted with all the family except Bobby. His parents, along with five sisters and three brothers, were attending the church when my wife, Barb, and I began attending in the early 60s.

Bobby was baptized on a baptizing tour in 1960. He was ordained a deacon in 1993, and served in that capacity for several years.

Bobby was given the responsibility of producing the Fun Show for the Feast of Tabernacles each year for seventeen years, and produced a very enjoyable Fun (Talent Show), as many of you know who have attended the Feast regularly at Land Between the Lakes.

Bobby has been preparing and giving sermonettes and sermons for many years, and has conducted a few funerals in his experience as a member and servant in God's church. He completed the Ministerial Apprenticeship Program (M.A.P.) within the past few months. The Ministerial Council, and I, being his mentor, with the help of God's Spirit, thought it fitting to ordain Bobby Whitt an elder in God's church.

Bobby also has a wonderful wife, Ann, who has stood faithfully by his side in all his endeavors. They have five children and ten grandchildren whom they enjoy very much. Our prayer is that we in the Church of God can continue to enjoy the service and enjoyment Bobby and Ann have to offer as a wonderful team. This ordination will give them an opportunity to serve in an even greater capacity.

May God's grace and peace be with them now and forever. Ω

Submitted by by Ferrell Vincent

Ed Szalankiewicz Ministerial Recognition



Ed and Linda Szalankiewicz with
Bill Watson at Niagara Falls, ON

Ed Szalankiewicz, of the Cranberry, Pennsylvania congregation, received his ministerial credentials from the *Church of God International* at this year's Feast of Tabernacles in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Mr. Bill Watson officiated at this joyous event.

A longtime member of God's Church, Ed was baptized on May 25, 1972. He was ordained as an elder in the United Church of God on the Feast of Trumpets, September 6, 1994.

Ed and his lovely wife, Linda, have two sons, Matthew and Michael. They reside in New Castle, Pennsylvania, and are members of the Cranberry congregation. Ω

Submitted by Wayne Hendrix

Penticton Deacon Ordained



Alex Kennedy, James Ludvigson

On August 22, 2009, James Ludvigson was ordained to the office of deacon. The Penticton congregation was formerly tended to by the late Desmond Burke, then shepherded by longtime member Emily Moore, who died in 2007.

James first heard Garner Ted Armstrong on the radio back in 1967, and was baptized in 1974. He has his roots in the *Worldwide Church of God* and *United Church of God*. James first began attending the *Church of God International* in August of 2004, and has been giving sermonettes locally since February.

Mr. Ludvigson has six children and eight grandchildren.

To quote him, "Following the sage lead of Mrs. Loma D. Armstrong, my favorite Bible scripture is Psalm 133:1." Ω

Watch Sabbath Services Live On Your Computer!

You are invited to attend church services in Tyler, TX or Nanaimo, BC via the Internet. We invite you to tune in Saturdays:

Tyler, TX, 12:00 Noon, EST at www.cgi.org
Nanaimo, BC, 2:30 PM, EST at www.cognanaimo.org

Simply go to either website and look for the link to "Live Webcasting." Best results are achieved with a high-speed Internet connection. *Please be patient and be prepared to "retry the link" until you connect.*

Coming Soon! Sermon Transcripts on line.

Church News

NEW!

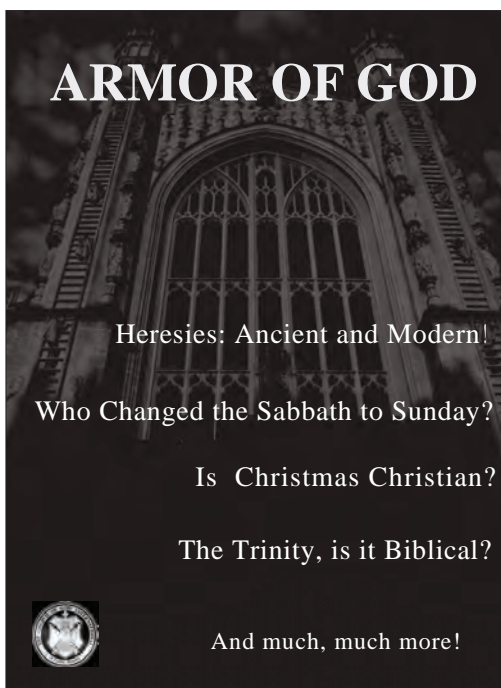
Armor of God Periodical

NEW!

We have a new resource of written material for our readers to study and gain much good and useful information. It is the *Armor of God* periodical. Below is an editorial by Mr. Bill Watson regarding this publication and the recent issue. You can send for your copy or download it from our website at www.cgi.org.

The story of the Church of God down through the annals of history is a stunning saga indeed! It is written in the blood, sweat, and tears of literally tens of thousands of God-fearing devoted people simply caught in the crossfire of so-called "Christian" religious persecution. Over the centuries, this *true story* develops into an epic that is sometimes stranger than fiction when considering who was responsible for inflicting what some considered a merciless genocide of quiet, hard-working, God-fearing family communities—all in the name of Jesus Christ and Rome's Universal (Catholic) Church.

What is the truth concerning these historical benchmarks that discolor and blister the alleged Christian Church? How is it that a "work of charity" in the name of Jesus Christ can continue to be so revered in our modern day and yet be responsible for so much innocent bloodshed and not be held accountable, but instead remain believable? Is it because most of today's secular society and culture is unaware?



Perhaps they just don't care because *pop culture* has them too distracted. Maybe they really are too busy to take the time to search out the information that discloses these atrocities and changes. Or perhaps many have just simply lost a love for God's truth.

Whatever the reason, this issue of the *Armor of God* has assembled a variety of in-depth, hard-hitting articles revealing information which for some will be extremely eye-opening regarding Christian church history. You will be exposed to an assortment of particular specifics concerning so-called cherished *Christian* traditions and beliefs that will explain there is nothing Christian about them; and furthermore, Jesus, His apostles, and the New Testament do not mention them at all.

We have attempted to make it easy for you, the reader, to obtain some of this basic fundamental information that should be easy for you to evaluate, and if you choose, access additional information for further education in this segment of ecclesiastical history. So pay particular attention in the course of the articles and sidebars for recommendations for more *FREE* material designed to improve your awareness of just how much of our Lord Jesus Christ's teachings have been compromised and abandoned. If you are sincerely seeking the truth, this issue should be of particular value to you. Remember, our Lord said, "I am the truth and the light..." and yes, the truth will indeed set you free! Ω

Is Christmas Christian?

“Why, what a strange question,” most would object. “Of course Christmas is Christian! Why, it commemorates the birth of the Savior of the world—Jesus Christ—doesn't it?” *Does it really? Or is it something we have been unconsciously spoon fed and taken for granted?*

In spite of all its seeming importance to millions, most remain *completely ignorant* that its *true origins* are rooted in paganism! But are pagan customs all right, so long as used in honor of Christ?

Do not make up your mind until you have read our two *FREE* offers: *Facts You Should Know About Christmas*, and *Is Christmas Christian?* You will be shocked, surprised, and astounded! Indeed, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Request your copies now, today, before you forget!

CGI Web Site: www.cgi.org

CGI E-mail: info@cgi.org

Phone: (903) 939-2929

Kentucky Love Feast

This Feast was truly a “Love Feast”!

We presented *two* “Lovebird Awards” this year, adding to the nine presented to married couples since 2002. It can be given to singles also, because love has many facets. One was presented to *Ferrell and Barbara Vincent* of Louisville, Kentucky, not only because they love each other, but because of their great love for the church and spreading the gospel. The other was presented to *Ken and Rosie Baker* of the Indianapolis, Indiana congregation. They are so much in love, and also have kind and understanding hearts of compassion toward the brethren.

A special thank you goes to *Fred and Ruthie Weed*, who go out of their way to serve the brethren. Every year, the ladies are blessed to choose a gift from Ruthie's craft table. This year, there were beautiful braided rugs, which went like hot cakes! Also this year, Fred had a table of his own, filled with wonderful woodcraft plaques that he worked on all year, and all were able to choose a plaque for their own.



Ken and Rosie Baker

My “Sabbath School Advocacy Program” was successful this year with its visual displays. My reading display featured the works of Laura Ingalls Wilder, who authored *Little House on the Prairie*. Another display was about the races, which featured porcelain dolls to represent each of them. God has made us all of one



Ferrell and Barbara Vincent

blood. (I heard somewhere that all human beings are 99.6 percent the same, and it makes one wonder why people fight about the other .4 percent!) Another display was a breadbox with a Bible inside, representing the “Bread of Life.” I also had on display a shell with six pearls in it, referencing the “pearl of great price.” In addition, there was a picture of nine snowflakes which looked like beautiful jewels, referring to the treasures of snow mentioned in Job 28:32.

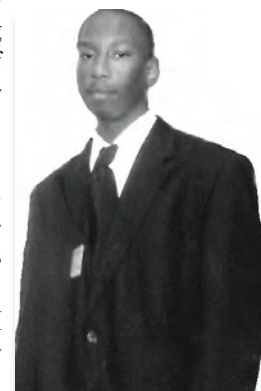
My program provided healthier snacks for the youth this year. There was fresh fruit, raisins, a *little* candy, and three kinds of cookies from Miss Nancy's kitchen.

Jerry Fink and *Mary Jane Byrd* served very well in the Sabbath School program. I believe that God has given young people a “special ministry” of singing and music, and “Youth Day” is always very special at the Feast.

Thanks also go to 16-year-old *Davarious Garrison*, who played the keyboard several times during the Feast. Davarious attends the Memphis, Tennessee congregation with his family, Dennis and Deborah Fouse, and his sister, Denisha.

Because of health problems, I am not sure just what I will be able to do in the future. But I have surely enjoyed this “spiritual adventure” we had in Land Between the Lakes this year!

Submitted by Nancy Miles



Ω Davarious Garrison

Feast Reports, 2009

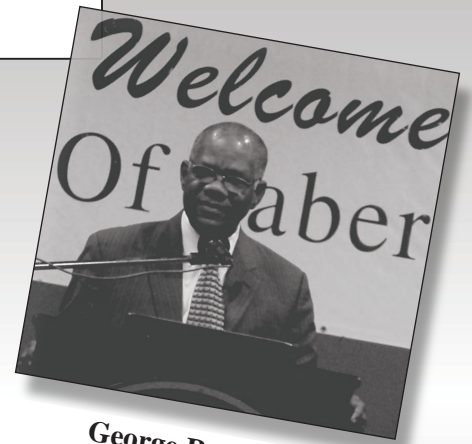
Feast of Tabernacles Land Between the Lakes, Kentucky



Clint Mahoney



Ferrell Vincent, Bobby and Ann Whitt



George Ramocan



Bill Russ



Nathan Kelley



Eugene Lucka



Mark Schwarzkopf



Kateena Leforge

What an amazing Feast we had this year! We welcomed two new brethren into the body of Christ. A long-time servant of God was ordained minister. Many bold and fresh messages were provided throughout the Feast. Children filled the Sabbath School and provided special music on Youth Day. A Senior Luncheon, Concert, Youth Picnic and Cookout, Church Picnic and Songfest, Talent Show and Family Dance, and many other activities were enjoyed, along with two free catered Church Luncheons. The Feast is the best time of year—why would anyone miss it!

Feast goers were met with warm and respectful greetings from *Ann Whitt* and *Marilyn Kidd* as they registered for the Feast. *Mr. Jack Stephenson* of Indianapolis provided rides from the parking lot with his trusty golf cart for those in need.

At the first service, before giving the offeratory, *Mr. James Pollitte*, of Morehead, KY, welcomed everyone to the **15th** annual LBL Feast of Tabernacles. *Mr. George Ramocan*, an elder from Kingston, Jamaica (now of Toronto, Canada) provided prophetic insight into the global meltdown and the opportunity it provided the Vatican to call for a world political authority. The afternoon service began with special music from LBL's talented song leader, *Mr. Fred Weed*, followed by a sermonette by *Mr. Nathan Kelly* and a sermon by *Mr. Clint Mahoney*. Mr. Kelly, a deacon from Morehead, KY, presented an exciting message on God's awesome power and made known God's Holy Spirit is more powerful than anything on earth, and His people are a part of a better resurrection. Mr. Mahoney, pastor in Alabama and Georgia, presented a message of hope and encouragement of the gift of salvation and affirmed the purpose of God's holydays and the salvation process.

The second day, a sermonette was presented by *Mr. Mark Skiba*, a member of the Columbus, Ohio congregation, followed by special music from *Mr. David Shoemaker*, accompanied on piano by *Mrs. Anna Werline* of Morehead, KY, and a sermon by *Mr. George Ramocan*. Mr. Skiba unveiled what "going the distance and winning" means. He made known our race should be run with patience and a willing heart and mind. Mr. Ramocan sharply defined "the power of Christian living" and what God is offering Christians (i.e., eternal life).

The third day, *Mr. James Pollitte* presented a split-sermon on the "Post Resurrection," debunking the worldly notion of going to heaven after death, and posed and answered the questions, do we have to guess our future state, must we stay ignorant, and does the Bible describe what we will be like in the resurrection. After special music by the choir, a split-sermon was presented by *Mr. Marvin Wyke*, pastor of Nashville and Jackson, TN, who made known that the doctrine we stand on is firmly implanted in the Bible and "bringing forth fruit" is instrumental in a Christian's life. A free Senior Luncheon and a twilight concert by *Kateena LeForge* closed the third day.

The fourth day, *Mr. Mark Schwarzkopf*, deacon from Indianapolis, presented a sermonette titled "Glad or Sad," followed by special music by *Ms. Priscilla Hawkins*, and a sermon by *Mr. Bill Russ*, "From Fasting to My Cup Runneth Over," and another free Church Luncheon and Youth Picnic/Cookout. Mr. Schwarzkopf challenged us to be active Christians, conscious of being bogged down with worldly cares, and to guard our hearts, seek the path of righteousness, and store our treasures in heaven, not on earth. Mr. Bill Russ, pastor of Knoxville, TN, disclosed the reason for keeping the Feast.

The fifth day, *Mr. Eugene Lucka*, deacon from Columbus, Ohio, revealed "a worldwide pivotal event" concerning the end time. He made known many false premises, ideas, and theories concerning the end time and provided prophetic insight into the kings of the north and south. *Mr. Ferrell Vincent*, a minister of the Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee regions, presented a message of "Preparing for the Kingdom" by exercising love for one another through Jesus Christ. After services, everyone enjoyed a free Church Picnic and Songfest at the Pavilion along the edge of beautiful Kentucky Lake.

On the sixth day, *Mr. Mark Saulsberry* of Nashville, TN presented a sermonette followed by special music from the LBL Quintet and a sermon by *Mr. Bronson James*, pastor of the Detroit, MI congregation. Mr. Saulsberry's message, "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow," encouraged us to spend our time wisely and finish the race, as the time will come when our tabernacle will end.

Mr. James' message, "Healing in His Wings," connected the promises of God to the protection and healing of all who remember and obey His commandments. After services, a Talent Show, followed by a Family Dance, provided the most enjoyable evening.

On the seventh day, the Sabbath school director, *Mr. Jerry Fink*, and the Sabbath school staff and class provided special music, followed by split-sermons from *Mr. Fred Weed* and *Mr. Bobby Whitt*. Mr. Weed presented the message, "Train Done Gone" to emphasize our need as Christians to be aware of our calling lest we forget and miss the train to God's Kingdom. Mr. Bobby Whitt, deacon and soon-to-be-ordained minister from Indianapolis, made known the "Profile of Paul," encouraging Christians to continue fighting the good fight. Topping off the day, *Mr. Charles Groce* presented a Bible Study on "Discovering How to Live in God's Kingdom." Mr. Groce made known in order to have a kingdom, we need laws, territory, servants, and a king.

The Last Great Day 2009 was both a glad and sad occasion. Happily, we spent one last day together learning God's Word. On the other hand, it was a very sad day, because we don't know what this world will bring in another year. Mr. Bronson James presented the offeratory and reminded us to always be thankful for God's blessings. After special music by the LBL Choir, we were treated with the ordination of Mr. Bobby Whitt from the Indianapolis congregation as another minister in the Church and Army of God. The final message was presented by Mr. Charles Groce, titled "Making God's List."

Mr. Groce revealed through Scripture the truth about the resurrections and the fact that salvation is obtained only through Jesus Christ of Nazareth. All in all, we were provided a wellspring of spiritual food, fellowship, and knowledge of God's future Kingdom on this earth.

Ω

Submitted by David Bumgardner

Feast Reports, 2009

Wagoner, OK Feast 2009

This year's Feast in Wagoner was a delight to all who joined together in worship to "keep the Feast of the Lord." With our usual activities of the Family Dance Night, the wonderful Fun-Show, Hay Ride, Ice Cream and Cobbler Socials, and the Pot-Luck Picnic, our fellowship was a joy that will sustain us for another year.

The song leaders and those gifted brothers and sisters who laid their offerings of special music before the Lord led us into an appropriate mindset of praise for our Father in heaven. Worship is the most important part of our assembly, and we began each day's observance with the perfect lead-in to worship through song.

We had the pleasure of hearing sermons from several gifted speakers. Beginning with *Mr. Dean Roberts* and *Mr. Bronson James*, who spoke the first high day of the Feast, the brethren listened as the theme of the Feast messages unfolded. The other sermon presenters were *Mr. Charles Groce*, *Mr. Wynn Skelton*, *Mr. Wayne Turnbull*, and *Mr. Ron Elkins*. We also enjoyed several sermonettes by *Mr. Drew De Jarnette*, *Mr. Buddy Brown*, *Mr. Denny Ledford*, and *Mr. Daniel De Jarnette*.

Each sermon/sermonette built one upon the other to paint a clear picture of what our goal ultimately is and what God expects of us in the here and now. We were encouraged to keep our eyes on the prize, but we were cautioned to remember that though the Feast models a beautiful time to come, it also depicts the fact that it is a very present experience with a call to action for the people of God. We were reminded that the Feast of Tabernacles is not based on a place, but on a way of life.

For many, the news that we would not be celebrating the Feast in Wagoner next year was heart-wrenching. We, over the years, have grown attached to the picturesque setting of the Western Hills Resort and have come to view it as the ideal place to depict the coming Kingdom of God. With its natural setting and separation from the world at large, the Feast in Wagoner has been a haven of rest for most who have stayed here. But the fact is that we as God's people are not supposed to be attaching ourselves to physical things. We are instead compelled through Scripture to break away from the bonds of the flesh and all it has to offer and seek instead those spiritual things that strengthen us.

The Feast is a time of spiritual regeneration for the people of God. But as I stated earlier, it carries with it a call to action. That call is to take the good news of the coming Kingdom of God that we just celebrated, out to this sick and dying world. We, as brothers and sisters in Christ, rely on one another to accomplish this task, both individually and corporately, a fact that was brought to clarity in the Bible Study at this year's Feast, conducted by *Mr. Frank Marang*, with *Mr. Ron Elkins* assisting.

When asked about the Bible Study, *Mr. Elkins* replied, "The topic was *Our Need for Each Other*." Continuing, *Mr. Elkins* stated, "I asked the group if there was a need for each other and, if so, what those needs were. The group was very responsive; they provided good feedback with some sound scriptural backup for their responses. I was very thankful to *Mr. Marang* for the subject he selected. It by far exceeded my personal expectations, and I had a wonderful time facilitating this year's Study. My thanks to everyone who participated in our Bible Study.

That sentiment should be the focus of us all. I do not want to imagine a single day without each and every one of my brethren. Together we find strength and reassurance to continue on in this struggle against the flesh and its trappings.

Next year the Feast site for the Midwest will be in Harrison, Arkansas, a small community with a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility for the brethren to worship together as they keep the Feast. I am excited about the change, and I hope to see all of my fellow "Wagonerites" in Harrison, Arkansas.

As we keep all the holy observances of our God, let us do so in the words of a common hymn sung throughout the CGI: *Wherever He Leads I'll Go*.

Ω

Submitted by David Beckerdite

Feast 2009 at Pinellas Park (St. Petersburg), FL



Tony Fontao

What a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles we had this year with the gathering of 254 like-minded brethren to listen to powerful sermons given by *Mr. Bill Watson*, *Mr. Tony Fontao*, *Mr. Ben Faulkner*, *Mr. John Coish*, and *Mr. Jeff Reed*. Sermonettes were given by *Mr. Tony Morelli*, *Mr. Jeff Peterson*, *Mr.*

Horaine Smith, *Mr. Dave Rusinko*, *Mr. Tracy French*, *Mr. Noel Scoburgh*, *Mr. Shey Smith*, and *Ian Faulkner* (Youth Day).

We had an excellent music program directed by *Mr. Frank Klett* with a beautiful choir and plenty of special music to cover every day's services.

The facility this year for the worship services was magnificent at the beautiful Pinellas Park Performing Arts Center, with plenty of space to accommodate everyone's needs, and a professional state-of-the-art sound and lighting system coordinated by *Mr. Jeff Peterson*.

For the first time we had the Infuse and Infuse Teen Programs at this Feast site, which were well attended and enjoyed by all participants with community projects and fun activities coordinated by *Mr. Jeff Reed*.

The Children's Bible Sabbath Classes were well attended with lots of activities culminating with a song program performed during Youth Day services. Teachers for the children's program were *Patty Tapanes*, *Pam Barnes*, and *George Ransdell*, with the assistance of *Mary Flores*.



Frank Klett leading the choir

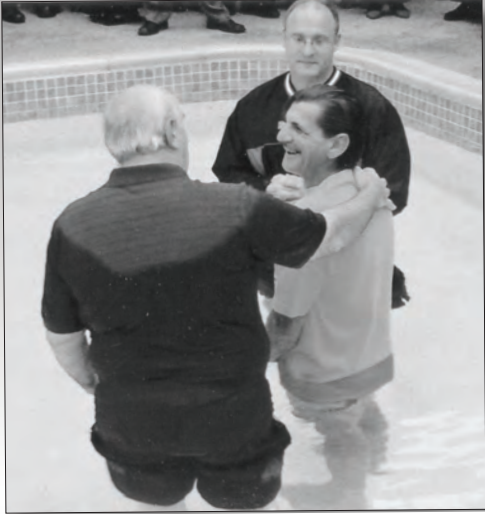
Lots of activities for everyone to enjoy included a Miniature Golf Night, Volleyball and Softball Tournaments, two BBQ / Picnics, a Fun/Talent Show, two Bible Studies, and a Dinner Dance with wonderful food and music for every age.

It was a great spiritual Feast that will be remembered for years to come.

Ω

Submitted by Aleida Fontao

Feast Reports, 2009



Ed Szalankiewicz (left) and Tony Buchert (top) baptizing Sonny Bunyak of northern Ontario

N Niagara Falls Ontario, widely known as one of the world's major tourist attractions and the "honeymoon capital of the world," was the temporary dwelling place for over 100 of God's people in observance of the Feast of Tabernacles. It was our first time back in Niagara since 2007. There was an average attendance of 120 persons from Day 1 to Day 7, and 160 on the Last Great Day.

Social activities included two Church Luncheons, a Family Day, Karaoke Night, a Variety Show, a trip to Marineland, and more. Many will say that the main highlight of the social activities was the Variety Show, also known as the "Fun Show," consisting of 18 entertaining acts, with performances from the very young to the elderly. This was one of the longest variety shows at an Ontario Feast site, going nearly four hours in length.



Niagara Children's Choir Singing with Sign Language



One of the central topics mentioned in most of the messages, was recommitting to God through prayer. Early during the Feast we offered an intercessory prayer for the sick (James 5:13-15), focusing mainly on our beloved brother and deacon of the CGI Toronto Congregation, Mr. Dwight Chin. The presence of the Chin family was certainly missed, and we continue to keep them all in our prayers.

Niagara Falls, Ontario

Minister *Murray Palmatier* got things started off on Day 1 with a very inspiring message on "Freedom." We were reminded of all the many things that have been plaguing mankind since we first turned our backs on God in the Garden of Eden. He spoke about being free from suffering, guilt, doubt, and sin in God's Kingdom. During his message, he made reference to Martin Luther King's famous 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech.

During the middle of the Feast, we were blessed with the presence of Minister *Bill Watson* who delivered two very inspiring, Spirit-filled messages. His first message was on the subject of "Commitment." We were warned about the imminent changes on the geopolitical scene, how we must all be aware of what is happening, and how we should prepare ourselves. Mr. Watson emphatically stated that we must be "committed with a sense of urgency" and prepare ourselves spiritually. Most of his presentation referenced scriptures from Luke 9, 12, and 13.

Mr. Watson's second message focused on Christians prioritizing and staying focused on our needs (Matthew 6:33). He spoke about being "forward motivated" and that everything that we desire, we should pursue with a Christian perspective.

"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). On the seventh day of the Feast, *Dilhani Niles* and *Sonny Bunyak* repented of their sins, were baptized, and received the laying on of hands. This ceremony was conducted by Mr. Ed Szalankiewicz and Mr. Tony Buchert. It is always a true blessing to witness the ceremonial acts of individuals making a personal decision to repent and walk in newness of life according to the will of God.

On the Last Great Day, Mr. Tony Buchert spoke about "Christian Living." The focus was on how we must humble ourselves before God and before others. We were also reminded that Jesus' atonement was not limited to us (firstfruits) alone, but that it was for all sinners. The message was well received.

As always, it was a Last Great Day filled with many emotions. We were all sad to be leaving one another, yet we were thankful for the great privilege of attending God's Feast, and to go back into the world with a renewed commitment to Christ.

Thank you to everyone who attended this Feast site and to all who contributed to its success. To God be the glory! Ω

Submitted by *Zion Hezekiah*

Feast Coordinator: *Murray Palmatier*

Sabbath School Coordinators:
Lissa Palmatier and Lu Copeman

Special Music Coordinator: *Lucille Tuuk*

Pianists and Accompaniment: *Loretta Jasper, Erica Delacruz, and Lorrie Delacruz*



Ed Szalankiewicz (left) and Tony Buchert baptizing Dilhani Niles of Toronto

Overseas Reports

SUNA, MIGORI

Mr. *Zablon Anyumba* reports that attendance was very good. "We really thank God for His guidance for having enabled us to have [a] very successful Festival. We opened it with the hymn, *How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings*, and I want to [tell] you that our children had every and lovely teachings through their concerned teacher; we were all excited, and they really want to meet you. During the Last Great Day, it was very [difficult] for [the] brethren to disperse to their various locations. There was a great and overwhelming joy amongst us, and then we did thank God with a hymn, *He Leadeth Me*, and thereafter we also sang, *Almighty God Be With You* in conclusion. After the last prayer, we [said] good-bye."

NANDIWA VILLAGE, INDIA

Elder *Padma Rao* reports that the brethren there had a good Feast. "We had the Feast of Tabernacles, 2009. It went so successfully. Many people attended and took part in these blessings. Even though we face problems, we still stand for God."

BUTARE, RWANDA

Mr. *Jean Claude Rubumba* reports, "From the first day [to] the Last [Great] Day, each of us had a wonderful and uplifting time at the Feast. We had talks about faith and the growth of [the] church. We learned and [are] educating ourselves and our families [to] better spread the Word of God so that all Rwandese may have the opportunity of salvation from our good examples to others. Each one of us was able to be called by the power of the Holy Spirit working with [us]. [Together we made] friends at this Feast, and prepare for the days ahead and the task of spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, so that the end may come."

MANANASI, KENYA

Mr. *Isaac Gwaro Montanya* reported, "Nearly 50 devoted members joined with us for this year's Feast of Tabernacles. We enjoyed a variety of fellowship opportunities. Inspiring sermons, songs, and fellowship [enabled] brethren [to] enjoy the eight days we spent together. Emphasis this year was coming together and [sharing] that which God has provided for us. A variety of hymns from [the] Church Choir, Children's Choir, and Teens gave us inspiration. The songs were sermons themselves. [We learned] more on God's true baptism and the Ten Commandments. It was a Feast which we cannot afford to forget. We thank God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord for the perfect weather and for each inspiring moment we spent here in Kenya. Looking forward to seeing you come in 2010." Ω

Submitted by *Roger King, Jr.*,
Overseas Ministries Coordinator

Feast Reports, 2009

Feast of Tabernacles Ballina, New South Wales, Australia



Herb Haupt

Services in Ballina were held in the beautifully landscaped Jockey Club facilities, attended by some 20 joyful Feast goers. We were fed both spiritually and physically during our time at the Feast. We enjoyed catered meals on both holidays, consisting of lamb, chicken, vegetables of all sorts, salad, and dessert. It was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

The spiritual food included sermons given by *Mr. Bob Schofield*, one of the MAP program candidates. One of his sermons was about being part of a royal family and all it entails, using as examples the royal family of England. Another sermon was about the right and left side of the brain, and how they differ in their analogies.

Festival coordinator and minister *Herb Haupt* also gave two sermons. One was about our temporary dwelling, relating it to the ark and how it was temporary for Noah and his family. The other presentation was about the Beast of Revelation 13 and how Satan's rebellion will be crushed, when he will then be chained up for 1,000 years during the Millennium, as referred to in Revelation 20.

The remaining sermons were given by a visiting minister from Kansas, *Mr. Max Davis*. A Friday night Bible Study was also attended by nearly all the brethren.

There were several activities to keep everyone busy, including ten pin bowling, golfing, and shopping in some of the remote small towns around the area. Then there was fine food at the many wonderful restaurants in the area, and just good fun and fellowship with all the brethren. A sing-along was enjoyed one evening, with Alex playing his guitar for accompaniment.

One of the highlights for me was breakfast at Shelly's on the Beach. It was on a cliffside overlooking the Pacific Ocean and a beautiful beach. Glimpses of whales could be seen if you were fortunate enough to look at the right moment. A great time was had by all! Ω

Submitted by, Max Davis



Brethren at Ballina, Australia

Behold, how good
and how pleasant it is for
brethren to dwell together
in unity
(Psalms 133:1)!

Feast of Tabernacles Myrtle Beach, SC

Those who came to Myrtle Beach for the Feast this year were not quite as many as past years. We registered 230 people, but with those numbers came some wonderful surprises.

The Feast began as it normally does with good food spread out on white linen tablecloths in the hospitality area. People came in and began chatting away as children spotted old friends and quickly made new ones. The next day marked the start of some wonderfully inspiring messages that continued throughout, along with equally inspiring and uplifting music. *Jim Patterson* received his ordination into the ministry during a brief ceremony on the first day with *Duane Nichol* officiating. We congratulate Jim as he begins a new chapter in a life of service to God's people. The Infuse program provided classes for both teens and young adults, along with the traditional Beach Party and Volleyball Tournament, as well as many other activities. The service projects this year were a food drive for the local food bank and an afternoon helping Habitat for Humanity. The children's Sabbath School was quite enjoyable for the children, and of course the Youth Day Children's Choir was, as always, a highlight of the Feast. The blessing of the children was a wonderful component of the Feast celebration. *Wayne Hendrix* presented a moving Bible Study near the end of the Feast that was well attended.

The Feast would not be the same without the Family Fun Show and the Family Dance! We were thoroughly entertained by some very talented members of our church at the Fun Show. The Family Dance was great fun as always. We were fortunate to again have our house band, *Full Body Armor*. I am always amazed at how well a group of people can play together when they only do it once a year. The members of our humble band love the people, the music, and most of all serving God, and it shows. We are so blessed to have that spirit of loving service to God and His people exist in the hearts of everyone who attends God's Feast, whether they have an assigned task or just kind, thoughtful words for one another.

We had some very appetizing luncheons prepared for us during the Feast. The Infuse Kick-Off Luncheon, Ministerial Luncheon, and Senior Luncheon were all presented buffet-style, along with opportunity for more fellowship.

For the last few years, there has been a Women's Luncheon and Bible Study on the schedule, but this year, due to a variety of circumstances, it was not planned. The ladies noticed it was not on the schedule, requested it, and a Luncheon was quickly scheduled. Forty-two women attended. The theme of the Bible Study was hardship and coping with the economics of today, compared to the women of the Bible, and the effects of that in relation to other aspects of our daily lives. The discussion turned to our need to get to know one another better, to reach out to one another in support, especially in prayer. The result of this was the beginning of a network for the women to stay in touch by mail, phone, email, and even through a Facebook page on the Internet.

At this Feast we were blessed to share in the miracle of answered prayer for two members of the same family. Wayne and Sandi Hendrix asked for prayer for their daughter and daughter-in-law, who both were experiencing some serious health issues. *God healed them both!* Tears of joy were flowing as Wayne Hendrix stood before the congregation to share their blessings. William Morgan of the Hickory, NC congregation also requested prayer. He developed pneumonia and spent a short while in the hospital, but was able to return to services before the Feast ended. We know God answers prayer, but we don't always get the privilege of seeing it happen so profoundly and so quickly!

Adding even more blessings, we had three baptisms. Three more children of God made the choice to embrace Him and His promise!

One thing definitely not missing here was *love*. Seeing that we are not alone with our troubles, that others have them too, and praying for each other, things begin to happen in a very positive way. Yes, this Feast was outstanding and most enlightening. We learned and were reminded of our need for God, His Son, Jesus Christ, and each other to get through the times ahead. Ω

Submitted by Jo Morris



Feast Reports, 2009

Feast Of Booths In Victoria, BC “Savour The Moment”



Friends forever!



Nomi and her father, Jerry Jantzen



Our favorite pastime at Feast—taking photos



Working at the Mustard Seed Project



Curt and Cathy Jantzen

Walking in the footsteps of countless others before us, brethren observed this *Sukkot*, this thanksgiving, this joyous harvest Festival, which celebrates the ingathering of grain and wine. Each year it is our awesome privilege to glimpse that moment in time when we will inherit the Kingdom. And as we dwell in our temporary booths in Victoria, British Columbia, we keep in remembrance and give praise for God’s continuing love, protection, and provision for His called-out ones.

The tone for the Feast was set in the opening services. *Vance Stinson* encouraged us, saying, “God has pitched His tent and is tabernacling with us. As we travel through the wilderness we are not alone; God is in our midst.” *Eric Jantzen* encouraged us to live God’s way of giving, to share our time, our energies, our encouragement with hugs, a smile, and a prayer, and to serve others with joy during our sojourn in Victoria, continuing to serve and love one another throughout the year. We put on God’s armor and were ready to go.

This Feast was full of opportunities for us to gather together and enjoy the incredible gift of fellowship. There were several scrumptious catered meals, continual conviviality of pleasurable chatter, a Games Night, Mini Golf, and a trip to Glendale Gardens, where we enjoyed a delicious buffet luncheon in a glass house, and stretched our legs with a guided tour through the Japanese and wildflower gardens. Many enjoyed a Senior’s Luncheon, a day at Imax, and a stroll through the historic Royal BC Museum, or just savored the beauty of Victoria. Brethren greatly appreciated special music and Variety Night, as young and old shared their talents.

“We have been truly blessed,” said Bob and Monique Dagenais from Ottawa. “The weather has been spectacular. The Feast is pleasantly unique with lots of seniors from whose wisdom we can gain, and lots of young people whose energy invigorates us.”

Most years, brethren have brought teddy bears for the children’s hospital or brought food to give to the local food bank, but this year was different. Thirty brethren, young and old, participated in a hands-on experience, which was much more fulfilling. The *Mustard Seed Food Bank* is the largest food bank on Vancouver Island. First we met and talked with the coordinator/minister of services. He told us how he happened to read in *Zechariah 14:16–19* about the nations *having* to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. (I commented, in view of the Scripture, maybe we could expect to see him next year.) He then invited us to a bowl of pea soup, which we politely declined. They didn’t know what hit them as we sorted used clothing, unpacked boxes, filled plastic bags with rice and sugar, carried out food hampers for people, sorted similar foods into boxes, and had a wonderful time doing it. Plus, we managed to bring 1500 pairs of new socks for the homeless. It was a delight and privilege to serve, and was especially eye opening for the young people.

Many of the brethren remarked that we should give special thanks to the many brethren who served in so many ways to make this a special Feast, and to give a “hats off” to Feast Coordinator *Eric Jantzen*, who spent many hours preparing for and working hard during the Feast to make sure everyone had a joyful eight days.

Karen Metcalf and her daughter, *Sandy Stevens*, visiting from Dallas, Texas, said, “We couldn’t have been more delighted with the brethren and the friendliness shown to us. We were made to feel so welcome here. What a wonderful family atmosphere; it reminded us of a joyous family reunion. The messages have been tremendously inspiring. And the Service Project was a great idea; every church should have one. Also, the beauty of Victoria is awesome, and we loved our time here. It was definitely our best Feast ever!”

The Feast was also broadcast via Internet so many who were unable to attend could take part in the Festival messages and special music. Most important of all were the inspired, uplifting messages. We were blessed with many fine speakers, plus three visiting speakers: *Vance Stinson*, *Charles Groce*, and *Roger King*. Charles stressed that we should “live in the moment” and quoted *Luke 9:35*. Emphasis was on “keep our ears open to Christ alone” and don’t be drawn away from the truth. Vance gave us a fascinating special presentation on how Satan planted a counterfeit language pertaining to the Caesars prior to Christ’s birth. Roger gave a sermon on *A Day of Salvation*. All the Feast messages stressed love for our brother, to be reconciled to them—that we cannot separate our relationship with God and our relationship with our brother. Our eternal life depends upon it. Eric reminded us of the Devil’s clever tactics to distract us from what is important—those *relationships*.

A last word of advice for us to carry through next year: *Our life is a journey of the heart; make sure you stay connected to God—that you are close enough to Him that He can hear your heart beat.* Ω

Bless the Broken Road

*I set out on a narrow way, many years ago,
Hoping I would find true love along the broken road.
But I got lost a time or two, wiped my brow and kept pushing through.
I couldn’t see how every sign pointed straight to You
God blessed the broken road that led me straight to You.*

Submitted by *Jean Jantzen*



Newlyweds, Curt and Cathy and Alex and Thai Jantzen singing at the Feast



Charles Groce and Gertie Moore (90 years young)



Three Jantzen boys intent on sermon



Discussing God’s ways



Charles Groce yucking it up with a couple of happy Feast goers

Feast Reports, 2009

Record 402 Attendance and 6 Baptisms at Jamaican Feast Site!

For the first time ever, more than 400 persons attended the CGI Jamaican Feast site. On the Last Great Day, a record-breaking 402 persons filled the Ruins Ocho Rios to overflowing, literally. This followed upon a first day attendance of 354, which itself was the highest up to then. Last year, 306 and 314 persons attended the Feast on the first and last days, respectively. Also on the Last Great Day, six persons were baptized, one more than last year.

Jamaica had *two* full-time feast sites this year, one in Ocho Rios and the other in Maroon Town. The Maroon Town brethren met all eight days, spending the Last Great Day in Ocho Rios.

"The best Feast ever!" is a cliché in Church of God circles, but for Jamaicans this year, it was no hyperbole. The packed hall of the beautiful Ruins at the Falls resounded with spirited praise and worship from the opening night. Vibrant congregational singing and varied special music offerings are unique features of the Jamaican Feast experience. But it was not for these reasons that the chorus of hundreds of voices have been singing the refrain, "This was my best Feast ever." No, the real reason was the sermons.

Pastor *Ian Boyne*, Pastor *Pedro Hall* of the Spanish Town congregation, and *Sean Goldburn*, Youth Presenter, gave sermons that were particularly impactful and memorable, for most persons.

Pastor Hall connected powerfully with several areas of relevance to the majority of his audience in his sermon entitled, "What is Your Driving Force?" Noting that humans in their humanness cannot help but be impelled by some driving force, he exhorted listeners to identify what was their real inner motivation. He elucidated the dangers of the negative driving forces of guilt, resentment and anger, fear, materialism, and the need for approval.

Sean Goldburn gave a profoundly thought-provoking sermonette entitled "Be. Do. Have." If our goal is to be in God's Kingdom spoken about in Zechariah 14, then coming to the Feast is a "spiritual training camp" rather than merely an exciting vacation, he said. The plan he proposed for sustainable spiritual growth included becoming transformed into Christ's character, from which godly actions will flow, and which will result in the "having" of the spiritual character God requires His children to develop.

On the Last Great Day, Pastor Boyne's sermon was a dramatic and emotionally charged exposition on the book of Nahum. He explained that the prophet Nahum lived in the times of the Assyrians, who were more atrocious than both the Egyptians and Babylonians. He showed the connection of Nahum with Jonah and Nineveh, and explicated the seeming contradiction between Nahum's oracle against Assyria and his name, which means "consolation."

A century before Nahum's time, Jonah had prophesied to wicked Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and they had repented, but only for a while. Assyria was now the most powerful nation on earth and was proud of its self sufficiency and military might. They were particularly barbarous in their treatment of their victims, and reveled in their

rebelliousness and sinful disobedience. Nahum courageously risked his life to condemn the atrocities of Assyria and to proclaim God's sure judgment upon them.

In the same way, said Mr. Boyne, leaders and believers alike, today, must have the courage to proclaim the truth of God, and to live without compromising their faith.

Showing how Nahum demonstrated not just God's mercy, but also His justice, he warned believers not to abuse God's mercy and grace by continuing in sin. Also, God's people should never lose hope when they see the world worsening and life getting harder. God will ultimately bring His wrath against rebellious people. The days of all earthy empires are coming to an end, so keep your Feast and be consoled. Nahum's message was both a forewarning for Assyria and a vision of hope for God's people, whose faith is in Him.

Other speakers included Deacons *Paul O'Connor*, *Fenton Tracy*, *Derrick Alwood*, *Stephen Scale*, *Ricardo Hall*, Elder *George Ramocan*, and myself.

Duane Nicol, from Chicago, gave two messages. In his sermon entitled "The Valley of Elah," he asserted that, like David facing Goliath, believers were facing an awesome enemy. God's people, he admonished, should therefore be filled with His Spirit and be determined to win no matter what. "Nothing could overcome them then," he said. His second sermon entitled "The Triune Christian," explored the three components of a strong believer. These included the Holy Spirit, personal growth, and communal growth.

Social activities included an exciting Sports Day, a well-coordinated Jamaica Cultural Night, and an enjoyable Fun Show. Couples and Singles Night was also a huge hit for the respective groups. The annual Herbert W. Armstrong Memorial Debating Competition served up some nail-biting tension as last year's competitive runner-up Stacy-Ann Hall vowed to dethrone the seemingly unbeatable Sandra-Mae Robinson, which she did.

The shore of the tranquil blue waters of the Caribbean Sea was the venue for baptizing six new members into God's Church. The Ocho Rios beach was well populated as these six souls were immersed by Pastor Boyne and Deacon O'Connor, amidst joyous singing. For the first time, several persons expressed the strong desire for post-Feast baptism, and are being counseled by Mr. Boyne, who expressed the likelihood that there might have to be a pre-Passover baptism. This has not taken place in many years in Jamaica.

As brethren sang "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," many wondered where we would go next Feast to accommodate the expected larger numbers, as Maroon Town brethren pledged to be at the main Feast site, not only on the Last Great Day, but for all eight days. Ω

These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons (Leviticus 23:4).



Feast Reports, 2009

First Feast in Baltimore, Maryland

Who would have known that the first Feast of Tabernacles for the Destiny of Hope Ministries would have been so awesome? By faith in God and with much passion, Pastor Woodland and his wife Beverlie, along with the support of the Church of God International, launched a Feast site in Baltimore to facilitate those who desired to attend a nearby Feast. Brethren from Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia, Florida, New York, and other neighboring states attended, as well as brethren from Ohio, Chicago, and Jamaica.

It was a small gathering of about 33 in attendance and sometimes 25–28 on weekdays. The organization of this Feast was professionally structured, as it had everything like a large Feast site. There were brethren who visited the website at www.Feastgoer.org and chose Baltimore, Maryland as their site without knowing for sure what it would be like, seeing it was the first time for the Woodlands. The brethren from Chicago who also came by faith, fell in love with what they saw and heard, and immediately gave of themselves and their resources to make it the success it was. The energy of the praise and worship sessions brought much enthusiasm. What was outstanding was the rich presence of the Lord throughout the week and the love that was almost tangibly felt among the brethren. Another outstanding memory was on the Last Great Day when Pastor Woodland called on two other pastors to join him in ministering to the needs of the brethren. This was for their physical healing, comfort, and strength for those who had the passing of loved ones, and for those who were undergoing the threat of home foreclosures. That was a solemn moment. Everyone was moved by the presence of God. What a moment! Testimonies were also received after the Feast on improved health issues, financial blessings, and the experience of God's strength and comfort by those who heard of the passing of loved ones.

The Family Dance, Seniors' Luncheon, and Reggae Social brought so much joy it was hard to believe this was not an ongoing Feast site for a long time. One of the highlights was the singing of the "Group" that comprised just Pastor Woodland and Beverlie. They called themselves the "Group" because they had plans to incorporate others to sing with them, but did not quite complete the process; hence they kept the name "Group." That was a time of laughter for the brethren, as they all "kept it real." The great talents of special music from Rashida Curtis and Deacon Al Nelson were truly superb. The Feast in Baltimore was a tremendous success. The testimonies below will speak to that end. Pastor Woodland announced that this would be an ongoing Feast site for Baltimore, and that the contract was already signed for 2010 at the same location.

Below are a few Feast testimonies from the brethren:

The Baltimore Feast was very interesting. This inaugural year saw the eclectic fusion of top-notch scholarship, upbeat worship, and energetic preaching in an intimate setting. In my 40-plus years of Feast keeping, this Baltimore native was excited to see the Destiny of Hope Ministries step out in faith with hard work to make it happen. It was well planned and hosted with typical Church of God standards, and highlighted with a personal touch, warmth, and spiritual renewal that too often are secondary in large venues. Congrats to the coordinators and hosts.

Todd and Yanina Drawbaugh, Rockville, MD

Who would have known this was the first Feast put on by Destiny of Hope Ministries? You would think they had been at this Festival thing for years! A small group of laborers put together a Feast that, while modest, was filled with all the things making for a memorable and Spirit-filled Feast. The Church of God International has done well in partnering with Pastor Woodland and Sister Beverlie Woodland in sponsoring this site. The location at the Homewood Suites was perfect. The hotel is less than five minutes from BWI/Thurgood Marshall Airport and within minutes of downtown Baltimore. Having all events in the hotel eliminated the need to rent a car for those who are budget conscious. The highlights of the Feast were the very timely and relevant sermons given. Meat was on the menu from the first night and continued to the end. The theme "Reigning with the King of Kings" was thoroughly explained through the thought-provoking sermons of Pastor Woodland, Dr. Tom Roberts, Minister Gary Staszak, Elder George Ramocan and Pastor Ray Curtis. Yet, with many medical problems and personal tragedies dotting the Feast, a spiritual high was the prayer for, and anointing of all Festival participants by Pastors Woodland, Deveaux, and Curtis. There were few dry eyes in the house. Many of us were aware of the problems and tragedies expressed by some of the brethren during the course of the Feast. This was cathartic and a moment that bonded us all as "founding members" and friends of this Feast site and of each other. If you have no plans for next year's Feast of Tabernacles, I would heartily encourage you to join us next year in Baltimore, if God wills.

Pastor Raymond Curtis, Chicago, IL



Founding Feast Members—2009

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to you, your family and our "fellow Feastgoers" for an awesome Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day. It was a stupendous week of worship, praise, and gratitude to our Awesome God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. We have celebrated the Lord's Feast of Tabernacles annually for more than 40 years. We have been blessed to travel all over the world for the Feast, and your site was one of the most enjoyable and Spirit-filled Feasts we have ever experienced anywhere! We were tremendously impressed with all the hard work you and your family did to sponsor such a well-organized Feast week with all the "amenities and treats" of a larger Feast site. You gave magnificent glory to God in every aspect of the Feast by providing daily services and activities which beautifully celebrated Jesus' second coming to establish God's Kingdom. You worked so hard everyday to set up the worship space, to tape music, sermons, Bible Studies and activities, to cook pounds of delicious foods for every event, and you spent hundreds of dollars of your own personal

money to give everyone who attended "the BEST FEAST EVER" Every sermon was powerful, instructive, and uplifting. We also appreciated hearing from the Community Youth Leader, Brother Jeremy Vickery, during his tribute to Jesus Christ. The daily hymns and special music were so inspiring that we were moved to tears more than once. We absolutely loved the "Group," our wonderful Feast Choir, none other than Pastor and Mrs. Woodland singing with heartfelt joy, every day, to our Great God. The activities were also very entertaining and fabulous! We had a wonderful time at the Festival Talent Show. We were amazed by the truly "professional" talent displayed during the Show. We also loved the Reggae Night, with music and cookout, in the courtyard of the hotel. Others told us how much they enjoyed the Family Dance (which we missed) and group shopping at the outlet mall near BWI. As senior citizens, we also loved being honored and served by younger Feastgoers at the Senior Luncheon. We returned home and we could not stop talking about how wonderful this year's Feast was. You worked so hard to make everyone's Feast experience MAGNIFICENT and MEMORABLE! We feel that God definitely inspired us to choose your site, especially after our "first choice" (Pine Mountain, GA) was canceled. We want to say THANK YOU again FOR A STUPENDOUS FEAST OF TABERNACLES 2009! We thoroughly enjoyed the great fellowship with you and our other "brothers and sisters in Christ" who attended. We have spread the word, so I believe you will have a greater number of attendees next year. Both of you are filled with so much LOVE, JOY and GOODWILL. May God richly bless you always! Again, THANK YOU for everything!

Stanley and Jean Marie DeVeaux, NY

I just want to thank the Lord our God for the wonderful time I had at the 2009 Feast of Tabernacles in Baltimore, Maryland. I've been in the church for many, many years, and I must say that this Feast was one of the very best I have had in a very long time. The spiritual food was just awesome! I am so thankful we chose Maryland. I hope to be there next year as well, God willing. The fellowship with the brethren was great, and the presence of God was so rich. It is one Feast I will remember and hold dear always. Thank you all for the hard work that was put into this Feast.

Malina M., Chicago, IL

I am grateful for your warm reception and hospitality. Your love and Christ-like personality make me feel like a member of your family. I've been to quite a few Feasts in my 20-plus years in the church, and this past one was by far the best. Thank you for making me feel so at home. I was humbled by the experience and more than glad I was of some small service to such a great work as God's mission. May God shower you and your family with many blessings and bestow upon you more of the love and wisdom you already possess. Stay well and keep up the good work.

Al Nelson, Chicago, IL

For 2010, the Feast of Tabernacles will again be held in Baltimore at the same location, The Homewood Suites, 1181 Winterson Rd., Linthicum, MD, 21090. The website at Feastgoer.org will be updated as we move forward. The same prices have already been locked in for hotel accommodations for 2010. Brethren will be required to fill out an attendance form online in order to keep track of the number of persons who will be attending.

God's peace and blessings to everyone,

Feast Secretary Ω

Overheard: This 'n' That

- Sign outside a Louisiana church: “Heaven knows when you’ve been here last!”
- An empty tomb proves Christianity; an empty church denies it.
- When Christians feel safe and comfortable, the church is in great danger.
- Church attendance is determined more by desire than by distance.
- No one is too bad to come to Sabbath services; neither is anyone too good to stay away.
- God’s church needs workers, not a wrecking crew.
- Perhaps few ever think of attending Sabbath services as a beauty treatment, but it is a wonderful way to have your faith lifted.
- How often have you met a critic of the church who tried to make it better?
- Too many church members are “teflon-minded”—nothing seems to stick.
- A Bible in the hand is worth two on the bookshelf.
- If we can’t understand everything in the Bible, we can at least obey the parts we *do* understand.
- People do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts *them*.
- The atheist can’t find God for the same reason a thief can’t find a policeman.
- The trouble with being an atheist is you have no one to talk to when you are alone.
- God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.

- God is not only a present help in times of trouble, but also great help in keeping *out* of trouble.
- God’s laws last infinitely longer than those who break them.
- No one can be at peace with God without getting into an argument with the Devil.
- The world will be a better place when the power of love replaces the love of power.
- Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them quite so much.
- Prayers cannot be answered unless they are first prayed.
- Let us pray, not for lighter burdens, but for stronger backs.
- The question arises: where can we put our resentment and anger while we pray our prayers?
- God makes a promise—faith believes it, hope anticipates it, patience quietly waits for it.
- Remember, we do not reap in the same season we sow.
- Love is an unusual thing: there are either two winners, or none.
- Love does not keep a ledger of the sins and failures of others.
- To love others makes us happy; to love ourselves makes us lonely.
- Love is little word, but people make it big.
- Works, not words, are the proof of love.
- Everything in the church runs smoothly when love oils the machinery.



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