



“Up Close” With Ben and Lois Chapman —50 Years in Ministerial Service—

On August 30 of this year, I had the pleasure of being able to sit down with Ben and Lois Chapman and take some time to go down “memory lane” with both of them. Uniquely enough, they live only about two miles from my home, in North Royalton, Ohio. They have been living in Ohio since 2007, and are now planning a move back to Tyler, Texas, where they can be closer to many of their friends and church brethren after 50 years of serving in the ministry! In some respects, going back to the Big Sandy area is like going back to their roots—where Ambassador College was such a major part of their lives.

It was quite a privilege having the opportunity to talk with both of these wonderful individuals who have so much of our church history stored in their memories—experiences and connections with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and so many events that define the genesis of the “early days”—helping to build the *Worldwide Church of God* back so many years ago. Without a doubt, both of them could be considered *real pioneers* in this modern Work of God—connecting back to the 1950s—with a direct connection to Richard David Armstrong (Herbert’s oldest son and brother to Garner Ted Armstrong), former husband to Lois Chapman, until his death in a car accident in July of 1958, while on a baptizing tour in California.

This was quite the interview—over two hours of memorable discussions, sorting through many of the events and experiences the two of them shared during those formative years of the *Worldwide Church of God’s* ministry. Both of them were intimately involved in building particular segments of the “Work” before the unraveling, and finally, the *apostasy and fragmentation* of the 1980s and 1990s occurred.

Interestingly enough, both were very gracious, unassuming, and humble with regard to their participation, contribution, and sacrifice for God’s Work over so many years. It was very refreshing to see such humility and modesty for any credit or recognition of their accomplishments; it seemed they just considered it their “reasonable service” in exchange for the blessings they received from our loving Savior and His sacrifice for them.

Bill: So, Ben, how did you first come in contact with the *Worldwide Church of God* (WWCG)?

Ben: In the early to mid 1950s, I was a project manager for designing the computer guidance systems for the United States government’s ICBM missile project. I had received my engineering degree from UCLA. At the time, I was about 23 years old.

by Bill Watson

While at work one day, Mr. Carl Tarver, a member of the *Radio Church of God* (prior to the name change to *Worldwide Church of God*), gave me a booklet on the subject about how Jesus Christ’s resurrection was *not on Sunday*. I read it, believed it, and started to listen to the broadcast regularly from that point on. I just believed immediately I had found the truth! So, some time

Lois and I began to date and ultimately marry in 1961.

Bill: So Lois, I understand you were one of only five female pioneer students of the Bricket Wood campus when it originally opened?

Lois: Yes, that’s right. It was in the fall of 1960. And there were 28 men that year who were also part of that original class of students.

Bill: Wow!! That’s quite a ratio of men to women. You ladies must have had quite “the field day” with all of those choices—and you picked Ben. That’s great!!

Now I have this question for you: How did you become involved with the WWCG and then eventually connect with Ben?

Lois: I was born in Nebraska, and at the time, while a teenager still living in Nebraska, would visit my sister Dee, who was married, living in Iowa. Her husband, Carl O’Beirn, actually introduced me to the truth. He suggested I read the WWCG’s material, which I did, and began to believe it. So, upon graduating from high school in 1954, I applied for Ambassador College in

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Lois and Ben Chapman

later, in about 1959, I enrolled in Ambassador College, resigning from my job to go back to school in Pasadena, California.

My first job at the college was on the gardening crew—not bad for a former ICBM missile guidance engineer. However, I didn’t work there very long, because Norman Smith found out I had an electrical engineering degree and asked me to work for him in the radio studio. It was also Norman and his wife Charlene who wanted me to meet Lois, who was a widow with a son from her marriage with Richard (Dick) Armstrong, but who now was passed on due to a car accident about a year before.

It was Charlene who mentioned to me there was this widow, Lois Armstrong, who needed help with her son after services. She played the piano at the Sherman Oakes church; and though we met at that time, nothing came of this introduction.

Then in 1960, the Ambassador College campus at Bricket Wood opened in England. Norman Smith asked me if I would go there to design, install, and be the operating engineer at this new radio studio so that when Mr. Herbert or Garner Ted Armstrong was there, they could do their broadcasting from that location, too. Uniquely enough, at or around the same time, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Armstrong asked Lois if she would like to be a pioneer student at Bricket Wood and be among the first class of students in 1960. Lois agreed and was honored, and it was here where

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Pasadena, California. My older sister had left Iowa and was living in Pasadena at the time, where Carl was now enrolled. I was accepted, but my parents would not allow me to attend; they thought the church was a crazy religion.

So I attended the University of Omaha, with hopes of becoming a degreed professional business secretary. I was hired by one of the most prestigious architectural firms in Omaha, and worked there until 1956. I left my job in Nebraska to attend Ambassador College. It was at this time when I met the Armstrongs, and became acquainted with Dick, Garner Ted's older brother. Dick and I married in June of 1957. Our first child was born in May of 1958. And sadly, Dick was killed in a head-on collision near San Luis Obispo, California. He died a week later in the hospital from those injuries in July of 1958.

Bill: Now was Ben already in college there at Ambassador?

Lois: No, not yet, but he was attending services at this time. He had heard Dick speak at the Shakespeare Club where we had services. But Ben started at Ambassador, if I remember correctly, in 1959, and at that time lived in Woodland Hills.



Bill Watson interviewing Lois and Ben Chapman

And I remember an amusing story about Ben when I first heard about him. After I moved out from the Armstrong home into the newly acquired property at Terrace Villa on the campus, the older students would have coffee with me in the morning, and Ben would come driving up in his "88" Oldsmobile that had very loud mufflers. He was a real hot rod. One of the students mentioned to me she heard Ben, who was driving "that car," was a real interesting guy. Ben at the time was considered the "new guy on campus."

Bill: Now you mentioned Lois, you lived with the Armstrong family for a while?

Lois: Oh yes, I don't know what I would have done; I was only 22 years old, and thought my life had come to an end. They basically adopted me and took me under their wing. I became like another daughter to them; they were very protective of me. They were extremely watchful about who came calling. And to this day, I remain very thankful, grateful, and fond of their care and concern, especially at that time.

Bill: OK, though Ben seemed to have noticed you there in Pasadena, the relationship between the two of you never really got started until both of you went to England. So, tell us a little bit of how the relationship began across the Pond.

Ben: Well, the church held services in London, and we would take the train into London. I would make sure that Lois and Dicky were cared for—I would go on the train too and help them.

Lois: And this was very sweet. I deeply appreciated this, since Ben was such a nice guy; he really was good with Dicky. Actually, to this day Dick considers Ben his dad. Ben has been his dad since he was two-and-a-half years old. It was over this period of time and interacting with each other that caused me to begin feeling like a "school girl" again. I went from disappointment and sadness to hope and happiness. I remember writing Mrs. Loma Armstrong, sharing my excitement with her about Ben. The Armstrongs thought the world of Ben—they liked him a whole lot. And he was becoming quite an instrumental part of the "Work," due much to his involvement with Norman Smith and the radio studios.

Bill: So how did this relationship make the turn toward marriage with the Armstrongs being such protectors?

Ben: The major step for me was the night of the "pheasant-under-glass" dinner.

Lois: Oh yes, the "pheasant-under-glass" dinner—this was quite a special night. We were in the house that Mr. Armstrong would stay at when he was in England. Shirley (Englebart) Jones and I decided to make this unique dinner with all these side dishes, featuring a pheasant-under-glass. It was quite a happy and exciting night for the both of us since Robin Jones, Shirley's boyfriend at the time, and Ben were both coming over for dinner. It was after this night Ben told me he loved me!

Ben: But I knew I needed Mr. Herbert Armstrong's approval. And Lois and I talked about how to present this to him. Frankly, it was somewhat unnerving, because we both knew how protective both he and Loma were; we were both quite anxious over this.

Lois: So Ben decided he would call Mr. Armstrong and ask him for my hand in marriage.

Ben: And so when I called him and told him I loved Lois and wanted to marry her, he said, "Well Ben, I don't want to lose a daughter. So, if you marry her, this means you will have to become my son." And I said without hesitating a second, "OK by me, Dad!" I remember that as though it was yesterday—and to this day still moves me with emotion!

Bill: Wow! I'm sure that is a very fond memory. So when was the big day?

Ben: April 11, 1961.

Lois: Yes, I remember it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread, because we had to have an *unleavened wedding cake*. If I recall correctly, it was a fruitcake.

Bill: Did you remain in England after that?

Ben: Yes, for a few more years.

Lois: It was in May of 1963, some 50 years ago, Mr. Herbert Armstrong came to England—I think during Pentecost—and ordained Ben at that time. Then in July of that year we moved to Big Sandy, Texas to help get the college ready to open in 1964.

Ben: I was also involved in building a radio studio there, as well as pastoring some congregations and eventually working at the college.

Bill: Where was your first pastorate?

Lois: I believe Ben pastored the Dallas/Ft. Worth area first, while we lived in Big Sandy.

Bill: So, looking back on your 50 years of ministry, how many different places have you lived over the course of your ministry?

Ben: I attended Pasadena until I went to Bricket Wood.

Lois: Yes, then we left Bricket Wood in July 1963 and lived in Texas from 1963 to 1973. From there we moved back to California and remained

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there until we were terminated from the employ of the WWCG in 1979. We then moved to New Jersey. Ben was hired by Robert Kuhn's father in New York to oversee the data processing department of his company. In addition, Ben purchased a franchised computer service for me to run. Working together, we built it into a payroll, accounting, and tax service—and he left his New York position in 1983.

Then in the late 1980s, Ben was offered a position of president for a company called 20/21 Software. It was during this time Ben began traveling internationally, setting up these software systems all over the world, while I ran our computer service in New Jersey. Ben at the time would commute between New Jersey and Provo, Utah, where they were headquartered. Finally, by 1991, it became impractical for Ben to commute. We had to move due to the demands of his position, so we moved that year to Provo, remaining there until 2007, when we moved to this home in Ohio.

Bill: So, what are some of your most memorable trips over the last 50 years serving in the ministry?

Ben: I'm not sure; they're all memorable. But Australia stands out for me. I really like Australia. I've been to almost every city and area there—Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, and of course the Gold Coast.

Lois: Yes, Australia is a wonderful country. It's so friendly and beautiful. The constellation called the Southern Cross stands out in my mind.

But we have been blessed to see and visit so many places throughout the world due to Ben's business traveling, as well as serving in the ministry. We've been to Lake Tahoe, Whistler Canada, Alaska, Hawaii, Ireland, and of course living in London for about three years. We have such memories.

One that stands out for me is keeping Passover in Jerusalem; it was 1968. On this trip, Ben and I traveled with Mr. Herbert Armstrong on the maiden voyage of the Falcon jet, so he could meet with King Hussein. This meeting didn't work out, but we did see the church's office in Cyprus, and other major European cities. As a point of interest, King Hussein claimed he was a direct descendent of Mohammad, the Islamic prophet, through the Hashemite family.

Bill: All right, what were some of your most memorable moments in your ministry—fondest memories?

Ben: Marrying Lois!

Lois: Ah, that's so sweet!

Bill: OK, I get that. Without a doubt, that's number one. But how about some others?

Ben: I think my ordination is a memorable moment. If I remember correctly, it was Pentecost of 1963; Mr. Herbert Armstrong did the ceremony.

Lois: I'd like to also include working at Big Sandy. We had such a wonderful time and shared such trusting relationships with so many of the students. I remember we would have students to our home regularly to watch *Mission Impossible* back then. This one incident reflects the quality of our relationship with the students. We were coming home from Ft. Worth after attending services, only to realize upon approaching the house all the lights were on. Both of us knew we didn't leave them on, so we knew something was up. Upon entering the house, two familiar students were watching *Mission Impossible*—they let themselves in through an open window they discovered. But that's how it was back then—a very pleasant and trusting environment.

Bill: Wow! That's hard to believe since finding out from our anniversary party a few months ago that Ben's reputation preceded him as being kind of a "tough" teacher at Big Sandy.

Lois: Well that is somewhat true. I remember our babysitter one night jokingly telling us upon our return that when she has children she intended to name them after Ben—"Frank and Ernest!" [Laughing...]

Bill: Oh my, that is funny. I trust you took it as such?

Lois: Oh yes. She was a great kid.

Bill: Okay, let me ask you, how many different responsibilities did you have during the course of your ministry? What roles did you serve in?



Ben: There were quite a few. As already mentioned, I designed, installed, and operated the radio studios, taught at Ambassador Big Sandy: photography, speech, and third year Bible (Systematic Theology, which included the calendar course). In addition, I pastored multiple congregations over the years as well.

Bill: That is quite a variety of roles. So what's the best part about these ministries? What did you like best, if anything at all?

Ben: That I had a part in spreading the truth! Teaching the truth of the Bible—God's Word!

Bill: Do you have any regrets? As you look back on your experiences in the ministry, is there anything you'd like to have done differently? It doesn't have to be in a negative sense, but just something that if you could do over, or differently—what would it be?

Ben: I can't really say I have any regrets—I really don't. If I could do anything differently, I think I would have spent more time writing. That is something I might have done differently.



Charles Groce presenting Ben Chapman with a plaque for 50 years' service in God's ministry

Lois: I would like to add that I'm just so thankful for all the things we have had opportunity to experience. We have had a very good life. It's so sad there are people who are just so bitter, angry, and remorseful about their "church" experience. They have problems whether with church policy, HWA, GTA, or something else, and they just cannot find it in themselves to forgive. *Love and forgiveness is the beginning of healing*—if we don't do that, we'll never heal. I think Ben and I—yes, we have had our differences—but we've learned to work through it all. *Love and forgiveness* are the tools we used to come to terms with so much of the turmoil the church finds itself contending with today—the world really does need more love and forgiveness.

Bill: That is very good advice all of us can take to heart regardless of our points of view and personal opinions of the past. You can't argue with love and forgiveness!

So, you're going back to Texas, and I'm sure you're looking forward to it. What is it that makes it so special?

Lois: I think it's our memories. There's a comfort level there where so much of our lives were spent growing up together in the church with our children, friends, and brethren. Two of our four children, Cathleen and Benjamin, were born there. The church is our life, and East Texas has been the area where much of it took place. And the home we have waiting there for us—we call it our cottage—is just what we need at this time in our lives, and we thank God for this blessing.

Epilogue

As I closed out the interview and drove home, I couldn't help but think on so many of their memories and their particular contributions to the "Work." How much they have benefited so many over the years—from college students growing up on campus, to the young and old in the congregations they served—or behind the scenes building the equipment to carry the clarion voices that announced the Gospel of God's coming world ruling government. Ben and Lois have certainly produced an evidentiary life that has glorified God while benefiting so many thousands over the course of 50 years in ministry. Yes, they, and we, have been blessed by their service as pioneers in this Work of God. They are two very gracious people who reflect the love of God—and their humility speaks volumes of the miracle of conversion they model for all of us today. May God bless them both with many more years of enjoyment and pleasure for the benefit of those of us who can still stand to learn some lessons from them about *love and forgiveness!* Ω



Believe it or not...

Christmas Is **NOT** Christian!

“What? You say Christmas is not Christian? How dare you? That’s borderline heresy! Of course Christmas is Christian! Christmas is biblical! It commemorates the birth of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ... doesn’t it?”

Oh? Does it really? Have you proven all things? (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Or it is something we have traditionally taken for granted? Do not make up your mind before you examine the facts!

by Lloyd W. Cary

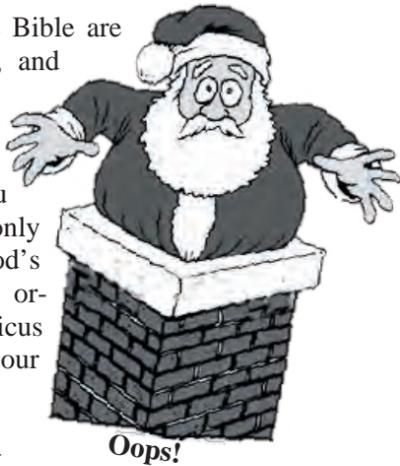


Lloyd W. Cary

Granted, there is no time that is more nostalgic than Christmas. It reminds us of home, of family, of “the good old days” when we were children. We think back to Norman Rockwell-like settings of jolly Santa, sleigh bells, Christmas trees, Yule logs burning in the fireplace, caroling, and of children shouting in glee as they unwrap presents “Santa” has brought them for being good. It may come as a shock to most to learn that, despite all these warm, fuzzy feelings, Christmas has PAGAN origins and is not a Christian festival at all.

Many have an immediate emotional reaction when confronted with this truth, but we must remember the Proverb that says, “He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him” (Proverbs 18:17). In other words, if one is steeped from childhood in the belief that Christmas is a Christian holiday, the information that it is indeed pagan will tend to be vociferously rejected. Another Proverb states that “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him” (Proverbs 18:13). We need to examine these FACTS with open minds, searching out the truth, not with minds clouded with emotion and tradition.

The plain truth is that nowhere in the Bible are believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or of Jesus Christ required to celebrate Christmas. You may search your Bible from cover to cover only to find that it just isn’t there. Upon close examination, you will find that the early Christian church not only did *not* celebrate Christmas, but instead, God’s people kept the sacred festivals that God ordained in the Bible as outlined in Leviticus chapter 23. (Write for your free copy of our booklet, *God’s Seasonal Plan*.)



What the Experts Say

Consider these amazing facts from historians and reliable sources:

- “Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church... the first evidence of the feast is from Egypt” (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1911 edition).
- The 25th of December was celebrated in ancient days as the birthday of the unconquerable SUN god, (variously know as Tammuz, Mithra, Saturn, Adonis, or BAAL) centuries *before* Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.
- “Christmas customs are an evolution from times that long antedated the Christmas period—a descent from seasonal, pagan, religious and national practices, hedged about with legend and tradition... In the beginning many of the earth’s inhabitants were sun worshippers because the course of their lives depended on its yearly round in the heavens, and feasts were held at its return from distant wanderings. In the south of Europe, in Egypt and Persia the sun-gods were worshipped with elaborate ceremonies at the season of the winter solstice, as a fitting time to pay tribute to the god of plenty, while in Rome the Saturnalia reigned for a week... The exact day and year of Christ’s birth have never been satisfactorily settled, but when the fathers of the church in A.D. 340 chose the day of the *winter solstice* which was firmly fixed in the minds of the people and which was their most important festival...” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, article “Christmas,” p. 642).

• “In a famous letter to Augustine, Pope Gregory directs the great missionary to accommodate the ceremonies of the Christian worship as much as possible to those of the heathen, that the people might not be startled at the change, and in particular the Pope advised Augustine to allow converts to kill and eat at the Christmas festival a great number of oxen to the glory of God, *as they had formerly done to the Devil*” (*The Story of Christmas* by Michael Harrison, p. 28).

• “It is nevertheless almost certain that the 25th of December cannot be the nativity of the Savior, for it is then the height of the rainy season in Judaea, and shepherds could hardly be watching their flocks by night in the plains.... Not casually or arbitrarily was the festival of the nativity celebrated on the 25th of December. One of the principal causes that

co-operated in fixing this period was that *almost all the heathen nations regarded the winter solstice as the turning point of the year—the beginning of the renewed life and activity of the powers of nature, and of the gods who were merely the symbolic personifications of these*. In more northern countries this fact must have made itself peculiarly palpable—hence the Celts and Germans, from the oldest times, celebrated the season with the greatest festivities. At the winter solstice the Norsemen held their great *Yule-feast* in commemoration of the fiery sun-wheel, and believed that during the twelve nights from the 25th of December to the 6th of January they could trace the personal movements and interferences on earth of their great deities, Odin, Beretha, etc. *Many of the beliefs and usages of the old Germans, and also of the Romans, relating to this period, passed over from heathenism to Christianity, and have partly survived to the present day*” (*Chambers Encyclopaedia*, 1908 Edition, Vol. 11, p, 222, article “Christmas”).

• “There is no authoritative tradition as to the day or month of Christ’s birth.... The winter solstice was regarded as the birthday of the sun and at Rome a pagan festival of the nativity of ‘*sol invictus*’ was introduced by the Emperor Aurelian on the 25th of December, 274. The church, unable to stamp out this popular festival, spiritualized it as the feast of the Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness. When Christianity spread northwards it encountered a similar pagan festival also held at the winter solstice—the great Yule feast of the Norsemen. Once again Christmas absorbed heathen customs. From the various sources came the Yule log, the Christmas tree introduced into England from Germany and first mentioned in 1789” (*Chambers Encyclopaedia*, 1970, p. 538, article “Christmas”).

As you can see, there is no shortage of historical evidence that Christmas long antedated Christ. Scholars have known these facts for centuries. They can be easily confirmed in any reference library. In short, we see that each year on December 25 the ancient pagans held a festival in honor of the SUN god. In order to win Gentile converts to the Christian faith, the Roman Church, centuries after the times of the apostles, *adopted* this ancient pagan winter festival of the SUN god and renamed it the “Mass of Christ”—or in its shortened form, “Christmas”—mistakenly thinking that the play upon words would shift the honor to the *SON of God*, the Savior of the world.

What, then, does *God* think of this pagan honor bestowed upon him? “Thus saith the LORD, Learn *not* the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them” (Jeremiah 10:2). He then goes on to mention one such custom. “For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not” (Jeremiah 10:3). Do you know of any such custom today (verses 3–4)? Again, in Deuteronomy 12:30–32 God warns, “Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire *not* after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.’ Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he *hateth*, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: *thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*” As shocking as it may seem to most, there in your very own Bible God says He *hates* those pagan customs that are attributed to Him! (Be sure to send for our free booklet, *Facts You Should Know About Christmas*.)

More Authoritative Quotations

Now that we understand that our Savior was not born on December 25 but in the autumn of the year, perhaps on the Feast of Trumpets or during the *Feast of Tabernacles*, let us consider further what various historians say about how December 25 came to be celebrated as the Savior’s birth:

- In *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon says: “The Roman Christians, ignorant of his [Christ’s] birth, fixed the solemn festival to the 25th of December, the Brumalia, or Winter Solstice, when the Pagans annually celebrated the birth of Sol” (vol. ii, p. 383).
- *Grolier’s Encyclopedia* says: “Christmas is the feast of the birth of Jesus Christ, celebrated on December 25.... Despite the beliefs about Christ that the birth stories expressed, *Xmas*, continued on page 5

the church did *not* observe a festival for the celebration of the event until the 4th century... since 274, under the emperor Aurelian, Rome had celebrated the feast of the 'Invincible Sun' on December 25. In the Eastern Church, January 6, a day also associated with the winter solstice, was in Italy preferred. In course of time, however, the West added the Eastern date as the *Feast of the Epiphany*, and the East added the Western date of *Christmas*".

- "The festivals of Rome are innumerable; but five of the most important may be singled out for elucidation—viz., Christmas-day, Lady-day, Easter, the nativity of St. John, and the Feast of the Assumption. Each and all of these can be proved to be Babylonian" (*The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop, p. 91).
- "Within the Christian Church no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of till the third century, and that not till the fourth century was far advanced did it gain much observance. How, then, did the Roman Church fix on December 25th as Christmas-day? Why, thus: Long before the fourth century, and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen, at that precise time of the year, in honor of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven; and it may fairly be presumed that in order to conciliate the heathen, and to swell the number of the nominal adherents of Christianity, the same festival was adopted by the Roman Church, giving it only the name of Christ. This tendency on the part of the Christians to meet Paganism half-way was very early developed ... Upright men strove to stem the tide, but in spite of all their efforts, the apostasy went on, till the Church, with the exception of a small remnant, was

submerged under Pagan superstition. That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, 'about the time of the winter solstice' (Ibid., p. 93).



"Thus says the LORD, Learn *not* the way of the nations... For the customs of the people are VAIN: for one cuts a tree out of the forest.. They deck it with silver and with gold" (Jeremiah 10:3)

- "Even where the sun was the favorite object of worship, as in Babylon itself and elsewhere, at this festival he was worshipped not merely as the orb of day, but *as God incarnate*. It was an essential principle of the Babylonian system, that the *Sun or Baal was the one only God*. When, therefore Tammuz was worshipped as *God incarnate that implied also that he was an incarnation of the Sun*. In the Hindoo mythology, which is admitted to be essentially Babylonian, this comes out very distinctly. There, Surya, or the Sun, is represented as being incarnate, and born for the purpose of subduing the enemies of the gods, who, without such a birth, could not have been subdued.
- "It was no mere astronomical festival, then, that the Pagans celebrated at the winter solstice. That festival at Rome was called the *feast of Saturn*, and the mode in which it was celebrated there, showed whence it had been derived. The feast as regulated by Caligula, lasted five days; loose reins were given to drunkenness and revelry, slaves had temporary emancipation and used all manner of freedoms with their masters. This was precisely the way in which, according to Berosus, the drunken festival of the month Thebeth, answering to our December, in other words, the *festival of Bacchus*, was celebrated in Babylon... *The Christmas tree*, now so common among us, was equally common in pagan Rome and pagan Egypt. In Egypt that tree was the palm-tree; in Rome it was the fir; the palm tree denoting the pagan Messiah, as *Baal-Tamar*, the fir referring to him as *Baal-Berith*" (Ibid., p. 96–97).

But Haven't We Traditionally Always Kept Christmas?

It may seem like Christmas has always been celebrated in the United States, but that's not the case. In fact, the joyous religious holiday was actually banned in America for several decades by Christians themselves.

"Shocking as it sounds, followers of Jesus Christ in both America and England helped pass laws making it illegal to observe Christmas, believing it was an insult to God to honor a day associated with ancient paganism," according to *Shocked by the Bible* (Thomas Nelson Inc., 2008). "Most Americans today are unaware that Christmas was **BANNED** in Boston from 1659 to 1681."

Christmas in the United States did not start out with Christmas trees and Santa Claus—far from it. When the pilgrims first arrived on Cape Cod, Christmas was not observed. December 25, 1620, was looked upon as a normal workday.

Using traditions of many immigrants, the United States has cultivated its own Christmas traditions.

Christmas was banned in Boston for a time during the mid-1600s. Even Congress was in session on December 25, 1789. It was not until 1870 when Christmas was declared a federal holiday.

The Germans introduced us to the Christmas tree and the Dutch gave us Santa Claus, otherwise known as "Sinter Klaas."

Christmas in the Colonies

From 1659 to 1681, showcasing one's holiday spirit in Boston could cost you a fine of as much as five shillings. *That's right—Christmas used to be illegal!* Christmas was so inconsequential in early America that after the Revolutionary War, Congress didn't even bother taking the day off to celebrate the holiday, deciding instead to hold its first session on Christmas Day, 1789. It took almost a century for Congress to proclaim it a federal holiday.

"Keep Christ in Christmas!" is the familiar refrain of Christians who fear the secularization of the holy day celebrating the birth of Jesus, their Savior. The plain truth is, Christ was never in Christmas to begin with! But today in America, most non-Christians celebrate Christmas.

In England, the ban on the holiday was lifted in 1660, when Charles II took over the throne. However, the Puritan presence remained in New England, and Christmas did not become a legal holiday there until 1856. Even then, some schools continued to hold classes on December 25 until 1870.

Although the change was gradual, people began to once again embrace the holiday until Christmas as we know it today, complete with pine trees, mistletoe, eggnog, Santa and his magic reindeer, and all the trimmings were celebrated throughout the American colonies.

According to a recent poll by the Christian group *LifeWay Research*, "A majority of agnostics or those claiming no preference (89 percent), individuals claiming other religions (62 percent), and even atheists (55 percent) celebrate Christmas along with 97 percent of [professing] Christians."

As a case in point, this writer was an avowed atheist before his conversion. While an atheist, he kept Christmas along with his family. When he was converted, he stopped observing the day. This caused much consternation to his family and friends. "When you did not believe in God you kept Christmas," they observed. "But now, when you say you do believe in God, you don't observe it. We don't understand." Life is full of conundrums.

So How Did Christmas Get Into the Christian Church?

The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* gives a clear explanation in the article on "Christmas."

"How much the date of the festival depended upon the pagan Brumalia [December 25] following the Saturnalia [December 17–24], and celebrating the shortest day of the year and the 'new sun'...cannot be accurately determined. The pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christian influence.... The pagan festival with its riot and merrymaking was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit and in manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Near East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ's birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia *accused their western brethren of idolatry and sun worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival*" (emphasis added).

The Roman Empire had been totally pagan, and prior to the 4th century, Christians were few in number and persecuted by both the government and pagans. Then the Emperor Constantine professed Christianity, placing it on an equal footing with paganism. Christianity suddenly became popular.

However most of the "converts" had been brought up in pagan customs, the chief of which was December 25. They enjoyed this festival of joy and merrymaking, and they did not want to give it up! The pagan Manichaeism identified the SON of God with the physical SUN, giving the new "converts" an excuse to call December 25 (re-birth of the SUN) the birthday of the SON of God.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, some Latins, as early as A.D. 354, may have transferred the birthday of Christ from January 6 to December 25, which was then a Mithraic feast or birthday of the unconquered SUN. The Syrians and Armenians who clung to January 6 accused the Romans of sun worship and idolatry, claiming the December 25 festival was invented by the disciples of Cerinthus.

Xmas, continued from page 5

Many “gods,” Same Birthday

Upon examination, we find that there were many others who celebrated the 25th of December as the birthday of *their* gods before it was agreed upon as the birthday of Jesus. For example, the people of India rejoice, decorate their houses with garlands, and give presents to their friends on this day.

The people of China also celebrate this day and close their shops. The pagan god Buddha is believed to have been born on this day when the “Holy Ghost” descended on his virgin mother Maya.

The great savior and god of the Persians, Mithras, is also believed to have been born on the 25th of December long *before* the coming of Jesus.

The Egyptians celebrated this day as the birthday of their great savior Horus, the Egyptian god of light and the son of the “virgin mother” and “queen of the heavens” Isis. Osiris, lord of the dead and the underworld in Egypt, the son of “the holy virgin,” was believed to have been born on the 25th of December.

The Greeks celebrated the 25th of December as the birthday of Hercules, the son of the supreme god of the Greeks, Zeus, through the mortal woman Alcmena. Bacchus, the god of wine and revelry among the Romans (known among the Greeks as Dionysus), was also born on this day.



Modern day idolaters

Adonis, revered as a “dying-and-rising god” among the Greeks, miraculously was also born on the 25th of December. His worshipers held him a yearly festival representing his death and resurrection in midsummer. The ceremonies of his birthday are recorded to have taken place in the same cave in Bethlehem which is claimed to have been the birth place of Jesus.

The Scandinavians celebrated the 25th of December as the birthday of their god Freyr, the son of their supreme god of the heavens, Odin.

The Romans observed this day as the birthday of the *god of the SUN*, *Natalis Solis Invicti* (“*Birthday of Sol the Invincible*”). There was great rejoicing, and all shops were closed while the people turned to fun and games. Presents were exchanged, and the slaves were indulged in great liberties. Remember, these are the same Romans who would later preside over the council of Nicea (A.D. 325), which led to the official Christian recognition of the “Trinity” as the “true” nature of God, and the “fact” that Jesus was born on the 25th of December also.

Christmas is not the only “Christian” festival that was borrowed from ancient paganism and foisted upon the religion of Jesus. There is also the venerable day of the Sun (SUN-day), Easter, the Feast of St. John, the Holy Communion, the Annunciation of the Virgin, the Assumption of the Virgin, and many others. These all have their roots in ancient pagan worship and have crept into professing Christianity today. But does it make any difference? Our intentions are good! You are correct. It makes no difference at all... IF there is no God and IF the Bible is not true. But there *is* a God and His Word *is* true. And if we believe there is a God and that His Word is true, shouldn't we believe and do what God says? There are many warning in the Bible about hearers of the Word who are not doers: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21); “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17); “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Romans 2:13); “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22); “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). Yes, it does make a difference—to God!

Okay! So Christmas Is a Pagan Festival! But What If We Just Honor Christ and Don't Take Part in Any of These Pagan Customs?

Good question. Let's allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves:

The Scripture declares, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit AND IN TRUTH” (John 4:24); “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). God's Spirit is the spirit of truth (John 17:17), and the spirit of truth does not lead us to the truth through error, half-truths, lies, or false doctrine. Truth slices through and exposes falsehood *every time*. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful,

and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Consider: worshipping Christ through honoring His birthday on a day that is *NOT* His birthday, borrowing many pagan customs in the process, is *NOT* worshipping Him “in Spirit OR in Truth!” On the contrary, it is actually taking his name *in vain*. “Howbeit in vain do they worship me,” Christ said, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of *men*” (Mark 7:7). God is supreme. It is He who determines when and how He will be worshipped, not puny, sinful little men.

What Now?

If this information is new to you, your head may be spinning. You may be wondering, “How does this information affect *me*? What shall I do?” Perhaps you now find yourself at an impasse. If all this about Christmas is correct, then how should we respond?

To ignore truth is obviously not a safe policy to follow, especially, when it concerns the choice between *Baal worship* on the one hand and *obedience to the commandments of God* on the other! If you are intellectually honest, we challenge you to *go to the library and check it out!* Read as many encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other reference works as you can to see if these things are true. The Bible commands us to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The inference is, if it is *not* good and true, do *not* hold fast to it; let it go. We prove all things by comparing what we hear with the Word of God, and if our beliefs and customs—however cherished they may be—do not agree with the Bible, we need to reject them. If they do, receive, believe, and practice them. God does not require “blind faith.” Hearers of the Gospel are bound to inquire, examine, and judge whether what they hear is—or is not—according to the Scripture. Any man or body of men who denies us this right, or hinders us from exercising it, is violating the revealed will of God.

When you have thoroughly studied the matter **YOU ARE LEFT WITH A CHOICE:** we can either go along with the pagan festival of Christmas—or obey the Almighty's commandments.

There really is no other option.

Ω



Not your Bible!

Be sure to request our free booklets,
**Facts You Should Know About Christmas,
God's Seasonal Plan, and our CD,
Ghost of Christmas Past**

Send your request to:

CHURCH OF GOD INTERNATIONAL
3900 TIMMS STREET, TYLER, TEXAS 75701
CGI Website: www.cgi.org
CGI E-mail: info@cgi.org
Phone: 903-939-2929

In loving memory...

Emanuel Omega “Pete” Peden

Funeral Services for Emanuel Omega “Pete” Peden, age 83, of Tyler, Texas were Thursday, October 3, 2013, at Tyler Memorial Funeral Home, with burial in Tyler Memorial Park Cemetery. Charles Groce officiated.

Mr. Peden was born on March 22, 1930, in St. Louis, Missouri, to Emanuel and Helen Marie Davis Peden, and passed away on September 30, 2013, in Tyler.

Mr. Peden served in the U.S. Navy, loved to ride bicycles, enjoyed camping, and was a ham radio operator (W5CPP). He had lived in Tyler about 53 years, and was a member of the Tyler congregation of the *Church of God International*.

Survivors include his wife, Peggy Peden, of Tyler; son, Rick Johnson and wife Dana, of Tyler; daughters, Debbie Cates and husband Kip, of Tyler; Stephanie Wells and husband Ritchie, of Flynn; Gwen Luchin and husband Tom, of Pueblo, Colorado; Melissa Bauer and husband Mark, of Corpus Christi; Pam Rippley and husband Jeff, of Magnolia; daughter-in-law, Sola Peden, of Houston; 14 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; brother, Martin Barnhart, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; sisters, Nancy Gibbon, of Guthrie, Oklahoma; Doloros Babbitt, of Florida; Patricia Block; and Constance Hughes.

Mr. Peden was preceded in death by his parents; son, Larry Peden; and sister, Mary Barger.

In spite of serious health concerns, Pete was a “regular” at Sabbath services in Tyler. We miss him very much, and look forward to seeing him again, when “this mortal puts on immortality...and death is swallowed up in victory.”



Pete Peden

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Mac McComb



Herbert McComb

On October 22, 2013, Herbert Keith “Mac” McComb, of Tyler, Texas, slipped quietly and peacefully into the sleep of death. He was 93 years old. A memorial service was held for him following Sabbath services on November 16, 2013.

Mac was baptized in the early 1990s and was a faithful member of the Body of Christ for the remainder of his life. For the past several years, he attended Sabbath services regularly with the Tyler CGI.

Mac is survived by his wife Harriet McComb; one son, Robert; daughter-in-law Lisa; two grandchildren, Rebekah and Melody; two nephews, Stephen and Jim Terwilliger; and two nieces, Carolyn Meters and Lois Babcock.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William and Evelyn McComb; his wife, Marian McComb; his sister, Florence Terwilliger; and a nephew, David Terwilliger.

Mac was born July 15, 1920, at Grace Hospital in Detroit, Michigan. He lived in Detroit for one year while his dad was building a house in Dearborn, Michigan. His dad died when he was nine; his mom died when he was twelve. His Uncle Frank took Mac and Mac’s sister, Florence, to Syracuse, New York. Florence lived with their Uncle Frank and his wife, and Mac lived with his Uncle Rozelle and Aunt Elsie. About a year later, Frank moved to Memphis, New York, and took Mac and Florence with him. Later, Frank moved back to Syracuse and took Florence with him. Mac stayed in Memphis until the school year ended, at which time Frank took him to live with his grandparents in Belleville, Michigan. He attended school at a nearby town. During these formative years and in all the moving about—from Michigan to New York and back again—Mac attended seven different schools.

He was working at a stove company in Ypsilanti, Michigan when World War II began. Then, on December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor. Mac was 21 at the time and was living with his grandparents in Belleville. About 10 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he decided to join the Navy. But his service to the country did not end with the Navy. Several years after his service in the Navy, Mac joined the Army. He was a veteran of World War II (four years of service), and he was in the Reserves during the Korean conflict (three years). He was a Boatswain’s Mate First Class in the Navy, and Sergeant First Class in the Army.

Like the men and women of Hebrews 11, Mac died in faith. We look forward to seeing him again in the day of our Lord’s coming—when this mortal puts on immortality, and this corruptible puts on incorruption...when death is swallowed up of life.

“Till we meet again!”

Ω

Your Bible says...

“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. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory”

(1 Corinthians 15:51–54).

Ω

Church News

Toronto Campaign a Resounding Success



Are They Lost?

Pastor Ramocan spoke to the people of Toronto showing them, from their Bibles, the fate of the billions of people who have lived and died without ever hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is a difficult question for Christians.

Most Christians teach that these lost souls are condemned to an everlasting punishment in hell. This immediately calls God's character into question. How can a loving God create billions of people to be condemned to eternal hell through no fault of their own? Some Christians simply sidestep the question by implying that if they were good people, they might still be in heaven. This answer calls into question the clear biblical teaching that there is no other way to salvation apart from Jesus Christ.

As the audience members listened to the Bible being opened up to them, they were enthralled by what it actually says on this topic. This campaign made it clear that there is a hunger for the clear and factual exposition of God's Word.

During the Q&A session afterward, many expressed heartfelt gratitude to Pastor Ramocan for the clarity with which he answered the question from the pages of the Bible.

Congratulations to all who were involved in this successful and worthwhile undertaking! Ω

Submitted by Adrian Davis



They Are *NOT* Lost!

On the 27th of October, 130 new people attended our outreach event, *Are They Lost?* In preparation for this event, CGI Toronto was energized by prayer, and equipped with training in personal witnessing. We went above and beyond to reach people near and far through fliers, television and radio advertising, social media, and email campaigns.

This campaign sought to address the issue of the fate of the billions of people who, through no fault of their own, lived and died without knowing Jesus Christ.

A Reasonable Objection

Romans 1:18–20 is the strongest text one can raise to support the view that those who die not knowing Christ are condemned.

This text, in essence, says the billions of people who have lived and died without knowing Christ are without excuse because God made Himself known to them through His creation, but they did not seek to worship Him. Hence, God says they are without excuse. On what basis, then, could it be said they had no opportunity for salvation?

Answering the Objection

The problem with this popular interpretation is that it contradicts the Bible's teaching about how one receives salvation. Nowhere does the Bible teach that salvation comes through the general revelation of God's creation. Therefore, to say that these people received the opportunity for salvation is to deny that: "salvation comes only through Jesus Christ" (Acts 4:12). You cannot say salvation is found only in Jesus Christ and at the same time say salvation comes from observing creation. Not only is this "salvation by works," it is salvation apart from Christ.

Continued on next page

Youth Bible Study—Burlington

In Burlington, we are entering our second year of a very successful Youth Bible Study program. We meet with our youth every Sabbath at 12:15 PM (except for the 4th Sabbath of each month when we have a congregational Bible Study). Every week, our youth are early and prepared for the study. In our first year, we covered the Old Testament. We were delighted to see how quickly the youth grasped the core narrative of the Bible. We laid a solid foundation.

This year, we are focused on the New Testament. Each week we send out the course lesson to our young people. They review their lessons and come prepared each week to share what they understand and have their understanding expanded.

Our parents and volunteers take turns facilitating the studies. The studies are well attended by adults as well as our youth and we are refreshed by what we are learning together and inspired by the commitment of our youth. Week by week we are preparing tomorrow's leaders. Please support us and our precious youth with your prayers. Ω

Submitted by Adrian Davis



Youth Study—Burlington

Church News

Continued from previous page

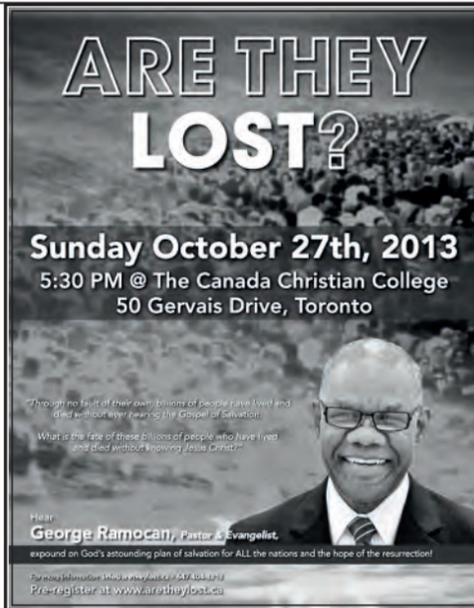
Billions of people have lived and died since Adam, and they never knew Jesus, the Christ, the only name by which human beings can be saved. Billions more will die before He returns, and will not have known Him either, through no fault of their own. What is the fate of these people?

These are life-saving questions that many people have pondered. There are answers to them, contrary to what some may believe. They are revealed in the pages of God's manual for humanity—the Holy Bible.

How then does a person receive salvation? The very same book of Romans explains that no one comes to know Christ except by hearing and believing the Gospel. Listen to what Romans 10:14–15 says about people who have never heard the Gospel: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him in whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'" The fact is this: even if these people came to know God through His creation and acknowledged and worshipped Him, they would still be without salvation because they have not accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. This can be understood from the calling of Cornelius in Acts 10. There we see that Cornelius was "devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly" (Acts 10:2). Yet, Cornelius up to that time did not receive salvation. Cornelius needed to come to know Jesus Christ. God in His own time would send a preacher in the person of Peter so Cornelius could hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ; because "How can they hear except a preacher be sent?" It was only after Cornelius heard the Gospel that he received the opportunity for salvation. He and his household believed in Jesus and were therefore saved (Acts 10:44–48).

It is only after we come to know Jesus Christ and then reject Him that we are without excuse. Hence, Jesus says in John 15:22, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin." Indeed, the people described in Romans 1:20 share the same sinful condition of the rest of humanity. Romans 3:10–12, declares: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." The whole world is in the same sinful condition since we all have access to God's creation. Paul sums this up in Romans 3:9 when he says, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin." Therefore, the fact that the people of Romans 1:20 have a sinful nature does not mean they (or the rest of the world, by extension) are abandoned and condemned by God. That's not what God means when He says "they are without excuse." They are without excuse for not knowing and acknowledging God as Creator. They are "excused" for their sins as explained by Paul in Romans 3:25. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. (Take note of this! No one is being punished! These people are not without hope!)

Paul elaborates in Romans 11:1, "I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2) God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.11) I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12) Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! 25) For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26) And so all Israel will be saved,30) For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience. Even when we are disobedient, God does not abandon us. 31) Even so these also have now been disobedient, that through



Poster for the "Are They Lost" event

the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32) For God has committed them ALL to disobedience, that He might have mercy on ALL."

Rather than condemning the billions of people who have died without hearing the Gospel, Romans 1:18–20 provides clarity that God indeed "committed them ALL to disobedience, that He might have mercy on ALL." Ω

Submitted by George Ramocan

Ordination of Adrian Davis Into God's Ministry



Roger King, Jennifer and Adrian David, George Ramocan



In the summer of 1985, after years of searching for the truth, Adrian learned about the Gospel of the Kingdom of God through a subscriber to the *Worldwide Church of God's* (WCG's) *Plain Truth* magazine. He eagerly devoured everything the WCG had to offer. He began attending services in Ottawa in the fall of 1985, and he was baptized in April 1986. After completing his studies in Ottawa, he returned to Toronto, where he attended the WCG's Toronto Central congregation.

We met at the Feast in Niagara Falls in 1989 and we were married in April 1991. We have two children, Ryan (19) and Rachel (17).

In 1992, we left the WCG due to its departure from foundational biblical truth, and started to attend with the *Philadelphia Church of God*. In April 1994, Adrian was ordained into the diaconate. However, once again, we were faced with the systematic dismantling of foundational biblical truth.

In 2007, a long time friend invited us to attend a service with the *Church of God International* congregation in Toronto (pastored by Bill Watson). Adrian began the *Ministerial Apprentice Program* in 2010 under the mentorship of Pastor George Ramocan.

On the weekly Sabbath during this year's Feast of Tabernacles in Leamington, Ontario, Adrian was ordained into Jesus Christ's ministry. The ordination was officiated by Pastors George Ramocan and Roger King.

Adrian and I now serve in the Burlington congregation alongside Pastor Murray Palmatier and his wife Lissa. We are overjoyed to participate in the shepherding of the firstfruits into the Kingdom of God! Ω

Submitted by Jennifer Davis

Feast Reports, 2013

Record 427 Attendance, 4 Baptized at Jamaica Feast Site

Breaking its previous Feast record, the Jamaican CGI had 427 persons in attendance at the 2013 Feast of Tabernacles. That attendance comprised members from the Kingston, Spanish Town, Ocho Rios, and Maroon Town congregations. This time around, the venue was the Portland Ballroom of the luxurious Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort in the tourism resort town of Ocho Rios.

Pastor Ian Boyne, for whom this year's Feast held special meaning, was pleased at the record attendance. September 18, the first day of the Feast, was the exact date on which Mr. Boyne had observed his first Feast with the Church of God 38 years ago, in 1975, then at the Runaway Bay Hotel (he kept it alone in 1974). In his post-Feast address, he commended the Jamaican brethren. He said, "It is amazing that in such dire economic challenges such as we're facing in Jamaica, we can have this record attendance at the Feast. I feel so proud to lead you, to be part of an organisation where people are so dedicated."

Not only did the Jamaican Feast start with the proverbial bang attendance-wise, but it also ended on a high note with the baptism, on the Last Great Day, of four new persons.

In between these highlights, the Jamaican members celebrated eight days of exciting praise and worship, uplifting special music, refreshing fellowship, enjoyable social activities, and most importantly, a sumptuous feast of dynamic and memorable sermons.

Mike James Created a Buzz

Speaking of sermons, visiting minister Mike James left the Jamaican Feast site buzzing with appreciation for his insightful and energetically delivered sermons. His sermon titled *Fear Not* justified his first day billing, a position usually reserved for Pastor Boyne.

Interweaving entertaining personal anecdotes with scriptural insights, he charged the almost capacity hall not to fear anyone or anything but God. He demonstrated that fear is not always a bad thing, but that, if allowed to overwhelm one, could prove crippling and debilitating. He provided listeners with proven steps for transforming themselves through mastery of their fears.

Pastor James' third-day sermon was titled *Achieving Church Unity*. In it, he emphasised that God does not want disunity in His church. Conflicts, he noted, were inevitable—human beings are working together after all—but are often what is necessary to create and strengthen unity. He gave some biblical keys for managing conflicts, building trust, nurturing strong relationships, and creating church unity.

In his third message, Mr. James presented what amounted to a master class in *Leadership and Teamwork*, in which he explicated the main concepts from Patrick Lencioni's work, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

Pastor Ian Boyne—Spiritual Survivor

As an important sign of not just the Jamaican CGI's numerical growth, but its growth in its leadership corps, Pastor Boyne only spoke twice at the Feast. His first sermon, delivered on Day Three, was titled *The World Tomorrow—What it Will Be Like*.

Noting that this year marks the 80th year of the founding of the parent church by Herbert W Armstrong, he lamented that the church could have gone on further if they had lived out the message of unity pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles.

One of the major features of the "World Tomorrow" will be unity, he asserted. God is going to bring peoples together and banish war, enmity, and separation (Isaiah 27:12; 19:23; 11:6). Satan, however, is intent on dividing God's people, something we should resist. He went on to clarify some prophetic aspects related to the Kingdom of God to be established.

Pastor Boyne's sermon on the Last Great Day was hailed by many as their message of the Feast. In it, he presented the first part in his exciting *Spiritual Survivor Series* in which he sought to highlight the major reasons, based upon his experience and study, why believers fall away from the faith and why others survive. His exposition on Ephesians 6 provided many potent lessons in how to overcome the schemes of Satan by putting on the whole armour of God.

A Feast of Sermons

Sermon speaker Chester Coke was commended by Pastor Boyne for the profundity of his presentation on *The Science of Spiritual Change*. My sermons were titled *The Heart of the Beast*, *Master Your Weakness*, and *Distraction Proof*.

Other speakers included Deacon Christopher Hendricks, a recent candidate for the Ministerial Apprenticeship Programme (MAP); Stephen Scale (*From Problems, Through Purpose, to Power*); Sean Goldburn (*The Great Hope of the Kingdom of God*); first-time Feast speaker Khari Ballantyne; Shannon Henry (*Eyes on the Prize*); Andre Dennis (*Focusing on the Kingdom*); Richard Wright

(*Contend for the Faith*); Ray Williams (*Bus Journey to Millennium Park*); Deacon Derrick Alwood (*Rejoice!*); Jeremy McKenzie (*Youth Matters*); and Jordan McKenzie (*Humility*).

HWA Memorial Speaking Competition

In the eagerly anticipated annual Herbert W. Armstrong Memorial Speaking Competition, Deacon Stacy-Ann Hall reclaimed the coveted trophy for the Kingston congregation. She presented the best arguments to defend the CGI's doctrine on tithing. In the process, she vanquished last year's winner from Spanish Town, Mr. Stephen Allen, while winning J\$50,000 for herself. Ω

Submitted by Ian Boyne

Myrtle Beach Feast of Tabernacles

Arriving at Myrtle Beach, with the beauty of the ocean before us, the sound of the waves crashing on the shore, and the gentle wind blowing, we felt the excitement increase at the coming of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Our preparations began the morning before the first day. With a small group of brethren as our set-up crew, and with the staff of the resort doing their part, the meeting room was beautifully transformed to a place of worship and fellowship. As the sun began to set, we looked forward to our traditional hospitality event, the beginning of several days of fellowship with old friends and new. With everything ready, God's people came. With light hors d'oeuvres for refreshment, and tables set invitingly around the room, we greeted one another with joy and love, very much looking forward to eight precious days spent in the company of one another.

On the first day of the Feast, as the meeting room began to fill with brethren, there was a sense of peace and happiness. Our services each day were filled with messages—sermons and sermonettes inspired by God and presented by true servant leaders. During our daily services, we were blessed not only in the messages given, but also in the Special Music shared by very talented and gifted brethren and dear friends.

As a family oriented Feast site, we are very pleased to have the Infuse team with us each year, providing daily morning sessions for all who want to join in. The messages are geared toward the young adults and teens in helping them in their daily walk with God. This year, as they have in past years, Infuse hosted several very enjoyable and well attended events during the Feast, including a Children's Carnival, an Ice Cream Social, and a Beach Volleyball Cook-Out.

The children had their daily Sabbath School classes taught by a few very dedicated ladies who not only teach, but make it fun for all of the children. One of the highlights of every Feast is the Children's Choir performing on Youth Day, and we were not disappointed! They did a wonderful job! Youth Day is always a very special day with its focus on the young people in the church, who represent our future; and it would not be complete without the Blessing of the Children, a very beautiful and touching part of the service.

We have many traditional events in Myrtle Beach, and we continued to follow tradition with our Family Dance and Family Fun Night, Senior Luncheon, and Women's Luncheon, to name a few. The focus is fellowship, and many of the brethren enjoyed these opportunities, as well as the opportunities they had to get together during their free time each day.

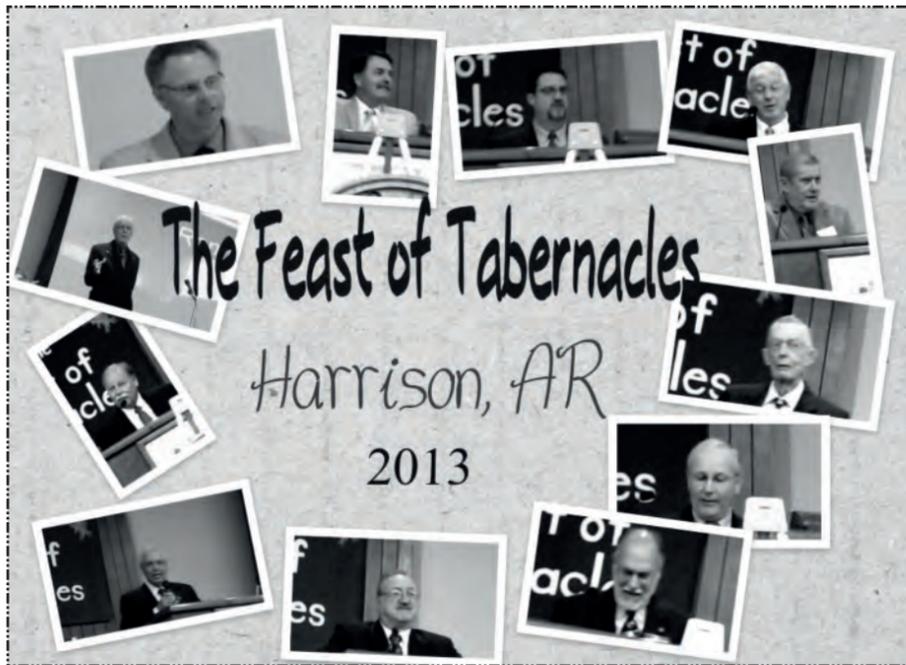
As the Feast came to a close, we said some of our good-byes, and with the help of several brethren, began taking down and packing away all signs we had been there in that meeting room, that special place for eight days. For those who could stay, we had one last opportunity to meet, fellowship, and say good-bye one last time—a final dinner together before going home.

This year, above all else, we were blessed with a sincere, loving spirit in all who attended with us at Myrtle Beach. We always feel that love, but this year it was a little more, and I didn't think it was possible to exceed the level of love we have each year. Each and every person contributed to that spirit through their service to one another through the hugs, the smiles, kind words, and prayers. It was truly awesome to see God's Spirit working so visibly in so many people at one time, in one place. Our brothers and sisters in Christ, we want to thank every one of you for sharing your loving spirit! You made this Feast the best Feast ever. We are blessed to have been a small part of your Feast this year and to have shared in your love. God be with you till we meet again. Ω

Submitted by Pam Nolen

Feast Reports, 2013

Harrison, Arkansas



The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in Harrison, Arkansas surrounded by the Ozark Mountains. The weather was beautiful after a few days of rain, and the brethren in attendance were 202.

We were blessed with many great speakers. They gave inspiring, motivating, and fantastic presentations. Among the sermon speakers were: Wynn Skelton, Denny Ledford, Skip Martin, Bill Glover, David Campbell, John Reedy, Dean Roberts, Wayne Turnbull, Ron Elkins, and Charles Groce. The sermonette speakers were: Pete Hornbuckle, Ted Standley, and Jean Lepont. Bible studies were given by Bill Glover and Pete Hornbuckle.

The festivities began with a welcoming message from Wynn Skelton, who also gave the offertory. John Reedy then gave the opening day sermon, in which he explained that understanding the Kingdom of God is not difficult. He went over the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, explaining in detail its meaning. In the afternoon, Dean Roberts focused on our future involvement as members of the Family of God in rebuilding the waste places and restoring creation to the pristine beauty and perfection God intended from the beginning.

On Day Two of the Feast, a split sermon was given by Denny Ledford and Skip Martin. Denny Ledford's sermon concentrated on keeping our focus on and watching for the coming Kingdom and return of Jesus Christ and not to be distracted by the world. Skip Martin preached concerning unity with the brethren, and gave a personal testimony of his experiences.

In the evening of the second day, a Bible Study was given by Bill Glover. He emphasized in his presentation that we should strive to know God and that we should yield all of our problems to Him.

On Day Three, Pete Hornbuckle gave what ended up being a split sermon with Wynn Skelton. Pete Hornbuckle preached that we are being "fixed" by God, and that we were at the Feast to celebrate the things that will be "fixed." Wynn Skelton spoke that we were there to recapture that vision of the future in the Kingdom.

On Day Four, Ted Standley gave the sermonette. His subject was mainly about the Day of the Lord. David Campbell concentrated on the future in God's Kingdom.

On Day Five, Jean LePont gave a sermonette about God's destiny for mankind. Bill Glover gave the main message on not giving up on our walk, or on God.

On Day Six, Wayne Turnbull and Wynn Skelton gave a split sermon. Wayne Turnbull spoke of knowing our enemy, pointing out that when the old self was buried in the waters of baptism, and that when we come out of that water, we've been recruited for a battle. That battle starts when we wake up every morning. Victory depends on knowing your enemy, and having a strategy against him (Satan) is a must. Wynn Skelton spoke of God's love for us and how nothing can separate us from the love of God.

The seventh day was Youth Day. Youth Day was a true blessing. Conducted by Skip Martin, the children performed a song about Noah's Ark. It was so adorable when the children would sing out, "Who built the ark, Noah, Noah!" The teens created their own Youth Day festival choir and sang many contemporary songs. A solo was performed by Marley Gilbert from the teen group. The Blessing of the Children was then conducted. The Youth Day sermon was given by Ron Elkins, who inspired us all to be wary of the bad influences of the world and to put off the old self and learn the new self.

We had numerous activities at the Feast, such as Pizza and Bowling, a Senior Luncheon at a local restaurant, Movie Night (*The Story of Joseph*), a Fun Show, a Dance with a Raffle, and a Picnic.

We also gave back to the community by donating non-perishable food items to an organization that provides meals for needy children.

It was a wonderful time of fellowship, laughter, and a reminder of how much God loves His people. Ω

Submitted by Carol Buser

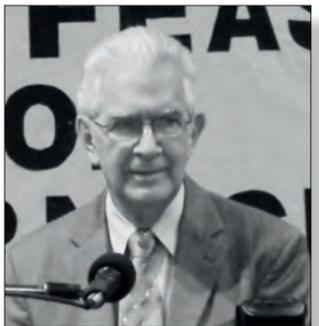
Feast Reports, 2013



James Pollitte



Bronson James



Bobby Whitt



Bill Russ



Mark Skiba



Fred Weed



John Reedy

Kentucky Dam Village

What were your thoughts as you traveled to Kentucky Dam Village and other Feast sites throughout the world? Your car had been packed with all the items you were sure you would need during the Feast. Of course, the family was there unless you were traveling alone. Were you thinking, *Did I pack all that I need? Did I turn everything off? Did I close the garage door? Did I lock all the doors? Did I stop mail delivery? What will the weather be like?* These are all the worries of a mortal's everyday life. After about 50 miles or so, did you decide it was too late to turn around and check on all those concerns? Perhaps your thoughts turned to the Feast of Tabernacles and its importance. Your thinking probably changed from mortal to hopefully becoming an immortal, and what a brilliant plan God has for us.

The sermons alone were worth the trip. The subjects ranged from *The Power of Love; Many Called, Few Chosen; Government of God or Politics of the World; Jonah; Last Days; Our Future Jobs in the Kingdom; Nothing Can Separate Us From God's Love; Faith; The Treatment of God's People During the Tribulation; The Apostles Continued to Spread God's Word Even Though They Were Persecuted; Our Inheritance; Rebuilding the Waste Places; and Bringing Israel and Judah Back Together.*

The speakers who helped us understand each of these subjects were Ferrell Vincent, Mark Schwarzkopf, Bill Russ, Nathan Kelley, Vance Stinson, Bronson James, Charles Groce, Bobby Whitt, Eugene Lucka, Archie Reynolds, Allan Graham, Mark Skiba, James Pollitte, Fred Weed, Marvin Wyke, and John Reedy.

Mr. Reedy presented a Bible Study on *Prophecy*. Vance Stinson also presented a Bible Study on *Abraham's Seed*, and the following day continued the discussion by speaking on *The Fulfillment of God's Promises to Abraham and His Seed*. Charles Groce, as only he can, with the help of two lovely teenage girls, demonstrated why we should *Pray Today for Tomorrow*. Bronson James was only able to spend a little time with us, but he presented a message on the *Divisions in Jesus' Family*.

As always, with James Pollitte's planning and the execution of many of those plans by the Shoemaker family and others, we had a wonderful Feast. Our calendars were filled with lots of activity. There were Luncheons, a Fun Show followed by a Dance and Bingo, Picnics, a Movie Night, and Baptism. A lady from the Tennessee congregation was baptized into God's Church. Anna Werline accompanied the congregational singing on the keyboard. Thank you to all who contributed to making the Feast successful.

The children were terrific, as usual. They presented their program the last day, thanks to Michelle Emerick.

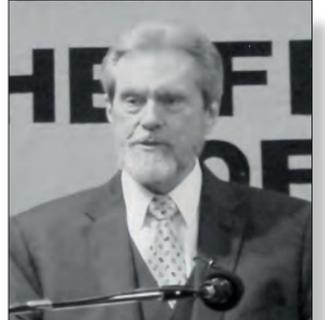
Oh yes, the weather was great. We had rain one evening, but we didn't mind. That was the evening Mr. Vincent presented a Bible Study with the help of the Holy Spirit watering the brethren with understanding.

A number of our friends were unable to attend this year, and, some visited other Feast sites. They were missed. Let's pray they had an informative and enjoyable Feast and are looking forward to next year. Until we meet again, may this coming year be a blessing to all. Ω

Submitted by Alice Edwards Lauria



Charles Groce



Vance Stinson



Ferrell Vincent



Marvin Wyke



Archie Reynolds



Nathan Kelly



Sonya King's baptism, September 25, 2013



Allan Graham



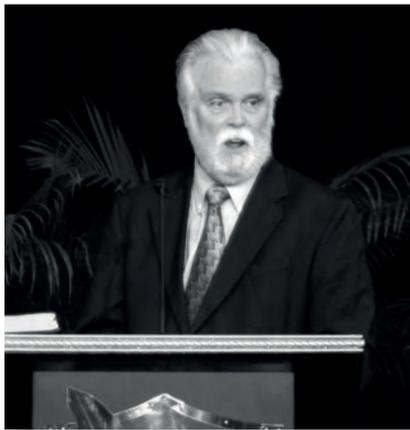
Mark Schwarzkopf



Eugene Lucka

Feast Reports, 2013

St. Petersburg / Pinellas Park, Florida



Ben Faulkner

The St. Petersburg / Pinellas Park area was host this year again to Church of God members and visitors who came together to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Services were held everyday at the beautiful Pinellas Park Performing Arts Center with its modern state of the art lighting and audio system. All services and Bible Studies were webcast everyday for anyone who could not physically be there with us. Two Canadian groups, in Ottawa and Halifax, were celebrating the Feast watching the complete webcast services. We had as many as 150 connections in a service; most of those connections were not a single person watching, but rather two or more watching with only one connection showing.

The one thing that touched everyone in attendance was the quality of sermons and sermonettes given by Ben Faulkner, Wayne Hendrix, Murray Palmatier, Dwight Harrison, Alex Fontao, Horraine Smith, Bill Harkins, Steve Miller, Larry Sharp, Mike Roy, and Randy Rust. Two well attended Bible Studies were conducted by Horraine Smith and Murray Palmatier.

Two mornings before services we enjoyed wonderful seminars presented by Ben Faulkner. Seminar No. 1 was titled *The Book God Wrote to You*. Seminar No. 2 was titled *4 B.C.—100 A.D.—World Upside Down*.

God's presence was clearly evident at this site as brethren from different Church of God organizations celebrated and worshipped together in unity, giving a foretaste of the unity and cooperation we will experience in the Millennium. By the end of the Feast, we were all sad to leave our new and old brothers and sisters in Christ.

The children played an important part of the Feast; they sang exuberantly during Youth Day services. The Children's Sabbath School classes were conducted by Lissa Palmatier, with the assistance of George Ransdell.

Teen Bible Classes were coordinated by Darren Collins, with several other men giving presentations to teach teens Bible based principles.

Wonderful Special Music was performed by Miriam Moreno, Lissa Palmatier, Jean Harkins, Beverly Smith, Bonita Wagner, and Katelyn Palmatier.

Song services and Special Music were accompanied mostly by pianist Sunny Faulkner, with the help of pianists Jean Harkins and Beverly Miller.

There was lots of time for physical fellowship during the many social activities, which included a Cookout at the Park, a Family Bowling Night, the BBQ Luncheon, and, as always, the highlight of the social activities was the Dinner Dance, with lots of music, fellowship, good food, and of course lots of dancing.

It was a great spiritual Feast filled with love, fellowship, and the opportunity of being together with old friends and getting to know new ones. What a wonderful way to look forward to the special time when we will be privileged to share this way of life with all mankind.

Thanks to everyone in attendance and to all who contributed and helped make this Feast a success, specially to Richard Sharp, Larry Sharp, and Alex Fontao for their hard work with the audio, video, and webcast.

We look forward to seeing you all again at the Feast of Tabernacles 2014. Ω

Submitted by Aleida Fontao



Wayne Hendrix



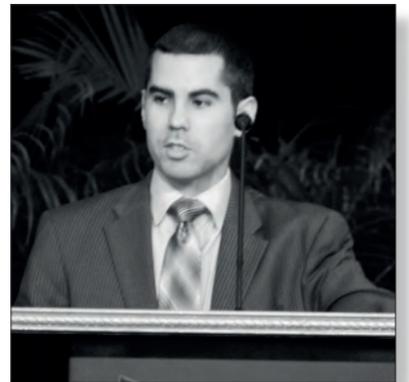
Randy Rust



Dwight Harrison



Larry Sharp



Alex Fontao



Waving to webcast camera

"These are the feasts of the LORD"
(Leviticus 23:4,44).



Special Music by Bonita Wagner, Beverly Smith, and Miriam Moreno



Youth Day



Still waving to webcast camera

Feast Reports, 2013

Ballina, New South Wales, AUSTRALIA

“God is trying to talk to you.”



ultimate embodiment into a spiritual body, as God will finally cleanse the world with fire. He urged the brethren here to aspire to becoming lights, “beacons” in a dark world, and always persevere in staying clean in what is now an ever-growing “dirty” world.

On Day Two, Mr. Bob Schofield’s sermon started off with some whimsical humour when he showed off the T-shirt he wore under his suit coat displaying the message “LISTEN TO BOB”—and so we certainly did. Mr. Schofield held our attention when he delivered a powerful message encouraging us to hunger and thirst after God’s Word, not just “snack and sip.”

That evening Mr. Watson seemed as fired up as ever when he walked in to give his Bible Study on *Prophecy* and the warning to beware of the growing number of “Christian preterists” out in the world who are deceiving the elect. Apart from the inspiring message he gave, it must be said that he had just come back from a road trip to Coffs Harbour, some two and a half hours south one way. The trip was necessary, as he had a critical need for a new step-down transformer (voltage converter) so he could have access to his laptop. Unfortunately, the one he brought from the United States burned out the first day. What was

inspiring to the brethren was his ability to teach with the energy and enthusiasm he exhibited, even after such a long and exhausting trip. It was a breath of fresh air, and lifted everyone’s spirits even further.

On Day Three, our minister Mr. Herb Haupt posed another important question for the brethren: *Why Booths?* He explained we are here on earth in these mortal bodies, as temporary as the dwellings we live in during the Feast. He reminded us that when we go back to our daily lives, we should never lose sight of the temporary nature this life of carnal, physical, fleshly, and mortal existence really is.

At the end of Day Three, Mr. Bill Watson conducted another Bible Study, delving further into the book of Revelation and its prophetic message for God’s people in the end times.

It was an early morning for many as Day Four opened, and quite a number of the brethren ventured up the coast a short way to Lennox Heads for breakfast. Another glorious day, and the views along the coastline



One of many congregational feasts

were spectacular! We even got to watch a whale beaching numerous times while it fed and had its breakfast as well. After “brekkie,” we all had some free time before the afternoon service. Some ventured out to the zoo, others had a round of golf, some shopped, rested, or just simply relaxed on the beach.

Back at services that afternoon, Mr. Watson reinforced the message that we must *Live and Die for the Lord*. We cannot be in the Kingdom of God if we are flesh and blood. The Feast of Tabernacles is a shadow of what is coming, and shows it is the celebration of the resurrection of a new tabernacle that will ultimately be, when God finally tabernacles with man—not in heaven, but on earth!

The close of Day Four saw Sonja and Bob Schofield entertain us with a movie of their choice, *The Number One Lady’s Detective Agency*. This is a story set in Botswana with a good moral and lots of wholesome humour.

Day Five came upon us so quickly—it was hard to believe we were beyond the halfway mark. Mr. Schofield gave another informative message titled *House With Three Windows*. It directed our awareness toward being wary of becoming hypocrites, and to realize that not only do we look out through the windows of our own “house” (ourselves), but that others can also look in. Obviously, this is a good reason to always be on the “lookout” for the straight path and narrow gate—being aware of our behaviour and how others see us.

Wow, if ever there was a Feast to remember, it was this one! Just when you think you’ve had it all together and the road you have been walking seems pretty straight and narrow, along comes a gust of wind to spin you around in the right direction—again. Without a doubt, looking back, the path we trod surely seems to be filled with bumps, dips, twists and turns, branches shooting out in every direction. However, this Feast showed us that when God wants to say something, He does so—no holds barred. So when God comes knocking at your door, you’d better be prepared to open it.

The sermons “dished up” here in the “Land Down Under” at this Feast of God’s were simply amazing—true food for the soul. We were nourished daily by God’s Word through the messages that were so inspirationally given by men diligent in the Lord’s service. I am always humbled when my Father speaks to me through the talents He has gifted those who so tirelessly work to feed His flock. I don’t think I stand alone in this opinion, and believe all the brethren here are truly grateful for their continual, devoted commitment.

This year the Aussie brethren were blessed to have Mr. Bill Watson and his lovely wife Margie traveling halfway around the globe to join us in the Lord’s Feast here in Ballina. Bill Watson’s talent to knock the nail on the head every time was evident as he swung firm and sure through every sermon and Bible Study he gave. His passion to bring home the message God wants us all to hear was reflected in his delivery, enthusiasm, and energetic character. Margie Watson, with her pleasant and helpful nature, graced us with her musical talent, serving us daily in playing music for every hymn we sang to our Lord. It is always so joyful to hear music performed live, and it did indeed add a wonderful accompaniment to the congregation’s singing, enhancing the sound in our small, but acoustically balanced room.

The first day kicked off with our minister, Mr. Herb Haupt (pronounced *hope*), giving a sermon posing the question, *Why Are We Here?* “These are the Feasts of the Lord...” (Leviticus 23:4), and like the Jews in the Bible, others may also judge us for keeping God’s holydays. Mr. Haupt cautioned us that we must be mindful and beware that others may try to distract us from what our

Father has planned for His children through the meaning of these days.

After a catered lunch, Mr. Bill Watson continued the day’s message with *Understanding God’s Plan for Salvation*. In his sermon, Mr. Watson stressed the need for our



Bill and Marge Watson, Tui and Herb Haupt



Herb Haupt

After services, the brethren enjoyed more fun and laughs with a picnic lunch and some games at the park. It always amazes me how hilarious it is to watch grown people hit a ball through little hoops with a croquet club.

Day Six saw Mr. Watson hit home the point that we are all narcissists in varying degrees and addicts to sin, easily self absorbed and ready to justify our own ways. “The heart is deceitful above all

things, and desperately wicked; who can know it” (Jeremiah 17:9)? We were reminded we should all be responsible for the decisions we make, and those who compare themselves with others are not wise. Instead, we should look to Christ as our standard. Very good advice!

“Ten Pin Bowling” was on the “lane” for the afternoon of Day Six, with everyone thoroughly involved, enjoying themselves amongst friendly competition.

Day Seven of the Feast of Tabernacles—WOW, didn’t that go quickly? Mr. Herb Haupt expounded on a number of issues, leaving us with the thought to be alert. “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14).

When the Last Great Day arrived, I couldn’t help but to think, *I don’t want to go home yet!* The spiritual food this year has been so nourishing. But

we must prepare ourselves for the world outside our little sanctuary. That is what these eight days have been all about—feeding us with God’s Word and strengthening us for what battles lie ahead. Mr. Bill Watson gave the final sermon, urging the brethren to be in the first resurrection—read God’s Holy Word and convert our way of thinking to Christ’s way.

Well, it was time to head home. The weather in Ballina was just glorious, “picture postcard” you could say. The views over the Richmond River and placid beaches are a testament to God’s magnificent power. There is so much for us to be

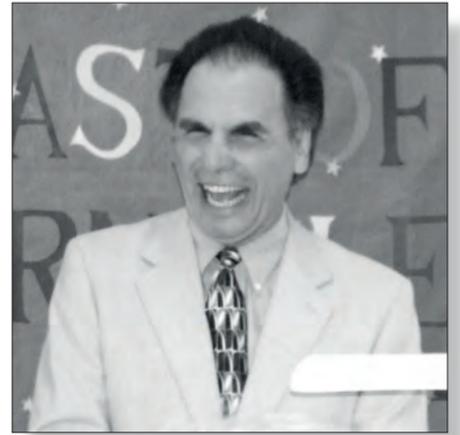
thankful for, from the people we know and love, to the friendships we share, and blessings in His creation that surround us all. The joy in strolling along the sand while children play—finding beauty in a tiny shell that washes up amongst the waves, or creatures living amongst rock pools on the shore, and of course, the birds and fish both etching out their way in the circle of life—yes, *there is a lot to be thankful about!*

One thing that struck me during this Feast was an image some of us saw one afternoon while walking back along the beach. We stopped to watch an osprey feeding on a fish close to the water’s edge. I took some pictures for my photo diary. A seagull stood by, watching with intent, hoping to win some leftovers. As the osprey feasted, with the fish tightly in its grasp, there was an air of persistence as the lone seagull seemed to be the only one brave enough to risk the osprey’s razor sharp talons and beak. Later, when I had another look at the photos, I couldn’t help but to think of the story in the Bible about Jesus and the Canaanite woman who wanted Him to heal her demon possessed daughter (Matthew 15:22–28). Christ said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” But the woman persisted and said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” Through her persistence and faith, Christ healed her daughter.

We come to God’s Feast with so much to feed on—God’s bread and water overflowing, a spiritual bounty so freely given by His grace. So few in this world understand; they are oblivious to this knowledge, this gift. We must endeavour to preach the good Gospel and be beacons in a gloomy world because we will never know when those hungering and willing to eat the leftovers that drop from the tables of this wonderful and bountiful Feast are ready to eat of this information. We must keep sowing.

Back at home, the following Sabbath, before Mr. Watson and his wife Margie said their goodbyes to us Aussie’s, he gave a message that connected all we were fed while away at the Feast. This sermon summed up what it is to be a Christian, the battles we face each and every day from within and without. Mr. Watson instructed us that Jesus led the way, and in the essence of this holy season, He gave us a more excellent covenant to live by, *but its path is not always easy.* Christ wants us to open our hearts and

minds to master our thoughts and become a new creature. How we think will reflect how we will behave and ultimately become. If we don’t change how we think, we may find ourselves repeating the same old mistakes. We need to change our way of thinking—*our minds are crucial to our Christian conversion, and the way we think is where it all begins* (Matthew 5:21–28). He mentioned that “We are what we eat” is true for the physical body; and “We become what we think” is true in the spiritual sense. That is exactly why this holy season is so important to us—so God’s Word can properly teach us how to think.



Bill Watson

Mr. Watson reminded us that being a Christian is to be constantly examining oneself. To do this, we need to *get out of our comfort zone.* He quite effectively stated, “It is difficult and nearly impossible to identify a need for change when you are comfortable. Taking the time to *meditate*—to consider changing our way of thinking, living, and feeling isn’t easy—*it’s not!* But if we don’t keep ourselves in check, then God might just allow opportunities and circumstances to occur in our lives that will teach us important lessons *necessary for our growth and conversion.* Through this walk we must learn to grow more peaceful, promoting unity among all we come in contact with,

especially our Christian sisters and brothers—understanding we all need time and space to learn and change.” Yes, Mr. Watson left us with an appeal: *Be more Christlike.*

Admittedly, we still stumble in our walk as God’s children—sometimes it feels almost every step of the way. We forget sometimes, it’s through our struggles and adversities that God tries to talk to us. In this mortal life we can feel so insecure at times and not worthy of His love—our human nature, feeble differences, and frailties often getting in the way. But His Feast reminds us each year that this is *His* plan that is unfolding, *not ours.* It is His LOVE we must aspire to. It is by His GRACE we are saved. We do not need to stand along the sidelines waiting for His crumbs, like the Canaanite woman in the parable. By God’s Holy Word, we are fed a feast—not the crumbs. This is His gift, and it is ours for FREE—and it’s up to us “to commit” to do something with it!

Ω Submitted by Dianne Tuskes



A day of croquet



Bob Schofield flashing his “Listen to Bob” shirt

The Richmond and the Pelicans*

The Richmond spreads out grand and wide, it’s an ever-changing scene;
From prawn trawlers to silent skiffs and everything in between.
It’s the home of my two pelicans who drift by me every day,
Patiently watching, ever alert, to see if they want to stay.
Their beady eyes watch carefully for any signs of lunch;
They dip their bills and grab some fish, disappearing without a crunch.
Their bills can hold more than their belly can, or so it has been said;
Who better than the Pelican to make sure he is well fed.
They wait in close proximity when the fishermen arrive,
Scaling, gutting, sustenance—easy pickings, so they can survive.
It’s a lazy way to get a feed, this watching, waiting game;
It could be said when they flock around it’s nothing more than greed.
In competition with the dolphins and some cheeky black ducks, too,
Who bob in-and-out and out-and-in, each day brings something new.
Despite all this activity, the Richmond ebbs and flows,
Sandbanks appear, then they’re gone, seems like time is going slow.
As the sun sets on another day, the Richmond is alight,
With brilliant, vibrant colours, to remember well after the night.

by Carol, Feast at Ballina, 2013

* A poem about the pelicans that live along the shores of the Richmond River at Ballina, New South Wales, Australia

Feast Reports, 2013

Chiang Mai, THAILAND



John Coish baptizing his second son, Legacy teacher, Zac

Feast in Thailand

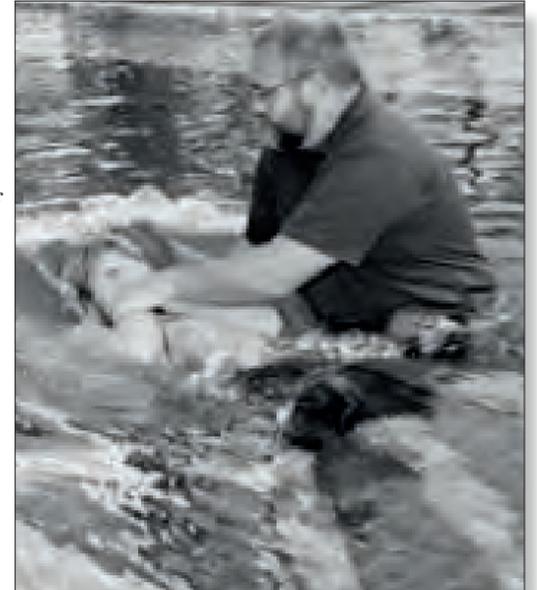
by John Coish

One of the first questions asked of me when we arrived at the Feast in Thailand was why the President of the CGI in Canada would be attending the Feast at the *Church of God Asia*. The short answer is because my son was volunteering over there as a teacher, and our family always wants to be together for the holydays.

This answer didn't suffice. They went on to ask why I wasn't at a CGI Feast site. I responded again about my family, and then went further and stated that the CGI has for years worked with like-minded people to celebrate God's Sabbaths or holydays together. We don't require they be called CGI, but fellowship in harmony. They liked that approach.

My son, Zachary, first told us last winter that he wanted to go to Thailand for 10 months to teach at the Legacy Institute. At first we didn't take him seriously, but it soon became apparent that he was serious.

Legacy Institute is an independent Church of God school that takes in Burmese refugees as students. The teachers for the



John Coish baptizing his eldest son, Ben

school are its founder, Leon Sexton, and after college/university Church of God young adults who more or less volunteer their time to help (paid \$30/week). The current teachers are from: *Living Church of God* (1), *United Church of God* (2), *Church of God International* (1), and *Church of God Cincinnati* (1). People from a variety of church backgrounds are working together with a common goal of building the faith and life skills of a few refugees, and each other.

What Zac was wanting to do was a noble adventure, and we ceded to his wishes (not that, at his age, we had any choice). It was my hope that Zac would use this adventure to consider his own faith and his own beliefs and come back with an attitude of gratitude like never before, and a quiet confidence in Jesus Christ. The local CGI church paid for his flights so he wouldn't have any financial burden while helping others.

When we arrived in Chiang Mai, Thailand for the Feast, it was very hot and smelled a lot different than home. I was wondering if it was the right decision. Thailand is about 90 percent Buddhist, so incense was everywhere, and everyone seemed to be cooking on the street. The resort where the Feast was held was beautiful, and we longed for a bed after the long road, but all we really wanted was to see our son.

Over the next few days, we got to see many wonderful sights in Thailand, ride an elephant, view an artistic cultural centre that the *Worldwide Church of God* had helped to set up, and experience much street shopping and interesting foods, but more importantly, spend some time with our family.

At church, we got to meet all the students, teachers, and many other visitors that came together to keep God's Feast days. That atmosphere was one of wonderful fellowship and support. The music supplied by the student chorale was inspiring, as were the messages.

Along the way, we viewed the school and farm area, and learned what a simple life they were living, and yet how happy they were, even though in Western terms, they had very little.

Of particular interest to me was one evening event. A teacher decided to take the students bowling and had invited us to attend because he appreciated the care basket we had sent earlier. We went bowling, and the groups had a mixture of people on each lane, student, teacher, and visitors.

The student we bowled with got all the pins down once that game; it was an incredible celebration. Her final score was 39. The attitude of gratitude for being able to play, and any little thing along the way, was incredible and strikingly beautiful. It sure made you feel terrible to complain about missing anything.

I stopped for a minute and thought about what they had: a roof over their heads, food, and a bed, plus a very minimum of personal effects. In terms of goods, they had the basics. In terms of attitude, they thought they had it wonderful—they had family, friends, peace, and all the necessities of life. The comparison of them and the average North American was enormous with respect to gratitude. You just wanted to help them. At that moment, I knew how much this was changing my son.

Over the next few days, I had the opportunity of watching him be the worship leader and watch both my sons do the prayers at church services and be a blessing to the others around them. It was a very special experience to sit back and watch my sons take their place in church.

Then it was time to talk about baptism with them. They asked some questions and said they were ready, and this time I knew they were ready.

On the Last Great Day of the Feast, we headed outside to the pool, and I had the greatest experience a father could have; I baptized my sons in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and laid hands on them while praying for them to receive God's Holy Spirit and the fruit thereof.

Who celebrated this with them? The Church of God that was in Asia did. Regardless of the organization they were from, they celebrated another life committed unto God. In all, five were baptized at a Feast site of about 50 people. Zac went there to be a blessing to others, and came away with the greatest blessing of all—eternal life guaranteed.

After the Feast, we spent a week at the ocean like when they were younger, except this time they were so thankful for the opportunity instead of taking it for granted.

It was a long way to travel to be together at the Feast, but it was a special Feast that I will remember forever because of the attitude, unity, and commitment of my sons and three others to the Family of God.

For more information on the Legacy Institute, see legacyinstitute.org. Ω

The Feast in Thailand was a great success. Helping me out with Festival sermons was Brian Bettes, an elder in the *Front Range Church of God* in Denver, Colorado; John Coish, president of the *Church of God International* in Canada; and Mitch Showers, a member of the *United Church of God* in Ohio, and my brother-in-law.

Besides the daily sermons and a seminar, fellowship and excitement was enjoyed by all with the usual elephant ride, visit to one of Queen Sirikit's projects, a tour of handicraft factories, and—among other fun Feast events—Family and Talent Night. As usual, the shopaholics had a field day at the Night Bazaar and Sunday Market.

What marked this year's Feast as special were the five baptisms

that took place. Adja Shan from Burma was first; then a Thai lady from Fon Hemphill (the first baptism I conducted in the Thai language); and finally, on the eighth day, was Stelin (Stanley) Shwe and the brothers, Zac (a volunteer teacher at Legacy this year) and Ben Coish. I was especially thrilled that John Coish could officiate at the baptisms of his own sons. We know that we all were joined in our rejoicing by the angels in heaven.

Altogether, we had 50 attending at Chiang Mai, Thailand, and 32 attending in Taungoo, Burma. Former Legacy teacher Erica Pedersen attended the first part of the Feast in Burma and then came back to keep the second half in Chiang Mai. She brought with her many photos of the Burma Feast. Ω Submitted by T. Leon Sexton

Feast Reports, 2013

Baltimore, Maryland

(Destiny of Hope, Feast Keepers, and Church of God International)

This year I traveled to Baltimore, Maryland for the eight days to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. It was an unusual experience in diversity, and that is a vast understatement.

The speakers were all filled with enthusiastic inspiration to share understanding on things of God with all. One spoke on physical versus spiritual, with the final conclusion that “all is vanity.”

Another spoke on the ultimate destiny of mankind. The most positive speaker of them all stressed getting a right relationship with God and following His instructions for our lives.

The historical aspects of Feast keeping and the merits of it were thoroughly expounded and stressed. This brought us to our present day practice.

A recently baptized lady, keeping the Feast for the first time, repeatedly exclaimed “GOOD...GOOD...VERY GOOD!”

One day, about midway into the Feast, a most peculiar thing happened. Our rented convention center had two adjacent sides. The people in the other section grew louder and louder, so much so that we were unable to hear to start our own worship services. They sang loudly with instruments sounding and drums banging. Our speakers were turned to full blast, but we still could not hear well enough to open services. A few converts, the convention director, and a couple of others went over and asked them to lower the volume enough that we could hold services. They did not. In frustration, our speaker, Mr. George Ramocan (Jamaican Ambassador to Canada), went over and asked also. They got even louder. The worship leader told me of their frustration. We decided our best option was to take our problem to God in prayer. Not long afterwards, we were able to get started. Then an amazing thing happened. About 10 or 12 men and women came quietly into services. Then more and more came, until we had a packed crowd of over 79 adults and 22 children added. A new group desired to keep the Feast with us. No, not the people from next door. This was an “Apostolic” group, headed by Bishop Smothers, looking to keep God’s Feast days. How wonderful—and what a treat! We never know just how God will answer prayer. Ω

Submitted by Vivian Hall

GOD ANSWERS

We pray and say, “What will God do?”

We know He answers. That is true.

Our needs and requests we make known.

God answers with love and mercy abundantly shown!

Unfortunately, not all Feast sites submitted a Feast Report by our November 15 deadline. Late Feast Reports may be published in the next edition of the *International News*.

Our next deadline for submissions is February 15. Ω

The editor

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 pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800-1000 words in either .doc, docx, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to vancestinson.org or lloyd Cary@gmail.com or, preferably, to *both*.

• **DEADLINE for the next issue is February 15, 2014.**

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

Mananasi, Kenya, AFRICA



CGI leader Mr. Isaac Gwaro Motanya with some of the members

This year’s Feast in Mananasi was a delight to all who joined together to keep the Feast of the Lord. We had the pleasure of hearing the sermons from several gifted speakers.

Mr. Isaac Gwaro Motanya got things started off on Day One with a very inspiring message on *Freedom*. He reminded us 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.

A Bible Study during the middle of the Feast touched on how the Feast is a time of spiritual generation for the people of God. It is a call to action; that is, to take the good news of the Kingdom of God that we just celebrated out to this sick and dying world. We as brothers and sisters rely on one another to accomplish this task, both individually and corporately.

The Children’s Bible Sabbath Classes were well attended, with lots of activities culminating in a song program performed during a Youth Day service.

The Last Great Day was both a glad and a sad occasion. Happily we spent one last day learning God’s Word. On the other hand, it was a very sad day because we didn’t know what this world will bring in another year.

There were several activities to keep everyone busy, including golfing and shopping in some of the remote towns around the area.

One thing definitely not missing here was love. Seeing that we are not alone in 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.

A last word of advice for us to carry through next year: *Our life is a journey of the heart.*

As brethren sang *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*, many brethren wondered where we would go next Feast to accommodate the expected larger numbers, for we were blessed with a total of 45 faithful attending the Last Great Day.

See you in 2014. Ω

Submitted by Isaac Gwaro Motanya

“Immortality—God’s Gift to the Saints!”

What happens after death? You can know and prove it by your own Bible!

Send for your free copy today!
Church of God International
3900 Timms Street
Tyler, Texas 75710
(903) 939-2929

Feast Reports, 2013

Tagaytay City, PHILIPPINES

The Feast of Tabernacles for CGI Philippines was held at Tagaytay City, about 55 kms from Manila, the nation's capital. Brethren and guests from the Baguio City, Malolos, Manila, Alabang, Naga City, Masbate, and Sagay congregations converged on this site to celebrate the Feast for a full eight days.

Services for the first day of the Feast and the Last Great Day were held at the beautiful Taal Vista Hotel. The hotel offers a scenic view of the famous Taal Volcano and Taal Lake. Daily morning services for the in-between days and the weekly Sabbath were held at the Tagaytay International Convention Center. A week-long monsoon rain coincided with the Feast observance. The rain, however, failed to dampen the spirits of about 200 attendees (including children). Indeed, the brethren rejoiced fully before the Lord as commanded in Deuteronomy 16:14.

We were enriched daily with words of wisdom, insight, knowledge, encouragement, and faith from the messages given by our ministers and assigned speakers: Winston Co, *God's Promises, Before The Millenium, After the Millenium*; Rene Corpuz, *How to Keep the Feast*; Eli Mellomida, *Few Are Chosen, Rekindling of Faith*; Mel Arcinas, *A Child Is Born, River of Life, Wedding Parables*; William Co, *The Conquest of Jericho, Hindrances to Prayer*; Romy Guintu, *Feast Is a Family Occasion, Significance of the Last Great Day*; Carlos Sarmiento, *Importance of the Feast to Christians, Blessing to be Able to Keep the Feast*; Ferdie Padilla, *Children Are Inheritance of God, When Christ Rules*; Alex Sanchez, *Welcome and Offertory Message, Rulership Role in the Kingdom*; Gerry Espenida, *Looking Forward to the Millennial Reign of Christ*; Rolly Garcia, *Rejoice Before the Lord*; and Mel Diegor, *A Wonderful World Tomorrow*.

On the first day, our pastor, Mr. Winston Co, gave a message reminding everyone that God keeps His promises. To God, a promise is a promise; and on this note, Mr. Co led the blessing of the congregation in keeping with the instructions in Numbers 6:22-27.

Daily services were further enhanced and made much more uplifting with various special and offertory music given by the different local church choirs from Alabang, Bulacan, Manila, and Naga. There was also special music rendered by the different age groups belonging to all congregations. The children, youth, ladies, gentlemen, and seniors of the various congregations combined their talents, and each group gave special music. Truly, everyone participated in giving glory and songs of praises and thanks to our Father. The hall was lovingly decorated by the Naga brethren and Ms. Menchu Co.

We also had the traditional blessing of the children, along with an afternoon dedicated for the youth of the church called "Youth In Focus." The youngsters organized themselves and showcased their talents for singing, interpretive acting on an original song composition entitled *Being Human*. The talented youth also organized a band and gave us a wonderful rendition of another original song composition entitled *Love the Children of the Lord*. There was also an afternoon dedicated to our senior brethren. Two elderly couples gave their personal testimonies of faith, and moved some of us with their touching stories. Our elderly brethren enjoyed the afternoon's games which featured, to name a few, *Name That Song* and *Name That Dance* (a novelty)!

We feasted on food and fellowship with a shared lunch for five days of the Feast and two potluck dinners. The brethren enjoyed three sponsored lunches courtesy of some of our very generous brethren. They have shown that the Feast is also about sharing our blessings with the brethren.

All in all, it was a Feast well organized, well planned, and the various activities well executed. Credit goes to the ministry, who provided guidance and direction, to the various committee members, who labored hard to come up with the activities and actual presentations, special music, hall decorations, transportation, and to the final audio-visual presentation at the Last Great Day, and yes, to those who took pictures of the brethren during various events. They captured those wacky, fun, serious, happy, and joyful precious moments. Special thanks also go to our Feast coordinators, Mr. and Mrs. Alex and Malou Sanchez.

Even though the rains prevented us from roaming around for sightseeing and (more!) picture taking, it just drew us closer together, for now we have spent more time on fellowshiping.

There was much rejoicing for two baptisms at the Feast: Mr. Agapito Dubouzet and Mr. Kevin Alderman from London; and two more after the Feast, the then fiancés, but now Mr. and Mrs. John and Jasmine Domingo.

Other Feast sites in the Philippines include Maranding in the Mindanao Islands and Iloilo City in the Visayas region.

Yes, it was the best Feast ever for us brethren in the Philippines! We now look forward to next year's Feast, because each year brings us closer to the time when we will finally celebrate the Feast with God the Father and our Lord and King Jesus Christ. Ω

Submitted by Ferdie and Arlene Venessa Padilla



The Alabang Church Choir



The combined churches coming from Metro Manila, Alabang, Naga, Sagay, Masbate, Baguio (180 + attendees)

Please remember to *pray* for those in the Philippines, who were struck by one of the most fierce typhoons in modern history.

Good news! As of *this printing*, Rene Corpuz reports that all the CGI members are OK. According to Rene, our members of God's Church have dodged this major devastating "bullet."

Thank God for His great mercy toward so many of His people.

What a witness of God's protective power as He deems necessary (Psalm 91)!

Ω

Feast Reports, 2013

Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA *Satellite Feast Site*

For the first time, Ottawa hosted a small satellite Feast of Tabernacles with webcasting from St. Petersburg, Florida. This site at the WelcomINNS was primarily for the benefit of those in the region who were unable to travel to a distant Feast location due to medical concerns, financial hardships, etc.

God blessed us with beautiful and warmer weather than usual.

The viewing of the webcast was a success and well received by those in attendance. A total of 16 people, which included eight regular members and eight guests from other Churches of God in Ottawa, came to fellowship and experience this new concept. A survey was taken during the Feast, and all have expressed an interest in attending if this concept is continued in the future; and they also mentioned that they knew of others who could benefit from this service. The people enjoyed viewing complete services including the Special Music. The hall rental included a small kitchen facility that allowed us to partake of refreshments and snacks during the fellowship time.



Ottawa Satellite Feast Attendees

God has truly blessed this initiative. A special thanks to Wayne Hendrix and Aleida Fontao for getting the St. Petersburg brethren to wave to us in Ottawa after services. Many miles may have separated us, but the spirit of unity was felt by all. Ω

Submitted by Bob and Monique Dagenais

“What if I can’t get to church services?”

Q The nearest CGI congregation is a long way from me, and I do not have dependable transportation, so I simply cannot get to Sabbath services, at least not on a regular basis. I feel bad about this because the Bible tells us we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. I don’t know what I can do to change this situation. Do you have any suggestions?

A The text you refer to is Hebrews 10:24–25: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

This text does affirm the importance of Christian fellowship, but to avoid reading too much into it, we should consider the historical context of this valuable admonition.

From evidence within the book of Hebrews itself, it is evident that the Jewish converts to Christianity were under severe pressure to renounce their faith. Here is an overview of what appears to have been going on:

By the time the book of Hebrews was written, Messianic Jews (Jewish converts to Christianity) were no longer welcome in the synagogues, so they met in homes or formed synagogues of their own. This separation made it clear that traditional Judaism and the Messianic faith were not the same. Under Roman law, traditional Judaism had been given the status of *religio licita* (“legitimate religion”), so Jews could meet in their synagogues and worship God according to the ordinary Jewish customs without fear of Roman interference. Christianity, on the other hand, was considered *religio illicita* (“illegitimate religion”); so, by this time, Messianic Jews (now “exposed” as Christians) did not have the privileges other Jews had under Roman law. Fearing the terrible things that might befall them under the cruel hands of their Roman persecutors, some of the Messianic Jews were forsaking their own assemblies and returning to the synagogues of traditional Judaism, hence the admonition that follows in verses 26–39: “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both

by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

“For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

“But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.”

As the context helps us to see, those who were forsaking Christian assemblies were not just “missing church”—they were forsaking the Christian faith! Their staying away from Christian assemblies was a symptom of a serious spiritual disorder. The trial they faced exposed their lack of faith and their misplaced priorities. The writer of the epistle, aware of this problem, encouraged the faithful to do just the opposite. He said, in effect, “Don’t be like them! Keep coming together to stir up love and good works in these difficult times—and all the more as times get worse!”

Now, your situation is very, very different! You are not forsaking the Christian assembly; you simply don’t have the opportunity to attend church services. That’s wholly different from what the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews had in view, and it would be a misuse of Scripture if I were to tell you that you were violating the principle found in Hebrews 10:25. You are not! Unlike the people this passage refers to, you want to attend church services; you want to be with others of like faith.

Since your situation does not permit regular attendance, here is what I would suggest:

- Stay close to God through daily Bible reading/study and prayer.
- On the Sabbath, listen to CDs you get from Tyler.
- If you have access to a computer, go to our website and watch our live webcast at 11:00 CST Saturday mornings.
- Use the written material we provide—the Bible study lessons, booklets, brochures, newspaper, and monthly letters. Be sure to watch for new material coming out.
- Do your best to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. Next year, the Feast begins October 9, and the Last Great Day is on October 16. Begin planning now, and do your best to keep the Feast at the site nearest you. Ω

Sentence Sermons

- “Dear God, I have a big problem. Me!”
- Suffering from truth decay? Brush up on your Bible!
- Be an organ donor. Give your heart to Jesus.
- Give Satan an inch, and he will become your ruler.
- When schools had prayer and Bibles, they didn't have drugs or guns.
- Think right and act right. It is what you think and do that makes you what you are.
- Having a sharp tongue may cut your own throat.
- You can trust a Man who died for you.
- Begin where you are, but don't stay there—climb.
- A pure mind is one that has been examined by the Sonlight.
- Being a full-time mother is one of the highest salaried jobs imaginable, since the payment is issued from heaven.
- Christ doesn't want a few shares of your life, He wants controlling interest.
- When God measures a man, He puts the tape around his heart instead of his head.
- Why is it that nobody is listening when history repeats itself?

- God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.
- God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.
- Most folks can resist anything but temptation.
- Many people want to serve God, but only in an advisory position.
- It is easier to build strong children than to repair adults.
- Dusty Bibles lead to dirty lives.
- Give God what's right—not what's left.
- Never give the devil a ride—he will always want to drive.
- People take your examples far more seriously than they take your advice.
- He who angers you controls you.
- A problem with people forgiving and forgetting is that they keep reminding us they're doing it.
- Exercise daily. Walk with God.
- Prayer moves the hand that moves the world.
- A Bible in the hand is worth two in the bookcase.
- No one is saved by buying a Bible he does not read, nor is one saved by reading a Bible he does not obey.



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