

Inside

Press Toward The Goal!	3
Obey God, And Enter His Rest	5
Achieving Godly Success	8
Why Do Christians Suffer?	12
International Corner...	14
Agape Love	16
Local Church News	21
Commentary	24

Recent Travel Enlightening, Inspiring

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Quite a number of brethren have asked me for more details of the recent trip my wife and I took to the Australasian area and the Philippines. It was an eventful trip, and there are many items that may be helpful to share with all of you. Also, I feel that many of you may not be aware of the growth God is giving us in those areas, and of the very fine servants God is using to build His Work and strengthen His people in some of these nations.

So let me share with you, in greater detail than I have been able to share before, some of the events and the impressions my wife and I experienced during that extensive trip. This trip was important in that it helped knit the Church together more strongly in the region, and gave me the opportunity to personally assess conditions in that part of the world. So I hope you will find this personal account enlightening and inspiring.

On Wednesday, March 20, 2002, my wife and I were taken by Mr. Don Davis to the San Diego Airport to catch a commuter flight to Los Angeles and then take a larger plane to Auckland, New Zealand. It was indeed a long and tiring trip. We “lost” a day (Thursday) flying over the International Date Line on the way. We were met, early Friday morning, by Mr. and Mrs. Kinnear Penman. Mr. Penman directs the New Zealand office and the entire Work in New Zealand, and is ably assisted by his dedicated wife, Carolyn. The Penmans showed us around some of the “high spots” in Auckland on Friday, including the site of the former New Zealand office of our former association. We had dinner with them on Friday night, and enjoyed a wonderful visit and the opportunity to become better acquainted. On the Sabbath, I preached in Auckland to a crowd of approximately 45 brethren and friends. They were *very* warm and responsive, and I could see that many had been in the Church for decades and were truly solid individuals. We had a church covered-dish meal after services, and then a long visit before heading to our hotel and to bed.

On Sunday morning, Mr. Penman drove us to the airport for our flight to Brisbane, Australia, where we were met by Mr. Bruce Tyler—our Australasia-Far East Director—and his wife. We had the opportunity to tour around Brisbane for a few hours, then, that evening, we enjoyed a delicious dinner and wonderful fellowship with the Tylers and with local elder Mr. Dayrell Tanner and his wife. These dedicated elders have all survived the “wars”—including the apostasy that took place in the Worldwide Church of

God and the “split” that took place with the Global board. It was very helpful and encouraging to become better acquainted with them, and to learn more about each other and our respective backgrounds. On Monday, Mr. and Mrs. Tyler took my wife and me to Burleigh Heads to see that beautiful area and to see the old Worldwide Church of God offices. Again, we had a wonderful opportunity to visit and share news of the Work and become better acquainted. We had dinner at the Tylers’ home and, before dinner, the opportunity to thoroughly inspect the Living Church of God office there—which is part of Mr. and Mrs. Tyler’s home. It was a beautiful occasion, and it was good to see the dedication of Mr. and Mrs. Tyler.

On Tuesday morning, we toured more of the Brisbane area. That afternoon, we were able to study and prepare for the Passover, which I conducted on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday morning, my wife and I accompanied Mr. Tyler to his parents’ home, and had an opportunity to see downtown Brisbane and some of the local historical sites. Wednesday afternoon gave us an opportunity to rest and prepare for the “Night To Be Much Observed,” which we conducted that evening. Also, I was able to work on my sermons for the next day.

The next day—Thursday—was the First Day of Unleavened Bread. I preached to the brethren in Brisbane—about 58 were present—and then we had a covered-dish meal with all the brethren, and a long visit before leaving. Then we headed to the airport with Mr. Tyler for a flight to Perth—about 2,200 miles to the west. Remember, brethren, Australia is as large as the United States excluding Alaska! We were met in Perth by our dedicated elder there, Mr. Ken Macleod, and his wife, and taken to our hotel. It was quite late when we went to bed.

On Friday, Mr. and Mrs. Macleod took us to Kings Park in Perth and on to Fremantle, which is a famous old seaport in western Australia. We had the opportunity to discuss many topics, and had a wonderful visit at a fish restaurant in Fremantle. That night, we met at our hotel with Mr. and Mrs. Macleod and Mr. and Mrs. Jim Porter—another dedicated couple in the Perth church. On the Sabbath, I preached in Perth and then went to one of our members’ homes for dinner on their patio with quite a number of brethren. Incidentally, we had about 49 people in attendance there—way out in western Australia and, they say, the most “isolated” major city in the world!

On Sunday morning, we flew to Sydney and were met by our elder there, Mr. Michael Gill, and his wife. Since there are *very few* brethren there, we were not able to have a service, but were able to spend time with Mr. and Mrs. Gill, and to see the beautiful city of Sydney and have a fine discussion with the Gills along the way. The next day—Monday—was our only full day in Sydney, and we were able to take a boat trip to Watson’s Cove and see many interesting and historical places in the area. On Tuesday we flew to Melbourne and were met by Mr. and Mrs. George Calache, and briefly toured interesting areas in Melbourne. We saw a historical

continues on page 19

Editor in Chief Roderick C. Meredith
Editorial Director Richard F. Ames
Executive Editor William Bowmer
Managing Editor Gary F. Ehman
Regional Editors . . . Rod McNair (Philippines)
Bruce Tyler (Australia)
Gerald Weston (Canada)
Douglas S. Winnail (Europe)
Layout Editor Donna Prejan
Proofreaders Sandy Davis
Linda Ehman
News Bureau June Olsen

Regional Offices

UNITED STATES:

P.O. Box 503077

San Diego, CA 92150-3077

Phone: (858) 673-7470; Fax: (858) 673-0310

<http://www.tomorrowworld.org>

AUSTRALIA:

GPO Box 772

Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia

Phone: (07) 5546 0472; Fax: (07) 5546 0768

CANADA:

P.O. Box 27202

Toronto, Ontario M9W 6S8

Phone: (905) 814-1094; Fax: (905) 814-7659

NEW ZEALAND:

P.O. Box 2767

Auckland, New Zealand

Phone/Fax: (09) 435 3592

PHILIPPINES:

MCPO Box 1774

Makati City 1257, Philippines

Phone: 63-2-813-6538; Fax: 63-2-867-1569

SOUTH AFRICA:

P.O. Box 4271

Luipaardsvlei, 1743 Republic of South Africa

Phone: (27) 11-664-6036

UNITED KINGDOM:

P.O. Box 9092

Motherwell, ML1 2YD Scotland

Phone/Fax: 44-1698-263-977

The *Living Church News* is published bimonthly by the Living Church of God, 16935 W. Bernardo Dr., Suite 260, San Diego, CA, 92127. Subscriptions are sent without charge to all members of the Living Church of God and others who may request them.

©2002, Living Church of God™. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Rates is Pending at San Diego, CA.

**Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Living Church News
P.O. Box 503077
San Diego, CA 92150-3077**

The *Living Church News* is not responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photographs. Scriptures are quoted from the *New King James Version* (©Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

* Applications pending. The symbol ™, appearing herein, does not indicate trademark registration.

Press Toward the Goal!

Editorial

By Roderick C. Meredith

One of the primary dangers for all of us in God's Church is Laodiceanism. We are *definitely* in what the Bible indicates is the "last era"—the last church age of God's Church just before the Tribulation.

The Apostle John was inspired to describe this era in very clear terms in Revelation 3:14–22. Note that this era is condemned *not* for any specific *doctrinal* errors, but for a complacent, lukewarm attitude. So those who are Laodiceans may have a "watered-down" approach to doctrine in general, but they appear to have most of the Truth. It is just that they are complacent and may say, in effect: "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing" (v. 17). Yet, in *God's eyes*, they are "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked."

Where do I stand? Where do you stand?

Each of us must constantly try to objectively evaluate *ourselves*—*not* other people. And I warn you solemnly that *not* all Laodiceans are in the "other groups!" For we in the Living Church of God have a certain number of Laodiceans, and *all* of us are in danger of becoming that way if we succumb to the dominant "spirit" of this church age—and of the society around us.

We all need to follow the examples of the great men and women of God, who "cried out" to God when they were in danger. And the *danger*

of some of us becoming Laodicean is *much greater* than many of us may think! When the prophet Daniel felt discouraged by the continuing captivity of his people and perhaps the general malaise among them, he began to zealously *seek God*. "Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by *prayer* and *supplications*, with **fasting**, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the LORD my

fasting—may help prevent not only ourselves but many of our fellow Church members from becoming Laodicean. In today's climate of compromise and corruption, it is all too easy for us to "drift" into Laodiceanism without even realizing what is happening! The Apostle Paul's exhortation certainly applies *today* in a special way: "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you

Each of us must constantly try to objectively evaluate *ourselves*—*not* other people. And I warn you solemnly that *not* all Laodiceans are in the "other groups!" For we in the Living Church of God have a certain number of Laodiceans, and *all* of us are in danger of becoming that way if we succumb to the dominant "spirit" of this church age—and of the society around us.

God, and made confession, and said, 'O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land'" (Daniel 9:3–6).

If we each sense the "Laodicean pull" and begin to *seek God* as Daniel did, we—*through our prayers* and

an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but **exhort one another daily**, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:12–13).

Please note that Paul said to "**exhort one another daily**." The word "exhort" means "to urge, advise or admonish urgently." So we should regularly admonish and encourage each other to study, to pray and to **grow** spiritually—and to do *all* that we can to prepare for God's Kingdom. Certainly, Paul did **not** mean that we should self-righteously preach at each other or "pick" at our

fellow Christians. But, in deep love and concern as brethren, we *should* be our “brothers’ keepers” in the sense that we do reach out to help and admonish a weak brother or sister who is perhaps drifting away from the Truth and from the Church.

And, again, we should be diligent in making sure that we are not “watering down” the full commitment to Christ in our thoughts or

through the ages have *studied* and **studied** the Bible through the lens of their own preconceived ideas and have, therefore, **never** learned the full Truth, **never** been fully “conquered” by God and **never** truly surrendered to do *what God clearly says?*

Please think about that!

The approach of just studying the Bible the way we would study any book on history, or philosophy,

Dear brethren, we must *all* be **corrected**, be **changed** and be fashioned and molded by God into the image of Jesus Christ our Savior. As Paul said: “Let this *mind* be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

I encourage *every one* of you to go “all out” in seeking to be more like Jesus Christ and in preparing to have a vital part in the soon-coming

Dear brethren, we must *all* be **corrected**, be **changed** and be fashioned and molded by God into the image of Jesus Christ our Savior.

our actions. As the Apostle Paul said: “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, **forgetting** those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I **press** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13–14).

Do you and I truly *bear down* and **press** toward the goal of Christ’s soon-coming Kingdom?

In recent years, I have emphasized to you brethren the profound need we all have to genuinely **study** the Bible and to “feed on” Christ—really reading and meditating on key passages in the Bible over and over, marking them and even committing some of them to memory. But, at this point, I would also urge you to remember *why* the Bible was written: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Let us all remember that the Bible was inspired by God not only to teach us true doctrine, but for **reproof** and for **correction**. How many thousands of Catholic monks and Protestant ministers down

is **not** good enough! Rather, we must humbly, prayerfully open our Bibles with the profound understanding that God is going to teach us concepts and approaches that we do **not** already understand. We must desire that—through His inspired Word—He will **correct** us and **reprove** us where we are wrong, that He will **fashion** and **mold** our thoughts and actions and that, over time, He will bring us into genuine alignment with the way **He** thinks.

God tells us: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:8–9). So a *vital* part of our Bible study and our church attendance—including *our attitude* in listening to the sermons—is to sincerely seek to find out where *we* are **wrong**, where *we* **need to change**! We must come to God and to His inspired Word sincerely “seeking” for *His* mind and *His* approach—**not** our own!

Do you do that?

Are you, personally, willing to **take correction** from God *through His inspired Word* and from the **sermons** that are preached by His true ministers in His Church? *If not, why not?*

government of God to be set up here on Earth. For Christ did **not** praise the fellow who, though perhaps “nice,” was *spiritually lazy* and hid his talent in the ground: “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest’” (Matthew 25:26–27).

We need to learn to go “all out” for the Kingdom of God! We had better go “all out” to **avoid** becoming lukewarm Laodiceans! For we in God’s true Church—now “in training” to be the kings and priests under Christ in Tomorrow’s World—are to be the “salt” of this earth. We are to impart that special *zestful* flavor that our God and our Lord Jesus Christ will see when looking upon humanity. For Jesus said: “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Luke 14:33–35). LCN

Obey God, and Enter His Rest

By John H. Ogwyn

For 40 years, the Israelites had been wandering in the Sinai wilderness. While the oldest segment of the nation had teenage memories of life in Egypt, life in the wilderness was all that the vast majority of the Israelite population had ever known. Now the nation was encamped on the plains east of the Jordan River, preparing to enter the land that God had originally promised to their ancestor Abraham centuries earlier.

The Sinai wilderness is a very inhospitable area. It is arid, with very little in the way of water or grazing areas for herds and flocks. In fact, conditions were such that if the Almighty had not directly intervened to miraculously provide the Israelites with food and water, they would have died during those years of wandering. Now, they were preparing to enter a land that stood in stark contrast to where they had spent their lives previously. The Promised Land was well watered, and had verdant pastures, forests and croplands along with vast mineral deposits (Deuteronomy 8:7–9). God called it a “land of milk and honey.” It even had dwellings already constructed, and much of the land was fenced and under cultivation (Deuteronomy 6:10–11).

After years of wandering, the people of Israel were finally at the point of entering into the “rest” Moses had promised many years earlier. Moses told the people that he would not actually be the one to lead them into the Promised Land; rather, he would die before entering the land, and his assistant Joshua would lead them the rest of the way. Joshua was the one who would give them rest (cf. Deuteronomy 3:28; 31:7–8, 23). The Apostle Paul, commenting on this many centuries later, explained that the rest Joshua gave was not the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise, but that the ultimate rest for the people of God was yet future (Hebrews 4:8–9). Paul demonstrated this by quoting Psalm 95, which David had written centuries after Joshua led Israel into the land of Canaan. Paul’s point was that the real rest for God’s people still lay ahead. As we gather at the Feast of Tabernacles, we look back to the years that Israel was in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:42–43), and we also look forward to Christ’s millennial reign, when the entire world will finally know rest (Isaiah 14:7).

Entering into rest is directly connected with obedience according to Scripture. That is why God emphasized

to ancient Israel the importance of teaching His law during the festival period. The Feast of Tabernacles is *far more* than a vacation for God’s people. It is a time for us to remember, year by year, the “rest” of the Kingdom of God that lies ahead—and the importance of learning and practicing *here and now* the laws upon which that Kingdom will be based. We need to understand more deeply the lessons that God anciently taught Israel in the context of the fall festivals, and also those matters that should be very much on our minds as we prepare for the 2002 Feast of Tabernacles.

The Rest Given by Joshua

In Hebrews 3 and 4, the Apostle Paul drew a comparison between the Christian Church and the people God brought out of Egypt. Both received God’s promises. However, Paul emphasized, those who do not respond to God’s promises by *faith* and *obedience* will not enter into His rest. It is important to understand that faith and obe-

The Feast of Tabernacles is *far more* than a vacation for God’s people. It is a time for us to remember, year by year, the “rest” of the Kingdom of God that lies ahead—and the importance of learning and practicing *here and now* the laws upon which that Kingdom will be based.

dience are inseparable. If you truly believe God’s word, you will obey it. In fact, the only kind of obedience that will endure and stand the test of time is that which flows from a heart that truly loves and trusts God!

The Israelites were promised rest from their slavery, and from their subsequent wandering in the wilderness. However, virtually the whole adult population that came out of Egypt died in the desert as punishment for its lack

of faith and subsequent disobedience to God. From Numbers 13, we find that Moses selected leading men from each of the 12 tribes, and sent them into the Promised Land on a reconnaissance mission. This event occurred in the summer of the second year of the Exodus. Numbers 1:1–2 describes a census carried out at the beginning of the second month of the second year, slightly more than one year since they had left Egypt behind at the Red Sea and entered the Sinai wilderness. Numbers 13:20 states that the spies entered the land at the very beginning of the grape harvest. This generally starts around the end of July. They spent 40 days investigating the land (Numbers 13:25); therefore they returned and made their report to the assembled nation around mid-September, probably just before the beginning of the fall festival season. As the people of Israel stood on the brink of celebrating their second Feast of Tabernacles, they were confronted with a decision about whether they would believe their Creator and enter into His promised rest.

Most are familiar with the story of the 12 spies returning and giving their report. The nation succumbed to fear, and chose to *doubt* the promises of the Eternal God. Hearing stories of the difficulties that lay between their present condition and their actually receiving God's promises, they became frightened of the future and accusative toward God and His true servants. As a result, the Creator decreed that an entire generation of Israelites would spend their lifetimes wandering in the wilderness, and that their children would be the ones to finally enter the Promised Land. This, by the way, is the basis of understanding why Revelation 21:8 says that the *fearful* will not be in the Kingdom. The fearful are afraid to follow where God leads and to do what He says. They are in desperate need of the perfect love of God, which will cast out fear (1 John 4:18) and enable them to truly keep the commandments of God (1 John 5:3).

Almost 40 years after the Exodus, Moses spoke to the second generation about entering into rest (Deuteronomy 3:20; 12:9–10). God did temporarily fulfill this prophecy, and the nation of Israel was given rest (Joshua 21:44), after the nation had spent six years subduing the pagan inhabitants of the land. The length of time is made clear by a careful reading of Joshua 14:6–10. We saw earlier that the spies went through the land and made their subsequent report to the people during the second year after the Exodus. Caleb and Joshua were the two spies who brought back a report based upon faith in God. While the rest of that generation died during the years of wandering, Joshua and Caleb were promised an inheritance in the land of Israel. When Caleb came before Joshua to lay claim on the inheritance Moses had promised him, it was

45 years after he and Joshua had brought back the faithful report, and was therefore 46 years after the Exodus. This means that six years after crossing the Jordan under Joshua, the land was finally “subdued” and the people were ready to enter into rest. This marked the beginning of the first sabbatical year, proclaimed at the fall festival season at the beginning of the seventh year.

Scripture gives us still more information on this occasion of Israel entering into rest. In Deuteronomy 12, Moses passed along God's instructions to the people that when they had entered into the Promised Land and God had given them rest, He would then choose a place for His name to dwell—where they were to appear before Him with their tithes and offerings, and where they were to celebrate His festivals (vv. 7–12). Joshua 18:1 tells of the fulfillment of this command, when the people gathered at Shiloh and the tabernacle was erected there. Assembled with the people at Shiloh, Joshua cast lots before the Lord and the remaining tribes were allocated their inheritance. Also at this time, Joshua announced to the representatives of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh that God had now given rest to their brethren as He had promised, and that they were then free to return to the inheritance that Moses had allocated them east of the Jordan (Joshua 22:1–4; cf. Numbers 32:18).

It is interesting to reflect upon what was foreshadowed by the assignment of inheritance to the various tribes of Israel at that great Feast of Tabernacles in Joshua's day. Christ's return will usher in the “times of refreshing” and the “time of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:19–21). A part of what will be restored is that each nation will return to its God-intended inheritance protected by God's law of the Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8–13, 23). There will be no more sad cases of the weak dispossessed by the strong. The land distribution that took place at that joyful Feast under Joshua is a type of what will occur on a far grander scale when Jesus Christ returns. The Feast of Tabernacles points to a time when all humanity will be given an opportunity to enter into rest. There is a time coming when all will have their own vine and fig tree in the land of their inheritance and *none* shall make them afraid (Micah 4:4).

Solomon's Reign—Israel at Rest

The great festival celebration of Joshua's day saw Israel enter into the rest that God had promised. At the conclusion of that seventh year, when the people gathered at Shiloh for the Feast of Tabernacles, Joshua and Eleazar the priest presided over services throughout the seven-day festival in which the entire book of the law was read in the hearing of the men, women and children present.

We know this took place because it was part of Moses' parting instructions to Joshua and the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 31:9–12) and we are told that Joshua did not fail to carry out any of the instructions given by Moses (Joshua 11:15). As the first sabbatical year ended, the people were reminded that to be eligible to partake of the rest that God offered was contingent upon obedience to His law.

As the story of Israel's life in the Promised Land continues throughout the book of Judges, it becomes quickly evident that the rest and tranquility given by God was soon disturbed. By the time Joshua and the elders who served with him had died, Israel began to depart from God's law (Judges 2:7–12). The period of the judges was

Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark.... Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim" (2 Chronicles 5:3–4, 7).

The religious significance of the ark was enormous. It contained the stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, and was covered by the mercy seat, symbolic of the very throne of God. When the ark was placed in the temple, an awesome event occurred. Fire descended from heaven and ignited the offering on the altar, and the glory of God spread like a cloud to fill the temple so that the priests were awestruck and unable to enter (2 Chronicles 7:1–2). King Solomon made a spe-

The Feast of Tabernacles points to a time when all humanity will be given an opportunity to enter into rest. There is a time coming when all will have their own vine and fig tree in the land of their inheritance and *none* shall make them afraid (Micah 4:4).

a turbulent period, during which Israel's rest in the Promised Land was disturbed by invasion and warfare on a regular basis—all because of its failure to obey the Creator and His laws.

It was only during the reign of King David that all of Israel's enemies were finally subdued. At the end of David's life, his son Solomon was crowned as his successor. Solomon's name is derived from the Hebrew word for peace, and his reign was prophesied to be a time of peace and rest for the nation. Notice the record preserved in 1 Kings 4:20–21, 24–25: "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the [Euphrates] River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.... For he had dominion over all the region this side of the River from Tiphshah even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had **peace on every side** all around him. And **Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree**, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon." Clearly the reign of King Solomon was a type of the millennial reign of the Messiah.

The great event that set the stage for Solomon's magnificent reign is described in 2 Chronicles 5–7. It was the dedication of what was undoubtedly the most beautiful and magnificent building of the ancient world, the Temple of God at Jerusalem. According to 2 Chronicles 7:8–10, this dedication took place at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. Consider what happened: "Therefore all the men of Israel assembled together with the king at the feast, which was in the seventh month. So all the elders of

cial prayer dedicating the temple to God, and God responded to him in a miraculous way. This lavish Feast of Tabernacles in the time of King Solomon centered upon the dedication of the site where God had placed His name and from where the Messiah will ultimately rule all nations.

In the midst of this celebration, during a time of peace and plenty, God reminded Solomon that the continuation of these blessings was dependent upon heartfelt obedience to Him. The abundance pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles can only be enjoyed by those who walk in God's ways. Again, **obedience** is necessary to enter into God's rest. Sadly, once again Israel's rest proved to be short lived. In his old age, Solomon's heart turned away from God, and God raised up adversaries against him. After Solomon died, his kingdom became divided and was subjected to recurring warfare and invasions. Finally, fewer than 375 years after that magnificent dedication ceremony at the fall festival season early in Solomon's reign, the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and destroyed both the city and temple that Solomon had built. God's glory, which had filled the temple in Solomon's day, had finally departed from both the temple and the city (cf. Ezekiel 10:18; 11:23). God will not continue to dwell in the midst of uncleanness!

God's Glorious Rest

Seven decades after Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the temple and deportation of the Jewish people to

continues on page 19

Achieving

By Richard F. Ames

GODLY SUCCESS

We all know ambitious individuals who drive themselves. They want success at all costs. We also know people who consider themselves failures, who constantly feel like giving up and are convinced they can never be successful. But what is true success? There is a standard of godly success, given in Scripture—and there are proven principles that can help us achieve success. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong called these principles the “Seven Laws of Success.” Applied properly, they can help Christians find true success in life.

The Bible comments on mankind’s desire for money and wealth. King Solomon, a man to whom God gave great wisdom, wrote most of the Proverbs. Solomon had everything a human being could wish for, yet he gave this warning: “Do not toil to acquire wealth; be wise enough to desist. When your eyes light upon it, it is gone; for suddenly it takes to itself wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven” (Proverbs 23:4–5, RSV).

King Solomon was striving to experience “life to the full.” But he retained his wisdom in examining the effect of his experiences. What was the result? “Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed all was *vani-*

ty and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:10–11). In other words, all his possessions and pleasure amounted to *nothing*—because they produced nothing of lasting value!

Some look for success in status, power and position, rather than in wealth. Is that true success? The mother of James and John—two of Jesus’ disciples—came to Him with a request: “She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.’ But Jesus answered and said, ‘You do not know what you ask’” (Matthew 20:21–22). He then told them that those positions were for those chosen and “prepared by My Father.”

Jesus then shared a great key to true success, in contrast to the vanity of rulers lording over others. “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25–28).

The greatest is one who is a true servant—one who truly cares for and helps others! Notice that it was the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, who took little children up in His arms and who stooped over to wash the feet of His disciples. You can read

about that foot-washing service in John 13. It was Jesus who sacrificed His life for us all! As the Apostle Paul wrote: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Jesus’ example was one of service, sacrifice and love. “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).

Whatever position we may hold in this life, we will never find true success unless we have an attitude of godly service toward others. One of the measures of true success is the degree of godly service one is willing to give. False success depends on the *get* principle, the standard carnal condition—or “default characteristic”—of human nature. True success depends on the *give* principle.

Can we find success through the pursuit of knowledge? Certainly God wants us to use our minds to learn godly values and true knowledge. But unless we practice genuine humility, material knowledge may lead to intellectual vanity—a feeling of superiority and even arrogance. Knowledge puffs up, as the Apostle Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 8:1). Without God, education and learning is little more than vanity. As Paul wrote: “Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is

written, ‘He catches the wise in their own craftiness’; and again, ‘The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile’” (1 Corinthians 3:18–20).

Ask yourself: how many times have you seen so-called history or theology “experts” on television, using their “expertise” to twist or pervert the plain truth of Scripture? How often have you seen the “entertainment” industry demean God’s law and Jesus Christ’s sacrifice? Truly, “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”

Can one find success through the pursuit of physical pleasure? King Solomon, who “had it all,” said: “I said in my heart, ‘Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure’; but surely, this also was vanity” (Ecclesiastes 2:1).

Today’s society seeks pleasure in sexual licentiousness, drug abuse, alcohol abuse and almost every imaginable form of stimulation. The Apostle John summed it up: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world; the *lust* of the flesh, the *lust* of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15–17).

Billions have been deceived by sexual temptations. They are sowing to the flesh, and of the flesh they will reap corruption (Galatians 6:8). God intends human beings to enjoy sexual pleasure in marriage; He wants us to enjoy life to the full within His laws and His precepts.

After all of King Solomon’s experimentation, he came to a final conclusion. “And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of

the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:12–14).

The NRSV states it a little differently: “fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone.”

Seven Laws of Success

Once we understand what success is, we still need to devise a plan to achieve it. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong pioneered what he called the “Seven Laws of Success”—a series of steps, or guidelines, for achieving success in a biblically based and Christian framework. What are those laws?

Law 1: Set the Right Goal

Successful people know that to accomplish anything of value, one needs to set goals. Unless you know where you are going, you will never arrive there!

Perhaps you have a specific career in mind. Learn all you can about the career you may be considering. And ask God to guide you. Remember Jesus Christ’s wonderful promise: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Matthew 7:7–8).

And no matter what our short-term goals, we must always pursue them in the context of the right ultimate goal. Jesus told his followers that they should not become anxious about food and clothing; He said that if God provides food for the birds of the air, surely He will much more

provide for His children. His point was that all the necessities of life, about which we humans so often worry, are secondary to the most important goal of all. As Jesus said: “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

A Christian’s ultimate destiny is the Kingdom of God. In order to be successful, we must set goals. And to be a true success—in this life and for eternity—we need to set the *right* goal!

Law 2: Educate (or Prepare) Yourself

What knowledge do you need to achieve your goal? What preparations must you make? If you are choosing a career as a craftsman, you will need to work as an apprentice before you can be a journeyman. And many professions require at least a college education, if not an advanced degree. More than ever, we need to increase our knowledge just to keep up with our goals. As God told the prophet Daniel concerning the end-time: “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Daniel 12:4).

One should never stop learning. But make sure that the knowledge you are learning is *true* knowledge, and not false education. Scripture teaches us that true knowledge begins with an awe and reverence toward God, and an acknowledgement that He is the source of wisdom and knowledge. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

We find a similar instruction in Proverbs 9:10. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and

the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

True Christians apply the second law of success by preparing for the coming Kingdom of God. Are you preparing? Are you growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18)? To reach your goal, you need to educate yourself and prepare to achieve that goal, both physically and spiritually.

Law 3: Maintain Good Health

How healthy are you? Do you have energy and vigor to work hard? Do you have the well-being to accomplish? Our very environment may be detrimental to our health. We have come to expect pollution in our 21st century. We have polluted our air, water and food. It may be difficult to obtain genuinely organic food and pure drinking water, but we must do the best we can. You might consider starting your own vegetable garden. Our fast-food, high-fat, high-sugar diet is not the steady diet God intended for humans.

In addition to a good diet, regular exercise is important. The Apostle Paul told the evangelist Timothy: “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:8). Again, the Bible emphasizes the spiritual dimension in our lives as priority. But we have a responsibility to honor God in our body as well as in our spirit (1 Corinthians 6:20). Other laws of health include maintaining a positive and tranquil mind, and avoiding accidents. You will be able to produce more effectively and efficiently if you have good physical fitness.

But we also need to understand our limitations, and do the best we can within them. Because of our physical limitations we may not

always have the same opportunities to serve as others with different skills and limitations. Still, no matter what our physical limitations, God will provide ways in which we can serve Him, and serve our neighbors, effectively.

Law 4: Drive Yourself

Mr. Herbert Armstrong called this an “all-important law.” He wrote: “You will always find that the executive *head* of any growing, successful organization employs *drive*. He puts a constant *prod* on himself. He not only drives himself, he drives those under him, else they might lag, let down and stagnate” (*The Seven Laws of Success*, 1974, p. 40).

Yes, we have to put a prod on ourselves to move. Scripture provides a graphic illustration. “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest. How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man” (Proverbs 6:6–11).

Proper rest is essential, but God warns against being slothful and lazy! The ant, in this case, keeps moving a little grain of food or grain of sand at a time, and accomplishes much over a long period of time. We all need energy and purpose. We need to discipline ourselves to work effectively.

Law 5: Apply Resourcefulness

Mr. Armstrong called this “the emergency law.” Perhaps the road ahead to your planned career or

goal looks clear and smooth. But life often meets us with unexpected obstacles. You may suddenly face a financial problem, or health emergency. What are you going to do?

Always investigate alternatives and options. What resources are available? What agencies or individuals might be of help? Of course, the *first step* to take in any serious emergency is to ask for God’s help. Remember the time Jesus came walking on the water to His disciples? The Apostle Peter wanted to do the same. So Jesus told Peter: “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’” (Matthew 14:29–30).

We often overlook the obvious when we are in trouble. In this case, Peter quickly cried out for help. And what does it say Jesus did? “And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’” (Matthew 14:31).

Ask God to deliver you from your predicament. But be sure to do your part and search out all the resources available. Never just give up. Ask for wise counsel. “Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established” (Proverbs 15:22).

Law 6: Persevere Toward Your Goal

Always have perseverance—stick-to-it-iveness. During World War II, when the future looked gloomy for Great Britain, Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke on October 29, 1941 at Harrow School. He inspired his audience to persevere. He stated: “Surely from this period of ten months this is the

lesson: *never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense.* Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy. We stood all alone a year ago, and to many countries it seemed that our account was closed, we were finished.”

Those who respond to God’s calling are in a spiritual race to persevere. Hebrews 11 is called the “faith chapter.” It mentions successful men and women of faith. Chapter 12 encourages us to remember their example, and to look forward to the final goal. “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with *endurance* the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1–2).

Apply the sixth law of success. Run the race with endurance, or “patience” as the *KJV* has it, or “perseverance” as the *NRSV* translates it. Never give up! Run the race of life with perseverance.

Law 7: Seek God’s Continual Guidance

If you are going to practice the first six laws successfully, you need the vital seventh law. You need to seek God’s continual guidance. Billions of men and women may carnally be practicing some of the first six laws, but unless they seek God’s continual guidance, their efforts are but vanity.

You may ask: “How can I have God’s continual guidance?” The

answer is that if God is calling you to understand His truth, you need to respond to that calling and seek Him. As you read your Bible, you will find priceless promises. Isaiah gives the following: “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6–7).

As you begin to pray—as you begin to change your whole way of life to God’s way of true success—He will forgive you through the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. God has promised that He will have mercy on you and pardon you, *if you repent and seek Him.*

God gives us many promises of His continuing and loving guidance. For example: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6). God promises that He will direct your paths, and that He will guide you through life to fulfill your human potential and ultimate destiny. When you come to a crossroads, and are faced with a decision, pray and ask for God’s will to be done in your life. As Jesus promised us: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).

Finally, what is the right goal of a successful Christian? The right goal is the Kingdom of God! As Jesus said in Matthew 6:33: “Seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Can You Really Succeed?

True success comes at a price—but not the kind of “price” many

might expect. As Mr. Armstrong wrote: “You can’t buy it with money. It comes to you *FREE*—without money and without price. There is a price, of course—your own application of these definite laws. It is not guaranteed to be *the easy way*—but it is guaranteed to be the *only way to real success!*” (*The Seven Laws of Success*, 1974, p. 10).

Can *you* really achieve success? As the Apostle Paul stated in Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” The Bible reveals the unseen, immutable laws of life. When we are in harmony with those principles and instructions, we are blessed. In fact, from the beginning of the Bible to the end, you will find that obedience to God’s way of life brings blessings, and disobedience to God’s way of life brings curses. The world’s criteria for success: possessions, power, position and pleasure—only bring pain, suffering, failure and death. Those who define success as “getting ahead” of others, and engaging in selfish indulgence, will not only harm others; they will ultimately harm themselves. True success comes only through the Savior of the world, who taught us to love our enemies, lay down our lives for one another and live by every word of God. When we do this through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can live truly happy, productive and successful lives, because we will be helping others into the family of God, and into the Kingdom of God.

So apply all seven laws of success. If you do, you will come to find the true abundant life Jesus promised: “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). ☐

Why Do Christians Suffer?

Can you “count it all joy when you fall into various trials”?

By Ron Wheeler

Suffering, by definition, is painful. So why would God allow it in the life of a Christian—and even praise its benefits? The subject of suffering is very serious, and often misunderstood. Thankfully, God has given us information vital to understanding the subject of suffering, and how it relates to what He is doing here on Earth. When we look at this information, we should be able to acknowledge that we are willing—indeed that we *need*—to suffer. Suffering can be a blessing, and is a vital part of our Christian growth.

Called to Suffer

Those of us in God’s Church should understand that we are called by God (2 Peter 1:10). But we did not just “volunteer” for suffering when God called us, so we need to understand the role that suffering is meant to play in the life of those who are called. “For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:19–25).

The thought that we are *called* to suffer does not sit well with some. It upsets us that sometimes we have to suffer even for the *good things* we do, because others are sinning against us! Christ suffered, and Scripture says that we are to follow His example: “Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear; though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been

perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:7–9).

Remember that Jesus had no sins of His own for which He had to suffer. He only suffered for others’ sins. But He learned, firsthand, how badly sin affects us, and He suffered from the sins of others just as we do today. Many might assume that an all-knowing God would not need to live in the flesh to experience, personally, the consequences of sin. But Scripture says that Jesus *learned*. Throughout His life, Christ experienced, firsthand, the consequences of others’ sin—and at His life’s end, He took upon Himself all of mankind’s sins. Though he committed no sin, he suffered for all sin. Unlike Christ, we have sinned. But like Christ, we must experience firsthand that sin is awful, and that the need for obedience to God is everything. We must come to hate sin so much that we will never sin again—forever!

Trial and Temptation

“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. **Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren**” (James 1:13–16). We are “wired” to be tempted. But Christ had the same problems with temptation that we have. “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. **For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted**” (Hebrews 2:17–18). Christ suffered the pulls of human nature, as we do: “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

Christ had to overcome sin in *exactly* the same way that we do! Having successfully done so, He now can be a faithful High Priest—an intercessor with God the Father. He knows not only how bad sin is, but also how hard it is not to sin in this human flesh! He can turn to God the Father and explain to Him our desperate pleas for help

because, as the saying goes, He has “been there and done that.” He can aid us because of His very intense and personal experience! So we need to remember Jesus Christ’s experience when we pray. We can remind Him, as our High Priest, of how hard overcoming is. We can use *His* power and rely on His intercession so that we can overcome as He did. He overcame, and we can too (Revelation 3:21).

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the *fiery trial* which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but *rejoice* to the extent that you *partake of Christ’s sufferings*, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now ‘If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?’ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:12–19). As James wrote: “My brethren, *count it all joy* when you fall into various trials” (James 1:2). The Apostles Peter and James did not shy away from suffering. They wrote that in response to suffering and temptation we should “rejoice” and “count it all joy.” When they were required to suffer for righteousness (Matthew 5:10–12; 1 Peter 3:14), they welcomed the opportunity and understood that it would benefit them as Christians (1 Peter 4:16)!

Of equal importance, we find in Paul’s words the first explanation of a second reason for our suffering. Scripture clearly presents the analogy of burning up the worthless parts of our character: “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. **If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire**” (1 Corinthians 3:11–15). Wood, hay and stubble will burn. Gold, silver and precious stones will not. So if, in spite of our genuine Christian commitment, we are in some areas building the wrong kind of character (the burnable kind), we will suffer that loss in that “Day” of which Paul wrote. We will

still be saved, yet so as by fire! It will not “feel good,” but this suffering will yield holy, righteous character.

What Is God Doing?

Surely, you might think, God could have found a way to build holy and righteous character in us without all this suffering. But Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong continually used to say that the one thing God cannot do is to instantly create righteous and godly character. God saw this firsthand when He watched Lucifer rebel and become Satan. With the creation of human beings, God made a different plan, in which those He creates must choose

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the *fiery trial* which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but *rejoice* to the extent that you *partake of Christ’s sufferings*, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

between God’s way and Satan’s way. Of course, He *wants* us to “choose life”—and He tells us so (Deuteronomy 30:19). To help us cement into our character the lessons of sin versus righteousness, He allows us to experience all of the suffering that sin creates. We are chastened by the consequences of our sins, by the consequences of others’ sins and also by God directly if necessary. “Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. **Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it**” (Hebrews 12:9–11). God knows that this suffering is painful to us. But if we are *trained* by this correction, it *will* yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. With this “big picture” in mind, Paul calls all of this a “light affliction” (2 Corinthians 4:17). Of course, it is often hard to have that perspective when we are in the midst of the suffering!

continues on page 18



International Corner...

Visit to Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Africa

by Carl E. McNair

One of the most enjoyable aspects of our work is visiting with Church brethren across the United States and around the world. Dr. and Mrs. Meredith returned from their Passover trip to Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines charged with enthusiasm and zeal for the work in the land “down under.”

Dorothy and I scheduled a visit to Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Africa for the Pentecost season, in order to combine a Holy Day trip with necessary annual Church business in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

This year we chose to visit Dr. Doug Winnail and the brethren on the weekend of May 12, in Drogheda, Ireland, 28 miles north of Dublin at “the gateway of the Boyne river valley.” It is one of Ireland’s oldest and most historical cities, taken by Cromwell on July 1, 1690.

Dr. Winnail drove us to nearby Newgrange, one of the “passage graves” in Western Europe. It is Ireland’s greatest national monument of prehistoric times, believed to be older than Stonehenge in England and the pyramids in Egypt.

On Monday, Dr. Winnail took my wife, Mr. and Mrs. Franz Peeters and me to visit Tara—another site of antiquity.

On Sabbath afternoon, the UK brethren from Northern Ireland, and

the brethren from the Republic of Ireland—along with Mr. and Mrs. Peeters from the Netherlands, Mr. Ray Clore from Paris, France and Mr. Bob Storrier from Scotland—met for services at Drogheda. Mr. Joe Stevenson, a deacon from Belfast, delivered the sermonette and I gave the sermon.

On Sabbath evening, the leadership gathered at Dr. Winnail’s home to hear a tape of Dr. Meredith’s opening remarks at last February’s ministerial conference held in San Diego, California.



Johannesburg, South Africa ministers (from left to right) Mr. and Mrs. Syd Hull; Mr. and Mrs. Christo Botha; Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bouwer. Not pictured are Mr. and Mrs. Pieter Van Der Byl, Capetown.

On Sunday morning, Dr. Winnail encouraged the group to always “Prepare To Serve.” I followed with a discussion on “Preferences versus Absolutes.”

After a fine lunch served by the restaurant of the Boyne Valley Hotel, I spoke on “Leadership Attributes—Courage and Integrity.” Truly, we are blessed with a dedicated group in Ireland.

On Wednesday, May 15, Mr. and Mrs. Gene Gustin and Mr. Storrier met Dr. Winnail and me at St. Albans, England. A major part of our discussion centered on growing the Work in the United Kingdom and

Western Europe, considering the limitations imposed upon us by financial and other restraints.

Thursday night, we flew from London to Capetown, Republic of South Africa. Mr. and Mrs. Pieter van der Byl met us at the airport and took us to the Rockhaven Bed and Breakfast. Later, the van der Byls drove us to their home, and we then went to Franschoek and Stellenbosch, two lovely towns in the grape- and wine-producing region.

Sabbath afternoon services in Capetown were followed by warm fellowship and South African food. Too soon we had to depart for our flight to Johannesburg, where we were met by Mr. and Mrs. Syd Hull.

Mr. Hull picked us up after breakfast to drive us to all-day Pentecost services with the Johannesburg brethren. After an inspiring visit, we met Sunday evening with the Johannesburg leadership at the Hulls’ home.

On Monday, the Hulls took us to a meeting with elders Louis Bouwer and Christo Botha, and their wives, for four hours of discussion about the work in South Africa. After a lunch and meeting we regrettably had to separate.

On Tuesday morning we flew to Phalaborwa to visit Mr. and Mrs. Carl Labuschagne, members in a remote part of South Africa.

We returned to Johannesburg on Thursday morning, for lunch and fellowship with the Hulls before a 9:00 p.m. flight to London, followed by a non-stop flight to San Diego. Our return trip from Phalaborwa to San Diego was 36 hours—24 hours of flying, plus ground travel and waiting in airports.

I am greatly encouraged by my visits with brethren in far-flung parts of God's wonderful creation. I find each area rich in resources and national culture. I have yet to find a country that is devoid of beauty and blessings. Clearly, God gave mankind a wonderful creation to dress and keep. Sadly, we have besmirched His gift with corruption, but God's Spirit will renew the earth when Jesus Christ returns to bring civility to governments and human hearts by righteous rulership. As we find our hearts knit and bonded to brethren everywhere we visit, by His Spirit all mankind will likewise bond in brotherhood under Christ's righteous rule. God speed the day!

Spanish Update

by Mario Hernandez

During my last visit to Mexico City, there were 65 people in attendance for Sabbath services on May 11. Four were attending for their very first time, including one lady from Ecuador and another from Colombia, who have been listening to our radio broadcast for two years.

On Sunday, May 12, I was able to do three radio broadcasts—one at 9:30 a.m., one at 2:30 p.m. and another at 7:30 p.m. My subjects were the coming struggle for the city of Jerusalem, and the coming Kingdom of God.

The Spanish office in Mexico consists of Mr. Sergio Cortés, his wife Angelica and their well-educated three daughters and two sons. Sergio and Angelica are full-time volunteers. Their sons and daughters help during their free time at home, when they are not at the university or at work. They deal with the radio station, monitor the broadcast, take phone calls, do data entry and mail processing, and keep track of all shipping of audiocassettes,

booklets, reprint articles and *Bible Study Course* lessons. Sergio does all the cassette duplicating. He also finds the best deals for printing *Bible Study Course* lessons and booklets. All of this and much more is truly a labor of love, done with great zeal and enthusiasm. Mr. Cortés is a retired economist, and considers his present involvement in the Work of God the most fulfilling opportunity of his lifetime. Instead of seeking a financial reward, he gives generous offerings of his time and resources.

Additionally, Mr. Cortés and his wife do a remarkable job of preparing people for their first interviews with me as a pastor. When people contact us and express an interest, the Spanish office makes sure that they become familiar with what we teach. Those who remain interested then schedule a personal meeting with me during one of my Mexico visits (once or twice a month). So far, this method has produced a steady growth in the Mexico City congregation.

In Colombia, God's protective shield around His people is more and more evident, as violence has increased since the truce between the government and the guerrillas has failed. Each day, in Colombia, 75 families are displaced from their homesteads by guerrilla and paramilitary groups fighting for territory. Displaced families are given 24 hours to move away from their land, otherwise they face death. Many end up living in cardboard shelters alongside the nation's roads.

Out of a population of 42 million, 15 million Colombians live in poverty—12 million of whom live in *absolute* poverty. Each day, 85 people are murdered, and 11 are kidnapped. Some kidnappers have reached the point of killing their victims, then demanding ransom from the relatives to let them know where the bodies of their loved ones are buried. "Let Thy

Kingdom come," is the fervent prayer of our Colombian brethren.

In spite of—or perhaps because of—these trials, the number of brethren in Colombia continues to grow. There will soon be a new video group in the city of Cali. Attendance in the city of Medellín has more than doubled in the last two years, to an average of 35 people each Sabbath. Groups are also flourishing in Bogotá and Manizales.

In Costa Rica, our radio broadcast has produced 64 calls since it first aired in March. We are offering an audiocassette of the broadcast and a subscription to the *Bible Study Course*. We expect a higher response in the coming weeks as we start offering booklets during the radio programs. Just before Passover, some Venezuelan members of our former association, who had been receiving our Spanish-language sermon tapes, requested a visit for several anointings and baptismal counselings. Mr. Jorge Schaubek made the trip, performing two baptisms and helping form two new video groups—one in Barquisimeto and another in Merida.

During my last visit to Bahia Blanca, Argentina, I had the joy to ordain our hosts there—Aaron Bravo and his wife, Stella—as deacon and deaconess. Their zeal for God's Work, their outgoing concern for the brethren and their life as a couple and as parents of three children are a shining example of God's way of life.

Radio station 91.1 FM in Bahía Blanca, which recently won its second award as the best-managed and most-heard religious station in the area, is offering us two weekly hours of free broadcasting, on top of our two half-hour paid broadcasts. Already we have received a baptism request from a listener who discovered us on this station!

God continues to bless His Work in the Spanish-speaking world. ☪

Agape Love

By Mike McDaniel

What aspect of your Christian life would you most like to enhance? If you could grow in any one area, which would you choose? There are numerous areas in which we, as Christians, all need to grow.

Faith is one such vital area. Jesus Christ said: “if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and *nothing* will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20).

Should we seek *wisdom*? It is true that God called the foolish of the world (1 Corinthians 1:27), but He does not want us to *remain* that way! Solomon said: “Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore *get* wisdom” (Proverbs 4:7).

Mercy is also a very important attribute. Christ said: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7).

A better understanding of Scripture is likewise a desirable goal. Many individuals spend countless hours poring over the Bible, in an effort to enhance their understanding of God’s Word. Some labor arduously to figure out details of prophetic events to come.

All these matters—faith, wisdom, mercy and understanding of Scripture—are important. Yet what is it that we should seek above all else?

Another way to approach this question is to ask: Why were you born? Scripture reveals that every individual will eventually have a chance to form a personal relationship with God. Upon unconditional surrender of our life to our Creator—and after baptism and accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior—we each come to have the *transforming* power of God’s Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Through a lifelong process of conversion, we increasingly partake of God’s own divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)—the very *mind* of Christ (Philippians 2:5). We have God’s laws and His way of life *written* in our minds and hearts (Hebrews 10:16), as we actually learn to think like Him, and increasingly take on the very *attributes* of God (Galatians 5:22–25).

Yes, we are to grow in the *likeness* of God—the *likeness* of Jesus Christ. With that being the case, what is the most *important* attribute of God? Whatever it is, *that* is the attribute, more than any other, in which we should *fervently* desire to grow in His likeness!

God Is Love

If you could describe God in one word, what would it be? The answer, of course, is “love.” We are told in 1 John 4:8 that “God is love.”

The Apostle Paul spoke of three great qualities—faith, hope, and love—but he stated that the *greatest* of them is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Consider also verses 2–3: “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand *all* mysteries and *all* knowledge, and though I have *all* faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not *love*, I am *nothing*. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not *love*, it profits me nothing.” What a powerful statement concerning the importance of love!

When we read in Galatians 5 of the fruits of God’s Spirit, what is the very *first* fruit listed? Love! (v. 22).

Very plainly, then, “love” is extremely *important* to God, for He *is* love. Yet, it is vital to understand that the love being spoken of in Galatians 5 is *not* “human” love! Rather, it is *godly* love—*agape* love. *Agape* is the word used in the original Greek: “faith, hope and *agape*,” “but [if I] have not *agape*, I am nothing;” and “God *is agape*.” The only way a human being can have God’s *agape* love is by receiving it *from* God, by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22).

Love Fulfills God’s Law

God’s law is spiritual (Romans 7:14). Therefore, we require spiritual love—God’s *agape* love—to *fulfill* that law. Paul said that “love [*agape*] is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:10).

Yes, love fulfills God’s law, and it does so because God’s law is a law *of* love! Christ showed this very plainly when He stated that “all the Law” hangs on the two great commandments to love God and to love one’s fellow man (Matthew 22:36–40).

The first four of the Ten Commandments show the basics of how to love God. The last six show the basics of how to love our fellow man. The Ten Commandments are then further magnified *throughout* the Bible, especially in the New Testament. In fact, one reason Christ came to Earth was to *magnify* God’s law (Isaiah 42:21). Rather than abolishing God’s laws of love, Christ made those

laws even *more* binding, and showed their intent (Matthew 5:17–28).

The Apostle John is sometimes referred to as “the apostle of love.” How did this “apostle of *love*” regard God’s *law*? He said: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1 John 5:3). In fact, how could it be otherwise, when we consider that God’s law is the very *reflection* of His love!

God’s commandments show the basics of how to *express* godly love. As Dr. Roderick C. Meredith has said: “God’s love runs down the channel or riverbed of the Ten Commandments.” Therefore, if any particular action of an individual is *contrary* to God’s commandments, then what is being expressed is *not* godly love!

Is it true, as some say, that God’s commandments are burdensome? King David, whom God called “a man after My own heart” (Acts 13:22), certainly did not think so. “Oh, how I *love* Your law!” exclaimed David (Psalm 119:97). The truth is that as an individual matures spiritually, he increasingly has God’s laws written in his mind

states that *agape* “does not seek its own.” Instead of being primarily *self-seeking*, godly love has its focus on others!

This principle is also discussed in other scriptures. “Let no one seek his own, but each one the *other’s* well-being” (1 Corinthians 10:24). Likewise, notice what Paul said to the Philippians. “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others *better* than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3–4).

No, this *agape* love is not self-centered. It does not seek its own. God’s spiritual love must come *from* Him. His love is *more than* natural, human love!

Reciprocation Not Required

The Bible shows that a Christian is to show *special* love for his brethren (John 13:34–35; Galatians 6:10). Does this mean that we are to express *agape* love only to those who love us in return? No! Christ Himself makes

Yes, God wants us to express His love to *all* men, not just to fellow Christians (1 Thessalonians 3:12). The Apostle Paul said: “As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto *all* men” (Galatians 6:10, *KJV*). This outgoing concern is to be a way of life—expressed at all times, and to all individuals.

and heart (Hebrews 10:16). Accordingly, the Apostle John plainly stated that God’s “commandments are *not* burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

Outgoing Concern

As John said: “This is the love of God that we keep His commandments.” Yet it is vital to understand that *agape* love involves far *more* than just keeping “the letter of the law.” God’s love—His way of life—is the way of outgoing *concern* for others. It is the way of “give.” It is the attitude of *servicing* (Mark 10:43–45). It is the way of helping and cooperating.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ showed how the Samaritan—unlike the priest and the Levite—went *far* out of his way to help the stranger in need. Christ ended the parable by telling us: “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:30–37).

1 Corinthians 13 is known as “the love chapter.” It describes attributes of *agape* love. How very beneficial it would be for each of us to review these attributes regularly, and to ask ourselves: “Do I *always* exhibit these qualities?”

Of all the attributes discussed in this “love chapter,” perhaps the most important is given in verse 5, which

the answer plain. “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same” (Luke 6:32–33).

Yes, God wants us to express His love to *all* men, not just to fellow Christians (1 Thessalonians 3:12). The Apostle Paul said: “As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto *all* men” (Galatians 6:10, *KJV*). This outgoing concern is to be a way of life—expressed at all times, and to all individuals.

Agape does not require reciprocation in word or deed; we are to love others whether or not they love us in return. We are to love others even if we know we will receive evil in return!

When “fierce witnesses” rose against King David and rewarded him “evil for good,” how did David respond? “when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting... I paced about as though he were my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one who mourns for his mother” (Psalm 35:11–14).

This is the approach we are to have toward *our* enemies. “Love your enemies,” said Christ, and “do good to those who hate you, *bless* those who curse you,

and *pray* for those who spitefully use you” (Luke 6:27–28).

This type of love is not something we have naturally. It is only by receiving this love *from* God that we can come to feel and express this godly love to others.

Jesus Christ is our perfect *example*. Just before Christ’s crucifixion, the Jewish religious leaders accused Him, spat on Him, mocked Him and repeatedly struck Him. How did Christ react to all this? “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an *example*, that you should follow His steps... who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:21–23).

Later, as He hung on the cross, did Christ ask God to exact *revenge* against those who had placed Him there? No. Rather, He said: “Father, *forgive* them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

One Love

Agape is an *all-encompassing* attitude. Can one who truly loves God, fail to love his brother also? “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him; that he who

loves God must love his brother also” (1 John 4:20–21).

Love toward God and our fellow man are inextricably connected! Accordingly, our heavenly Father takes it very *personally* when we love—or *fail* to love—our fellow man. “For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me... inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:35–40).

Yes, our Father takes this matter very personally! So it should serve as a *life-guiding principle*, as we interact with our fellow man.

Love Is the Answer

What aspect of your Christian life should you *most* want to enhance? Plainly, no *other* aspect of your Christian life can be properly enhanced without *agape* love. This is the way of outgoing concern for others—the way that travels down the riverbed of God’s Ten Commandments. It is God’s own perfect love, which *requires* no reciprocation.

We all should grow in many areas. Yet without *agape* love, we are nothing! 

Why Do Christians Suffer?

(continued from page 13)

God has clearly explained what He is trying to accomplish through our suffering. He is using it to teach us that we need to follow His plan of salvation and build *His* holy and righteous character! He hopes that our suffering from sin will cause us to stop! We are His children, “and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.** For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.** For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation [including humankind] was subjected to futility, **not willingly, but because of Him who subject-**

ed it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:17–23).

Can we thus see God’s purpose for our suffering? Suffering from our own sins, and the sins of others, should teach us the painful consequences of sin—and motivate us to quit sinning (1 Peter 4:1). Christians are indeed called to suffer (1 Peter 2:21). But we must remember that God is called “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3). How can we reconcile that God is merciful yet allows the

suffering, correction and trials we have discussed? Scripture explains: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). God earnestly desires to *save* us, not *destroy* us! “For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them” (Luke 9:56). He is perfectly aware when we are suffering. And He knows that suffering—first Christ’s and now ours—is absolutely necessary for salvation! When trials come, we can be comforted that God is using those trials to prepare us for an eternal place in His Family. With that understanding, we should be able to “count it all joy” and thank God for all His blessings—even for the blessing of suffering! 

Obey God, and Enter His Rest*(continued from page 7)*

Babylon, God finally opened the way for them to return and rebuild. Zechariah was one of the prophets who accompanied Zerubbabel, the newly appointed Persian governor, and encouraged him and the people in the rebuilding of God's temple at Jerusalem. Looking around at the devastated city of his day, Zechariah foresaw a future time when God would yet choose Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:17). That will be a time when *many* nations will become joined to God and will be His people. It will also be a time when the God of Israel will actually dwell in Jerusalem (Zechariah 2:10–11). His throne will be located in a yet-future temple that is described in the final chapters of the book of Ezekiel (cf. Ezekiel 43:1–7).

This glorious future time will see all nations of the world come up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles and to worship the Lord of Hosts (Zechariah 14:16). It will be a time when God's law will go forth

from Jerusalem and the knowledge of His ways will cover the earth like the waters cover the sea. It will also be a time of rest—*real rest*—for all of mankind.

Isaiah 14:3 promises that a day is coming when the Eternal will give “rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve.” Sorrow, fear, and hard labor have their origin described in Genesis 3 and are the result of sin. It was only after he had sinned that Adam became afraid and hid himself. He and Eve were each told of the sorrows and hard, strenuous labor that would pervade their lives as part of the curse of sin. Fear, sorrow and hard bondage have been the universal lot of mankind ever since that fateful day in the garden. The time is coming when mankind will finally be given rest; indeed the whole earth will be at rest (Isaiah 14:7).

Only those who believe and obey God's word will be able to enter His rest, as Paul explains in Hebrews 3 and 4. The Feast of Tabernacles

reminds us of the time when the world will finally know peace and rest, and the Eternal God will make a “feast of choice pieces” (Isaiah 25:6) for the whole world. There were dramatic periods of rest that were inaugurated for the people of God in times past at the Feast of Tabernacles. However, what God gave during the days of Joshua and the days of Solomon proved to be short lived. Because of disobedience, the people forfeited that rest, which God had given.

As we gather at the Feast of Tabernacles this year, we should be deeply mindful of the events that we are picturing—the time described in Isaiah 11:9–10: “They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and **his rest shall be glorious**” (KJV). Let us obey God with our whole hearts, so that we might enter into His rest! ☞

Recent Travel Enlightening, Inspiring*(continued from page 2)*

war museum and the “Eternal Flame,” after which Mr. and Mrs. Calache took us to our room at the local Holiday Inn.

After having a couple of hours to rest and change clothes, we met and counseled with Mr. and Mrs. Rod King, who were planning to come with us from a different association. Rod was a former student of mine at Bricket Wood, and was President of the Ambassador Club that I directed there in the spring of 1973. So it was a wonderful opportunity to meet with him and his dedicated wife. They were able to “check us out” and ask all kinds of questions about the Living Church of God—what we believe, where we are headed, and so on. It was great to become more thoroughly acquainted with them—and *all* these acquaintances are very helpful for all of us in “bonding” as we work together to prepare for Christ's coming.

The next day, Wednesday, was the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. In the morning, I gave the offertory and a split sermon on news of the Work, followed by a fine message from Mr. Tyler. We had a meal with the brethren during the noon hour, and that afternoon I preached to about 55 people there in Melbourne. On Thursday we toured Melbourne more thoroughly. We were also able to spend “quality time” with Mr. Tyler and with Mr. and Mrs. Gill. Mr. Gill has served ably and with great dedication as pastor of the Melbourne congregation, and will now be able to focus more on business matters for the Australian Work since Mr. King has come with us.

That evening, our entire group had a wonderful dinner in an Italian restaurant in Melbourne, then returned to our hotel early so we could meet with the former Jennifer Hanway of Pasadena, and her husband, who were interested in coming with us from another group. It was a wonderful visit, as Jennifer had worked for me in Church Administration at Pasadena many years ago. Both

of them, incidentally, have decided to come with us in the Living Church of God!

Early next morning, Friday, we flew from Melbourne, through Sydney, to Manila, in the Philippines. We were met that evening by Mr. Rod McNair, and were able to have a snack with him before retiring for the night. Mr. McNair—the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl McNair—is directing the Work in the Philippines. He spent some three years living there, and now visits there three or four times a year to conduct meetings, perform training and solidify things. He is very dedicated, as is his wife Dana. The brethren there obviously respect him deeply, and it was inspiring to see him in action there in the Philippines. Next afternoon, on the Sabbath, I preached in Manila to a fine crowd of 208 people. The hall was really crowded, with more people attending than had been expected, and everyone was extremely enthusiastic. That evening, we had dinner right there in the hall, and then enjoyed a wonderful talent show in which the brethren put on quite a display of Philippine singing, dancing and other very interesting performances. There is *a lot* of talent there among our brethren—including dozens of young people! It was a warm and loving occasion, and one we will always remember.

On Sunday, we went to the Philippine office, where some of our brethren were hard at work. Mr. McNair showed us around, and explained the operation there. Then we were able to have lunch, with the McNairs and local elder Mr. Gorgonio DeGuia, at the Manila hotel where General Douglas McArthur had his headquarters. That afternoon we saw Fort Santiago, where the Japanese had imprisoned and tortured thousands of Filipinos and Americans during World War II. Then we went to the U.S. military cemetery, where thousands of tombstones marked the final resting places of many American servicemen from World War II. It was inspiring and moving to see some of the tombstone markers with the designation: “Known Only To God.” It made me think a great deal about how *extremely important* our understanding of the great White Throne Judgment is, and how *vital* a part that event will play in the Plan of our loving heavenly Father.

On Monday, we toured other important sites in and near Manila, then returned to our room in mid-afternoon so that I could start preparing my lectures for the Philippine Ministerial Conference which was to begin the next morning. On Tuesday morning, I gave the “kick off” lecture for the conference, then after lunch joined Mr. McNair in leading the conference in a give-and-take session that afternoon. On Tuesday evening, we had a banquet for all of the ministers and wives in the Philippines,

and experienced a great deal of warm and loving fellowship. That night, we had to pack for our trip to Hong Kong.

On Wednesday morning we flew to Hong Kong, and we spent the afternoon and the following morning seeing interesting and historic sites in that city. I had never been to Hong Kong before. It was interesting to see, throughout the city, signs of its former status as a British Crown colony. But, also interestingly, we could see that the communist Chinese are gradually replacing the former British names and places, and are obviously beginning to stamp out many of the British symbols in that important and interesting port city. One by one, the last vestiges of the British Empire are being dismantled! And it is vital for all of you American and Canadian brethren to realize that the *same thing* may happen to our nations within this generation.

Overall, I am thankful to God for blessing us on this trip, for “hedging” us about in many ways along the way, for the privilege of meeting so many dedicated ministers and brethren, and for learning many things that will enlarge my understanding of that part of the world, including a few places I had *never* before visited. Men like Mr. Bruce Tyler, Mr. Kinnear Penman and others have been dedicated to the Work for many, many years. As I mentioned above, they have come through the “wars” and remained faithful to the **Truth**. They have been willing to seek out where the Work of Christ is being done most effectively, and to join wholeheartedly in that effort. For that, I thank God. And I thank all of you brethren around the world for your love and support, and I ask *all* of you to join me in praying for these fine ministers, their wives and our brethren in Australasia—and for God’s guidance and protection for the Work there, preparing the way for His Kingdom.

Dear brethren, each and every one of us is being “tested” as to our willingness to grow as close to the true Christ of the Bible and to His **way** as we possibly can. God is also evaluating how much we give of ourselves in actually *doing* His Work and preparing for His Kingdom. Remember Jesus’ challenging statement: “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My **reward** is with Me, to give to every one according to his **work**” (Revelation 22:12). And we can all rejoice most sincerely in Jesus’ most encouraging statement: “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am **coming quickly**.’ Amen. Even so, **come**, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).



Wyoming Family Weekend



Brethren from around the country enjoy fellowship along the banks of the North Platte River.



The spectacular Medicine Bow Mountains rise above beautiful Lake Marie, 40 minutes east of Saratoga.



Messrs. Ben Whitfield and Eugene Api reflect the joy of the occasion.

Saratoga, Wyoming, was the site of the annual Wyoming Family Weekend this year. Forty-six brethren from Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, California and Florida attended the event, which was held at the Riviera Lodge on the banks of the beautiful North Platte River. Each year, brethren from this area and beyond come together for a summer outing and an opportunity to get to know each other. Time to relax and worship God on His holy Sabbath day, along with extended fellowship time, is a real opportunity that many of the brethren in our part of the country do not experience outside of the annual Feast of Tabernacles.

This year, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ames took time out of their busy schedules to visit with the brethren who came to Saratoga. The weekend began with a Bible Study conducted on Friday evening by Mr. Ames, who updated us on many aspects of the Work and covered the book of James. He showed how faith relates to the book of James, and also the book of Hebrews. A brunch started off our Sabbath morning, followed by fellowship, services and a steak-fry cook-

out on the lawn of the Riviera Lodge.

During his two messages, Mr. Ames talked about our family responsibilities, and about how God's purpose will prevail in each of our lives as the time draws closer to the coming kingdom. Fellowshiping continued late into the evening for those who were able to stay over. Sunday morning brought us together again for family fun. A few went fishing and hiking; some others had a private tour of the Saratoga Museum, followed by a sightseeing trip to the beautiful Medicine Bow Mountains and Lake Marie. Mrs. Ames even had the unusual opportunity to ride as a passenger on a motorcycle!

The Wyoming Family Weekend offers brethren special fellowship and a spiritual boost during the early summer months when the days are pleasant and the nights are cool. The weekend was a great success thanks to the generosity of the brethren, who went all-out to share their blessings.

Plan now to attend next year's Wyoming Family Weekend in early June of 2003. You will come away refreshed and encouraged.

—Ben H. Whitfield

Birth

Jason and Glory Talbott of Kent, Washington, announce the birth of their daughter *Harmony Aria Jewel Talbott*. She was born on March 8, 2002, weighing 8 pounds, 5 ounces, and measuring 20.5 inches long. Her two-year-old sister Melody already adores her!

Feast Volunteers Wanted!

Opportunities are still available for those wishing to serve at the Feast of Tabernacles. Do you have a special musical talent to share? Would you like to help with ushering, parking or first aid? There is still time to get involved; please download a Volunteer Service Form from the LCG Member Web site at <http://www.cogl.org/fot2002/>. If you do not have Internet access, you should be able to obtain a printed copy of the form from your local congregation.

Growing LCG Web Activity

In the month of June, visitors to the official English-language LCG Web sites—www.lcg.org, www.tomorrowworld.org and www.cogl.org—submitted 1,125 online “Order FREE” forms, requesting approximately 440 subscriptions to *Tomorrow’s World* magazine, 470 subscriptions to the *Bible Study Course*, and more than 2,500 booklets and tapes.

Early in the month, the sites received their first documented activity from the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, bringing to 150 the number of countries known to have visited the Church Web sites.

June activity on www.lcg.org exceeded 40.6 gigabytes and 30,500 visitor sessions. Together, the three main Church sites recorded more than 110,000 page views in the month of June.

In the last half of the month, we resumed a small-scale advertising campaign on the popular Google search engine, and we look forward to evaluating its effectiveness in the months ahead.

Upcoming *Tomorrow’s World* Telecasts

WGN: Sunday, 6:00 AM ET

VISION (Canada): Sunday, 3:30 AM & 5:30 PM ET

Air Date	Broadcast Title
August 4	Where Is Hell?
August 11	Keys to Answered Prayer
August 18	When Will the Great Tribulation Begin?
August 25	Principles of Bible Study

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

Ordination

On the Sabbath of June 6, 2002, *Mr. Sheldon C. Monson* was ordained an elder by Mr. Charles Bryce, assisted by Messrs. James Wells, Phil Sena and John Turner. Mr. Monson will be serving the brethren in the Minneapolis, Minnesota region.

50th Anniversary Celebration

On May 4, the brethren from Nashville, Chattanooga, Crossville, Tennessee and Athens, Georgia congregated for a Sabbath of inspiring messages, fellowship and a wonderful covered-dish meal. However, this particular day also held the surprise of a special golden anniversary. The brethren honored Mr. and Mrs. Bob and Faye League

for their loving service, and for the occasion of their golden anniversary on May 25. Special gifts from each congregation were presented, along with a beautiful anniversary cake. Mr. and Mrs. League were especially moved by the arrival of their sons Terry and Gary, their grandsons Jeremy and Jason and their great-grandson Tyler.

In Loving Memory

Regina Acero, age 86, long-time, faithful member of God's Church, died on April 26, 2002. Mrs. Acero was the most senior member of the Bogabongan-Sindangan Living Church of God congregations in Northwest Mindanao, Philippines. She was baptized into God's Church in 1950, and in 1963 became a member of the Radio Church of God.

Mary Jane Erickson, age 59, of Pulaski, Wisconsin, died on May 24, 2002, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. A baptized member of God's Church for more than 30 years, she is survived by Haldor Erickson—her husband of 38 years—and by her mother, one brother, five sisters, and two sons.

Hazel Lee Mikesell, age 88, of Madison, Indiana died on March 14, 2002. She was a long-time member of the Louisville, Kentucky congregation of the Church of God, as was her husband who preceded her in death in 1991. Both died in the faith. She will be greatly missed by three daughters, a daughter-in-law and extended family, many in the Church, as well as her brethren and 22 grandchildren, 47 great grandchildren and 10 great-great grandchildren. Her minister, Mr. Lambert Greer, performed the funeral service.

Ether Beatrice Miller, age 91, died on May 23, 2002, in Heber Springs, Arkansas. She was a long-time member of God's Church, who began listening to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in the late 1930s. She was among the first in her area to support the Global Church of God in 1993, and faithfully attended services each Sabbath until the infirmities of age prevented her from doing so regularly. She embodied the fruits of the Spirit with her joyful attitude, kind heart and genuine love for everyone. The people in her community loved and respected her, even though her religious beliefs were very different from theirs. She is survived by a daughter, a son-in-law, a granddaughter and three great-grandchildren, and was predeceased by her husband John.

Rosa E. Mitchell, age 89, of Commiskey, Indiana, died on April 14, 2002 at home. She was a longtime and faithful member of the Louisville, Kentucky congregation of the Living Church of God. She lost three husbands to death, but brought up three daughters and two sons, and was thankful for her 16 grandchildren and her great-great-grandchild. Her sister, a daughter-in-law, a granddaughter and other extended family are members of the Living Church of God. She will be missed by all. Her minister, Mr. Lambert Greer, performed her funeral service.

Harvey A. Taylor, age 83, of the Springdale, Arkansas congregation, died on Thursday, June 20, 2002. Mr. Taylor, a long-time faithful member and deacon in the Church of God, was born in St. Paul, Arkansas on June 25, 1918. He was baptized in 1965 and ordained a deacon in 1967. He is survived by his wife, Chloe Taylor, to whom he was married for 62 years. He is also survived by his four children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Commentary

A Cup of Trembling By Jeffrey Fall

Day after day, we hear of more bloodshed in the Middle East. Palestinian suicide bombers and Israeli military actions are a part of life and death in Israel. Violence begets violence. Is there any possible end in sight? For the immediate future, the answer is a resounding “No!” The mix of Israeli and Palestinian desires is volatile, and the future for the region looks bleak indeed.

Israel is armed to the teeth. According to David Wood of the *Newhouse News Service*: “Israel can field 19 divisions of ground troops: the United States boasts [just] 13 divisions worldwide. Israel’s air force, with souped-up U.S. F-15 fighters, can generate nearly 3,000 sorties, or combat missions, per day. The United States can sustain [only] about 1,600 sorties a day. There are almost 1 million Israelis... liable to be called on [for reserve] duty.”

Yet the Palestinians have a deadly weapon in their willingness to sacrifice their lives as suicide bombers. No amount of military might can stop those willing to blow themselves up for a cause. According to the *World Net Daily*: “The Muslim Brotherhood, which is said to have aided the Palestinians in their cause, has a slogan: ‘The Koran is our constitution, the prophet is our guide; death for the glory of Allah is our greatest ambition.’”

Equally significant is the flow of billions of aid dollars. The United States, and millions of Jews around the world, have poured more than 3 billion dollars per year into Israel since the late 1970s. The world’s Muslims, on the other hand, are just beginning to rise to the challenge of pouring money into the Palestinian cause. In April, fund-raising telethons were held in Saudi Arabia and four other Middle Eastern Arab nations, raising almost \$204 million.

Soon Europe and the United States could see their vital interests at stake, and ultimately be sucked into a major conflict. According to the Bible, they will indeed. Centuries ago, God could see the seeds of conflict sown in this region, and that Jerusalem would be thrust onto the world stage in the end-time: “The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it” (Zechariah 12:1–3, KJV).

As Scripture shows, the time will come when Jerusalem will be the focal point of world conflict. Eventually, Europe will see the need to invade Israel, and a confederation of Islamic states will do battle with the European forces. Europe will launch a major offensive and occupy much of the Arab world.

As we look at the Middle East today, we can see that the stage is being set for dramatic end-time battles. And we can see that mankind does not know the way to peace. God’s Word states: “It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jeremiah 10:23).

The tremendous Good News is that Jesus Christ Himself will return to earth and prevent mankind from annihilating itself. At the last moment, Christ will intervene to establish the government of God on Earth. Finally, Jews and Arabs will learn to live together in peace. May God speed that day!

The above is an excerpt from one of the many commentaries on key topics facing our world, available at the www.lcg.org and www.tomorrowworld.org Web sites.