



# THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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

Summer 2008

## THE CHRISTIAN BATTLE: "STAYING THE COURSE!"

**There is a warning** for Christians in the latter days that if ignored, could cause them to fail. It's simply known as "burnout." Christians are admonished to beware, "the love of many will wax cold." We are also advised that some will allow themselves to grow "lukewarm." The alarm has sounded; Christians must be cautious not to abandon God's ways and "become weary in well doing." But how can we be sure we will "stay the course" and not be affected by today's social pressures and forfeit our eternal life?

by Bill Watson



Bill Watson

**I**n Matthew 10:22 we are told, "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." This is repeated again in Matthew 24:13 and Mark 13:13. In Revelation 2:10, Christians in Smyrna were encouraged to be *faithful unto death*. This first-century exhortation is appropriate for present day Christians as well: "...be thou *faithful unto death* [natural or not], and I will give thee a crown of life."

Unquestionably, Christ is clear on what He expects from all of us. The level of commitment is total and complete, including, if necessary, your life. Anything else is not good enough. We are instructed to be living sacrifices for God (Romans 12:1-2), dying daily on His behalf (1 Corinthians 15:31), and mortifying the flesh (Romans 6:13), because of the sacrificial death He experienced which allows us to live for Him (1 Peter 2:5). Living the life of a Christian requires and demands a personal renewal and change of one's lifestyle. It's all about the renewing of our minds, which ultimately changes

the way we feel, think, and act (Romans 6:3-19). This is an important concept to grasp and accept as part of the required cost that comes with being a Christian. When considering the Christian way, be assured: *it is a challenge!*

The challenge starts when the *conversion process* begins. The reason is because as soon as an individual starts to make some drastic changes in his life, he finds himself confronted with new and sometimes unexpected social and personal pressures. Notice what Peter explains concerning what one can expect upon allowing God to change the direction of one's life: "...for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God [your life is taking on a noticeable change]. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they [perhaps your friends and relatives] THINK IT STRANGE that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot [anymore], speaking evil of you" (1 Peter 4:1-4).

We must remember that those who cease from sin *will suffer possible* **Battle.** continued on page 4

### What You Need To Know About....

## "The Devil's Devices"

**"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Corinthians 10:4)!**

by Lloyd W. Cary

### Good News, Bad News



Lloyd W. Cary

**The good news is: God exists! The bad news is: so does Satan the devil!**

**"The devil."** The very mention of the name brings a multiplicity of thoughts to people's minds. The average person either views Satan with superstitious fear, or considers him a mere "doctrinal trinket." To many, the devil is little more than a superstition or "joke"—nothing more than a red Halloween costume with horns and a tail. The inference is that if we can laugh about him, we have nothing to fear from him. Some flat out do not want to hear anything about him. Millions roared with laughter when comedian Flip Wilson, as Geraldine, quipped in a high-pitched voice, "The *devil* made me do it!" Many have little or no regard for his existence, and have little or no conception of his ability to influence or control their lives or those around them. And fewer still have any systematic method for dealing with him.

### Does the Devil Exist? You Bet!

*Who, what is the devil?* Does he exist? If so, what is he up to? How does he operate today?

Scripture tells us, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). What are our weapons, and how do we pull down his strongholds? How can we combat and overcome an enemy we cannot even see?

Even among professing Christians, there is a wide variety of beliefs. Some Christians are frightened to death of the devil. They blame him for every bad thing that happens to them. Some treat him as if he were the "evil brother" of God, and every bit as powerful. They superstitiously do not want to make him angry any more than they desire to get God angry with them. At least one professing Christian denomination scoffs at the very existence of the devil. Another denomination believes in God the Father and Christ the Son, but they do not believe that there is such a being as Satan. They prefer to believe all Biblical references to Satan are merely euphemisms for the evil in human nature. Amazing!

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# Was Christ the “End” of the Law?

by Mike Nolen



Mike Nolen

**M**ost suppose our Savior came to put an end to the law, and the passage typically quoted in support of this belief is Romans 10:4, which reads: “For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Am I to understand that the One who said, “Think *not* that I am come to destroy the law” is taught by the Apostle Paul as the One whose coming abrogated the law as a way of righteousness, and therefore Christians are released from any obedience to the law? If the reader is not predisposed to entertain contradictions in the Word of God, then, let us endeavor to understand what Paul is actually saying.

The controversy involves not the verse, but *one word* within the verse—“end.” The English word “end” typically invokes thoughts of cessation, or the point at which something is terminated. The word “end” in this passage translates from the Greek word *telos*, which has a variety of meanings. Not only can *telos* refer to the point at which a thing ceases, but it can also connote *aim*, *outcome*, *purpose*, and *goal*. However, the well-established interpretation of Romans 10:4 as termination of the law is evident in the following contemporary translations:

- “Christ has made an end to the law as a way of getting right with God. Everyone who believes in him is put right with God” (*Worldwide English Version*).
- “Christ ended the law so that everyone who believes in him may be right with God” (*New Century Version*).
- “But Christ makes the Law no longer necessary for those who become acceptable to God by faith” (*Contemporary English Version*).

Viewed in isolation from the context, the preceding translations of Romans 10:4 appear to establish that Christ reverses the immutability of the law and releases Christians from its observance. However, for serious open-minded students of the Bible, the main problem with this “termination interpretation” is the fact that it contradicts the immediate context of Romans 10:4 and the broad context of Romans chapters 9–11. Before we address Paul’s objective, take notice of the following additional words by Paul regarding the law to the Roman church which, *in context*, contradict not Romans 10:4, but rather the antinomian termination view:

- “...For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified...” (Romans 2:13).
- “...Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we *establish* the law” (Romans 3:31).
- “...Wherefore the law is *holy*, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12).

When we honestly study Paul’s analysis of the law, we find not abrogation of the law, but a clarification of the true intent of the law. In an effort to understand what Paul is saying in Romans 10:4, one must consider the broad context of Romans chapters 9–11, which primarily involves the rejection of Christ and a misunderstanding of the true purpose of the law by God’s people Israel. Instead of attaining righteousness by faith, Israel sought its own righteousness relying on obedience to law rather than recognizing God’s intention on their behalf through Jesus Christ (Romans 9:31–10:3). Paul reveals that God has used Israel’s passing failure for the inclusion of the Gentiles, and ultimately the salvation of Israel (Romans 11:1–36). Romans 10:4 must not be interpreted based on a dissonance between “law and gospel,” but based on how God is working out His plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles (Romans 10:12). Did Christ’s appearance suddenly make the law void as many claim, or, on the contrary, did His appearance represent the goal on which the law was designed? The evidence points to the latter. If our Savior’s appearance did not terminate the law then, what does the statement “Christ is the end of the law” mean, and if the word “end” refers to goal or purpose, how, then, is Christ the goal or purpose of the law?

Without space within this article to cover all detailed arguments, let us at least endeavor to inspire further study and enhance understanding.

Paul follows verse four by quoting two verses from the Old Testament. Verses 5–8 read: “For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness [NASB quote from Leviticus 18:5]. But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus: ‘do not say in your heart, “who will ascend into heaven?” (that is, to bring Christ down), or “who will ascend into the abyss?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).’ But what does it say? ‘the word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching” (cf. Deuteronomy 30:12–14, NASB Paraphrase).

Most assume the quotation in verse 5 and the quotation in verses 6 through 8 provide two contrasting ways of righteousness: the righteousness by works of the law (Leviticus 18:5) and the righteousness by faith (Deuteronomy 30:12–14). Is this what the Apostle Paul is teaching, two different ways of righteousness? If Paul believed that Leviticus 18:5 teaches righteousness by works, how could he denounce the Jews for relying on works, as they would have been doing precisely what the law commanded? Another mistaken assumption involves the particle “but” from the Greek “*de*,” which begins verse 6. An exhaustive study of *de* reveals the word is frequently translated as “and” in preference to *alla*, which is consistently translated as “but” because it provides a contrast. Paul in this context is using the particle *de* not to express antithesis, but to harmonize two characteristics of righteousness, i.e. faith and works.

Paul presents Christ as the goal of the law Who offers righteousness to all believers and elaborates in verse 5 by quoting Leviticus 18:5, “whoever follows the way of righteousness taught by the Law shall live by it.” Paraphrasing Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in verses 6–8, Paul shows that achieving the righteousness required by the law in order to live (Leviticus 18:5) is not insurmountable, does not require extraordinary effort, like climbing to heaven to bring Christ down or descending into the abyss to raise Him up. This was Paul’s way of pointing out the Pharisees’ misinterpretation of the law, which created an impossible situation the Jews pursued via their own efforts. Question: Would God establish a law designed to be a yoke and bondage upon the people? The Apostle Peter did not believe so (Acts 15:10).

Jesus said, “... I have kept my Fathers commandments ...” (John 15:10). He was the only human who was completely obedient to the law’s requirements (Philippians 2:8; Romans 10:5). During the Sermon on the Mount, He made the following enlightening statement, which has become a stumbling stone to many a prospective antinomian: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). The law of God has reached its fulfillment in Him. Jesus is the embodiment, the purpose, and the goal, of God’s holy righteous law. He was the object of all the promises, types, and sacrificial ceremonies (Hebrews 10:1–8). Paul understood this—thus his statement in Romans 10:4. Jesus and Paul were not incongruous. The righteousness required by the law is fulfilled through the Word, which is in the heart and in the mouth, in essence, by believing and confessing that Jesus is the Christ (Romans 10:8–10). Christ is not the *end*, but the *goal* of the law in the sense that without His presence in our lives, we are unable to live by the just requirements of the law. □



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# Reviewing the Deaconate

*What is a deacon? What was their function in the early church, and what is their function today?*

**T**hroughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and on into the 21<sup>st</sup> century of God's church, the deaconate has sometimes been misunderstood, scrutinized, and yes, even abused. However, this hasn't occurred because we don't have enough information. Quite the contrary, there are plenty of details in the New Testament about the qualifications for deacons.

Rather, much of the ambiguity surrounding the deaconate comes from the misguided framing we had within the autocratic culture of the Worldwide Church of God. This influence contributed to what was known as the "super deacon" syndrome, which occasionally surfaced among some who were ordained as they struggled for an identity within the pastorate. Undeniably, the office of *deacon* posed special challenges and was subject to abusive activity, contributing to the heartache that so many members within that organization experienced over the years.

## What is a Deacon?

The New Testament plainly illustrates there are only *two* offices in the church when ordination is required. They are described as a "bishop" and a "deacon." Other offices described throughout the New Testament, such as evangelist, pastor, teacher, etc. clearly indicate *gifts* and describe *functions* within the ministry.

Remember, the original reason for the institution of the deaconate was to solve an administrative need and task early in the development of the Jerusalem congregation. Keep in mind Jesus did not personally institute the office. However, He obviously led the apostles to their decision, because He openly honored it by blessing the office of deacon with spiritual gifts. The accounts of Stephen and Philip clearly illustrate this point.

Unquestionably, the deaconate is a very important office to the church. The fact that all of the names of the original seven men are listed and the works of two of them are prominently explained in the book of Acts, in combination with the fact that it appears there was accelerated growth *immediately* following the ordination of the seven, all go to prove how crucial a good deaconate is to the fundamental health and well being of a congregation.

Clearly, the office is not merely a "physical duty" role. Otherwise, why do we find the qualifications of a deacon listed right alongside the qualifications of a bishop in 1 Timothy 3? Plainly, the answer is, administrative responsibilities require a certain amount of spiritual integrity to insure the proper direction and needs are maintained for the congregation and/or the individual member. And because this requires a certain level of *trust*, the deacon must be above reproach in his role. It does not

go unnoticed that the initial requirements for the deaconate are that they be men of good reputation, full of faith, wisdom, and the Holy Spirit. Obviously, the reason for this is that eventually they would find themselves confronting issues of spirituality that are embedded in the physical demands of their ministry, which requires a certain degree of spiritual maturity in their service to the brethren.

## A Modified Improvement

Now this was the church's first attempt at dividing the service to the brethren with the intent to improve the quality of care to those called to Christ. The result they were looking for was plainly stated in Acts 6:4, when the apostles said they would devote themselves to the ministry of the Word, presumably preaching and prayer, while the deacons would assure the care of the people was accomplished, according to the gospel.

## The Etymology of "Deacon"

"The word deacon (dē'kən) is derived from the Greek word *diakonos*, which literally means "service," or "through the dust." It is translated "servant" in Matthew 23:11 and John 12:26, and "minister" in Mark 10:43; 1 Corinthians 3:5; and 1 Thessalonians 3:2. It is generally believed the office of deacon originated in the selection of seven men, among them Stephen, to assist with the charitable work of the early church as recorded in Acts 6."

(An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon. Oxford: Clarendon Press.)

This division of service was not viewed as conflicting, simply because the deaconate was not perceived as a preaching office. However, this did not preclude the deacon from preaching if he was gifted, but preaching was not necessarily expected of him if he wasn't.

In many respects, the deacon's qualifications were similar to that of the bishop, but with one notable exception—the deacon *need not be apt to teach*. However, he was expected to have his own home in order, obviously indicating he needed to be strong, both administratively and in the spiritual areas of his life.

Clearly, in 1 Timothy 3:10, it is written that these should first be proved by virtue of their works' sake. In other words, those *considered* for the *ordination of deacon* would first be proved by evidence of "works" among the brethren that he or she is, indeed, doing the work of a deacon. The ordination then becomes the affirmation of a charity already manifest, thereby validating the service and function of the individual who is performing it. This is usually confirmed by the congregation looking out among them and bringing forward the names of those recognized as doing the work of

a deacon to the ministry. In Acts 6:3,6, this method is illustrated, showing how it worked then and *how it should work now*.

Unfortunately, in years past, the *ministry* has "appointed" the deacons, which often led to a ministerial hierarchy that "ruled and reigned" over the congregation, unfortunately resulting in far too much abuse. The deaconate was never intended to serve the exclusive needs of the ministry except as it was directed to serve the needs the ministry had for the congregation. Regrettably, sometimes this was not the case, and the deaconate became an "oligarchy" for the ministry, protecting and providing him (the minister) the venues which allowed him to achieve his own self-serving programs. This often became very disillusioning to the membership, and eventually led to infighting, schisms, and ultimately, splits in the congregation.

## In Summary

When considering all the points that have been covered, a variety of things come to mind. First, the deaconate is a vital office for the health, growth, and stability of any congregation. A good deacon can be the *mortar* that holds a congregation together, especially if he/she has been chosen from among their peers as opposed to being *appointed* by the minister as one of his "favorites."

An individual who meets the qualifications of a deacon, outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8–13, is obviously a person who can be trusted with significant responsibility. That responsibility may be administrative and intensely task oriented, and

then again it may also include some teaching opportunities as well, individually and/or collectively. But in any case, this individual will be an instrumental ingredient in the overall progress of the congregation, helping the ministry to accomplish what is expounded from God's Word, Sabbath to Sabbath!

A deacon will be connected to the needs of the *local congregation* and have their best interest at heart, bringing with him or her a high degree of dependability, wisdom, character, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. He or she will be a *strong supporter* of the ministerial leadership and always willing to lend a helping hand when and if needed, even if it's not personally convenient.

If there is one thing to be learned from all this, it is that the ordination of a deacon is no small matter, and should not be taken lightly. Paul made it plain to Timothy that when we ordain an individual to be a *deacon or elder*, we are responsible for them (1 Timothy 5:22–25). So when considering ordaining a deacon, be sure to take your time and let the *congregation consider its choices* from those who are serving among them.

Reprinted from the *Ministers' Chronicle* □



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*abandonment, mocking, accusations, disbelief and suspicion, personal loss, physical harm, mental and emotional anguish, etc.* in the flesh, but this should not be a surprise, since Jesus also suffered in the flesh (1 Peter 4:1).

We are admonished *not to think it strange* to be confronted with trials once becoming a Chris-



**“For we are His workmanship...” (Eph. 2:10)**

tian. Undeniably, it should be expected, and Peter reminds us of this (1 Peter 4:12–13). Christ also explains through the Apostle Peter that trials will make us stronger, more resolved, resilient, and dedicated to accomplishing the commitment that will result in the salvation of our souls. Notice what Peter says, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season [temporarily], if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: [why?] That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:6–9).

### Comparing Today’s Church With the Bible

Christians today are no different than Christians of the past. Their objectives and goals are the same. In summary, they want to obey God and be good people, *but with a particular distinction*—to be good people *as God defines goodness*, not as the government, culture, or manmade traditions define goodness. This distinction throughout the centuries has caused conflict to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the times, location, and cultures Christians have found themselves in. The result—countless numbers of the faithful died through the ages, *committed to the faith* God called them to.

Unfortunately, the historical record confirms many Christians contending for the “faith once delivered” have been hurt, disenfranchised by government, ostracized by family and friends, and even killed as entertainment. It’s quite a disturbing legacy, especially when one considers these to be God’s chosen, called-out ones—those He considered His sheep. Today’s “heath-and-wealth” gospel stands in direct opposition to Christian experience in *early church history*. In fact, much of traditional Christianity represents a stark contrast to the Biblical description and record of God’s true *called-out ones* that define His true church (Luke 6:26, 12:51–53; John 15:19, 17:14; Hebrews 11; 1 John 3:13).

Many of today’s traditional Christian denominations and megachurches have ingratiated themselves into the hearts of teeming multitudes by tolerating and legitimizing lifestyles, liturgy, traditions, and doctrines that would surprise and disappoint even Jesus Christ Himself. Today’s traditional Christian community is an aberration of today’s pop culture, controlled by the politically

correct environment that has emerged in our present secular humanistic society which, in general, is led by a *compromised moderate ministry* committed to *teaching non-offensive expectations*. By contrast, notice what the Apostle Paul advised the young evangelist Timothy to do: “I solemnly implore you, in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is about to judge the living and the dead, and by His Appearing and His Kingship: *proclaim God’s message*, be zealous in season and out of season: convince, rebuke, encourage, with the utmost patience as a teacher. For a time is coming when they [lay members and society in general] will not tolerate wholesome instruction, but, wanting to have their ears tickled, they will find a multitude of teachers to satisfy their own fancies; and will *turn away from listening to the truth* and will turn aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:1–4, Weymouth New Testament). Unfortunately, this is a sad commentary on exactly what has been and is currently happening within the general Christian community.

### How Do We Maintain THE Faith Once Delivered?

Some years ago, my wife and I went on a Caribbean cruise. For the first six days of this eight-day trip, the weather was just outstanding. However, during the last 36 hours, a tropical storm developed, causing the waves to increase enormously, aggravating the “rocking of the boat.” Many of the passengers and crew, including my wife, became extremely seasick. As the hours dragged on, she appealed to me repeatedly that it would be better if I just threw her overboard and put her out of her misery. Amused by her request, I responded with a smile that this wasn’t a good solution. She obliged and conceded to “toughing it out.” In other words, *she endured the storm!*

This example may appear insignificant compared to the variety and enormity of life’s potential problems and confrontations, but it illustrates a point: sometimes there are no options but to “endure the storm.” Occasionally, *enduring is our only alternative*. Sometimes, there’s nothing more we can do. We have reached the end of our ability to do anything—the proverbial “end of our rope.” We must deal with conditions and emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually handle the circumstances we’ve been dealt and go through them, liking it or not. Some may view this as passive behavior, but I can assure you, depending on what we are enduring—accident, marital issues, health concerns and addictions, misbehaving children, relationships, vocational or career problems, etc.—it can be enormously and painfully *proactive*.

Jesus said we must *endure* to the end. He also mentioned, “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day [Jesus also *willingly* endured much!]. And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily [enduring the Christian requirements and demands], and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake [endures the pain and suffering, consequences and costs], the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” (Luke 9:22–25).

Also, when addressing Timothy, the Apostle Paul chooses an interesting characterization. He told Timothy to “*endure hardness* as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3). This is a curious request, unless, of course, you realize the

life of a Christian is much like that of a soldier. This admonishment is very cogent when one comes to embrace the life of a Christian. The similarities of a soldier’s life and a Christian’s are quite metaphoric. Both are aware, or at least should be, that circumstances can be difficult. Life can get uncomfortable at any time. Unimaginable inconveniences may be experienced, and tests, trials, or temptations can be enormous occasionally. But for the Christian soldier, when considering the reward promised and defined by the *true gospel*, we are assured the challenges of this life are *not worthy to be compared* to the gift of immortality God has prepared for us (Romans 8:18)! Therefore, *enduring occasionally*, though it may be uncomfortable for the time, is a small price to pay for such a stunning benefit from God.

Clearly, we must embrace the fact that *enduring* is going to be a part of our Christian experience. Consequently, it becomes obvious that endurance must be part of our character, our “frame of mind.” Developing this *frame of mind* is not necessarily easy to do, but it is achievable when considering Paul’s instruction to Timothy. Notice what he says: “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:4). And further down in the text he says, “Therefore I *endure all things* for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:10). And James mentions, “Behold, we *count them happy* which *endure*. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11).

A firm resolution to “willingly endure” is a *type of spiritual inoculation* that has a long-term benefit: eternal life! It is the evidence of faith that is pleasing to God, because it is reassuring to Him that regardless of what “shakes,” you will not be



**“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly;  
so fight I, not as one that beateth the air”  
(1 Cor. 9:26)**

*shaken*. Notice, “And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain” (Hebrews 12:27). When you decide to be a Christian, you are asking God to become intimately involved with your life. This is a wonderful thing, but is also very challenging, because you are no longer your own. He now is in charge of your life.

In making this point more poignant, let me suggest reviewing the first two chapters of Job.

As you read this narrative, three things become obvious. *First*, Job was a very blessed and affluent man. *Second*, God was steering Job’s life, and He, God, chose to *allow Satan* to have his way with Job and his family. *And finally*, the circum-



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stances that erupted left Job in a condition he could *not control*. Job had only one option: *to endure* the pain and suffering due to the loss of his family and health.

Those of us familiar with the story know that the circumstances defining Job's journey to the "self-actualization" God had in mind was merely a "means to an end." Further, the point that *God*



**"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind..." (Rom. 7:23)**

*is in control* of the lives of His servants is plain to see. This should resonate with those of us who are baptized and/or considering baptism. Paul explains, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also *should walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:3–6). This illustrates that we are expected to live a *renewed life* fashioned after Christ's example by allowing God to have His way with us.

Upon being baptized, we have invited God into our lives, conceding to His intervention in directing our lives as He sees fit for His purposes. Notice: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor" (Romans 9:20–21)?

Giving our lives over to God can be a fearful thing, because we don't know what He may have in mind for us. But one thing is sure: *He has our best interests at heart* at all times. We should realize that although anyone can walk with God when times are good, it is assured that our character will be *tested and tried* to ensure God we are indeed sincerely with Him, for better or worse (1 Peter 4:12–13). God knows us better than ourselves. He knows what we are capable of doing, even when we think otherwise. Like a good coach, He is looking for ways to maximize our God given skills by giving us opportunities to multiply our talents for the benefit of others; and that may require some occasional intervention on His part to motivate us beyond what even we thought ourselves capable of.

Assuredly then, we must recognize that in the course of our lives we may be confronted with challenges that will require a certain degree of *endurance*. None of us are immune to hardships. All of us, while in this flesh, are vulnerable. It's important we are not fearful, terrified, or afraid to live our lives knowing that at some point we may be dealt a test, trial, or temptation that *temporarily* may seem enormous in scope. Remember, God is watching how we are reacting to conditions, and hoping we will respond in such a way to either inspire, reprove, instruct, or correct our course He has us on, while at the same time expecting us to glorify Him with that response. Knowing we are committed to *endure*—and if necessary, outlast the

trial—should serve to ensure we will overcome it. Clearly, a *commitment* to endure makes that possible!

Understandably, this awareness can be daunting. Yet, we are discouraged from fear, because we know fear can paralyze an individual's growth in love. And love is essential in the life of a Christian. This is why we are reminded "love casts out [displaces, replaces, eliminates] fear" (1 John 4:18). Our enemy, Satan, wants us immobilized, dysfunctional, doubting, questioning, tentative, and hesitant, ultimately giving up and quitting. He does not want us to have the faith in God to "stay the course." He knows if we begin to fear and doubt, allowing these negative characteristics to encroach on our faith, *we will not endure*. That is why we must always remain steadfastly connected to God when confronting these stresses, fully knowing He has our best interests at heart; and if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us (James 4:7–8).

The Apostle Paul unequivocally assures us that God will always be "measured" with what He allows to come our way. Notice what he says: "There hath not temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will *not* suffer [permit] you to be tempted above [beyond] that ye are able [capable]; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able [capable] to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Do you realize what you just read? This is undeniably one of the *most reassuring* scriptures in your Bible. It reveals that God will *never allow* a test, trial, or temptation to confront you that is beyond your abilities to handle. This means that whatever the trial, test, or temptation you're facing or contending with, the fact you are in this confrontation is *evidence* you can be victorious. However, *endurance* must underscore your commitment to the challenge you're facing.

#### In Summary

We understand that if we don't endure life's difficulties as a Christian until the end of our life or until Christ's return, we will *not be rewarded* with eternal life as an immortal son, born of God. As Jesus explained many times, only those Christians who *endure to the end* shall be saved.

Admittedly, the conversion process is a difficult one. Why? Because it *requires change!* That's what conversion means. Therefore, the crucible of "fire" is an appropriate metaphor, since fire is used on so many physical materials for the purpose of converting different elements into something they were not (i.e., water into steam, iron ore into molten steel, liquid gold into different jewelry, etc.). Certainly, it would only seem appropriate that God would exercise His prerogative in our lives to assure Him of the "crucible development" we need to qualify for His kingdom with the maximum reward.

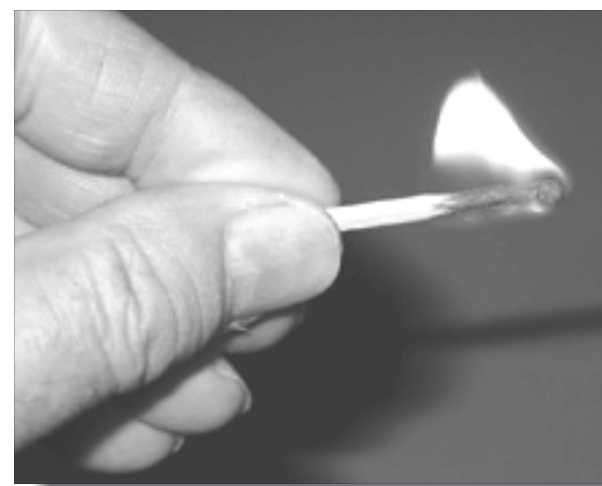
God reserves the right to be God! Therefore, He is *not* our "copilot." Instead, ***He is our Pilot.*** It's *His* salvific program. *He* makes the rules and the laws defining the course. It's *His* mission! We have only to accept the requirements and commit to "endure" what our particular "*Christian role development program*" demands to succeed in our calling. Notice what the writer of Hebrews says about this possibility in our lives: "...My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye *endure chastening*, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is

he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Hebrews 12:5–8). Paul encourages the Christians at Philippi, in the context of persecutions and being surrounded by adversaries, that they have been given a privilege, a gift: *the gift* of "sharing in the suffering" of Christ (Philippians 1:28–30).

Did you grasp what Paul said? Let me re-emphasize this very important point. Paul says we have been given a tremendous opportunity, a gift to share not only in our belief in Christ, but "also to *suffer for His sake.*" That's right!

The one least-appreciated gift in our Christian walk is the *gift of suffering for His (Christ's) sake*. And yet, is it right we should think any differently, since *He suffered* so much for us? Anyone who commits to living a life dedicated to exemplifying the attributes, characteristics, and values of what Jesus Christ represents *will suffer* because it requires making decisions that cut across our nature and society like a two-edged sword. Remember, the nature of man is enmity toward God and not naturally subject to the laws of God (Romans 8:7).

We should always recognize the example of how our Lord finally succeeded in His passion: *He endured*. He could have called a legion of angels to stop the whole event and rescue Him from this

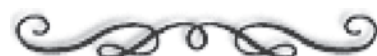


**There is a warning for Christians in the latter days that if ignored, could cause them to fail. It's simply known as "burnout."**

unjust execution; but instead, *He willingly endured*. His life was dedicated to paving a way that would result in redeeming us from the penalty of death that the law laid claim. Everything depended on our Lord's success and His *willingness to endure*. He had only one option. And He chose to accomplish it by *enduring*, "staying the course," and outlasting the humiliation, pain, and suffering. Yes, He surrendered Himself to the cause by simply *enduring the circumstances* that confronted Him so that we may have life.

We, too, must be prepared to *endure anything*. As Paul was committed not to allow anything to separate him, so we should commit to the same degree of love for Christ (Romans 8:35–39, 2 Corinthians 4:8–18; 11:23–33). Unquestionably, our Lord expects us to develop and have this "frame of mind."

To better assure yourself you won't become weary in well doing, wax cold in love, or become lukewarm, commit and dedicate yourself to enduring whatever life may throw at you. Surely, God will welcome you into His kingdom as a good, faithful, and righteous, born son of God! □





# Church News

## CGI's Fifth Annual M.A.P. Meeting Seminar In Review

**I**t was another inspiring weekend for all those participating in this year's annual seminar for the Ministerial Apprentice Program. Located at the very accommodating and comfortable Holiday Inn adjacent to Cincinnati's Airport, this fifth year's ministerial apprentices' meeting saw ten candidates convene for edification and fellowship on March 28, 29, and 30. It was quite a weekend!

The variety of events mixed with luncheons and combined dinners provided plenty of opportunity for everyone to get to know each other.

Unfortunately, four other candidates were unable to attend, but the fact that 14 men are in the program attests to the success of the program in serving its purpose of qualifying men for serving Jesus Christ in the ministry.

The format this year included a combination of presentations conducted by Vance Stinson, Wayne Hendrix, John Coish, and Bill Watson. The variety of subjects covered quite a scope of topics, all designed to help the candidates better understand the importance of ministry and its demands.

Vance presented two subjects covering how to improve your Bible study and writing skills. John Coish presented a topic on how to prepare sermons, with an emphasis on how important it is for us to be living and walking *examples of our sermons*. Later, he and Wayne Hendrix discussed and presented what it's like to be a minister and how to manage ministerial obligations while working full time and perhaps main-

taining a family. Bill Watson moderated the program as well as presenting a topic focused on the core principles of counseling. Scattered throughout these presentations was quite a bit of "give and take," with questions and answers going back and forth.

Additionally, there was a block of time on Sabbath afternoon reserved for all the candidates to present ten-minute sermonettes to the class on a subject selected from our *Statement*



**Fifth Annual M.A.P. Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio**

*of Beliefs*. Each candidate came prepared to present a subject. After presenting his topic, each received an oral evaluation, along with a written evaluation from everybody in the class. The intent of this evaluation method was to allow each man to receive the maximum amount of "feedback" he could get for improving his speaking skills.

Everyone who participated found this evaluation process very helpful and sometimes quite humbling, as they "honed" in on developing their communication abilities.

We are very excited that the M.A.P. program continues to grow, both in volume and quality of students. Admittedly however, the program's growth and expanding interest has recently necessitated some changes in order to maintain the original purpose of preserving the curriculum's objective of exclusively being reserved for ministerial development. Therefore, we are announcing the introduction of an "Entrance Acceptance Committee." The purpose of this committee

will be to evaluate all applications of candidates submitted for acceptance into the M.A.P. program. Currently, the committee has approximately a half dozen or so additional applications under review. As we continue to forge ahead, we enthusiastically look forward to the recommendation of additional candidates for the future. The Church of God International will continue to search out in an attempt to nurture and develop men "apt to

teach" for the ministry in hopes of cultivating leaders for the ongoing mission of the "Christian Way." As the Apostle Paul instructed Titus, "...that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). We are intent on sustaining and promoting a ministry that will exceed the lifetimes of the current leadership. The M.A.P. program will help us accomplish that goal, and this recent group of men gives us good indication we are well on our way toward achieving this objective! □

## Jeff Reed Ordained Into the Ministry

**J**eff Reed, a former M.A.P. candidate, was ordained into the ministry on April 12. Congratulations, Jeff!

A follow up article will be in the next issue of *The International News*. □

### "What Does the Bible Say About Same-Sex Unions?"

Send for your free copy today!

Church of God International  
PO Box 2525  
Tyler, TX 75710

## Night Much Observed Toledo, Ohio

**O**n Saturday evening, April 19, 2008, the Toledo CGI, pastored by Mr. Wayne Hendrix, and the Toledo Church of God, pastored by Mr. Gary Klar, met together to celebrate the Night to Be Much Remembered at the University of Toledo Scott Park Campus Student Union Building.

Approximately 50 brethren enjoyed being united for a wonderful evening of fellowship with both new and old friends. A few children were in attendance, giving the group an extra "sparkle." A delicious meal was catered by the University, with the main course being a choice of Chicken Marsala, Steak Diane, or Grilled Salmon.

As the dinner came to a close, the ladies were invited to take home the pots of flowers from the tables. The evening was over all too quickly, and it's hoped we can join together again next year.

(See snapshots on the next page.) Submitted by Gail Cary □



Church News

Good Things Are Happening In Florida

**T**his year on April 26, the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, approximately 75 people were in attendance for a very special combined service in the Clearwater, Florida area. No, it wasn't the location, though the location was great. (*I mean, come on—it was Florida!*) It wasn't the potluck luncheon, though it, too, was fabulous! And it wasn't the sermon or fellowship, even though they also were outstanding! Then what was it? It was the "benchmark" event of an ordination into the deaconate of Robert Balsamo of the Clearwater/Largo congregation.

The congregation would like to share this "good news" and introduce Robert Balsamo, whom they—the congregation—recognize as one serving among them as a deacon. It's been about six or so years now that a small group of about 10 to 15 people were drawn together by their common faith and love for the truth to form the beginning of this fellowship group. Terry (Robert's wife) and Robert, both of whom have been long time members of God's church, proceeded to search out a location convenient to the demographics of the group. Since then, the group has grown to approximately 25 to 30 people on any given Sabbath.

Robert was originally introduced to God's church by his wife, Terry (who was brought up in the Church of God) and his in-laws, Jim and Ginger Melzer, who serve in the deaconate for the CGI Pittsburgh, PA congregation. Interest-



Bill Watson laying hands on Robert Balsamo with wife, Terry, at his side



Robert and Terry Balsamo

ingly enough, this original introduction occurred some twenty-six years ago, but took another thirteen years to finally culminate in Robert's conversion and consequent baptism in 1995. His father-in-law, Jim Melzer, has been known to say, "He took to it like a duck to water."

Since then, Robert and Terry have been serving God's people with a focus of providing an environment of worship and fellowship for the Clearwater/Largo assembly. They have been married for twenty-eight years, twenty-five of those years having been spent growing together in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This "Telecommunication and Data Operational Engineer," who works as a global team director of additional engineers in an industry providing us with telephone, Internet, and television services for our homes, has been viewed by the congregation using the standards mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:8–13. Proven by his "works" over the last six to seven years, Robert was officially recognized and ordained as a deacon for his service. With that said, we say *CONGRATULATIONS* for the relentless care and effort you dedicate to God's church. The deaconate is a good "degree" of work!

So if you're in the area, don't forget to stop by on the Sabbath for services at 11:00 AM and say "Hi." The location is: The Bible Fellowship Church, 4670 East Bay Drive, Clearwater, Florida. Directions can be obtained at their local website, [www.clearwater.org](http://www.clearwater.org). □

A few snapshots from the combined Night To Be Much Observed in Toledo, Ohio





# Church News

**H**allelujah! Praise God! The Texarkana, Arkansas congregation announces four baptisms in April. **John Jacoby** was submerged in the waters on April 5, 2008. His wife Susan, along with **Troy and Linda Kay Lowry**, were immersed April 18, prior to the New Testament Passover service. It's a joy to have two families join our church, and a great way to start off Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. John, Susan, and their son Blake reside in Nashville, Arkansas. Troy, Linda, and Cory Lowry are from Atlanta, Texas.

Saturday evening we were blessed to hear Ron Elkins deliver an inspiring message about "True Discipleship." He covered verses in Matthew 3, 7, and 21, encouraging us to seek the narrow path. Special music for the day was "The Mercy That Never Fails," a great song we should sing often. The sermon on the First Day of Unleavened Bread, titled "Coming Out," was another great message for all of God's children based on verses from both the Old and New Testaments.

*Submitted by Kathy Saul* □

## Four Baptized in Texarkana



Left to Right: John & Susan Jacoby, Ron Elkins, Linda & Troy Lowry.

## Passover In Indianapolis

**O**n the evening of April eighteenth, 31 dedicated members presented themselves before our Lord and Savior to observe the memorial of His sacrifice according to His personal instructions handed down to His followers. It was a very solemn assembly, and it was obvious everyone recognized the seriousness of the event. Bobby Whitt assisted me in administering the rituals of the service.

The next night, the Night To Be Much Observed, 32 made their appearance, and we all enjoyed the evening meal the ladies had carefully prepared. The meal consisted of lamb and a large variety of other goodies too numerous to mention. The ladies certainly put on a wonderful display of culinary skills in preparing for the special evening meal. Lots of good fellowship was noised about, and fun and laughter was shared by all. You would think we had just been released from Egypt!

The following day, the first high day, Bill Samples gave his first sermonette. He presented the example prayer our Savior left us with in Matthew 6 as being the spiritual bread that would keep us from the evil one. It was a very good and fitting sermonette. I ended the services with a sermon entitled "The Release From Bondage."

After sundown, we all gathered at a local restaurant and had a meal together in a private room. Enjoyment was shared by all. We furnished our own unleavened bread.

A widow from Metter, Georgia, who has been baptized for fifty years, came up to keep the Passover for her first time with brethren of like mind. She said it was tiring, but worth it all.

We all are looking forward to keeping the Feast of Pentecost, which will be here soon. Let us all be praying that we all can keep the remaining holydays of the year. May the great God be with you and preserve you now and forever. *Submitted by Ferrell Vincent* □

## Bronson James Celebrating 40 Years of Ministry

**A**n outpouring of appreciation was very evident in a special "anniversary celebration" recognizing Bronson James' forty years of service in the ministry. Through the efforts of the Detroit CGI and the local Infuse team, May 20 was selected as the day for friends and family to come together in worship (for Sabbath) and celebration (an evening dinner and program) to acknowledge Bronson's long-time service as a minister. Even though Bronson was aware of the invitation, every effort was made to surprise him in some way. As it turned out, he was a little overwhelmed by the involvement of so many and the thoughtful words offered by those who have known him over the years.

The celebration began with worship services Sabbath morning. The service was well coordinated, and provided a venue for joyful singing and inspired preaching. To everyone's delight, Bronson led the service, introducing the liturgy and leading (as only he can!) the songs of praise. Along with his voice, there were also three exceptional special music performances. Each song built upon the other, elevating the expectations for the sermon given by Clifton Buchanan from Houston. He delivered a lively message which focused on the Christian vote "for the candidate of choice"—referring to the one candidate who is not running for office at this time, Jesus Christ. Clifton's metaphor to the upcoming election was timely and reaffirming, especially with the national political landscape fractured by so much skepticism and division. Everyone was in complete agree-

ment with the ultimate solution: the candidate of choice is in fact our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! He's needed more now than ever!

In preparation for the evening program, guests began to arrive around 5 PM. There was great anticipation for all the evening would hold, especially since everyone expected to hear from Bronson and Myra, and their three children, Sharon, Paula, and Aaron. (Aaron, who lives in Bali, Indonesia, where he teaches English, traveled the greatest distance to share this night with his father.)

The organized program, which involved several CGI ministers, (Duane Nicol, Wayne Hendrix, Bill Watson) was superbly coordinated by Annette Hankins, a minister of music for the Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit. As a result of Bronson's relationship with this congregation (with whom he regularly performs), the pastor, Dr. Charles Adams, and many of the church's choir members were present. Following dinner and a solo performance by Ms. Allyson Hankins, everyone was treated to a special PowerPoint presentation featuring Bronson's "history." Through the miracle of technology, Bronson's life was visually displayed in three segments: music, broadcasting, and ministry. Each portion included pictures of Bronson accompanied by music and commentary. The images provided a nostalgic review of Bronson's upbringing, his education, and his journey as a gifted son, a loving father, a supportive friend, and a devoted minister.

**Bronson,** continued on next page



# Church News

## Passover—Springfield, MO

**O**n Friday evening, April 18, 2008, the Churches of God gathered together at their various meeting places around the world to observe the Christian Passover.

We of the Springfield, MO, CGI kept the Passover at the IBEW Hall in Springfield with 25 members in attendance. After the foot-washing service, our pastor, Mr. Ken Register, who was not feeling well, chose David Beckerdite, the local deacon of the church, to officiate the observance. David called upon Daniel and Drew DeJarnette to assist him with the Scripture readings. Ken Register assigned Daniel to ask the Lord's blessing over the unleavened bread, and he assigned David Beckerdite to ask the Lord's blessing on the wine. Visiting member Steve Mansfield, from the Tyler, TX, congregation, was asked to pass the bread and the wine. It was a solemn evening, yet joyous in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior who laid down His life that we might live.

On the following evening, after our regular Sabbath service, our local church came together, along with a few visitors, to observe the Night to be Remembered. Drew DeJarnette gave a wonderful reading of *Why Are We Here?* in response to the question asked by young Jasmine Parker. As Drew read about the plagues that the Lord visited upon the Egyptians, the children cast upon the listeners plastic replicas of the flies, gnats, frogs, and hail. With the children's participation, it became a beautiful, yet cautious reminder of the awesome events that led to the birth of a chosen nation of people for God, and our subsequent adoption into the family of believers who has come out of our "Egypt" of slavery to sin.

The reading was followed by an amazing meal, complete with lamb, roast beef, rotisserie turkey, sweet potatoes, green beans, casseroles, and enough unleavened desserts and side dishes to please all 34 people in attendance.

The following day, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, we gathered to observe the high Sabbath. David Beckerdite led the song service; Steve Mansfield gave the opening prayer; Drew DeJarnette gave the offertory; and after the announcements, by our pastor, Mr. Ken Register, Daniel DeJarnette offered up a sermon on the "Basics of the Days of Unleavened Bread." Drew DeJarnette closed the service with prayer, and all 28 members in attendance enjoyed the potluck meal together.

On the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, April 26, Daniel DeJarnette was song leader. David Beckerdite gave the opening prayer, Daniel DeJarnette gave the offertory, and Ken Register gave the announcements. Drew DeJarnette gave a sermon titled, "Is Jesus Washing Your Feet?" Steve Mansfield finished the service with the closing prayer, and the members sat down to a delicious potluck meal. There were 18 in attendance.

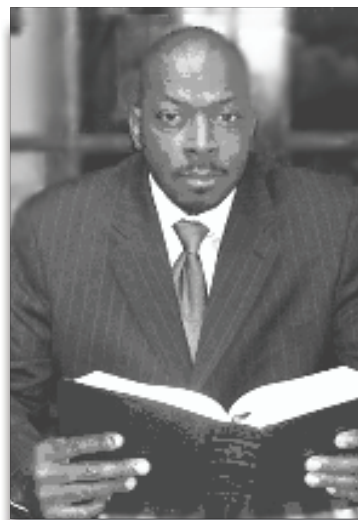
The Feast of Unleavened Bread proved to be a special time for the brethren of Springfield. The festival's symbology played out in the lives of each member in unique and memorable ways. □

### Bronson, continued from previous page

It seemed this special night came to a close all too quickly—but not before Bronson was asked to come to the stage. Accompanied by enthusiastic applause, he came forward and graciously received the public acknowledgement given to him on behalf of the Church of God International for his years of service. In appreciation, he expressed his personal gratitude to everyone, drawing special attention to all those who planned and organized the evening, including his close friends, Stager and Wanda Horton. In his final comments, Bronson turned everyone's attention to his wife Myra, as he asked her to stand. Out of appreciation for her support and sacrifice, he thanked her for the many decisions she'd made that opened his life to the possibilities he has pursued. His remarks were the fitting capstone to this memorable evening of recognition and celebration. Submitted by Charles Groce □

**More details to follow in the next issue of *The International News*.**

## Church of God International Meetings Are Closer Than You Think!



**Mr. Isaiah Eaton**

**Y**es, that's right. Recently we in the Raleigh and Greensboro, North Carolina area had the privilege of listening to a sermonette given by a person in Denver, Colorado. The message was given by a long time member of the CGI, Mr. Isaiah Eaton. When I started attending the CGI in 1997, Isaiah, his wife Felicia, and their two daughters were attending here in Raleigh. Isaiah was a credentialed speaker at that time. They have been in Denver for several years now, and they attend services, CGI services, every week.

There is a catch in this. There is no congregation in Denver! They attend Raleigh/Greensboro every week via teleconferencing, a project that has been going on for around four years. We use this concept to make it possible for everyone who desires to attend CGI services to be able participate at least via the telephone. Naturally, this is not as good as being there in person, but it is better than the alternative, not attending services.

Many of our members use tapes and CDs, which serve a very useful purpose, but they are basically "one-way devices." With teleconferencing, there are opportunities to participate in the services. It is very interesting that when I am out of town and dial in, the singing doesn't sound too good because of the transmission and reception mediums, but when I join in and sing it seems better. I don't think it sounds better because I sing so well, but that I am participating rather than observing.

Here's how it works. We give the individual(s) a telephone number and an access code. They dial in at about five minutes before services, using a speaker phone, and wait along with others for the services to start. When services start there will be a song, opening prayer, and a few announcements while everyone is getting settled. Then the person doing the announcements will welcome the "telephone guests" and ask them to as we say, "let us know who is with us today." After that, they can participate along with those who are in house.

To participate, there are only four basic requirements:

(1) Give the meeting the same respect you would if you were there in person. Don't be doing other things while you are listening.

(2) Don't give out the telephone number to others. We do not use this as a recruiting tool, but as a service to our members, and the minister needs to know who is there. Our local services are open to everyone, but the telephone service needs to be a little more controlled. Also, there is a cost involved for each connection, so costs could easily get out of hand.

(3) Identify yourself when you are asked to do so.

(4) We ask that participants don't use the telephone service to relieve them of the effort it takes to attend services. The service is not for those who are within a reasonable drive or commute to services.

This study project is a part of our continuing efforts to serve the members of the *Church of God International* who are not able to attend services due to distance or health reasons, and those seeking membership. If you are in one of these categories and would like to be involved in this project, please e-mail Roger King at [rbking@nc.rr.com](mailto:rbking@nc.rr.com) or call 919-327-1389.

Submitted by Roger King □



# Church News

## Kenneth E. Register

CGI Pastor  
Springfield, MO



**Ken and Betty Register**

**O**riginally from Missouri, Ken Register was introduced to the truth around the mid-1940s through his father-in-law, who was getting literature from Herbert Armstrong. Ken said to his wife Betty, "All these churches can't be wrong!" He went out to see for himself, studying the Scriptures regarding the seventh day Sabbath and the commandments, proving to himself that his new father-in-law was right after all.

Ken started listening to H. W. Armstrong's messages over the radio when the church's name was "Radio Church of God." He got on their mailing list to receive literature, convinced this was what he needed in his life.

In 1953, Ken was baptized at Big Sandy, Texas near the Feast site at Big Sandy Lake. Mr. Marion McNair baptized him during the Days of Unleavened Bread. In those early days, during the spring holyday season, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was kept as a group. (It was not required, but it was something the people wanted to do.) People came from everywhere, wanting to learn of this wonderful message they could never get enough of.

Ken attended Ambassador College in Pasadena, California from 1955 to 1960.

In 1966, he was ordained a deacon in Glendale, California, which is near Pasadena. Mr. Armstrong said he would make them pillars in the church. At the time, they did not know what this would lead to. They just served where they were needed.

Ken worked for the church (the name was later changed to "Worldwide Church of God") in Pasadena until he was transferred to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, as Office Assistant in 1973. Ken and his family were there for three years before moving back to the States, to Gilroy, California, near San Jose, where they started attending *The Church of God International*, along with their daughter Nancy, the Chamberlains, and a handful of others in 1979.

They moved back to Missouri in 1982. Shortly afterwards, Ken received a letter from Garner Ted Armstrong asking Ken to help with a Feast site in Branson, Missouri. The first Feast in Branson had 80-plus people attending. The small room was full of God's people, and it was a wonderful sight to see! Ken was ordained a minister in 1984 at the Feast in Branson by Mr. Ron Dart and Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong. The Feast was in Branson for five years with Ken as coordinator. At that point, the Feast site was changed to Wagoner, Oklahoma, where Ken coordinated the Feast for another five years, until Mr. Ron Elkins took over the reins and still takes care of the Feast there.

Ken and Betty traveled across southern Canada for seven years, visiting the brethren and those on the mailing list, hoping and praying for a Feast site on the west coast of Canada. Finally finding a suitable and beautiful site in Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia, the Feast was held there and continued for five years with Ken as coordinator. After outgrowing the facilities, the site was moved to Victoria, British Columbia.

Ken was elected to and served on the Ministerial Council beginning in 1995. Because of health reasons, he decided to retire from the Council at the age of 87 in December, 2007.

Ken and Betty Register have two living children: David Register, a minister in the United Church of God in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Nancy Beckerdite of Springfield, Missouri—and Steven Register, deceased in 1965. They also have grandchildren: Jonathan, Steve, Daniel, Drew, Alex, and Nathan; and two great-grandchildren, Isaiah and Bailey—with more on the way. □



**Ken decided to retire at the last Ministerial Council meeting.**

## What's going on in your local Church area?

Combined services? Public Bible studies? Potlucks? Church activities? Celebrations? Memorials? Visiting ministers? Baptisms? Birth or death announcements? Plans for getting *The Armor of God* on a free Public Access television station in your area? Let us know, and perhaps we'll publish it under "Church News." We'd love to hear from you!

Our next deadline is August 15.

The editor



# Church News

## In loving memory...



**Bob Tackett**

**Charles Robert “Bob” Tackett, Sr.** (1921-2008), age 86, of Pleasant Valley, Morehead, Kentucky, husband of the late Geneva Wright Tackett, passed away Tuesday, March 4, 2008, at his residence. He was born August 4, 1921, at Wrigley in Morgan County, Kentucky, and was the son of the late Charles H. and Lula Littleton Tackett. He was also preceded in death by a brother, Harvey Tackett, and three sisters, Flora

Cooper, Alice Brown, and Edna Hiles. Bob is survived by two sons, Charles Robert “Bobby” Tackett and wife Joyce of Waterwood, Texas, and Jeff May of Morehead, Kentucky; two daughters, Marilyn Kidd and husband Billy of Morehead, Kentucky, and Kynnn Porter and husband Jim of Little Rock, AR; three grandchildren, Stephanie Ruth, Michelle Emrick, and Levi May; and two great-grandchildren, Cole Ruth and Rachal Emrick. Mr. Tackett was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving in Italy and Africa during WW II. He was a 40-year ordained minister with the Church of God International. He also enjoyed golfing and fishing. A private family service will be held with entombment in Forest Lawn Mausoleum. □

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### Remembering Bob Tackett

Just a few weeks ago we learned of Bob Tackett’s death. Although Bob was in his 80s (he would have been 87 this coming August), the suddenness of his passing caught us a little by surprise. He always talked about “making it to 90,” and until just recently, there was every reason to believe he would make that goal. Those who knew him best felt that Bob never really recovered from Geneva’s death three years ago. (They were married for over 40 years.) Between Bob and Geneva, they had four children—Bobby Jr., Jeff, Marilyn, and Kynn.

Bob attended his formative school years in Morehead, Kentucky, where he also lived at the time of his death. Occupationally, he worked as an auctioneer, real estate broker, welder, construction worker (pipeline and kitchen cabinets), and a public servant with the state and city police. WWII found him in the US Army, doing time in the Mediterranean theater (Africa and Italy).

Bob was introduced to the “truth” in 1963. He started attending the Worldwide Church of God (Cincinnati) in 1964. Bob was ordained a deacon in 1971 and an elder in 1975. In 1984, Bob began his association with the CGI. He provided oversight to many congregations throughout Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, and West Virginia. He also served faithfully on the Ministerial Council.

One time Bob was asked to list the special achievements and milestones in his life. He sorted through many possibilities and came to settle on these three: his marriage, his conversion, and his call to the ministry. There is little question that those were his priorities, and he did his best to honor them all. Bob’s dedication and years of service will be remembered. □

### Osmand LeCheminant

Members of the Utah congregation are mourning the death of **Osmand (Lee) LeCheminant**. Mr. LeCheminant passed away on March 23. A World War II veteran, he was born January 31, 1927, and is survived by his wife, Ramona, two sons, a daughter, two grandchildren, seven sisters, and three brothers. He was a loving part of the congregation and will be greatly missed. □



**Clarence Osterloh**

**Clarence “C.L.” Lee Osterloh, Jr.**, 81, of Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, died Monday, January 1, 2008, at Northwest Medical Center of Benton County in Bentonville, Arkansas. He was born on July 31, 1926, in Tecumseh, Oklahoma, to Clarence Lee and Maude Osterloh.

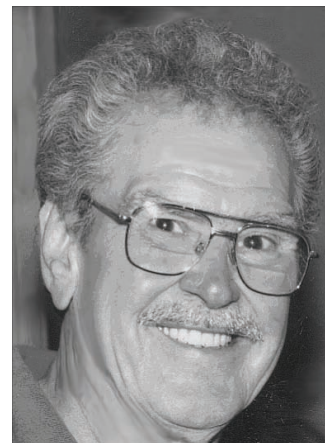
He was raised and educated in northwest Arkansas. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1945 until 1946. “C.L.” married Dorothy Duncan on November 15, 1947, in Noel, Missouri. He was

employed as a railway mail clerk by the U.S. Postal Service. He retired in 1987 and moved to Sulphur Springs, Arkansas. There he taught school for several years and served six years as mayor. “C.L.” was also an American Legion Commander and a volunteer fire-fighter/first responder in his community.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Tommy and Bobby Wayne Osterloh; sisters, June Osterloh and Carol Sue Mason.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Dorothy Osterloh of Sulphur Springs, Arkansas; one son, Clarence Lee Osterloh, III, of Mountain View, Missouri; two daughters, Jean Heckerman of Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, and Carol Donson (husband Dirck) of Mobile, Alabama; one sister, Louise Hatfield of Kansas City, Missouri; seven grandchildren; and eleven great-grandchildren.

C.L. Osterloh became a member of the Church of God in 1967. He was a faithful servant involved with the work of the gospel of Christ. He attended the Church of God International in Fayetteville, Arkansas. C.L. was a kind person who greeted all who entered the doors of the church with a warm, friendly welcome and handshake. He will be remembered as a vital source of information and teacher of God’s Word. He was thoughtful and supportive of others up to his death. His warm, gentle presence will be greatly missed by all. □



**Dave Summers**

### Dave Summers

The Memphis congregation, along with many others who knew him, was saddened by the loss of our brother in Christ, **Dave Summers**, who died on November 29, 2007. He was one of the earliest members of the Memphis Church of God, International, and was a deacon who served the congregation and the church faithfully and conscientiously. He truly loved all the brethren and delighted in the fellowship he had with them; his humor and good-natured teasing were always welcome and a big part of the weekly Sabbaths. He poked fun at himself as well, and was known for his famous line, “I was just testing you!” when he made a mistake. He had a sign that read

“JOKE” which he would hold up if he thought his punch line had been missed. He looked forward every year to the Feast at Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky, and always enjoyed the closeness with all the brethren who returned there year after year. He was proud of his culinary skills and often donned his chef’s hat and invited people to eat with him at the Feast. He was genuinely loved by all who knew him.

*Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness! (Matthew 25:21, NIV)* □



Devices, continued from page 1

The existence of Satan is attested to in seven Old Testament books and by every New Testament writer. Jesus Christ acknowledged and taught the existence of Satan repeatedly (Matthew 4:10; 13:39; Luke 10:18; 11:18). When tempted in the wilderness, Christ was combating a very real spiritual entity, not just His own human nature!

The Apostle Peter warned, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). At one point, Christ informed Peter, “...behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31).

Before we can successfully fight against the devil, we must be aware of what his schemes and devices *are* (2 Corinthians 2:11).

We would have very little accurate knowledge about Satan the devil if it were not for God’s Word, the Bible. The Bible reveals much about him.

The Bible Reveals Many Things About the Devil

- For example, he is *old*, but not eternal like God. He is a created being, as we see in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. He was present in the Garden of Eden, and was the very one who tempted Eve.
- He is *intelligent*, but he is not all knowing like God. For example, if Satan had known the ending as well as the beginning, as God does, he would have never allowed Christ to die on the stake. In doing so, Satan himself orchestrated the very plot that condemned him to defeat!
- He is *powerful*, but he is not as powerful as God. In Job 1:12 we learn how Satan brought death, destruction, and despair into Job’s life. God sometimes uses Satan to develop character in His called-out ones. Satan displayed power over armies (vv. 15,17). He displays a power over the weather (v.19). He displayed a power over illnesses (2:7). Yet, he could do none of it without God’s permission (Job 2:6).

His Names and Titles

The Bible clearly identifies Satan the devil through many names and titles. Names and titles reveal character, function, and devices. He is called:

1. The adversary (1 Peter 5:8)
  2. The enemy (Matthew 13:39)
  3. Abaddon (*Destroyer*) (Revelation 9:11)
  4. Apollyon (*Destroyer*) (Revelation 9:11)
  5. Destroyer (1 Corinthians 10:10)
  6. Beelzebub (*god of flies*) (Matthew 12:24)
  7. Belial (*wickedness*) (2 Corinthians 6:15)
  8. The tempter (Matthew 4:3)
  9. The wicked one (1 John 2:13)
  10. A liar (John 6:44)
  11. The father of all lies (John 8:44)
  12. Accuser of our brethren (Revelation 12:10)
  13. A murderer (John 8:44)
  14. The serpent (Revelation 20:2)
  15. That old serpent (Revelation 12:9)
  16. Angel of the bottomless pit (Revelation 9:11)
  17. Evil spirit (Acts 19:15)
  18. Unclean spirit (Luke 11:24)
  19. Spirit working in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2)
  20. The great red dragon (Revelation 12:3)
  21. A roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8)
  22. Ruler of the darkness of this world (Ephesians 6:12)
  23. The power of darkness (Colossians 1:13)
- He is called the prince:*
24. ... of this world (John 14:30)
  25. ... of demons (Matthew 9:34)
  26. ... of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2)
  27. ... the “god” of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)

His *many* names and titles indicate he is a *master* of deception!

Seven Ways Satan Can Influence You

Satan doesn’t tap you on the shoulder and ask, “Pardon me, may I have twenty minutes to destroy your life?” But that’s exactly what he attempts to *do!* How? By means of *deception*—he has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9). He does this:

1. Through false doctrines and prophets.
2. Through your feelings and uncontrolled emotions.
3. Through uncontrolled, hot temper.
4. Through your thought life.
5. Through false witness and accusations.
6. Through a root of bitterness.
7. Through compromise and lack of faith.



If I Were the Devil. . .

Let’s play a little game. Let’s pretend that you are Satan the devil, with all his miraculous powers and deceptions. If it were your goal to corrupt and destroy a people or a nation and to cause them to miss out on the Kingdom of God, how would you go about it—what would you do? For the sake of playing “devil’s advocate,” here are some of the things I would do. Perhaps you can add to the list.

1. If I were the devil, I would try to convince mankind that I do not even exist! I could then work my wiles invisibly, totally undetected—never having to be concerned that anyone would resist me.
2. Failing that, I would appear good, beneficent, helpful, and all knowing—a friend, to disarm.
3. I would do everything I could to lead you and your loved ones into sin, to cause you to forsake the Lord, His church, and the truth.
4. I would fill you with pride by telling you that you are “Number One,” and a very important person. I’d promote jealousy, envy, and pride. I would try to control you by making you utterly selfish, and blind you to the needs of anyone else. I would distract you with desires and keep your mind away from God and His work. I would make service to God optional and distasteful.
5. I would make light of things that are right, and seduce you with things that are wrong. I would tell you how important it is to please men (actually *me*) and that God’s ways are always boring, outdated, and a struggle.
6. I would make heroes out of sinners. I’d saturate your mind with the thought that sin really isn’t so bad, but “fun.” I would provide an excuse for every sin. “It’s not your fault!” It’s your heredity, your environment, your peers. I would try to convince you that you had no choices.
7. I would degrade and make fun of Jesus Christ and His church. I’d always try to make the church look foolish and hypocritical. I’d scoff at people who want to do right by labeling them naïve, “dangerous,” and mentally unbalanced.
8. I would delight in and inspire religious confusion

- by raising up counterfeit religions, preachers, and bogus churches that look like the real thing. I’d convince people that God’s grace is so great, they can substitute man-made beliefs and practices for the Biblical ones (1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Corinthians 11:13–15; James 3:16).
9. By contrast, I would hold up the worst possible examples of professing “Christians” to bring shame and disgrace upon the true church of God.
  10. I would corrupt the church from within by disguising myself as a “sheep in wolf’s clothing” (Jude 4; Acts 20:29–30).
  11. I would have the Bible memorized—because I know you haven’t—and quote it with a twist, as I did with Christ in Matthew 5.
  12. I would attack your thought life and use up all your spare time by filling every moment with trivia—novels, movies, interruptive phone calls, politics, and distractions—so you would not have the time nor inclination to think on the really important things in life.
  13. I would invoke you to participate in the seven things God hates in Proverbs 6:16–19.
  14. I would attack peace at every opportunity, and cause offenses at every turn. I’d plant it in your heart to “get even,” to be slow to forgive anyone. I would implement “political correctness” to make sure people become hypersensitive.
  15. I would especially sow discord among the brethren. I’d encourage gossip and slander. I would cause offenses, make you judgmental, suspicious, and paranoid. I would cause your family and friends to pull you in the wrong direction. My strategy is “divide and conquer.” It works!
  16. I would tempt you through curiosity, ego, envy, vanity, jealousy, lust, and greed. I would make sin “fun,” look good, taste good, and feel good. (It has worked beautifully thus far, so why change tactics when it works so well?)
  17. I would use your emotions against you. God says, “fear not,” “have faith,” etc. I would incite fear, doubt, distrust, lust, and instill a negative mindset in you. Like any good salesman, I would know that once I have you emotionally drawn in, you’re “hooked.”
  18. I would detest Scripture because it exposes me! I would question God and His Word. I would raise such seemingly academic inquiries as, “Does God exist?” “Yea, has God said?” “Is the Bible His Word?” “Should we go by the Old Testament only?” “By the New Testament only?” “Are we using the right calendar?” and a Pharisaical list of do’s and don’ts. I would have an area of deception for everyone. Why? So I could conquer and divide people.
  19. I would look ahead and try to obfuscate God’s plan in advance. I would seek to “change times and laws” and substitute rank pagan holidays for God’s holydays, which reveal God’s plan for man (Daniel 7:25).
  20. I would offer you many substitutes for God: evolution, naturalism, German rationalism, situation ethics, politics, humanism, and so forth. I would encourage men to “intellectualize” away their faith. Pick one—*any* one—except the right one!
  21. I would especially offer alternatives to God’s laws: psychology, philosophy, false “science,” political correctness, and—I love this one—a perverted “grace” theology (1 Timothy 6:20).
  22. I would know from James 4:7 that Christians can resist me—if they will—so I would try to weaken their will by constant negative bombardment through every sensory channel possible, such as TV, music, entertainment, and a godless educational system.
  23. I would try to mold mankind into my image and character, knowing this would eventually cause them to destroy themselves.
  24. I would deceive you by making you think *my* ideas were *your* ideas. I would float many “idea babies” and pet theories,

Continued on next page



knowing that your vanity would cause some of you to embrace them over the plain truth of the Bible.

25. I would strive to disrupt and destroy the family, the foundation of any nation, through work and leisure. I would encourage the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). I would encourage overextending credit, and manipulate the economy to ensure mothers would be away from home. I would stir up rebellion in children through peer pressure, recreational drugs, and “alternate lifestyles.”
26. I would give you “the easy life” so you would feel foolish enough to voluntarily remove your spiritual armor piece by piece (Ephesians 6:10–17). Then, when you are unprepared—*BAM!*—I would have my way with you!
27. I would instill disrespect for government of all kinds, knowing that this attitude will bleed into the churches! (Ecclesiastes 10:20; 1 Peter 2:13–14,17; 2 Peter 2:10).
28. I would reveal human weakness and errors at every opportunity! (Proverbs 10:12; 16:27–28; 17:9; and 1 Peter 4:8).
29. I would instill distrust and inspire abuse of all law! (Exodus 16:28; Ezekiel 5:6; 20:13,16; Jude 4).
30. Lastly, I would try to possess and control you totally. I’m sure that with a little thought, you can add to the list.

### Our Defense

Knowing these things, what do we do? How can we defend ourselves against the devil’s devices? We’re glad you asked!

I Be super strong in the “basics,” the doctrines of Christ (Hebrews 6:1–2). We need to *prove* what we *think* we know! Study. Pray. Meditate upon the Word of God.

II Review what you know, and *do* what you know! Study with the intent to teach. If you cannot teach someone else what you know, you probably do not know it well enough yourself! Send for and review our *Statement of Beliefs*. Mark your Bibles.

III Put on the whole armor of God and use it circumspectly (Ephesians 6:11)! “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:10).

James 4:7 exhorts us, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” This shows it is not wrong to rebuke the devil! If we do not, we may be taken captive by the devil *at his will* (2 Timothy 2:26).

Ephesians 6:12–13: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” [or “overcome”].

Remember, the people Satan wants *most* are those who belong to God! He is out to get *Y-O-U* and me! For a fuller understanding of the devil, be sure to send for our free booklets, *The Devil, You Say?* and *What You should Know About Demon Possession*.

How does Satan work today? The *same* way he has worked for the past 6,000 years!

We hear a lot of talk today about “change.” This raises up an interesting question. If *I* were the devil, what would I change? The answer, not surprisingly, is *nothing*!

If I were the devil, I guess I would leave things pretty much the way they are! □

# When What You “Hear” Is Not What Was Said *Or, How NOT to Listen to a Sermon!*

by Vivian Hall



Vivian Hall

**D**id you know that past experiences can enhance or distort what you see or hear? It is not always the clarity or how well it is presented.

Not very long ago, I heard a sermon that covered two subjects. I had previously done some study on both and had formed strong opinions, which I felt were supported by my extensive factual studies. I was sure my conclusions were accurate.

The sermon I heard did not support my position. On subject one, the minister gave researched historical information that showed how a solidly grounded faith became a movement. That movement inspired many to a belief that with God, much can be accomplished. Needless to say, his direction was not really the one I felt was the one that should have been chosen. On subject two, he took from his own personal experience. Since I had not shared that experience, I did not share his “take” on it. I perceived something unstated, and was offended by his sermon.

I pondered on it, because I was disturbed by what I perceived as implications behind what he said. I decided to talk to two of my trusted friends about the situation. They had heard the same sermon that I heard, but were enriched by it and not at all offended. Still, I felt the speaker was in great peril. I concluded that my friends were loving and trusting in their assessment and possibly influenced by the fact that the speaker was a minister in good standing, and a brother. Sound reasoning told me not to label this man a bigot, racist, or radical because of what such labeling would say about me. Fearing the possibility of damaging my relationship with God, I did not spread discord about what I heard or the person who spoke. After all, this could well be an anointed one of God. So I diligently prayed about myself and him. Thankfully, I then left it in the hands of God.

Some months later, I found myself in close contact with the same speaker and his wife. We experienced some things together that proved he has impeccable character, along with a kind, caring, loving nature. He has a zest for facts and history. His wife is intelligent, with a disposition that would well serve any saint.

I heard the same sermon again. This time I combined my study, his words, and what I now knew. I was not offended. My perception had changed.

I wronged that man. I attributed character traits to him he was not guilty of. My impression of the man and his message was way off base. Have you ever done that? I have known of other times when a message was meant to be encouraging and loving, but was not received as such. Because the people did not “hear” what they heard, they misunderstood the whole thing. Many of us have at one time or another been guilty of this. Perceptions and perspectives are everything.

I went before God with my petition in prayer with unclean hands. Learn from me—do not do this! Always be willing to give the speaker the benefit of the doubt, realizing that two people can witness the same event and perceive it so differently it appears to be two separate happenings. □



## Special Offer!

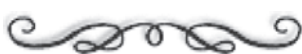
Over the years, we have received countless requests asking just *who* and *what* is the *Church of God International*. Whether you have heard of us through *The Armor of God*, our TV program, attended one of our public Bible lectures, read one of our many publications, or heard of us by word of mouth, thousands have wondered *who* is the sponsoring organization behind this Work and *what* we are doing. *We’re glad you asked!*

In response, our Media Department has put together a **free half-hour program on DVD** entitled **SHARE THE VISION**, detailing who we are and *how we are accomplishing* Christ’s Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20). This special presentation will also introduce you to the management teams of our organization and give you a tour of our Home Office facilities.

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# The Truth!!!

by Ferrell Vincent



Ferrell Vincent

**W**e live in a world where truth is scarce—and to find verification of that statement, all you have to do is turn your television on or pick up a newspaper and observe their contents. The producers and reporters try to present something that's extraordinary in order to grab the attention of people, because that's what people look for—something

out of the ordinary, exciting, something that will put them on a higher level than most. That's the media's job, and they're well trained and skilled at it. As a matter of fact, the reporters consider the public so incapable of understanding, that they will repeat what the president says in a speech, and explain what he meant, or at least what they perceive the president meant.

A large percentage of the people are led to think the way someone else wants them to think because they, the people, want someone else to think *for* them. That's why it's so easy for people to be deceived. After all, we live in a society governed by the greatest deceiver who ever existed. So I guess we shouldn't expect any thing else.

The Apostle John was sent to the Isle of Patmos to write about the future. Much of the things he wrote about was what some of the prophets had written about in an earlier age. In the book of Revelation, John described a powerful being who was capable of controlling the minds of the whole world—at least the majority.

"And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having

great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time'" (Revelation 12:7-12, *NKJV* throughout).

Now there is another major source of deception, the most effective source of all, because it's the least expected of someone who claims to be so right. *Human nature* desires that everything be easy, and expects the most for nothing. So we have those in leading positions in the religious world teaching that following them or their way of life will bring an eternity of doing nothing. And the sad part of it is, they accuse our Savior of teaching such a thing. That's in total error of the scriptural information contained in the Holy Bible. The Bible tells us we are going to reign with Jesus Christ for a thousand years.

"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:1-6).

John said he saw thrones and people sitting on them. Who were the judges sitting on the thrones? They were those God had called to be in His Kingdom—those who exercised real godly love in the fact that they loved the message of God's Kingdom and the supreme ruling Family more than their own lives. In Hebrews eleven, we find record of many who were willing to give their lives in several different ways, having the mindset that they would receive eternal life in the Kingdom. You see, they too were lied to, lied about, and deceived until the great God removed the vial and allowed them to understand the significance of coming out of a corrupt sin sick world. The sickness of sin was brought on by the great deceiver in the Garden of

Eden. And that deceiver has been doing a number on this planet ever since. Notice how our Savior equated sin and sickness.

In Matthew 9:1-8 we read, "So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.' And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, 'This Man blasphemes!' But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, "*Your* sins are forgiven you," or to say, "*Arise and walk*"? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins'—then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw *it*, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men."

Our Savior declares that He is the *Way* and He proclaims that He is the *Truth*—and through *Him* is the only way we can reach the Father. When we go to the Father, we have to come face to face with the One who died and suffered for us, and He knows if we are sincere or following a way of deception. Our Savior is acquainted with the deceiver; He too has been face to face with the one who rules this world, and knows all of Satan's tricks, snares, and traps that he sets for the children of God.

The deceiver has led the world to believe that the beauty of cathedrals and various places of worship are of God. But in reality, they are fashioned after the very nature of the deceiver. Also, every nation wants to be superior to the other in military might, developing the power to destroy all life on this planet. That is an indication to me that the deceiver intends to *take out* the whole world if he can't maintain control. The great God in heaven has dealt Satan a hand to play—and He will let him play until He is ready to toss in the trump card that will bring it to an end. Then the One who is the one particular *Way* will bring *truth* to the entire world through an educational system that will offer life to all who have ever lived. Our Savior is eternal. He lived in passed eternity, He lives in the present, and will live eternally in the future. Truth has always been, and our Savior has paid the price for all to receive it freely—if they would accept it and think for themselves. Let us reason and think for ourselves according to the knowledge God has given us. For He is truth! □

"These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations"  
— Leviticus 23:37 —

## 2008 Holy Day Calendar

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

- \* New Testament Passover: April 18 †
- \* Feast of Unleavened Bread: April 20-26
- \* Pentecost: June 8
- \* Feast of Trumpets: September 30
- \* Day of Atonement: October 9
- \* Feast of Tabernacles: October 14-20
- \* Last Great Day: October 21

† Observed at sundown.



# The Woolen Sweater

by Jean Jantzen



Jean Jantzen

**I**t was her favorite sweater. Every morning I helped her put it on, and every morning she told me she had made it. And every morning I told her it was beautiful. The creamy woolen cardigan sweater with its large wooden buttons had served her well. It had two large pockets that held her daily necessities: Kleenex, a few coins, house keys. It gave her security, comfort, warmth, and joy. She was mostly blind by macular degeneration, and 94 years old. She had knit the sweater at least sixty years earlier. One day her daughter took it home and washed it. It was just like a brand new sweater. It just kept giving and giving and giving. Talk about service beyond the call of duty!

That woolen sweater represented to me what genuine servanthood is all about. It made the words of the Apostle Paul clearer—to *present our bodies as a living sacrifice, which is a Christian’s reasonable service.*

The woolen sweater gave her security in its lifelong faithful service and commitment, reminding me of Ruth’s faithful promise to her mother-in-law when she said, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried” (Ruth 1:16,17, NIV). Ruth was turning her back on her old way of life, denying herself in order to provide security to another. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus says to deny ourselves and follow Him. We have to ask ourselves: “Could I do what this young widow did? Could I put my mother-in-law’s needs before my own?” This denying of one’s own wants and desires and looking to serve others as a way of life fulfills our reasonable service to God.

The familiar woolen sweater gave the old woman comfort and a feeling of well being and contentment. Jesus was born to be a servant, to give comfort to all. In Mark 9:35, when the disciples were disputing who was the greatest, Jesus said “...If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all.” A servant’s job is to do all he can to make life better for others. A servant’s first interest is not himself, but others. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than you. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3–4, NIV). Isaiah tells us how. He says: “Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.” He then says what the Lord promises us in return for our sacrifice. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isaiah 1:17,18). Do we act on our feelings to comfort and nurture others who have less than we do? Do we, as God’s people, do as God commands—if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink? Do we have what it takes to forgive? If we overcome evil with good, we have succeeded in fulfilling the instruction of “offering our bodies as living sacrifices.”

On cool mornings, the woolen sweater snuggled her in love and warmth. Jesus made it clear that our relationship with God is evidenced by our relationship with each other. In fact, Jesus authorized an identifying mark of His followers, and that was bound up in our ability to love our brother. Selfishness is the source of division, and servanthood the basis of unity. As the King’s loyal son, Jonathan’s love for David is a good example of selfless brotherly love. David was dressed in shepherd’s apparel unfitting for Saul’s court. “And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt” (1 Samuel 17:57). This evidently was an ancient custom—friends exchanging armor. In this case, David had none to exchange, and so Jonathan gave him his. The ancients believed that clothes were simply an expression of what the man was. In that moment, Jonathan was giving of himself to David when he gave him his armor. David had already rejected Saul’s armor, but he accepted Jonathan’s. And as his soul was knit to David, Jonathan sacrificed his entitlement to his father’s throne. Jonathan loved David as himself, and he made a covenant with him, a permanent commitment to their friendship. And he proved his commitment by giving all he had, laying down his life for his friend. He clothed David in warmth and love. What greater friendship is this? Have we learned to love our brethren like this?

The woolen sweater was, in her dark world, a daily source of joy and pleasure. If anyone is qualified to speak on the subject of suffering, it is the Apostle Paul—a man flogged, beaten, imprisoned, and exposed to death over and over. Paul was able to “rejoice” in his own suffering because he knew “in all things God works for the good of those who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28, NIV). “For Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am

weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10, NIV). That’s how Paul was able to remain assured in his terribly unsure years in prison. We should think of a spiritually joyful Paul in prison, not someone downcast and fearful. He is striding around some small room or dismal cell in Rome, perhaps even chained to a Roman soldier, yet we see Paul carefully dictating a profoundly positive letter to encourage the church.

The letter to the Philippians becomes a message of joy. The word *joy* occurs 16 times in its various forms in the letter. Spiritual joy, rejoicing in Christ, is a major theme. “I will continue to rejoice,” Paul writes to concerned believers while he is under house arrest in Rome (Philippians 1:18). Yet he is the one encouraging the church to have hope, joy and peace. He virtually demands the members to feel triumphant: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (verse 4). Paul demonstrates a wonderful pattern for us as a “living sacrifice.” Do we follow Paul’s lead and not complain about our discomfort and trials? To rejoice and to give joy and pleasure to others in spite of our own trials is fulfillment of our reasonable service.

Do others want to put us on like a comfortable woolen sweater? Do they feel snuggly secure and safe, warm and joyful in our presence? Of course having the ability to be a living sacrifice takes a miracle—the love of God in each of us. Let’s remember the woolen sweater and how it selflessly bestowed upon the elderly blind woman a feeling of security, comfort, warmth and joy, and in doing so became symbolic of true and faithful servanthood.

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Let’s look at the secrets of wool from a sheep’s body that provides for our security, warmth, comfort, and joy as an example of a living sacrifice.

“The secret of wool lies in the structure of its fiber, which absorbs moisture, insulates against heat and cold, resists flame and maintains its resilience. Unlike cotton, linen, silk, or polyester, wool fibers are covered with tiny scales, making them look like pinecones...When one fiber’s scales rub against those of others, they pull the fibers together in irreversible tangles. When compacted under heat and moisture, the wool shrinks into felt. Although its scaly surface tends to repel liquids, the wool fiber’s core is highly absorbent, taking in as much as 30 percent of its weight in moisture...By drawing perspiration away from the body, wool clothes prevent the skin from feeling clammy during summer, and helps to hold in heat during winter” (*Wool, the Fabric of History. National Geographic Vol. 173, No. 5, May 1988, p. 556*).

“Wool’s unique properties make it particularly suitable for both carpets and clothes. Wool fibers have minute overlapping scales or plates, all pointing in one direction like tiles on a roof... In one inch of wool fiber, there may be 2,000 overlapping shingles. Air trapped between fibers gives wool its insulating quality; wool provides great warmth for little weight. Wool can be bent 20,000 times without breaking (silk breaks after 1,800 bends, rayon after 75). In biblical times, wool was used to collect water; a fleece was left out overnight in the desert, and the next morning the dew was wrung from it” (p. 561). □



## Local C.G.I. Web Sites

Home Office, Tyler, TX.....	<a href="http://www.cgi.org">http://www.cgi.org</a>
Canada.....	<a href="http://www.cgicanada.org">http://www.cgicanada.org</a>
Jamaica.....	<a href="http://www.cgi.org/site/churches/jamaica/cgija.htm">http://www.cgi.org/site/churches/jamaica/cgija.htm</a>
Phillipines.....	<a href="http://www.cgiphils.org">http://www.cgiphils.org</a>
Montgomery/Birmingham, AL.....	<a href="http://www.hisvoice.org">http://www.hisvoice.org</a>
Morehead, KY.....	<a href="http://www.cgimorehead.org">http://www.cgimorehead.org</a>
Auburndale, FL.....	<a href="http://www.geocities.com/cgiauburndale">http://www.geocities.com/cgiauburndale</a>
Clearwater, FL.....	<a href="http://www.cgiclearwater.org">http://www.cgiclearwater.org</a>
Atlanta, GA.....	<a href="http://www.cgiatlanta.org/">http://www.cgiatlanta.org/</a>
Waterloo, IA.....	<a href="http://cvcgi.ourprofile.org">http://cvcgi.ourprofile.org</a>
Chicago, IL.....	<a href="http://www.cgichicago.org/">http://www.cgichicago.org/</a>
Morehead, KY.....	<a href="http://www.cgimorehead.org/">http://www.cgimorehead.org/</a>
Gaithersburg, MD.....	<a href="http://www.cgimaryland.org">http://www.cgimaryland.org</a>
Raleigh/Greensboro, NC.....	<a href="http://www.cgiraleigh.org">http://www.cgiraleigh.org</a>
Hickory, NC.....	<a href="http://www.hickorycgi.org/">http://www.hickorycgi.org/</a>
Columbus, OH.....	<a href="http://www.cgicolumbus.org">http://www.cgicolumbus.org</a>
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Infuse.....	<a href="http://www.cgi.org/infuse/">http://www.cgi.org/infuse/</a>

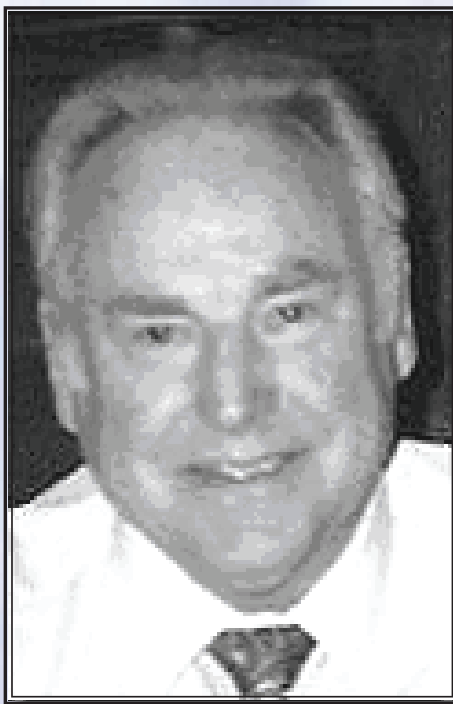


## Memories of a Dear Friend

**T**he Church of God International has numerous writers who can go back decades and tell you about the life of Bob Tackett. He was a part of my life for only four short years. That isn't a long time to know someone, and especially to write about his life. I would, however, like to share my memories of him with you.

I had written Tyler to inquire about the location of a local congregation, and they provided Mr. Tackett's phone number, along with other information. When I was able to attend services, I called him to verify the meeting time and place. He provided the answers to my questions and invited me to attend. It was his face that was the first to greet me when I walked in the door

As I got to know Mr. Tackett, I was more impressed with who he was. His demeanor never changed through the time I knew him. He was always kind, courteous, encouraging, and answered all questions with clarity and understanding. He always had time for each of us.



**Charles R. Tackett**

Even illness could not change him, and he continued ministering, giving his last message December 8, 2007. Bob always had a smile on his face.

Bob was so respected that he was presented the very first Upper Room Ministry Award. He had been a highway patrolman, a construction company owner building residential homes, an auctioneer, and had selflessly served the church for many years without compensation or complaint. Because he followed in the footsteps of the disciples, he was persecuted to the point of almost quitting. Bob had the last laugh, though. He didn't give up, and he has the love and respect of all who knew him. Bob was a good, decent man who chose to serve his God and his congregation in any way possible. His is an excellent example for all of us to follow.

Bob was laid to rest with his beloved Geneva on March 15, 2008. His peace has come, and so it will be forever. We, his children, brothers, and sisters, will miss seeing him, but he will always be with us. *Submitted by Alice Edwards Lauria* □



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