

Church of God News

Positive News of the Churches of God

First Anniversary Issue

January 2004, No. 11

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From the Editor...

The Boomerang Effect

This is the first anniversary issue of the COGNews and it's a good time to reflect on its worth and worthiness. No, we have not won a Pulitzer Prize and we struggle mightily with proofreading. We cannot know what you may have liked or disliked unless you write us, but I have observed two things.

First: Suzie asked (reading my mind), why so many reports from India, Africa, and prisoners? The foreign reports and prisoners (in the U.S.) indicate God is working strongly in these arenas. True, there are some scam artists out there and we do our best to screen our stories, but it would appear to me that God is repeating a lesson He taught 2000 years ago when, in **Romans 10:19**, He recorded: "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke [or stimulate] you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you."

Now, your anger can be directed at God for ignoring you or the "foolish nation" because of their advantage, but what if we direct that anger back to the cause of the problem — us? A careful reading of the following verses shows the problem comes from our inattention to duty, so now we are being stimulated to do what we should have already been doing.

Romans 11:11-15, "I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead?"

A Lesson from Business and Industry

Most organizations (including Churches) are in the business of self-adulation and preservation; and most meetings are to serve those purposes, make everyone feel good, cover up the truth, or create something unneeded or defective. Sorry, I get carried away with my cynicism sometimes, but I can't deny what I see. **Ecclesiastes 1:18**, "For in much wisdom *is* much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

And so, those who see with open eyes sincerely and deeply sigh and cry for the abominations being done. It is my hope that this newspaper can, in a small way, "provoke" some positive changes.

Surely, the "ates" (described below) are best applied by you. But I must admit that many friends, and even enemies, have stimulated me to change. It's a dirty job but somebody has to do it.

Maybe this "small way" to be applied is one of the five "ates" which are:

- Humiliate, to humble
- Agitate, to get you out of your comfort zone
- Stimulate, to tickle the conscience
- Irritate, that's the way pearls are made
- Motivate, produce action and results

Those five things are not bad, but they can be very uncomfortable, all while producing a positive effect.

Second: There are a lot of uplifting things going on. It's what I call the boomerang effect. When reading the following, note verse eleven especially.

Isaiah 55:8-12, "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: **So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.** For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands."

It seems as though God designed everything to make a full circle, "what goes around, comes around," if you like.

Here's the principle: **Ecclesiastes 11:1-6**, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty *themselves* upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what *is* the way of the spirit, *nor* how the bones *do* grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good."

An interesting event unfolded recently. The January and February 2003 issues of the COGNews each featured a story of Loy Baker, 1651 N. Emerald Hills Dr., Nixa, MO. 65714.

Loy served his country and his fellow man faithfully through the World War II era. A man from Malaysia recently requested back issues of the COGNews and after reading Loy's article, wrote him a commiserating letter that encouraged Loy greatly. Our man from Malaysia did not realize the importance

Church of God News

"For the edifying of the body of Christ,"
Ephesians 4:12.

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Submit articles to:

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of his letter and how it lifted Loy's spirit because, you see, Loy is struggling with cancer.

Now let's consider the non-boomeranging boomerang. If your boomerang is not shaped correctly, or if you throw it wrong, or not at all, it won't come back. You never know when your bread will feed someone, but first it must be cast like the fisherman's net. Unless it is thrown out, it will not function.

God's principle works like knowledge: when you give it away, someone has gained something and you have lost nothing. I was told you can't out-give God. Experience has

proven its validity in tithes, offerings, and almsgiving. **Malachi 3:10**, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." This is especially true with time. The keeping of the Sabbath, giving back time to God that He has given you, rewards the giver tenfold with a full, complete, and satisfying lifetime.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

— by Steven J. Kieler

Article...

Love and the Law

We should get to know and teach God's law. But what also needs to be kept in mind is that the law without love can be pharisaical.

Our Bible study should teach us to love God and our fellow man; if not, then we fail to grasp what God is trying to teach us.

We should not try to teach that the law is done away. Jesus said: "Think not that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill," **Matthew 5:17**.

Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep My commandments," **John 14:15**. And in **verse 21** He says: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." We need to see the connection between love and the law.

We must hold fast to the truths that God has taught us.

We can have an institutional unity in some of our organizations, yet we can be lacking in the spiritual unity we should have. We may grow to learn all of the doctrine and agree that we should keep the law; but if we fail to apply it and the love that's intended to be with it, then we suffer loss.

Vital doctrines are important, and we get on dangerous ground by trying to water them down. Some settle for a religion of emotionalism or ritual. There are many imbalances we can get into. One is that we can learn all of the laws and doctrines and be able to quote the Bible from cover to cover. And yet we can fail to allow the Holy Spirit to work with us to where we grow in the love of Jesus Christ. We talk about balancing our checkbook and

balancing this or that, but there's no place it is more important than in spiritual matters.

"...God is love," **I John 4:16**. "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" **I John 4:20**. I feel that a good gauge on how much you love God is how much you love other people. I used to be selective on who I would love. We can try to justify our behavior.

As we study **Psalms 119**, we see how the Psalmist loved God's law.

And **Psalms 1:2-3** tells us, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

God did intend that we meditate on His laws and ways; and that we would get to know Him as we apply what we learn. "He who does not love does not know God: for God is love," **I John 4:8** RSV.

The connection between love and the law should be learned: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another," **Galatians 5:14-15** RSV.

We can see the connection between love and the law in the above Scripture. Without love it won't work; we can wind up devouring one another as the above Scripture relates.

The more time passes, and the more God teaches me, the more I see how important the love of God is, and how it will keep us in focus as we allow Him to put His love inside of us.

The law was not done away with; and we should seek to learn and grow in the love of God as we seek to understand His law.

— by Tommy Willis

Hmmm...

A couple drove down a country road for several miles, not saying a word. An earlier discussion had led to an argument and neither of them wanted to concede their position. As they passed a barnyard of mules, goats, and pigs, the wife asked sarcastically, "Relatives of yours?" "Yep," the husband replied, "in-laws."

Prison Ministry...**A Dream Come True**

During the years of our ministry, we have received numerous letters from prisoners. Many prisoners are on the mailing list for the "Giving & Sharing Newsletter." We frequently note that they tend to have a general attitude of seeking the Almighty's Truth. One recent letter touched us. This man needs someone to visit him.

The prisoner, a Sacred Name advocate, has been involved in the bondage cult of the House of Yahweh, Abilene, TX. He noted that the House of Yahweh does not answer letters from inmates, and they also insist that he come to Abilene for baptism. We were happy to answer his questions, and send him literature.

Drugs and sex led to his incarceration. He blamed God for losing his marriage and possessions, and became a terror to jailhouse Christians. Then, on May 17, 1999, he had an unsettling dream. In his dream, he was at home sitting in his recliner with an open Bible in his lap. An arm clothed in a white robe pointed to **Job 36:8-12**. Then he woke up. He did not immediately have access to a Bible. When he read the passage later, he was shaken. He surrendered to his Heavenly Father and begged on his knees in prayer for forgiveness, and committed to Him and Him alone. Apparently, he has not yet been baptized.

Here is what he says: "Since then, I've read the Bible in various translations seven times completely. . . . All I am 100% sure of today is that I love, with all my being, the Father and the Son. . . . I seek only to please Them with my life!" He sees no love in the Assembly of Yahweh of Abilene, TX, and knows some of their major doctrines are erroneous. "There is no weekly Sabbath service here at this facility I can attend. . . . I get days off work for the Holy Days of Lev. 23 but cannot assemble with the few here whose beliefs are similar to mine. I am in dire need of correction and pure teaching. Can you help me?" His name is Markus Dickey #8956511, J. Lynauch Unit, 1098 South Hwy 2037, Ft. Stockton, TX 79735.

Would you like to correspond or visit prisoners? Contact Earl Lewis, Giving & Sharing, PO Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849. Earl can also provide a card authorizing you

to engage in prison ministry. He has worked with prisoners for years, and can give advice to new prison ministers.

— by Richard C. Nickels

Feast Report...**Ouidah Africa Report**

Greetings to you in the name of Jesus our soon coming Lord of lords. With unspeakable joy we concluded this year's Feast of Tabernacles in Cotonou, Ganvié, Calavie, Godomey, and Ouidah. It was a joyous time in the presence of our heavenly Father who gave us all that we need through Christ.

We started with thunderous prayers as each participant prayed under the direction of the Holy Spirit. We interceded for one hour and thirty minutes for our nation, the nations of the world, the USA, and the Arab nations to embrace Jesus the author of peace, spiritual unity of believers all over the world, God's Word to penetrate every heart, etc. We then began the worship with the band leading our worship and praises. We had workshops, Bible studies, etc. We encouraged each participant to embrace Jesus and be a good example for other believers.

This year's Feast of Tabernacles was a fantastic, refreshing, and rejuvenating Christian experience with worship services, pot lucks, hymn sings, worship, praises, a fun quiz night, a Feast dinner, dance, and outdoor crusades/evangelisms. These were just some of the great activities we enjoyed, along with a trip to La Porte Du Non Retour (Entrance of No Return) in Ouidah where the white men came and bought slaves during the colonial era.



The Feast of Tabernacles reminds and helps us to see our lives in proper perspective. A sukkah built for the Feast lasts for just a week. Similarly, our bodies are "booths" that only last for a certain number of years. Without God, all is meaningless, as we learn

from Ecclesiastes, a book traditionally read during the Feast. But when God comes to dwell in our booths, then our lives matter. It was a wonderful experience.

But why should we rejoice at the Feast?

Deuteronomy 16:15 gives us an answer, “. . . because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.” God has great things in mind for us, and celebrating the Feast can help us to grasp the full meaning of God’s purpose and provision for mankind. We also traveled to Lake Nokoue where people live in housing on top of the water. We witnessed to 30,000 inhabitants of Ganvié who had never heard about the Sabbath message, God’s Holy Days, or anything about the food laws. We preached and evangelized the inhabitants and gave out used clothes, reading glasses, Bibles, etc.

About 1,876 people in this unusual habitat requested Bibles, as many of them had never seen one. We baptized 45 persons who joined us in the family of God and planted five Bible study centers for them. From Cotonou it is 25 miles. The return trip to Ganvié from Cotonou is 15, and we need to send workers immediately. I will be there this Sabbath by His grace. These people are neglected, though there is a school, market, and tap water. Wonderful you may say. But life is difficult here, as you must own a boat in order to survive. The people are very poor and depend only on fishing.

We also evangelized in the strong hold of Voodoo in Africa, Ouidah. Satan put up a good fight to stop our outreach there, as the letter of authority that had been issued to us by the Mayor of Ouidah was surprisingly cancelled at the last minute because the Catholic Church protested against our meeting opposite their kingdom, and lied that, they, the Roman Catholics would be having a program at the venue the Mayor had approved for us the same day. The venue is in the front of the famous Python Temple-Ouidah. The Roman Catholic Church and the Python Temple are facing each other (two evils, wondering which is the greater evil). On reaching there, we were told that we couldn’t hold a meeting at the venue, even though the Roman Catholics never hold a meeting.

Very confused and not knowing what to do next, we called on the God of heaven and made our needs known to Him. He answered beyond our imaginations by using “Chef De

Arrondissement” of Ouidah (the “quarter chairman” for Ouidah). He intervened and went to the King’s palace of Ouidah (because we had already gone to the King of kings palace, Jesus Himself) who granted us his domain for the crusade, which was far larger than the Voodoo venue. God’s ways cannot be understood as the King welcomed us and we paid him a courtesy visit, prayed with him, and gave him a copy of a Holy Bible and a 2004 “Good Seed” devotional book.

We held the crusade in his domain and immediately people heard the sound of the music and came by the hundreds to listen to God’s Word that has the power to change their situations. We preached Jesus who came to destroy the power of the destroyer, the devil. I spoke from **John 10:9-10**, and **I John 3:8** and told them that the only weapon Satan can use to stop them from embracing Jesus Christ is fear. When I called on people to accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, 158 people came, and several brought their magic books and charms to be burned. Fifteen women and six men came openly to renounce their association with witchcraft, and cried about how the devil had used them to destroy so many lives in accidents, miscarriages, sicknesses, and had made so many men and women barren or mad. I could not contain myself as I looked at these people crying to the God of heaven for help and forgiveness. It was a night I will never forget for the rest of my life.

Many invited us to their houses to either destroy their shrines or dig out the charms they had buried in their homes, some for protection from enemies, or for business successes, etc., which turned against them and kept them miserable. We prayed in the name of Jesus, destroyed the power of sorcery, and commanded the demons to flee in Jesus’ name. We prayed for them as they welcomed Jesus into their lives. We spoke about God’s Holy Sabbath, His Holy Days, the Ten Commandments, salvation only through Jesus Christ, and a life of holiness and prayers. We later baptized thirty-six people and started five home Churches, unbelievably, one at the King’s palace at his own request. I saw a great hunger for righteousness and the need of a liberator in all the villages we went to. Their only problem is fear of uncertainty and insecurity as the devil controls their entire lives. King Ouidah is originally from Brazil and came here during the slave trade era.

There are so many needs in most places, such as Bibles, Christian literature, clothes new or used, shoes, pens or pencils, etc., whatever you can no longer use will be useful here; you will always find someone who may need them. We need someone to support the brethren who will be witnessing/discipling in all these villages that have opened their hearts to the Sabbath message. We shall need \$200 monthly to help for their transportation and food in these villages. We also need \$1,500 to pay for nine months' rent in all the villages where we have started home Churches. God provided us with His Spirit of peace and joy that pervaded the entire Feast.



We hope the entire Ouidah community was blessed by the presence of Christian believers. As the Feast site was not affiliated with a Church organization, the Feast site was comprised of brethren from a range of Church groups and representatives from eight countries which included: Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger, Cameroon, and Benin Republics. Many Pastors came from the following Churches: Pentecostals, SDA, Church of God, White-garment Sabbath groups, and like minds, etc. Those who attended generally understood the Church of God to be spiritual in nature. There were no conditions for Feast attendance, other than the willingness to meet in peace and mutual respect. Two remarkable miracles took place during the Feast. A former Muslim woman, now a Sabbatarian, gave birth to twins (a boy and girl) on the fourth day of the Feast without medical assistance. God sent His angels as He did to the Hebrews. A mad woman came to disrupt the Holy Convocation and was healed instantly. At Ouidah, a woman who never used her right ear to hear was also healed, and she could not control her joy. We don't know how all these miracles took place, praise the power of Jesus Christ who died to set us free from sin and destruction. We ask you to help with some bedding for the twins and mother through us,

as I will make sure they get them. Napkins, sweaters, etc. would be appreciated. There are other women who are pregnant and need our assistance too. Several young people from different nations need our encouragement both spiritually and physically to continue witnessing and living for Jesus.

Our Father and His Son had to be so pleased with His Feast of Tabernacles held at Ouidah this year 2003. "God's Family Reunion" as it could be called, was celebrated with love, rejoicing, and family caring. Attendees were always being directed, from the pulpit, to rejoice at "God's Holy Party," that this is a Family Affair, to believe that "what makes God happy should make us happy, and that the Feast is only eight days, but memories (made here) last forever. The amount of love and caring shown to each other this year was just fantastic!!! Not just from those who were the speakers and volunteers, but from the general run of attendees.



There was continuous fellowshiping attained at the planned activities, outside lunches, and dinners. Activities were always blessed by others offering rides, meals, etc. Everyone seemed to be so attuned to others' wishes and needs. We were also blessed by many excellent sermons, beautiful special music, and activities that were unsurpassed. The attendance was up this year, hovering close to 480 each day and 895 were shown as being registered. The speakers who brought the messages each day all seemed to be God-inspired, since most of their sermons were working close to the same theme. We had fantastic and inspiring messages, sound spiritual meat with good encouragement about what God is doing, where God is working, what He expects of us and how to truly fear Him. The meaning of Jesus' name, His Eternal work, along with the historical illustrations of His coming to the temple and the future coming Kingdom of God and the resurrections to eternal life rounded out the "Gospel" message of this year's Feast. The meaning of the Last

Great Day, along with Pastor Porter's encouraging message to carry on with God's work, inspired us all to continue with the work of God to preach the Gospel to the world and warn the descendants of ancient Israel of what's coming ahead.

Those who blessed us with the messages and words of God were: Michaels Porter, Mark Josiah, Stella Porter, Agye Kuruma, Pierre Ndong, etc. Dr. James from the USA was our guest during the crusade/leadership conference held in Cotonou. The Feast in Ouidah this year was as expected: Tremendous!!! What else could we expect God's Holy Party to be? We couldn't have done it without everyone's help in serving the 895 brethren that came to Ouidah Village this year. We want to "Thank Everyone" again!!! It was a wonderful Feast for us. I couldn't imagine not being with my family, my closest friends, and you my brethren, at God's Feast in Ouidah.

A guest speaker from Ghana commented on the "one-ness" of the messages and the positive spiritual attitudes of the brethren that were reflected throughout the Feast. "Everyone at the Feast was happy and in good spirits. Many folks just didn't want to leave this year and wished that the Feast would truly go on. Their fellowship with each other and a deep spiritual 'refilling' of God's Spirit filled the entire 8 days of this year's Feast. It will truly be one to remember for a long, long, time. It was very good! For brethren who were celebrating for the first time, they regretted knowing this amazing truth so late. A 79 year old woman from Togo said, 'I wish God could make me young again to serve Him better and go around the villages to tell people what they had missed in their fruitless effort without God Almighty'."



Thank you immensely for helping make the Feast possible through your giving, pray-

ers, materials, etc. You all are very special. Again my special thanks to all of you for a job well done! It was an excellent Feast. Thanks for helping it be so. We hope that you also experienced a joyous festival, and that you will find this report to be a source of further encouragement and stimulation. We need your help always.

— by Michael Porter, 03BP2991 Jericho,
Cotonou, Benin, Africa
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Hmmm...

If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.

— author unknown

News...

Book Price Comparison

My name is Ori Tend and I'm from Israel. I wanted to introduce you to a new Web site I've launched recently: www.FetchBook.Info. It's a free service, allowing you to easily compare prices of any book among 70 bookstores, and find a price which is 30-80% off the market list price.

Here's a sample comparison, where you can see that it saves so much for any book: www.FetchBook.Info/0130408905.html.

Also, I'm striving to improve the site, so if you have any feedback, please feel free to send it! I hope you like my site. Thanks.

— by Ori Tend, Israel

Article...

Life in India

Here is an article of one part on what life is like in India, and the Goatery program explained in brief. Well, here is the Goatery program I have discussed. Some of our members who live in a village have been infected by HIV, or their spouses have been infected. We have about twelve baptized families and nine prospective families. When somebody is infected with such a disease, they are looked down upon, are cut off from the normal world, their livelihood is denied, and their only destiny is to commit suicide. Actually, these brethren have productive lives to live and we believe God can heal them. It is not for anybody to judge about their sickness.

What we want to do is to help them with some livelihood sources, and after some study, we found that goats are like sheep and

they reproduce faster. These goats are cash animals, so this would help them to have some income to live on. I am planning to organize a complete training program for them and then give them six she-goats and one male-goat. The training would cover how they should rear them, veterinary care, marketing arrangements, etc. It cost about \$250 US dollars per family where they would get the six plus one goats. We have about twenty-one families in this program. When someone sponsors a family, they would be called guardian brother or guardian sister. It would give a lot of encouragement and motivation to these helpless brethren that somebody still loves and cares for them. Thanks for all the motivation and love you have given and shown.

— by M. R. Hubert, India
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News...

Camp Meeting/Crusade

Greetings to you in Christ's Name. The attached are photos for the crusade/camp meetings which took place in various places: Tabarit in Bomet District and Trasmara, youth classes in Bureti District, and the women's ministries at Bureti Togomin care of Sotik.



The work of the gospel message is just going well in East Africa, mostly in parts of Kenya. So, it is our prayer that you pray for the gospel. May God bless you.

— by Overseer Andrew K. Koech
joskomix@yahoo.com
 Giving & Sharing Representative
 Kenya, East Africa

Youth Rejoice at Texoma...

“Keys to the Kingdom — Keys to Your Future!” This was our theme for the 2003 Feast classes this year at Lake Texoma, OK. We had 18 students and 4 teachers for 6 mornings, plus 2 evenings and one afternoon for some Bible story videos. Everyone also enjoyed the Fun Park one day, the recreation building one afternoon for the kids’ carnival, and a potluck fish-fry picnic on another perfect-weather day. Nearly all of the children participated in the Talent Show, and also in the Youth Day assignments.





Becky Kelly led the children's choir in singing "God is Still Workin' on Me!" Becky and Nedra Pence taught the elementary class and began the first day with "Get on the Feast Train!" Of course, we had our regular Teddy Bear gift table where all the children can pick a bear to take home.

Doyle Carter taught the preteen's class and began with Four Feast Keys to Keep, and a Feast Journal to make.

Pam Chambers' teen class incorporated several artwork projects along with our theme of Keys to the Kingdom.

Each class day began with discussing the posters set around the room to coincide with the day's topic. The elementary and preteen classes also were presented with special Bible coloring books and Bible storybooks to take home.

Another **wonderful, full, and rewarding Feast!** I can't express in strong enough terms how thrilling it is to share our hope and great goals with such excited young people!

— by Pam Chambers

Feast Report...

Mountain View, AR

The Mountain View Church of God Fellowship held the Feast of Tabernacles for the first time in the beautiful hills of Mountain View, Arkansas this year with 80 in attendance from Little Rock, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Tulsa, OK, and Big Sandy, TX.

The Church building was open daily from 9 AM until 10 PM and sometimes later due to enthusiastic fellowshippers and game players.



The brethren provided a covered-dish lunch daily and the tables were always overflowing with great food.

Other activities included a special day for our youth, with Chad Tate, a young baptized member giving his first Sermonette. An afternoon at the go-cart track followed services. We also had homemade ice cream and cobbler night, a cookout at the park with games following, game night, a fun/talent show, pickin' & grinnin', and a tour of the beautiful Blanchard Springs Caverns. All activities were provided by the Feast offerings and hard work of all the brethren.



Feast pictures were taken by about 20 youth that were given disposable cameras at the beginning of the Feast. The pictures were developed the last day of the Feast and awards were given to each child on the Last Great Day, for their best picture. The award winning pictures remain posted at the Church building as a reminder of our first Feast in Mountain View. A set of pictures was given back to the child to keep or give away and the other set was made into a collage and remains posted in the Church building.

Most local members tabernacled in their back yards in tents and campers, and invited others to join them.

The willingness of the brethren to work hard to serve and help one another made this a wonderful Feast for everyone.

— by Wayne Holmes



“Establishing the Children”

Are Our Children Going Down the Tube?

Everyone talks about the downward spiral of our country's morals. We are in very deep trouble with our youth because we adults do not seem to be able to control our own behavior and we have a loose standard toward the way we live our lives. We wonder what is wrong with our children, how did they become so rebellious, or why don't they behave the way we want them to behave?

There are several factors why children develop wrong behavior, including family breakups, economic problems, peer pressure, wrong types of entertainment, and sometimes the environment that some children grow up in. There are some things we have control over and we can make a difference in our lives and the lives of our children.

Basically, children pattern themselves after our examples. But in the absence of good parental teachings, children will pattern themselves after others; for example, peers their own age, movie and television characters, etc. There is convincing evidence that children who watch or participate in the wrong kind of entertainment also may develop wrong behavior. Television programs, computer games and activities, music videos, compact discs and DVDs, all find their place in our homes as forms of entertainment. These forms can be good entertainment if used appropriately. However, more and more television programs are down in the sewer. Some computer games picture destructive behavior such as shooting and killing people, revealing too much action and detail. The music industry aims their music toward the young, and big bucks are spent on this type of entertainment, which can be very explicit, provocative, and crude. The music is hot, heavy, and for most of us, unintelligible. But the kids understand what the words say and what they mean.

The Television Monster

In this issue, we're addressing how television affects our lives and our children's lives. Years ago, there were great comedy and drama shows such as “I love Lucy,” “Father Knows Best,” “The Waltons,” “The Carol Burnett Show,” “The Bob Hope Show,” “The Smothers Brothers,” “Little House on the Prairie,” and many more wonderful shows that came along in the innocent years of television. Now, programs are full of deviant behavior, filthy words, murders, adultery, for-

nication, gay behavior, arguing, fighting, and much more.

Even situation comedies turn into shouting and arguing matches, bad parenting actions, etc. These days, do we sit in front of the television set watching and even laughing at shows like “Friends,” “Everybody Loves Raymond,” “Will and Grace”? The reality shows defy description. Try watching “Fear Factor” without your stomach doing flip-flops. “Survivor” recently had one contestant lying by telling the other contestants that his grandmother had just died so he could win by getting their sympathy vote.

One recent episode of “Missing without A Trace” showed a houseful of teens in different stages of undress and engaged in various sex acts, leaving not very much to the imagination. Other programs like “ER” and “CSI” are very graphic in depicting murders, operations, and seemingly have an endless supply of blood and gore. “Everyone Loves Raymond” is an example of how **not** to have family peace and unity. Hopefully, not any of us are watching these shows while our precious little children are right there beside us, absorbing all the wrong kinds of behavior being played out before them by the television monster.

Slow Conditioning

Do we realize how we are slowly being conditioned to accept any behavior that man can come up with in this rush to busy and entertain ourselves? If we can't resist watching these types of television programs, participating in computer games, entering Web sites that are inappropriate or watching and listening to crude offensive music videos, then, how can we expect our children to turn away from these types of entertainment?

Hopefully, we will wake up to how wrong kinds of entertainment can influence us and our children. Make a checklist of what type of entertainment programs you watch on television, games you play on the computer, or other activities you use the computer for, and what kind of music you listen to, including music videos. Don't forget to check into what and how your children are being entertained.

Get rid of these entertainment monsters in your home by not participating in the wrong use of these forms. But don't make the mistake of throwing out your television, computer, music videos, and discs (unless they are inappropriate). These forms of entertainment can still be used for the good of your family.

There are good educational programs such as *The Discovery Channel* and *National Geographic*, and every once in awhile there are good storylines that reflect love, kindness, generosity, hard-working people, sacrificing for the good of others, etc. Sometimes there are good shows that are produced by *Hallmark* and other producers that portray good moral values.

The computer is a marvelous tool when used for the right reasons. There is a great deal of information available on just about any subject, and the right type of music can be most enjoyable and make us feel better.

The important things to remember are: be vigilant, make a checklist of the types of entertainment that are acceptable, and make sure you weed out bad television programs, computer programs, and music that is inappropriate for your family.

Visualize in your mind and ask yourself this question, "Would we be taking part in this kind of entertainment if Jesus Christ, our elder Brother, were visiting with our family and sitting here with us right now?"

— by Shelby Faith
sfaith@mindspring.com

Youth...

What's it Worth?

A man comes back home from a hard and frustrating day at work. His son sees him, and is quite excited, then sees his dad's long face, and calms down a bit. His dad sits in his favorite Lazy Boy recliner as the boy walks up to him.

"Dad, can I ask you a question?"

His dad, not too enthusiastically, plays along.

"What is it, Son?"

"Dad, how much do you make an hour?"

Dad answers, "If you need to know, I make \$20 an hour."

The son looks down in thought for a moment, and then asks, "Dad, can I borrow \$10?"

His dad gets quite annoyed, thinking he's asking a lot of questions so he can ask for cash to buy a toy or something, which he'll only lose interest in, in a couple of weeks. So his dad, annoyed and very angry tells him, "You come and bother me when I come home from a hard day's work, and ask for money so you can buy something worthless? You know

what? For being selfish, you can go to your room."

His son, taking this all in and looking ashamed, heads for his room without another word. His dad eats, relaxes, and watches TV. After while he calms down and thinks to himself that he was too hard on his son. Maybe he wanted the money for school or something.

The father knocks on the boy's bedroom door and asks, "Son, are you awake?"

"Yes, Dad, I'm awake," the son answers.

His dad walks in and, says, "Look, I'm sorry I went off like that, here's your \$10."

His son, very excited, grabs his dad's cash, reaches under his pillow and grabs more money. His dad, getting annoyed, realizing that his son already had money, says in as calm a voice as can be managed, "Son, why did you ask me for money when you already have some?"

"Because," his son answers, "I didn't have enough, and now I do! I have \$20 now, and I can buy an hour of your time."

— author unknown

Kids Prayers...

Three year-old, Reese: "Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name. Amen."

Six year-old Anna and her four year-old brother Joel were sitting together in Church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in Church." "Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel asked. Anna pointed to the back of the Church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers."

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait. Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

A father was at the beach with his children when his four year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore, where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked. "He died and went to Heaven," the Dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

BIBLE TRIVIA

See if you can answer the following trivia questions without looking them up:

1. Who had surgery performed on him while he slept? _____
(See Genesis 2:21)
2. Who slept in the bottom of the ship as it rolled in a storm? _____
(Jonah 1:5)
3. Who slept at Bethel and dreamed about angels? _____
(Genesis 28:11-15)
4. Who had troublesome dreams that kept him from sleeping? _____
(Daniel 2:1)
5. Who was visited by an angel of the Lord while sleeping? _____
(Matthew 2:13)
6. Who slept while Jesus prayed in Gethsemane? _____
(Luke 22:45)
7. Who sneaked into Saul's camp while he was sleeping? _____
(I Samuel 26:7)
8. Who spoke to Abram while he was in deep sleep? _____
(Genesis 15:12-16)
9. Who did not sleep while Daniel was in the lions' den? _____
(Daniel 6:18)
10. Who slept through a haircut? _____
(Judges 16:19)

(Trivia questions from *The Complete Book of Bible Trivia* by J. Stephen Lang.)

Worksheet by Shelby Faith - 2003

WORD PUZZLE

Find the words in the grid. Words can go horizontally, vertically,
and diagonally in all eight directions.

G	S	A	M	S	O	N	S	V	M	S
N	T	A	L	T	L	P	S	H	A	T
I	K	D	A	V	I	D	H	L	D	E
L	T	R	I	R	T	A	C	A	A	P
U	C	E	R	O	N	N	B	H	Y	M
A	M	S	O	O	N	I	P	M	H	J
S	A	B	J	R	E	E	A	T	A	A
O	R	H	E	S	S	L	S	S	M	C
M	B	B	M	O	E	R	T	A	N	O
V	A	O	J	E	N	A	U	E	U	B
T	N	L	D	J	T	P	S	F	T	L

ABRAM
ADAM
DANIEL
DAVID
HAM

JACOB
JONAH
JOSEPH
SAMSON
SAUL

Letter to Editor...

Hello brother Kieler. Greetings to your good self. Here's sincerely hoping you're fine and in good health. I'm fine here and happy these days.

Well, what a good time to write and say "thank you" for your kind gesture in sending to me the back-issues of the Church of God News. Now I have the complete set and I'm really happy to read all the good news that comes in from all over. Just great! I must truly say that it was a really good idea to have this fabulous newsletter/magazine. It gives me a good chance to contact others afar, so that we can build friendships and learn something from them.

Also, it's even better still when pictures are included. I now know how you look. Meanwhile, please carry on and put the addresses at the end of the articles. Now I'm writing to some of them. The children's articles are good as I can make copies to pass on to parents/kids for their good use. Many parents/moms have requested kid's materials as they are very concerned about their kid's unbecoming behavior. So, if you do have contacts, please pass my name to anyone who can help me out with kid's materials. Thanks brother!

Oh yes, I'm wondering whether you do have any prison-inmates names/addresses (males or females)? I have a request from a couple here who are keen to do their part (Christian duty) to write to any USA prison inmates. This couple is doing a great job here. He is a security officer and I always pass him names of men who need a job. His company is very understanding to give the Sabbath off to any seventh day Sabbath-keepers who work for them. His wife is running a daycare/tutorial classes for kids. I always give her the copied materials for kids. Well, maybe you can send me a list of names and I'll get others to write to our many USA brothers and sisters inside. Nowadays, I do get many visitors coming to our house. I can impress upon them to do something worthwhile. I have kept on writing to prison inmates. Some have stopped of course, but I try to send a postcard once in a while. I have also written to new ones. So, if you have a list, why not?

Well, brother Steve, thanks very much. If you have any materials to spare, remember me here. Nothing goes to waste! Many now know what I'm doing here. Materials are like

hot cakes. Take care and God bless you, your family, and the ministry you're doing!

Yours humbly in Yashua,

Duncan Dominic
1-Jln Bertam 10 Taman Daya
81100 Johore Bahru
Jahore D.T.
Malaysia

Hmmm...

- Pythagorean theorem: 24 words
- Lord's prayer:..... 66 words
- Archimedes' Principle: 67 words
- Ten Commandments: 179 words
- Gettysburg Address:..... 286 words
- Declaration of Independence: 1,300 words
- US Government regulations
on the sale of cabbage: 26,911 words

Obituary...

David Jon Hill

David Jon Hill, longtime minister and former Ambassador College instructor, died on November 24, 2003 at his son Jonathan's home in Shingletown, California. He was preceded in death by his wife who died last July. Funeral services were held at Quilcene, Washington where he lived for many years.

Article...

TV: the Great Educator

Recently, I was reading an article from the Internet that covered the topic of sex education and TV's role in this matter. The article was covering a certain survey released by the Santa Monica based Rand Corporation, a nonprofit research group. It mentioned the TV series, "Friends."

Rebecca Collins, lead author of the report, was quoted as saying: "We have known that teenagers get useful information about sex from factual reports and advice-oriented medias, but now we know they can get this information from entertainment television programs as well."

It is not just sex education messages that children receive from TV, but other messages such as violence, drugs, etc.

Whose job is it to educate the young children and teenagers? Should our TV shows and movies set our standards on such matters as sexual and social behavior?

In **II Timothy 3:15-17**, Paul encourages Timothy by saying: “And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Those following God the Father and Jesus Christ should use the Holy Scriptures as the standard for our lives and use it to correct and reprove any concepts that may be presented to us from any other source.

In **II Corinthians 10:5**, Paul wrote: “Casting down imaginations [reasoning], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

Deuteronomy 6:7 states: “And thou shalt teach them [statutes, commandments, judgments, **verse 1**] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up.” This commandment was for Israel to teach their children of God’s way.

Parents, family, and Church members are assumed to educate the children in the Church in general of the way of God and the proper way to go. It is not the job of TV shows or movies to do this.

Such matters as sexual education and other moral topics should be presented with a Biblical prospective to our children to give them a more correct view on life.

Educating your children early in the way of God and the Bible should be your goal. So that when the television becomes a part of a child’s life, he can decide the correct way to go.

No TV show or movie should be an educator in some matters, even though they can be good for general matters such as nature, animal behavior, or history. The media should not determine our moral code or behavior.

Matthew 4:4 says: “Man should not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” The Word of God should be the standard for life and the moral code to live by. Teach your children to use the Word of God as their standard and not TV shows or movies.

— by Doyle J. Carter

Article...

Rediscovered Hero

I don’t look a thing like my father.

In his prime, he had a full head of gloriously red hair; mine is sort of a mousy, dishwater blond-brown-blah.

He has bright, penetrating blue eyes; mine are a noncommittal hazel (no matter how big your box of crayons is, you won’t find a crayon called *hazel* — I promise. He has a proud, prominent, almost Romanesque nose; mine is a squishy little blob in the middle of my face.

And even at 93 years of age he has broad shoulders, strong arms, and large, powerful hands; my shoulders are narrow, my arms are reed like, and my hands are so soft, almost feminine.

Not that there is anything wrong with feminine hands; they look great on women. But they don’t look virile and masculine like my Dad’s.

That is why I was startled when an older gentleman stopped me in the mall the other day. “Aren’t you Bud Walker’s son?” he asked.

“Yes, I am,” I said. “I’m his youngest son, Joe.”

“I thought so,” the gentleman said. “He used to speak of you often.” Now, you need to know that it has been years since Dad has spoken to anyone about anything. Time and disability have robbed him of one of one of his greatest natural abilities: his ability to communicate. Dad had a way with words and a way with people that I always admired and wanted to emulate. These days, Dad is in a care center, where his warm smile and pleasant disposition endear him to all with whom he comes in contact.

But he isn’t talking — about me or anything else.

So, after bringing the gentleman in the mall up to date with my father’s condition, I had to ask him how he could, after so many years, remember Dad, not to mention Dad’s youngest son.

The man paused, then said simply: “Your father is one of my heroes.” I could understand that. Dad was my hero too. But, somehow, in caring for him through his current difficulties, I had forgotten the bright, vibrant, charismatic man he once was, until I was reminded by a stranger.

“Years ago when I was starting out in the life insurance business, your father took me under his wing,” he explained. “He taught me how to sell, but more important, he taught me how to serve my clients and develop relationships of trust and understanding with them. I’ve tried to run my business that way ever since. I couldn’t have done it any other way.

“But that isn’t the real reason your Dad is my hero,” the man continued. “One time, a group of us from the main office went to a convention in Las Vegas. I had never been on one of those trips, but I had heard stories, you know? And sure enough, that first night a group of the guys were making plans to go places and do things that, well, married men shouldn’t do.

“I wanted to be one of the guys; but I didn’t want to do this. So I asked: ‘Is Bud going?’ The other guys kind of looked at each other and laughed. One of them said, ‘Bud’s a great guy and everything, but he doesn’t know how to relax and have a good time.’

“That’s all I needed to hear,’ I just smiled at the guy and said, ‘You know what? Neither do I.’ I figured if your Dad could have a career without compromising his values, so could I.

“I’ve had a good career,” the man concluded, “and in two months my wife and I are going to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. Following your Dad’s example has been part of both.”

I didn’t find what I was looking for at the mall that day. But I found something even better: a rediscovered hero. Even if I don’t look a thing like him.



— by Joseph Walker
with permission
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Article...

Radar

In looking through some old papers, I found the following description of how ships during World War I were protected by the power of Radar. I wrote this while aboard a ship during World War II.

On the Good Ship Silversteak bound for Europe

To a man at sea, sailing aboard a ship equipped with the latest scientific devices, it is very easy to feel that there is such a thing as

a guardian angel to keep him from harm. I refer to a wonderful and mysterious force that science has given us — the power of radar.

Imagine a ship far out at sea, inching along through a fog so dense, you can hardly see your hand before your face. It is impossible to see the light of an approaching vessel, and the warning sound of a foghorn might be deceiving as to its location.

What can a skipper do in a situation like this to protect the lives of those on board? If his vessel is equipped with radar, he can tell on his radar screen if another ship is approaching, even though it may be several miles distant. This remarkable electronic device can see through the fog, affording a means for extremely precise measurement of the distance the oncoming vessel is away and the direction from which it is approaching. It is interesting to speculate on how many wrecks have been avoided, and lives saved by the wonderful power of radar.

My first experience with radar was during World War II. The troop ship *West Point*, on which I crossed the seas to Europe, did not travel in convoy. It zigzagged across the broad Atlantic alone, through waters where enemy submarines lurked, without any escorting vessels for protection.

I remember what a feeling of security it gave us when we were told that our ship was so swift, that it could outrun any submarine, and that it was possible, with our radar equipment, to detect any enemy underwater craft long before it could come within range to launch a torpedo.

The account of my experience while crossing the Atlantic is similar, in a way, to the dangers young people face today. There is evil, which is very real, that threatens them like submarines. There are young people all over the land whose lives have been damaged for as long as they live as a result of a drunk driver, caused not by them necessarily, but by a drunk driver who has been at a party.

I recently read that half of all marriages go on the rocks. I’m not an expert on marriage, but I’d like to tell of an experience I once had attending a wedding in Des Moines. At the close of the ceremony, the pastor said to the bride and groom: “May I give you some advice which I think will help you make your marriage happy? In the evening at supper time, or in the morning at breakfast, say a prayer together. If you are puzzled at first what to pray about, soon you will think of

several requests you feel like adding to the Lord's Prayer. I think it will enrich your marriage and draw you closer together."

That suggestion reminds me of that ship crossing the ocean, which is threatened by submarines or approaching ships. A prayer can be like radar which helps you to escape danger and keep your marriage from facing disaster.

— by Skip Westphal

Service Article...

Sowing of Seed

SEED Missionary Aid Association was established in 1975. SEED stands for Salvation - Education - Equipping - and Discipling. SEED is a nonprofit organization with a four-fold purpose: presenting Salvation; educating ministers and lay pastors; equipping individuals and congregations with tools to strengthen their Christian walk and help with some of the necessities of life; and discipling new believers. Contributions are tax deductible and very much appreciated by the board of SEED and by the recipients of materials.

Along with mailing materials to American pastors, individuals, and prison inmates, SEED also mails packages of materials to foreign pastors and individuals in the following countries: Kenya, Ghana, Poland, Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, Guyana, Gambia, Central African Republic, the Philippines, Union of Myanmar, India, Rivers States West Africa, Brazil, Costa Rica, Republic of Guinea, and the Republic of South Africa.

The Director of SEED is Earl Lewis. Earl and all of the members of SEED's Advisory Board attend the Church of God (7th Day) in Joplin, Missouri. Please send financial donations or Bibles to: *S.E.E.D. Missionary Aid Association*, PO Box 10, Neck City, MO 64849. God bless you as you bless others less fortunate.

— by Earl Lewis

Hmmm...

A man said to his wife one day, "I don't know how you can be so stupid and so beautiful all at the same time." The wife responded, "Allow me to explain it to you. God made me beautiful so you would be attracted to me; God made me stupid so I would be attracted to you!"

Hmmm...

The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.

A Bit of History...

Niger

Welcome to the Republic of Niger, the largest country in West Africa. Niger is a landlocked, arid nation in north central Africa, surrounded by Algeria, Libya, Chad, Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali. Two-thirds is desert, the northern borders stretching to the middle regions of the Sahara Desert. The heat can be so intense that rain frequently vaporizes before it reaches the ground. The remaining third along the southern border is made up of dry to semi-fertile savanna (grassland). This region consists of small-scale gardens along the banks of the Niger River to the southwest. The rest of the region is still rain-fed. The southern border receives up to 76 cm (30 in) of rain in the wet season; but, due to the dryness of the air, most of this quickly evaporates. Enough rain is retained to enable limited agriculture. Two-thirds of Niger receives less than 10 cm (4 in) of rain per year. Lake Chad has shrunk beyond the borders of Niger to the southeast. Ninety-five percent of the population lives on rain-fed agriculture.

Climate

The climate of Niger is hot and, in most areas, dry. The rainy season is negligible in the north, and lasts from June to October in the south. The average annual temperature at Niamey, in the southeast, is 29°C (85°F). The days and nights are hot except from December to February, when the nights get cooler.

History

Ruins of cities preserved by the arid climate of the Sahara Desert indicate that a highly civilized people inhabited Niger 4,000 years ago.

In the last 1,000 years, three empires have controlled this historically important crossroads of the Sahara. The Borno Empire ruled the East around Lake Chad from the eighth to the nineteenth centuries; the Hausa Empire controlled the central regions during most of this same time; and the Songhai Empire dominated western Niger until 1591.

Islam spread into Niger in the tenth and eleventh centuries, taking root among the

aristocracy and upper levels of the cities. It was not until the nineteenth century that it became the religion of the rural people.

The Scottish explorer, Mungo Park, who was killed on the Niger River in 1806, made the first recorded European contact with Niger. The British followed up his exploration in the ensuing years, seeking to learn more about this vast unknown region and to develop trade with African states. In 1890, France began its first military foray into the area. By 1899, she had begun the process of colonization. After much bloodshed, Niger became a French colony in 1921. On August 3, 1960, Niger declared independence from France under the leadership of President Hamani Diori. In 1974, due to the economic and social problems created by the great drought of 1973, Diori was overthrown in a military coup led by Lieutenant General Seyni Kountche. Kountche maintained close ties with France, and developed stronger relations with neighboring countries. He died in 1987 and General Ali Saibou became acting president. Following Niger's first democratic elections in the 1993, Mahamane Ousmane became president.

Political Situation

Constitution: The constitution of 1960, introduced at independence, was suspended in 1974 following a military coup. After that time the *Supreme Military Council* (CMS), with executive power vested in its chairman, ruled the country.

In 1983, President Kountche set up a 150-member *National Council of Development* (CND) presided over by a civilian prime minister and providing for a 93-seat National Assembly and President. In 1987, a charter was presented aimed at drafting a new constitution and calling for elections. In 1988, the CND was given the task of actually drafting the constitution which was approved in 1989. This constitution was suspended later in 1991. A new constitution leading to a civilian multi-party political system was set up in 1993. In 1996, following a new government shutdown caused by a stalemate between the opposing political parties of the president and prime minister, Colonel Bare seized control of the government during a military coup after a constitutional convention and subsequent changes to the document. He was then elected as president in a contested democratic election in 1996 and assassinated 1999.

Political Instability: A successful coup in 1974 ousted President Hamani Diori. There have been numerous coup attempts or plots since that time. A transitional government replaced the military in 1992. Presidential elections took place in 1993. A coup precipitated the election of 1996. In 1996, foreign aid was cut drastically due to corruption and lack of results: French civil servants pulling out, US AID pulling out with the downsizing of the US Embassy.

Political Parties: The *Mouvement National de la Société de Développement* (MNSD) was formed in 1988. With the adoption of the multi-party system, forty political parties registered to contest the 1993 election.

— by Michael Porter, 03BP2991 Jericho,
Cotonou, Benin, Africa
goodseed1st@hotmail.com

Correspondence Request...

I'm writing from Nigeria, Africa. We just finished our Sabbath fellowship. We have electricity today, after several weeks of power failure in our community. My name is Joy David, I'm a single girl of 22. I am a Sabbath-keeping Christian. I'm an orphan, but live with a Christian Sister who shares the same faith with me. She has no child of her own. Her husband died several years ago and she chose not to remarry. She is faithful in serving God and she cares for homeless children in our neighborhood.

I want to have Christian friends who share the same faith to correspond with me. There are so many people in my community who don't know anything about the Creator's Sabbath. Ninety-seven percent of the people in my village are Sunday-keepers. They think the Sabbath is not the True day of Worship. This is a sad thing. They are happy to celebrate the pagan Christmas, Easter, etc. They think our small family is wrong to observe the Feasts of God, Passover, FOT, etc. They think when you don't keep Sunday, Christmas, and Easter, that you are not obeying God, but we must not obey man. We must obey God by observing the Sabbath and the Creator's seven ordained Feasts as contained in the book of Leviticus.

I was born into a Sabbath-observing family. I was taught by my parents to observe the Sabbath and the Feasts of God. Please, I want to exchange mail with you as I know you can help me with literature to pass to our

people, especially girls my age who are lost in sin and prostitution. Please write back to me and if you send me your postal address, I will post my pictures to you. May God bless you as you obey His call. In His Love,

— by Joy David
PO Box 184 SK
UYO 520001
AKS

Nigeria, West Africa

Church News...

Africa Report

We thank God for the sister and her group from Bermuda who sent us \$1,500, and a brother from USA who sent \$350, making the total gift received \$1,850. A total sum of \$3,236 was spent on all the programs. We spend so much money on transportation, and with \$2,500, we can buy a fairly good, used ten-seater bus. Another thing that took much money was the PA system. With \$1,000 we can have a complete band set with speakers and address system. We need them for our outdoor outreach programs, etc. We are still in need of a computer and phone line to connect to the Internet, and this will save us a lot of money, too. We owe a sum of \$800 and pray that someone will help us out, as it is never good for us to owe. Praise God for a ministry in the USA that supplied us free of charge a film projector/films, also with a “touch kit” that can operate with a car battery or electricity for rural evangelism where there is no light. We can now show Jesus films in the rural areas. We are in need of \$800 to purchase Christian literature to distribute in Togo and here in Benin. We need also a sum of \$850 to buy French, Arabic, and Yoruba Bibles for the converts who don't have Bibles. Many brethren who were former Muslims have no Bibles or faith-building materials. I need \$390 to assist me in my rent for a 3-month period. I have been praying for a monthly support of \$130 for our rent, etc. We need also \$1,500 to pay for fellowship centers' nine-month rent in the villages where we established home Churches. Praise God for several Sunday worship pastors who attended the FOT and have quit the sun worship to follow the true day of worship, also elders from SDA Churches, etc. We need new or used clothes, shoes, beddings, writing materials, books, CD's, audio/video tapes, Bible dictionaries, commentaries, study Bibles, etc.



We distributed 160 copies of free French and English Bibles to the new converts who attended the Feast. Also, 121 free reading glasses were also given out as some are seen in pictures, testing them. May God bless you all who love His appearing. Let us continue to be occupied until He comes. Yours in the blessed hope.

— by Michael Porter, 03BP2991 Jericho,
Cotonou, Benin, Africa
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Church of God News Purpose Restated

January 2004 marks the first anniversary of *The Church of God News*, a newspaper for Sabbath-keepers.

A new publication could not be justified if it were merely to create competition or duplicate other's efforts. There are already more publications than one could possibly have time to read and many are very good. We are taking a new approach. Our focus will be on the Church, what we need to get our act together, how to get it together, who we are, and what our responsibilities are. Short articles have been submitted and printed that help in leading us to the Kingdom of God. We also want to get ideas from local Churches, larger “corporate” Churches, and individuals about what they are doing that is profitable, things that others can assist in or copy.

We are optimistic about the Church and see many great things being done.

There is an obvious and urgent need to edify and unify the Church. It's a tall order and may generate a lot of flack from the naysayers; but we must do something different or we will keep getting the same results: Church division and decline. Phil Harris sang a song many years ago with the line, “You gotta accentuate the positive; eliminate the negative.” “The COGNews” accentuates the positive and, while we know we will never

eliminate the negative, we try to minimize it without totally ignoring the fact that problems do exist. The guide to this approach is to employ some basic scriptural principles.

Many have professed this novel approach and then tweaked the Scriptures to support their own ideas or agendas. Our guiding scriptures are basic and have a logical progression.

1. (**Ephesians 4:11-12**) “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

This presumes that there are those appointed to oversee, lead and guide.

Problems start:

- a. When irresponsible people “reign.” (A frequent problem)
- b. When authority is rejected. (Resulting in anarchy and confusion)

2. (**Hebrews 10:24**) “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.”

Once responsible “leaders” are established and recognized, the duty of the Saints comes into play. Provoke is better rendered “stimulate”; we’ve had enough “provoking.”

3. (**Hebrews 10:25**) “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

This tells us how, by using (#3870) *parakaleo*, to aid comfort and encourage. That’s the same root as for *parakletos*, the function of the Holy Spirit. How much of that have you seen in the Church of late?

4. (**Ephesians 4:3**) “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

This is probably our greatest challenge. It doesn’t say keep the unity . . . it says endeavor; try to keep it. Frenchman Georges Clemenceau mused that “It is much easier to make war than peace.”

Each of these scriptures needs meditation, prayer, and APPLICATION. We are just at the starting gate.

— by Steven J. Kieler