

Church of God News

Positive News of the Churches of God

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Amazing Story...

Captain Kangaroo

Captain Kangaroo died in January of this year at the age of 76, which is odd, because he's never looked a day under 76. (DOB: 6/27/27) It reminded me of the following story.

Some people have been a bit offended that the actor, Lee Marvin, is buried in a grave alongside three- and four-star generals at Arlington National Cemetery. His marker gives his name, rank (PVT) and service (USMC). Nothing else. Here's a guy who was only a famous movie star who served his time, why . . . does he rate burial with these guys?

Well, the following is the amazing answer: I always liked Lee Marvin, but did not know the extent of his Corps experiences. In a time when many Hollywood stars served their country in the armed forces, often in rear-echelon posts where they were carefully protected, only to be trotted out to perform for the cameras in war bond promotions, Lee Marvin was a genuine hero. He won the Navy Cross at Iwo Jima. There is only one higher Naval award — the Medal of Honor.

If that is a surprising comment on the true character of the man, he credits his sergeant with an even greater show of bravery. Here is the dialog from *The Tonight Show* between Johnny Carson and his guest Lee Marvin:

Johnny said, "Lee, I'll bet a lot of people are unaware that you were a Marine in the

initial landing at Iwo Jima — and that during the course of that action you earned the Navy Cross and were severely wounded."

"Yeah, yeah . . . I got shot square in the behind and they gave me the Cross for securing a hot spot about halfway up Suribachi. The bad thing about being shot up on a mountain is people get shot hauling you down. But, Johnny, at Iwo, I served under the bravest man I ever knew. We both got the cross the same day, but what he did for his Cross made mine look cheap in comparison. He actually stood up on Red beach and directed his troops to move forward and get . . . off the beach. There were bullets flying by and mortar rounds landing everywhere, and he stood there as the main target of gunfire so that he could get his men to safety. He did this on more than one occasion because his men's safety was more important than his own life.

"That sergeant and I have been lifelong friends. When they brought me off Suribachi, we passed the sergeant and he lit a smoke and passed it to me, lying on my belly on the litter and said, 'Where'd they get you Lee?'

"Well Bob, if you make it home before me, tell Mom to sell the outhouse!

"Johnny, I'm not lying. Sergeant Keeshan was the bravest man I ever knew. The sergeant's name is Bob Keeshan. You and the world know him as Captain Kangaroo."

Another Note

There was this wimpy little man (who also just passed away) on PBS, gentle and quiet.

Mr. Rogers is another of those you would least suspect of being anything but what he now portrays to our youth. But Mr. Rogers was a U.S. Navy Seal, combat proven in Vietnam with over twenty-five confirmed kills to his name. He wore a long-sleeve sweater on his show to cover the many tattoos on his forearm and biceps. He was a master in small arms and hand-to-hand combat, able to disarm or kill in a heartbeat.

After the war, Mr. Rogers became an ordained Presbyterian minister, and therefore a pacifist — vowing to never harm another human, and also, dedicating the rest of his life

to trying to help lead children on the right path in life. He hid the tattoos and his past life away, and won our hearts with his quiet wit and charm.

America's real heroes don't flaunt what they did. They quietly go about their day-to-day lives, doing what they do best. They earned our respect and the freedoms that we all enjoy. Look around and see if you can find one of those heroes in your midst.

Often, they are the ones you would least suspect, but the ones you would most like to have on your side if anything ever happened. Take the time to thank anyone that has fought for our freedom. With encouragement, they could be the next Captain Kangaroo, Mr. Rogers, or Lee Marvin.

— by author unknown

Guest Editorial...

COG Half-Life Less Than Fifteen Years

Bill Lussenheide, a long-time member who runs a marketing company and has friendships within many of the COG groups, wrote to the CEM forum: "UCG has done a demographic study of its membership and its ministry. The median age is 58 plus. This compares to the United States national average age of 37. For many months, I have done a private 'Death to Birth' ratio study of the various COG member publications. For nearly all organizations, the ratio is about 2.5 to 3 deaths for every birth. Twentieth anniversary or higher notices outnumber wedding announcements by about the same ratio. Anyone who does not see that the COG organizations are old, compared to COG demographics 30 years ago, has a poor memory.

"There will be individual congregations that have unique demographics that differ from this, so do not E-mail telling me such. I am talking about collective stats, which have less sampling errors. The COG has a half-life of less than 15 years, in which half of its members will have deceased, and the other half will have a half-life of just 7 years. Unless the COG organizations can grow a NET gain of memberships of greater than 7% a year starting immediately, then they are demographically doomed."

How did we get to be such an "old" group? Most of the older members have had children. The problem is that most of those

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

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children do not remain in the Church of God groups. If our own young people do not remain among us, can we really expect to bring in other young people as new members? Why do our young people leave? This writer has addressed the subject with dozens of young people. It is good to ask the opposite question: Why should they stay?

The answer most COG members would probably give is: "Because we have the truth." When it comes to knowing Scriptures, many Church of God groups are better than most other congregations. However, there are more spiritual gifts than the gift of know-

ledge. When it comes to love for neighbors, taking care of the poor, helping disadvantaged people, healing the sick, receiving direct guidance from God (prophesying), teaching Bible basics, understanding young people's difficulties, etc., the Church of God groups are often far behind.

Furthermore, it is difficult for young people when they are told they should stay in a Church of God group because it "has the right doctrine," and then most of the services and publications are devoted to finding "what is the right doctrine?"

Learning the right doctrine is something we should have done, but we need not have left the other undone. The Church of God groups produce hundreds of newsletters (of which this is one), each proclaiming the Sabbath, Feast days, and other doctrines — hopefully doing it a little better than the others. Most of these things are not helpful to young people who are trying to learn the basics.

More Doing, Less Doctrine — We do not need more doctrine and teaching about doctrine, we need more doing and teaching about doing.

— by Norm Edwards
(This is an excerpt from a longer article about SEE, a Sabbatarian Educational Environment, including a post-secondary school and a place for older people to be able to serve while in "retirement." This article will appear in the Mar/Apr 2004 *Servants News*.)

Article...

A Threefold Cord

Are you the weakest link in your congregational chain, or are you part of a band that is not easily broken?

A fellow spotted a flatbed truck with several steel barrels on its deck. He wrote, "One might have expected this would have been the time for heavy chains," but the barrels were held in place with wide fibre bands. His nephew, whose expertise was in trucking, said the fibre bands were much more reliable. "A chain," he pointed out, "no matter how strong, is only as strong as the weakest link. If one goes, so goes the whole load. The fibre band, on the other hand, is made up of many weaker fibres all bound together as one, and will hardly ever give way."

The concept is nothing new: Solomon wrote, "Two are better than one . . . If two lie together then they have heat . . . and a threefold cord is not quickly broken," **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**.

Jesus Christ, in choosing His disciples, knew the concept of synergy — two bodies working together can produce more energy than the same two bodies working independently. Twelve working together could generate tremendous power.

He never had a chain of command, but told His disciples to work together in making followers throughout the nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe what Jesus had commanded His workers (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

It is fortunate Jesus did not have a chain of command. What if Judas had been the middle link? When he betrayed Jesus the entire load of doing God's work would have been spilled on the road. But, like trucker's fibre bands, the rest of the disciples held together, so the work was carried on.

The writer stated, "How like the Church! If we depend on one or two strong individuals we can be disappointed. If we all share the load and pull together as with one mind, our strength will be phenomenal!"

Betty and I spent many years in a Church with a chain of command. God was the first link, Jesus was next, the pastor general (as he called himself) was third, and his ministers completed the chain. This chain tied together multi-thousands in the various congregations worldwide.

Perhaps the pastor general envisioned himself as immortal, but time proved otherwise. The chain of command was broken with his death, so a substitute took his place. He, also, was not immortal, and just a few weeks after his death, his son occupied the throne.

But the chain of command was so broken that most of the members fell off the truck. Rather than lying where they landed however, many joined together like fibres in the trucker's bands, to work within their own communities and do as Jesus commanded His disciples. Through them, the word of truth is again being given to the world in tremendous power, as it was in the early centuries.

In the true Lord's Prayer, Jesus told our father, "I don't pray only for these men, my disciples, but for all who will have faith in Me through their teaching. May they all be one [like the strands in fibre bands], so all men may

have faith that You have sent Me, and that You love them just as You love Me,” (**John 17:20-23 Author’s Version**).

The gentleman who inspired this column notes something else about being part of a fibre band. He wrote, “[Jesus] knew it would be so much more enjoyable, working together in fellowship as well. What a blessed Lord!”

— by Leslie A. Turvey
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Perks of being over 60...

Your eyes won’t get much worse.

Poem...

Faith and Flowers

To see all the new spring blooms
And beautiful blossoms,
Is like a peek into God’s kingdom
And His wonderful promises!

Reminders that sometimes even though
A late frost can make us feel slow,
There is still hope in every seed
And faith in God is ever our need.

We see His assurance in every flower
And rejoice together in God’s loving power.

— by Pam Chambers
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Article...

What is Worship?

The most common Greek and Hebrew words for worship denote two main things: bowing down, and serving (**Exodus 20:5**). When Ezekiel saw the glory of God, he wrote, “. . . I fell upon my face,” **Ezekiel 1:28**. When Saul saw the vision of the risen Christ, he fell on the ground before Him (**Acts 9:4**).

The holiness and grandeur of God overwhelms us and plunges us deep into our own nothingness. In ancient times, some were able to encounter God directly — but it is rare. Nevertheless, His marvels are for all to behold in the universe and all through life and nature. In them, we recognize the presence of God and the action of God, His glory, and His holiness!

As Paul wrote, “Ever since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be

understood and perceived in what He has made . . .” **Romans 1:20, NAB**.

Adoration and worship are the expression of the complex reaction of humans who are overwhelmed by the nearness of God. It can bring mankind to a state of silent confusion, veneration, trembling (**Psalms 5:7**), and thanksgiving (**Genesis 24:48**) as well as a happy, excited adoration (**Psalms 95:1-6**). The Bible talks both of public, as well as private, worship. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshipped privately and erected altars to God wherever they encountered Him.

After the Old Covenant was established with Israel, a great deal of emphasis was placed also on public worship — sacrifices, festivals, musical instruments (for example: cymbals, trumpets, stringed instruments, dance, circumcision, holy wars, washings, public prayers, readings of Scriptures, etc.).

Privately, one could dance, sing, pray, jump, shout, tear off one’s clothing, cry, wail, beat on oneself, fall on the ground, etc.

One of the main elements of worship was service. The second Commandment forbade bowing down to idols and “serving them.” In the Hebrew, the worshippers of Baal were those who also served him. In **II Kings 10:19** “servants” of Baal (**KJV**) are the worshippers of Baal (**NAB**).

To worship God is automatically taken also as a willingness to serve Him. There are both Greek and Hebrew words that mean service and are translated as worship. To serve other gods was to worship them. When God freed Israel from Egypt, He wanted them to “serve” him (**Exodus 8:20**). Obeying God was cardinal to worshipping Him. In public worship one could hide in the crowd but God warned through the prophets that outward, public worship is futile without inward heart worship.

Micah expressed the principle: “Where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” **Micah 6:6-8**. Isaiah said essentially the same when he condemned the over emphasis on festivals,

ceremonies, sacrifices, and even prayers without true obedience to God's great moral commands. See **Isaiah 1:10-17**. We will discuss more about worship another day.

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Historic Sayings...

Common entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards but only applicable to the "ace of spades." To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't "playing with a full deck."

Article...

A Nation that Rejected God

In the Bible, we read about a nation that rejected God and His way of Life. This nation was ancient Israel. It would be to our benefit to review the events that caused its fall as a nation and learn from the lessons of the past. It is said that they who do not learn from the past are due to repeat it whether it be good or bad.

I Kings 12 records the division of Israel into two nations. One became the kingdom of Judah, which was lead by King Rehoboam, and the other was the kingdom of Israel, led by King Jeroboam.

The reason for the division was a political one. King Rehoboam was advised to lighten the burden on the people of Israel (all twelve tribes). He did the opposite, causing ten of the twelve tribes to follow the leadership of King Jeroboam.

"And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah," **I Kings 12:26-27**.

We see that this king became concerned about his position as king. This led to a bad choice as recorded in the next few verses.

In **verses 28-30**, it records that he took council and decided to build two golden calves and place one in Bethel and the other in Dan. Then he told the people not to go to Jerusalem once a year, but to worship where the calves were because it was too much of a burden for them to go to Jerusalem. He also made priests of the lowest of the people (**verse 31**).

You will note that the people of Israel did not seem to reject the idea as a whole. They just followed along with this plan.

In **verse 32**, it states, "And Jeroboam ordained a feast [note: not God's] in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the Feast that is in Judah [the Feast of Tabernacles], and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made." So he decided to ordain a feast without God's authority.

By this action, this king started to remove the people from the true worship of God by replacing the method and the place of worship. The first few generations may have believed they were worshiping the true God, but over time, idolatry becomes the main religion of the country.

This king started the actions that led the kingdom of Israel to its downfall. Over a period of about 230 years, the northern kingdom of Israel went through hard times politically and there was an increase in moral decay over these years. This fact is recorded in both the Bible and in history books.

God had to send prophet after prophet to warn the leadership and people of this nation, but few ever listened to these men of God.

Even about 20 years before the destruction of this nation, Hosea spoke the word of the Lord to Northern Israel saying, "...for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood," **Hosea 4:1-2**. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge [of God], I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children," **Hosea 4:6**.

By 720 B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria, and the

people of this land were deported out of the area and the nation ceased to exist.

Like the actions of King Jeroboam, we as a nation are drifting from God by removing prayer from schools, the Ten Commandments from the courtrooms, etc. We as a nation are going on a very dangerous path. If we do not want history to repeat itself, nationally and individually, we must turn back to the true values and worship of God.

I encourage you to ponder on these facts, look toward God, and pray that our country will stop rejecting God's Way before it is too late. Search the history of Israel and learn from the lessons of the past.

— by Doyle J. Carter

So You Think You Know Everything...

A dime has 118 ridges around the edge.

A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.

A crocodile cannot stick out its tongue.

A dragonfly has a life span of 24 hours.

A goldfish has a memory span of three seconds.

A shark is the only fish that can blink with both eyes.

A snail can sleep for three years.

Almonds are a member of the peach family.

Butterflies taste with their feet.

Letter to God...

Dear God, I bet it's very hard for you to love everybody in the whole world. There are only four people in our family, and I can never do it.

Love, Nancy

Article...

Please Don't Kill the Ref

A shrill whistle blast penetrated the high school gym. A clenched fist waved in the air while an accusing finger pointed out the teenage transgressor.

"Thirty five!" an authoritative voice intoned. "You're pushing!"

The muscular young man with the number 35 on his basketball jersey, groaned and grimaced, kicking the ball and stamping his foot like a 3-year-old who does not want to take a nap. His coach stormed onto the floor to suggest, loudly and crudely, that the official who made the call was visually, mentally, and ethically impaired — not necessarily in that order.

Meanwhile, fans focused their wrath on the referee's appearance and ancestry, offering recommendations that are physiologically impossible and genetically unlikely. The entire gymnasium seemed to rage with vented anger and released frustration. And do you know what happened? Nothing.

No matter how many tantrums were thrown, no matter how many ugly epithets were flung, the referee's call stood: a foul on number 35. For all the belligerent effort, nothing changed, except perhaps the diminished dignity of those who somehow seem to believe that you can leave your humanity in the car when you go to the gym.

One of the great lessons that sports should teach us is that there are certain things that are always going to be beyond our control. Referees, coaches, and players all make countless decisions during the course of a game. Some decisions are good some are not. But even when a decision is made that is obviously incorrect, agonizing over it is a waste of time and energy (come on, be honest — when was the last time you saw a ref listen to his hecklers, blow his whistle and say, "I'm sorry, I must have been wrong. Let's take that foul off the books and start all over again"?). The most successful coaches and players focus their attention on responding to events as they happen, not on trying to change things after they've already taken place.

The same principle is true in real world settings, and it can be viewed from a variety of different contexts. No amount of yelling can reconstruct a carelessly broken heirloom. A dying relationship is not revived with water that has already passed under the bridge. A wound will not heal if you keep picking at the scab. And if you want your garden to grow, you eventually must stop plowing the same ground.

Get the idea?

We are imperfect people living together on an imperfect planet. Our success here is not determined so much by our ability to control the external forces that influence our lives,

but in our ability to respond to those forces in a productive and positive way. When bad things happen, as they inevitably will, the successful person will accept the challenge, and instead of wasting precious time and energy shaking a fist at the heavens and raging about the unfairness of it all, they will focus their attention on the most important matter: figuring out a way to deal with it.

Please don't misunderstand. I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with protesting injustice when we see it, or fighting for our rights when we truly believe we have been wronged. That is an appropriate way to respond to certain kinds of challenges. But we've got to pick our battles carefully and save our best efforts for the fights that really matter. Otherwise we'll find ourselves constantly at war with a world that is crammed full of frustrating possibilities at home, at work, at school, at Church, and on the basketball court — especially on the basketball court.

— by Joseph Walker
with permission
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The Way It Was...

March 1904, Fort Dodge, IA “Nutty” Willey Leaves Town

Michael Conlin, Earnest Willey, and William Kelso were arraigned in police court this morning on the charge of being drunk. The first two named were fined \$1 and costs, while Kelso was taxed \$5 and the trimmings. Conlin is a track-laying foreman and was employed by the Great Western for laying steel for the Omaha extension. He is deaf and, for that reason, had some difficulty in pleading guilty when arraigned this morning. His fine was suspended providing he would return to work.

Ernest Willey, who is better known as “Nutty” Willey, left the city hall this morning with the firm determination of never showing his face in Fort Dodge, again. He made this promise under threat of being sent to the dry house at Cherokee.

Willey is a well-known character in Fort Dodge, and for a number of years, has been arrested repeatedly for being drunk. He was given an hour to get out of town, together with the information that if he again came within the limits of the city, he would be promptly arrested.

Of Interest...

Satellite Sunset

For those of you who have never been in space, this is what it looks like. This photo was taken via satellite, on a cloudless day. Note how the lights are already on in Holland, Paris, and Barcelona, and how it's still daylight in London, Lisbon, and Madrid. The sun is still shining on the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Mediterranean Ocean is already in darkness. In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean you can see the Azores Islands; below them to the right, the Madeira Islands; a bit below them the Canary Islands; further south, close to the furthest western point of Africa, the Cape Verde Islands. Note how the Sahara is huge and can be seen clearly during both daytime and nighttime. To the left, on top, is Greenland, totally frozen. Fantastic or what?!

— author unknown



Article...

The War Moves On

Why does the world hate God? The world does, you know. Not everyone in the world, but the world at large hates God. There is a hatred of God that is visceral, primeval, strange, and irrational at any level we can deal with. You may have noticed it in the second commandment, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children

unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me," **Exodus 20:4-5**.

There it is in black and white. There are people who hate God. They want all mention of God expunged from public life. Now they have managed to remove the Ten Commandments from an Alabama courtroom. Tomorrow they will attack the Ten Commandments on the wall at the Supreme Court. They have fought prayer of any kind in school. Even a moment of silence is troubling because it implies prayer. They have fought not only the reading of the Bible in school, but also even the presence of the Bible. A teacher was not allowed to have a Bible on his desk.

No, I don't mean to say that everyone who participates in things like this is a hater of God. However, there are people who do. Never forget that. And working alongside them are people exactly like the people who foolishly helped the communists in the '50s — people whom the communists called "useful idiots."

Where does all this stuff come from? Why this drive to use Bible-sniffing dogs to ferret out every last vestige of religious observance of the acknowledgment of God from public life in this country? The answer: there is a war going on. It is a war being fought at the highest spiritual levels — a war that cannot be won with tanks and guns. Paul warned, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," **II Corinthians 10:3-5**.

The constitutional arguments out there today against God are what Paul would call a "pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God," **II Corinthians 10:5**. Once you realize this and you start looking for the pretexts, they jump out at you. I am afraid I find myself shouting at the television set. The arguments are so stupid and so obvious.

Why, for example, the irrational objection to a monument that merely memorialized the Ten Commandments? That's easy. The seventh commandment is "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Sexual sin is the defining characteristic of our generation. The monument also identifies God with the fourth command-

ment. Critics are right who say the Ten Commandments are not about a generic God. They are about the God who created the world in six days and rested the seventh.

Most importantly, it points the finger at those who hate God, "... I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me," **Deuteronomy 5:9**. I can't overemphasize the importance of those words and of this commandment. This commandment is about more than pictures on a wall, or statues in the vestry. It is about the rejection of God in favor of an idol. It is about the hatred of God.

Not long ago I had occasion to address a group in Little Rock, Arkansas, and this was my theme. I developed it thoroughly, not only with items from the news, but with scripture to give insight into the real war and what we might do about it. I'd like to send you a free cassette tape of this sermon titled, "The Hatred of God." I think you need to hear it. To get your complimentary copy without obligation, just write to the address below.

Don't delay. The war moves on apace.

— by Ronald L. Dart
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Hmmm...

No pearls of value are ever found in North American edible oysters.

"Brevity is the soul of wit," *from Hamlet*, has nothing to do with being witty. In Shakespeare's time, "wit" meant "wisdom." Polonius meant that brevity is the soul of wisdom, or that the wise know how to put things succinctly.

The fish symbol for Christians and Christianity is not a reference to the miracle of the loaves and fish. The symbol began as a Greek rebus. The letters in the Greek word for fish form the first letters of the Greek words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

Canada isn't wholly north of the United States. Actually, 27 of our states lie to some degree north of our northern neighbor's southernmost part, Middle Island which lies west of Toledo in Lake Erie.

*“Establishing the Children...”***Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread**

The Spring Holy Days are upon us and it is a joyful time of the year. We should look forward to partaking of the Passover service, which is a way we recommit ourselves to God’s way of life. Once again, we stand before God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and our sins are wiped away, forgotten, and blotted out. In the simple acts of taking a small portion of unleavened wafer and a small sip of wine, we renew our commitment to follow God’s way of life. At baptism, we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior. In the Passover service, we accept the broken unleavened wafer, which represents Christ’s broken body, and we sip the wine representing His blood shed for our sins. The Days of Unleavened Bread picture putting sin (leaven) out of our lives, and eating unleavened products (taking on the mind of Christ who was without sin).

The Night to Be Remembered

These days should not go by without explaining to our children why they are so important. The Night to be Remembered (Observed) is a good time to teach our children what happened originally to Israel, how the lamb was slain, the blood spread over the doorposts, and the people of Israel were delivered, (**Exodus 12.**) Explain how Israel left Egypt with great joy, after being delivered from slavery. Then taking them to the New Testament (**I Corinthians 5:7**), teach them that Christ became the Passover lamb, and that He died for us. Tell them that we have also been delivered from our sins, and the slavery that captured us before we were converted. God has given us the opportunity to be a part of His Family, not only us, but our children and their children, and so on, and so on.

Passover Tradition

We had a tradition in our small local Church group that we did on the Night to be Remembered. We all gathered at someone’s home or rented a hall for this night. We always had a potluck (unleavened food, of course) after sundown. After a short while, we would gather the children off in a corner. I had written a story about the events in **Exodus 12**: the account of Moses going before Pharaoh so many times, the plagues that fell on Egypt, the death angel passing

over and killing Egypt’s firstborn children and cattle, Israel being spared because they had sacrificed a lamb and spread the blood over the doorposts, and finally, Pharaoh calling Moses and telling him to take Israel and get out of the land of Egypt.

I divided the story into sections, and the older children would take turns reading the story. Every time Moses went before the Pharaoh in the story, the younger children would shout “Let my people go.” As the story ended all the children would shout, “This is what this night remembers.”

The grown-ups enjoyed seeing the children perform this, and the kids enjoyed doing it; and it helped them remember the Passover story, and why we keep the Days of Unleavened Bread. The story could also be put in a play, letting the children act it out. When we taught these events of **Exodus 12** in Sabbath School, we would have a large piece of cardboard with a door drawn on it. Then we would have the children brush, paint, or color red around and over the doorposts. This taught them why Israel did this when the death angel was to pass over. Then we would open the cardboard door and let them walk through, just as Israel did on their way out of Egypt.

As an aside, Israel was commanded to spread the blood over the lintel (overhead post) and the side doorposts. Did you ever realize that the blood was not to be spread over the threshold? Why? Perhaps, just as Israel did not trample the blood of the sacrifice under their feet as they walked through the doorways, we are not to trample Christ’s blood under our feet. We can, if we decide not to keep His commandments and laws, and just walk all over them without any regard.

Remember, Israel kept the first Passover just as they were instructed to, not adding to or taking away from what they were commanded to do. Even our children in Sabbath School learned that they didn’t cross over any red colored threshold as they went through the cardboard door. The lesson is “Don’t trample over the blood (laws and commandments) of God.”

There are two activity sheets included elsewhere in this issue covering the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. Have a joyful spiritual Spring Holy Day Season!

— by Shelby Faith
sfaith@mindspring.com

The Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread

Exodus 12

Ancient Israel was in captivity in Egypt for about 430 years. They cried to God to save them and finally God decided it was time to bring Israel out of slavery. God called a man named Moses to lead Israel out, and through him instructed ancient Israel to kill a lamb on the 14th day of the first month. They were to spread the blood over the upper doorpost and the two side doorposts. At midnight the death angel passed over Egypt and every firstborn child was killed along with the firstborn of the cattle. Yet Israel was spared because they had spread the blood around their doorways. They left Egypt by night on the 15th day of the month (Read Deuteronomy 16:1 and Numbers 33:3, Numbers 28:17). Because Israel left in such a hurry, their dough didn't have time to rise. God instructed them to eat unleavened bread for 7 days. Those 7 days are called the "Days of Unleavened Bread". The night that the death angel passed over and spared Israel is called the "Passover". During the 7 days of unleavened bread, there was no leavening to be found in their houses, and they were instructed to eat unleavened bread, (bread without any leavening such as yeast, baking powder, baking soda).

Fill in the blanks in the following scriptures:

"Your lamb shall be without _____, a male of the first year. . . . And you shall keep it up until the _____ day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of _____ shall kill it in the _____."
(Exodus 12:5-6)

"And they shall take the _____ and strike it on the two _____ and on the upper _____ of the houses, wherein they shall _____ it." (Exodus 12:7)

"For I will pass through the land of _____ this night and I will smite all the _____ in the land of Egypt, both man and beast..." (Ex. 12:12)
And this day shall be unto you a _____ and you shall keep it a _____ to the Lord throughout your _____; and you shall keep it as a feast by an ordinance _____." (Ex. 12:14)

"Seven _____ shall you eat _____ bread; even the _____ day you shall put away _____ out of your houses." (Ex. 12:15)

**Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread
Youth Bible Study**

Teachers/Parents:

As you teach the Spring Holy Days to your children, ask questions regarding Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread and check your children's understanding of these days: (The answers are found in Exodus 12)

1. What is meant by the term "Passover" as relating to the Old Testament?
2. Who observed the first "Passover"?
3. How and where was the first "Passover"?
4. What is the "Feast of Unleavened Bread"?
5. What is "leaven"? (Definition)
6. How many days are we to eat unleavened bread?
7. How are we to observe these holy days?
8. How do you observe the Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread in your home?
9. Did Jesus ever keep the Passover? (John 2:13, John 2:23, Matthew 26:17-19, Mark 12:12-14)
10. Did Jesus become our Passover lamb when He was sacrificed for us? (I Corinthians 5:7)

Holy Day Activities:

1. Check recipes to find out whether the recipes call for leavening or unleavened ingredients.
2. While shopping teach your children to read labels to see whether the food has leavening or unleavened agents.
3. Allow your children to help you plan a meal for these holy days.
4. For younger children, help them find pictures of "unleavened" food and pictures of "leavened" food that should not be eaten during these holy days; Example: Ice cream=no leavening Bread=leavening
5. For the older children, help them write the story about Moses, Pharaoh, The Plagues, Passover, Israel leaving Egypt; then put the story into a play and the students perform; or keep it in story form and ask the students to read various sections of the story.

Story...**A Living Bible**

His name is Bill. He has wild hair, wears a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans, and no shoes. This was literally his wardrobe for his entire four years of college. He is brilliant — kind of esoteric and very, very bright. He became a Christian while attending college.

Across the street from the campus is a well-dressed, very conservative Church. They want to develop a ministry to the students, but are not sure how to go about it. One day Bill decides to go there.

He walks in with no shoes, wearing jeans, his T-shirt, and wild hair. The service has already started and so Bill starts down the aisle looking for a seat. The Church is completely packed and he can't find a seat. By now, people are really looking a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything.

Bill gets closer and closer and closer to the pulpit, and when he realizes there are no seats, he just squats down right on the carpet. (Although perfectly acceptable behavior at a college fellowship, trust me, this had never happened in this Church before!)

By now the people are really uptight, and the tension in the air is thick. About this time, the minister realizes that from way at the back of the Church, a deacon is slowly making his way toward Bill.

Now the deacon is in his eighties, has silver-gray hair, and a three-piece suit. He is a godly man, very elegant, very dignified, very courtly. He walks with a cane and, as he starts walking toward this boy, everyone is saying to themselves that you can't blame him for what he's going to do.

How can you expect a man of his age and of his background to understand some college kid on the floor?

It takes a long time for the man to reach the boy. The Church is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. You can't hear anyone breathing.

The minister can't even preach the sermon until the deacon does what he has to do. And now, they see this elderly man drop his cane on the floor. With great difficulty, he lowers himself, and sits down next to Bill, and worships with him so he won't be alone.

Everyone chokes up with emotion. When the minister gains control, he says, "What I'm

about to preach, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget.

"Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read."

— by author unknown

Article...**Busy**

Satan called a worldwide convention. In his opening address to his evil angels, he said:

"We can't keep the Christians from going to Church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate, abiding relationship experience in Christ. Once they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So, let them go to their Churches; let them have their conservative lifestyles; but, steal their time, so that they can't gain a relationship with Christ.

"This is what I want you to do, angels. Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior, and maintaining that vital connection throughout the day!"

"How shall we do this?" shouted the angels.

"Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life, and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husband to work six to seven days each week, ten to twelve hours per day, so that they can afford their empty lifestyles.

"Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family fragments, their home will offer no escape from the pressures of work! Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still small voice. Entice them to play the radio or the cassette player whenever they drive, to keep the TV, the VCR, the CDs, and their PCs going constantly in their home and see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-biblical music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ.

"Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news twenty-four hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services,

and false hopes.

“Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines so that their husbands will believe that external beauty is what’s important, and they will become dissatisfied with their wives. That will fragment those families quickly.

“Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted, and unprepared for the coming week. Don’t let them go out in nature to reflect on God’s wonders. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts, and movies instead.

“Keep them busy, busy, busy!

“And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk, so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions. Go ahead, let them be involved in soul-winning; but crowd their lives with so many good causes that they have no time to seek power from Jesus. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause. It will work! It will work!”

It was quite a convention. The evil angels went eagerly to their assignments, causing Christians everywhere to become busier, more rushed, and wandering here and there.

I guess the question is, “Has the devil been successful?” You be the judge. Does busy mean being under Satan’s yoke?

— by author unknown

Poem...

Hand Prints

Sometimes you get discouraged
Because I am so small,
And always leaving my finger prints
On the furniture and wall.

But every day I’m growing up,
And soon I’ll be so tall
That all these little hand prints
Will be hard to recall.



So here’s a special hand print
Just so that you can say
“This is how my fingers looked
when I place them here today.”

— by author unknown

Hmmm...

Nothing else ruins the truth like stretching it.

Church News...



Enid, OK

The Church in Enid, OK, (Art Hulet, pastor [left]) was blessed by a visit from the Tulsa Fellowship Choir on February 28th. The choir arrived early to practice the eleven songs that they were going to perform that day, and many of

the Enid Church members came early to set up the potluck for after services.

Church started at 2:00 PM with 40 individuals attending, 25 people from the Enid Church group and 15 from the choir.



Tulsa Fellowship Choir

The choir started off the service with nine songs: *Hallelujah, Majesty, Awesome God, How Great Are You Lord, We Will Glorify, In Times Like These, I Know Who Holds Tomorrow, How Majestic is Your Name, and Let it Be Said of Us.*

The sermon was presented by Ray Kurr entitled “The Absolutes” presenting the idea that God’s will is an absolute fact whether it is written in the Law of God or a general principle such as faith and healing. He spoke of how this country behaves as if there are no absolutes, not even from God’s Word.

As part of the sermon, Ray ended with two songs that related to the topic of the sermon which were *By This Shall All Men Know* and *Let it Be Said of Us.*

A potluck with plenty of food such as chili, stews, and, of course, desserts was served. Every one stayed till after 6 PM.

This Sabbath at Enid was spiritually uplifting along with great fellowship.

— by Doyle J. Carter
PO Box 690592
Tulsa, OK 74169

*Prison Notes...***Fellowship**

In the awesome name of our Creator and Father, we want to say we love you all, and humbly praise our Savior Jesus Christ that you may receive all the blessings through His Spirit.

This is from all of us as a group of twelve and growing as Yahweh gathers His family together "For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their bed," **Psalms 149:4-5**

As we seek to worship our Heavenly Father and Creator of all things, through His loving Son, our Savior, we believe that His love will always remain within our group through fellowship and lots of worship.

John 15:10-11, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

We would love to receive word from any one who would like to correspond with us out of the state of Texas. If your group or family wishes to enhance the faith and the love of God among his family, please share the way He has been working in your lives as we give updates of our growth in spiritual wisdom.

We welcome all through his loving Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," **Romans 8:38-39**. With much Christian love, we await for your correspondence. Amen.

Fellowship Forever Group
Rudy Puentes #700099
Ramsey Two 1200 FM 655
Rosharon, TX 77583

*Article...***Why Did Jesus Die?**

Who is responsible for the crucifixion?

Many Christians hold to the idea that all mankind caused this event to happen because

of our sins. Were the Jews responsible? What does the Word of God tell us?

In **Matthew 26:39**, Jesus Christ was at Gethsemane just before the priests and soldiers came to arrest Him and this verse records, "And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Again, in **Matthew 26:42**, it states, "... O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done."

The prayers appear to imply that it may have been possible that the crucifixion could have been aborted if Christ chose to, but Jesus Christ said that He would abide by His Father's will in the matter.

One of the disciples, Peter, pulled a sword out and struck a servant of the High Priest (**Matthew 26:51**). "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" **Matthew 26:52-53**. It would be a logical assumption that it was possible the event could have been aborted if God so desired.

But why did the Father allow Jesus Christ to endure the horrible suffering? In **Romans 3:23**, Paul states, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

And in **Romans 6:23**, Paul wrote, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Again in **Ephesians 1:7**, Paul states, "In whom [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

Just from these verses, it can be understood that all mankind has sinned and, through the Blood of Christ, we can have redemption of our sins.

It appears that Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be killed for the sins of the world so that we may have an atonement (a sacrifice) for our sins.

The Jews and Romans (some, not all) were just agencies in this process that saved all mankind. As Jesus stated to His disciple, He could have called for twelve legions of angels to rescue Him at any time.

The fact is that all mankind has sinned and, without the blood of Christ to cover our sins, we would not have salvation.

As it says in **John 3:16**, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

We are responsible for the death of Jesus Christ because of our sins. God allowed it to occur so that we would not perish, but have an opportunity for eternal life. It all happened because God loves us so very much.

— by Doyle J. Carter

Church News...

LCG

Regarding LCG’s March 2004 ministerial conference, Charles Bryce reports, “Rod Meredith was very pleased with the Ministerial Conference. He mentioned that several ministers told him it was the best they had ever attended. I felt the same way. The meetings, fellowship, office tour, and special banquet were among the factors that made it so. It was plain to see that God was guiding everything and poured out His special blessings on us. As far as we know, everyone is back home safely now and busy at work.”

He also reported, “**Leviticus 23:6** states, “. . . seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.” Among other things, the unleavened bread symbolizes Jesus Christ. In **John 6:33-35** we are instructed to feed on Christ, which we should do every day, including the seven days of Unleavened Bread, not just when we decide to eat the bread. Our focus should be on becoming more like Christ. Eating unleavened bread every day and focusing on the meaning of that unleavened bread is what is really important. Therefore, during the Days of Unleavened Bread, all members of the Church are instructed by Scripture to eat at least one piece of unleavened bread per day.”

International

Charles Bryce reported, “All of our brethren in Madrid, Spain, are doing well and none were hurt by today’s terrorist attacks. One of our members had been planning to travel to Madrid today, on the train line that was bombed, but he changed his mind before the bombing. God undoubtedly protected him and his family. This is a clear example of why we need to be praying for one another daily in this evil, rotten world.”

Rod McNair reported, “I’m writing this from Manila. I arrived safely last Thursday night after an uneventful flight. I’ll be in

Quezon City today for Sabbath services (February 14). Today we will be having combined Metro-Manila services (Quezon City and Cavite) which usually consists of around one hundred and twenty people — so a pretty big crowd! Tonight I believe we’ll be having a potluck and leadership club, which I’ll be able to attend with the men. The weather here is very pleasant — a bit cloudy, breezy, and in the mid-70s. We do have some unpleasant news. Upon my arrival, I learned that Tex Benitez died yesterday, Thursday, February 12, at around 2 pm.” Tex Benitez was a long-time minister and member in the Church in the Philippines, and will be missed.

— Submitted by Robert Thiel
Cogwriter@aol.com

Letter to the Editor...

Steve:

I just read the article written by Richard about the SDA Church. I agree with it. But he is misinformed about its past history.

I was born in the SDA in 1926. I know well what the past practices were. I could not go to the movies, as it was considered sinful. But that old gentleman that said they didn’t believe in Christmas or Easter is definitely mistaken. As a child growing up, both were observed. There never was a time when they were not a part of that Church. If there was, it would have had to be before 1920, because my older sisters have always observed both those days, and still do. They still disagree with me because I do not.

I just want to set the record straight, and I am an authority that goes back to the nineteen twenties in the SDA Church. Sincerely,

Gene DeFalco

Comment:

SDAs are not now, and were not in the early 1900s, 100% in agreement about observing Christmas and Easter. Gene lives on Long Island, New York. Some SDAs in Montana in the early 1900s did not observe Christmas and Easter. Today, some SDAs are not in favor of homosexuality. Other SDAs are strongly pro-homosexual. Today, some SDAs observe the annual Holy Days, but most do not. Coming from a Worldwide Church of God background, we are prone to think that SDAs must be unanimous in their beliefs, but that is not the case.

— Richard C. Nickels

Obituaries...**Joe Waller**

Joe Waller, PO Box 462, Piedmont, MO 3957-0462 passed away on March 1, 2004. He is survived by his wife Vada.

Ray Kurr, Sr.

Ray Kurr Sr., Tulsa, OK, father of Ray Kurr, Tulsa, OK passed away on February 29, 2004. He was born in Bronx, NY on July 14, 1930. He served our country as a marine in the Korean War and was awarded the Purple Heart. He loved sharing his Christian faith with others and had ties to several congregations in the Tulsa area. His fellowship will be missed by many.

Spring Holy Day Schedule...

Mountain View, AR
Spring Holy Days 2004
Wayne Holmes, 870-251-2431
jabbsma&pa@cei.net
Tim Hall, 870-930-0593
thall@aristotle.net

Passover, Apr 4	07:30 PM
Night Much Observed, Apr 5	07:30 PM
1st Day UB, Apr 6	10:30 AM
	01:30 PM
Apr 7,8,9,10,11,	10:30 AM
Last Day UB, Apr 12	10:30 AM
	01:30 PM

Service Article...**Church of God Home School Association**

www.coghomeschool.org
webservant@coghomeschool.org

“Giving Ads” and “Needed Ads” are now ready and online. If you have a need for something or have something you wish to give away to help someone else, visit our Web site. This is a free service for those in God’s Church. No mention of organizational affiliation (or lack of) need be posted. This is a service for the Church, please use it and receive the blessing promised by the Eternal in Scripture for doing so.

The main page contains a link in the top left corner of the page, a button named Giving Ads at www.coghomeschool.org. You may take a look directly from our main page. The direct link to the “Giving Ads” main page is: www.coghomeschool.org/welcome.htm.

There is an ad section set up for all fifty states. To view all fifty of the US states go to: www.coghomeschool.org/us.htm we have set up example ads in the first state, Alabama. Included along with the Giving Ads are examples of Needed Ads.

If we receive requests for “Giving Ads” to be posted from outside the United States we will gladly make the server space available and advertise pages for the foreign countries where “Giving Ads” pertain.

Hopefully, God’s way of giving will be reflected by strong support from all branches of God’s Church in the **GIVING ADS**.

— by Frank Olive
Church of God Home School Association

Article...

**To Anoint
To Consecrate
To Sanctify**

It seems, at first glance, that the words are almost synonymous; so, doesn’t it seem curious that anoint, consecrate, and sanctify are all used in one verse? **Exodus 28:41**, “And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest’s office.” Is this a case of being redundant or do we miss something of great importance to us? The context is the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood with the symbolism being very rich and important to us today.

To Anoint

Anointing refers to a very general practice in the East. It originated from the relief from the effect of the sun that was experienced by rubbing the body with oil or grease. People originally used vegetable or animal fat. This was smelly! “Dear, you smell like oil of possum (or cabbage) tonight” doesn’t sound too endearing. So, later, spices were added to enhance the odors.

There is nothing mysterious about anointing. The act of anointing was significant to appointing or recognizing to a holy or sacred use; hence the anointing of the high priest (**Exodus 29:29**) and of the sacred vessels (**Exodus 30:26-29**). The high priest and the king are thus called “the anointed.” Anointing a king was equivalent to crowning him (**I Samuel 10:1, 16:13**). Prophets were also anointed (**I Kings 19:16; I Chronicles 16:22; Psalms 105:15**). The expression, “anoint the

shield” in **Isaiah 21:5** refers to the custom of rubbing oil on the leather of the shield so as to make it supple and fit for use in war. So, when one is anointed, he is symbolically made fit for his position or duty.

Anointing was also an act of hospitality. It was the custom of the Jews, in like manner, to anoint themselves with oil, as a means of refreshing or invigorating their bodies, and is continued among the Arabians to the present day. Interestingly, anointing a bishop is an act of hospitality. He is instructed in **Titus 1:7-8** to show the same. Furthermore, that same quality is required of you (**Romans 12:13**).

Oil was also used for medicinal purposes, and it was applied to the sick and to wounds. Perhaps this oil, as used in anointing, is to signify physical and spiritual healing, and again this duty or function is transferred to the one anointed. Jesus here, being the example, was the Anointed with the Holy Spirit, and He was sent to heal and save from sin. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath **anointed** me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,” **Isaiah 61:1**.

Anointing is figuratively styled the “oil of gladness.” Jesus of Nazareth is this Anointed One, the Messiah of the Old Testament. Indeed, one anointed should bring gladness to others. So we see to anoint is to impart the Holy Spirit or symbolically to signify that the Spirit is to be imparted, and, by implication, also those qualities of the Spirit. The thought is to appoint, or qualify for a special dignity, function, or privilege.

Oil had many purposes: decorating the person **Ruth 3:3**; refreshing the body **II Chronicles 28:15**; purifying the body **Esther 2:12**; **Isaiah 57:9**; curing the sick **Mark 6:13**; **James 5:14**; healing wounds **Isaiah 1:6**; **Luke 10:34**; preparing weapons for war **Isaiah 21:5**; preparing the dead for burial **Matthew 26:12**; **Mark 16:1**; **Luke 23:56**. But it is even more noteworthy to list the parts of the body that were anointed and what they represented:

- The head **Psalm 23:5**; **Ecclesiastes 9:8**, for glory and magnificence
- The face **Psalm 104:15**, to make the face shine [to radiate as did Moses], to ornament, provide splendor or rank
- The feet **Luke 7:38, 39**; **John 12:3**, to prepare for travel or journey

- The eyes **Revelation 3:18**, to enable you to see.

This is not a light thing. Three more points need to be addressed.

First: Neglect of the use of oil may be a mark of disrespect. The example is in **Luke 7:46**: “My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.” Do we neglect the use of oil or fail to utilize it as and when we should?

Second: The deprivation of oil is threatened as a punishment. Consider the curses of **Deuteronomy 28:40**: “Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.” And also **Micah 6:15-16**: “Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine. For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing; therefore ye shall bear the reproach of My people.” The reason they would not anoint, or possibly that their anointing would be ineffectual, was that there was sin in and amongst them.

Third: Christ recommended it in times of fasting (**Matthew 6:17, 18**). It was so that our faces would shine with His glory even as we become weak with our fast. “He must increase but I must decrease,” **John 3:30**.

To Consecrate

The instructions given in **Exodus 28** were not a capricious exercise. Notice **verse 3**. “And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron’s garments to **consecrate** him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest’s office.” The craftsmen were to be men of wisdom. And, in **verse 2**: “And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.” There was real purpose and significance here. Literally, the meaning and business of consecrate is to fill their hand, to equip, or to set (as in setting gems).

Consider **Ezekiel 43:25-27**, “Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish. Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves. And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so

forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord God.” Consecrate is close to sanctify but it means to impart or request to have imparted or conferred upon a person, the tools or abilities, physical or spiritual, to perform the task or duty he is to perform for which he was anointed.

To Sanctify (or hallow)

No surprises here, it means to be sacred and set apart. “My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do **SANCTIFY** Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore,” **Ezekiel 37:27-28**. And, we know Israel was sanctified through God’s commandments. They were made holy, or differentiated, from all the nations. They had His laws.

Merging the Three

Exodus 28:41 “And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify (hallow) them, **that they may minister unto Me in the priest’s**

office.” Please note the purpose (in bold) of the three. We are priests (**Revelation 1:6, 5:10**) dedicated to perform service to God. Ask yourself:

1. Are you anointed? Can, or do, others recognize your function in the Church?

2. Are you consecrated? Do you have the tools to perform your duties?

3. Are you sanctified? Are you set apart, not only for your job, but apart from the world, all evil, and every false way? Israel was set apart from the nations because of the law that God gave them!!

We are to be anointed as servants of God. We are to be equipped with the tools, physical or spiritual, that enable us to do our duty. This means acquiring such as needed from God or even our brothers, whether it be money, goods, or prayers! Then we must be sanctified, separated from the world and from the sins that constrain us. When we are anointed (appointed or assigned), consecrated (equipped), and sanctified (separated) we will then be focused and the anointing will begin to take effect.

— by Steven J. Kieler

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