

Church of God News

Positive News of the Churches of God

July/August 2005, No. 24

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Article...

Spiritual Bankruptcy

We're making great progress. But are we going in the right direction? Recent history and the scriptures show we are not.

How does a nation go from the world's greatest superpower to spiritual bankruptcy in just a few years?

In 1803 the United States attempted to negotiate the purchase of small parcels of land or, at the least, navigation rights on the Mississippi River. The French, who held rights to the land, astonished President Jefferson's envoys by offering them an all-or-nothing deal: 800,000 square miles extending from New Orleans into Canada, and from the Mississippi to Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. The price? Less than five cents per acre!

No amount of negotiation could have brought this about. The thirteen original states trusted in Almighty God and He, in turn, blessed them beyond belief.

What did God tell our forefathers? If you listen to Me, and do all my commandments, I will set you above all the nations of the earth, (**Deuteronomy 28:1**). The next verses continue with blessing after blessing experienced by the United States well into the 20th century.

But what happened? Little Vietnam humiliated the Americans. President Bush sent his troops into battle against Iraq. Then,

he prematurely declared the war was over.

Drought plagues the farmers; horrendous diseases are known in every household; no one is safe on the streets, or even in their homes; demented men crash airplanes into the nation's memorials to the almighty dollar; and "In God We Trust" are just words on a dollar bill. One person observed they should be changed to, "In this god we trust."

How did the United States go from the world's greatest superpower to spiritual bankruptcy in just a few decades? **Deuteronomy 28:15** tells the story. "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee." Read for yourself what has become of the world's greatest superpower. Despite America's claim of being a Christian nation, the governing powers at every level have caved in to the demands of minority groups when they should have thundered, "No!"

God says, "Do," and we don't. He says, "Don't," and we do. Our schools teach safe sex when we parents should be teaching purity. Our young people are turned on to Harry Potter and his demonic friends; they haven't a clue to the value of the classics. The entire nation let one woman take prayer from our schools. Now a few people want to take God from our schools, our homes, and our lives. And the powers that be say, "Go for it." (I'm not blaming any political party: one's as guilty as the other.)

During my journalism days, I accompanied a man in his attempt to swim across Lake Ontario. Our navigator got schnoekered the night before the swim, and wasn't too much in command of his ship during the trip. He assured us we were making good progress. What he didn't know was we were going in the wrong direction.

Our governments — the United States, Canada, and Great Britain — tell us we're making good progress, but they don't tell us we're heading in the wrong direction. The passages from **Deuteronomy** indicate we're

way off course. Is it too late to return to the right way?

God told King Solomon, “If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” **II Chronicles 7:14**).

Canada recently held federal elections, and it’s obvious we didn’t elect a God-fearing government. Did the United States do any better in November? Or have our nations sunk so deep into spiritual bankruptcy that we’ve given up the will to seek the face of God?

P.S. Since this writing I received word that gay-marriage advocates spent \$450,000 to fight a Missouri amendment to ban such unions. The pro-amendment group spent \$19,000.

The National Council of Churches boasts 140,000 member congregations across the United States. If every congregation donated only \$3.25 — well, you can do the math.

The pro-amendment group said they were distressed by the result, but their distress should come from the lack of support of, what seems to be, spiritually bankrupt Christian churches.

— by Leslie A. Turvey
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laturvey@becon.org

From the Editor...

What do you know? And when did you know it?

These two questions are commonly used by the press today, usually during investigations of suspected wrongdoing by political or business leaders. But what if we asked that of ourselves? Lets get a word or two about this “knowing” from Bildad.

Job 8:8 “For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers,” (He is saying that it starts with a search of history, that there is nothing new under the sun.) Barnes says, “That is, attend to the results of observation. Ask the generations which have passed, and who in their poems and proverbs have left the records of their experience.”

Job 8:9 “For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.” (We are young and life is short.)

Job 8:10-11 “Shall not they teach thee,

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“For the edifying of the body of Christ,”

Ephesians 4:12.

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and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart? Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?” (We have no roots, no knowledge of history on which to grow.)

Job 8:12 “Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.” (Inspect your roots for root rot.)

Job 8:13-17 “So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. He is

green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.” (There is no nourishment from stones unless the stone is crushed).

It can be said that the Universities and Churches are full of knowledge — because it all comes in and none goes out.

Maybe the problem is too much education, too much knowledge, and not enough application (or wisdom). We are “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” as **Timothy** put it. Educated fools might be modern terminology. We still pay homage to Martin Luther in this regard — i.e., what I think I know will save me. But we know that **James** says, “Faith without works is dead.” At best, we “See through a glass darkly.” This concept is reinforced in **I Corinthians 8:2-3** “And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.”

Darwin, Marx, and Freud believed in the philosophy of positivism. That says there is no valid knowledge outside of observation alone in the pursuit of knowledge and truth. They require observable data from the five senses.

Let’s return to Barnes commentary on Bildad. Barnes says, “That is attend to the results of observation. Ask the generations which have passed, and who in their poems and proverbs have left the records of their experience.”

Search for sensory knowledge is certainly not wrong but it is clear that we can and should be able to learn from the experiences of others. After all, the Bible is a collection of stories of successes and failures. The main lesson being that any pursuit of knowledge without God’s guidance and Spirit leading is incomplete and doomed to failure.

Luke 10:21 “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

Thank God for knowledge and truth.

— by Steven J. Kieler

Correction...

We need to make a correction to the Guest Editorial published in the May/June

issue. On page 3, “Lessons From the Wisconsin Shootings,” paragraph 5 stated that Mr. Ratzmann “had taken anti-depression drugs.” The autopsy report contradicted a previous news report about there being drugs involved.

Hmmm...

There are two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: “abstemious” and “facetious.”

Viewpoint...

New Pope

I was happy to see that the cardinals picked a conservative, Joseph Ratzinger, to be the new pope. As Pope Benedict XVI, he can be expected to hew to the line of keeping the Church as a witness to truth, regardless of what modernists and relativists think.

The news media were quick to point out that many liberal American Catholics disagree with the Church on such issues as celibate priests, no women being ordained, and birth control. Well, there is a simple solution. Let them get out and become Unitarians or whatever pleases them.

Many Americans — Protestants as well as Catholics — suffer from what I call the Spoiled Brat Syndrome. Seeing themselves as the center of the universe, they think the world and everything in it, including whatever Church they attend, should conform to their wishes.

That is a childish attitude. There is no need for the Church to “catch up with the 21st century,” as one person put it. Christianity is not a 21st-century religion. If you are a Christian, your choice is to obey the teachings of Jesus and His Apostles. You don’t get to vote on them or pick some and reject others. And, if you are a Roman Catholic, you don’t get to set Church doctrine, which is presumably based on those teachings. The Roman Catholic Church defines itself, and it is not defined by dissident priests or nuns or disgruntled lay members.

If, after counseling, the dissidents won’t shut up, then they should be ex-communicated. That’s the Church’s polite way of saying, “Go to hell.”

I believe that what attracted so many young people to the previous pope was his absolute beliefs. In an age of moral relativity,

which is to say an age of immorality, someone with steadfast beliefs in ultimate truth, and who lives those beliefs has great attraction for a lot of people. Not the self-indulgent types, but those people who are looking for meaning in their lives.

Certainly the world would be better off if people conformed to Christian beliefs than it would be if Christianity tried to pander to modern whims and fads, which are not new. They are just the very ancient belief in hedonism, and decadence in new verbal dress. If you are a believing Christian, then you surely know that Jesus did not come to this earth to teach people how to become wealthy, or healthy, or successful in secular pursuits.

I would suggest to Protestants that they worry more about preachers with six-figure salaries, mansions, and expensive cars than whether priests are married or celibate. I believe Christ said something about it being easier to push a camel through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. That is certainly not a modern thought.

Former basketball player Charles Barkley said something recently that I heartily agree with. He said that when he sees some of these TV evangelists, he knows that God must be (expletive for being extremely annoyed) to see these bozos speaking in His name. That is certainly true, I'm sure.

Christianity may well wither and die in this current flood of secularism. If so, it should die true to its roots. Trying to pander to people who hate it won't save it.

I have great respect for people of faith, whether they are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist or Hindu. They, at least, are not fooled by secular fairy tales, or lulled into the false belief that happiness can be found in the pursuit and acquisition of stuff.

What people require for a good life, and many smart people have written books on this subject, are meaning and purpose. I personally have never met a self-centered person who was happy or content. The happy people I know are serving something greater than themselves — a cause, a religion or a family.

We humans are not the center of the universe, and the world owes us nothing. As for meaning and purpose, we have to find them. I believe the new pope will help a lot of people do just that.

— by Charley Reese
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To the Editor...

Mr. Steve Kieler:

One of the brethren in my Church recently gave me a stack of old "Church of God News" newsletters which I just couldn't wait to read and study. I enjoy them very much. My husband started reading one of the articles in the April 2004 No 14 newsletter when he noticed page 5 and 6 of the article titled "What is Worship?" were missing. I guess my friend had somehow lost that page as my husband said it was a very interesting topic and asked me to please ask you if you could send me another copy of that newsletter. We would appreciate it very much. Thank you and your writers for the hard work you put into this newsletter. May God bless you and the entire staff for their dedication to serving God first and then the people who hunger for the Word of God. I learn so much truth from these newsletters and also from the Giving and Sharing magazine. In a little while, I will send a donation to you so that the "Work" may continue.

Thank you all for the newsletters. God bless you all. Sincerely,

— Mrs. Gloria Chambers
PO Box 344, Bowling Green, SC 29703

Hmmm...

Survivor

To all the kids who survived the 1930s, 40s, 50s, and 60s:

We survived being brought up in a world with no protection. Our mothers took aspirin, ate blue cheese dressing and didn't get tested for diabetes.

Then after that trauma, our baby cribs were covered with bright colored lead-based paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, nor latches on doors or cabinets. And when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets, not to mention the risks we took hitchhiking.

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.

Riding in the back of a pick up on a warm day was always a special treat.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle. We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and no one actually died from this. We ate cupcakes, bread and butter and drank soda pop with sugar in it, but we weren't overweight be-

cause we were always outside playing!

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach us all day. And we were O.K. We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We did not have Play stations, Nintendo's, X-boxes, no video games at all, no 99 channels on cable, no video tape movies, no surround sound, no cell phones, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms.....WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.

We made up games with sticks and tennis balls, and ate worms. And although we were told it would happen, we did not put out very many eyes, nor did the worms live in us forever.

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house, knocked on the door or rang the bell, or just walked in and talked to them!

Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!!

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers, problem solvers and inventors ever!

The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all!

And congratulations, YOU are one of them!!

You might want to share this with others who have had the luck to grow up as kids, before the lawyers and the government regulated our lives for our own good.

— Author unknown

Article...

Clinical and Spiritual Depression It's Causes and Cures

Many people are not even aware of it, but they suffer from a low-grade mental depres-

sion. Researchers are convinced that one of the causes of alcoholism is an underlying state of depression. Drugs are often prescribed in an attempt to relieve this depression.

In my pastoral work over the years as well as in my clinical practice, I have seen people try to mask the symptoms of depression by using other substances. Some use prescription drugs and others use alcohol or street drugs. By the way, the number one cause of depression in America is the over use of alcohol.

Many use food to relieve depression. Overeaters often eat to relieve feelings of low self-esteem and the depression that goes with it.

Marriages are adversely affected when one or both of the partners are depressed. Imagine the irritability that exists when a partner in a marriage is depressed. A further complication is that depressed people often employ negative and pessimistic thinking.

What effect does a depressed parent have on the children? One can only imagine what it is like to live in a home where one or both parents suffer from depression. And, sadly, depression seems to run in families as well. So, it is possible that one of the children will suffer from it.

Two Forms

Clinical depression usually comes in two forms: a) reactive depression, and b) endogenous depression. Reactive depression may range from an emotional sadness that comes from a relatively minor event all the way to intense sadness from grief over the death of a loved one.

Endogenous depression is characterized by ongoing deep depression when there seems to be no reason to be depressed. The source is usually a disease or a chemical imbalance.

Common Symptoms

There are symptoms common to all depressions. They are: sadness, emptiness, the inability to experience pleasure (called anhedonia), low self-esteem, withdrawal, low motivation, irritability, excessive emotional sensitivity, and thoughts of suicide.

Many diseases can cause depression. Here are some of the most common ones: asthma, anemia, cancer, malnutrition, premenstrual syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, congestive heart failure, hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, infectious hepatitis, ulcerative colitis, multiple sclerosis, and chronic infections.

Many psychologists believe that one of

the causes, or at least an exacerbation of the depression, is negative, pessimistic thinking, which creates low self-esteem.

When depressions are pronounced, a person may experience decreased sex drive, appetite disturbance, impaired concentration, forgetfulness, restlessness, agitation, extreme fatigue and sleep disturbance. There is also an intense anhedonia (inability to experience any pleasure).

In a recorded sermon on depression, I talk about how often low thyroid function is a cause of depression. In fact nearly 8% of the population suffers from low thyroid function called hypothyroidism. Here are some of the signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism: weakness, dry skin, coarse skin, lethargy, slow speech, sensitivity to cold temperature, thick tongue, impaired memory, constipation, gain in weight despite little or no appetite, difficulty in losing weight, loss or thinning of hair, muscle pain, joint pain, slowing of mental activity, and choking sensations. Not all of these symptoms have to be experienced to have hypothyroidism. There are several tests that can detect thyroid malfunction. In the message on depression, you will learn about a non-invasive test that can be done in your own home free of charge. There is a great deal of reasonable certainty determining whether you may be hypothyroid. The test was discovered by one of the foremost experts on hypothyroidism, Dr. Broda O. Barnes, M.D.

Spiritual Depression

There is another kind of depression — spiritual depression. It is a malaise that seems to be upon many people from time to time when they feel “cut off” or “far away” from God. While in it, they have no enthusiasm for God’s Word. They seem “weary in well doing.” They seem ready to collapse under persecution.

They sound like the Psalmist when he states, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance” **Psalm 42:5**. He repeats this refrain over and over. He says his soul thirsts for God, (**Verse 42:2**) like a deer longs for water, (**Verse 1**). He acknowledges that he is in mourning (**Verse 9**) and that “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me,” **Verse 7**. It is almost as though things are too hard to bear.

What is the solution to this depression? It is self-talk? Psychologists have known for some time now that negative, irrational self-talk in the form of simple declarative sentences often leads to depression. And therefore, appropriate self-talk can lift us out of depression — unless depression comes from an endogenous source like hypothyroidism.

If you would like to hear *The Causes and Cures of Depression*, a tape-recorded message on this subject will be sent to you free of charge. Just write to: **Guardian Ministries, PO Box 50734, Pasadena, CA. 91115** and request the message on depression.

— by David L. Antion, Ph.D.
President of Guardian Ministries

Church News...

Minister Starts Radio Program

My name is Willis Hornbuckle. My friends call me Pete. I was the youngest of 10 children born to Loyd and Elsie Hornbuckle. My dad was a farmer. I was a part-time farmer and a full time salesman for 31 years. I served in the Army from 1953 to 1955. During that time, I married my beautiful wife (of almost 52 years now) when she was only 16 years of age. We have three children, two girls and one boy. The two girls are in the Church and our son believes but is not yet baptized.

My dad and I began listening to Mr. Herbert Armstrong on the radio in 1945. We were the only ones in our family who believed, or cared what Mr. Armstrong was saying. Although my dad believed, he was never baptized into the Church. I was baptized in April 1965.

I began attending the Radio Church of God, as was its name then, and after about 10 years I was given the opportunity to speak. My wife and I attended the WWCG until 1995. Because of the creep in doctrinal changes, I wanted to quit attending several years before 1995. Just about the time we firmly decided to quit attending WWCG, the United Church of God was formed. A local UCG group formed and we began attending services with a small group of former WWCG members, and we remained there until 2003. In 2003, we quit attending UCG. At that time, I felt that the same atmosphere that had perpetuated the WWCG had crept into the UCG, at least in my local congregation.

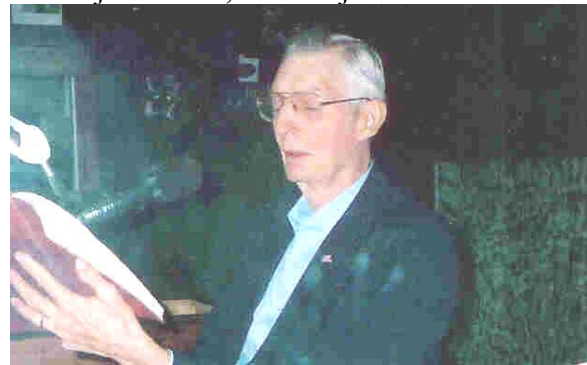
Neither my wife nor I feel any ill will toward any Church of God organization, or the brethren, we just needed a place to attend services that offered an atmosphere that reflected an attitude of servant leadership and humility. I also wanted to contribute more than I had been able to do in the WWCG and UCG. The last message I gave while in WWCG was based on **Mark 14**. The chapter describes a woman who anointed Christ's head with very expensive oil just a couple of days before His death. Some criticized the woman for using the expensive oil. But Christ said, leave her alone, for she has done a good work for Me and she has done what she could do. Although the disciples and many others were present, that one woman was the only one who did anything for Christ. That passage has caused me to ask myself many times, am I doing what I can do? Am I doing all I can do? As noted in the book of **Acts**, the Church was scattered abroad and they went everywhere doing the work. How many of us could be doing more?

We soon learned of a group of individuals who were having once a month Sabbath Bible Studies close to our home (40 miles away). We began attending the monthly Sabbath Bible Studies. I was grateful for a place to go once a month but I was also in spiritual agony for about three months. I needed and wanted more. I feel it was then that God led me to finding a meeting place for weekly Sabbath services on the other three Sabbaths of the month. I stepped out on faith. I began conducting weekly Sabbath services having prayers, songs, a sermonette and a sermon. Fifteen people showed up for the first Sabbath service in August 2003. I've just finished purchasing a building, which will be used for Sabbath services. Some of the members are helping renovate the building and it should be ready for the first Sabbath service in a couple of months.

The last Sunday in April 2004 my first radio program was aired. Once again, I stepped out on faith not knowing if I had the knowledge, wisdom, or health for such a task at the age of 70. But with God's help and grace, I have done and continue to do what I can do.

I was ordained an elder on the Last Great Day of the FOT 2004 by Wayne Holmes, Tim Hall, and others in Mountain View, Arkansas. I have been strengthened in courage and boldness, thanks to God.

I appreciate Church of God Outreach Ministries for allowing me to offer their literature on my radio program. I was on the air for 3 or 4 months with no literature to offer. I appreciate the responses God has given to the radio program, and Steve and Suzanne Kieler for operating the CGOM 800-phone number. I plan to book more radio stations and hope some have the power of 50,000-watt stations. My broadcast tapes are available to anyone who requests them, free of charge of course. I'm planning to buy magazine display racks and fill them and maintain them with CGOM booklets and brochures. Each CGOM affiliated group could do the same in your local areas. I plan to incorporate as the Marble Hill Church of God 7th Day, and as a tax-exempt religious, non-profit, organization. Christ has commanded us to sow the seed and to do what we can whether anyone responds or not. It's God's job to call; it's our job to do the Work.



Brenda, Clinton, Emogene
Edith and Pete Hornbuckle

Let us all pray for one another that we may be in good physical, mental, and above all, spiritual health. Please take courage and do what you can for Christ and the Work of preaching and publishing the Gospel. I am deeply grateful for the fact that God has given those of us in His Church the opportunity to do something for him.

Sincerely, in the Work of God,
 — Pete and Edith Hornbuckle
 HC 64 Box 960
 Grassy, MO 63751
 573-238-2480

Health...

Truth About Tobacco

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. With over 400,000 deaths annually, tobacco kills more people than alcohol, Aids, drug abuse, car crashes, murders, suicides, and fires combined!

Second-hand smoke carries smaller particles of the same chemicals that harm smokers — it is a serious threat to your health.

Cigarette smoking increases your risk of heart disease, stroke, heart attack, vascular disease, and aneurysm. Smokeless tobacco can cause gum disease, loss of teeth, receding gums, and cancers of the esophagus, palate, tongue, lip, and cheek.

Statistics show that children who have parents that smoke are twice as likely to begin smoking. Peer pressure is one reason adolescents are at much greater risk than adults for starting to smoke. It's important for parents to take an active and repeated stand against smoking.

It is very hazardous for pregnant women to smoke. Cigarette smoking has been linked to premature labor, breathing problems, and fatal illness in infants. Maternal smoking during and after pregnancy has been linked to asthma among infants and young children.

Smoking is a difficult habit to break. You need God's help, and it wouldn't hurt to see your doctor to get started on a cessation program. Do it today!

— author unknown

Church News...

The Days of Unleavened Bread Tulsa, OK

On April 24, 2005, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, the Tulsa Church of God and Church of God Tulsa Fellowship had a combined service for this Holy Day.

Services began with an opening prayer by Ron Kolb.

Pastor Lawrence Gregory presented the sermonette entitled "A Pillar of a Cloud, a

Pillar of Fire" which covered the travels of Israel in the wilderness, and how God went with them in a pillar of fire by night and pillar of the cloud by day. He revealed many lessons that can be learned from this event such as how God showed His love by leading, and protecting them.

Of course, there was an offering taken up as tradition in the Church of God. Steve Andrews performed this part of the service and used **Deuteronomy 16:3, 16** as reference scriptures.

Then the Fellowship Choir sang two songs entitled "Turn Your Face From Sin," and "Continue To Seek Ye The Lord." Pastor Ray Kurr sang solo with the choir as back up.

The main sermon was by Barnabas Grayson entitled "Christ, The Bread of Life" which covered the importance of bread in the Egyptian's life, and the lack of faith of the Hebrews. And, of course, the main fact that Jesus Christ referred to Himself as "the Bread of Life."

Almost everyone stayed for the enjoyable potluck that followed.

On April 30, 2005, the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, the Tulsa Church of God held Holy Day services. It was not a combined service, but very enjoyable.

The sermonette was by Barnabas Grayson entitled "Famine of the Word" which covered this topic based on **Amos 8:11**. It expressed how many in this country do not seem to be concerned about morals or many Bible teachings.

Special music was presented called "Welcome to our World." After which Steve Andrews presented a sermon entitled "Christ In You — The Hope of Glory" which covered how we can be puffed up by our sin, and the many tricks that Satan may use on us to tempt us to fall from the grace of God. Such temptation must be overcome as stated in **James 1:12**.

After services, there was a potluck meal and fellowship for a few hours. Many that attended the potluck shared the many concepts that they learned during these days.

— by Doyle J. Carter

Hmmm...

Inflation: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

Tomorrow: One of the greatest labor saving devices of today.

Church News From Nigeria...

THE CHURCH OF GOD (IN NIG.)
2005 Feast of Passover and unleavened Bread Holding at Okporo-Orlu in Imo State, Nigeria. 22nd-30th April 2005

Days & Dates	5-6:30 Morning Devotion	6:30-9:30 Breakfast	9:30-12noon Fellowship	12-3:30 Launch	3:30-5pm Bible study	5pm-6pm	6pm-8pm Night fellowship
Friday 22	ARRIVAL ! ARRIVAL!!			BAPTISM			Holy Communion and life in the camp.
Sabbath 23	Opening Remark	BREAK FAST	Weekly Sabbath Evidence of true repentance			RECREATION	Quiet time
Sunday 24	Evangelism		High Day Sabbath Significance of the feast				Restitution
Monday 25	Persevering in prayer		Faith	LAUNCH	Sabbath Keeping		Youths role in the Church
Tuesday 26	Family life		Dressing		Marriage		Sanctification and humility.
Wednesday 27	Clean and unclean		Prayer house		Maria di aso		Wilderness Journey
Thursday 28	God's Promises		The Law		The Bible Church		Colossian two Sixteen
Friday 29	Holy name and Judaism		CHILDREN'S DAY PROGRAMME				Q & A
Saturday 30	Gossip its Danger		Behold I come quickly. High Day Sabbath				Rest
Sunday 1	Departure		Departure	Departure			Departure

Night-Vigils 12-3am

Night vigil programme coordinators: Izu Ukoha, Eddie Eneh, Levi Ibeakuzie, UcheEgbuatu, Ven Nwogu, and Arthur

Dear Elder Nickels:

May the peace, grace, and mercy from Yahweh the Almighty God of Israel be with you. We just returned from the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread about two weeks ago. I am writing to thank you for the newsletters and copies of the King James Bible you sent. You know we are happy to have your friends and brothers Mark Mickelson and Fred Kellers in our midst. We love that. Although Dale Shutter who was in their company could not make it back to us from Lagos, we were with him during the ministers' seminar at Owerri before he traveled to Lagos for the Feast. A feast schedule is included [see above]. I'm sure we had informed you that Pastor Joseph Orié had passed away. How is the ministry God entrusted into your hands? I am persuaded that He who called you will perform His beautiful design concerning you unto the end. Have my love.

Bonny Okolo

The Passover-Unleavened Bread Nigeria

From noon on Friday, April 22, 2005, brethren from various States, which include Edo State, Rivers, Abia, Anambra, Enugu, and Taraba State had started to arrive at the Okporo-Orlu in Imo State of Nigeria the venue of the Feast. Due to mechanical break down, the writer and his entire family got there at about 8:15 P.M., and were enthusiastically welcomed by the waiting brethren.

The service began by 8:30 P.M. according to plan. It was so beautiful, and so solemn that it took many brethren back to remember how it was their sins that nailed their Savior to the cross. A total of 156 brethren partook of the emblem. At about 12:05 A.M. we were able to close and brethren retired to their camps.

With about four subjects (sermons and Bible studies) each day, the joyous Feast began the following morning, which was the weekly Sabbath. On Sunday, April 24, being the first High Day Sabbath, we were privileged to have Mark Mickelson from the United Church of God in our midst. The Church was blessed much through Mark's sermon. The Feast was made unique by the five nights of prayers and vigils added to the programs. Before 11:45 P.M. each night, brethren had already filled the auditorium in readiness for the vigils, which always ended at 3:00 A.M. to allow people some sleep to continue the morning program. And so, we continued each day till the last High Day Sabbath, which fell on the weekly Sabbath day. On this day, Pastor Fred Kellers, the presiding officer of the UCG in Nigeria, was pleased to visit us on that day, and the brethren had a good fellowship with him. As the Feast draws to a close, brethren wished they could remain there with such a beautiful environment where sinful inclination could hardly be seen. Nevertheless, the following morning, brethren began to depart for home.

— Bonny Okolo.

The Church of God in Nigeria
Box 9589 Enugu 400009, Nigeria

Obituary...**Pat Dennis**

Pat Dennis, of Coffeyville, passed away on May 19, 2005. Services were held on Tuesday, May 24th at 2:00 P.M. at the Tulsa Church of God, 14509 E. Marshall Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Pat is survived by his wife, Aletha, daughters Mrs. Shawn (Kim) Witt, Mrs. Matthew (Renee) Steel, and his son Trevor and his wife Krissy. The children all live in the Tulsa area. Cards may be sent to Aletha at 402 Elm Street, Coffeyville, KS 67337.

Service Article...**The Story of S.E.E.D.**

S.E.E.D. Missionary Aid Association is a grass roots organization started in Stanberry, MO in 1975. A group of sisters of the Church of God (7th Day) became acquainted with a young ministerial student from Nigeria who was attending Midwest Bible College. He told of the hardness of his life overseas and so the ladies took it upon themselves to load the young man down with food and clothing as he flew back and forth to his home. They would pack up large suitcases with dried soup mixes, powdered milk, and other non-perishables. One of those ladies, the first director of *S.E.E.D.*, is with the organization today, Billie (Henderson) Johnson, Historian Emeritus.

At approximately the same time, in the 1970s, Earl Lewis was training for the ministry at Midwest Bible College. As an assignment in Stanley Kauer's Missions class, he was directed to begin a correspondence with some foreign ministers.

In 1978, Earl and Billie got their act together, joined forces, and started sending *S.E.E.D.* overseas. At first it was referred to only as Seed, which would produce, hopefully, a bountiful harvest. It was only in 1988, that the name, "SEED" became an acronym for Salvation, Education, Equipping, and Discipling. Since its inception, *S.E.E.D.* has been operated as a not for profit organization with a volunteer staff for years consisting mainly of Earl and Billie.

Since 1998, an advisory board has shouldered some of the administrative and physical burdens of *S.E.E.D.* The board meets monthly to discuss the solicitations we receive for

materials, and how we can answer those needs within the constraints of our limited finances — all materials are sent free of charge. The organization is maintained by free-will offerings from individuals and Churches.

The majority of *S.E.E.D.* which is sown overseas, is the Word of God, in the form of Bibles and Christian literature. However, through the years, *S.E.E.D.* has sent such things as a treadle sewing machine, packed in several boxes; we have sent grape juice for the Lord's supper; eyeglasses; and even in one case, we have sent literal seed. We have recently sent a lot of clothing, especially since the tsunami in December of 2004. We support at least three orphanages in India and Africa.

Our giving is focused overseas on Sabbath Keepers, regardless of specific denominational ties. However, occasionally, we will receive a request from a Sunday Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist seeking truth, and we are blessed to be able to respond to that person with whatever materials are needed.

On the domestic front, *S.E.E.D.* serves a large prison population through its prison ministries. Bibles, Christian literature and Bible Study Courses are sent into prisons throughout the United States. *S.E.E.D.* offers both the Searchlight Bible Study Course and Discovery Lessons. Given that Islam is the fastest growing religion in our U.S. prison system, we feel this ministry is one to be continued and possibly, expanded.

S.E.E.D. publishes a newsletter called *The Sowers' Report* quarterly. In it we record statistics of materials sent, and report on the progress or needs of our foreign brethren. There are many ministries that vie for our attentive and faithful giving, and we do not wish in anyway to denigrate those ministries. Earl is fond of saying that it is amazing how much can get done when you don't worry who gets the credit. We do hear that the Sunday Churches over seas are much better supplied and supported, due to the size of some of those denominations. Our poor COG7 ministers struggle against formidable challenges. Often they are denied work for not working on Sabbath. They are threatened by local officials who are suspicious of these "strange" believers who are different. So, we can say with certainty that if you want to specifically help a COG7 minister, *S.E.E.D.* is a good organization to support. We have the blessings of Bill Hicks and other Conference

officers who recognize that we are fellow laborers with them.

Our Advisory Board is currently made up of Wanda Lewis, President; James Agan, Vice-President; Paul Nandico, treasurer; and Linda Storm, secretary and editor of *The Sowers' Report*. Earl Lewis is the Executive Director, and Searchlight Director is Dave Gartner. And last, but not least, Billie Johnson is our *S.E.E.D.* historian, and keeps us focused. God is blessing our efforts and we invite anyone who wishes to do so, to join in these efforts. The fields are white to harvest — we can't afford to wait.

To Contact *S.E.E.D.* you may write Earl Lewis, PO Box 10, Neck City, MO 64849. You may also request to be placed on *The Sowers' Report* mailing list at this address. Thanks and God Bless.

— The Staff of *S.E.E.D.*
Missionary Aid Association.

Church News...

Church Names Clyde Kilough New President

Council chairman to assume new duties

Cincinnati – On May 12, 2005, the 12-man Council of Elders of the United Church of God, an International Association, selected Clyde Kilough as the new president of the Church from a final list of three candidates. The selection of Mr. Kilough concluded a process that lasted nearly 60 days following formal input solicited from Church elders and Council members.

Mr. Kilough succeeds Roy Holladay, who served as United's president from 2002 to the present. A long-time Church pastor, the General Conference of Elders elected him to the Council in 2001. He previously served as the Council's official reporter from 1997 to 1999.

In his remarks to the Council, Mr. Kilough said that the Church's CEO must personally understand the Church's mission and vision and keep it constantly in the forefront of those involved in United's work. "Our members are ready," he emphasized. "They want to be rallied."

He outlined how the Church's leadership and ministry need to stir up the membership and those associated with United with increased focus and zeal. Citing **II Timothy 1:6**, Mr. Kilough reminded those present that

"zeal is a spiritual issue." He spoke of us deepening our sense of being an integral part of the Work of the Church of God.

"There are people out there whose lives are waiting to be transformed," Mr. Kilough said. "It's a time for us to rally — a time to revive — as people did in Nehemiah's time."

He went on to quote from the book of **Nehemiah**: "Then I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, 'The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore, ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us,'" **Nehemiah 4:19-20**.

Continuing his planned focus as United's new president, Mr. Kilough stressed that: "This spirit has to come from within, not primarily from projects, media thrusts or personnel changes. The Church's core strengths are spiritual, not physical." Concluding his remarks he emphasized: "When our ways please God, He will bless us."

The Council of Elders thanked Mr. Holladay and his wife, Norma, for their three years of leadership and service in strengthening a foundation that will enable broad growth of the United Church of God.

Mr. Kilough was born in 1951 and came into the Church with his parents in 1963. He graduated from Ambassador College, Big Sandy, in 1974 and served congregations in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, Canada, from 1974 to 1981. Since then he has served congregations in Arkansas, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Ohio and California. The Kiloughs currently make their home in Sacramento, California, where Mr. Kilough is pastor of congregations in Sacramento and Reno, Nevada. He and his wife have two children, David and Rebecca, and are excited new grandparents.

In accordance with the by-laws, Mr. Kilough will step down from his prior position as chairman of the Council. The family will move to Cincinnati shortly, where Mr. Kilough will devote his full time to his new position at the Church's home office.

Chicken Crosses Road...

The Bible's Answer: And God came down from the heavens, and He said unto the chicken, "Thou shalt cross the road." And the chicken crossed the road, and there was much rejoicing.

*Establishing the Children...***Nature In Action**

The past few days, my husband and I have been privileged to watch nature in action in our own backyard. We have had bird feeders in our backyard for several years. Our visitors included cardinals, chickadees, nut hatches, wrens, yellow finches, and woodpeckers of several variations including large ones about one foot tall. Our yard abounds with squirrels, rabbits, sometimes deer, and other wildlife.

As we sat in our sunroom the other morning a young woodpecker crashed into our glass door, falling onto the porch. It just sat there, not moving; we thought it might have broken one of its' wings. After some time passed, we became concerned that it might be really hurt, and thought we should put some seed and water beside it. Within a few minutes though, it clumsily flew onto a tree close by. At that point, the mother woodpecker flew next to it and sat there as if to say, "Poor baby, what happened to you?" She started flying back and forth to the finch feeder, each time bringing food to her baby. For two days she kept this up, and eventually the baby woodpecker was able to fly to other trees. Then she proceeded to teach the baby how to land on the feeder, and she would feed her with seed from the feeder. While all this was going on, another woodpecker showed up with another baby and joined in with the mother in helping the baby birds. We were surprised to see that this was really a family of woodpeckers, father, mother, and two baby birds. It was amazing to watch how this family functioned, the parents taking care of their babies making sure they were safe, well fed, all the while teaching them the skills they would need to know in order to stay alive.

Family Responsibilities

All this caused me to think about how our families function, or rather how they should function. When we become parents we take on the responsibility for our children. We should always be there for them, constantly watching over them and keeping them safe, comforting them when they are sad, sick, or hurting; making sure that they are fed, encouraging them to try out their wings, and teaching them skills to enable them to have a good life. As our children grow, we should teach them about God and His laws, showing by our example what they need to know in

order to have a happy childhood and become productive adults in the future. The mother bird was teaching her baby how to accomplish things by her example. The baby bird had to depend on its mother to learn how to fly, feed itself, and overcome the dangers around it. Our children are dependant upon us for everything when they first start out in life, and we should be like the mother bird; always taking care of them and teaching them what they need to know to in order to live in this world. God charges us as parents to be responsible for our children. He has called us and is training us as His children, and we should also be training our children by setting the right example for them. After all, God is calling our children too, in their own time. **Acts 2:38-39** states, "...and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord, our God shall call." God reveals through the prophet Malachi that, "...That He might seek a Godly seed. [He seeks Godly offspring]," **Malachi 2:15.**



As parents, we want our children to inherit eternal life, and God has revealed to us that His promises are to **our children and us**. May He bless all of you as you take care of your responsibilities as parents in the teaching and training of your little ones.

— by Shelby Faith
sfaith@mindspring.com

The Resource Corner

Compiled by Shelby Faith

Web Sites:**www.ParentsAsTeachers.org**

(This web site covers a lot of information for parents, including parenting tips, simple everyday activities, child development expertise, local state and national resources and more.)

www.biblestudytools.net

(This web site contains a lot of helpful tools in your bible study including various Bible translations, commentaries, concordances,

dictionaries, encyclopedias, lexicons, history and other tools.)

www.cem.org

(Christian Education Ministries have lesson books for the student and teacher including lessons for several age groups; Senior Teens (16-19), Intermediates (12-15), Primaries (6-8) and the age group (9-11 year olds). There is a nominal fee for each booklet and teachers' guidebook.)

www.ucg.org

(This web site has many lessons, activities for all age groups, which can be down loaded and printed out for individual use or class use. Also offered is a magazine called "Vertical Thought" for older teens and young adults.

Bible Translations:

New King James Version: An excellent choice for a "working Bible. Overall it is probably the best and most accurate modern English translation available.

New Revised Standard Version: Another good translation. Very helpful and will shed light on certain passages that may otherwise be hard to understand.

New International Version: A much looser translation — somewhere between a translation and a paraphrase. It can be a good choice for a children's Bible as it renders scriptures into understandable language.

Bible Paraphrases: Least reliable. The translators simply tell in their own words what they think the original author meant.

International Children's Bible, New Century Version: Each verse is reworded in short sentences and utilizes a 3rd Grade vocabulary, easier for younger children to understand.

Online Bible Sources:

www.christianbook.com
www.bibles.com
www.thomason.com
www.amazon.com
www.bamm.com

**Don't Argue
With Children**

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small. The little girl stated that a whale swallowed Jonah.

Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah." The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" Then little girl replied, "Then you ask him."

A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was? The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

One day a little girl was sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head. She looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, "Why are some of your hairs white, Momma?" Her mother replied, "Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white." The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then said, "Momma, how come ALL of grandma's hairs are white?"

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, "Now, class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face." "Yes," the class said. "Then why is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't run into my feet?" A little fellow shouted, "Cause yer feet ain't empty."

The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

Word Search Puzzle

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

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

DEBORAH
DIANA
DINAH
ELIZABETH
HANNAH
MARY
NAOMI
PRISCILLA
RACHEL
RAHAB
RUTH
SARAH

By Steven and Suzanne Kieler

Of Interest...**Living Will**

With the death of Terry Schiavo, the Florida woman who was on life support for many years, many people are interested in establishing a living will. They want their wishes to be made known in case they are ever in a brain-dead or terminally ill situation. There are many versions of a Living Will. Check with your attorney or other counselor to make sure that your wishes are expressed and legally valid in the state or country where you live.

For an example of a living will, check our website at:

www.giveshare.org/family/living-will.pdf

— by Richard C. Nickels
3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718

E-mail: giveshare@vcn.com

Humor...**A Chip Off the Old Block**

As I was waiting for my husband to pick me up in front of a department store, a lady came toward the store with her boy of about 7 years old. He was crying and causing a fuss. The lady said “You’re just like your father. You cry every time I want to go shopping.”

Letter to the Editor...

“I was glad to read . . . Church of God News, page 9, May 2005 issue about the New King James Bible Version. It was a good article. I agree. The KJV is the best version to stay with. The UCGIA church group uses the NKJV for all their writings and studies. They think it’s great...Until 1887, Protestants used the Majority Greek Text. Now the liberal Protestants are using the Vatican Manuscripts [Vaticanus]. . . . The Jesuits . . . hate the KJV. Since they cannot call for burning the KJV, They have gotten on Bible Translating Committees to change the scripture. . . .

“The NKJV uses much harder and longer words. Who wants to memorize from the NKJV? No one, I’m sure. So many Bible versions [are] flooding the market written by and seduced by the Serpent Scribes.

“Think how the Worldwide Church of God made the NIV their official Bible version.”

— Pauline Y. Dobbs
Columbus, Indiana

Church News...**COG News**

Beginning in late April 2005, the COGwriter Website, hosted by Living Church of God member Robert Thiel, made a switch. Not only did it switch servers, it also changed URLs. The new URL is shorter and easier to remember. It is www.cogwriter.com.

Other reasons for the switch were to diminish down time, as the previous server seemed to frequently drop pages when they were updated. Also, the previous server would often place advertisements on the site, which were not authorized.

In the first month of the switch, individuals from at least 67 different countries noticed the switch and visited the COGwriter site.

The COGwriter Website is one of the most popular pro-Church of God news oriented sites on the worldwide web according to rankings from Alexa, an independent statistical service.

Living Church of God

Although there were some delays in getting its *Tomorrow’s World* telecast on in the United Kingdom, this has now occurred. In its first two months, LCG has received over 600 responses from its telecast there. And the response rate seems to be increasing. Wayne Pyle reported that 111 responses were received from the first weekend in June 2005.

Wayne Pyle also reported that as of June 9, 2005, “we are only 3,048 responses away from our 500,000th TV response in the United States and Canada.”

LCG also made some changes to its main magazine, also called *Tomorrow’s World*. The May-June 2005 edition of *Tomorrow’s World* now has a new look and layout. It also lists 164 television and 13 radio stations carrying LCG’s *Tomorrow’s World* broadcast.

— Submitted by Robert Thiel
COGwriter@aol.com

Obituary...**John Ogwyn**

Dear fellow ministers and brethren,

It grieves me to have to inform you that our beloved fellow servant, Mr. John Ogwyn,

died in his sleep this morning at 5:30 AM, June 14, 2005. He was at home with his wife, Genie, and his sons, Charles and David. Mr. Roderick Meredith has asked that I send a letter to all of you about this unexpected and tragic turn of events.

Mr. Ogwyn was a leader in God's Church and Work. He was a "tour de force" who cut a very big swath; an Evangelist, prolific writer, telecast presenter, member of the Board, member of the Council of Elders, Regional Pastor, and much more — and he carried out all of his responsibilities with the utmost effectiveness, commitment and zeal. God used him in a very powerful way. For example, notice what Mr. Wayne Pyle wrote about the success of just one of John's responsibilities: "Mr. Ogwyn made a tremendous impact on many tens of thousands of viewers since he made his first formal appearance in front of the TV camera about three years ago on July 5, 2002. Since that day, he made a total of 27 half-hour television programs. His final five programs are scheduled for airing over the next five months to November. The programs produced more than 37,000 responses in the United States and Canada, as well as bringing in more than 18,000 brand new subscribers. Who knows what will come from the spiritual seeds he planted among tens of thousands of fertile minds."

I think of John when I read **I Chronicles 28:21**, "And, behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God: and there shall be with thee for all manner of workmanship every willing skilful man, for any manner of service: also the princes and all the people will be wholly at Thy commandment." It is well known that Mr. and Mrs. John Ogwyn worked as hard and as skillfully as anyone in God's service. He was a shepherd in the fullest sense of the word.

Mr. Meredith will conduct Mr. Ogwyn's funeral on Thursday, June 16, 2005.

— by Charles E. Bryce

Wedding...

Leon Barnett of Roff, Oklahoma and Dena Thomas of Sherman, Texas were joined in marriage on June 12, 2005. The ceremony took place at the Fellowship Church of God in Oklahoma City, OK with Les Pope officiating. The couple sang "You Can't Live With-

out God in Your life." They will make their home in Roff.



Leon and Dena Barnett

Article...

Blessed Are the Merciful

The lack of mercy is like a hagfish, which sucks the life out of its prey. But the merciful will not be its prey.

Jesus taught His disciples saying, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy," **Matthew 5:7**.

My favorite dictionary defines mercy as "compassionate or kindly forbearance toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power." It also gives, as a synonym, forgiveness.

"Then came Peter to Him and said, Lord how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" **Matthew 18:21**. Peter seemed to think there was a limit to mercy. "But Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but Until seventy times seven," **Matthew 18:22**.

Immediately after Peter's comeuppance, Jesus told of a king who took account of his servants. One owed him an enormous debt, but could not immediately repay it. The king commanded that his possessions be sold, and he and his family be sold as slaves to recoup whatever he could.

"The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped Him saying, Lord, have patience

with me and I will pay Thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him and forgave him the debt,” **Matthew 18:26-27**.

“But the servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all,” **Matthew 18:28-29**. The servant, however, had no mercy and imprisoned the man until the debt was paid.

Of course, word got back to the king, and the first servant was called on the carpet. The king said, “You wicked servant. I forgave you millions because you asked me. Shouldn’t you have also had compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had pity on you?”

The king was furious, and delivered his servant to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due unto him, (**verse 32-34**).

Jesus ended his parable by saying, “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses,” **Matthew 18:35**.

Jesus told of two other men, one who were so good in his own estimation that he felt no need of God’s mercy. The other prayed from his innermost being, “...God be merciful to me, a sinner,” **Luke 18:13**. Here was a man who knew he deserved God’s wrath, yet dared to ask for mercy. Jesus said he went home justified — made right with God — acquitted.

God is a merciful God as we see from David’s prayer, “With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright,” **II Samuel 22:26**.

David also wrote, “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear [respect; honor] Him,” **Psalms 103:8, 11**.

His son, Solomon, advises, “He that despiseth his neighbor, sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he,” **Proverbs 14:21**.

Many people suffer from suicidal depression when they do not have to. Ann Landers noted, “Forgiveness is more for the forgiver than for the forgiven.” Depressed people need to look deeply inside themselves to see if there is anything they haven’t forgiven —

anyone on whom they haven’t had mercy. Until they go to the person and truly forgive him, the lack of mercy will be like a hag fish which burrows into the belly of its prey and sucks the life out of it from the inside. “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”

— by Leslie A. Turvey
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laturvey@becon.org

Hmmm...

Thought for the Day

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it.

He sends you flowers every spring. He sends you a sunrise every morning. Face it, friend — He is crazy about you!

God didn’t promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, sun without rain; but He did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears, and light for the way.

If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.

Story Lesson...

The Brick

A young successful executive was driving down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag’s side door! He slammed on the brakes and backed the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown.

The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid, and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, “What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing? That’s a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?”

The young boy was apologetic. “Please mister, please. I’m sorry, but I didn’t know what else to do,” he pleaded. “I threw the brick because no one else would stop.” With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car. “It’s my brother,” he said. “He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheel-

chair and I can't lift him up."

Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me."

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out a linen handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay.

"Thank you, and may God bless you," the grateful child told the stranger.

Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message: "Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!"

God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He will throw a brick at us. It's our choice to listen or not.

— author unknown

**Feast of Tabernacles
October 18, thru 25, 2005
CGOM sponsored or Recommended sites**

Lake Texoma, OK
Contact: Steve Kieler
sskieler@dodgenet.com
515-576-5743

San Antonio, TX
Contact: Julian Cruz
jcruz@ix.netcom.com
210-333-7229

Lake of the Ozarks, MO
Contact: Duke Schneider
ddinmo@advertisnet.com
573-372-3221

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
Contact: Alex Nicholson
ancbns@hotmail.com
902-860-2880