

Church of God News

Positive News of the Churches of God

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True Tales to Live By...

A Simple Act of Kindness

It was noon Monday and everyone was rushing to lunch. A man, Pete, pulled into a local fast food restaurant and parked, noticing an old pickup truck with a trailer attached. The driver had pulled into the narrow parking lot and mistakenly tried to exit via the one-way drive-through lane. Unfortunately, he was going the wrong way and cars were stacked up waiting to get out.

Pete noticed that he was frantically trying to get turned around and out of everyone's way. There were a lot of people watching, but no one offered to help. Walking over to the driver's window, Pete asked him if he needed some help. The driver was an older gentleman, completely exhausted. The truck did not have power steering, and in his attempt to get turned around, he had jackknifed the trailer. Pete could tell that he was scared and did not know how to get out.

After stopping all the traffic and asking everyone to be patient for a few minutes, he was guided back and forth by Pete until he finally got the truck and trailer turned around. He patted the older man on the shoulder and told him, "God bless you and good luck."

He told Pete that he had just been released from the hospital, and he was so scared he thought he was going to have another heart attack right on the spot. He said, "You're a good man and I can never thank you enough." The thanks were truly from the heart, and he

drove away. Pete had worked in construction all his life and he had been required to drive vehicles with a trailer behind them, so it was a fairly easy situation for him to correct. To the inexperienced driver, it can be a nightmare. A simple thank you was certainly sufficient for such a little gesture of kindness.

What, happened next though was a total surprise and an event Pete will never forget. As he opened the door and walked into the restaurant, everyone in the restaurant stood up, clapped, and shouted "good job."

No words can ever explain how good Pete felt.

Another story is told about a metro Denver physician. The physician was driving home about 5 PM when the car started to choke and sputter and die. Barely managing to coast into a gas station, the physician thought she would be able to have a warm spot to wait for the tow truck. It just wouldn't even turn over.

Before she could make the call, she saw a woman walking out of the quickie mart building. It looked like the woman had slipped on some ice and fell into a gas pump. She got out to see if she was OK, but instead found a haggard young woman who had been overcome more by sobs than pain.

The woman dropped something as the physician helped her up. It was a nickel. The young woman had an ancient Suburban crammed full of stuff with three kids in the back and a gas pump reading \$4.95. She didn't want her kids to see her crying. She said her boyfriend had left her two months before and she couldn't make ends meet so she had called her parents in desperation. They had not spoken to each other for five years. They said for her to come and live with them in California until she could get on her feet.

The physician took her card and swiped it through the card reader on the pump so she could fill her car completely, walked next door to McDonalds and got two bags of food, and some gift certificates. The kids ate ravenously. As she was walking to her car the young lady asked if she was like an angel or something. She said, "At this time of the year,

angels are really busy, so sometimes God uses regular people.”

She went to her car and it started right away. God had indeed used her to help this lady in distress.

— by Skip Westphal

Editorial...

Famine of the Word

There's a great famine coming, and it will leave your mind empty unless you've stored what it needs ahead of time.

For years, Christians have used expressions like, “Signs of the Time,” and “We're in the Last Days.” Even the apostles may have thought they were nearing the end of civilization as man knew it (**II Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3**).

Each generation truly believed the day of the Lord (**Joel 2:1-11**) would come in their lifetime and, of course, each generation was obviously closer to that time. In Century 21 we are much closer to the end than ever before, and the signs are more indicative of it than ever before.

Jesus revealed to His disciples some of the events that will take place before His return: wars, and rumors of wars (**Matthew 24:6**); persecution of Christians (**vs. 9**); the rise of false prophets (**vs. 11**); once-loving people will become more inward (**vs. 12**); and so on.

The most important sign will be the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in the entire world for a witness to all nations, and then the end will come (**vs. 14**).

We're certainly in the era which makes this sign possible. Bibles are published in nearly every language; radio and television are being used to take the gospel message to the nations; and the Internet has a magnificent capacity to spread the word.

There are more than two thousand readers on the *Life Lines* mailing list, and many — perhaps you're one of them — relay some of the columns to their mailing list. If a few of those relayed it further, and so on, we'd be amazed at the number of people who would receive the message.

And *Life Lines* is not the only way God's message is being spread via the 'net. There are many individuals and organizations that are similarly using it. The gospel is being preached worldwide.

Church of God News

“For the edifying of the body of Christ,”

Ephesians 4:12.

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Purpose: To discover what the Churches of God are doing right. News and information about, and of interest to, Church of God Sabbath-keepers. To inform, edify, stimulate, exhort (**Hebrews 10:24-25**), and unify (**Ephesians 4:3**).

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This doesn't mean everyone accepts it. It doesn't mean everyone who hears it is being converted. Jesus said the Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached worldwide as a witness.

In court, it's not the witness' job to convince the jury of guilt or innocence. That's the attorney's work. All the witness can do is tell the facts as he saw them. And that's the business of those of us who publish God's word on the 'net.

Now Jesus didn't simply say the gospel would be preached to the world. His next words are, “...and then shall the end come.”

Does this mean immediately? Not at all.

Between the time when the world will have received the witness, and the ultimate time of the end, there will be a time of terror throughout the world (**Amos 8:1-10**), and people will wonder what's going on. The gods of the world won't help them. The governments will be powerless. And, for the first time, the nations will look to God for answers. But, God says He will send a famine throughout the world: "...not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord," **vs. 11**. People will search near and far to hear God's Word, but they won't find it (**vs. 12**).

Why will God send such a famine? Doesn't He want people to hear the truth? Yes, but the truth is being preached today, yet most people refuse to accept it. But when they're starved for the truth, and it's finally made available again, they'll accept it with alacrity, just as a starving man might wolf down a hamburger offered to him.

I suspect we are entering the time of famine right now. Already some television networks are not accepting Christian programming. There're a few religious radio stations, and some local stations provide time slots, but at ridiculous hours during the night.

Now the other powerful medium, the uncontrolled Internet, is becoming part of the famine of God's Word. Computer spammers are flooding the 'net with so much garbage there soon won't be room for God's Word. Many people are subscribing to anti-spam programs that block everything except selected mail. I see it in the number of *Life Lines* columns that are returned because they include a word that may be considered offensive.

Someone will ask, "Doesn't God have the power to stop all this?" and the answer is, "absolutely." But the world is so evil — even so-called Christian countries — that God says, "I will send a famine...of hearing the words of the Lord," **Amos 8:11**. How will He send it? Through closing the media to anything smacking of Christianity.

Wow! Guess I'd better start studying the Bible tomorrow! Sorry, make that today. Tomorrow may be too late.

— by Leslie A. Turvey
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laturvey@becon.org

Poem...

My Temporary Home

This old body's made of sinew and bone
But that's okay — it's just my temporary home!

I'm just here for a little while it seems
Then I'll "retire" with a future King.
Christ has prepared me a Kingdom bright
Where He alone is the resurrection light!
This old body will take on a new life
As I leave behind all my sorrow and strife.
In this life I've had many blessings untold
But when I leave, I'll walk on streets of gold.
Someday, I will go — be it day or night
I'll shed this old body and I'll take flight;
To meet the King in the clouds so high
To return to this earth and nevermore die.
Death is but a very peaceful sleep
So be happy for me and don't you weep.
Don't mourn for me when I am gone
Remember...I was just living in my temporary home!

— by Santa Fe Parton

Of Interest...

Only an Eighth-Grade Education? What it Took to Get an Eighth-Grade Education in 1895

Remember when grandparents and great-grandparents stated that they only had an eighth-grade education? Could any of us have passed the eighth-grade in 1895?

The following is the eighth-grade final exam from 1895 in Salina, Kansas. It was taken from the original document on file at the Smokey Valley Genealogical Society and Library in Salina, KS, and reprinted by the *Salina Journal*.

Eighth-Grade Final Exam: Salina, KS -1895

Grammar (Time, one hour)

1. Give nine rules for the use of capital letters.
2. Name the parts of speech and define those that have no modifications.
3. Define verse, stanza, and paragraph
4. What are the principal parts of a verb? Give principal parts of lie, play, and run.
5. Define case. Illustrate each case.
6. What is punctuation? Give rules for principal marks of punctuation.
- 7 - 10. Write a composition of about 150

words and show therein that you understand the practical use of the rules of grammar.

Arithmetic (Time, 1.25 hours)

1. Name and define the Fundamental Rules of Arithmetic.
2. A wagon box is 2 ft. deep, 10 feet long, and 3 ft. wide. How many bushels of wheat will it hold?
3. If a load of wheat weighs 3942 lbs., what is it worth at 50 cts/bushel, deducting 1050 lbs. for tare?
4. District No. 33 has a valuation of \$35,000. What is the necessary levy to carry on a school seven months at \$50 per month, and have \$104 for incidentals?
5. Find the cost of 6720 lbs. coal at \$6.00 per ton.
6. Find the interest of \$512.60 for 8 months and 18 days at 7 percent.
7. What is the cost of 40 boards 12 inches wide and 16 ft. long at \$20 per meter?
8. Find bank discount on \$300 for 90 days (no grace) at 10 percent.
9. What is the cost of a square farm at \$15 per acre, the distance of which is 640 rods?
10. Write a Bank Check, a Promissory Note, and a Receipt.

U.S. History (Time, 45 minutes)

1. Give the epochs into which U.S. History is divided.
2. Give an account of the discovery of America by Columbus.
3. Relate the causes and results of the Revolutionary War.
4. Show the territorial growth of the United States.
5. Tell what you can of the history of Kansas.
6. Describe three of the most prominent battles of the Rebellion.
7. Who were the following: Morse, Whitney, Fulton, Bell, Lincoln, Penn, and Howe?
8. Name events connected with the following dates: 1607, 1620, 1800, 1849, and 1865.

Orthography (Time, one hour)

1. What is meant by the following: alphabet, phonetic, orthography, etymology, and syllabication.
2. What are elementary sounds? How classified?
3. What are the following, and give examples of each: Trigraph, subvocals, diphthong, cognate letters, and linguals
4. Give four substitutes for caret 'u.' (HUH?)

5. Give two rules for spelling words with final 'e.' Name two exceptions under each rule.

6. Give two uses of silent letters in spelling. Illustrate each.

7. Define the following prefixes and use in connection with a word: bi, dis, mis, pre, semi, post, non, inter, mono, sup.

8. Mark diacritically and divide into syllables the following, and name the sign that indicates the sound: card, ball, mercy, sir, odd, cell, rise, blood, fare, last.

9. Use the following correctly in sentences: cite, site, sight, fane, fain, feign, vane, vain, vein, raze, raise, rays.

10. Write 10 words frequently mispronounced and indicate pronunciation by use of diacritical marks and by syllabication.

Geography (Time, one hour)

1. What is climate? Upon what does climate depend?

2. How do you account for the extremes of climate in Kansas?

3. Of what use are rivers? Of what use is the ocean?

4. Describe the mountains of North America.

5. Name and describe the following: Monrovia, Odessa, Denver, Manitoba, Hecla, Yukon, St. Helena, Juan Fernandez, Aspinwall, and Orinoco.

6. Name and locate the principal trade centers of the U.S.

7. Name all the republics of Europe and give the capital of each.

8. Why is the Atlantic Coast colder than the Pacific in the same latitude?

9. Describe the process by which the water of the ocean returns to the sources of rivers.

10. Describe the movements of the earth. Give the inclination of the earth.

Notice that the exam took five hours to complete. Gives the saying "he only had an eighth-grade education" a whole new meaning, doesn't it? Also, it shows how poor our education system has become.

— author unknown

Article...

School Shooters

School shooters, like the boy who just killed several people in Red Lake, MN, bear a strong resemblance to suicide bombers. They have a combination of rage and despair that motivates them to kill others and then themselves.

Of course, school shooters are rare in comparison with all the rest of the students, but they are certainly symptomatic of something dreadfully wrong in our culture.

In trying to explain these tragedies, we can eliminate guns. Guns are inanimate objects, and it is impossible for an inanimate object to motivate a human being. To blame crime on guns is as stupid as blaming pencils for writers.

We can also eliminate poverty. For decades, socialists have argued that if poverty were eliminated, social problems such as crime would go away. In the first place, such a premise is an insult to poor people, the overwhelming majority of whom don't commit crimes. In the second place, we see the same social problems among the affluent. The shooters at Columbine High School came from affluent families.

If you take away poverty and guns, then you are left with the person and the person's mind. All human actions originate in the human mind. I've been thinking a lot lately about why so many young people today seem to be unhappy.

Looking at my own childhood, I came from what most would describe as a poor background, though no one in the family, including me, ever thought of us as poor. I got my first BB gun at age 5, my first rifle at age 8, and my first shotgun at age 11. Never once did I ever entertain a thought of shooting anybody with them. Life to me was pleasant and exciting and full of hope.

Since I consider myself as typical of the time and place, the question arises, what has changed in our society? For one thing, today almost half of American children live in one-parent homes. Starting in the 1960s, the cultural elite condoned living together without benefit of clergy. The states made it much easier to get a divorce. Feminism poured forth its poisonous discontent, pretending that being a mother and a wife were somehow inferior to working in a corporate office. What nonsense that is. It is a thousand times more difficult to be a good mother and to manage a home than it is to do the mostly rote work that corporations require.

Ironically, even though I grew up during World War II, there is far more violence in the media today than during the war years. The incessant violence on TV, in the movies and in video games has a deleterious effect on children. That's not even debatable. At best, it

makes them indifferent to violence. Furthermore, Hollywood and television don't provide boys with many heroes. Youth is presented either as a mindless drunk and a woman-chaser or some nihilistic killer. Homosexuality and drug use are presented as normal.

Children are exposed to sex at a much earlier age today. Nothing is sadder to me than to see a 13 or 14-year-old with ennui. They've already been there and done that. What is there to look forward to? When I was in high school, the sight of a girl's knee could cause me to break out in a sweat. Today you can see high-school girls with bare midriffs and skirts with hemlines up to their crotch. No wonder kids do less well in academic subjects. And, of course, the results are teenage pregnancies and teenage venereal disease.

Another sin the media commit, especially the advertising industry, is bombarding children with an unending depiction of affluence. This is bound to cause discontent, because for so many children today they see such affluence as impossible. Expectations play a huge role in a person's mental health.

This might seem far away from student killers, but it is the cultural soil out of which they grow.

— by Charley Reese

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Of Interest...



“Till the Cows Come Home”

Letter to the Editor: Feminism

The rise of feminism is not all about sexuality. It is also in part about male abuse of power. Sure the Bible speaks about Eve having “desire” to her husband because of sin, but this does not give him the license to twist scripture to abuse/control her. For example

making the apostle Paul look like a sexist pig when in reality he was ahead of his day in female liberation. And I know what I am talking about. I grew up Roman Catholic — just take a few moments to read what the so-called “Church Fathers” had to say about women. Satan is really to blame. Did not Christ call him the father of lies? Real love is not about controlling one’s spouse or the female gender. The true Word of God reveals this. Real love casts out all fear. You want to be a leader? You want a real godly woman as a wife, or more gentle women in society? Then put into ACTION I **Corinthians 12:13, 13:1-13** and **Galatians 5:22-26**. Do this, and she will follow you anywhere. Start using her gender as a doormat and she’ll claim worldly feminism as her goddess and hate as a badge of honor. — by Alison Raborn

Letter, Follow-up

Yes, my letter was a response to the feminist article in the November/December issue of the COGNews. Yes you may print my letter and use my name. I look forward to reading your research on feminism in the future. It is so sad that women either think God is a male monster, or that the Lord expects her to be passive when it comes to the marriage (“house spouse”) doctrine within the Church. Both views are so negative! Is it any wonder that women want a female god? There is so much healing that needs to take place. I know years ago I almost fell into the secular feminist trap. I spent many of hours on my college campus trying to explain who/what God really is. Interesting I had more opposition coming from the Christian conservatives (female & male) than from the secular women who were really hungry for direction in their lives. Like I said, it is all about power/control and the fear of losing it. We all feel it at conversion. God calls and we resist because it is hard to surrender. The feminists who argue about sexual freedom focus on the fact (fear) that males have tried throughout history to control a woman’s sexuality. That is the whole point about the fight on birth control and abortion (I DO NOT BELIEVE IN ABORTION). A good book on this is *Women and Water: Menstruation in Jewish Life and Law*. Editor: Rahel R. Wasserfall. Brandies University Press, 1999. So anyway, when a minister speaks out on feminism, and just focuses on the sexual issues, what women, even within the Church, hear is

“control freak;” thus causing division and not healing. Keep this in mind when presenting this hot issue in your future articles. You may print and use my name in this letter also.

— by Alison Raborn

Article...

Can You Weather the Storms of Life?

Are there times in your life when the storms of life such as bills, car repairs, and so forth seem to just overwhelm you? I know that we all have times in our lives that can be very difficult, and circumstances that seem to overwhelm us. Just recently in my life, I have had a trial that really seemed impossible to overcome, but I found encouragement in the Word of God, which is the textbook of life for us here on earth. Let me share with you what I have found.

In the Gospel of **Mark 4:36-41** (also in **Luke 8:22-25** and **Matthew 8:23-27**), we are told of an event that happened to the disciples, “...they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?”

We can see that many principles of this event can be applied to our lives during times of difficulty; for we know that we do live by every word that “proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (**Matthew 4:4**).

One point that we can note is that Jesus was asleep in the ship during this storm, and He did not seem to be concerned about the storm that was threatening the ship. He realized that all would be well even though, at that moment, things look bad. We need to realize that when life’s storms go against us that it will not last forever and blue skies will be seen again.

Another point that we can note is that the disciples did not call for Jesus’ help at first, but tried to weather the storm on their own until it just got so bad that they could not cope with the situation. As disciples, we sometimes wait before we call on our Father for help until we can no longer do it ourselves. We

should instead call on Him first when our storms of life start, and allow Him to guide us though them when it gets rough.

We also see that the disciples showed lack of faith in the storm and were asked later by Jesus why they had a lack of faith. We must show faith that He will assist us under any circumstances that may befall us. **Romans 8:35-39** states a list of events and conditions that cannot “separate us from the love of Christ.” Please read the scripture for it is very encouraging.

As the disciples were trying to keep the ship from sinking, we tend to try to work out the storms of life and worry about them. It is good that we try to work out our problems, but we must allow God to help us. Just remember that God created all we see, and He has the power over the universe. We must put ourselves in His hands.

So next time the storms of life get rough, just remember this event in the Gospels about the disciples trying to save the ship, and to call on Our Lord Jesus Christ to help. Even if problems get hard to deal with, in the end there will be blue skies.

— by Doyle J. Carter, Photocrazy88@cox.net

Feast of Tabernacles...

Elks Lodge, San Antonio, Texas

Families and individuals — 185 in all — from four States observed the Festival, hosted by the Church of God, San Antonio.

The Festival began with a welcome from Pastor Julian Cruz, and continued daily with messages from Julian, Jeff Henderson, Dan Johnson (both from California), Chris Patton (Minnesota), Wayne Heinz, and Terry McAdams (Texas). Children took part in the services through Scripture readings, a youth choir, and prayers.

A baptismal service for Pam Hendrickson was conducted at the hotel’s swimming pool.

Sabbath eve everyone assembled for a special “blessing of the children” ceremony where every child, teen, or adult child received a special blessing and prayer by Pastors Julian Cruz, Jeff Henderson, or their own fathers and mothers.

Activities at the Festival included traditional live mariachi music by Campañas de America, a twelve-member ensemble. They complemented the Mexican-themed feast as the CGSA shared some of the cultural experiences and foods that make San Antonio so

special. Activities included a line dancing class, BBQ and a country and western concert, ‘burger fest’ and magic show, balloon sculpting and swimming, and a Slide Show of the Feast. Teens enjoyed an outdoor pizza party.

The Feast of Tabernacles 2005 concluded with the traditional, sentimental singing of “God Be with You ‘Till We Meet Again,” and finally with the Feast’s theme song, “Here I Am, Lord.”

— by Jody Patton

Benin Republic, Africa

Dear in Christ, Shalom and bon jour,

We bring you greetings from Cotonou, Benin Republic, Africa.

We are thankful to Almighty God and pleased to report a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles just completed at Ouidah (weedah) South of Benin Republic. The camp was filled to capacity with those eager to celebrate this key Biblical observance and to learn, experience, and share the Truth of the Word. Those attending traveled from different countries, and cities. We have brethren from Gabon, Congo, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, and Benin Republics.

The messages were stimulating; the music was memorable; the children’s classes were a blessing; and the many activities kept everyone refreshed and ready for more each day. The weather was clement except on the second day.

Our theme for this year’s FOT was “To know Christ in-depth.” Six local chiefs (Dahs) from Abonmey (Abonmey is an ancient town where blood of human beings was used to build several houses for their kings) attended the Feast. Nothing like this has ever happened before that chiefs of this caliber would attend a Christian gathering. They were here for the whole seven days and they gave their lives to Christ. We are preparing them for baptism. (Will send the pictures to you when done). We have just started Bible studies in 3 locations where they came from. They promised to give a piece of land to build a Church and a vocational center for their people. It amazes me what the Lord is doing. There were brethren from Allada, Seme Podji, Bohicon, Ouidah, Parakou, Comé, Lokossa, etc.

We distributed free Bibles, reading glasses, and provided a year school fees for 28-orphaned children. Some their parents died

because of AIDS. We thank God for the brethren whom He used to help us celebrate this year's FOT. Our thanks go to John Walsh of Actnet, Brother and sister David & Lori Johnson, Pastor Dennis McLeod, Pastor Jeff Henderson, and his congregation,

Stephen Wayne, and many of you are praying for us. Without you, it would have been very impossible for us to organize the FOT. May our great God continue to bless you all in abundance. We appreciate all the efforts of John Walsh to make sure we got all the money that was sent through the Visa account. The enemy wanted to frustrate us through the bank, and it affected some of our programs until God intervened. Praise His holy name. This year's FOT was too expensive compared to last year's celebration. It was due to the high cost of gasoline. Foodstuff was high too. Our children's Bible class was a great blessing. Stella Porter spoke on the family; Michael spoke on the second coming, the Feast, etc. Others spoke on the Biblical Sabbath, holiness, clean and unclean food, etc. We were refreshed and some people



even wanted us to continue after the Great Last Day. We had Christian dramas by Youth Ministry; we praised God in different tongues and dialects. We praised and worshipped God in our own African style. He must be pleased to see us worshipping Him that way. We tried also some Jewish style of dance and worship. Next year it may be an American style. May His Name be praised! Through some of the pictures and later some videos you will understand what we meant. Souls were saved, some adherent of voodoo worshippers gave their lives to Christ and many brethren rededicated their lives to the service of the Master. We have so many pictures and reports and we shall send them out gradually.



Needs/Prayers

We have some needs that we want you to pray and seek God on the best way you can help. Praise God for the 'BORN TO WIN' radio outreach, which is being aired here in Cotonou, Benin Republic since October 2005 on Wednesdays and Sabbath mornings. Pray that God will use this radio outreach to bring souls into the Kingdom, and to equip the saints in their search for perfection. We have nothing to reward any of you for the parts you have played in making it possible for us to celebrate the Feast of the Lord. May His blessings continue for you.



You made our days. Reports show that all the brethren arrived safely to their various destinations.

Thanks for sharing and for caring, and continue for you.

Maranatha, Shalom,

—by Brother Michael & Stella Porter

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Of Interest...

Strategies for Christians

It seems to me that some of the sayings by Sun Tzu, famous Chinese general and military strategist of the 6th century BC, are applicable to us today:

“The more you read and learn, the less your adversary will know.”

“He who knows when he can fight and when he cannot will be victorious.”

“All men can see these tactics whereby I

conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.”

“Now the reason the enlightened prince and the wise general conquer the enemy whenever they move and their achievements surpass those of ordinary men is foreknowledge.”

“The general [read Church member] who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, whose only thought is to protect his country [read Church] and do good service for his sovereign [read Christ], is the jewel of the kingdom.”

— Regards, Craig White
surfer11@primus.com.au

Establishing the Children...

Ways to Establish Your Children Part 1

Sometime ago, I was asked if I would write a column for parents and teachers in helping to establish our children. The definition for “establish” is: “To set up on a firm or permanent basis; to settle as if permanently; to show to be valid or **well grounded...**” (American College Dictionary). For the purpose of this article, we’ll use the definition “**well grounded.**” Before we can establish our children in the faith we ourselves need to be well grounded.

Well, are we well grounded in our faith? Have we proved “all things?” (**I Thessalonians 5:21**). (All quoted scriptures are from the NKJV) **Romans 12:2** states: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Further, **II Corinthians 13:5** says: “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you.” Peter wrote in **II Peter 1:12**: “Therefore I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know them, and are established in the present truth.” We are to be “rooted and grounded in love” (**Ephesians 3:17**). Also Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:23**: “if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard.” God wants us to be grounded, rooted in the faith. If we are, then we should help ground our children, giving them a foundation to build upon. We are to be “rooted and built up in

Him [Christ] and established in the faith” (**Colossians 2:7**).

With all the break-ups and Churches splintering apart, it has been hard on all of us; but even more so for our children. They have lost friends and relationships that were part of their lives. Families have been split apart and some family members won’t have anything to do with other family members. What a shame! With all the accusations, arguments and confusion of the brethren when a group breaks up, it’s hard for us to sometimes hang on. But if we are rooted and grounded in love we will be able to overcome and keep on going. There are things we can do to help our children become more established in the faith, even when all seems to be going the wrong way.

First of all, our children should never hear or see us speaking badly of someone whom we disagree with, and we should never act inappropriately before them. Our children mimic what we say and how we act, so remember to not allow your words or your actions to cause problems for your children. God does not want us to behave in such a manner, accusing and arguing with another brother, repeating gossip and name-calling. **Matthew 5:44** states: “...love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” Again He said, “...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself;’” (**Matthew 22:37-39**). Here Jesus is talking about how we are to love others.

What about the brethren? Do we just love those who we agree with, and hate those who don’t look at things the same way we do? Do we look down on brethren in other fellowships or speak and act badly toward them? What did our Savior say about how we are to treat our brethren? “A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another,**” **John 13:34-35**. If we truly love the brethren, we won’t look down on them if they don’t agree with us in everything, and we won’t bad-mouth them to others. Certainly we won’t pass on gossip (or lies) that hurt others, as this is one of those things God hates; and we

won't cause division among the brethren; another thing God hates. Remember each of us are to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...do all things without murmuring and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation..." (**Philippians 2:12-15**).

Don't compare yourself or your group with other brethren in other groups. If they are of God, then God will be for them, and we don't want to go against God's people. And if we are one of God's children, we will bring forth "good fruits;" so will those brethren who are not in the same group we are. Sometimes it seems that there is a lot of jealousy and competition going on between the Churches of God, large and small. Wouldn't it be well if we just quit commenting, arguing, dividing, and causing confusion in our groups, and just believe the best about each other? If we really can't get along with someone or some group, it's better to stay away from them; but don't let God or your children hear you say something destructive or act badly against any brother or group. This will set a better example to your children than gossiping, arguing, accusing, and bad-mouthing others in front of your children. Let them see instead "the light of God" in your life, giving honor where honor is due, and not speaking evil of anyone. Let them see "love for one another" as this signifies that you are one of Christ's disciples. Remember we are to humble ourselves as a little child and not cause any offense to these little ones, or cause them to sin (**Matthew 18:4-6**).

Make sure your children have a stable home life, as much as is within your power. Try not to allow squabbling, tension, confusion, bitterness, or any of the other problems that cause strife to enter into your home. Set age appropriate guidelines for your children such as:

- Share at least one meal together each day;
- Make each child take care of their "stuff";
- Have a set time for homework and bedtime;
- Set curfews for teens;
- Limit children's school activities so they won't be overloaded;
- Guide what your children watch on television, the Internet, what kind of music they listen to; also know who your children's friends are.

- Spend some private time with each child; discuss the day's events;

Make sure you are there for them when they come home, if possible; and spend some time doing fun things (on the weekend or whenever you can squeeze in extra time). Be flexible, keep calm, laugh a lot, defuse problems quickly, and think before you act. If you become tense, angry, jealous, frustrated, quarrelsome, your children will probably behave in the same way. Remember our children really want to have guidelines; they need them to fall back on when peer pressure gets too rough. Again, be a light for your children and set the proper example.

— by Shelby Faith
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Poem...

David and Goliath

There's a story in the Bible that was written
long ago
About a little shepherd boy and the God that
we all know.
He was just a little lad with just a stone and
sling
He didn't know that one day...he would be a
king!
He went out to meet Goliath — a giant of a
man
But David did not fear him for he already had
a plan.
Goliath laughed so very hard to see this little
lad
And thought that the Israelites had really gone
quite mad!
Said David to Goliath, "You come with armor
and a bow,
But I come before you with my God whom
you don't know."
He picked a stone and said a prayer and then
he let it fly
It pierced just like an arrow right between
Goliath's eyes!
Goliath went down quickly...on that fateful
day
A giant of a man whom little David did
quickly slay.
His God had delivered the giant into his hands
For David was a faithful lad and for God he
took a stand.
The giant came to David with a spear and
with a sword
But David came to him...with the power of his
Lord!

— by Santa Fe Parton

"HAVE LOVE FOR EACH OTHER"

The scripture below is written in a secret code. See if you can find the correct letters listed in the code below and write them on the dotted lines:

"
 ☉ ■ℓ◆ ℘□○○☉■△○ℓ■◆ ✕ γ⊕❖ℓ ☐□◆ ◆⊗☉◆ ☐□◆
 ●□❖ℓ □■ℓ ☉■□◆⊗ℓ□ ☉◆ ✕ ⊗☉❖ℓ ●□❖ℓ△ ☐□◆
 ◆⊗☉◆ ☐□◆ ☉●◆□ ●□❖ℓ □■ℓ ☉■□◆⊗ℓ□." (John 13:34)

CODE

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o
☉	⊕	℘	△	ℓ	✕	γ	⊗	✕	er	&	●	○	■	□
p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z				
□	□	□	◆	◆	◆	❖	◆	☒	☐	⌘				

Use the word pool below to fill in the blanks in the following scriptures. Look up the scriptures in Matthew 22:37-39 if you need help. (NKJV)

"You shall _____ the Lord, your _____ with all your _____, with all your _____, and with _____ your _____. This is the _____ and _____."

"And the _____ is like it; you shall love _____ _____ as _____."

WORD POOL

first	your	love	God	mind	great
heart	yourself	all	commandment		neighbor
second	soul				

Origin...**Roses Are Red**

Should you honor an imaginary saint, or the true and living God? Perhaps the following will help you decide.

“Roses are red. Violets are blue. You’d better send crocuses, or we are through.”

This bit of doggerel introduces the fact that roses are not the flowers for Valentine’s day. The crocus, which blossoms about mid-February, is St. Valentine’s flower, so save your money fellows, and give her crocuses instead.

Who is this “saint” Valentine, and how did all this money spending, in his name, get started? More important, is Valentine’s Day Christian?

The Roman Catholic Church has certain, non-Biblical, criteria to determine sainthood; the first of which is the person must have lived. But did the man called Valentine actually live?

Some sources say there were as many as seven Valentines, whose lives were blended to form one legend. Now legends are fables, myths, and fairy tales; yet the Catholic system has canonized a mythical someone as a saint. That’s akin to making a saint out of Peter Pan or Harry Potter.

One of the seven Valentines is said to have been a young man who helped Christians during a time of persecution. He was beheaded February 14, 269 A.D. for refusing to worship the Roman gods. If this is true, then we know where the date for Valentine’s Day originated.

The imaginary Valentine was composed of various love-gods and — even though he was a male — goddesses, including Juno Februata, the ancient Roman queen of heaven, and goddess of the febris (fever) of love. Valentine was also identified with Eros, the god of sexual desire, and Priapus, the god of male procreative power. Priapus was the son of Dionysus, the god of fertility, and Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, from whose name we get our noun aphrodisiac, a drug inciting sexual desire.

Juno Februata’s festive day was the Lupercalia, a Roman festival of sexual license. Among the day’s events, bachelors drew girls’ names from an urn. Each couple, so selected, formed a liaison for the erotic games to follow, and paired off until the next Lupercalia festival. He wore her name on his

sleeve, and was duty-bound to attend and protect her. Now you know where the expression “wear your heart on your sleeve” came from.

French and English literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries contain allusions to similar practices. Those who chose each other under such circumstances called each other their valentines, a reference to one of the stories surrounding the mythological saint. The legend says Valentine restored the sight of his jailer’s blind daughter, and on the eve of his death wrote her a farewell note signed, “From your Valentine.”

The practices of an ancient day devoted to a make-believe saint, have continued into the 21st century. Merchants love it: it is second only to Christmas for the sale of greeting cards, and as long as there’s money to be made, they’ll keep it going.

But the entire concept of the day is unchristian, and more honor is given to an imaginary mortal named Valentine, than to the source of true love, our heavenly Father, God.

Considering the legends, eroticism, and background of Valentine’s day, every Christian has an obligation to decide whether he should take part in the orgy of gift giving and card sending.

Perhaps, instead, each Christian should consider whether God’s holy days outlined in Leviticus 23 are more appropriate. There’s nothing imaginary or mythological about them, and they all are part of God’s great and wonderful plan for all mankind.

— by Leslie A. Turvey, laturvey@becon.org

NOTICE

Churches: Please submit news about your group for publication to: sskieler@dodgenet.com.

**We need you!
Thank you for sharing.**

Food For Thought...

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

— by Frank Outlaw

*Poem...***It's Strange Isn't It?**

Isn't it strange how a 20-dollar bill seems like such a large amount when you donate it to Church, but such a small amount when you go shopping?

Isn't it strange how 2 hours seem so long when you're at Church, and how short they seem when you're watching a good movie?

Isn't it strange that you can't find a word to say when you're praying, but you have no trouble thinking what to talk about with a friend?

Isn't it strange how difficult and boring it is to read one chapter of the Bible, but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a popular novel or Zane Grey book?

Isn't it strange how everyone wants front-row-tickets to concerts or games, but they do whatever is possible to sit at the last row in Church?

Isn't it strange how we need to know about an event for Church 2-3 weeks before the day so we can include it in our agenda, but we can adjust it for other events in the last minute?

Isn't it strange how difficult it is to learn a fact about God to share it with others, but how easy it is to learn, understand, extend, and repeat gossip?

Isn't it strange how we believe everything that magazines and newspapers say, but we question the words in the Bible?

Isn't it strange how everyone wants a place in Heaven, but they don't want to believe, do, or say anything to get there? Isn't it strange?

— by Author Unknown

*Church News...***News from India**

Dear Steven and Suzanne:

Greetings. How are you doing? As you know, the continuous floods and storms, have totally ruined our state; thousands of hectares of farm lands destroyed, outbreaks of dis-

eases, houses submerged and collapsed, smell of dirty water, dead bodies of human beings, cattle, rats, and live snakes, roads and bridges damaged beyond repair. This is the scenario of Tamilnadu. At least we thought it would be over, but the weather prediction is that several more storms are on the way.

I am trying to reach out to do whatever possible and help the brethren and others who are in dire need of relief. Well, I was with two minds whether to send this letter or not. I should not always give bad news but there is no other way. I am not sending this letter to over burden you for help. It would be great if you can try to promote some source for help through any means. Above all, keep praying for us. This is more than a great tribulation.

— by M. R. Hubert, mrhubert72@yahoo.com

Church Report from Kenya

Dear Elder Richard Nickels:

Receive sincere greetings from fellow brethren here in Kenya. We are fine in the Lord, busy continuing with the proclaiming of His Word into our communities of the East Africa region.

Also receive many greetings from my family and our Churches. I do also like to express the challenges that we face in spreading the gospel. As some places are located in remote areas with respect to this, we do request for your spiritual intervention through prayers.

Although we have a few to assist in various Church ministries, we have managed to establish some more new Churches in our various widespread areas. Some of these Churches are fully established while some are still upcoming.

Moreover, the areas in which we are establishing these Churches have other numerous denominations and in that case we do face some sort of competition in converting new believers. Still or in reference to this, we have to defend sincerely these new converts and entire Churches that are still new as they require both our spiritual and physical support in order for them to stand firmly.

Furthermore, these areas are comprised mainly of poor or mid class people. This problem is currently and frequently being faced by most of our members. They actually face strict famine caused by frequent, persistent drought resulting in great hunger. Some of these converts need to be provided

with such basic needs as food and clothing.

In this case, it is sometimes difficult for them to stand strongly, and they are severely faced with a lot of crises. Also, the new converts, and even some members, require close attention and frequent visiting for spiritual encouragement, consolation, teaching, guiding, and counseling. We do also organize several or receive a lot of invitations from various categories of people who actually need guiding and counseling. These categories range from youths and adults both genders.

The spreading of the gospel has been effective. My wife and I visited a special seminar at Sotik in October of 2005. The people living in that area were much appeased with the message of God. Among them were pastor Raymond Soi and sister Regina Langat. The seminar was very successful and some of the main agendas were:

- Unity among Christian spouses and with the Churches
- Ways of solving domestic within Christian families as members of the Church.
- Ways of ensuring good progress among Churches already established.

In relation to these issues we dealt with during the seminar, I do have a mission in furthering/teaching the same at my local Churches that are far apart. (As far as the Districts: Kericho, Bomet, Transmara, Narok, Nandi, and the other parts of Kenya regions) I had also planned to conduct the same activity at three levels:

- Elders council/conference
- Women's conference
- Youth conference

I also express my gratitude for this work we are jointly committed with you serving the Lord, that is my fellow brethren in co-operation with you. It is therefore my prayer and request that you pray for us as ministers here in Kenya. We also thank our Government for granting us the license to continue spreading the Gospel. We have registered our Church as Sabbath Church of God. I am the chairman, Nelson Kirui, vice chairman, and Edwin Nyolei is the Treasurer.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Kenya and hearing from you soon. Thank you for the books and other literature you send.

Elder Overseer
Andrew K. Koech, East Africa Chairman.
Sabbath Church of God,
overseerandrew@yahoo.com

Living Church of God News

LCG's Rod King reports, "We are adding 200 new subscribers a month to our *Tomorrow's World* list in the Philippines. Most of this is through word of mouth. We also still have new people joining us from other groups. The highlight of this month will be the youth camps we will be conducting in three separate locations. Please pray for the success of the camps and for God's inspiration on all who participate."

LCG's Douglas Winnail reports, "In Church Administration, we are working on plans for a Ministerial Conference in Charlotte next summer, and the Feast of Tabernacles for 2006. We would appreciate your prayers for success in these areas."

LCG Media

LCG's Bruce Tyler reported that, "Michael Gill has had a positive conversation with the programming director of WIN television. WIN is the country or regional distributor for the NINE Network. A face-to-face meeting is scheduled for early in the New Year; so we request your prayers for another door to open for us to take the Gospel to the rest of the country."

LCG's Wayne Pyle reported, "This has been a most exciting year for *Tomorrow's World* audience growth in North America. According to the latest information we have seen from Nielsen Media Research, the organization famous for TV ratings, the weekly *Tomorrow's World* viewing audience has experienced a 25 percent jump over last year's group of viewers. We began the year with a total of 6.2 million TV households having viewed the telecast over the previous six years, and so far this year, the viewers have zoomed to more than 7.8 million households, which is 25 percent above a year ago. The increase was greatly helped by the addition of 29 TV stations across America, with the Inspiration Network being a major contributor. These stations connected the *Tomorrow's World* telecast to 38 million homes. While only a fraction of American and Canadian viewers watch the telecast each week, our average weekly viewing audience has been growing steadily. The telecast has now been watched by more than six percent of all Americans and Canadians, or about one out of every 16 Americans and Canadians has

viewed the *Tomorrow's World* program at least one time over the past seven years. Each week, 400,000 households are viewing the telecast. We are very grateful for the marvelous doors Jesus Christ has opened to do His Work!

— submitted by Robert Thiel
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Church of God, Seventh Day, in Ghana



The Church of God, Seventh Day was planted in Ghana, West Africa, in the mid-1960s. The Church started small in Kumasi, the second largest city of Ghana, in the Ashanti Region. The work spread, and in 2005 there were ten branches in many parts of Ghana. There are four pastors and one evangelist. In some cases, presiding elders oversee the activities of some Churches. The main goal of the Church of God, Seventh Day is to spread the Word of God, to consolidate the Sabbath truth, and to lift up Christ.

Evangelistic efforts include open-air crusades, house-to-house evangelism, Bible study groups, correspondence courses, and FM radio broadcasts. The latter has proved very effective, resulting in many people won to Christ, and accepting the Sabbath truth. The Church is involved in a number of humanitarian efforts, including an orphanage



to help children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Needs of the Church include resources for evangelism, funds for more FM radio broadcasting, Bibles for new converts, and means of transport for the ministry to penetrate the hinterland.

The small photo is my passport photo. The large photo is a baptismal ceremony. I am in the middle.

— by James Donkor Dugger
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Feast of Tabernacles...

Pura Vida! Costa Rica

About 350 English-speaking brethren from America, Canada, Britain, and elsewhere, plus about 150 Spanish-speaking brethren gathered in San José, Costa Rica from October 18-25, 2005, for the Feast of Tabernacles sponsored by the United Church of God El Salvador. Translations from English to Spanish and Spanish to English were broadcast on an FM transmitter so the brethren could listen with radio headphones.

Sermons were by Festival Elder Herbert Cisneros, other Spanish elders, and English pastors from America such as Mr. James Capo and Mr. Fish. I gave a sermonette on what it means, "every man shall sit under his own vine."

Costa Rica is a most beautiful country. Where we were in the central plateau, about 2,000 feet above sea level, has been called by *National Geographic* magazine the world's best climate. It never gets hot or cold, with year-round temperatures usually in the comfortable 70s. Although it rained often during the Feast, it was never hot and humid, yet Costa Rica is far south, near Panama.

Costa Rica is an "eco-country," where you can drink the water out of the tap, and it is blessed with clear mountain streams. Their electricity comes from hydro and wind power. Tours were available for Feast-goers to visit local volcanoes, tropical rain forests, butterfly and hummingbird preserves, the lovely Pacific coast beaches, and, for the adventurous, white water rafting. Tour guides explained that a typical Costa Rican village has a village square, church, football (soccer) field, and if big enough, a bar and a fast food restaurant. Our first class Hotel Herradura provided excellent rooms at reasonable prices, plus an outstanding free breakfast with farm eggs, local cheeses, beans and rice (staple food of the country), cheese bread, ripe pineapple, papaya, and fruit juices with local coffee. It was great to fellowship with the brethren every day of the Feast. In the country, you see terraced fields up steep mountains with cattle, chickens, coffee, and nursery stock being typical. Our tour guides explained that Costa Rican life is summarized by the phrase, "pura vida," which means "pure life." People are industrious, but not too hurried to enjoy the good life. Surprisingly, this country

provides free medical care for its citizens, and its top industry is high tech.

The Costa Rican people are very friendly. We got to know our taxicab driver, Juan Vargas. We wanted to go to the artisan market, to buy local crafts made from leather, wood, and pottery. Juan spoke very little English, and we spoke a little Spanish, but we communicated. “¿Cuánto? (how much?)” I asked. He replied, “\$15.” After an hour of negotiating twisting streets, we arrived at the *Mundo de Recuerdo* in the San José suburb of Moravia. As we got of the taxi, I offered him the \$15. “No, señor, I wait for you.” Later, we came out of the first store loaded with packages, and he deposited them in the taxi, and followed us to the next store, and the next. When we finally returned to our hotel, about 3-4 hours later, the price was still \$15. He gave us his business card, and if we return to Costa Rica, we will plan to look up our amigo. On another day, we took off to the El Centro (downtown) Costa Rica, and discovered a local restaurant on the second story of a plain building above the pedestrian mall. We

were treated to local meals at reasonable prices, guava juice, a delicious steak called “chorrasco,” and a sea bass fish called “curvina.” It was “pura vida!”

Besides the excellent sermons, I was blessed to be able to sing in the English choir, directed by Laura Payne of the Isle of Man in the United Kingdom. The Spanish choir from San Sebastian, El Salvador, was outstanding. And the talent show was awesome, with one great musical exhibition after another, in Spanish and English. My daughter Barbara and her husband Roberto, organized many festival activities, for adults and children.

Getting to know Spanish brethren and the truly beautiful country of Costa Rica made this feast very special. We had a taste of the Millennium, when everyone will be living “pure vida.” It is likely that next year, the Feast will again be held in Costa Rica. If interested, contact Barbara Parada at closetoyouinc@hotmail.com, or call 713-914-0766.

Pura Vida!

— By Richard C. Nickels