



The Evening Light

A Publication of The Church of God

February 2019, Vol. 27 No. 4



LOVE *for*
the **LOST**
(John 3:16, 17)

Redeem the time, because the days are evil! (Eph. 5:16). Be a good steward of the time God gives you every day and make it count for the Lord's service. Use every means possible to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ and the message of the Church now! *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest"* (Eccl. 9:10). Look around you and be ready to seize every opportunity God gives you to present the gospel message which is the **POWER OF GOD** unto salvation. Let the Spirit of Christ get a hold of you and get a hold of the Spirit of Christ today which declares, *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"* (John 9:4).



EMERGENCY FUND DOLLARS: We are now about halfway through our Assembly Year, and we want to encourage our pastors and local churches to give special attention in the month of February to our endeavor to see that all our churches be 100% in Emergency Dollars. A number of local churches have already reported to the Assembly Band Movement Department that they are 100% in the collection of these funds. Members, don't wait until the last minute to send your annual contribution of \$5.00 to this fund which has helped to supply so many needs—domestic and foreign—through the years. Our ministers, their families and churches have been blessed by the help this fund has extended to them when the need was very great in their lives. May God richly bless each pastor and congregation for their faithfulness.

Editorials

Oscar Pimentel
General Overseer



Special Notice: The following is a portion of a "Special Notice" that was placed in *The Evening Light* of October, 1998, by Bishop Robert J. Pruitt. I feel that it is necessary to share it now to address some of the same concerns.

I have received word at the office that solicitations for money have been made to some of our members and churches since the end of the Assembly and in the recent months. Please read below:

"Special Notice! ...Please be advised that no one, Overseer or otherwise, has been authorized or permitted to make personal or private solicitations from individuals or local churches. The private donations intended for National Overseers or churches outside the United States should go through General Headquarters and the donor should specify where it is intended to go, then it will be sent to the recipient intended. Such random solicitations will only lead to confusion and result in some more aggressive solicitors getting all the help and the less aggressive ones getting nothing. Your favorable response to this notice will help us to know where the help is going and how to distribute what we have in the mission fund. May God touch your heart in helping us to distribute the funds God has given us to use for the advancement of His work. May He bless you in your obedient cooperation in this great endeavor."

Announcement

The *Assembly Minutes* are ready to be printed and will soon be mailed out to all licensed ministers. The newly updated *Church Business Guide* is in the final proofreading stage and will soon go to print, as well. Either of these books can be pre-ordered from the Bookstore.

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The Evening Light is an official publication of The Church of God with Oscar Pimentel, *General Overseer; Editor & Publisher*; Kryss Barick, *Assistant Editor*. This paper is published monthly at General Headquarters, 197 Tillie Road, Cleveland, TN 37312. Those desiring information or wishing to submit articles or testimonies for publication may contact the Assistant Editor at the following address: P. O. Box 450, Charleston, TN 37310. E-mail: eveninglight@thechurchofgod.org. Visit us online at www.thechurchofgod.org. Subscription prices: \$20 per year, or \$30 First-Class Mail. Digital subscriptions are \$8, available through the online store.

Watch Her Now, Righteous Rebekah

Oscar Pimentel, *General Overseer*
The Church of God

"And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master" (Gen. 24:10-14).

Abraham's eldest servant, Eliezer, was a man on a mission. He took of his master what goods were to be given as a gift to the damsel, and to the family, who would become the wife of Abraham's son. It is apparent that when the servant came to the city to which he was sent, he felt the weight of the responsibility that was laid upon him. I'm almost certain that the heaviness of the responsibility was felt from the moment he understood Abraham's instructions, and this heaviness was with him for the duration of his travels to Mesopotamia.

Imagine this tremendous duty of finding an adequate help to his master's son. No doubt he understood that such a serious task allowed only "one go at it," so to speak, and that he could not afford to make even one mistake. He had to be certain that this damsel was the right one, the adequate one, a willing one.

So, what did this man do under such serious obligation? He prayed! He lifted his voice to the God of heaven to guide him. Also, he prayed for the damsel to be sensitive to his need which in turn would serve as an indicator that this was she who should be Isaac's wife from among the many daughters of men who came to draw water from the well.

"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up" (Gen. 24:15, 16).

There near the well, the servant patiently waited and observed. As he watched he must have seen her fill her pitcher and then toss it up upon her shoulder and begin to leave the area where they were. The Bible says that *"she went down to the well."* I read somewhere that some of

these wells had long staircases built to provide convenient access to them. Some wells were 30, 75 or more feet deep and the women would come and fill their pitchers down at these wells.

Was this her? She was young, she was pretty, she had come to the well—could it be her? Of course, he would have his answer if she fit the pattern described in his prayer. For Rebekah, it was evening time—the time the women would typically come to draw water, possibly about sunset. Would she pass him and his companions by in a hurry because it was late in the day and she had some distance to travel to get home, seeing that the well was outside the city? What would he encounter in her? Would she wait on him and demonstrate a spirit of servanthood? Would she be too busy to give a drink of water to this stranger? That water she had drawn from the well was their salvation, after all; they were thirsty, and they were tired from the long distance traveled.

"And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink" (Gen. 24:17, 18). Watch her now, righteous Rebekah, whom God had prepared and who was also going about her daily duties of fetching water with a natural unselfish spirit and a sensitivity to the needs of others. By that same unselfish spirit and servanthood attitude she would unknowingly demonstrate to Eliezer her divine selection. It was no "show" on her part, no audition, it was just her being her. What a tense moment it must have been when he ran to meet her. Eliezer uncertain about the outcome, yet anxious to know as soon as possible, and it is certainly imaginable that Rebekah might have wondered for a brief moment who this stranger was.

As we examine some of the details of what took place during this brief period of time from the servant's arrival, to his prayer and the appearing of Rebekah it brings to mind that wonderful and glorious relationship that is in existence today between Christ and His Church. It also brings into view what ought to be by nature the devotion, sensitivity, burden and work ethic of God's Church everywhere at all times among all people.

There is a prayer that Christ uttered in John 17:6-23 from which we can put together a list of what Christ found and desired to find in His Bride. Think of this list as requirements that needed to be met by the one chosen to be the Bride of the Son of God. Just like Eliezer's prayer over the damsel who would serve to be his master's son's wife, the institution claiming to be Christ's True Bride must fit the pattern of the prayer of the Son of God. Listen to excerpts

from Christ's prayer: *"They have kept they word"; "The words which thou gavest me...they have received them"* (while so-called church groups everywhere give up the Word, His Church keeps it!); *"They have believed that thou didst send me"* (His Church declares, Thou art the Son of the living God!); *"I am glorified in them"; "Keep them through thine own name"* (The Church of God is His own name); *"The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world"; "Not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil"; "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth"; "Even so have I sent them into the world"; "Believe on me through their word"* (A gospel message sharing Church); *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us"* (Speaking and minding the same things. Walking by the same rule); *"That they may be perfect in one."*

These things, among others, God requires of Her and they serve as indicators to God's children that of all the *"daughters"* who come to *"draw out water"* from the well of Living Waters, She is the one appointed and divinely selected for Christ our King. The Bible says, *"There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother..."* (Song of Sol. 6:8, 9), and again *"Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all"* (Prov. 31:29). Rebekah was not chosen because she was *"very fair to look upon"* or for being *"a virgin,"* though this was good and right, but because she fit the pattern of a servant, and so it is with the Church. According to Scripture there are many good and pure Christian groups doing a good work, but they are not the Bride of Christ because they do not fit the pattern of Christ's prayer. It would not have been enough for Eliezer that Rebekah was just pretty and a virgin but she had to also fit the pattern of what was prayed to God regarding her. The true Church will be presented to Christ a glorious Church and as a chaste virgin, and She will fit the pattern of that which was prayed to the Father regarding Her and all the types and shadows of the Old Testament.

"And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not" (Gen. 24:19, 21).

Some say that the jugs carried by the women could hold between 3-5 gallons, which is about 30-50 pounds when calculating the weight of the water jugs themselves. The servant only asked for *"a little water of thy pitcher,"* but watch her now, righteous Rebekah, a type and shadow of The Church of God, as she seeks out the opportunity to do a good thing and go beyond what has been requested of her. One man wrote, *"Now figure that a thirsty camel could drink at least 10 gallons, and that the men also drank a minimum of 3 gallons after their trek across the desert.*

The water jars that the women carried held about 3 gallons and would have weighed about thirty pounds [the same as about 4 gallons of milk] when they were full. So, the total volume of water that this dear woman with a servant's heart carried out of that well that day was about 103 gallons; about 34 trips [that evening], carrying about 30 pounds each trip. Do you get the picture? This was no small test."

Had she been of a different spirit she may have told the man that she did not have time to help, or she may have felt that she had no obligation to bring the pitcher down from her shoulder, after all, they were complete strangers to her. However, she never once had any kind of motivation other than to demonstrate kindness to someone else who was in need. Regardless of all the work it may require, the Church, like Rebekah, must be sensitive and have a servant's heart and learn to obey the beckoning of the Master. Rebekah cared little for what she had already gone through to draw the water, she did not fuss about how late in the evening it was and how far she had yet to walk to arrive at the comforts of her home in order to go on about her day.

We must be careful, Church, with getting too busy amongst ourselves—busy running to and fro, busy with all our internal activities, busy with all of our programs that we forget about the strangers who approach us needing prayer, needing a kind word or gesture, and most importantly spiritual water to drink. It is not too difficult to be overtaken in the busyness of our church responsibilities. It is not too difficult to be overrun by the busyness of our administrative church duties. It is very possible that somewhere along our journey we have been guilty of passing some thirsty and needy soul by because we were *"pressed for time"* or maybe *"late to some engagement"* or *"prior appointment."* Perhaps we passed a soul by simply because we felt that a portion of our daily routine, family time, weekly scheduled event, an annual outing of some sort could not be given up—no not even for a loved one, much less for a stranger. Some of the sweetest words a lost soul has ever heard were from someone who simply stopped what they were in the middle of and took the time to say, *"I want to tell you about Jesus"* and it changed the course of their lives.


Watch her now, righteous Rebekah, as she is anxious to be of service. She not only gave the men to drink but said, *"I will draw water for thy camels also."* This was not asked and certainly not expected of her. Have you ever been anxious to be of service for the Lord? Have you ever been accused of and persecuted for seeking the welfare of others? Some people have; Nehemiah made some folks angry because he dared to seek the welfare of others. The devil will not be happy when God's people really begin to seek the welfare of others, especially the spiritual welfare of others. But we're not here to make him happy, we are here to please the Lord.

Her work ethics and willingness to do good unto others, and to forget about self, seem to just naturally flow and spill out of her. Church of God, let's take her example, let's reach

up and reach out to follow after the pattern set before us! Rebekah, this great woman of God, would not stop until all had the opportunity to drink. How much more then should the Church work and labor nonstop until every soul has had the opportunity to taste of the Water of Life? The Bible says that Rebekah *“ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all.”* Oh, it seems as though her servant-like spirit cannot be matched in this present age of a narcissistic world and among (so-called) Christian culture that, in great part, is interested only in its small circle of friends. But you and I, Church of God, in view of lost and dying humanity, should we not run again to the Fountain of Life that does not run dry, run to Jesus, and be filled with His Spirit so we have plenty to give to as many as we may encounter?

The Church, as a servant, must not hesitate to do something kind and even go beyond our reasonable service. The Church must not hesitate in the face of the thirsty and tired

multitudes that need spiritual water, but we must work and employ every effort to go down to the well and get upon our knees and “DRAW UP” the Living Water to give a little water of our pitcher. We’ve got to have something to give something! Like Rebekah, let’s not occupy any of our time questioning if it is really necessary, but let us be swift to satisfy the request!

Eliezer and the other men who traveled with him were not helpless, but able-bodied men. They could have gone down and drawn the water for themselves and their camels. Nevertheless, Eliezer watched and wondered to see if she fit the pattern of a servant’s heart. Rebekah was not a poor servant girl, and she had no need or reason to do what she chose to do. In like manner, our God is well able, and He doesn’t really need us to do anything for Him, but He is watching Church, wondering if we will obediently and willingly with a servant’s heart wait on Him and serve those in need. 

FOR THE LOVE OF A SOUL

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life”

John 3:15

In loving and caring for souls, there are many ways to give of ourselves to reach the lost and the dying. As we care for souls and love them as Jesus loves, we are fulfilling the words of Jesus, *“Go, and do thou likewise.”* I wish to share with you what the Antioch, Tennessee, church is doing for the “love of a soul.” Let us be inspired to increase our outreach efforts, allowing God to move us out into this lost world sharing the message of Christ and His Church!

HARVESTING HOPE

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35).

About 2 years ago, I found myself becoming comfortable. Comfortable with what was very normal for me. Attending church every Sunday and Wednesday and having great fellowship with my brothers and sisters in the Lord. The Lord began to convict my heart that while I was very comfortable with all of this, there were people all around me, in our community, who desperately needed the love of Jesus. There is a lady in our area who has had a street ministry for many years and welcomed anyone to volunteer and help her. I decided to help. What I saw on the streets was very eye opening, and I thought, “shame on me” for allowing myself to become so comfortable. After prayer and seeking the Lord, He began to speak to my heart that we, The Church of God at Antioch, Tennessee, need to get out of our four walls and do more. I shared my heart with my pastor, and he supported this completely. This is when Harvesting Hope began. I thought the best place to start would be to feed the less fortunate in the community around our local church. So, we got to work. We went through the necessary steps to ensure we were compliant with serving food from our fellowship hall and contacted a local food donation bank in our area. We had a large sign made to display in front of the church, so that we could be sure it would “attract” people to come. We went door to door right around our local church and shared what we were doing—that we had hot dinners—and invited them to come. That first night, one person showed up. Although one soul is always worth the effort, I felt sure that we would have many, many, people to come.



I knew this inspiration was from the Lord so I was confused when it didn’t turn out the way “I” thought it would.

I remember vividly standing in front of the church, somewhat disappointed, and I began to pray, “Lord, please send the people” and VERY clearly I heard in my spirit the Lord speak to me.... *“And the lord said unto the servant, GO OUT into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled”* (Luke 14:23).

I knew in that moment that the Lord was directing us to go to them. So, we did! And, have been for the past 2 years. Every first Wednesday of the month, we prepare a meal, (most of what we make comes from our local donation food bank, that we get for free), meet at the church to put to-go boxes together, load up our cars and go out. We typically give out 100-125 box plates each time. We go out into the community and share food with those who need it. We have made relationships with some of these wonderful souls. They look for us to come. It is evident that some of these individuals are in desperate need for Jesus. Some of the places we go to are very poor conditions, and the enemy has such a hold on their lives, But I’m confident that God is doing a work through our efforts. I’m confident that heaven holds the record of the lives being touched through this ministry. We have been able to join hands with some and have prayer. We began this ministry to be blessing, but we have been the ones who have been so blessed. I encourage you to pray about a ministry such as this. If you want to do more, if you want to be the hands and feet of Jesus, I encourage you to GO OUT. There are many, many, souls waiting for us.

Tammy Fox—Antioch, Tennessee

This month's CPMA boost was published in a recent issue of *The Olive Branch*. It was written by Sister Lisa Smith, member of the Uniontown, Pennsylvania, church. She serves as the Regional CPMA Coordinator for the Northeast Region. May her writing be a blessing to every reader of *The Evening Light* and may her efforts to boost the Church of Prophecy Marker Association help to see her Region and many others to become 100% this year.

The Heritage Tree

Cape Perpetua, on the central Oregon coast, is home to a giant spruce known as the Heritage Tree. It is called the Heritage Tree because it stands almost 200 feet tall and started to grow as a seedling half a century before Columbus sailed to the Americas. What's really fascinating about this tree, however, is that there is a tunnel about 3 feet in diameter that runs through its base, making it appear that the tree is standing, or rooted into the ground on a tripod. This tunnel, or empty space is where a nurse log once was located. This giant Sitka spruce began its life as a seedling on a nurse log. Nurse logs were once great, giant trees themselves but eventually died and fell to the earth. The log became a nursery, so to speak, for an entirely new ecosystem of life. With the nurse log down on the forest floor in such a high-moisture environment, the log decays rapidly, and soon the seeds of mighty trees, caught in the mossy layer that now grows on the logs surface, sprout and take root. As they grow larger, their roots will surround the girth of the nurse log, and the tree will grow tall strong; viable on its own. By this time, the nurse log has long since decomposed and disappeared.

This illustration reminds me of our duty to the generations following on after us. We must teach and train our children and those coming after, passing on Bible Doctrine, for eventually, we will step aside so they may grow up in our place making use of what we have taught.

Church of Prophecy Marker Association

James R. Horne
General CPMA Coordinator



One of the duties of the CPMA is to be living markers, or testaments, of Jesus Christ and promote perfection among the believers. How important it is that we instill Bible truths in the hearts and lives of those coming behind, being the living example before them so they never forget the truth of God's Word and the beauty of The Church of God.

"That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the cov-

enant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever" (Joshua 4:6, 7). *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 2:5).

We need to be nurse logs to the coming generation. Willing to die out, but willing to die out only to help another grow up. Nurse logs still have a purpose. Let us plant seeds into the lives of this younger generation imparting the truth that we have learned along the way.

Those achieving 100% this month are shown here on the Honor Wall:

Athens, AL	Long Lane, England	Raceland, KY	Michie, TN
Moulton, AL	Bethel, GA	Hatch, NM	Fairmont, WV
Anchorage, AK	Kansas City, KS	Lucama, NC	

God has blessed the Northwest Region in the past and has provided us with some very good young ministers who are now pastoring churches. I am very grateful to God for His answers to prayer and these families being willing to follow His call.

We are in need of some New Field Mission workers who are willing to move into areas where we have small groups of members, for the purpose of ministering to them while building new congregations and getting churches organized in those areas. In many of these areas we have older female members, and a good young lady minister or family would be a blessing. I also have an organized church that needs a pastor for the coming year.

If you are not being currently used or would want to pray about moving to the beautiful Northwest in a new spiritual venture, please pray and then contact me for more details. God is blessing out here, and we would love to have you come join in to see what He is going to do next. God bless you as you read this post.

Northwest Region, (N. Idaho, W. Montana, Oregon, Washington)

Regional Overseer: Allard L Smith Cell# 208-870-5266
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Nampa, ID 83686

Praise the Lord for another wonderful BTI report from our National Overseer of Nigeria, Brother Matthew Ogunmola. In his own words, "I am grateful that this School served as a revival period for the Church in Nigeria. We had 24 students in our enrollment. The students were so excited at the teachings that it made them see no reason they should not work for God during their lifetime. They received new inspiration in a wonderful way that brings great joy to their souls."

Not only are we excited about what **has** been accomplished in the BTI Department, but we are also excited about what is to come.

Realizing the increasing number of Spanish speaking members in the U.S. and their need and desire for training, we will, for the first time, be introducing a dedicated Spanish First Term class during the 2019 Bible Training Institute in Cleveland, Tennessee. This will be done as a pilot program and, if successful, will be broadened to 2nd and 3rd Terms in the future. As a pilot school, and the unique challenges of the teaching staff and the students, this first school will be held during the second week of our regular 2-week school

BIBLE TRAINING INSTITUTE 2018-2019

WALKING BY THE
SAME RULE—
MINDING THE
SAME THING



PAUL HORTON
GENERAL BTI COORDINATOR

in Cleveland. Registration will be on Saturday, June 1, with classes beginning on Sunday and concluding with tests and graduation on Saturday, June 8.

With the growing need and increasing cry for more schools, we trust the saints of The Church of God will have a desire to help fund these schools. You have already been faithful to do so and, as the need increases, we are confident so will the funds to conduct these schools. Thank you in advance for your generous giving in your local BTI services and

your special gifts to help finance the upcoming schools to be held around the world.

As mentioned by Brother Dupre in his BTI program at the 2018 Assembly, we are looking to soon have an official BTI school on the West Coast and considerations are being made for an Official School in Central America as well. Please continue to pray for this arm of the Church as we continue to try to fulfil and follow where the will of the Lord leads. *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"* (Eph. 4:13).

Faith Works by Love

A wise man once told me, "Doing good works doesn't make one a Christian, but being a Christian will make one do good works."

This is how the writer of Hebrews was finishing up the epistle to the Hebrews as he gives instructions on how to maintain their faith.

But faith works by love because the spirit of Christianity is the spirit of love. True religion—and religion is not a dirty word—is to manifest the genuine quality of God Himself—LOVE.

The command is to love: *"Let brotherly love continue"* (Heb. 13:1). "Pay attention," he says, "none of this will work without love."

Once my family was traveling in the west in evangelistic work and in Boulder City, Nevada, our car cried out for a new engine. Between my father (not a mechanic), the pastor and another minister, an engine was installed. It was in perfect running order; the wrist pins were turned just so; the valves had been bored to the right specifications and at the onset, it purred like a kitten. But something was wrong. By the time we got off the mountain headed for California, the oil pressure had dropped out the bottom, and we heard ominous noises. We crossed on over the Grapevine into Northern California, and the first thing we had to



Bettie Marlowe
General Sunday School Coordinator

do when we reached our destination was get a new motor.

There was nothing wrong with the motor that had been put in that 1951 Pontiac. But despite all the working parts, it had to have oil to make it work smoothly and continually.

The oil of the Holy Ghost will generate the love that is needed to reach others for God. *"Let brotherly love continue,"* the writer says. Why? Because all the things I'm going to

advise you to do, it will take love to make it work.

Then he lays it out, explaining as he goes the good reasoning for each instruction: Serve; Be faithful; Love your spouse; Be content; Develop Christian value; Be kind to one another; Follow good examples; Obey; and Pray. These should be natural attributes of a Christian. Right? And these qualities are wrought in the heart and lived through the Holy Ghost.

A Christian doesn't live in isolation, but in a society, in communication and relationship with others. He has fellowship with the saints, but he doesn't live with just saints. And we are trying to reach people outside our Christian realm.

The writer of Hebrews in Chapter 13 gives practical advice. Remember it is written to Christians—a person without the love of God in the heart can hardly practice it.



Costa Rica National Convention

What a glorious time Brother Luis Bañuelos and I had as we were able to be with the wonderful saints in the Costa Rica National Convention and the Honduras National Convention.

We arrived in San José, Costa Rica, on November 29, where we were warmly greeted by the National Overseer Brother Moisés Artola. We were blessed to be with all the saints as we experienced waves of the Holy Ghost in every session of the Convention. It was reported that there were 11 saved, 18 sanctified, 1 filled with the Holy Ghost and 5 added to the Church. It was also reported that there were over 1,100 who attended the Convention.

Paul Horton, *Field Secretary*



Honduras National Convention

From Costa Rica, we traveled to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where we were again warmly greeted by the National Overseer and his wife Brother and Sister Julio Cruz. After a couple hours of travel by truck, we arrived at a beautiful country-side property where we met with the Lord in a glorious way for the next 3 days. As most of you know, over the past couple of years the Church in Honduras has experienced some difficult times within the Body of Christ. However, I can testify that the Body of Christ (The Church of God) is alive and well in Honduras! All they have endured has not defeated them, but rather made them stronger and has brought them to a deeper place of unity which was very evident during this Convention. We were blessed to be a part of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost during every session, which I am convinced was brought about by their love of the Lord and unity of faith. It was reported in this Convention that there were 7 saved, 58 sanctified, 1 filled with the Holy Ghost and 1 added to the Church, with over 500 in attendance.

To God be the glory for such a blessed time in these Conventions. I look forward to hearing all that will be accomplished this year in Costa Rica and Honduras.

Paul Horton, *Field Secretary*



Love and the Burden of Proof

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance..." (Gal. 5:22, 23). We know the fruit of the Spirit is to be evident in the life of every Christian. We know that if they aren't seen, the spiritual condition of that person could be questionable.

The ABM Department of The Church of God is called the auxiliary of love. This is not so we can only boast of our love for the saints on the pew with us, but those who are unfaithful in attendance, those who may reject biblical doctrine, those who may reject our conversation or visitation, and even those who may be wolves in our midst.

It is our burden to prove our love to one another. What do you do to prove you love someone? How can you offer evidence to validate the genuine love you have? Why should it matter? Doesn't God alone know you, and isn't He alone the Judge of your Christian fruit?

"I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love... Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf" (2 Cor. 8:8, 24).

These two verses speak to the proof and sincerity of love from one person to another who may not love us in return. Love between relatives and close friends is easy to demonstrate, but it is not always the case with one who isn't even friendly in return.

"So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swal-



ASSEMBLY BAND MOVEMENT

Allene Cox, General ABM Coordinator

lowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:7-11).

If you were to be questioned about your spiritual condition and accused of love, would there be enough proof of this fruit in your life? Where is the evidence?

Build your case today, *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love"* (Eph. 4:13-16).

Churches reporting 100% in Emergency \$:

Athens, AL	Bethel, GA	Efland, NC
Moulton, AL	Monticello Ridge, GA	Lucama, NC
Anchorage, AK	Kansas City, KS	Gray Court, SC
Long Lane, England		Fairmont, WV

Are love offerings taxable to the recipient or can they simply be considered gifts? And can either be counted as a tax deduction for the donor?

Section 102(c) of the tax code says that a "gift" shall not include... "any amount transferred by or for an employer to, or for the benefit of, an employee." Therefore, offerings to a pastor, minister or employee by the Church are taxable and should be included in salary on the pastor's or employee's W-2 or a visiting minister's 1099-MISC, even if it is called a "love offering."

Generally, if an individual wants to personally give the pastor or minister a love offering, it is not taxable to the recipient, and it does not qualify as a tax-deductible contribution for the donor. The courts have outlined four requirements for a "gift" to be considered nontaxable to the recipient (pastor/minister/employee):

1. cannot be for a service performed
2. must be spontaneous in nature



3. cannot be solicited

4. cannot be a tax deduction for the donor

Also, the donor cannot use the Church as a conduit for a tax-deductible contribution. One of the IRS rules for tax-deductible contributions is that the organization must be in control of the funds. If someone wanted to just give the pastor a personal love offering, they would need to give it straight to the pastor. This would not be tax-deductible.

But if the church is taking up a love offering for the pastor then that same individual can give in the offering, and it could be a tax deduction. This is because the church is in control of the offering. The individual cannot just decide to give an offering to the pastor, or anyone else, and have it to go through the church, so they can get a tax deduction. If the church accepts offerings from an individual and allows that individual to use them as a "conduit" for tax-deductible contributions, the church is at risk of losing its tax-exempt status.

For more information, please contact your accountant or tax professional.

Forgetfulness is apparently a weakness of human nature. This can become tragic when God's people forget His goodness toward them; when they fail to remember His commandments and His will for them and for the Church. Israel, God's chosen covenant people, were prone to forget, although His law was given for the express purpose that they should not forget. David points back to their history, citing the dire consequences of their forgetfulness: *"For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God. The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them... And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness... Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy" (Psa. 78:5-11, 17, 41, 42). "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea... They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel... They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt... Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance" (Psa. 106:7, 13, 21, 39, 40).*

God instituted and ordained the Passover for annual remembrance of His marvelous deliverance of His people from Egypt. Then at Sinai He gave His law as a perpetual reminder of His will.

When Jesus had established His Church, He instituted the Lord's Supper, showing that the Passover had been gloriously fulfilled. This Communion was to be observed periodically *"... in remembrance of me"* (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25). Paul explained, *"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come"* (1 Cor. 11:26).

In a very real sense, the General Assembly of The Church of God brings God's Word and will to remembrance and keeps it in remembrance. The need became evident soon after the Church in these last days arose from 1,578 years of the Dark Ages. Functionally, it was a new beginning. God moved on the group in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina to rediscover the New Testament Church. The confusion of denominationalism called for a "grass-roots" searching of the Scriptures relative to the doctrine and practices of the early Church, with the Bible as their only authority and guide.

When revelation came from God through A. J. Tomlinson on the morning of June 13, 1903, it was specifically pointed out and agreed upon that taking the whole Bible rightly divided was what made it The Church of God. This being the case, it is expedient that we know what the Bible requires. It is here that

The Purpose & Authority of the General Assembly

R. O. Covey

Reprinted from *The Evening Light*, August 1997

the purpose and authority of the General Assembly becomes clearly evident.

THE CURRENT NEED FOR A REVIEW

With the passing of generations, there is always the possibility that the Assembly's

inspired deliberations will suffer a measure of disregard, whether from forgetfulness, neglect, or ignorance of the truth. Therefore, it becomes necessary from time to time to refresh the minds of the Church's membership of the purpose and authority of this instrument of theocratic government. Perhaps this present time is one of those times for a needed review. It should be remembered that the Church has already suffered a major "falling away" and two regrettable disruptions through departures from theocratic government.

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR A GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the product of an urgent need. This need was first recognized, and met, when a dissension developed in the local church at Antioch in Syria. (See Acts 15 for more information.) The dispute, or indecision, was over Gentile circumcision. It soon became evident that local church authority was not the proper level for resolving the matter. At that early date in the Church's operation, the apostles and elders of "the mother Church" at Jerusalem were appealed to as the body qualified to settle the question. From the historical record of that Council we see God's plan and purpose revealed for the nucleus of government for His Church in this present world.

Details in some respects may be unclear, but the essential elements are evident. For instance, we see that the Holy Ghost was given preeminence: *"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us..."* (Acts 15:28). The "us" is seen to have been *"the apostles and elders, with the whole church"* (Acts 15:22). The Church in these last days has taken the proceedings of that early council, or Assembly, as our pattern for conducting business in matters relevant to the Church in general. Several points are to be observed from that Assembly.

- God used duly appointed men—apostles and elders—as leaders in the proceedings. Of course, there was no succession of apostles, so today we look to God for Holy Ghost direction in the selection and appointment of Church leaders. (See Acts 15:12, 22).
- The question was heard and discussed from both perspectives, in fairness to all (Acts 15:5, 7, 12).
- The decision was based on the Word of God through the prophets (Acts 15:14-19).
- The decision was reached by unanimous agreement (Acts 15:22, 25), establishing that principle as an order for Church business.
- The moderator, or General Overseer, voiced the decision (Acts 15:19). He did not make the decision himself.
- The Holy Ghost was honored as the One whom Jesus had declared *"will guide you into all truth"* (Acts 15:28, John 16:13).
- The decision was equitable in that it adhered to the issue and therefore avoided offending the Jewish members unnecessarily (Acts 15:19-21). Later, God used Paul to clarify the truth that there is no difference in His sight between the Jews and the Gentiles; all are in one body. In fact, this is a major point in the revelation of the Church mystery to Paul. (See Romans 10:12;

Ephesians 1:9, 10; 2:11-22; 3:1-11; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Corinthians 12:13.)

- By Assembly action, the commission was given to choose men to dispense the official action throughout the Church everywhere (Acts 15:22-29; 16:4, 5). This assured unity in faith and doctrine (Eph. 4:3, 13; 1 Cor. 1:10; Rom. 15:6).

- Unscriptural restrictions were avoided in light of grace versus the ceremonial law of Moses (Acts 15:5, 10, 22, 15, 28).

- Their “*much disputing*” (Acts 15:7) was silence by the presentation of God’s movement through the Holy Ghost: (1) Peter’s experience in the house of Cornelius (vv. 7-10), and (2) the testimonies of Barnabas and Paul concerning God’s miracles and wonders among the Gentiles.

- Finally, James summarized the discussion on the grounds of the unchanging Word of God (vv. 13-21).

Solomon has said, “*in the multitude of counsellors there is safety*” (Prov. 11:14). The General Assembly provides this multitude, and the Church’s safe direction is insured, giving protection from the dangers of private interpretations (2 Peter 1:20).

Hebrews 12:22-24 speaks of the New Testament Church as a “*general assembly*,” in the context of the Church as being an awesome institution which should instigate both the glory and fear of God and His Son as the mediator of the New Covenant.

THE NEED FOR THE ASSEMBLY BECOMES EVIDENT

We have seen how the need called forth the Assembly in the early Church. Likewise, soon after the revelation of the restored Church in 1903, it became evident that problems would arise, requiring official solutions; especially those concerning the interpretation of Scriptures relating to doctrine and holiness of life. After a careful search of the Scriptures, it was concluded that a General Assembly was the answer; and the first one this side of the Dark Ages was held in January 26, 27, 1906. A. J. Tomlinson reviewed this decision in his address to the 7th Assembly in 1912 as follows: “It was in 1905 that the idea of an Annual Assembly was conceived. There had been some ingatherings of souls during the year, and at the same time some perplexing problems had arisen. We had joined ourselves together as Churches of God to walk in the light, and at the same time search the Scriptures and earnestly seek for additional light and knowledge. Near the end of that year, the demand for such a gathering had grown to such an extent that the ministers were almost forced to look into the Scriptures to see if there was anything that would warrant the call of such a convention. We were walking softly, carefully and prayerfully before God, as we have been up to this day, determined to track the Bible, and not go beyond in any of our teachings and practices, and at the same time advance as light was given.”

THE ASSEMBLY’S STATUS, NATURE, AND FUNCTION

After 83 years of the Church’s restoration (1903-1986) and 80 Assemblies, the Questions and Subjects Committee submitted an orderly summary of the Assembly’s status, nature, purpose, and function. (See 81st *Assembly Minutes*, 1986, pp. 36, 37.)

Status: Christ is the Head of The Church of God. The General Assembly, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, is the highest governing authority here on earth.

Nature: The Assembly consists of all members of the Church present, the male members discussing and deciding all matters of business. The very first Assembly adopted the following: “We do not consider ourselves a legislative or executive body, but judicial

only.” Neither is it a representative body; rather, it is constituted of all members in attendance, every male member having a voice in the Assembly’s decisions.

Purpose: While it provides a forum for worship, fellowship, and unity of Spirit, its chief purpose is business, both doctrinal and practical. From the beginning it has been the expressly stated purpose of the Assembly to search the Scriptures for additional light and knowledge; to resolve interpretations which tend to be divisive. The ideal in view is to strive “...for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12, 13).

Function: The Assembly is moderated by the General Overseer, who, by the Assembly’s authority, appoints various committees to consider relevant issues through intensive study and prayer. However, the actual decisions are made by the Assembly in session by unanimous agreement, not by the committees. The Church of God is theocratic in governmental form; government by God through the Holy Ghost’s immediate direction. The Assembly is committed to approve only what God approves. It is the function of the Assembly to resolve differences that may arise among diligent searchers and teachers of God’s Word of Truth.

It is obviously necessary that there be certain officers and committees to maintain order and to move the business forward. None of these appointees have dictatorial power. However, a matter of primary importance is the relationship of the General Assembly and the General Overseer. The General Overseer is selected at the direction of God through the Holy Ghost, and by acclamation on the part of those members present. His appointmental authority is delegated by the Assembly in session. He is answerable to the Assembly for the conduct of his office. Besides being the Moderator of the Assembly, he is also subject to its decisions the same as the other members. The 60th Assembly (1965) accepted the following resolution:

“...that the General Overseer be and is hereby authorized to represent and stand for the General Assembly when it is not in session, to sign any and all documents requiring the signature of an authorized representative of said Assembly, and to handle all emergencies that may arise between Assemblies.”

EACH MEMBER’S RESPONSIBILITY

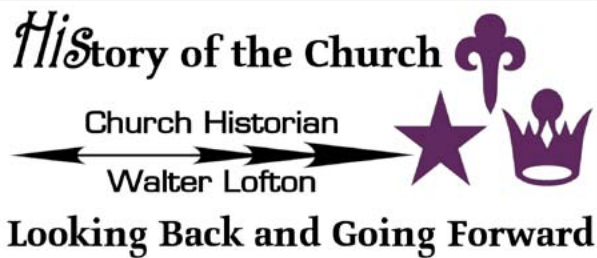
As members of the Church, it is our responsibility to accept and support all Assembly action. If we have grievances or disagreements with the Church, either in doctrine or practices, we should not publicly air them so as to generate strife and division. Rather, our question should be submitted to the appropriate committee for study and consideration, and possible presentation to the Assembly. “When the Assembly is in session, those desiring to make submissions for Assembly consideration should appear first before the Counseling Committee which would help them determine the appropriate course to pursue” (81st *Assembly Minutes*, 1986, p. 38).

We should honor, respect, and comply with the decisions of the Assembly. Loyalty to the General Assembly is also loyalty to God, the Bible, and the Church which Christ purchased with His own blood. If any have forgotten these truths, or if any have been tempted to rise in opposition, we would plead that they conscientiously review the purpose and authority of the General Assembly with an open heart and mind, and with humble submission to “*the Holy Ghost and us*.”



Attention Ministers!!!

All licensed ministers have been placed on the subscription list for *The Evening Light*, per 1961 General Assembly recommendation. Those not previously subscribed will be receiving an invoice the same as is done for the *Assembly Minutes*. Ministers not financially able to pay the subscription price may contact General Headquarters and state their need.



The Meeting Place Part Two

Since time immemorial God has had a special meeting place with His people. With Adam and Eve, it was the Garden of Eden. With the patriarchs, it was altars of sacrifice. With the Children of Israel, it was the Tabernacle and later the Temple in Jerusalem. With the early Church, it was the city of Jerusalem. First, they waited in an upper room for the coming of the Comforter—the Holy Ghost. The first Assembly of the Church convened at Jerusalem to conduct Church business. The ministry of the early Church came to Jerusalem to converse with the apostles and elders. During the millennium period, all families of the earth will be required to go up to Jerusalem each year to worship the King (Zech. 14).

Every local church has a central place to gather to worship. The general Church conducts business once a year at some specified place where all can meet together as the “*general assembly and church of the firstborn*” (Heb. 12:23). Our meeting places with God are special and should be taken seriously.

Since the “*Arise, shine*” of the Church in 1903, through the re-organization of the Church in 1993, all the General Assemblies of the Church took place in the state of Tennessee with the exception of two Assemblies. These were the first one which convened in North Carolina in 1906, and the 87th Assembly which convened in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1992.

There have now been 113 Assemblies since the “*Arise, shine*” of the Church. All of these except ten took place in the state of Tennessee. Nine of these Assemblies convened in North Carolina; the first one in 1906 and the 105th through the 112th (2010-2017). The 87th Assembly, as mentioned above, convened in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1992.

Of the 103 Assemblies that took place in Tennessee, 81 convened in the city of Cleveland, one in northeast

Bradley County at Union Grove, two in Harriman, 17 in Chattanooga, one in Hixson, and one in Kingsport.

Of the first few Assemblies that took place in the city of Cleveland, ten convened in the building of the local church in Cleveland. These were the 3rd Assembly in 1908 through the 11th Assembly in 1915, and the 14th Assembly in 1919. Two Assemblies occurred in 1913 and one was skipped in 1918 because of a nation-wide influenza epidemic. Three Assemblies convened in the newly constructed Assembly Auditorium on Montgomery Avenue from 1920 through 1922. This brings us to the point of the first disruption in the Church.

Following the 1923 disruption, A. J. Tomlinson purchased a lot on Central Avenue and had a temporary structure erected facing Short Street measuring 48' x 80' in size. The building, with its dirt floor covered with wood shavings, housed the 18th Assembly in November of that year. This structure was torn away and another larger building facing Central Avenue was built in time for the next Assembly. This building was remodeled and improved over the years until it became the familiar structure that some who attended there still remember so fondly while others esteem through historical pictures and accounts. There were 46 Assemblies held there (on Central Avenue) with the last one being the 63rd Assembly in 1968.

The next twenty Assemblies to be held in Cleveland convened in the new Assembly Tabernacle on Keith Street. These were the 67th Assembly in 1972 through the 86th Assembly in 1991. Only two other Assemblies have been held in Cleveland since that time. These were the 102nd Assembly in 2007 held at the North Cleveland Church of God and the 103rd Assembly in 2008, which was held at the Conn Center located on the Lee University campus.

Seventy-one Assemblies of the 113 held to date have been conducted on property owned by the general Church. In addition to this, ten Assemblies were held in buildings owned by one of our local churches, one Assembly was conducted in the home of a Church member and one Assembly was conducted in a church building which was later purchased by the general Church. The Church-owned Assembly properties were: Montgomery Avenue (3 Assemblies), Central Avenue (46 Assemblies), Keith Street (20 Assemblies), all in the city of Cleveland, and Harriman, Tennessee (2 Assemblies).

...stay tuned

BORN TO BE WARRIORS

Comic book artists and movie makers have for a very long time depicted good versus evil in their story lines. The “good” is in a never-ending battle with “evil.” When one evil villain is conquered, another arises and so the fight continues.

While the comic book heroes are fiction, the story-line of “good” versus “evil” is VERY REAL.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels” (Rev. 12:7). War will always rage between the “good” and “evil” until one of them is crushed. Peace between good and evil is an impossibility. They will never, under any circumstances, come to a compromise or treaty of peace.

Revelation describes Michael fighting the dragon, which represents the pinnacle of evil, Satan himself. Michael will always fight. As long as evil exists, he will fight!

VICTORY LEADERS BAND



JOSHUA FARTHING, GENERAL VLB COORDINATOR

All of the servants of Christ (you and I), will and must fight; WE ARE BORN TO BE WARRIORS. Ever since our spiritual birth, we have been at war with the evil of this world.

Evil will not let you rest! If you rest from fighting, then you will find yourself overtaken by the very evil you are called to destroy.

Fighting may at times be spiritually tiring, but the alternative is NOT better! We should not expect to serve God without opposition. The more zealous we are, the more certain are we to be targeted by the devil.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)” (2 Cor. 10:3, 4).

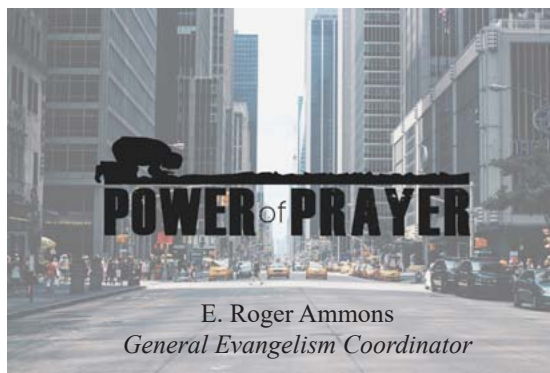
This spiritual war rages all around. To dream of peace is dangerous while evil is on the loose. But glory be to God, we know the end of the war! Let us sharpen our swords today and pray for the Holy Ghost to give us boldness for the conflict!

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Rev. 20:1-3).

BIG CITY EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS

Our General Overseer, Bishop Oscar Pimentel, in his 2018 Annual Address gave the Church a challenge to

“Big City Evangelistic Efforts.” To the Overseers, he gave a three-fold directive: (1) To “look at the map of your respective area and find the biggest city on the map where we still do not have a local church and to make it a goal” to have a church there before the next Assembly; (2) “To band together with the General Evangelism and Victory Leaders Band Departments”; (3) “to help prepare a plan of action for your respective area.” He issued a call to arms to all Overseers, ministers, members, the General Evangelism and Victory Leaders Department, District Overseers, and the youth of the Church so that this Big City Evangelistic Effort can be a success. If you do not know what city in your area has been targeted, ask your Overseer.



E. Roger Ammons

General Evangelism Coordinator

Reports of such efforts are being received from Wichita, Kansas; Atlanta, Georgia; etc. Keep updated on the official Facebook page of the Evangelism Department (<https://www.facebook.com/TheChurchOf-GodEvangelismDepartment/>). Please post articles, pictures, videos, etc. of Big City Evangelistic Efforts in your area. If you know of potential prospects

in a big city, please inform your Overseer or send a private message to the Facebook Evangelism page.

Many resource materials can be found by doing an internet Google search on “urban evangelism.” Even though these are written by authors who are not members of The Church of God, most all of them deal with methods and not doctrine. One very helpful example would be “A Strategy for Lay Involvement in Urban Evangelism...” by David Velazquez (<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1237&context=dmin>).

One approach would be to have prayer meetings in various homes in a city during the winter and make plans to bring them all together for an evangelistic crusade in the spring.

The Love that Freely Gives

Kryss Barick, Assistant Editor
Cleveland, TN



*“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers,
raise the dead, cast out devils:
freely ye have received, freely give”*

(Matthew 10:8).

While Jesus was with us in the flesh, He gave us many things to help us along the way. On the Cross, He purchased our salvation, but before that, He gave us a multitude of blessings and benefits which enhance and beautify any life which is fully surrendered to Him.

- He gave us the words from God. *“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me”* (John 17:8).
- He gave us the Glory of God and unity. *“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one”* (John 17:22).
- He gave us rest for our weary, sin-sick souls. *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matt. 11:28).
- He gave us power over all the power of the enemy. *“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you”* (Luke 10:19).
- He gave us the kingdom. *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”* (Luke 12:32).
- He gave us irresistible wisdom. *“For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist”* (Luke 21:15).
- He gave us the Comforter. *“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever”* (John 14:16).
- He gave us peace. *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”* (John 14:27).
- And last, but not least, on the Cross of His suffering, He gave us eternal life. *“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish...”* (John 10:28).

This is just a short list of the benefits we have received from Christ. His life is our perfect example of God’s will for us. If we ever have any questions about how we should behave, we need only look to the pattern which we clearly see in God’s Word. Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:8, *“freely ye have received, freely give.”* Just as He freely gave us salvation, and a multitude of other blessings, He intends for us to be willing to share everything that we have received from Him with

those around us in the same manner that He bestowed these blessings on us.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 4:7 *“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”* We have nothing that we did not receive from Him. The Word is firm in that all things are His.

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost” (2 Cor. 4:1-3).

If we fail to live out the example that Christ left for us, the Church will become stagnant. We cannot grow, if we find the truth of God’s Word and then refuse to allow it to work through us to draw all men to Christ. This job is not just for pastors, travelling evangelists and appointed missionaries; this work is for all who have felt the Holy Ghost draw them to the foot of the Cross for cleansing from their sins. We each need to find our place in the Body, not just our positions, but where God has placed us for His work of the ministry, whoever we may be. We all have a potential to make a difference in the lives of sinners, but how often do we take advantage of every situation that God places in our paths? I have to confess that I often totally miss many opportunities to be a witness, and the Spirit reprimands me sharply each and every time.

I’ll be first to admit that I am not pointing my finger at anyone, rather, God was speaking directly to me when He gave me this verse of Scripture: *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost”* (2 Cor. 4:3).

Do we truly have a burden for the lost? Have we become so separated from our foundation that we no longer understand the value of a soul and what it cost to redeem us from the eternal punishment that we truly deserve? Do we believe that all who will be saved are already among us? Do we think that the world is so lost that none of them will hear the truth?

Paul tells us again in 1 Corinthians 9:11 *“If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?”* He was speaking of the ministry and their earthly income from such, but this verse applies to our returning all things to God as well. How can we give to the One who owns all things? Jesus already told us when He said, *“freely give.”* If there were any doubt, He clarified His will for our giving throughout the Gospels.

“Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Matt. 5:42).

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Matt. 19:21).

“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21).

“Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again” (Luke 6:30).

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- ☐ \$20/year (11 issues)
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- ☐ \$8/year for Digital edition (11 issues)
- ☐ \$7⁵⁰/year Gift Subscription (4 issues)

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"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:33, 34).


These are just a few of the words of Jesus concerning our giving. He never put any conditions on our giving, He simply said, "Give." Just as He gave salvation to us when we were unworthy, He expects us to share the blessings that He has given us, whether of our time, money, efforts, or of the Spirit of God and the truth of His Word which He has given to each of us.

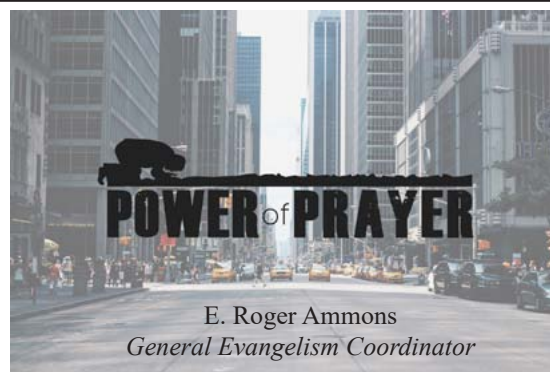
Will we be found faithful if we allow the gospel to be hid to them that are lost? God spoke to Ezekiel about this and, by extension, He still speaks to us today. *"When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezek. 33:8).*

We have been given the truth to share with all who will receive it. But we cannot tell who will receive it and who will not until we first make an attempt. We will be held responsible for all those whom we refuse to reach out to when God pricks our hearts to speak out in love.

"And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 1:22, 23).

If the same compassion dwells in us that first pulled us away from the flames of hell, we will never neglect this important effort we have been tasked with. Souls will recognize our love for them regardless of their current situations, just as those in the past recognized the love of Jesus as He personally reached out to them.

Jesus has passed the torch on to us—His Church. He said, *"Ye are the light of the world."* If that light is shining through us as it should, there will be no doubt who we are, and whom we follow. The love of God will be the catalyst for change in the lives of all those who experience it flowing out through us, and the light of that love will shine out as a beacon of hope to all who will accept its life-giving power. 



"... A LITTLE FIRE ..."

When James wrote, *"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"* (3:5), he was referring to the power of the tongue to offend. If the tongue when it is set on fire of hell kindleth a great matter, how much more so does the Holy Ghost and fire. When the mighty arm of God compresses His bellows and the wind of the Spirit is blown upon "a little fire" and the oil of the Spirit is poured out upon it, *"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"* Even so it happened in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost, and the whole world was set ablaze with a holy fire. So it was on June 13, 1903, atop Burger Mountain, and yet again, in the Solemn Assembly, on July 24, 1993. Recently, in a service at The Church of God at Fields of the Wood, I heard our pastor earnestly weep, "Do it again, Lord, do it again!" Two or three years ago at the National Convention in Mexico with an attendance that would rival the General Assembly, I reflected on the roots of such a crowd and the "little flock" at Southside, Cleveland, Tennessee, where I was pastor, and the Holy Ghost messages and interpretations which had previously called for the Solemn Assembly in 1993. I said in my heart as the prophet Isaiah, *"Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?"* (49:21). Whether it be five loaves and two fishes, a handful of corn, a grain of mustard seed, or "a little fire," little is much if God is in it! *"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"*

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EVANGELISTIC MISSION CRUSADE IN ARIZONA/NEW MEXICO REGION

The Arizona/New Mexico Region, with Regional Overseer Roberto Jovel, hosted a joint Evangelistic Mission Crusade. The team traveled and ministered to new fields, nursing homes and churches in the Region. The team consisted of Mary Shelton and family, Clarissa Woods, Caleb Cox and Marcia Brooks. The Crusade ended in Phoenix Valley, Arizona, for many days with an outreach in the park and local nursing home where one was saved, and many were blessed. On a Saturday evening, Marcia Brooks (pastor of Phoenix City) brought the message, and the altar call lasted almost three hours, with several messages, interpretations and manifestations of the Holy Ghost. Two were sanctified and one filled with the Holy Ghost.



Evangelism News

SINGING IN THE PARK AT WILLIAMSTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

The South Carolina Evangelism Department had a singing at the Mineral Springs Park in Williamston. We passed out tracts, witnessed, and prayed with some people. Some in the audience spoke Spanish and Gabriella Booth ministered to them in song. The Church of God in Commerce, Georgia, which was nearby, came and supported us. We plan to have events in other community parks.

—Ashley Stamey, *State Evangelism and VLB booster for South Carolina*

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Mary Shelton—(931) 224-6659

OXNARD, CALIFORNIA

The Evangelism Department at The Church of God in Oxnard, California, is reaching out to the community and experiencing a great move of the Holy Ghost at the local swap meet. Pastor Gabriel Alvarez and his members were passing out tracts, personally witnessing, street-preaching, and praying for those who had needs. The sick are being healed, souls are being saved, and new people are coming to the Church. Some have opposed them, but God has protected them.