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From Connections: A Lifelong Soldier in the Faith Has Fallen

Dear Brethren,

It is with great sorrow that I find myself needing to inform you, the body, that we have lost an amazing sister in Christ to death. Of course our personal loss is also our collective gain, for when the first trumpet sounds she will rise to meet her Husband in the air. Her walk in the faith started long before most of us took our first breath. Meg was a remarkable woman in many ways. Sitting and talking with her was a lesson in history on so many subjects it would be difficult to pick out the one she had the greatest command of, for she was a storehouse of knowledge.

She learned early in life that she would have to cut her own path, with the assistance of God the Father and the Son. It has been an honor, pleasure, and an eye-opening humble experience to have known her as a person and as one who was a pillar in the household of God. Linda and Meg could spend hours talking on the phone, often laughing with each other for much of it. Even though they were thousands of miles apart they talked of things like they lived next door.

Meg's last few years contained her greatest battles, and she held fast and endured through them all up unto the end. Her son in the faith (as she called him to Linda and me), Greg Ireland, faithfully kept the Sabbaths and Holy Days with her. It was always Greg and Meg on every appointed time of meeting with God. We asked Greg to send us a narrative of her life so that we could blow the trumpet loud as to her journey. He has done so, as you will be able to read below. Some of you may remember some of it, for many years ago John Morgan put some of her memories and travels in life to paper. It is a story worth repeating in this age of selfishness and arrogant dominion in that which is often called the Church of God.

--Brian Convery

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Margaret (Meg) McCormack, 1916-2012

Margaret (Meg) McCormack passed away on the 5th of July at the age of 96 years in Melbourne, Australia. Meg was born on the 25th of January 1916 to Marion McKay at Coynton Woodside in the shire of Aryshire, Scotland. Her father, John McKay, died during World War I: killed in action on the Western front in 1915. Marion McKay suffered a mental breakdown and went to live with her father, Willie Young, on the island of Arron. Arron, along with the islands of Milport and Rothesy, is part of the Brute Shire at the mouth of the Clyde river and at that time belonged to the Duke of Montrose.

Meg's grandfather, Willie Young, was a farmer and lived at Lamlash. He was a Sabbath keeper who belonged to the Church of God. He raised Margaret, and she attended the Church of God which held services at Whiting Bay about three miles from Lamlash. Services were held on

Friday evenings after sunset, Saturday mornings, and again in the afternoon. Members did not attend all three, but chose the time that suited them best.

The church was simply known as the Church of God, with members on all three islands. Also on the island were members of a United Church and Presbyterians who observed Sunday. There were no Catholics on the island, as no one would employ them. All business was closed on the Sabbath. There was one full-time minister, Ebenezer Muchie, and three elders who were not employed by the church. One was John McDonald.

The building where the congregation of about 200 met was made of sandstone and built with donated labour on a farm. Services consisted of songs, a sermon expounding the scriptures, and lasted about one and a half hours. The Passover was kept on the 14th, and the Night to Be Remembered was kept in individual homes. Unleavened Bread was observed, and homes were unleavened before Passover. Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement (also known as the Fast Day), Tabernacles, and The Last Great Day were all observed.

However, no one travelled off the island to keep the Feast. Baptism was by immersion; unclean foods were not eaten; although some pigs were raised and sold to non-members. The only part of the pig used was fat used to grease boots. There was a saying, "That was all pigs were good for."

It was clearly understood that man's destiny was to be born into the family of God at the resurrection. If one remained faithful, then one would be a son of God.

The church knew that Britain was Ephraim, the USA Manasseh, and parts of France Reuben, Holland Zebulon, Belgium Asher, Sweden Naphtali, and they believed Scotland to be Simeon. They also understood that Germany was descended from Assyria. The Catholic Church was the Great Whore of Revelation and the Pope was the False Prophet.

While they knew of other churches of God in the Ukraine, Scandinavia, Chile and China, they were unable to establish contact with them, as they wished to remain isolated. The church knew of Jeremiah coming to Ireland with two of Hezekiah's daughters, a harp of special significance, and King David's coronation stone. At that time there was a land bridge connecting Ireland to Scotland called the Giant's Causeway. Jeremiah walked over to Scotland and taught the people there. This was dismissed as myth by people outside the church.

A form of tithing was practiced. A member paid according to his resources and what he considered fair. There was no hard and fast rule. The money was put into a large wooden box in the church building on the Sabbath. The income was used to pay church expenses and to help the poor and those in need. There was no social security in those days. No money meant no food or medical treatment. The church members kept to themselves, considering the people on the mainland as deceived and "in the world."

It was in this environment that Meg grew up, accepting everything she was taught as truth. In 1934 at the age of 18 she married Hugh McKenzie, a church member 10 years older than herself. Hugh owned Auchenrowen farm, about a mile from the church at Whiting Bay. His whole family were church members. Hugh and Meg had six children. Hugh, Marion, Jack, Ann (1941), Mary (1946), and Avril (1948). It was a very unhappy marriage, as Hugh was an alcoholic. Meg was baptised in 1936 at the age of 20.

In 1949 Meg inherited 6000 pounds from a relative and left Hugh, moving to Loch Gilpead where there was a church of God with about 60 members. She met a member there, Duncan Turner, whose brother had migrated to Australia. Some years later, Meg contacted him where he was living at Box Hill, a suburb of Melbourne. His name was Jimmy Turner. At the time, he was still keeping the Sabbath on his own, as he found no Church of God to attend.

About 1951, Meg divorced her husband, who subsequently died about 1953. She met Alexander Whemond McCormack, then working for British Electricity, after serving for 12 years in the Royal Navy, and surviving 14 ships being sunk beneath him during WWII. An astounding story in itself! She had known Alex for years and then they were married, having one son, who they named after his father. Alex (senior) then took a job in forestry preservation so he could be at home.

In 1959 they migrated to Australia, arriving in Fremantle on the 26th August that year. Alex was then employed by the Australian Broadcasting Commission (A.B.C.) and his job caused them to move to Shepparton, a town in north-east Victoria.

Alex was a Presbyterian, and Meg accompanied him to church on Friday nights for a while, but was not happy doing so. He left the Presbyterian Church after being told by a minister not to take any notice of the Bible except for the Gospels. Meg then just kept the Sabbath at home, until she heard Garner Ted Armstrong on the radio in the early 1960's, from what was then the Radio Church of God. They wrote for all the literature offered and started to tithe, and commenced the Bible correspondence course. Around 1967 they were visited by Bob Fahey, a minister in the church, and began attending the Worldwide Church of God at Ballarat, Victoria. In 1975 Alex was baptised for the first time and Meg re-baptised by Bruce Tyler.

As time went on, both of them became increasingly unhappy about the constant appeals for money and the hierarchical form of government; in particular, Herbert Armstrong's claim to be God's chosen apostle. Meg's two youngest daughters were also attending Worldwide. After Herbert Armstrong's death, the church started massive doctrinal changes. By around 1990, both Meg and Alex had lost interest and confidence in the W.C.G. and stopped attending. In January of 1992 Alex died, which left Meg greatly distressed as it had been a very happy marriage.

Meg and her friend Lily Morgan started to look around for a church where they could still find the Truth of God. Both attended the Global Church of God for a short time, Meg only going twice. Then, hearing of the Christian Biblical Church of God, they wrote for and received care packages, which they studied carefully. Meg attended the C.B.C.G. Feast of Tabernacles in 1994, her first in five years. Sadly, Mrs Lily Morgan's poor health prevented her from attending, and she died a few days after the Feast, aged 83.

Here were two elderly widows, with little or no money, who would not accept false teachings flooding into their church. Rather than accept them, they chose rather to risk losing all their friends of many years, and go it alone. This account of Meg's life up until 1995 was compiled by John Morgan.

The last chapter of Meg's life in the church began with the local upheaval of the C.B.C.G. in Australia. This occurred after the death of John Morgan (2000), who ran the Australian office.

This upheaval caused a number of brethren to splinter off and meet in even smaller groups than previously, even as few as two on Sabbaths. Meg and myself (Greg Ireland) continued to observe the Sabbath together.

These events turned out to be a blessing from God. The C.B.C.G., as do many other churches of God, have always strictly adhered to the calculated rabbinic calendar (C.R.C.). This calendar is not Biblically based. The month of Abib is the first month of God's year (Ex. 12:2; 13:4). The C.R.C. uses the seventh month, Tishri, as the start of the year. The breakup of C.B.C.G in Australia gave greater opportunity and indeed need to study this matter.

The conclusion reached by Meg and a number of brethren was that Aviv barley determines the start of God's year in association with new moon visibility at Jerusalem. This was a major change in understanding particularly for a lady in her eighties. Meg gladly embraced this God-revealed truth.

Significant as this change in understanding was God, had not finished. The international dateline posed problems for brethren, who were wanting to keep God's appointed times. Those living on the globe east of Jerusalem, and west of the dateline, where Australia is located, have this world's calendar set one day in advance of that observed from Jerusalem.

Brethren wanting to keep God's Sabbaths correctly in Australia actually have to postpone one day to keep in sync with the holy land. The correct day for Sabbath observance is therefore Sunday in Australia. Without Sabbath keeping there is no sign between God and His people (Ex. 31:13), and working on the Sabbath leads to death (Ex. 31:15).

Once again Meg and other brethren embraced this truth. Meg was always tenacious in observing God's truth, as she understood it, not willing to compromise. She was always a generous and true friend to brethren and had a gritty sense of humour. Meg exhibited many of the qualities of the Proverbs 31 wife. She was someone for whom it was a privilege to know, and have as a friend. Sadly, the last four years of her life were spent confined in a nursing home, but her faith never wavered.

The words of Paul in Timothy 4:7-8 come to mind. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Also Ps. 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Yes, Meg, we will keep our kilts swinging!

--Brian, Linda and Crew