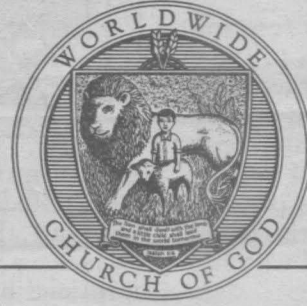


2 Burdens of the office of president of the United States

4 Endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ

8 Dutch Office manager retires after 25 years of service

The Worldwide News



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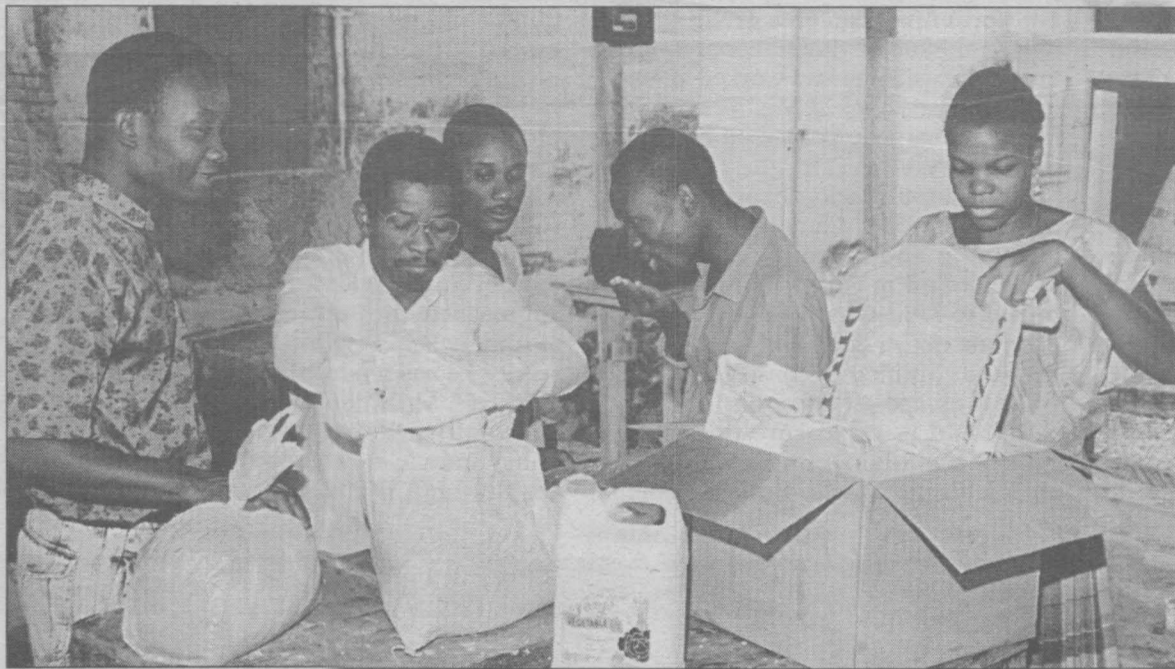
Members in Haiti shine as conditions darken

By Paul Monteith

Out in the Haitian countryside a farmer sang a sad melody as he washed the day's labor from his face with water from a nearby well.

Listening was Cyrille Richard, pastor of the Pointe-a-Pitre and Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, and Port-au-Prince, Haiti, congregations, and Blaise Franklin, a local church elder in Haiti. They were sitting in a truck waiting to conclude some official business with a notary in the area.

Intrigued by the song, they called the farmer over to the truck and asked him to sing it again. What had caught Mr. Richard's and Mr. Franklin's attention, and inspired them, were the words, "Lord, please help me to live with my misery."



I SAW YOU HUNGRY—With foodstuffs being scarce and costly, Haitian members are grateful for the food distributed every Sunday, made possible by donations from members in France, Guadeloupe and the United States. [Photo by Ulrick Colas]

"Some of us," said Mr. Richard, "might have asked the Lord to get us out of our misery, but this farmer

asked the Lord to help him cope with it."

Mr. Richard traveled to Haiti Dec. 7 from his home in Guadeloupe.

Grim conditions in the capital

"The living conditions here have worsened since the September coup of 1991," said Mr. Franklin. "Church members are not exempt from the effects of the two-year-old [United Nations] embargo. Facing hardship, however, has been a permanent situation for most Haitians since the birth of this nation in 1804."

The fuel embargo, once again in force since Oct. 19, is hurting everyone, from schoolchildren to doctors, with both groups finding it increasingly difficult to travel because of the gasoline shortage. Haiti has been using its fuel reserves to minimize the embargo's effect, but a gallon of gasoline can cost up to \$25 Haitian (\$10 U.S.).

While Mr. Richard was in Haiti the government closed all gas stations Dec. 8 and they were not to reopen until Dec. 20.

Essentials have tripled in price and are scarce. And while places such as pharmacies still have medicine, it too is becoming unaffordable.

In Port-au-Prince, according to a grim report in the Nov. 8 edition of Guadeloupe's *France-Antilles* newspaper, there are "pigs feeding on garbage heaps in the street, open sewers giving off a pestilential odor, battered cars breaking down in the middle of potholed streets: the capital looks more and more like a giant junk yard. The city's garbage, part of which used to be collected, is no longer picked up, since the garbage trucks no longer have access to gasoline or spare parts."

Said Mr. Franklin, "We need the prayers of all God's people for the safety of the entire population, who are threatened by civil war."

Aid provides food for 10 weeks

Unemployment in Haiti is running at 90 percent, and unemployment and underemployment affects 75 percent of the Port-au-Prince church.

The congregation of 80 is formed by eight families and 34 single people. Because of unemployment, members depend on assistance.

Mr. Richard took with him donations from the Bordeaux, France, and Guadeloupe churches.

"Their funds were exhausted and they had not had food aid for three weeks," Mr. Richard said.

"The Bordeaux and Guadeloupe donations will buy food for the next 10 weeks." Relief funds have also been raised by brethren in Florida, bringing food every Sunday to more than 75 percent of the congregation.

"The Haitian members are grateful for the support of all those brethren from abroad," said Mr. Franklin.

Members set up service project

In spite of the difficult living conditions, the members are in good spirits and enthusiastic about being involved in a church project.

"We've set up an agricultural and educational project on half a hectare of land," said Mr. Franklin. "We are going to dig wells to supply drinking water to some 5,000 countrymen and for irrigation." They also have plans for pools to raise fish, and grow vegetables.

"The project also gives them a chance to be active in the works of personal evangelism, as promoted by Mr. Tkach," Mr. Franklin continued. "They are letting their lights shine by developing their talents and by serving their fellow citizens in the countryside."

Some church families have started their own businesses. Between them they sell rice, candles, matches, charcoal, used clothes and homemade juice. Some members with used cameras take photographs of Haitians there for relatives living abroad. A few have set up their own studios.

"When you look around and see the desperate state this country is in, the industrious initiative of the members is very encouraging," said Mr. Richard. "It's also encouraging to see that God takes care of his people."



Personal from...

JOSEPH W. TKACH

A time for spiritual renewal

As you all know, the Church has been struggling with a lower than normal income for the past three years. Although the major reason for this is the economic condition of the United States, of course, part of the reason is that some members have left our fellowship.

They have lost faith that Christ is leading the Church. A few, upset and confused by administrative or doctrinal change, have decided to leave. I pray for them every day that they might find the peace of Jesus Christ and the joy that comes from faith in him.

On the other hand, most of our members are *deeply committed Christians*. I appreciate that and am thankful for it. *And yet I also believe that we as a Church need a renewed zeal and enthusiasm for Christ*. That is what this letter is about, and I hope you will read every word carefully.

Some members have allowed discussions about the nature of God to distract them from God himself! Knowing about God is important, of course, but it is much more important to know God—to know his love, to know his power and faithfulness, to have a personal relationship with him and to be deeply committed to him. That is precisely what we need more of.

Members of the Church *are* committed to God, but I feel that we still need to be exhorted to recapture our first love. Does that mean love of a particular doctrine or teaching that first attracted us to the Church? No—it means love of *Jesus Christ* (1 Corinthians 16:22; Ephesians 3:17-19).

Our love for Christ must be greater than anything else in our lives. It must transform what we do, what we think and what we are. It needs to completely dominate our lives, changing even how we think of our-

Continued on page 3

Burdens of office weigh heavily on President

Despite a rapidly changing world scene, the office of President of the United States remains the most important elected position on earth. It is an office of awesome responsibility and incredible demands.

A president needs a deep reservoir of stamina and good health to stand up to the rigors of the job—travel, endless ceremonial duties as head of state, battles with Congress and within one's own party, the sensitivities of international diplomacy, as well as periodic threats to world peace that arise to test the will of every individual who has sat in the Oval Office.

To be truly successful, a president must have vision, and be able to articulate it. The presidential podium is a pulpit from which to exercise moral leadership. But in so doing, the Chief Executive must be able to withstand criticism of the most intense and often cynical kind. "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen," President Harry Truman (1945-1953) once said.

On Dec. 5 I had my first opportunity to meet a president in office. I accompanied Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, David Hulme, vice president of the Ambassador Foundation, and Rick van Pelt, director of Facilities Services, to a reception in the White House before the annual awards ceremony at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

I was a bit anxious as my time neared to shake the hand of President



Bill Clinton, and the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton. Each person had but the briefest moment to exchange a word or two with the President and his wife before pausing for an official photograph with them.

I congratulated the President on his stirring, come-from-behind victory in winning congressional approval for the North American Free Trade Agreement, an issue of vital national importance for which he had worked so tirelessly. I then thanked Mrs. Clinton for her own energetic service on behalf of the country.

Mr. Clinton graciously accepted my compliment. Mrs. Clinton, projecting a charming and radiant personality, impressed me in the way she was determined to hear what I—and I'm sure, everyone else in line—had to say to her husband. Nothing of consequence was going to escape her attention.

It would be a pleasure to one day explore the affairs of state with such an intelligent couple. Both President

and Mrs. Clinton have an uncommon ability to grasp and explain in detail the complex issues confronting government and society today.

It is no secret that the early months of the new administration were marked by a certain lack of direction, perhaps through trying to take on too many issues at once. Since then, Mr. Clinton has sought the advice of many experts to help him focus his efforts.

One of the President's most beneficial moves was obtaining the services of David Gergen, a former official in the Reagan White House and a knowledgeable political analyst. Mr. Gergen, still a registered Republican, serves as counselor to the President. After the concert at the Kennedy Center, I approached Mr. Gergen and expressed to him my appreciation for the selfless service he has rendered.

Of late, Mr. Clinton has spoken out eloquently against the rising tide of crime and violence gripping the land. On Nov. 13, in Memphis, Tennessee,

the President said it was the nation's moral duty to combat the "crisis of the spirit" of crime, violence, drug abuse and family breakdown in America.

Vowing to dedicate much of his effort as President to addressing these problems (he has met with many mayors and police chiefs since), Mr. Clinton nonetheless said there were limits to what government can do. In calling for a restoration of values, structure and discipline in American life, he stressed it must arise from the influence of families, communities and churches.

Time and again, those who have shouldered the enormous burdens of the presidency have recognized there is a higher power they could rely upon in times of need.

For example, Ronald Reagan told NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw three days before he left office in 1989: "I believe very much in what Abraham Lincoln said when he had this job. He said he couldn't perform the functions, the duties of this job for 15 minutes if he didn't know he could call on One who is wiser and stronger than all others."

In our age of talk-show hyper-criticism, let us be careful to have a proper regard for those who have chosen to bear burdens we wouldn't think of carrying. "Show proper respect to everyone," scripture counsels us. "Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17).

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Letters to the Editor

Letters for this section should be addressed to "Letters to the Editor." The editor reserves the right to use letters so addressed in whole or in part, and to include your name and edit the letter for clarity or space. We welcome your comments.

A fire to melt hearts

How my heart swells with love and pride for the brethren and students of Imperial School who during the Altadena fire helped out at the understaffed Red Cross emergency center at Eliot Middle School [WN, Nov. 16].

Love is not just a feeling, but an action. They are proof that God's love is a selfless and active love free of charge!

The people who came in contact with them during that crisis will never forget them, and when they think of Christians, they will think of them, with an open and a positive attitude.

By our example, we may soften the hearts of people and ready the ground for God to open their hearts to his truth, leading them also to the hope that we have in Christ.

E. M. Johnson
Covina, California

Cultivating the vision

As I was scanning a few stations on my radio set, I heard a preacher from a neighboring country talking about the New Age movement. The same topic had appeared in the September *Plain Truth*.

The preacher warned the listener against embracing the New Age movement because it is a cult and not Bible based. Then he referred listeners to a book in which he said are listed many more cults.

To my dismay—and surprise—among the names read out of the book was the Worldwide Church of God. The preacher called us the Worldwide Church of God of Mr. Armstrong and a cult to be avoided.

I was shocked. God's Church has never been Mr. Armstrong's—it cannot be a man's. Mr. Tkach's beautiful Festival '93 card quoted 1 Peter 2:9 where we are called a chosen people, belonging to God, who has called us out of darkness into his light.

Even 2 Timothy 1:8-9 shows we have been called in spite of ourselves. I believe those scriptures with all my heart and no radio programme or book is going to change that.

I never knew God's Church existed until God drew me. When I was baptized in June 1991, I was not stamped with the seal of the Church or its logo in my forehead, but God gave me his Spirit.

Mr. Tkach, thank you for the vision for the Church, without which we could get lost. This is the time the pastor general's (indeed God's) plea to let our light shine in the world becomes the more relevant. May God help us to be a positive force in the world.

George Muhindo
Kampala, Uganda

Time is on her side

For many years I have lived in poverty and have not been able to adequately provide for

Name withheld
Illinois

"Into All the World..."

Your involvement in the Work produces fruit. In this column subscribers to the Work's publications and viewers of the *World Tomorrow* telecast express their views and opinions.

'A good soldier of Jesus Christ'

Since you sent my very first issue of *The Plain Truth* I have been overwhelmed and, quite frankly, excited about the issues that have followed.

It seems that the magazines help with the problems that I am going through, or I have had questions answered in the issues that have followed.

I am in the United States Army at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Because of my job, I am required to spend many days in the field, training soldiers. I try to teach the Word of the Lord as often as possible.

Sometimes I give my literature to those who are interested, to give them better understanding. About two months ago, as I was reading, a soldier began asking me some of my own questions that I used to ask myself.

I began showing him the magazine, and what I couldn't explain, the magazine could. Hence I gave him the magazine.

J. F.
Ft. Benning, Georgia

Without answers to Alzheimer's anger

An article in the October *Plain Truth* hit me square in the face (so to speak)! My father has Alzheimer's disease, and we too are trying to take care of him at home. The stress level you mentioned is indeed very stressful.

my family. As a single parent struggling on the welfare payroll I have not been able to pull my own weight when it came to many areas.

It is a humbling experience to have to ask anyone I could for clothes and furniture.

One thing that bothered me was in the area of donations. I was always embarrassed that I gave such meager offerings.

I recently began to look at it in a new light. Since my donations can't be in dollars they will simply have to be in service. This helps me to have a much better attitude about serving.

I hope after my schooling is finished and I get a degree, I can go to work and help the Church financially.

We too have the book *The 36 Hour Day*. We ordered it when he was diagnosed, about two years ago. It has helped, but it doesn't tell you what to do exactly when the patient gets angry, talks ugly and demands that you bring him what he wants.

He has lost his ability to reason. We can leave him only for short periods of time. He is now in what they call level 3.

I worked in two nursing homes with patients who had Alzheimer's, and they stayed (some of them) in level 2 for a good while, while others went from 2 to 3 and died in the latter stages of 3. You just never know.

We are the caregivers, who have to deal with the day-to-day stress and agony.

J.F.
Birmingham, Alabama

First love

I am a 22-year-old with three children. I am fortunate that being married at age 15 to a 17-year-old we are still in love and together.

We are fairly young Christians in the stage of extreme thirst for information about the Lord. The problem we began to see was that to get truly beneficial information we had to give a lot of money that we did not have.

We are so very grateful to those involved in keeping this publication in circulation so that those with a low income can continue to receive helps in their Bible studies.

The materials I have received have proven to be so informative and helpful in my walk. I cannot thank you enough.

D.G.
Phoenix, Arizona

Personal: Seeking God's will, not our own

Continued from page 1

selves—no longer living for our own purposes, but for his, earnestly desiring his will for our lives. We need to be completely dedicated to Jesus Christ, to following him, to living by the example he set, to doing good and spreading his good news.

When God is the center of our lives, everything we do, say or think will be based securely on our faith in him and our allegiance to him. He is our Creator, our Lord and Master.

We are insignificant lumps of clay, and yet he died for us so that we might live for him. Paul wrote that our lives should be living sacrifices, totally dedicated to Christ (Romans 12:1). Jesus' claims on us are definitely overwhelming and all-inclusive, and that is only fitting, because we *belong* to God, and we have no reason for existence except to do what God wants!

As we walk through our daily routines, how conscious are we of God and of his purpose in our lives? I hope we all understand that we fall short of the incredibly high calling we have been given.

How thankful we can be for God's grace and mercy! And when we reflect on that, how inspired we can be to renew and strengthen and deepen our faith and our devotion to God.

What are some of the enemies of our relationship with God? The cares of this world, the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life. The problems we encounter in our jobs, our finances, our family responsibilities, rather than driving us to our knees for God's help and courage, often divert our attention from God. Hurt feelings also cause us to focus on ourselves rather than on God and our neighbor.

Lives centered in God

God's people have a continuing need for spiritual renewal and revitalization, and it is for this reason that I will, in the Dec. 27 member letter, exhort every member of the Church to devote extra time during the month of January for fasting, special prayer and spiritual renewal.

This is not a hunger strike or some "prayer barrage" to get God to do *our* will. Rather, our goal should be to humbly rededicate ourselves to do God's will, to seek repentance for our sins and to trust him in faith to lead us.

I cannot say it strongly enough. Our lives must be centered in God. He must be the reason for which we live. He must be the driving force in our lives.

He is the reason for the Church and for our calling and for the message we are given to proclaim. He is the Source of everything we have and everything we ever hope to have.

In him we live and move and have our existence, as Paul said. *We need to be more mindful of it*, and I pray that we can stir up God's Spirit in us this coming month to renew our zeal for Christ and his Church and his message. Paul wrote to Timothy, "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6).

God, although he has all power, does not force his will on us. He wants us to seek him, to desire him, to choose him of our own free will—to love him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. He wants us to yield willingly to him, in faith, to be led by his Spirit in everything we do.

We need to seek to be increasingly yielded to his leadership through the Holy Spirit.

God's guiding Spirit is already in us. As we seek to be led by God, we do not seek to change him, *but to change ourselves* to be more sensitive and responsive to what he wants, and more willing to do it despite our human fears.

Perfect love and perfect faith overcome fear—but none of us is perfect. We have fears when we ought to have faith. Our time of fasting and prayer should focus on the faith we need to be thoroughly yielded to Christ. It is in faith and humble submission that we should let our requests be made known to God and know that we can trust him to answer.

One of our requests is that God supply the resources the Church needs to do Christ's work according to his will. These resources include funds, people and, above all, the Holy Spirit. God knows what we need before we even ask (Matthew 6:8), but he wants his people to worship him in spirit and in truth, looking to him for all their needs and devoting all their good gifts to his service as good stewards of his grace toward us (1 Peter 4:10).

We pray for resources and also the wisdom to use them in the most effective way. But most importantly, we pray for a never-ending spiritual resource—a relationship with God and the spiritual wisdom to draw strength from that relationship.

Let's understand. It is not simply a matter of our using God's gifts. Rather, he is using *us*, and his gifts are to be used by us *in his service*.

God's people have a continuing need for spiritual renewal and revitalization, and it is for this reason that I will, in the Dec. 27 member letter, exhort every member of the Church to devote extra time during the month of January for fasting, special prayer and spiritual renewal.

This is true for the Church as the Body of Christ, and it is also true on an individual level. God gives each Christian gifts as he wishes to distribute them, and those gifts are to be used, not for glorifying the self, but for the benefit of the Body of Christ.

Our diverse abilities are to be used to help each other, to help build the Church, to strengthen the bonds of unity. As we work together in harmony, the community of faith is a credible example of God's way of life and a good testimony to the love of God activated in us.

As individuals and congregations set good examples in our local communities, people ask about what lies behind our conduct, and we are happy to tell them it is our faith in Christ. As God uses each of his people in making known the way of salvation, new people are added to the flock.

The closer the Body of Christ is to God, the greater its faith, and the

more courageous and effective it will be as a witness of the gospel. God works through the Church to encourage sinners to repent and to develop a relationship with him, thereby adding more people to the Body.

One of the Church's most important resources is people, and I know this is an underused resource. *Everyone who has the Spirit of God is a source of strength for the Church*. As we fast and pray, we should ask God to guide us, personally, in being more helpful assets to the local church. We should pray about and reflect on how we can encourage each other, on how we can use our talents to serve others in the congrega-

Instead of asking God for what we want, we need to ask him to help us understand what he wants.

tion, on how we can be a help in welcoming new people.

We should ask God for opportunities and motivation to participate in works of service and love. We should ask him to give us wisdom, good judgment and courage as we explain to people who ask, that Jesus Christ is the motivation and strength for what we do. We should ask God to guide us to understand how we can give him glory in our day-to-day lives. Each member of Christ's Body is an agent God can use in his service.

One of the biggest enemies of faith today is *money*. And I know that this statement applies to me and to all human leaders of God's Church. Money is powerful, and it tempts us to trust in its power instead of in God. Thanks to our many faithful members, the Church does have a regular income, but it is humanly easy to take that for granted and to feel a certain security in it.

All of us do need money to support ourselves and our families, and the Church needs money to do the work of the gospel, including paying salaries for the livelihoods of all those who work for the Church. But it is wrong to put our trust in money and to make our dependence on it more important than our dependence on Christ. Our trust and security must be in Christ alone!

Just as we all, as individuals, must sometimes make certain decisions to serve and obey God that might mean a financial sacrifice, so the Church itself must also make such decisions.

Facing the truth

This past year, Jesus Christ confronted us with decisions about doctrinal changes. We were convicted of the need to clarify our teaching on the nature of God. But we also knew that facing the truth would trouble some of our members, and that, as a result, our income might drop. We had to make a decision: Should we preach what God shows us to be true, or should we maintain doctrinal stability in hopes of maintaining financial stability?

In one sense, it was a choice between faith and finances. It might look like an easy choice, but it was not. The Church has many hundreds of employees depending on the Church's income to support their families. We agonized over it, wondering if we should put off the change, if we should allow the

Church to continue teaching error for just a while longer until the income might pick up.

I discussed the subject with advisers and prayed about it for many weeks. Eventually, faith and truth won out, as I believe they will with most members of the Church once they understand the issues involved in this subject.

God requires us to be faithful and to follow him where he leads. We belong to him, not him to us. We must respond in faith to him, not ignore the truth when he shows it to us, regardless of the consequences.

Knowing his need for the courage that God supplies, Paul requested the prayers of the Ephesians on his behalf. He wrote: "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should" (Ephesians 6:18-20).

Just as Paul needed the prayers of the Ephesians, I need your prayers. We all need the prayers of one another. So I ask, pray for me, my brothers and sisters, that I will have the faith to follow Christ's lead.

Our decisions must be made on faith, not in fear of financial consequences, reputation consequences or any other consequences. *Faith does require wisdom and good judgment, of course*. God does not call us to blind faith or foolish faith. He calls us to the kind of faith that knows whom our trust is in and why—to faith in the one who owns us, who created us and who redeemed us with his own blood, to the one who gives us the wisdom that is from above (James 3:17).

We must follow Christ where he leads us, and do the best job we can with what he provides. From a purely human perspective, we might be tempted to fast so that God would increase the Church's income. But our greater need is that God would increase our faith and dedication to him.

Instead of asking God for what we want, we need to ask him to help us understand what he wants. He will supply the money we need. By faith, we already know that. What we need most is *him*. Our role is to serve him, using wisely and faithfully what he provides, looking to him for help to do what *he* knows is most important.

Money is a potential enemy of faith in every Christian. Jesus warned us about the riches that can choke the word of salvation and make it unfruitful (Matthew 13:22). Many of us are, by first-century standards, wealthy, and we are exhorted to be rich in good works, to have treasure in heaven (1 Timothy 6:17-19). We are called to a life of faith—to trust in God, not in mammon.

Of course, *faith does not mean financial foolishness*. We should trust God to supply our needs, and we also do our part by *working diligently*. We trust God to meet our future needs, too, and we do our part by *saving some for future needs*. That is wise—but it is not wise to put all our *trust* in those savings.

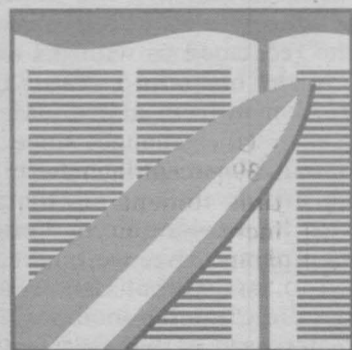
Jesus criticized a rich man, not for having barns for storage, but for putting all his resources into his own security and trusting in his own savings (Luke 12:16-21). It is good to

See Personal, page 5

IRON SHARPENS IRON

so one man sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17—As iron sharpens iron,



You can prove what *elohim* means

By Ralph Orr

We know that the Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1:26 is *elohim* and that God says there, "Let us make man in our image." Does this mean that there is more than one God? The Hebrew Bible plainly quotes God saying there is only one God. "I am God," God says, "and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:22). God does not say, "We are God."

So what does *elohim* mean? Is it plural or is it singular? Does it prove there is one God or many?

More than one God?

We have said *elohim* was a family name—a uniplural family name. The word *uniplural* was used by C.I. Scofield, a Congregationalist minister, in his *Scofield Reference Bible*. It was likely from the reference notes in Dr. Scofield's Bible that the word entered the Worldwide Church of God, where it was used to explain our teaching about the nature of God.

Yet because *elohim* was plural in form, it allegedly revealed the existence of more than one Person or Being or God in that family.

It sounded logical, and we believed it. After all, doesn't the New Testament reveal that both the Father and Son are God? But does that prove there is more than one God? Does the word *elohim* support that idea?

Not only did we believe that there was more than one God, we also believed that God [the Father] is reproducing himself. We thought that we were babes in the Church's womb.

Tomorrow we were to be Gods, children of God. Perhaps not exactly like God the Father or Jesus Christ, but Gods nonetheless. That was an exciting part of the Church's message.

However, what we were teaching—without realizing it—was polytheism (belief in more than one God). We hadn't analyzed the implications of

Ralph Orr, a preaching elder, is a researcher and writer in Editorial Services.

saying, "There is more than one God in the God family" or "We will become Gods."

You can prove it yourself

But now the Church has reconsidered that teaching. We say that God *has* a family, rather than he *is* a family. God is the only God, and he will forever remain the only God. He is not making more Gods or reproducing himself.

Furthermore, the Church today rejects the idea that God the Father and God the Son are separate Gods. It insists that the Father and Son are but different aspects of the one true God. There is only *one* God.

So much biblical understanding hinges on how one defines *elohim*. How can we know the truth? Most of us don't read Hebrew, so how can we know what a Hebrew word means?

One way you can know is to study how the word *elohim* is used in the Bible. How a word is used is a key to understanding what it means. Is the word used as a noun, verb, pronoun, adverb or as another part of speech? If the word is used as a noun, is it a singular, plural or proper noun?

What other words are used with it? Are there any pronouns or adjectives associated with it? The more examples of a word's usage in context, the more certain its definition can be.

You can apply these principles to find out what *elohim* means. Here's how. Because *Strong's Concordance* is probably the most widely used Bible study tool in the Church, I'm confining most of my comments to that work.

In *Strong's*, under the word *God*, you'll find a list of every Bible verse where *God* appears in the King James Version. The verse list begins with Genesis 1:1, "God made the heaven and the earth."

To the right of that verse is the number 430. In the Hebrew and Chaldee dictionary in the back of the concordance, at the number 430, this word is *elohim*. So Genesis 1:1 is the first place in the Bible where one finds *elohim*.

You can now read *elohim* in Genesis 1:1 by reading the text like this: "In the beginning *elohim* made the heaven and the earth."

So now return to the verse list for *God*. Notice how many times *elohim* appears. (*The NIV Exhaustive Concordance* shows *elohim* 2,602 times in the Old Testament. The New International Version translates it 2,242 times as *God*.) *Elohim* is the most common word in the Old Testament for God.

These more than 2,200 verses can help you understand what *elohim* means. It may help to take *Strong's* verse list of *God* and read *elohim* for God at the appropriate places. That is a simple way of cementing the true meaning of *elohim* in your mind. But remember, don't just read the verse by itself—read it in its context.

Overcoming common barriers

Substituting *elohim* for God in Genesis 1:1 can change your perspective of that verse. Applying this principle affects the reading of other verses in that same chapter.

Genesis 1:2-5 will read: "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of *elohim* was hovering over the waters. And *elohim* said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. *Elohim* saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. *Elohim* called the light 'day,' and the darkness he called 'night.' And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day."

Genesis 1:26 is perhaps the most common barrier to our understanding. Often we fail to consider the context. Genesis 1:26 reads, "Then God [*elohim*] said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.'"

This verse does not tell us why or to whom God is speaking. It does not claim to explain God's nature. Those who read Hebrew do not claim that the verse supports a plurality of Gods. Consult any good Bible commentary for possible explanations of this verse.

This may simply be an example of God using the royal "we," a form of expression used by a king when referring to himself.

The context of the verse proves that it is not plural. Genesis 1:27, the very next verse, reads, "So *elohim* created man in *his* own image, in the
See *Elohim*, page 5

Don't surrender, endure hardship, 'occupy till I come'

By Norman L. Shoaf and John Halford

Place: The Philippines. Time: Late in World War II. Japan is in retreat.

Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda, who was drafted into Japan's Imperial Army in 1942, was assigned to lead a guerrilla campaign on Lubang, an island off Mindanao. His mission: Fight for the territory and harass the enemy.

In his book, *No Surrender*, Lt. Onoda described the orders he received from his commanding officer: "You are absolutely forbidden to die by your own hand. It may take three years, it may take five, but whatever happens, we'll come back for you. Until then, so long as you have one soldier, you are to continue to lead him. You may have to live on coconuts! If that is the case, live on coconuts. Under no circumstances are you to give up your life voluntarily."

"I said to myself, I'll do it! Even if I don't have coconuts, even if I have to eat grass and weeds, I'll do it. These are my orders and I will carry them out."

Hiroo Onoda and his men took

their position on Lubang late in 1944. Within months, Japan was defeated in the Philippines. A plane dropped surrender orders to Lt. Onoda and his group. But he and his four companions refused. His orders were clear: Under no circumstances was he to quit. The enemy, he reasoned, must be playing tricks.

One by one, his men deserted or were killed or captured. The 1950s came, then the 1960s. Japan became an industrial giant. In place of its armies, Japan's cameras and radios invaded the world.

But on Lubang, Lt. Onoda fought on. His uniform rotted. He suffered hunger, cold and loneliness. He couldn't figure out why cruise ships had replaced the battleships in the bay. Why did the newspapers he sometimes found give no news of the war? And why didn't his superiors send more orders?

He knew Japan still existed. The papers said his nation was growing in wealth and power, so they couldn't have lost the war. That meant they would come back for

him. His commander had promised.

The Filipinos, the Americans and even the Japanese tried to entice Lt. Onoda from the jungle. Japan sent his brother to plead with him. But Lt. Onoda would not surrender.

Finally a Japanese photographer contacted Lt. Onoda and asked what it would take to make him give in. He answered: Send the man who had told him not to give in. Let him rescind the order.

Back in Japan, Lt. Onoda's commanding officer, now a middle-aged bookseller, was found. He was given the original surrender orders and sent to Lubang, where he reached Lt. Onoda.

Finally, on March 9, 1974, nearly 29 years after his country surrendered, the Second World War's last warrior did, too. Despite his tattered uniform, Hiroo Onoda emerged from the jungle looking every inch a soldier. His weapons were in top-notch condition. He was still a fighting force. He occupied till they came.

Like Lt. Onoda, we Christians have similar orders. Jesus' commission to us? "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13,

King James Version), and "Do the work of him who sent me" (John 9:4).

We are not to surrender. We're to live in what amounts to enemy territory, spiritually, and witness to another way of life. We are to endure hardship like a good soldier (2 Timothy 2:3).

As God's born-again children, we show that Jesus has already come to save the world. He's coming now, living in us (Galatians 2:20). And we announce that he will come again, bringing the full reality of God's kingdom to earth to deliver all humans from the corruption of sin.

Lt. Onoda expected to be on Lubang for two or three years. The apostles expected Jesus to return within weeks of his ascension. Only later did the Church see it would be much longer. Whenever Jesus returns, his orders to us are still valid: Fight on. Don't let enemy propaganda wear you down. Stay loyal to your King.

An ordinary soldier, fighting for a physical emperor, understood this. Hiroo Onoda endured to the end. How much more should we who serve the King of kings and Lord of lords?

Personal: Pray for faith in Jesus Christ

Continued from page 3

have a "barn," in other words, to have some savings, but we should not allow those tangible assets to distract us from our spiritual duties.

Part of our spiritual responsibility—the life to which we have been called—is the way of give. We should not withhold our hand from a genuine need for a good work (Proverbs 3:27). That is our responsibility as a collective Body and as individuals. Generosity is one important way to express thanks for what God has given us.

As we make decisions regarding

next year's budget, we try hard to use our resources wisely, to work smarter and to work diligently. We want to get the most mileage out of each dollar spent. We aren't always successful, but we keep trying to improve. We certainly need wisdom in these decisions, so we ask that you pray for God's guidance.

If we all come before God humbly, beseeching God for his guidance, will he bless his Church with more money? Don't count on it! God makes no such guarantee of health and wealth either for individuals or for his Church as a whole.

Instead, *he tells us that his power is*

made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). We are to trust in him, not in any humanly created thing, and that certainly includes money. We are to let our needs be known so that we can pray for each other and help each other—each in his or her own way, according to what God has given us.

Our most vital asset

Members are the most important physical assets the Church has. This is true in a financial sense, of course, since God supplies the vast majority of the Church's income through its members. Your financial health has a bearing on your tithes and offerings. Your diligence on the job and your wise management are important for your own long-range finances and for those of the Church. However, the real value of our members is far beyond their ability to pay tithes and give offerings.

Church members are the most valuable physical resource to the work of the Church because we are children of God, people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, people who are being transformed by God in the way we think and in the way we live. We live for God.

Each member is a living advertisement of salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Members not only *represent* the Church, they *are* the Church in their local areas. Members are the health of the local congregation—the ones who do good works, who give answers for the hope that lies within them, who welcome new people, who show hospitali-

ty to potential babes in Christ, who encourage, love and pray for the newly baptized. Each member is a light in the darkness, the preserving salt God is putting into the world. Each member is a person God can use to add even more people to his flock through good deeds and words (Matthew 5:16).

I pray that each member has the humility to overcome personal fears, to be confident and bold in the gospel, to be used as God directs in facilitating local church growth—in building and strengthening the household of faith.

Do we have the faith to trust in God? I pray that we do. Real faith is infinitely more valuable than money. Let us pray for the faith in Jesus Christ to do what God wants, to be led by his Spirit.

Fasting is a vital part of the spiritual life of God's people. Fasting is a way of humbling ourselves before God, of setting our perspectives in order, of focusing our attention on him and reminding ourselves of our complete dependence on his grace for our existence. I also remind you that those with health problems should not fast without getting advice from a doctor.

We need God. We need his guidance for the job he has given us to do. We need his power and comfort and encouragement. We need faith to repent of our sins, to do his will, to follow through on what he leads us to. Let's work together in prayer as the Body of Christ to rededicate ourselves to love, worship, honor, obey and serve God, doing everything to his glory.

Elohim: God reveals himself as one

Continued from page 4

image of God [elohim] *he* created him; male and female *he* created them" (emphasis added). Just as in the rest of the chapter, the pronouns here are singular. So we see that when elohim creates man, God reveals himself to be but one God.

As you do your study, you'll probably notice several other interesting facts about elohim. For example, elohim also said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant" (Genesis 1:29); "I will make a helper suitable for him"

(Genesis 2:18); "I am going to put an end to all people" and "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you" (Genesis 6:13; 9:12).

In the Bible it was elohim who walked in the Garden of Eden, made a covenant with Abraham, wrestled with Jacob and spoke out of the burning bush. It was elohim who thundered from Sinai, gave victory to Joshua, sanctified the temple and spoke to the prophets.

"See now that I myself am He! There is no elohim besides me" (Deuteronomy 32:39). You'll see that as well. Enjoy your study.



Dateline: Ambassador

AN UPDATE OF AMBASSADOR COLLEGE

College switches to need-based financial aid

Efforts have been made to reduce the amount of money spent on the college's work-study program.

In the past, every student has been allowed to participate in a full work program regardless of his or her family's income or financial standing.

Students must now submit financial aid applications along with their college applications.

This year, 84 students did not qualify for employment in the college's work-study program, and many others are limited in the hours they may work because their own financial standing or the family contribution they can expect exceeds their financial need.

Foundation projection in Sri Lanka to close

Daniel Thompson, Ambassador Foundation foreign-project director in Sri

Lanka, explained the planned closing of the Sri Lanka project in forum Nov. 9.

"We're the only project that doesn't operate under the auspices of a royal family," said Mr. Thompson. "As a result, it is easier for the project to get swept up in the changing political winds."

Mr. Thompson said that Sri Lankan politicians who helped pave the way for the foundation to operate in the country have since left or been forced out of politics.

Politicians currently in power are not interested in projects associated with their former political opponents.

Ambassador students named players of the week

Junior **Cheryl Smith** of the Lady Royals basketball team was named NAIA District II Southwest Regional player of the week for the week of Dec. 5 through Dec. 10.

As of Dec. 13, Cheryl, from

Calhoun City, Mississippi, was shooting 80 percent from the free-throw line, No. 2 in the region. She was also averaging 12.4 points, 6.6 rebounds and 1.6 steals per game.

In late October, freshman **Sharon Treybig** of the Lady Royals volleyball team, was named NAIA District 8 volleyball player of the week, the first AC women's volleyball player to be so honored since the reintroduction of the intercollegiate program in 1990.

Men's volleyball team to play in new association

The Ambassador Royals men's volleyball team has been invited to play as an independent team in the Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association (MIVA).

The MIVA will have an NCAA division and an NAIA division and will include teams such as those of Ohio State University, Ball State University and the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

The invitation came from **Bill Cooperrider**, associate commissioner of the MIVA, which has its offices in Columbus, Ohio. The MIVA heard of AC's development in men's volleyball and sought the Royals' involvement in the association.

Men's volleyball has not been established as an intercollegiate sport by most NAIA institutions, so this invitation gives Ambassador the opportunity to participate in an official intercollegiate volleyball organization.

Student body composition changes

The composition of the student body has experienced many changes in the three years since consolidation.

The number of enrolled students has been reduced slightly to create optimum living conditions in student residences. There were 1,181 full-time students in the fall of 1990, compared to 1,105 this year (70 mar-

ried students, 537 single women and 498 single men).

Other changes since 1990: a 39 percent increase in part-time students; a 21 percent increase in international students; a 5 percent increase in in-state enrollment; a 4 percent decrease in male students; a 4 percent increase in female students; and almost a 25 percent increase in the number of minority students.

By mid-December, the college's Admissions Office had received 275 applications for the fall 1994 semester, 58 of whom had been accepted.

Soccer, volleyball and basketball results

The Royals soccer team ended its second season with a record of 12 wins and 5 losses.

In women's volleyball, the Lady Royals ended with a final match record of 20 wins and 12 losses.

The men's and women's basketball season began Nov. 13. As of Dec. 13, the Lady Royals were 9-1 and the Royals were 1-10.

Freshman **Sharon Treybig** leads the Lady Royals with averages of 18.1 points and 15.9 rebounds a game.

Senior **Seth Mullady** leads the Royals with game averages of 18.5 points and 11.3 rebounds.

Update

NEWS OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS

Editors, writers hear creationism lecture

FULLERTON, Calif.—Editorial Services employees Neil Earle, Jim Herst, Paul Kroll and Tim Finlay attended a lecture on creationism conducted Nov. 15 by Henry M. Morris of Simon Greenleaf University, which is located in Anaheim, Calif.

Dr. Morris, president of the Institute of Creation Research, has authored books on creationism.

The lecture covered the scientific case for a 6,000-year-old creation and how evolutionary theory has been damaged by a shortage of scientific evidence.

"We must try to look at all sides of this vital question," said Mr. Earle, international editor of *The Plain Truth*. "However, many people have closed minds on both sides of the subject of origins. This

makes it hard to be objective."

Dr. Herst said: "Professor Morris exposed major difficulties with the theory of evolution. Obviously, he takes the view of a Christian fundamentalist. However, evolution is not under attack by fundamentalists alone, it is also being questioned by reputable scientists."

The Plain Truth plans to address the subject in future articles.

Members speak, are filmed, at agriculture conference

KANSAS CITY, Missouri—Chris Finlay, an employee of the Church's Landscaping Department, Neal Kinsey, a local church elder in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and Dale Schurter, pastor of the Tipp City, Ohio, church, spoke at the Acres U.S.A. Conference here Nov. 19.

Acres U.S.A. is a magazine that concentrates on eco-agriculture. Publisher Charles Walters organized the conference, which was attended by about 700 people.

Linda Scobee and Tina Kuo and cameramen from the Church's Television Department interviewed speakers and some attendees for *The World Tomorrow*.

Mr. Schurter received 133 requests for lecture material, multiple copies of audio tapes and some requests for videotapes. *The Plain Truth* will be offered in the packet sent to those who requested lecture material.

Singles to meet for weekend in Dallas

DALLAS, Texas—Singles are invited to Big D's Grand Gala on Presidents' Day weekend, Feb. 19 and 20. Services and a semiformal banquet and dance will take place in the Dallas Grand Hotel. The Doc Gibbs Band will provide a variety of music and entertainment.

Casual Sunday activities will feature games, more dancing and an all-you-can-eat Texas barbecue at the Lancaster Town Center. Music will be by the Texas Sound Band.

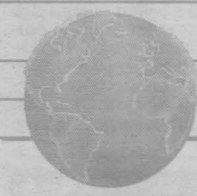
Cost for the dinner dance is \$25 (\$30 if you send your money after Jan. 24), and the cost for the 1 p.m. Sunday barbecue will be \$10. Make your check out to Church Activity Fund—Dallas South and send it to Marcia Chambers, 7127 Flameleaf Place, Dallas, Texas, 75249.

The Dallas Grand Hotel offers the flat rate of \$60 per room (one to four people). Call as soon as possible to get a "double-double"—a room with two bathrooms and two closets (phone 1-214-747-7000).

More information will be sent to church pastors. For information on other hotels or motels, call 1-214-216-0877. For information on in-home housing, call 1-214-296-1395. For general information call 1-214-470-9203. Don Hooser.

Soccer team a family affair in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—Nautilus Graphics, a Church team of soccer players, reached second place in



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Station/Location	Air Time	Channel
KELO Sioux Falls, South Dakota	Sunday 6:30 a.m.	11
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WFMY Greensboro, North Carolina	Sunday 7 a.m.	2
WKPT Kingsport, Tennessee	Sunday 10:30 a.m.	19
WNCT Greenville, North Carolina	Sunday 8:30 a.m.	9
WPIX New York, New York	Saturday 6 a.m.	11
WRIC Richmond, Virginia	Sunday 7:30 a.m.	8
WTBS Atlanta, Georgia	Sunday 6:05 a.m.	17

and cable

Cancellation

KWGN Denver, Colorado	Monday 1 a.m.	2
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Last airing April 10

their division of the Sunday Commercial Football League in their first year.

They are coached by Brian Jones. Manager Dennis Lees pointed out that the team consists mainly of white men. Mr. Lees said: "We recently played against black opponents. Afterward they told us, 'We really enjoyed playing you guys, because you play a clean, determined, hard game. And there were no racist remarks from your side—we could just get on with the game. We felt we were playing against true sportsmen.'"

"Our main goal is to play football, have fun and build camaraderie," said captain Craig Nicolau. "A lot of the players are related. Getting together gets us together as a family. Parents, kids, grandparents, are all here. It's a great atmosphere." Geoff Neilson.

Member's trailer destroyed in Arkansas tornado

HATFIELD, Arkansas—Saturday evening, Nov. 13, tornadoes struck Polk County, Arkansas. Valerian Staggs of the Mena, Arkansas, church, who lives here with her four children, lost her trailer, which was destroyed by the tornado.

Services had been rescheduled to the afternoon with a social planned for that evening. Mrs. Staggs almost went home after services but decided to stay. It was quite a shock for her to return home and find her trailer gone.

Church members helped clean up the debris on successive Sundays. Polk County qualified for disaster relief, so with government assistance and Church help Mrs. Staggs is on the road to recovery. Nelson Haas.



FROM OUR

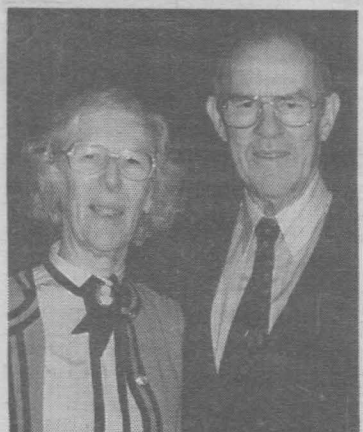
Brethren Worldwide

Johan Wilms retires as Dutch Office manager

By Gerrie Belo

NIEUWEGEIN, Netherlands—Johan Wilms, Dutch Office manager, received a plaque Oct. 16 for 25 years of service. On Oct. 1 he retired.

Mr. Wilms, who will be 69 on Dec. 29, had been office manager since 1975 and was



Miek and Johan Wilms

ordained a local elder in 1986. He and his wife, Miek, were pioneer members in the Dutch church.

While in Singapore for his work, Mr. Wilms listened to Radio Ceylon. "Although *The World Tomorrow* only aired on Radio Ceylon for three months a year, I was one of the listeners," he recalled. "I wrote for *The Plain Truth* a year later in 1957."

Back in Holland Mr. and Mrs. Wilms wrote to the British Office for more information. There was no church in Holland yet. Frank Schnee, then German regional director, visited them.

After his baptism Mr. Wilms opened a post office box in Arnhem to receive Church mail from Dutch-speaking areas. "Once a week we collected the mail and sorted it with the help of our children," Mr. Wilms said. "At first I translated the letters into English so the

British Office could answer them. Later, Dutch people working in England took care of the correspondence."

While riding his bicycle home from work April 23 Mr. Wilms was hit by a motorcycle and sustained several broken bones and serious head injuries. Doctors think it will take two more years for him to heal, although he will never regain total use of his left arm.

Mr. Wilms received hundreds of letters and cards and a great many flowers. He thanks everyone for their concern and encouragement.

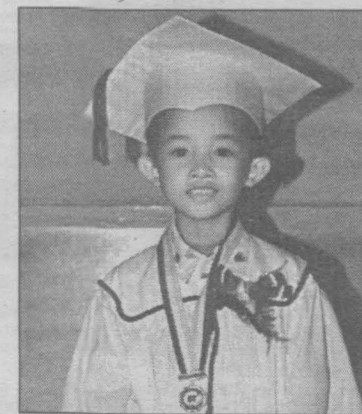
10-year-old attends services alone in Philippines

By Nilo Belarmino

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines—There's nothing extraordinary about Joshua-Jireh

D. Dajao. He's no different from other 10-year-old boys. What is exceptional about him is that he goes alone to Sabbath services almost without fail—unusual for a boy of his age.

When we had no permanent Sabbath meeting hall



Joshua-Jireh D. Dajao

Joshua would call the pastor or deacon each week inquiring about where and at what time the service would be.

Joshua, a consistent honor student, excels in English and science.

Since his mother, Glenda, died of cancer when he was 5, it has been a father-and-son team.

"I've learned a lot from him," his father, Laarni, said.

"When we have a heart-to-heart talk sometimes I am surprised by his sensible and uninhibited opinions and answers."

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