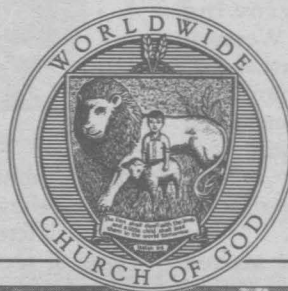


3 Mr. Tkach visits brethren  
in Atlanta, Georgia

4 Where is God when it hurts?

7 Our brethren in Angola—  
partners in spreading gospel

# The Worldwide News



VOL. XXIII, NO. 2  
JANUARY 24, 1995



## Personal from...

JOSEPH W. TKACH

### New light on the Sabbath, Holy Days, unclean meats

Now that Christ has led us to understand and believe that the new covenant in his shed blood has made the old covenant obsolete, not only is there cause for great rejoicing in the truth of the gospel message, but there are certain procedural matters that need clarification.

As you can well imagine, I have had to wrestle in prayer and agonize over this whole matter. It is not easy to admit we have been wrong about our understanding and application of the Sabbath and the Holy Days, as well as other old covenant forms of worship, but we have. Yet the truth is so much more glorious than the error that the grief is swallowed up in joy. The Word of God is sure and steadfast. We can take great comfort in the fact that we no longer have to explain away (which is what it amounted to) some clear and plain words of the Bible.

Many people today, even in other Christian churches, think Christians should observe the principles of the Ten Commandments because they were written in stone by the finger of God. Yet, the New Testament clearly tells us that the glory of the old covenant, written in stone, has no glory in comparison to the new covenant, which is not of the letter, but of the spirit (2 Corinthians 3:4-18). It tells us that the old covenant is now obsolete because the new covenant has come (Hebrews 8:13).

In other words, we observe the principles we find in the Ten Commandments, not because they were given at Mt. Sinai, but because Jesus Christ and the apostles commanded them in the new covenant. Again, Paul wrote expressly that the old covenant, written on tables of stone (the Ten Commandments), has ended and the new covenant has come in. The reason we do not murder, steal, commit adultery, worship idols, etc. is because *Jesus* tells us not to, and because his Spirit dwells in us through faith in him, not because they are written in tables of stone. These commandments do reflect the mind of God, but God has now written a new covenant on our hearts, and we are bound to him by it, not by the old one. The old covenant is now ended and the new has come.

#### A new covenant on our hearts

Why don't we find the Sabbath commanded in the new covenant? The Sabbath foreshadowed the entering into the promise of God. Just as the sacrifices foreshadowed the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of the whole world, so also the Sabbath foreshadowed the rest from our own labors, the rest God gives from our sins through faith in Christ (Hebrews 4:8-16). The unbelieving Israelites were not allowed to enter the Promised Land (Hebrews 3:19), a "Sabbath rest," but we enter, through faith (Hebrews 4:3), into the better promise—the new life in Jesus Christ, the new life of freedom from sin, freedom from our own labors and into the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf and in us.

The Sabbath pictured the promise. It pictured Israel's entrance into the Promised Land, and it pictured the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God—entering into eternal life, the life of the age to come, the new, regenerated, born-again life in Jesus Christ, free from sin and death.

Colossians 2:16-17 tells us that the reality, or substance, is Christ, and now that he has come, now that we have the reality and have entered into it, there is no more requirement for the physical figure, just as there is no more need for the physical sacrifices.

Paul's point is that to bring the physical figure back in, as a requirement for salvation, is to minimize the value of the true reality. We are not saved by grace through faith in Christ plus the Sabbath, or plus circumcision, or plus the sacrifices, or plus anything. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, period.

All Christians have an obligation to live the life of the Spirit as children of God, but not as slaves to the law (Romans 8:1-17). But the

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HEARTFELT HELLOS—Members of the congregation in Cacuaco, Angola, send greetings to brethren worldwide. [Photo by John Halford]

## New goals in Angola

By John Halford

Jack Brunet, pastor of the Brussels, Belgium, church, and I arrived in Luanda, capital of Angola, on the morning of Dec. 11. This was my first visit, and Jack's second. He visited Angola in October with Bill Bentley, a minister in Canada. They had discovered a rich spiritual harvest. Hundreds of people wanted to make contact with the Church.

This second visit had a different focus. We needed to take stock, and then decide how best to serve the

Angolans. Our goal was to get to know the leaders of the many small groups and congregations that had contacted us.

This country certainly poses some interesting challenges. It has faced three decades of war. This and a failed experiment with Marxism have left the economy in ruins. Warring factions have littered the countryside with mines and other antipersonnel weapons, so travel outside the main cities is dangerous. By some estimates there are more than 20 million land mines still unexploded. It may be 300 years before some fields are safe to plow.

Thankfully, a cease-fire seems to be holding, and the Angolans are

See Angola, page 7

John Halford is a senior editor for The Plain Truth.

## Uniting Sabbatharians in Uruguay

By Randal Dick and Victor Kubik

On a hot and humid Dec. 7, we arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay, and spent two days discussing church growth and leadership development with pastor Mike Medina and his wife, Adriana.

Two days later we drove 300 miles to Salto, home of the largest Uruguayan congregation. We woke up in a little hotel with marginal air conditioning. From the time we left the room, we were not destined to be dry again that day. By 11 a.m. the temperature was 120 degrees Fahrenheit

(49 Celsius), and the humidity was about 85 percent.

In Salto on Friday evening we visited Anna Svedov and her family. Anna attends our church, while the others in her family attend Salto's other Sabbatharian church.

Since Anna and her family are of Ukrainian descent, they switched comfortably back and forth between Spanish and Ukrainian. One of her relatives, Pedro Osczurkivisz, and his family were visiting from the Misiones region of Argentina, where many other Sabbatharians live. We had a lively discussion that evening.

It was interesting to watch them—about 15 adults, some of whom are Ukrainian Sabbatharians, some of whom are members of the World-

See Uruguay, page 3

Randal Dick and Victor Kubik are assistant directors of Church Administration.



# Why the East-West morality gap favors Asia

Early last year, Lee Kuan Yew, senior government official of Singapore, was interviewed in *The New York Times*. His responses to questions put forward by Fareed Zakaria illustrate the growing morality gap between the Western world and the nations of East Asia.

The morality advantage enjoyed by the Asian powers must be considered a factor in the unprecedented economic surge they enjoy at the moment, often at the expense of their trading partners in the West.

Lee was asked whether he viewed the United States as a model. "I find attractive features," he replied, "but ... I find parts of it totally unacceptable: guns, drugs, violent crime, vagrancy ... in sum, the breakdown of civil society. The expansion of the right of the individual to behave or misbehave as he pleases has come at the expense of orderly society."

The *Times* interviewer then asked the senior government official if he admired America more 25 years ago. "Yes, things have changed," replied Lee. "It has a lot to do with ... the diminution of personal responsibility ... Man needs a certain moral sense of right and wrong. There is such a thing called evil, and it is not the result of being a victim of society...."

"Westerners have abandoned an ethical basis for society, believing all problems are solvable by a good



## Worldwatch

GENE H. HOGBERG

government, which we in the East never believed possible....

The difference between Western concepts of society and government and East Asian beliefs, continued Lee, "is that Eastern societies believe that the individual exists in the context of his family.... The family is part of the extended family and then friends and the wider society. The ruler or the government does not try to provide for a person what the family best provides...."

"It's not that we don't have [social problems] such as single mothers here.... But there is grave disquiet when we break away from tested norms, and the tested norm is the family unit. It is the building brick of society."

Asked whether a cultural shift in the West to greater individual responsibility was possible, Lee remarked it would take a major swing of the pendulum. He said he detected a backlash in America against failed social policies.

This backlash has been confirmed

in the election of November 1994. The new Congress appears determined to attack social crises on a broad front. But skeptics wonder whether just new policies is the answer. There is a limit to what government can do, for example, in the area of illegitimacy.

In a study published last August, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that only about half—50.8 percent—of American children now live in a traditional nuclear family, defined as one where both biological parents are present and all children were born after the marriage.

According to *The New York Times*, "census officials said the decline reflects powerful societal trends that cannot be easily reversed," such as declining church and community influences and greater tolerance of divorce and single parenting.

"With more and more women bearing children out of wedlock, along with high divorce rates, more children than ever are spending at least

part of their childhoods in single-parent families or other alternative family situations," said Stacy Furukawa, author of the census report.

In 1960 there were 243,000 children living with one parent who had never married. By 1993 that number had soared to 6.3 million. Only slightly more than 10 percent of children living in two-parent families are living below the government's poverty line, whereas 66.3 percent of those living with mothers who had never married are living below the poverty line.

Such a life of poverty and resulting underachievement hurts the nation's overall competitive advantage, especially when stacked against the dynamic, closer-knit societies of the East.

Asked what he would do to address America's problems, Lee replied: "I would start off with basics, working on the individual, looking at him within the context of his family, his friends, his society. But the Westerner says: 'I'll fix things at the top, one magic formula, one grand plan. I will wave a wand and everything will work out.' It's an interesting theory but not a proven method."

Social stability begins with strong family life. This is fostered by moral and spiritual values, not by the vicissitudes of government. But the Bible, the fundamental moral document of the Western world, has been virtually ignored for the light that it alone can shine on the problems of modern life.

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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.

### Motivated by love

I was so inspired by your "Personal" (Dec. 13, WN). God's message to us is designed to further our spiritual maturity. One way we'll grow in maturity is to forsake purely legalistic practices, replacing them with actions motivated by love.

Love will enable us to welcome God's work in other Christians. Love will give us teachable hearts and minds, replacing predetermined ideas.

I will indeed pray for those on the fence. I also intend to intensify my love for my brethren. I want as many people as possible to feel accepted and esteemed. Please continue to allow God to lead us into all truth.

Beth Morrisey  
North Providence, Rhode Island

### Listening with open mind

This letter is to express my sincere appreciation to Dan Taylor on his informative articles about contemporary Christian music in both *The Worldwide News* and the October *Plain Truth* magazine. While I was growing up in a musical family, my parents exposed my sister and me to all kinds of music. We listened to everything from classical to gospel.

My mom loves the Mormon Tabernacle choir, and my dad prefers the late, great Mahalia Jackson. I respect all music styles.

The world is comprised of all kinds of people. Different kinds of people with different cultural backgrounds will listen to different kinds of music. All music because of word content may not be suitable, but cultural styles should never be offensive.

As God's Spirit leads us to open our hearts to our fellowman, let's lend open-minded ears to the various styles of contemporary Christian music available for us to enjoy.

Ginger Reese  
Norfolk, Virginia

### Accentuate the positive

With regard to my Dec. 13 article "Five Years Later, Walls Go Back Up in Germany," I need to mention a few problems that the editing has created here.

My intent was to encourage brethren to hang on despite problems, which was the reason for my original title: "Five Years Later: The Challenges of Unity." Unfortunately, the edits gave the article a much more negative emphasis. For example, the title "Walls Go Back Up" exaggerates the problem. Germans are struggling with unity, but not abandoning it.

Since three problems (challenges) were presented without including the positive

response of the brethren here to offset them (which my article originally included), a much too negative impression was created. As a result of this and some unfortunate edits, the article wasn't balanced. Some brethren here see the article as a one-sided negative representation of Germans.

I had to learn from this as well. "Accentuate the positive!" is an important motto, since it rarely offends and is seldom misunderstood.

Gary Hopkins  
Bonn, Germany

The Worldwide News regrets any problems caused by edits to Mr. Hopkins' article.

## Immigrant visa lottery program

The Church's Legal Services Department offers the following help to Church members who are natives of the countries listed below and who would like to become permanent residents of the United States.

The Department of State will conduct a lottery and will grant 55,000 immigrant visas. Natives from the following countries can participate in the immigration lottery:

<b>Africa:</b>	All countries.
<b>Asia:</b>	All countries except the following: China—mainland born and Taiwan born, India, Philippines, Vietnam and South Korea. (Hong Kong is eligible.)
<b>Europe:</b>	All countries except the following: Great Britain and its dependent territories. (Northern Ireland is eligible.)
<b>North America:</b>	The Bahamas is the only eligible country included in the North America region. Canada is not eligible.
<b>Oceania:</b>	All countries.
<b>South America, Central America and the Caribbean:</b>	All countries except Mexico, Jamaica, El Salvador, Dominican Republic and Colombia.

If you want to participate in the lottery by filing an application within the requested time, the application period for registration will begin at midnight Tuesday, Jan. 31, 1995, and will end at midnight Wednesday, March 1, 1995.

### For more information contact:

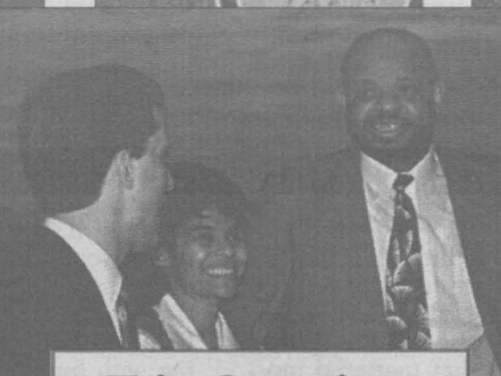
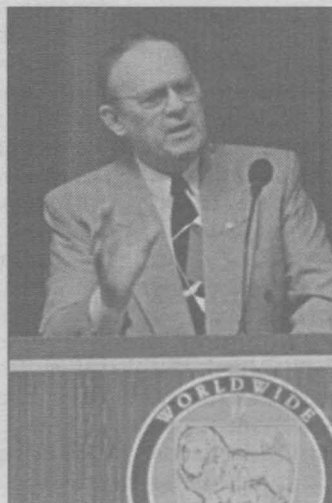
1. If you live overseas, the American Consulate in your country.
2. If you live in the United States, the V-1 Lottery at 1-202-663-1600.
3. If you cannot receive information from other sources, you may call the Church's Legal Services Department and ask for the information on the Immigrant Lottery Program.





# Pastor General visits...

ATLANTA, GEORGIA



## Trip Overview

Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach spoke to 1,402 brethren Dec. 17 from Atlanta East, West and Northwest, Rome, Carrollton, Buford and Athens, Georgia.

Hosts for the visit were Earl and Katrina Williams, Atlanta East; Joe and Susie McNair, Atlanta East; Dan and Barbara Rogers, Atlanta Northwest and Rome; Allan and Edna Barr, Atlanta West and Carrollton; Thomas and Kenya Heap, Atlanta West and Carrollton; and Richard and Onnie Thompson, Buford and Athens. [Photos by Silvester Robinson and Dennis Rouse]

## Ukraine and other connections in our Uruguayan churches

Continued from page 1

wide Church of God and some of whom are members of the Church of God (Seventh Day).

All were there to celebrate the Sabbath together in Salto. I (Randal) was the only one who had to communicate solely through a translator, which meant that I communicated less. This gave me time to observe many cultural differences and much common spiritual ground.

People seem to respond more naturally to people from their same culture. Victor, whom most of those present had never met, was immediately family. The next day after services, Victor disappeared. We later found that the whole Ukrainian contingent had dragged him home to Anna's to stuff him full of lambchops and to talk Ukrainian. The rest of us didn't mind—it gave us a chance to find a place with air-conditioning for lunch!

Mr. Kubik had given a split sermon that morning about the Estonian brethren and about not neglecting our salvation. I had given a sermon about our role in sharing the news of God's kingdom.



**WORKING THROUGH FAMILIES**—Randal Dick (right) shares a meal with Mike Medina, his wife, Adriana, and family in Montevideo. [Photo by Victor Kubik]

Later we had a youth service with the Church of God (Seventh Day), which until August had been an independent Sabbatarian church.

Before introducing the three of us, one of the pastors made a statement about the Church of God (Seventh Day). He said that they had realized they had been too much of a closed body, and that they had a job of proclaiming the gospel.

He announced that they soon were beginning a radio program in Salto and expressed the desire that we work in the same harvest field as friends and brethren. We wondered how it all must look to God, seeing with perfect perspective the parallel tracks the two organizations have walked over the decades. We wondered what he has in mind for the future.

Mr. Medina spoke in Spanish, I

spoke in English, and Mr. Kubik in Ukrainian. Mr. Medina translated for me, and Carlos Chub, a Church of God (Seventh Day) minister, translated Mr. Kubik. We also showed a video of Ambassador students working on a project in Ukraine this past summer. We informally met with their church board and fellowshiped with the brethren.

Sunday we drove back to Montevideo, where we had a Bible study with our brethren. We fellowshiped with the small but dynamic group in Montevideo. They want to learn all they can about evangelism and have a tremendous desire to see the Body of Christ increase in Uruguay.

We had hoped to take a look at Punta del Este, the new Festival site for 1995, about 70 miles east of Montevideo. (Mr. Medina is arranging for English translations, which would make it a wonderful choice for North American transfers.)

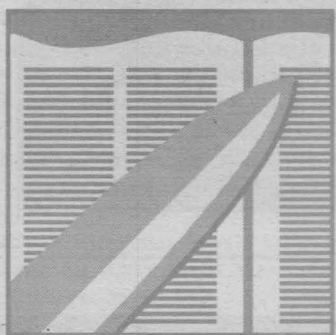
However, we ran out of time and climbed aboard the aircraft as its engines were starting. We were two tired guys, but at the same time we took with us some of the contagious energy and enthusiasm of the brethren in Salto and Montevideo.



# IRON SHARPENS IRON

so one man sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17—As iron sharpens iron,



## Where is God when it hurts?

I evaluated God by what I observed and suffered. Judging God as deficient, I felt justified in looking out for myself.

By Jeff Zhorne

**I**t was one of life's particularly low moments. I sat down with my family at dinner and started to pray: "Thank you, Eternal God, for ... for ..." I'm ashamed now to admit I couldn't think of anything to say.

My wife and I had squabbled, the baby was sick, our house wasn't selling, the car needed a transmission, we owed too much on credit cards and the roof leaked. It felt like the roof of the world was crashing down on us. This list might sound exaggerated, but all these troubles really did happen at once.

I guess I was expecting life to get easier after losing our two children in an auto accident two years earlier. But for a while it seemed to get only worse.

God was hiding himself, I thought. Where was he when I needed him the most? During that awful year, I didn't think God could be trusted with the things that mattered most. So I had taken matters into my own hands.

I may not have said it out loud, but the way I was responding to God was something like: "You haven't proved your goodness to me, so you have no right to expect me to trust you. If you want to be on better terms with me, you'll have to make my life better, take away the pain and help me to feel good about myself. What's so unreasonable about that? And if you do these things, I might just start to trust you again."

With so much anger and doubt filling my heart, no wonder God didn't let me find him or reveal himself. Sometimes I gasp in fear on recalling those thoughts I had for God. How could a Christian think such things? Maybe I wasn't a Christian after all.

Maybe within some of us, though, is a perverse desire to challenge God. But as Job discovered, arrogance keeps us from giving ourselves to God. A proud concern for ourselves can easily drown a humble spirit longing to know God and believe in his goodness.

"God will not listen to me if I approach him proudly, requiring that he prove himself to me," wrote Larry Crabb in *Finding God*.

I was seeking relief from pain rather than using suffering to come to know God. If we value God only as a remedy, if we arrogantly trust only in ourselves, then we will not find him. What we call looking for God is often simply looking for relief. God wants us to value something else.

### Believing in God's goodness

Despite all evidence to the contrary, despite any tragedy or disaster, despite any amount of pain—God is unalteringly good, no matter what we believe or feel. We have to believe that.

When we are suffering, we must call God good for reasons that go beyond pain. And when things are going well, we must call him good for reasons that supersede immediate blessings. Does God reward the righteous and punish the wicked? If that were his only guidepost for dealing with human beings, then why is the New Testament filled with exhortations to hold fast in the face of inevitable suffering, trials and hardships?

During every Christian walk, trials will come. R.T. Kendall, a senior minister of Westminster Chapel in London, said 100 percent of believers eventually go through a period when God seems to let them down.

"Where was God during my rape?" "Why did my husband leave me?" "God could have healed my father!" "How could a good God allow my child to die?" Honest questions. From just studying life, few would conclude that God is good. Our faith can become hindered by bitter experiences like these.

The search for God leads us through a desert of struggles, set-

backs and confusion. He doesn't come down and explain what he's doing. If we lose faith in God during these periods of spiritual confusion, we may appear to cope at first. But we will eventually wither, drop out of Church and quit reading the Bible and praying. And some will do things they never would have contemplated before.

### Tough love

Somehow, though, a loving God helps each of us come to the point where we realize he is our only hope. It may sound like a "tough love," but in the intense battles with faith, when we are pushed to the breaking point, that tough love will carry us through. That love contains hope, which "is more valuable than present relief," Crabb wrote.

I had evaluated God by what I observed and suffered. Judging God as deficient, I felt justified in looking out for myself. But I finally realized I could never have a right relationship with God that way.

I've come to see that God need not prove himself to me, by my standards. Trust in him means relinquishing control. As Christian songwriter Gary Chapman puts it: "I'm not supposed to be in control. I'm not even supposed to want to be in control. But I'm still working on that one.... God help me. God help you. God help us all to learn to surrender, to learn to lose, to learn to die to ourselves, to learn to live."

And the only way to life and joy is trusting someone bigger than ourselves: Jesus Christ. He invites us to believe in his goodness, and he answers our inconsolable longings by promising a better country.

We look for another homeland and rest in an eternal country to come (Hebrews 11:13-16), a place without sorrow, suffering and death (Revelation 21:2, 4). For this joy, Christ endured the shame of the crucifixion (Hebrews 12:2).

Christ does not wish us pain. But when we experience pain, we can't ignore it, refuse to face it or quickly dismiss it. "Our willingness and capacity to feel hurt will eventually be matched by our willingness and capacity to feel joy," wrote Melody Beattie in *The Language of Letting Go*.

Instead of seeing ourselves as wounded, we see ourselves as sinful before a holy God, yet forgiven by Christ's supreme sacrifice. As we yield to Christ's transforming presence now at work through our weakness, Christ ministers to us in our brokenness and humility (2 Corinthians 1:3-7; James 4:6, 10).

Blessed are the poor in spirit, not blessed are the arrogant. With Christ in control, we move into life eager to obey rather than just determined to survive.

### Passion for Christ

God doesn't point us toward solutions to our problems as much as he asks us to seek him and his kingdom with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Nothing matters more than developing a passion for Christ as we struggle with life's unpredictability. Our primary purpose is not to use God to solve problems but to move through our problems toward finding God.

Today, I am learning to accept sorrow and suffering as a difficult privilege that opens the door to a rich relationship and closeness with Jesus Christ. That's something to be thankful for. Such gratitude will turn today's pain into tomorrow's joy.

## Discerning where to serve

By David Chaundy

Have you ever asked yourself how you can serve or where? At Ambassador I have been confronted with many such decisions. Which Outreach activities should I get involved in? How can I help out with graduation ball? What should I do to most effectively use my time here?

Before we can effectively serve, however, we need to understand what spiritual gifts we possess.

In 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle Paul tells brethren he does not want them ignorant about spiritual gifts (verse 1). He explains that there are different kinds of gifts, but it is the same Spirit behind them (verse 4). Each gift is given for the benefit of all (verses 7-10).

In verse 12 Paul begins an analogy between the Church—the Body of Christ—and the human body. In verse 18 he says that "God has arranged the

parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be."

God places us in the Body. He does not leave us as scattered individuals, working independently. God places us in the Body as it pleases him.

But, can we know what our role, function, part or place is within the Body of Christ? Here are three principles to ask yourself:

1) "What do I have to offer?" Some have musical abilities, some have leadership skills; other people are good listeners, while some have the gift of encouragement. It does not matter who we are, we all have something, and usually several things, that we can share or do to help benefit others. For example, we can all pray for one another (James 5:16). Ask God to help you discern where your gifts, abilities and talents lie.

2) "What needs are there?" We may have the ability to lead songs, but our congregation may have more than enough song leaders. However, perhaps there are widows who would benefit from frequent visits. We may have the ability to organize activities,

but what might be needed is someone to take down chairs after services.

Ask your pastor what needs there are that you might be able to assist with.

3) Ask God to help you match your talents and resources to the needs of the church or community. God knows our abilities and limitations better than we do. He understands the needs of individuals and the church more fully than we do. We feel more useful when our talents are used in the most effective way.

Asking for God's guidance must be an ongoing process. The needs of the church will change over time. Also, as we develop new talents and grow in experience, what we can offer will change. Therefore continually seek God's guidance to effectively serve.

The result is that we will use our time and resources more effectively, and the church and community will gain by having their needs met. And "the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16).



# Personal: the Sabbath in the New Covenant

Continued from page 1

physical keeping of the Sabbath is not part of our new covenant obligation (Galatians 4:1-31). The spiritual keeping of the Sabbath—the entire new life lived through faith in Christ—is what is commanded. No longer is only one day set aside for worship of God—we ourselves, as the people of God formed through faith in our Savior and Lord, are set aside for worship of God, every day, all the time.

As Galatians 4:31 sums it up, "Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman." The slave woman is a figure for Mt. Sinai (verses 24-25), and the free woman is a figure for Jerusalem above (verse 26), whose children are born of the Spirit under the new covenant, and not under the terms of the law given at Sinai (Galatians 3:18).

The old covenant is not applicable to Christians. Our relationship with God is governed by the new covenant and is based on faith in Jesus Christ, not on the law.

Galatians 3:22-25 says it plainly: "But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law."

Does this mean that we should stop keeping the Sabbath? No, it doesn't. We will continue to keep the Sabbath. To set aside the Sabbath every week to assemble together and to devote to congregational worship is appropriate and fitting. *We know that we should not neglect assembling with the Church* (Hebrews 10:25).

And to take a break from regular activities to engage entirely in Christian activities is a valuable, even vital, spiritual discipline. But to say that the Sabbath is a binding command on Christians in the New Testament, and to forbid employment as a requirement for membership, is to misunderstand and misapply the Scriptures. (On the other hand, to play golf or go to sports stadiums instead of assembling for worship is wrong.)

The Church must no longer teach what it has come to see is not true. The Sabbath does not appear in any of the "sin lists" in the New Testament. Nor does it appear in any of the commands or lists of virtues in the New Testament.

But wasn't the Sabbath command given at creation and therefore binding on all humanity through all time? Let's take a closer look at that question.

At creation, God rested on the seventh day and sanctified it. But we also need to understand that at creation, God gave no command to human beings regarding keeping the day as a Sabbath. The day is not called the Sabbath at creation; it is called the seventh day. There is no commandment regarding the Sabbath until after the Exodus. The Sabbath commandment is based on God's rest in the creation account, but there is simply no biblical teaching that a Sabbath commandment existed before God formed a relationship with the Israelites, a relationship codified at Mt. Sinai.

Even if the Sabbath were a command from creation, which it isn't, Colossians 2:16-17 tells us that the Sabbath is the shadow, and that Christ is the reality to which it pointed. Now that the reality, Christ, has come, the shadow, as a binding law, is no longer in force, regardless of when it began.

What can we learn from the fact that God rested on the seventh day? For one thing, it is significant that the seventh creation day has no ending recorded, as the other days of creation have. There is no "and the evening and the morning were the seventh day."

**At conversion, we enter into full allegiance to Jesus Christ, living no longer according to the desires of the flesh, but according to his commands, not as mere slaves, but as his brothers and friends, as children of God.**

God intended that Adam and Eve live free of sin in his seventh-day rest. But you know the story. They sinned and brought corruption into the human family. The entire history of salvation, from the promises to Abraham to the covenant with Israel and the covenant with David, pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ, who would redeem his people and open the way by which they could be reconciled with God and enter into his rest—free from sin and corruption, clothed with righteousness.

And the point in Colossians, Galatians, 2 Corinthians and Hebrews is that this reconciliation comes about not by keeping the shadow, but by faith in the reality, Jesus Christ.

We are told in Romans 8:20-21: "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God."

The way into that glorious freedom, the promised Sabbath rest, the rest sanctified at creation, has been made possible by the work and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and it is entered into by the elect of God through faith in him. *We have, through faith in Christ, entered the spiritual reality of the Sabbath.* We experience that freedom, that rest, in part in this age and will experience it fully in the age to come.

It is not a question of the Sabbath "being done away" as though the Sabbath has no meaning or value. It is a matter of understanding the identity, the work and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. To come to Christ in faith is to enter "the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God." Faith in Christ brings freedom from sin and therefore fulfills what the Sabbath symbolized. That is the New Testament keeping of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is expanded in the New Testament to its full and glorious meaning and intent. To think that it, as an old covenant command, is still a requirement for the people of God, is to miss the point of it, to minimize the coming of the Messiah,

and is no better than going back into animal sacrifices and circumcision.

We, therefore, keep the Sabbath voluntarily, recognizing it as a biblical pattern for worship. Our purpose is to celebrate its true intent—salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. If we make it a requirement for salvation or for membership, we are misusing it and imposing it in an inappropriate way upon the new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Some of us have made significant sacrifices to keep the Sabbath. And God knows the devotion of our hearts. No sacrifice made for God is in vain. But God has now brought us to the point of truly understanding that salvation is by his grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and there are no strings attached.

Those who have sacrificed jobs over the Church's misunderstanding of the Sabbath were making that sacrifice because they wanted to serve God, and God knows that. Let no one think that devotion to God is not noticed by him. God knows the love his people have for him. But just because we suffered in the past with certain misunderstandings doesn't mean Christ would forgive me for just continuing to bind that on everyone else. That would be wrong.

At conversion, we enter into full allegiance to Jesus Christ, living no longer according to the desires of the flesh, but according to his commands, not as mere slaves, but as his brothers and friends, as children of God. And as children of the promise, enabled to call God our Father because we have faith in Christ, we walk according to his will, which is made manifestly plain in the New Testament.

But the Sabbath and the Holy Days, along with the other ceremonial observances of the old covenant, are fulfilled in Christ and are not binding in their physical observance

**We keep the Sabbath voluntarily, recognizing it as a biblical pattern for worship. Our purpose is to celebrate its true intent—salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.**

in the new covenant. The new covenant, Jesus said, is in his blood. He is the reality, and the Sabbath and the Holy Days are the shadows.

How did the laborers in the vineyard feel who were angry when they got the same pay as those who only worked a little while? Let's not be like them. Let's thank God for his generosity and his love. Let's rejoice that God has done what is necessary for our salvation, and let's commit ourselves to obeying him in the ways he has commanded us as Christians. Christ expects me as the leader of the Church not to bind unnecessary burdens on the members, and our misunderstanding of how the Sabbath should be kept by Christians *has been* a heavy burden that we ministers did not have to bear!

We will continue to assemble on the Sabbath and on the Holy Days. And we will continue to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. But we will not continue to teach what we now realize the Bible teaches against—*impos-*

ing old covenant observance of the Sabbath and the Holy Days as binding commandments under the new covenant. The Sabbath and the Holy Days become holy time for us as we devote them to God, but they are not holy time in the sense that the old covenant is still in force. When the people of God, who are made holy through faith in Jesus Christ, devote time to the worship of God, that becomes holy time. It becomes holy time because it is devoted to God, who is holy, not because that particular time is itself holy.

But we do not need to, and should not, judge one another with respect to the days we devote to God (Colossians 2:16; Romans 14:5).

Adam and Eve entered a perfect creation in its Sabbath rest, sinless and pure. But the corruption of sin entered, alienating humanity from God and bringing in death. Then, at the fullness of times, God sent his Son to redeem what sin had corrupted, to offer eternal life through faith in him. The Sabbath commandment pointed back to the perfect creation and ahead to the perfect redemption, forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation that comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Sabbath and the Holy Days. Christians enter into the presence of God through *him*, not through the observance of these days. When we keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days to honor him, and not because we are obligated to the old covenant, we can gain the spiritual benefit of worship and fellowship as brothers and sisters in Christ. And that is what we will continue to do.

Let me now answer some specific questions as they pertain to Christian conduct under the new covenant. Let's also keep in mind what Paul instructed in Romans 14: We must allow for differences of understanding and practice within the Church, and we must not judge one another or be inconsiderate of one another over these things. Although these matters are often highly emotional issues, they are matters of personal choice and preference in worship, and therefore not the same as matters of law or command. They are, however, the general practice of our Church. In any case, whatever a person chooses to do in these matters, following Romans 14, he should do it "to the Lord."

**Will we continue to observe the annual Festivals?**

Yes, we will. These are major highlights of our pattern of worship and have rich meaning for us. They promote Christian celebration, worship and fellowship, and provide opportunities for family bonding and development of Christian friendships. But as we celebrate the annual Festivals, we will remember that these are *shadows* of the *reality*, who is Christ. The sign of true Christians is faith in Christ, not keeping the annual Festivals.

So, like the Sabbath, we keep the Festivals to celebrate salvation in Christ. And again, even though these are major highlights of the year for us, a person must make his or her own decision regarding taking time from work. The United States requires employers to allow time off for religious observances, and the Church supports its members in this. But the decision to take time from work belongs to the member.

We are, and will remain, a Holy Day-observing church. We observe the annual Festivals joyfully and

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# Announcements

BIRTHS, ENGAGEMENTS, WEDDINGS, ANNIVERSARIES AND OBITUARIES

## Births

AGUILAR, Julian and Lupi (Lorenzana) of Alhambra, California, boy, Alexander Julian, Dec. 28, 6:09 p.m., 7 pounds 9 ounces, first child.

BENITEZ, Michael and Susan (Johnson) of Garden Grove, California, girl, Lily Nicole, Dec. 13, 2:24 a.m., 6 pounds 11 ounces, now 2 girls.

BENNINGFIELD, Wayne and Clela (Devine) of Paducah, Kentucky, boy, Jared Devin, July 31, 11:39 a.m., 8 pounds 13 ounces, now 2 boys.

BLACK, David and Laura (Cook) of Dallas, Georgia, boy, Aaron Joseph, Dec. 23, 5:27 a.m., 9 pounds 10 ounces, now 1 boy, 1 girl.

BOCCHICCHIO, Severino "Sam" and Rosalba (Monti) of Montreal, Quebec, boy, Robert Mario, Nov. 14, 1:24 p.m., 7 pounds 8 ounces, now 1 boy, 1 girl.

BROWN, Wally and Linda (Bozzyak) of Seaford, Delaware, girl, Abigail Rebecca, Oct. 13, 10:30 p.m., 8 pounds 12 ounces, now 2 girls.

CALHOUN, Bryan and Oletha (Scott) of Houston, Texas, boy, Travis Austin, Sept. 22, 8 pounds 3 ounces, now 1 boy, 1 girl.

CALVELLI, Steven and Carolyn (Brath) of Union, New Jersey, girl, Lauren Elizabeth, Nov. 16, 8:22 a.m., 7 pounds 4 ounces, now 1 boy, 2 girls.

CHIRWA, Tielmans and Royce (Phiri) of Blantyre, Malawi, boy, Jonathan Prince, Oct. 26, 5:25 p.m., 3.4 kilograms, now 3 boys, 3 girls.

CLARK, James and Nareen (Campbell) of Grafton, Australia, boy, David Western, Nov. 15, 1:31 p.m., 8 pounds 2 ounces, first child.

CLOUGH, Todd and Dawn (Boslaugh) of Vacaville, California, boy, Nolan Mitchell, Nov. 30, 6:19 p.m., 10 pounds 1/2 ounce, now 2 boys.

COMEAU, John and Reney (Steinmann) of Surrey, British Columbia, boy, David Emerson Ari, Dec. 2, 2:44 p.m., 6 pounds 14 ounces, now 2 boys.

COOK, Mike and Jan (Antion) of Arlington, Texas, girl, Samantha Nicole, Dec. 19, 4:20 p.m., 7 pounds 12 1/2 ounces, first child.

DELAFUENTE, Dominic and Heather (Patterson) of Tempe, Arizona, boy, Cameron Jordan, Nov. 22, 8 pounds

3 ounces, now 2 boys.

ELWESS, Leonard "Ree" and Sheila (Kiernan) of Modesto, California, girl, Katelyn Nichole, Sept. 18, 7 pounds 8 ounces, first child.

FAHEY, Jonathan and Sharyl (Clayson) of Pasadena, girl, Elizabeth Ann, Dec. 14, 9:30 p.m., 7 pounds 8 ounces, first child.

FINNIGAN, Kevin and Dru (Alleman) of Blackfoot, Idaho, girl, Kathleen Danielle, Dec. 9, 10:15 p.m., 10 pounds 2 ounces, first child.

FULLER, Brad and Naomi (Wood) of Winnipeg, Manitoba, boy, Aidan Riley Kayne, Dec. 16, 1:18 p.m., 8 pounds 8 1/2 ounces, now 2 boys.

GIFFEL, Nick and Deanna (Williams) of Flint, Michigan, boy, Kurtis Ryan, Dec. 19, 4:21 p.m., 8 pounds 15 ounces, now 1 boy, 1 girl.

GILBERT, Scott and Andrea (Lopez) of Texarkana, Arkansas, boy, Tristan Scott, Aug. 6, 8 pounds 8 ounces, first child.

GUTTRY, Gilbert Jr. and Tammy (Holland) of Frederick, Maryland, girl, Charlotte Elizabeth, Nov. 7, 3:12 a.m., 8 pounds 8 1/2 ounces, now 1 boy, 3 girls.

HAMMETT, Thomas and Faye (Grove) of Chattanooga, Tennessee, girl, Rosalie Faye, Dec. 21, 11:39 p.m., 9 pounds 5 1/2 ounces, now 4 girls.

HEINZ, Harvey and Eileen (Kushniruk) of Darwell, Alberta, boy, Jason James, Nov. 12, 3.385 kilograms, now 3 boys, 1 girl.

HISAW, Kathy of Tulsa, Oklahoma, boy, Isaac James, Dec. 11, 5:39 p.m., 7 pounds 9 1/2 ounces, first child.

HUGHES, Dennis and Sue (Emerson) of Port Orchard, Washington, girl, Tabitha Carol, Dec. 13, 8 pounds 1 ounce, now 1 boy, 1 girl.

LOTER, Dana and Pamela (Pierce) of Davenport, Iowa, girl, Clara Ruth, Nov. 17, 3:33 a.m., 9 pounds 7 ounces, now 2 boys, 5 girls.

LOVATO, Steve and Mary (Trapp) of Albuquerque, New Mexico, boy, Nathan Lawrence, Dec. 19, 10:41 a.m., 7 pounds 2 ounces, now 2 boys.

McNAIR, Joe and Susie (Sutter) of Atlanta, Georgia, girl, Katie Jo, Dec. 5, 8 pounds 14 ounces, now 2 boys, 1 girl.

MERRIMAN, John and Sharon (Foot) of Canberra, Australia, girl, Grace Michelle, Nov. 9, 9:16 p.m., 8 pounds 15 ounces, now 2 boys, 1 girl.

MORGAN, Dereck and Lisa (Nakkula) of Victoria, British Columbia, boy, Zachary Dana Robert, Nov. 20, 6:52 p.m., 6 pounds 4 ounces, first child.

PAIS, Oscar and Patti (Wolford) of North Tazewell, Virginia, girl, Franki Kaitlin, Dec. 11, 7:27 a.m., 5 pounds 12 1/2 ounces, now 2 girls.

PEARCE, John and Tracy (Hogan) of Lafayette, Louisiana, girl, Kaitlyn Nicole, Nov. 4, 9:15 p.m., 8 pounds 3 ounces, now 3 girls.

PRIESTER, Tommy and Shelley (Keene) of Charleston, South Carolina, boy, Taylor Early, Aug. 6, 11:40 a.m., 5 pounds 7 ounces, first child.

SCHMEDING, Hans and Sabine (Barta) of Bonn, Germany, girl, Christine, Oct. 2, 3.6 kilograms, first child.

THREET, Scott and Monica (Janz) of Modesto, California, boy, Scott Christopher Jr., April 1, 9:03 a.m., 6 pounds 12 ounces, first child.

WAGGONER, Allen and Rebeca (Fletcher) of Stanfield, Oregon, boy, Kyle Fletcher, Nov. 19, 8:49 a.m., 8 pounds 6 ounces, first child.

WILSON, Keith and Michele (Petty) of Washington, Pennsylvania, girl, Kristen Rose, Dec. 16, 4:58 p.m., 8 pounds 6 ounces, now 2 girls.

WOODRUFF, Paul and Kimberly (Daniels) of Longview, Texas, boy, Lance Jeffrey, Oct. 12, 8:18 a.m., 8 pounds 1 ounce, first child.

YATES, Kenny and Lisa (Stroup) of Knoxville, Tennessee, boy, Bradley Ray, Dec. 16, 6 pounds 12 ounces, now 1 boy, 2 girls.

## Engagements

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Ferrante Gennaro of Tampa, Florida, are delighted to announce the engagement of their son John Emile to Ann Marie Aurbeck, daughter of Norma Aurbeck and the late Raymond Aurbeck of Tampa. A May 13 wedding is planned.

Mr. and Mrs. John Barbour of Brunswick Junction, Australia, are delighted to announce the engagement of their daughter Karen Nicola to Michael Mark Richter, son of Gerhard and Alice Richter of Grande Prairie, Alberta. An Aug. 6 wedding in Australia is planned.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Devine of Nottingham, England, are pleased to announce the engagement of their

daughter Rachel to Damien Prowse of St. Austell, England. An April wedding is planned.

Bonnie Rose and Sharon and Lloyd Register III, are pleased to announce the engagement of their children, Denise Rose and Erick Pace. A Feb. 17 wedding in Orlando, Florida, is planned.

Robert and Carol Stevens of Perth, Australia, are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter Claire Michelle to Patrick Anthony "Tony" Jones, son of Pat and Allene Jones of Austell, Georgia. A May wedding in Tyler, Texas, is planned.

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Kirk of Salmon Arm, British Columbia, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Maree to Brad Cowell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cowell of Salmon Arm. A July 9 wedding in Salmon Arm is planned.

David and Patricia Pearson of Buckhorn, Ontario, are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter Carla to Fram Sethna of Toronto, Ontario. A June 18 wedding in Ontario is planned.

## Weddings



**MARTIN & MATI VALENZUELA**

Mati Gonzales, daughter of Julian and Dolores Gonzales, and Martin Valenzuela, son of Edward and Julia Valenzuela of Pasadena were united in marriage Sept. 11 in Madrid, Spain. The ceremony was performed by Pedro Rufian, pastor of the Madrid, Spain, and Lisbon, Portugal, churches. The groom's mother was matron of honor, and the bride's father was best man. The couple live in Madrid.



**JUANITO & JELITA GAPUL**

Jelita Neriquita and Juanito Gapul Jr. were united in marriage Sept. 19. The ceremony was performed by Petronilo Leyson, pastor of the Butuan, Philippines, church. Vicenta Tacobobo, sister of the bride, was matron of honor, and Roldan Tacobobo, brother-in-law of the bride, was best man. The couple live in Quezon City, Philippines.



**TIMOTHY AND BECKY GANDER**

Becky Sue Mall of Sandwich, Illinois, and Timothy Scott Gander of Stoughton, Wisconsin, were united in marriage Sept. 4. The ceremony was performed by Gary Petty, pastor of the Janesville, Wisconsin, church. Jerri Middlebrook was maid of honor, and Steve Allen was best man. The couple live in Sandwich.



**DAVID & JENNIFER MORRISON**

Jennifer Ann Loveall, daughter of Doug and Deena Loveall of Bedford, Indiana, and David John Morrison, son of Galen and Corinne Morrison of Rockford, Illinois, were united in marriage Aug. 6. The ceremony was performed by the groom's father, a minister in the Rockford church. Lisa Metz was maid of honor, and Charles Morrison, brother of the groom, was best man. The couple live in Bloomington, Indiana.



**ARWIN & ROSANNA VISITACION**

Rosanna Gay Sasedor and Arwin Visitation were united in marriage Nov. 6. The ceremony was performed by Jessup Bahinting, pastor of the Cebu, Philippines, church. Rowena Sasedor, sister of the bride, was maid of honor, and Joel Ocio

was best man. The couple live in Talisay, Cebu.



**BENJAMIN & DALLIS TUNSETH**

Dallis Elaine Vance, daughter of Dale and Nona Vance of Pawnee, Oklahoma, and Benjamin Bjorn Tunseth, son of Al and Dee Tunseth of Anchorage, Alaska, were united in marriage Sept. 18 in Kona, Hawaii. The ceremony was performed by Earl Roemer, pastor of the Honolulu, Hawaii, church. The couple live in Tulsa, Oklahoma.



**MICHAEL & ANDREA RESHETAR**

Andrea Marie Ramberg, daughter of Harland and Arlene Ramberg of St. Paul, Minnesota, and Michael Thomas Reshetar, son of Tom Reshetar and Julie Schwartz of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, were united in marriage Sept. 3. The ceremony was performed by Darrell Larson, a minister in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, South church. Jane Hill, sister of the bride, was matron of honor, and Nathan Russell was best man. The couple live in St. Paul.



**SCOTT & HANNAH BARLWS**

Hannah Riner, daughter of Thomas and Bonny Riner of Macon, Georgia, and Scott Barlows, son of Robert and Judy Barlows of Auburn, Alabama, were united in marriage Sept. 4. The ceremony was performed by Thomas Clark, associate pastor of the Big Sandy A.M. church. Laura Denny, sister of the bride, and Kristin Haynes attended the bride, and Robert and Brian Barlows attended the groom. The couple live in Fort Worth, Texas.



**ALEX & DESIREE STEVENS**

Desiree Michele Roland, daughter of Richard and Mary Roland of Tyrone, Pennsylvania, and Alex Stevens, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Stevens of Collingdale, Pennsylvania, were united in marriage Nov. 26. The ceremony was performed by Donald Traynor, a minister in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, church. Suellen and Amberly Roland, sisters of the bride, were maids of honor, and Joe Mass and Chris Rodia were best men. The couple live in Holmes, Pennsylvania.



**MIKE & BETH HESS**

Elizabeth Harrison, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Harrison of Grafton, West Virginia, and Michael Hess, son of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Hess of Bridgeport, West Virginia, were united in marriage May 21. The ceremony was performed by Michael Horchak, pastor of New Orleans, Louisiana, church. Gina Caldwell, Cindy Berrie and LeAnn Nickelsen were bridesmaids, and John and Joe Hess, and Rod Garner were groomsmen. The couple live in Morgantown, West Virginia.



**MARK & CAMI BRECTO**

Cami Renee Dillard, daughter of Paul and Sharon Dillard, and Mark

Oliver Brecto, son of Oliver and Hope Brecto, were united in marriage Sept. 4. The ceremony was performed by Tom Tullis, associate pastor of the Seattle and Federal Way, Washington, churches. Schelley Bauer was maid of honor, and Michael Snyder was best man. The couple live in Eugene, Oregon.



**ROBBIE & LISA BURKETT**

Lisa Hansen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joe A. Hansen, and Robbie Burkett, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Burkett, were united in marriage July 24. The ceremony was performed by Jack Smith, a minister in the Dallas, Texas, South church. Amy Grumbles, Carol Davis and Rachel Hansen attended the bride, and John and Scott Stephens and Kelly Slayter attended the groom. The couple live in Garland, Texas.



**LAWRENCE & RUTHANNE WOOD**

Ruthanne Kirishian, daughter of Arthur and Mignon Kirishian, and Lawrence Wood, son of John and Carol Wood, were united in marriage Aug. 21. The ceremony was performed by Robert Dick, pastor of the Seattle and Federal Way, Washington, churches. Rachel Kirishian was maid of honor, and Earl Rands was best man. The couple live in Bellevue, Washington.



**PATRICK & MELINDA ARNOLD**

Melinda Joy Mihalec, daughter of Peter and Jackie Mihalec of Melbourne, Australia, and Patrick Bryon Arnold, son of Gary and Bonnie Arnold of Vancouver, British Columbia, were united in marriage Dec. 3. The ceremony was performed by Owen Murphy, associate pastor of the Vancouver church. Kristina Glombowski was maid of honor, and Rob Kendrick was best man. The couple live in Burnaby, British Columbia.



**TRACEY & WENDY SORENSON**

Wendy Wandell, daughter of William and Laura Wandell of Roseburg, Oregon, and Tracey Sorenson, son of Noel and Connie Sorenson of New Plymouth, Idaho, were united in marriage Oct. 7. The ceremony was performed by Randall Stiver, pastor of the Roseburg and Coos Bay, Oregon, churches. Melissa Gomes was maid of honor, and Perry Sorenson was best man. The couple live in Boise, Idaho.



**JASON & AMBERLEE YEATS**

Amberlee Elizabeth Ruggless, daughter of Darwin and Julia Ruggless of Arcadia, California, and Jason Shaun Yeats, son of Manuel and Lourdes Yeats of Gibraltar, were united in marriage Sept. 11. The ceremony was performed by Aaron Dean, a minister in the Big Sandy A.M. church. Rebecca Ruggless, sister of the bride, was maid of honor, and Darren Yeats, brother of the groom, was best man. The couple live in Big Sandy.



**DAVID & KATIE CEMER**

Katie Marie Callihan, daughter of Mr.

and Mrs. Ed Callihan, and David Paul Cemer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Grady Jones, were united in marriage Aug. 6. The ceremony was performed by the bride's father, a minister in the Lancaster, California, church.



**TAKALANI & MARGARET MUSEKWA**

Margaret C. Nagel and Takalani G. Musekwa were united in marriage Sept. 6 in Bloemfontein, South Africa. The ceremony was performed by Roland Gevers, pastor of the Bloemfontein church. Leah Senamela was maid of honor, and John Mogano was best man. The couple live in Ellisras, South Africa.

## Anniversaries



**LES & DARLENE SCHMEDES**

Les and Darlene Schmedes of Altadena, California, celebrated their 40th anniversary Nov. 21. They have four children, Keith, Kevin (deceased), Kent and Audrey; a daughter-in-law, Stephanie; a son-in-law, Greg Reed; and five grandchildren, Renee (deceased), Jeanine, Jocelyn, Kyle and Kirsten. Mr. Schmedes is pastor of the Pasadena P.M. church.



**MARV & OLLIE PARKS**

Marv and Ollie Parks of Windsor, Ontario, celebrated their 40th anniversary Sept. 18. They have a son, Kevin; a daughter, Darlene, who died in 1980; a daughter-in-law, Donna; and two granddaughters, Jessica and Ashley. Mr. and Mrs. Parks serve as local church elder and deaconess in the Windsor church.



**MAX & OLETA DEVEREAUX**

Max and Oleta Devereaux of Fort Worth, Texas, celebrated their 40th anniversary Dec. 24. They have a son, Paul; a daughter-in-law, Esther; and two granddaughters, Chaitra and Kristen.



**PHILLIP & GLADYS ANDERSON**

Phillip and Gladys Anderson of Bradford, Tennessee, celebrated their 40th anniversary Jan. 11. They have three daughters, Anita Ulseth, Bonita Wendt and Amy Olmstead; three sons-in-law, Bill Ulseth, Wayne Wendt and Preston Olmstead; and six grandchildren, Tim, Crystal and Katie Ulseth, and Nicholette, Natalie and Tabitha Wendt.



**RAYMOND & BLANCHE FINCH**

Raymond and Blanche Finch of Hervey Bay, Australia, celebrated their 40th anniversary Nov. 19. They have two sons, John and Marcus; two daughters, Paula and Naomi; and

See Anniversaries, page 7



# Angola: a flowering work in a frugal land

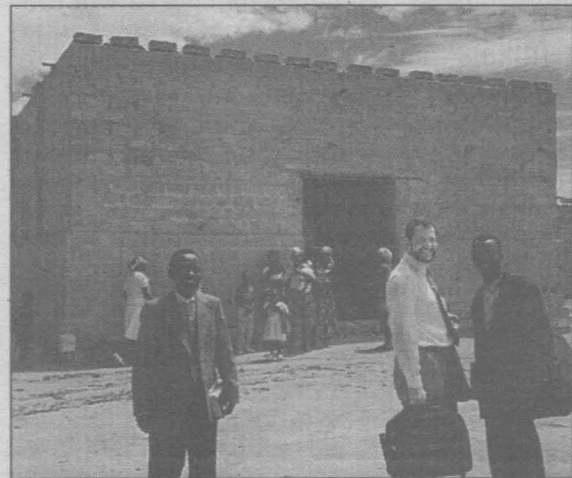
Continued from page 1

hoping for some years of peace. In spite of the wreckage of war, the ruined economy, the stark poverty, the many diseased and maimed people, and the tragic little war orphans roaming the streets—yes, in spite of all this—we found Angola a positive place. Never, in all my considerable travels, have I met people so enthusiastic and ready to serve and obey God and to dedicate their lives to spreading the gospel message. Jack and I met with the leaders of several of the groups who had been contacted on the first visit. Some are ministers over congregations with several hundred people. There are also small groups of perhaps 10 or 12, led by sincere men who tried to share the truth with friends and neighbors. Some already call themselves the *Igreja de Deus Mundial*—Worldwide Church of God in Portuguese. (Angola was once a

Portuguese colony.) Jack and I spent just over a week with the Angolan members, visiting their churches and humble homes in the shanty towns around Luanda. We shared their frugal meals, answered their questions and became better acquainted with them. We were deeply moved by their faith and determination. Most are unemployed. All are desperately poor. Many are saving diligently, hoping to afford a Bible that costs about 60 cents. Yet nobody asked us for money. In fact, they often offered to help us with our expenses. What they do ask of us is fellowship and a partnership to help them spread the gospel to their people. Certainly some of the customs and worship styles are different to ours. The



**UNIFIED IN FAITH**—This small congregation meets regularly in one of the shanty towns around Luanda, Angola's capital. [Photo by John Halford]



**SERVICES IN ANGOLA**—Left, Jack Brunet (center) with Papa Kabula (right) and Misuel Wizana outside a church building. Right, elders and visitors join in Sabbath hymns. [Photos by John Halford]



Angolans showed a great willingness to conform to our traditions, but we were careful not to insist on changes until we understand better.

For example, one little church had pieces of paper hanging from strings stretched across the room. I wondered about these. I have seen similar in Asia, in non-Christian temples, and I worried that this too was a form of idolatry. Many African religious traditions have a voodoo origin. So we asked the pastor what the papers meant.

"We notice in the picture we have of your services that you decorate your church meetings with flowers," he explained. "We cannot afford to have flowers, so we put up the paper as decoration instead."

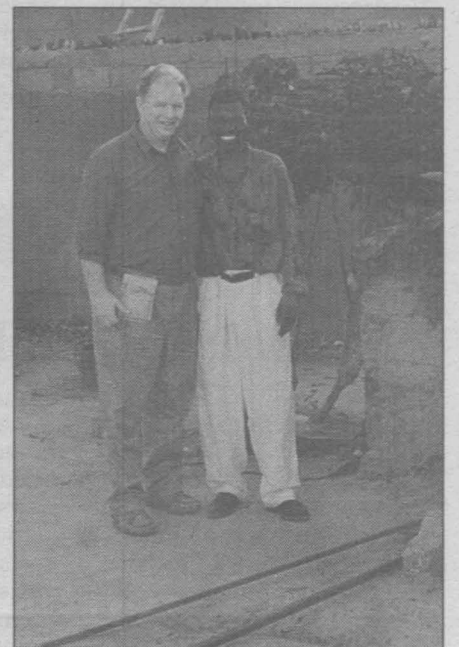
It was a good lesson in not jumping to conclusions. What I had seen were suspicious-looking papers hanging from the roof. The congregation looked up and saw flowers. I think God looked down and saw their flowers too.

This visit to Angola, like the first, was too short. We have still only scratched the surface of the potential interest in this country.

Much of southern Angola is inaccessible to foreigners, and will be

until the civil war winds down. We understand there are several hundred more people waiting to make contact. And maybe many more small groups.

The Angolan brethren are humble, teachable and readily acknowledge they have much to learn from us. But it was obvious that we have much we can learn from them. Please remember this new frontier for God's Work in your prayers.



**MUTUAL SUPPORT**—Oliveira Kitambala (right, with John Halford) supports his family and widows and orphans with a small bakery. [Photo by Jack Brunet]

## Anniversaries

Continued from page 6

four grandchildren, Christopher, Rebecca, Raymond and Thomas.



### GERALD & MARILYN SMITH

Gerald and Marilyn Smith of Akron, Ohio, celebrated their 40th anniversary Oct. 9. They have two children, Gail and David; and two grandsons, Aaron and Adam.



### RICK & ELLEN SPAIN

Rick and Ellen Spain of Morwell, Australia, celebrated their 30th anniversary Nov. 28. They have four daughters, Ellie Coulson, Debbie O'Kane, Erin Worthing and Leonie; two sons, David and Ross; three sons-in-law, Lee, Peter and Phillip; a daughter-in-law, Selina; and four grandchildren, Renata, Jade, Elise and Adelaide.



### TOM & BEV DIEMERT

Tom and Bev Diemert of Thompsonstown, Pennsylvania, celebrated their 25th anniversary Aug. 23. They have

two children, Tom Jr. and Giles.



### FARRIS & LINDA BOWEN

Farris and Linda Bowen of Birmingham, Alabama, celebrated their 25th anniversary Nov. 29. They have two sons, Odell and Jeff; and a daughter-in-law, Melody.

Ron and Selina Stringer of Brampton, Ontario, celebrated their 30th anniversary Aug. 14. They have five children and seven grandchildren.

John Mark, Howard, David, Ray, Paul and Jeff Deming.



### RUTH WARD

WARD, Ruth, 90, of Manville, Wyoming, died of cancer Nov. 27. She is survived by three children and their spouses, Grant and Marie Ward, Fred and Kit Ward, and May and Raymond Smith; 11 grandchildren; and 28 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Zeb; a son, Charlie; and an infant daughter, Vera.

VAUGHN, T. Chester, 80, of Addison, Alabama, died of multiple health problems Dec. 4. He is survived by two sisters, one brother and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife, Josephine.

CHURCHILL, Ken, 55, of Sioux City, Iowa, died of cancer Dec. 27. He is survived by Betty Churchill; their three daughters, Patti, Didi and Gina; his mother; and one brother.

SUMMERS, Glenda, 46, of Lake Ozark, Missouri, died of cancer Dec. 1. She is survived by her husband, David; two daughters, Natalie Summers and Julie Bernet; and her parents, Ray and Mildred Bean.

FRASIER, Judith A., 45, of Lacey, Washington, died after a short illness Oct. 21. She is survived by her two sons, Michael and Russell; a grandson, Jeffrey; a sister, Reeva Lohrengel; and two brothers, Douglas and James Meeds.

LAWRENCE, Linda Lee, 42, of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, died of cancer Oct. 4. She is survived by her daughter, Heather St. Charles; her mother, Jesse Brymer; and two brothers, Tony and Mike Brymer.

## Obituaries



### ELLEN JARLSKOV

JARLSKOV, Ellen Margrethe, 98, of Middlefart, Denmark, died Nov. 27. She is survived by five children, 11 grandchildren, several great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild and one sister.

JOLLS, Claude, 84, of Kingman, Arizona, died Oct. 18. He is survived by his wife, Ruby; a daughter and her husband, Rose Marie and John Deming; a brother, Stanley W. Jolls; and six grandsons and their families.



**EARS TO HEAR**—This congregation of the Church of the Apostles (Seventh Day) wants affiliation with the Worldwide Church of God. [Photo by John Halford]



# Update

NEWS OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS

## Charities collect from PT-generated calls

Habitat for Humanity International called *Plain Truth* offices Dec. 14 to report that their telephone lines were overwhelmed by callers responding to **John Halford's** article, "Little Houses on the Prairie," published in the January issue.

The article includes an interview Mr. Halford conducted with former President **Jimmy Carter**, and a box encouraging readers to call Habitat for Humanity to receive information on how they could help Habitat.

Mr. Halford is receiving an average of one letter a day in response to his article "Africa

Notebook" in the November-December *Plain Truth*. Subscribers are inquiring how they can help the organizations featured in the article.

One woman sent \$2,000 to be forwarded to Zambia; a retired doctor sent two checks of \$2,500 each; a church in Texas has written Zambia asking if they can pay the food bill for a year. Several other donations from members and others have been received.

"I estimate I have sent around \$9,000 to the organizations in Africa," Mr. Halford said. "Plus every day I seem to be writing one or more letters to people who want to know how to help. It seems like we struck a nerve."

## Relief for Croatia

BONN, Germany—Church members assembled relief goods Dec. 20 at the Church's warehouse in Mondorf and sent them to the Red Cross refugee camp in Zadar, Croatia.

Once again **Winfried Fritz**, Bonn-Duesseldorf pastor, coordinated the collection of the donated goods with **Ivo Ivin**, a member of the Salzburg, Austria, church.

This time the donations for Croatia included 70 mattresses, bedding, winter clothing, shoes, medical supplies, medical and dental equipment, 33 wheelchairs and 10 pallets of hotel dishes, as well as a pallet of serving trays. The Bonn Office also purchased two tons of powdered milk to go with the shipment.

Before the pickup **Siegfried Pietralla**, Postal Services manager in the Bonn Office, organized on three consecutive Sundays the sorting of donated clothing with the help of area members. Members from the Darmstadt church also donated a small truckload of used clothing. Because of the clothing donations from Church members the 22-ton truck was full before all the used clothing could be loaded.

Mr. Ivin, a native of Croatia, once again met the shipment in Croatia and assisted the Red Cross there with the distribution of our donations.

An article and photos of the relief shipment appeared in the Jan. 2 newspaper *Rhabarberblatt*. **Gary W. Hopkins**.

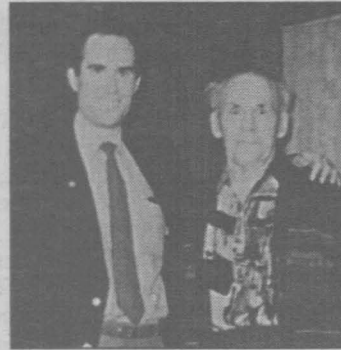
## Norwegian 'new born'

HOLT, Norway—It is not only in the third world that baptizing a new member involves two days of travel.

After Sabbath services Aug. 27 in Stavanger, Norway (1½ hours flight from home in Copenhagen, Denmark), pastor **John Andrews** boarded a 4½-hour flight to Tromsø.

**Torstien Wiik**, Scandinavia's northernmost member, met Mr. Andrews and drove the 1½-hour route south to Holt, where **Olav S. Tilleremo**, 81, lives.

They picked Mr. Tilleremo up from the elderly center where he lives, and drove another 14 kilometers (about nine miles) to the house Mr. Tilleremo built 12 years ago



**SCANDINAVIAN MEMBER—**Pastor John Andrews (left) with Olav S. Tilleremo. [Photo by Torstien Wiik]

and baptized him there.

"*Nu er jeg ny født* [Now I am new born]," Mr. Tilleremo said.

Mr. Andrews said afterward: "It is amazing how far-flung people are, whom God has called. If I had flown south from Stavanger and covered the same distance, I could have baptized a man in the Italian Alps."

## Church anniversaries

CHICAGO, Illinois—The Chicagoland churches will mark their 40th anniversary April 14-16.

From a small beginning of 15 in 1955 to the current five congregations with more than 1,500 people, the Chicago area has deep traditions, a long history and lifelong friendships and memories. Churches in Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Iowa have all sprung from the original church.

Activities include a Night to Be Much Observed buffet, fol-

lowed by a religious music presentation Friday, Sabbath brunch, Holy Day and 40th anniversary commemoration service, dinner dance and YOU prom Saturday evening, Sunday brunch and free time to tour Chicago.

Accommodations are available at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare. For more information and brochure contact **John Pirog**, 144 S. Oak, Palatine, Illinois 60067. **Richard Frankel**.

BALTIMORE, Maryland—The Baltimore church will celebrate its 30th anniversary April 15 with afternoon services followed by a dinner and dance Saturday evening. The cost for the dinner and dance is \$25.

For details and information about staying with brethren or at a motel please contact **Matt Stewart**, 3635 Hilmar Rd., Baltimore, Maryland, 21207, telephone 1-410-922-8831.

LAFAYETTE, Indiana—The Lafayette church will celebrate its 25th anniversary May 6. Afternoon services will be followed by a banquet and dance that evening.

**Robert Persky**, pastor from 1972 to 1976, will be the guest speaker. A multimedia presentation will trace the history of the congregation. All who have attended the church here are invited to attend. Cost for the banquet is \$22 per person. Checks should be payable to LCAF—Lafayette and mailed to **Gene Nielander** at 608 E. Adams St., Flora Indiana, 46929. You may telephone Mr. Nielander at 1-219-967-3763.

## Personal: the Bible, not tradition, is our guide

Continued from page 5

worshipfully before God. But we will do it in the understanding that observance of the annual Festivals is not a requirement for salvation. The Israelites were under the old covenant, before Christ came and fulfilled the law, and Christians are under the new covenant, and we are to do things in the light of the coming of Christ.

The Bible has to be our guide in these things, not our tradition. Jesus was the whole point, the whole focus of the Law and the Prophets, and he did not come to make the shadows that pointed to him more binding. He came to be the fulfillment himself.

These things have value only as they point us to him. When we keep observing these things according to an old covenant perspective, it keeps us from having the proper new covenant perspective.

What about saving second tithe? Members are certainly free to save a tenth of their income for expenses at the Feast of Tabernacles, and many, if not most, will continue to do so. But it is only necessary to save

enough to keep the Feast. Second tithe is not commanded and not a matter of obedience or sin under the new covenant.

In order to help with the costs of operating the Festival sites, we still ask that members contribute a portion of their Festival savings to the Festival Fund (formerly called the tithe of the tithe). Instructions regarding the Festival Fund will be in the Festival Planner scheduled to be distributed to members Feb. 18.

### Should we continue to pay third tithe?

I cannot stress enough the need for the Assistance Fund for the purpose of helping the needy in the Church. However, the three-tithing system is not part of the new covenant. Nevertheless, the admonition for Christians to help those in need is every bit as great.

Even though there is no law to give a particular amount, the principle of giving for the support of those in need, especially widows and orphans, is *paramount*. James 1:27 tells us: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from

being polluted by the world."

I hope that we will all continue to contribute as we are able to the Assistance Fund for those in need.

### Is it a sin to eat unclean meat?

We wish that everyone understood what Mr. Armstrong taught about this subject. He said it was not a spiritual matter, but a physical matter, a question of health. This is, no doubt, the best-kept rule in the Church, even though it is not a spiritual matter.

For Israel, it was something that helped them remember that they were sanctified and set apart as God's people. But even in ancient Israel, when someone ate unclean meat, they were *not stoned or killed for it*. They were simply considered unclean until evening. It was a matter of being ritually clean or unclean.

Christians, however, are made clean before God through faith in Jesus Christ, the one to whom such laws pointed.

Read what Mark said in Mark 7:18-19: "'Are you so dull?' he asked. 'Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him "unclean"? For it doesn't go into his heart but

into his stomach, and then out of his body.' (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean.')

Voluntarily abstaining from unclean meat, when not used as a spiritual yardstick, can help us remember that we are made spiritually clean through faith in Jesus Christ and that we are called out of the world to serve him. But there is no scriptural requirement for Christians to abstain from unclean meat. We are not going to put people out of the Church or refuse to baptize them because they eat unclean meat.

It is, however, a sin to deliberately offend others with our practices, as Paul explained in Romans 14:14-18. We all need to be considerate of one another in such things, and that includes not eating things in front of others that would disgust or offend them.

Further, we should remember that whatever is not of faith is sin, and we should not violate our consciences or offend others' consciences by what we do.

A special thanks to all who sent such encouraging and supportive letters and messages over the past few weeks! These are indeed exciting and spiritually joyful

times for the Church, even though spiritual growth can also be painful and difficult.

Let's pray earnestly for one another and make every effort to promote unity and peace among God's people as Jesus Christ leads us closer to him.

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MR-MRS DONALD C TODD

59 SUNSET LN

MANCHESTER TN 37355-6120