UNITED NEWS

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ABC Students Hold Charity Auction to Raise Money For Haitian Brethren

by Ariana Del Signore

On March 24, about 100 attendees from the greater Cincinnati area enjoyed food, entertainment and fundraising at this year's Charity Auction. This event is held annually in the spring by each ABC class to raise money for a charity of their choosing. At this year's auction, members of the congregation and surrounding area donated baked goods, artwork and other items to sell in the live and silent auctions.

The theme for the evening was "the Ambassador Awards." Upon registering and receiving a numbered paddle, guests followed a red carpet into the main hall, which was decorated with streamers, film awards décor and tables filled with homemade treats. Art for sale lined the walls towards the stage.

The live auction was broken up into three segments. Between each segment, students performed skits and songs. Autumn Boeland and Austin Jennings hosted the entertainment portion, and Bradley Bales and Justin Franke were the two auctioneers during the live auction. Attendees enjoyed the lively entertainment and were generous and supportive bidders.

This year, the ABC class chose to donate the proceeds to the building project in Haiti. Through the generous bidding in the charity auction, the class raised over $6,000. Students also set up a GoFundMe page for the Haiti Learning Center at www.gofundme.com/haiti-learning-center through which they raised an additional $2,200.

Due to the rapid growth of the Haitian church, the relatively new congregation is in need of a larger meeting hall as they are overflowing their current meeting place. The goal of the project is twofold: one objective is to provide members a place to learn professional abilities (such as English and computer skills) during the week. In a country experiencing such high unemployment rates, having these skills can be crucial to obtaining a steady, longterm job in order to provide for families. The other objective is to enable church members to worship in a hall large enough to accommodate their growing numbers.



Students suffer from the plagues of Egypt at a clinic in a skit at the charity auction.

Here is a description of the needs in Haiti from Chuck Smith, senior pastor of the Caribbean region:

"Mary and I just returned from an exhausting but successful trip to Haiti. On this 5-day, 4-night visit we were able to see the church building project up close and personal. The project is about 85-90 percent complete. On this trip we delivered the sound system and put it to use. We successfully had the new electric line wired into the new breaker box, then installed 110 new outlets on the interior walls along

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Pentecost and the Promise of the Father

Having been with Jesus Christ throughout His 3½-year ministry, His original 12 disciples became deeply saddened when He told them He would be going away. But what awesome event turned their sorrow into joy? And what should that singular occurrence mean for us today?

by John LaBissoniere

When I was a child living at home with my parents, a special family lived next-door whom we could truly depend upon. If my mother needed to borrow a cup of flour she would always ask Mrs. Swartz. If my father needed a little assistance with a home project, he could call upon Mr. Swartz. So the Swartzes assisted us and we did the same for them when they needed help. Our excellent, neighborly relationship was warm, mutually beneficial and greatly appreciated.

Perhaps you have such fine neighbors now as we did then. But let's take it a step further. Imagine for a moment that Jesus Christ was still on earth and lived next door to you! If you had a problem, you could ring His doorbell and He would listen and miraculously help. If you were ill, He would come to your house and heal you instantly. If you needed advice, He would counsel you perfectly. Of course this is merely a fanciful notion because Jesus left earth long ago. Near the end of His 3½-year ministry He announced to His disciples, "I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16:28).

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Photo by Tim Foster/Unsplash

We must remember that we are disciples and we have access to God's power through the Holy Spirit.

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43 percent

of *United News* readers are coworkers and donors

In the Wake of Theft in Chipata, Zambia







Top: The new wall that was built after the break-in at the Chipata church building.
Bottom and left: Members enter the church property on the day the wall was dedicated on April 21, 2019.

by Victor Kubik

On Jan. 29, 2019, robbers broke into the Chipata, Zambia, United Church of God meeting hall building and property. The perpetrators stole furniture, chairs and window coverings that the church ladies had lovingly sewn. They took the three solar panels powering the borehole pump that provided irrigation and clean drinking water to 200 area families. They tried to dig up and steal the submersible pump but failed. They caused a lot of damage to the equipment.

This happened when there was a heavy downpour of rain. Both the church hall and water infrastructure are amidst tall crops of maize (corn). Consequently, the caretaker, whose house is about 80 meters away, could neither hear nor see anything until morning. Cursory investigations, however, indicated footprints of a group of five or more intruders. The police are investigating, but the congregation's location is very near the borders of Mozambique and Malawi and raiders regularly cross the porous border.

Both Good Works and LifeNets are stepping up to help the people in this devastated area. We will need to provide not only a solution for the loss of clean drinking water for 200 families but chairs, furnishings and window coverings for the church hall as well.

We have been so encouraged by the many contributions to LifeNets and Good Works. The Batavia, Ohio, Rotary Club also made a very generous contribution to the Chipata people to rebuild and restore what has been damaged or stolen.

I want to thank everyone, particularly those who had not contributed before, for helping out so generously in this time of trial and suffering.

We plan to take additional security measures to dissuade thieves from returning. We plan to build a wall around the church building and the pump facility that will remain locked at night.

Many people have already offered their solace and prayers to the Chipata congregation and pastor Filius Jere who has responded bravely to the event. He and his wife, Chosiwe, went on a three-day prayer and fasting retreat. He vows never to get discouraged, give up on God or be a quitter. The church in Chipata accepts this as a temporary setback. These events have acted as a bond to knit them much closer together. They are so thankful for the outpouring of love from all over the world. Your love has made them feel more closely a part of a much bigger body of future citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Good Works, LifeNets and LifeNets Australia have helped our brethren here over the years with sewing machines, oxen, plows and boreholes.

For more background information, you can visit http://lifenets.org/sos-chipata. **UN**

Building Up the Body of Christ in Africa

by Ariana Del Signore

During the Kubiks' travels in Africa, one common trait that has stood out is growth in the wake of loss. The robbery in Chipata, Zambia resulted in the loss of necessary items in the church hall and clean water for the community. Thieves stole chairs and curtains in the Solwezi, Zambia church building. There have been *four* break-ins on church property in recent months. Yet a common thread among God's people in these areas is resilience.

Despite setbacks, congregations are exhibiting growth—both in numbers and in physical structures. As the Body of Christ, these brethren recognize the need to continue to rebuild. In Solwezi, the congregation is making preparations to build a concrete wall around the building and fortify the door frame.

In Malawi, villagers living near last year's Feast of Tabernacles site in Nkhwazi, Malawi began asking questions about the Church when they saw members keeping the Feast. They noticed the members camping on a plot of land owned by the Lilongwe congregation. The villagers then began meeting at a local deacon's home on the Sabbath and for weeknight Bible studies with numbers ranging from 15-25 people. Recently, a bamboo tabernacle has been constructed on the land and this group is currently using it as a meeting hall. Plans are being made for temporary booths to be built for the Feast next year.



Mr. Kubik cuts the ribbon at the ceremony.

The church building in Manyinga, Zambia that the Kubiks visited on April 14 was recently completed as well. Mr. Kubik read dedications from 1 Kings 6 and 8 for the ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony. Some of the members had spent years adhering to their calling and staying faithful to God's Word as they met every week under a mango tree, waiting for a ministerial visit. Many were finally able to be baptized in recent years. They dreamed to have their own building, but is was only that—a dream. As the church grew in leadership, the building slowly became a reality. These projects are a physical representation of the building up of brethren in the body of Christ in these African countries. **UN**

Charity Auction

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with nine ceiling fans. The interior walls are now painted and the church will start holding Sabbath services in the building this week. Some additional brackets and building ties will be installed this week as we prepare for hurricane season in the Caribbean. The steel doors have been installed and we are finishing the handrails for the stairway this week.

"The assembly hall comes at a time of pressing need. Our Bible Study last Friday was overflowing our 58-seat capacity with over 70 in attendance. The next morning for services there were 85 plus in attendance. We had a wonderful interactive service as the Haitian brethren took part in proving the history of Passover through the many scriptures in both the New and Old Testaments. There is a zeal and passion for God's Way in this financially crippled country. We had five baptisms this trip with most having no Church of God background.

"It was a tiring but worthwhile visit as we hope to have everything completed on our next trip. We thank all for their prayers and support of this great work being done in Haiti. The Mirebalais congregation will keep the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread for the first time. They are excited and eager to learn more by keeping God's Holy Days and learning God's plan of salvation not only for them but for the entire world. Please keep them in your prayers as they travel down 'The Road To Eternal Life.'"





Top: Chuck Smith with brethren in Haiti.
Bottom: Brethren working on the new church building.

The ABC class of 2019 would like to thank all of those who attended and participated in the Charity Auction to support their zealous fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in Haiti. **UN**

FORWARD!

A Precious Truth



MARK WELCH
Ministerial and Member Services

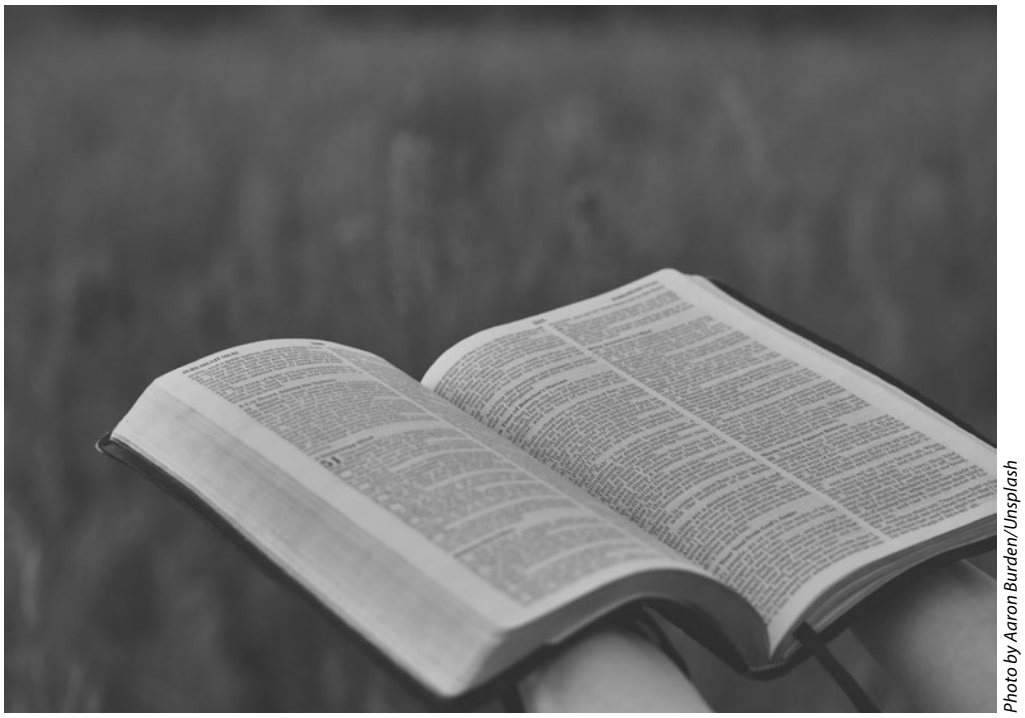


Photo by Aaron Burden/Unsplash

We have a precious truth and must hold onto it by staying close to God through prayer and Bible study.

When God called me and I started attending God's Church at age 18, I began a project to read every single booklet the Church published. As I read and studied, turning to every scripture listed, I was truly shocked and amazed at the truths God was revealing to me in His Holy Word. Each booklet would explain another piece of the spiritual puzzle God was allowing and leading me to understand His glorious plan of salvation for mankind.

One of the most precious and eye-opening truths I was led to was about the Word (the Logos, the Spokesman) becoming flesh and being born as the Savior of the world—Jesus Christ, the Son of God (John 1). The Old Testament was coming alive, as I now understood that the God Being who most directly worked with mankind during the Old Testament period was surely the One who became the Christ, the Messiah!

Since being baptized in 1974, I have continually studied the Bible with that understanding in mind. It has worked very well all these years, and today I have an even deeper understanding and a greater conviction and appreciation regarding this fundamental truth God has given His Church. The Church of God is to be the pillar and ground of the truth of God (1 Timothy 3:15), and it is through God's Holy Spirit that we are given understanding (Isaiah 11:2).

A few years ago I began an in-depth study of this belief that continues to this day. I rose early on many mornings and pored over literally thousands of verses where the tetragrammaton ("four letters"), *YHWH,* was represented in the King James and New King James versions of the Bible with "the LORD" in capital letters. The name *YHWH* basically means "the Ever-Existing One" or "the Eternal."

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From The COUNCIL

Are You A Christian Soldier?



by Donald Ward



Photo by Jonathan Fox/Unsplash

As we move forward in life we have to remember we are Christians soldiers trying to navigate our way through this life.

We sing the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers" with great gusto. But do we really mean it? "Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war with the cross of Jesus going on before." "Onward, Christian Soldiers" is a 19th century English hymn. The words were written by Sabine Baring-Gould in 1865. He wrote the words for English school children to sing as they marched. The music was composed by Arthur Sullivan in 1871. Sullivan named the tune "St. Gertrude," after the wife of his friend Ernest Clay Ker Seymer at whose country home he composed the tune. The hymn was sung at the end of the Academy Award-winning movie, *Mrs. Miniver* (1942). And it was sung at Dwight Eisenhower's funeral. The Salvation Army even adopted the hymn as its favored processional.

The theme is taken from references in the New Testament to the Christian being a soldier for Christ, for example 2 Timothy 2:3 (KJV throughout): "Thou shalt endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

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The Good News

The Ten Commandments Series

The Fifth Commandment

by Don Hooser

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12).

"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you" (Deuteronomy 5:16).

Mother's Day and Father's Day are two of the most appropriate and important national holidays in various countries. In addition, God commands us to honor our parents throughout the year.

This commandment applies both to young children and adult children. There are some differences, of course. When the Bible tells "children" to "*obey* your parents," it obviously means minor children (Colossians 3:20). Even young Jesus "was subject to" His parents (Luke 2:51).

Clearly there are many other ways for children *of all ages* to show respect, deference, care and concern throughout the lives of their parents. To begin with, be kind and courteous and never talk disrespectfully or condescendingly to them or about them.

In the heart of the Ten Commandments, the Fifth serves as a bridge. In Leviticus 19:3, God says, "Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father. . . " Children learn to revere God by first revering their parents. And honoring parents is the foundation upon which respect and love for neighbor is built.

This commandment prepares a child for his or her future relationships. By learning respect and submission to authority in the home, the child learns to have respect for rules, laws, leaders and people in general, especially adults. He learns to have special respect for those in positions of leadership and authority—teachers, coaches, police, leaders in government, leaders in the workplace, etc. The following important scriptures emphasize this truth: Romans 13:1-2; 1 Peter 2:17-18; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-25; 1 Timothy 5:17; 6:1-2; Titus 3:1-2; and Hebrews 13:17. A child learns leadership by first learning followership.

The Bible also teaches that a person should show special respect toward people who are much older than he is (Leviticus 19:32; 1 Peter 5:5).

Why doesn't the commandment say to *love* your father and mother? The Bible teaches that all positions of authority should be respected whether they are acting with good intentions or not. A very young child can learn to act respectfully, and based on that foundation, can learn true love as he matures. (See the elements of respect in the love chapter—1 Corinthians 13.)

This commandment is not limited to honoring one's biological parents. "Your father and mother" means the people who have or had guardianship and have acted as your parents. They can be adoptive parents, stepparents, grandparents, foster parents, uncles and aunts, etc. Furthermore, grandparents are deserving of special respect.

Major Disobedience Is a Terrible Sin

By authoring the Fifth Commandment, God delegated His parental authority to the parents. Disobeying this commandment is a sin against God (see Deuteronomy 27:16; Proverbs 20:20; 30:17).

God prescribed the death penalty for anyone who struck or cursed his father or mother (Exodus 21:15, 17; Leviticus 20:9). And the "wayward son" law provided for the possible death penalty for a chronically rebellious and incorrigible child (Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

It's essential to understand that *God never permitted a parent to kill one of his children*. The *elders* at the gate of a city served as a court of law and only they could impose the death penalty (Deuteronomy 21:19). The "wayward son" law required first of all that *both the father and mother had to agree* to bring the child to the court at the gate of the city for a trial by the "elders." However, there is no biblical or historical record of any executions that were based on these laws.

Show Gratitude to Your Parents!

First of all, you exist because your parents brought you into this world. They accepted a commitment to take care of you for the next 18 years! To begin with, your mother carried you inside of her for nine months.

For the first few years of your life, your parents' life was give, give, give. They sacrificed to provide everything—safety, protection, healthful living, shelter, food, clothing, first aid, medical care, comfort, guidance, education, coaching, transportation, school supplies, opportunities, encouragement, recreation, entertainment and fun!

So God wants you to understand and remember all of this and regularly express your gratitude in every way possible! And what do your parents primarily want from you? Good attitudes and behavior, especially your gratitude,



Photo by Jessica Rockowit/Unsplash

As children, and even into adulthood, we are to honor our parents. We honor our parents by showing respect, deference, care and concern. If we follow this commandment, God will bless us.

forgiveness, respect, love, *and to see you turning out well*. It gives parents great joy to see a child becoming a mature, wise and loving person. "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother" (Proverbs 10:1; see also 13:1; 15:20; 17:21; 23:15-16, 22-25; 27:11; 29:2; 3 John 1:4).

If you live a godly life, you will honor your parents by protecting and enhancing your family's name and reputation: "A good name is better than precious ointment" (Ecclesiastes 7:1; see also 10:1).

Your parents took care of you when you were young and needy, and they may need your help when they are old and needy. When they have serious health problems, need physical and financial assistance, or just feel lonely, make sure your parents feel very loved and are well taken care of (see 1 Timothy 5:4). Jesus severely castigated the Pharisees because they neglected their parents and invented an excuse for that neglect (Matthew 15:4-6).

Should I Honor a Parent Whose Actions Have Not Deserved Honor?

All parents make many mistakes, but when the attitudes and behaviors of a parent have been abusive or terrible in other ways, it is confusing and challenging for a child to know how to honor that parent. To begin with, remember that the Bible tells us to love and be merciful to everyone, including our enemies (Matthew 5:44-45). The child should still be courteous, pray for the parent and forgive him.

In extreme cases, it might help to counsel with a minister or qualified outside help about how to honor that parent.

Godly Parenting

The other side of this subject is *godly parenting,* an awesome responsibility! This is a huge subject by itself, so this section will only briefly address it. Much instruction on godly childrearing is contained in two of our booklets, *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension* and *Making Life Work.*

A child on his own does not naturally honor his parents. He must be taught and respectful behavior must be enforced. Parents must teach the truth of God's Word and way of life to their children, ideally by doing it every day (Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:6-9, 20-25; 11:18-21; Ephesians 6:4). Of course, to be effective teachers, parents must be good role models.

To see how essential it is to lovingly discipline children see Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 29:15 and Hebrews 12:5-11. Children learn by receiving and responding to discipline.

Western civilization is turning its back on the Bible, the Ten Commandments and Judeo-Christian values. Bible prophecies tell us this would happen: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves. . . blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful. . . unloving, unforgiving, slanderers. . . despisers of good. . . haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1-4; see also Isaiah 3:4-5, 8-17). Therefore, parents must work extra hard to keep these evils from influencing and infecting their families.

Please see page 6

The Good News

Surviving A School Shooting Turned Me to God

by Addison Taylor

It sounded like someone was banging on a filing cabinet, except with a fist made of metal.

I remember everyone in my class having the unanimous, unspoken decision to run towards the corner of the room and to hide as best we could in the corner, while being as quiet as possible.

I remember being stuck sitting on my feet, and slowly losing feeling in them during the maybe 20-minute time span, but what felt like an hour.

On Feb. 14, 2018, in Parkland, Florida, while I was in my fourth period English class, someone entered the high school building I was in and opened fire. I won't go into too much detail for the rest of it because I don't have the best memory for imagery or descriptions (although maybe that's for the better). But I can remember that I would have been seen by the shooter from where I was sitting if he looked into the room, just because of where I was located. He was in the classroom directly next to mine.

I guess I should give some background.

My name's Addison Taylor and I went to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School during the 2017-2018 school year, and was in the same building as the shooting that happened last Valentine's Day. But before saying how it turned me to God, I'll give some other context. Growing up, I wasn't really introduced to religion in any sort of way as a child. I have some grandparents that go to your average Christian churches and I'd see them often when I was younger, but other than that I only sporadically picked up some information here and there. I never got the whole concept of "everything happens for a reason," or the idea God is looking after His own. I didn't really have any sort of opinion on it. Growing up with parents who believe in God, all I knew (or thought I knew) was that there was a heaven, a hell and everyone went to one or the other. I lived my life like the average, albeit not very outgoing, teenager would, not really having any sort of cares. I didn't get into trouble constantly, do drugs, or drink; I just kind of let life happen.

My family moved to Parkland, Florida, at the beginning of April in 2017, and signed me up for the school that summer. When I arrived I didn't know anyone, but I slowly made some friends and eventually started to enjoy it more. I was okay with the friends I had there, even though there were only a few.

When I first arrived home the afternoon of the shooting, one of my first thoughts and reactions was just, "Wow, I'm insanely lucky to be alive right now." After a couple months, though, that reasoning just wouldn't sit with me. Nothing lined up in my head at all. Things I used to love to do almost felt like a chore. I started (unintentionally) cutting people off. I was constantly doubting anything and everything, especially relationships with friends and family. I don't know if it was some type of or full-on depression, or just some sort of delayed grief, but it messed me up. A lot. I just couldn't live with the fact that it happened. Why did it happen to me? Why am I still so sad, 6+ months later? Why did I happen to make it perfectly fine physically, but other people didn't? Almost more importantly than all those questions I had, I always felt like I was bothering my best friend with questions, which really bothered me, because she was the main person I had in my life.

One afternoon when I was feeling extremely down… I asked her the million-dollar question: Why do bad things happen to good people?

This best friend also happened to be in another group that came out of the Worldwide Church of God. I had occasionally asked her about some of the things she'd done in the church. For example I would ask about the Sabbath, certain holy days and why holidays like Christmas or Easter are wrong. I was extremely interested in it and wanted to know more, but I was scared to ask because I didn't understand it. I didn't want to bother her by asking the million questions I had or come off as offensive by maybe asking the wrong question or responding the wrong way. I also didn't know where to look to find out this stuff myself, so I stuck to just asking her something whenever it came up, which wasn't as often as I wanted it to be sadly.

Then one afternoon when I was feeling extremely down, we happened to be talking about religion and I asked her the million-dollar question: Why do bad things happen to good people?

And I don't think she could have had a more perfect response. She told me that they're called trials, and they're a way to test someone's faith in God. That was the answer I was unknowingly looking for, to solve all of those questions I had earlier. God had a plan for me, and He wanted me to go through what happened in February. He wanted me to experience what I did, all those emotions and thoughts, and then to find Him. This experience was my calling. It was the trial that would turn me to God. And, that night, I listened to my first sermon.



Photo by Ava Dickson/Unsplash

The Parkland, Florida, school shooting was the deadliest high school shooting in America with 17 people killed and 17 others injured.

[God] wanted me to experience what I did, all those emotions and thoughts, and then to find Him. That experience was my calling. It was the trial that would turn me to Him.

Over time, I started listening to sermons and sermonettes every evening, if I was able to. I started keeping the Sabbath and slowly got better at it, and I started listening in to my friend's church services. I eventually ordered my own Bible, started a Bible plan to read the entire book in a year. As of writing this, I'm on day 117 and I'm expected to finish by Dec. 10. I try to surround myself with Bible verse notifications each day. My entire mindset started to change. I was (and am) the happiest I had been in months, and had no one to thank but God for giving me the opportunity. I was extremely worried to try and explain it to my parents so it took some time and courage to do so, but they were very accepting of it all and have been nothing but the best about it so far. They have been willing to take me to church, buy me clothes for church, and have gone above and beyond by helping me have something for a church potluck (love you, Mom!). On Feb. 9, 2019, I attended the United Church of God for the first time, and it was a million times better than I could have ever hoped.

I have been going to church for over two months now, and it has only gotten better. It's my favorite part of the week by far. Being around everyone instantly raises my mood, and the messages I hear are always understandable, thought-provoking, and able to be applied to my own life. It's still taking time to get used to some things, and my first Holy Day will be this upcoming Feast of Unleavened Bread, but I'm excited for everything else to come. I'm extremely thankful for being given this opportunity by God and with how He's let it all turn out so far. I hope someone out there will be able to see the effect God has had on my life, and be willing to let Him into their life. He can work wonders for His own. **UN**

Local Church UPDATES

Southeast Regional Formal



Top and right: Teens who attended the Southeast Regional Formal.



The Southeast Regional Formal was held on April 6, 2019 at the Baird Chapel of Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee.

The day began with Sabbath services during which four of our young adults performed Special Music followed by a sermon by Dr. Philip Aust. After services, the graduating high school seniors were formally recognized by Mr. Gary Petty.

The 50 attendees enjoyed a group dinner followed by a night of dancing and fellowship with a Candyland theme. The organizers would like to thank all those who attended and volunteered their time and energy in making the day a success!

Lizzy Creech

Updates from Ministerial and Member Services

Brennan Hilgen, former Project Coordinator in Malawi, and his wife Michala returned to the United States in mid-March. Mr. Hilgen is now working as a Ministerial Trainee serving the Denver, Colorado Springs, Loveland and Frisco, Colorado, congregations.

On March 30, 2019, Tony Edge was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Ruth, serve in the Melbourne East, Australia, congregation. Please continue to pray for the men and wives who serve God and His people.

Chris Rowland

The Fifth Commandment

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The One Commandment That Promises A Reward!

Remember God said those who honor their parents will receive the following blessing: *"that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you"* (Deuteronomy 5:16).

First of all, these rewards tend to be true simply because of the logical laws of cause and effect. A teachable and obedient child who has learned to respect people, submit to authority and have good relationships will generally have a safer, healthier, longer and more successful life.

This promise is also meant to apply to "the land"—the nation. Generally, a nation survives for a long time and thrives as long as it is composed mostly of strong families.

"Honor your father and mother… that it may be well with you." God said it and meant it so it has to mean very good things! God blesses those who obey His Ten Commandments and God gives special blessings to those who faithfully obey the Fifth Commandment!

To all the moms and dads: thank you! **UN**

Read the rest of The Ten Commandments Series *here: www.ucg.org/tags/the-ten-commandments-series.*

Pentecost

continued from page 1

He is gone now. Today we worship and pray to our great Creator who we cannot physically see. Even though we may have a close relationship with Him, we may at times, have to wait for the fulfillment of our prayerful needs and requests (Psalm 27:14). Then, on some occasions, we may begin to wonder if He really hears our prayers or even cares about us. Of course, this tests our faith and patience especially when we are undergoing pain, distress and sorrow (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6).

Jesus declared: "I go to My Father and you see Me no more" (John 16:10). When Jesus' original 12 disciples heard these words from Him they felt terribly distraught (John 16:6). But Christ also told them that they would benefit enormously by His leaving. He said, "I tell you the truth. It is *to your advantage* that I go away" (John 16:7, emphasis added throughout). But how could it possibly be helpful to them or us today if He went away to be with His Father? He went on to state, ". . . for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him [it] to you" (John 16:7).

The Promise of the Father

Immediately before Jesus ascended to heaven He told His disciples, ". . . not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for *the promise of the Father*" (Acts 1:4, 11). This is the most marvelous blessing of comfort and support that Christ's followers could have ever heard! It far outpaces any human-made promise. It encompasses the unparalleled gift of God's very own Spirit which Jesus would go to heaven to receive from His Father to send to His steadfast disciples (Acts 2:33). This priceless promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in 31 AD when 120 disciples were infused with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). For the first time in world history, the very essence of God's divine nature was made available to more than a tiny number of people. Accompanied by extraordinary, miraculous signs, including a rushing mighty wind and tongues of fire, the bestowing of the Holy Spirit to those disciples marked the very beginning of the New Testament Church (Acts 2:1-4).

As His dedicated disciples today, we have access to all the spiritual energy and faith we need to fully pursue His way of life.

So when Jesus ascended to be with His Father, He certainly didn't desert His disciples. It was completely the opposite! He would actually be with them in a dramatically *more* powerful and vibrant manner. To be sure, this fulfilled Jesus' earlier statement that their sorrow would be "turned into joy" (John 16:20)! He exclaimed, "I am with you *always*, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Furthermore, He said, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, *but you will see Me*" (John 14:18-19). How would they see Him? Not only in the resurrection at His Second Coming but in their daily lives through the essence of God's boundless power, guidance and wisdom dwelling in them—just as it did in Christ Himself (Romans 8:11; John 14:10).

Confirmation of this awesome miracle was seen instantaneously on that Pentecost morning in the lives of Peter and the other 11 apostles. In fact, Peter exclaimed to an assembled crowd in Jerusalem that Jesus ". . . being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this *which you now see and hear*" (Acts 2:33). Indeed, by means of Peter's passionate, God-inspired preaching, 3,000 people repented, were baptized and received God's Spirit on that very day (Acts 2:40-41).

So, the magnificent fulfillment of "the promise of the Father" occurred at that time but, it didn't stop there! That was only the beginning. It has continued down through the centuries in all people who answer God's call, are baptized, receive the amazing gift of His perfect Spirit and are diligently producing spiritual fruit throughout their lives (John 15:4-5).

Greater Works Will Be Accomplished

As we commemorate the giving of the Holy Spirit each year on the Holy Day of Pentecost we can be *more than confident* that the words of support and wellbeing Jesus expressed to His original disciples apply to us today. He declared, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; *and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father*" (John 14:12).

Those "greater works" could only have been demonstrated by converted men and women after Christ joined His Father on His throne. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that He works mightily in and through converted individuals (Romans 8:11). As His dedicated disciples today, we have access to all the spiritual energy and faith we need to fully pursue His way of life (Matthew 4:4; Romans 12:1-2). We are incredibly blessed to have the very mind of Christ so we can love God, overcome sin, build holy, righteous character and serve others (Philippians 2:5; Romans 8:28; James 1:21-22; 1 Peter 4:10).

While having a warm and mutually beneficial relationship with a wonderful human next-door neighbor is certainly excellent, isn't what we have with Jesus Christ far beyond any comparison? He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Also, Jesus understands our needs and requests as we prayerfully and patiently wait for His ideal timing in response (Isaiah 65:24; Psalm 27:14). With the tremendous power of God's Holy Spirit working in us, we have the perfect assurance of help today and a wonderful and exciting future in God's coming Kingdom (2 Corinthians 4:16-17). Therefore, let us appreciate *more than ever* the wonderful fulfillment of the Promise of the Father which began on that first New Testament Pentecost. **UN**

Local Church UPDATES

Seattle Women's Enrichment Weekend

The 2019 Seattle Women's Weekend was held once more at the lovely La Conner Country Inn. God blessed us with sunny days and wonderful company, with people coming from all over, from Victoria, British Columbia, to even as far as Colorado! The theme followed Proverbs 31:25: "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come."

Friday evening kicked off the start of the weekend with dinner and icebreakers as the ladies were broken into groups to introduce themselves and given prompts that were both lighthearted and insightful. We learned everything from why a woman always carried something around with her to what she might most want to accomplish with her life.

Our opening speech Saturday was led by Mr. Nutzman as he gave an inspirational sermon speaking on the various women in the Bible and the role God gave women in His plan.

After a break for lunch we had many discussions that emphasized strength, dignity and laughter! Young and old alike stood on the podium and gave their speeches, helping us learn about the strength it takes to follow a sparsely marked hiking trail, the humor a mother experiences with her child and many other life lessons. Each speaker emphasized the topic of the weekend in their own unique fashion, helping us take away the lessons God wanted us to learn.

Our now traditional wine, cheese and coloring night ended Saturday on a comfortable note to bring us into the last day. Sunday, we were closed by a lovely speech by Mrs. Nutzman who gave vignettes of her life, leaving the ladies with stories that would strengthen them as they went on their way home.

Over all, the Women's Weekend was a success that helped us strengthen our relationships with each other and our relationship with God!

Annick Steffanin





Top and right: Ladies who attended the Seattle Women's Enrichment Weekend.

Nashville Young Adults Babysit for Parents' Date Night

Nashville parents were able to enjoy a wonderful night out thanks to the date night event on Feb. 2, hosted by the young adults and teens in the congregation.

Parents were encouraged to go on a date with their spouse or with a group of other adults while free childcare was provided at the church hall. The volunteers served the kids a delicious meal of meatballs and pasta followed by games such as red light/green light, hide and seek and Bananagrams.

The successful night was capped off with popcorn and a movie. It's hard to know who had a better night—the kids or the parents!

Brittany Hynes



One of the children having fun!

Maryland Teens Serve in Community Service Project

The teens of the Columbia, Maryland, congregation reached out to the community by collecting donated items for a local orphanage run by St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore. In addition to the orphanage, St. Vincent de Paul also offers numerous services for homeless families including housing. The teens contributed to a project called "Beans and Bread." The project distributes over 200 personal care bags each month to homeless families.

Around 200 one-gallon bags of snack items and hygiene items were filled for the orphans and homeless families. Clothing items were also collected.

Rhonda Diggins



Teens organize contributions to "Beans and Bread" project.

Nashville's Annual Fundraiser for Camp Nacome



Joshua Creech, after his wife Lizzy throws a pie in his face for the Nashville's Camp Nacome fundraiser.

The Nashville, Tennessee, congregation held an annual fundraiser event for Camp Nacome March 9, raising over $1,600.

This year's event featured simple but engaging activities for all ages with the goal to raise money to bolster the preteen camp's scholarships fund, equipment maintenance and updates, and to cover other general needs.

The evening started with a hot dog dinner and a cake walk beginning after sundown. The cake walk featured a variety of cakes and desserts donated by members. There was also a prize walk for the little kids to have a chance to win one of many donated toys. Various donated items were also raffled off throughout the evening. But the big draw was once again the pie in the face contest.

Members voted for who'd get it in the form of donations to jars for the respective candidates: local members David Kellers, Jason Fritz, David Horvath and assistant pastor Joshua Creech. By a wide margin, the people had spoken: an assistant pastor he may be, but Joshua Creech's face did not remain pie-free. And in a twist certainly heretofore only dreamt of, it was his wife, Lizzy, who crammed that confection so lovingly into his countenance. All for a good cause, people.

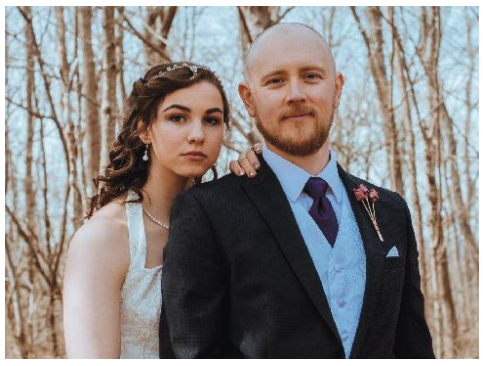
Tina Cason and Mitchell Moss

Announcements



Jordan Morasse & Courtney Call

March 9, 2019



Christopher Reed & Rachael Boise

March 10, 2019



Sidney & Alma Johnson

50th Anniversary



Stephen Anthony Allen

April 21, 1955-Feb. 4, 2019

Weddings

Jordan Morasse and Courtney Call

Dan and Julie Morasse along with Kevin and Debbie Call are excited to announce the marriage of their children Jordan Morasse and Courtney Call. The two were wed on March 9, 2019 in an evening ceremony officiated by Courtney's dad in front of about 170 guests. After a short honeymoon in Ohio, the newlyweds headed to Canada where they have set up their household. They attend the Ottawa congregation in Kemptville.

Christopher Reed and Rachael Boise

Dr. Christopher Reed and Rachael (Boise) Reed are happy to announce their union in marriage on March 10, 2019. The wedding ceremony took place in Milford, Ohio, and was officiated by pastor Steve Myers. Friends and family traveled all the way from Oregon and Washington (where Rachael is from), and as near as Cambridge, Ohio (where Chris is from). It was a small ceremony that incorporated many of the things that drew Chris and Rachael together. They wore hiking boots and went rappelling in their wedding attire for pictures before the ceremony, and the cake featured two people rock climbing. Chris and Rachael attend the Cincinnati East congregation.

Anniversaries

Sidney and Alma Johnson

Sidney and Alma Johnson's 50th wedding anniversary was celebrated by the Tulsa, Oklahoma, congregation at a reception following Sabbath services on March 2, 2019. The celebration included a beautiful cake, flowers, punch and coffee. They were presented with a card signed by members of the congregation and a gift card. They later received a photo book commemorating the reception.

Sidney and Alma met at a church they both attended when they were introduced by a friend. They were soon married in Columbia, Mississippi, and lived in Mississippi for about 15 years before moving to Tulsa in 1985.

Alma began attending the Worldwide Church of God in Tulsa in the early 1990s. She had known of Mr. Herbert Armstrong from many years earlier. Sidney started attending some years after Alma.

The Johnsons have set a wonderful example of marriage and togetherness for all of us. We appreciate their 50 years of commitment in marriage and we wish them many more happy years of life together and in good health.



Gene Cook

March 10, 1917-Jan 11, 2019



George Allen Rusnak

Jan. 10, 1948-March 4, 2019



Marty (Martha) Scholz

March 17, 1945-Feb. 19, 2019

Obituaries

Stephen Anthony Allen

Stephen Anthony Allen, age 63, of Raleigh, North Carolina, passed away on Monday, Feb. 4, 2019 of liver cancer. Steve was baptized into God's Church March 20, 2016. His wife Kris is also a baptized member of God's Church.

Steve was a man of conviction. He settled quickly into the church and was respected by everyone as a man who loved God and wished to serve Him in spirit and truth.

In younger years Steve was the owner and operator of Steve Allen Construction Company. He began building homes at an early age and knew everything worth knowing about building a home! In later years Steve owned multiple rental properties and was "the best landlord a person could hope for." Steve was athletic and involved in coaching baseball and basketball while his sons were young. Steve loved the beach, fishing and sailing.

Steve was a loving husband, father, grandfather and a stalwart member of the local congregation. He endured a lot of pain because of the cancer, but he did so with dignity and with a sober eye toward his future in God's Kingdom. Everyone misses Steve's strength and friendship.

Gene Cook

Gene Cook of St. Petersburg, Florida, died Jan. 11, 2019 at the age of 101. She was born in Warren, Pennsylvania, on March 10, 1917. Gene attended Westminster College, Pennsylvania, and Lewis Hotel Management School in Washington, DC., where she met her husband William. She worked for Bell Aircraft in Buffalo, New York, during World War II while her husband William was serving in the South Pacific. Gene and her husband later owned a summer resort named "The Inn" at Lake Chautauqua, New York, before moving to Florida. There she started her own business in St. Petersburg, Florida, for several decades, named "lnteriors by Gene."

Announcements: Send us announcements from your local congregation! Have your pastor review what you write, and send it in to UN@ucg.org. We're looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photos with captions. Please double-check the spelling of names, and include the author's and photographer's names. **Email is preferred**, but we will also take physical mail as well! Please include a self-addressed envelope if you'd like photos returned.

Gene first heard of Mr. Armstrong through her mother, who had been listening to the radio program since the late 1940s. She requested literature and started the Bible Correspondence Course. With no local congregation in Florida, Gene, her husband and their son drove to Lake Okeechobee to meet Hal Baird and David Mills, who were conducting a baptizing tour, where she was baptized. She was asked to be a radio monitor for the World Tomorrow broadcast and reported to headquarters to ensure that the local station was playing the intended program.

ln 1964 a congregation was started in Lakeland, Florida, and Gene with her family attended the first service. They became charter members of the Lakeland congregation, which they continued to attend until the St. Petersburg congregation started in 1973. Over the years Gene has enjoyed many Feast of Tabernacles sites, including nine in Europe and one in Israel; her favorite U.S. site was Branson, Missouri.

She enjoyed bridge, watching golf and traveling. Gene was a member of the Radio Church of God, Worldwide Church of God and United Church of God, totaling 58 years. She is survived by her son, William Cook III, who attends the St. Petersburg congregation.

George Allen Rusnak

George Allen Rusnak of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, passed away on March 4, 2019 while living his life to the fullest and taking advantage of every good opportunity set

Please see next page

Announcements

continued from previous page

before him. He is preceded in death by his parents George and Rosemarie, brother, Eric, and wife of 45 years, Robin (Wacker) Rusnak. He leaves behind two daughters: Jennifer (Shawn) Sibit and Amanda (Sean) McQuade and five grandchildren: Milo, Sara, Tyler, Natalie and Aaron. He is also survived by one brother, two sisters, many nieces and nephews, and countless loved ones.

George will be lovingly remembered for his kindness, his excellent example of faithfulness, and his love of cooking, jokes and service to others. At the age of 71, George was attending classes at Ambassador Bible College, participating in the ABC choir and letting nothing hinder him from enjoying his life while growing in grace and knowledge. He quickly became an integral member of his class and was easily loved for his unique ability to walk as equals with all people while never compromising his standards or diminishing his character.

George had a way about him. He had a way of working hard to make all people feel valued in a way that drew no attention to himself. He had a way of being essential to a group without creating a dependency in those around him. He had a way of encouraging people's strengths and stepping up to help in their times of weakness.

The Ambassador Bible College class of 2019 will remember George for a number of excellent qualities, and will not soon forget the impact that he had on the class as a whole, as well as each individual he interacted with. One of George's frequent and favorite pieces of advice to give as a contribution to class discussions was the phrase, "Begin with the end in mind." Although this year's ABC class has been handed a trial through the death of one that was loved by them as one of them, they are determined to take this prevalent message from George as a last way for him to help them through even this trial after his passing. George Rusnak did not just preach, "Begin with the end in mind," he lived it and "the end" that George was beginning with was not this physical life, but an eternal life with God that he now awaits. All who knew him greatly look forward to the day when they will see him again.

Marty (Martha) Scholz

Marty (Martha) Jane Scholz, age 73 (but always 29 in spirit) and resident of Cheshire, Massachusetts, passed away at Berkshire Medical Center on Feb. 19, 2019 after an unexpected but brief illness. She was baptized in July 1968 and was a member of the Worcester, Massachusetts UCG congregation.

Born March 17, 1945 in Ohio, Marty spent her formative years in the Buckeye state. During her lifetime, she counted Ohio, New Mexico, California and Massachusetts as her homes. As a well-traveled citizen of the world, she enjoyed exploring other cultures, meeting new people and nurturing lifelong friendships.

Most recently, she split her time between Cheshire and Warsaw, Ohio, and was an active member of her church and community. She also enjoyed being part of the Cheshire Ladies' Reading Club, Red Hat Society, Coshocton Library Association and Walhonding Historical Commission.

Marty was married to her second husband, Richard Scholz, of Cheshire. She is also survived by her sister Margaret; daughters Karen Crisostomo and Kristine Talbott; stepchildren Karl Scholz, Tara Pinkos, and Michael Scholz; and nephews and nieces Jay, Shawn, Suzanne, Valerie and Michele. "Nonnie" loved her grandchildren dearly—leaving behind a legacy of strong, intelligent young women and men: Nadia, Addison, Zoë, Victoria, Coco, Shayla, Loryn, Anthony, Sophia and Julianna. Marty was predeceased by her sister Mary, niece Lisa and granddaughter Sasha.

Known for always remembering loved ones' birthdays, Marty never missed the chance to reach out with a thoughtful, handwritten note. She studied interior design and imbued beauty and elegance into everything she did. From dinner parties to high teas and other celebrations, Marty was always a welcoming and wonderful host. She took pride in raising her children and grandchildren to appreciate the same kindness and social graces.

Marty will be greatly missed by her family and friends. A tea celebration was held in Marty's honor by her children and immediate family. It was a beautiful afternoon of remembering. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Friends can honor Marty by donating to LifeNets International (LifeNets.org) in lieu of flowers.

A Precious Truth

continued from page 3

Repeatedly, as I prayed and studied for understanding, this wonderful truth was confirmed to me.

The apostle John said, "No one has seen God at any time" (John 1:18), and this was in the context of the Word—the Logos, the Spokesman who was God along with the Father—becoming flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:1-17). So it was God the Father who had not been seen. Jesus Christ likewise confirms this two different times in Scripture. In John 5:37 Jesus said to the Jews: "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." And in John 6:46, Jesus undeniably states, "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father."

We ought to believe the words of John and Jesus as recorded in Scripture and not doubt they mean anything but what they clearly said in this regard. No human being has seen God the Father at any time!

Some would argue that every time the word "LORD" is used in the Bible it must refer to the Father. But, in light of Christ's and John's own words that no one has seen the Father, it is wrong to believe this error—because the LORD did appear to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and He interacted with and spoke to them repeatedly. The One who became Jesus Christ is revealed as the Word of God, the Logos, the Spokesman. Think on and analyze that for a moment—He wouldn't be much of a Spokesman if He didn't speak much, would He? If the LORD was always exclusively the Father, the Spokesman would have said very little during the Old Testament period!

The Logos, the Spokesman who was God along with the Father, became flesh and dwelled among us.

The LORD also appeared to Jacob (Genesis 32:30) and to Moses "face to face" (Exodus 33:11) while manifested in human form. According to Scripture, Moses even saw the LORD's back while He was in His glorified state in the form of God (Exodus 33:20-23). Clearly this Being who was seen was not the Father, but must have been the One who later became Jesus the Christ.

The One we now know as the Father delegated to the Word the responsibility to interact with mankind as God, beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:1, 26-28) and proceeding to appear to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 26:2, 24; 35:1; 48:3; Exodus 3:2, 16; 6:3, 16:10; Leviticus 9:23, etc.). As recorded in 1 Samuel 3:10, the LORD even stood by and spoke to little Samuel!

Jesus Christ revealed Himself as "I AM"—the Being who appeared and spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was the God Being who directly interacted with Moses, and who led the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 3:14; John 8:25, 28, 58), and He spoke the Ten Commandments to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19-20), where He was seen by and ate a meal with Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and 70 elders of Israel (Exodus 24:1, 9-11).

Jesus Christ also clearly revealed Himself as the Rock who accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:4-9; 2 Samuel 22:2-3).

"The LORD," *YHWH,* is used thousands of times in the Bible. When the context reveals One bearing this name appearing to and speaking directly to people, that One is the Being who became Jesus Christ. However, the name *YHWH* may also refer to God the Father and in a relatively small number of places in the Bible refers to Him exclusively. Often the name is used of the Father and the Word together as God. This is because we should always remember that the Word, the Logos, the Spokesman, was God too (John 1:1)—of the God kind—and that Jesus Christ is God (Titus 2:10, 13; 1 John 5:20). "It is clear that the name *YHWH* can be used to identify both God the Father and the One who later becomes Jesus Christ (the Word)" ("*Nature of God and Christ,*" UCG Doctrinal Study Paper, p. 14).

Some have been confused by Acts 3:13, which refers to the Father as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This may be easily understood in light of the fact that the Father and Christ are both God. Of course, the Father is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the sense that God the Father is supreme and He is your God, my God and everyone's God. But this doesn't negate the fact that it was the Word who personally interacted with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (and others) as God. The Father has delegated roles of Creator, Redeemer, High Priest, Intercessor and Spokesman to His beloved Son, Jesus Christ! But, on the other hand, the Word always did the Father's will and always spoke for the Father (John 5:19, 30-31; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10). So the Father was also intimately involved through the Word with whom He existed throughout eternity. Jesus Christ said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30; 17:22). We worship both the Father and His Son, who was the Logos or Spokesman for the Father and was also God and LORD.

The Bible is consistent in its teaching that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2). Therefore, there were two Beings, now called God the Father and the Son of God, throughout eternity.

Again, it was the Word to whom the Father delegated the very important role of intimately and directly interacting with mankind from Adam and Eve throughout history until Jesus came in the flesh as the Son of God. The Word, the Logos, the Spokesman—the One Who became Jesus Christ—may accurately be referred to as "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," along with the Father.

We should cling and adhere faithfully to the clear teaching of the Bible on this topic and patiently deal with any perceived problems or difficulties with our long-standing overall teaching on this subject, being careful not to cause discord or division (1 Corinthians 11:17-19; Jude 1:19).

Much more could be said, but let us rest assured that it was God Himself who revealed this amazing, precious truth to His Church—and His Word is clear and sure! UN

ABC Students Host 1950's Dance



Sean and Kira Boyd share a laugh at the dance.

The ABC class of 2019 hosted a fun evening of dancing on Saturday night, April 6 at their 1950's Decade Dance.

All of the young adults in the Cincinnati area were invited and almost everyone came dressed up in their ginchiest 1950's attire. Attendees spent the evening swing dancing, jump-and-jiving and fellowshipping. About 60 young adults were in attendance and the hall was decorated with 1950's records, old coke bottles and plenty of refreshments.

After the dance, the ABC students were thankful for the young adults who stayed later to help clean up and reset the hall.

Ariana Del Signore

Are You A Christian Soldier?

continued from page 3

Are we indeed Christian soldiers? Fully committed to and obsessed with our mission and commission? Have we become far too passive in our individual mission and commission to be Christian soldiers and ambassadors for Christ?

We sing the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers" with great gusto. But do we really mean it?

What do I mean by passive? We take on the attitude that nothing can change or be done until Christ comes and the Kingdom is established on earth. I see brethren come to church and passively sit with a pleasant look on their face, but if they bring a Bible they don't open it—much less take notes. This approach is like the parable of the Ten Virgins. This state of mind is reflective of John's description of the Laodiceans. The reference to them being "blind" seems to show that they don't know they are Laodiceans (Revelation 3:14-22).

Are we living as if we have been translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son? According to the apostle Paul, those who have repented and received God's Holy Spirit have been translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13). Or are we awash in the political correctness and multiculturalism of the day where everything is gray, evil is called good and good called evil and the watch word is tolerance?

God deeply desires all of our affection and being and He wants it now. God is a jealous God and there is no middle ground with Him—you cannot serve God and mammon i.e., you cannot pursue the things of this world (James 4:4-7) and live the resurrected life as Christ lives His life in us.

Are we Christian soldiers and ambassadors for Christ? Are we ambassadors for the Kingdom of God? Is Christ truly in our lives? Note the question that Paul asks in Ephesians 4:1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation [Greek word is *klesis* which means calling] wherewith you are called." Far too many treat their spiritual life as if it were a sideline activity. Something you do on the Sabbath. Whereas soldiers are on duty 24/7.

Of all the challenges that beset us as a people now, I believe it is the fact that the cares of this world have by default become our number one priority. They have choked and smothered the zeal in our hearts and minds. On the Sabbath we tend to be exhausted because we have spent our time and energy during the week on surviving. We have become victims of "SMS" (survival mode syndrome). There are so many physical things that we believe have to be done in order to survive. But Christ says, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). The challenge is for us to stir up the Spirit and rekindle the fire and love for the truth and the brethren. Let us set aside the burdens of the day and run with patience the race that is set before us.

We should not live as if the Kingdom is just a faint hope for the future. We have been called to the highest calling there is. There is no greater calling than to be invited to become a son or daughter of the great King of the universe. We are called to rule and reign with God and Christ over the whole world. Do we value our calling to become members of the royal priesthood of God—called to be kings and priests in the Kingdom of God?

The New Testament is replete with admonitions to fight and struggle to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered. When we went under the watery grave of baptism we became Christian soldiers and ambassadors for Christ. Our ultimate goal and reason for being is to become love as our Father in heaven is love and be born into His family at the resurrection.

Satan also has a *raison d'être* (reason for being). That is to break prophecy, make God into a liar, wreck God's plan of salvation and destroy humankind. Satan has tremendous power and is continually waging war. Remember Paul's words, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Paul uses metaphors of military armor to describe our spiritual armor. Satan now has at his disposal the communication and behavioral technology to continue to deceive the whole world. But as Paul exclaims the weapons of our warfare are spiritual, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled" (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). We have more power at our disposal than all of Satan's minions and devices combined.

God is a jealous God and there is no middle ground with Him—you cannot serve God and mammon i.e., you cannot pursue the things of this world.

One of the greatest understandings the Church of God teaches is the purpose of human existence. In my view, these are the six greatest questions of the ages: 1) who is God; 2) what is God; 3) what is His purpose; and the corollary to those questions, 4) who is man; 5) what is man; 6) what is his purpose?

The culture of God will be the only culture allowed to exist in the wonderful world tomorrow. That culture will be built on the foundation of moral and spiritual knowledge—the Word of God.

The youth of the land have been targeted—do they really know and understand their reason for being? Some of our youth are just biding their time until they can leave home—be out on their own and live as the rest of the world lives. Of course the glamour and glitz of this present evil age appeals to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. In order to counter the prevailing pressure to conform, parents must teach their children what is important and what is the real reason for their being. We are on a quest for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life in the Kingdom of God (Romans 2:7). If we don't diligently teach them their reason for being, they are defenseless as the culture is awash with living in the now.

Young and old have become victims in the name of tolerance, political correctness and multiculturalism. It seems the tidal wave of political correctness has rendered some powerless to stand fast as Christian soldiers. But young and old have at their disposal spiritual weapons that will enable all of us to gain the victory over Satan.

The challenge is for us to stir up the Spirit and rekindle the fire and love for the truth and the brethren.

Many people have come into the church because of prophecy and that is still more important to some than our reason for being. Note the words of Paul, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Becoming love as God is love envelopes the core of Christ's teaching. When the lawyer of the Pharisees asked Jesus which commandment is greatest, He responded, "... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40). Note the assertion made in verse 40, that the law and prophets hang on the two great commandments.

Prophecy is still important—because a faulty understanding of prophecy will be one of the main ways that Satan will deceive the world into accepting the anti-Christ. Will we not be deceived if we cleave to the trunk of the tree? People could have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and yet fail if they are not becoming as God is. God is love (1 John 4:8, 16).

Have we lost the fire in our bellies for marching onward to the Kingdom as Christian soldiers? We must not draw back, if we continue to march forward, armed with the Word of God and Spirit of God, we cannot fail. If God is for us, who can be against us (Romans 8:31-38)?

So, let us march forward as Christian soldiers in full assurance of faith. Let us renew our zeal and dedicate ourselves to make a difference in our own lives and the lives of others right now. Let's march forward as God's great army carrying forth the banner of truth and righteousness. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Matthew 24:46). **UN**

Trinidad Teen Takes on Camp Cotubic 2018

Are you ready for camp this coming summer? Elizabeth Bissessar describes her first experience as staff in a United Youth Camp in the U.S.

By Elizabeth Bissessar

Growing up in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), there were never many young people in my local congregation. It has been my desire to create comradeship with my fellow young, like-minded Christians, supporting each other down this narrow path of life. Being a recent college graduate, I took it upon myself to venture off to the U.S., seeking my own 2018 adventure at Camp Cotubic. Right before my camp journey even began, doubt crept into my mind. Not knowing anyone at camp even as a young adult can be daunting. Also, leaving your home, whether it's your state or country, can be intimidating as it forces you to move outside your comfort zone.

Questions arose in my mind about not fitting in, not knowing anyone and whether I could even perform the staff duties well. Soon I realized that these kinds of thoughts of hesitation were not of God's will but that of the enemy. The focus of camp has always been to build love, joy and peace with God and your fellow brethren. Yet Satan can twist the goodness of an amazing opportunity into something negative. From there on, I made a more active effort to keep my mind focused on scriptures like Matthew 5:14-16 about being a light. Dwelling on being a light reminded me that our service like volunteering at camp should not be hidden under a basket but is in fact a real calling for each of us to do our part and share our talents. Beaming with an attitude of willingness to assist the youth of the Church is a chance I could not refuse.

So how was camp for me? One word: Awesome! The Cotubic campground was absolutely gorgeous with its expansive green landscape, the glassy lake and cozy sleeping quarters. Working with Mitch Moss on the team-building committee was a wonderful experience that involved planning activities centered on teamwork. My job at camp allowed us to showcase the importance of building trust amongst campers, strengthening their relationships with God and their teammates during and post-camp.

I also learned that being vulnerable has value as opposed to being harmful. Compass Check sessions evolved into precious moments where both staff and campers let down their barriers, insecurities and fears amongst each other, building up strength and encouragement rather than emphasizing the weaknesses of one's struggle. Furthermore, I cannot believe I even stressed about whether I would make any friends because it turned out that this was the easiest part of camp. There was a diverse mix of individuals across the U.S., as well as individuals coming from across the world such as South Africa, Philippines, Brazil and Mexico.



Elizabeth (far left) with other staff at Camp Cotubic in summer 2018.

The main lesson I learned from camp is to put the opportunity to serve others above my personal desires and to throw out discouraging thoughts that can separate you from God's will for your life. How amazing is it that God challenges us to go beyond the horizon and explore unknown opportunities! Spiritual growth and the development of amazing friendships would not have happened if God had not moved me to attend Camp Cotubic in 2018.

I would urge any young person who is thinking about going to camp in 2019, and has the means to go, to just do it! **UN**

Teen Photography Contest



We have chosen a winner of the teen photography contest! Thank you to everyone who submitted a photo!

Breanna Greer is the winner of the contest and will have her photo featured on the front cover, in full color, of the Teen Festival Book. Above is the photo that will be on the cover of the 2019 Festival Teen Book and was taken in Alaska at the 2018 Feast. We have had many entries submitted and are excited to share the rest inside the booklet.

Please be sure to register for the Feast at UCG.org in order to recieve a printed copy of the Teen Festival Book. A PDF will also be available on the members website closer to the Feast.

Thank you for your support!

The Education Team

ABC Sells Cookbooks for Fundraiser



Pictured are ABC students and staff who worked on the cookbook.

After months of planning, collecting recipes, taking orders, editing and having work parties, we can now reveal our finished product! The long-awaited healthy Unleavened Bread cookbook, *Healthful Eats and Unleavened Treats*, has arrived just in time for the Days of Unleavened Bread.

The concept of providing health-conscious recipes for Unleavened Bread was important because of the growing number of brethren in the Church seeking healthier alternatives, whether because of health issues or simply to be mindful of their health. Here is a cookbook of only unleavened recipes, many of which are sugar-free, dairy-free, gluten-free, grain-free or egg-free. These recipes are organized in four categories: Unleavened Bread, Starters and Sides, Main Dishes and Treats. Many recipes have been family favorites for years; others have been handed down through generations; still others are original creations by the authors themselves.

We sincerely hope you get as much joy out of using these recipes as we have had in collecting them. All proceeds go toward our ABC International Students Fund to help international members be able to participate in the ABC program, bringing the knowledge and leadership skills they develop back to their home countries to serve brethren there. We would like to thank those who purchased a cookbook and those who spent many hours working to create this special product.

Additional cookbooks can be purchased by filling out the order form in the back of the cookbook along with the amount of $12 plus $3 shipping. They can also be ordered by emailing us at healthy.cookbook2019@gmail.com.

Kathy de Campos

What's New In MEDIA?

BEYOND TODAY

Television Airing Schedule

Title	Host	Literature	Airing Period
The Ten Commandments: The Heart of the Matter	Darris McNeely	*The Ten Commandments*	May 5-11
Two Things You Didn't Know About Jesus	Steve Myers	*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*	May 12-18
What Happens to Me When I Die?	Gary Petty	*What Happens After Death?*	May 19-25
The Four Horsemen of Revelation	Darris McNeely	*The Horsemen of Revelation*	May 26-June 1
The Middle East in Prophecy	Darris McNeely	*The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*	June 2-8
Should I keep the Sabbath?	Steve Myers	*Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*	June 9-15
You Can Understand the Bible	Gary Petty	*How to Understand the Bible*	June 16-22
Are You Led by God's Spirit?	Steve Myers	*The Power of the Holy Spirit*	June 23-29
Are We Living in the Time of the End?	Gary Petty	*Are We Living in the Time of the End?*	June 30-July 6

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UNITED NEWS

Coworkers Now Invited to Subscribe to *United News*

The *United News* editorial staff is happy to welcome a new group of readers to our publication. We are now offering *United News* subscriptions to our coworkers—those who are contributing financially on a regular basis to the work of the United Church of God, *an International Association*. Currently, about 43 percent of our *UN* subscribers are coworkers who don't usually attend Sabbath services with us at one of our 400 church locations. We welcome our new readers to *United News* and thank you for your support!



ucg.org/members/united-news/inside-united

Be sure to check out the most recent *Inside United* Podcasts hosted by Mr. Victor Kubik. There have been 116 recorded and published episodes! A few more have been recorded and are now being edited. Here are some of the recent episodes:

- Podcast #116: Steven Britt—Aliens
- Podcast #115: Hayli Messer—ABC Experience
- Podcast #114: Andi Chapman—Discussing Death, Part 2
- Podcast #113: Andi Chapman—Discussing Death, Part 1
- Podcast #112: Jesmina Allaoua—Beyond Today in Germany
- Podcast #111: Stan and Judy Erickson—Lifetime of Friendship and Service
- Podcast #110: Rainer Salomaa and Tony Wasilkoff—Update on Canadian Work
- Podcast #109: Jessica Hendrickson—Update on French Work
- Podcast #108: Randy Urwiller—Sex, Solomon, Song of Songs
- Podcast #107: Mark Welch—Ministerial and Member Services
- Podcast #106: Steven Britt—Abortion and Life
- Podcast #105: Darris McNeely—Ministerial Training in the UK and Africa, Part 2
- Podcast #104: Darris McNeely—Ministerial Training in the UK and Africa, Part 1

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2-5: *Preteen Camp Nacome, Tennessee*
June 9: *Pentecost*
June 16-19: *Preteen Camp Colorado, Colorado*
June 23-26: *Preteen Camp Piney Woods, Texas*
June 30-July 7: *Camp Cotubic, Ohio*
June 30-July 7: *Camp Pinecrest, Missouri*
June 30-July 7: *Camp Hye Sierra, California*