News of the Churches of God

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Did you leave the Worldwide Church of God a bit too soon?

The writer, who attends the Church of God, Big Sandy, is CGBS youth in- stant and camp coordinator.

By Diana Havir

INDIANA, Texas—Our God’s not dead. He’s surely alive.
He’s living on the inside, shining like a lion.

The meeting hall reverberated with preteen and teen voices singing the popular Newsboys song while jumping and dancing in unison.

This was just one of the many experiences campers and counselors enjoyed during the summer camp sponsored by the Church of God Big Sandy (CGBS) at Timberline Camp and Conference Center in Big Sandy, Texas.

“The best part of camp was just spending these five days with them,” said Kevin Moody. “You get so close with people when you spend every minute of five days with them. It was a great experience.”

A lot of activities

Participants—all were from East Texas—enjoyed a diverse array of activities during the camp. They started each morning with traditional camp activities and then participated in a Bible study followed by a brief service project and some wild and crazy indoor games.

Verse theme

Bible studies throughout the week focused on aspects of the camp’s central Bible-verse theme, 2 Timothy 4:7—“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous, has prepared for all who love Him.” (See SUMMER CAMP, page 16)

Big Sandy congregation sponsors summer youth camp

By Gary Fakhoury

MILTON, Del.—I think one of the things that can keep us from gaining closure regarding our experiences in the Worldwide Church of God is lingering doubt. I think we all wish we had left before this happened, so we left before giving the new teachings an impartial and thorough examination.

In the end, it could have been that we rejected them simply because we didn’t want to critically examine our own beliefs and perhaps change some things.

As one who left the WCG in the ‘90s, I can assure you that this is precisely how many of our former fellows say about us. Like many blanket explanations, many of our former fellows say about us.

In case you’re wondering...

But I determined to make sure it wasn’t the case with me, and if you’ve ever wondered what would have happened if you’d stuck around and personally challenged church leaders on their teachings, I hope my experiences might be of some interest to you.

Over the past three years I’ve written long study papers comparing WCG-Protestant doctrinal positions on observance and the nature of the Sabbath.

In Transition

As one who left the Worldwide Church of God a bit too soon, I have wondered about how I might approach and greet the man and cast my question. I recall feeling some trepidation about approaching him. This anxiety was partly because of the nature of the question, but also just from the fact that I was going to shake hands and look into the eyes and direct an interrogative toward the apostle himself, a man not known to suffer fools gladly.

Initial nervousness

Standing aside as others spoke with him that Sabbath afternoon, I tried to make my approach and greet the man and cast my question. Looking back, it is rather puzzling, why, after the initial greeting, the arcane doctrines and lore of the WCG, I wanted badly to have this particular question answered.

Maybe it had to do with the uncon- troversial, decidedly nontothical, nature of my inquiry. A question about the 1,335 days of Daniel 12 or the 19-year time cycles, or the date for entering Petra, might get me gal- laged for a grand of time in the Inquisition. Whatever.

Receptive clasp

At any rate, I, respectfully shook his small hand with an Ambassador- firm grip, remotely notic- ing that his hand was soft and pliable, not at all aggressive or commanding. This made me think he was receptive to my probing inter- rogative.

After giving my name and mentioning that I was a senior at the Pasadena campus, he had been transferred from Big Sandy, I said I had a question I wanted about. I also added had “often” won- dered.

What’s the plain truth re Mr. Armstrong’s ‘W’?

New AC grad dared to question Mr. Armstrong

Available: SEP to buy, Hall of Ad to blow up

The adjoining office building is approx- imately 70 by 80.

"The property was once part of a youth Bible camp that disbanded in the late 1990s. The mostly level grounds offer panoramic views of Ambassador Point and Pelican Lake.”

For more information contact Cold- well Banker Properties North at (218) 749-8222. Ask for listing agent Tim Lilkquist.

Halfway across the continent, as part of a planned redevelopment of the former AC campus in Pasadena, the former Hall of Administration is scheduled for “controlled demolition” between now and September 2015. The offer for the administration hall is not for you to buy. It’s so you can use it as a unique SFX [special effects] location.

"This is a unique opportunity for production companies to film scenes which will include such scripted ele- ments as explosive pyrotechnics, con- trolled burns, interior simulated gun- fire, vehicle crashes, demolition and/or other types of SFX and stunt se- quences.

So if you’re working on a movie and need to blow up a building for an exciting scene or two, maybe the Hall of Ad is just the ticket.

For more information contact the City of Pasadena Film Office at (626) 744-3964.
Some people are referring to Adam and Eve as ‘steroids’ in The Journal. Is this something that they have to do because they don’t understand things. I have personally found it hard to understand the verse, but no one else seems to have a clue either.

In the verse, ‘Steroids’ is used to mean a hormone given to people who are not expected to live long enough to produce their own. It is a way of saying that the husband and wife are not equals, and that the husband is the one who makes the decisions. This is not the way I see it, and I believe that the Bible is clear on this point.

I have noticed, especially in recent years, that some people take the Bible literally and believe that we should not allow any of the instruction to not allow any of the instruction to be used in our lives. This is not what the Bible teaches, and it is not what the early church believed.

There should be no argument this sacrifice refers to the Passover, so the instruction to go with it of the day of the year, is the exact original instruction from Exodus. In conclusion, using the same letter from Leviticus 23:32 and applying it to Leviticus 23:5, we say that the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed at the end of the 14th.

I know some translations substitute for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and I have to assume this is not the way the Hebrews understood the difference between Hebrew and Greek/ Western thinking. In Hebrew thinking there are four interpreters of understanding in each verse. This is in contradistinction to Greek/Western thinking. In Western thinking, there are two levels of interpretation: the right and the wrong. We are trained in our culture, religious or otherwise, to think that way.

In Western thinking, when we are told the interpretation of a passage of Scripture and we believe it, then we conclude in our minds that we have understood the meaning of the passage. If someone comes to us with another interpretation, by definition, in our minds, that interpretation must be wrong.

Are antilegalists saying they do not have doctrines, which are nothing more than laws on steroids, whoever has them?

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Columns and commentary

Splits happen, even to one true churches

The writer, a longtime Church of God member and elder is founder of the Argentinean Church of Christian Development and host of its weekly Virtual Church of God. He can be reached at mail@White.org.

By Ken Westby

SEATTLE, Wash.—Splits happen. There’ve been many and they keep coming. More, they’re occurring in all denominations and, for that matter, in just about any human organization, I’ve experienced a big one firsthand. They called me “the devil” back in 1981. I thought, well, maybe not the devil or the Satan, but a bad hombre under devilish influence. I was accused of being used by the Prince of Darkness to attack “the church,” to cause a split. Here was another 10 percent of the charge and wasn’t pushing for a split, but “causing one.”

Ask and you shall bomb out

Who were they “to whom” I refer? They were the human heads of God’s One True Church (OTC). They were the human heads of the OTC (One True Church) warned Satan against church’s wavering brethren that this might be the end-time sign of Satan launching his attack to destroy the church. Hard fast! Don’t listen to the evil divisors. Do what we tell you. While you’re doing it, send money.

The OTC survived the 1974 taxi attack and could continue to ignore or hide its problems—at least until the next crisis.

Questions ignored, problems, and future crises are guaranteed to come. They did until finally the OTC blew big, many pieces, with a few sharp and nasty ones still thinking themselves the OTC to this day.

High drama

Once you’re out of a high-commitment sect or church organization, suddenly it’s just you and God. That can be scary at first but can prove to be the best way to get in contact with yourself, and to promote individual growth and Christian maturity. I think most find this to be their story. In the months leading up to, and for many months following, a church split, emotions move in hyperdrive, E-mails and phone calls flow into the ether like antiaircraft flak, bad motives are generously attributed (rightly or wrongly), lists of sympathizers and enemies develop, leaders emerge, fence-sitters are pushed, and preparations get legal and irreversible.

The breakup proved therapeutic and liberating for many. But the divided individual Christian was now left standing alone before God and responsible to discover His will, without the false comfort of hiding behind the OTC, its correct dogma and its ministers, whose infallibility God had given to you and administered God’s authority.

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My group of rebels was like the gang that couldn't shoot straight. We were just a bunch of naive preachers who thought we'd get a fair hearing.

The real unity of which the Bible speaks is between a saved character, love and commitment to God and His Son (Colossians 3:1-4, 12-14: "together in perfect unity").

Dissensions of spirit

The legitimate OTC is a spiritual entity composed only of saved believers to the very Spirit of God. Its membership roll book is kept to keep far away from the prying eyes of mortals. That church belongs to God and is His upon earth to give the gospel and the church should all attain to be members in this kingdom. If you are divided and confused. To what end?

My group of rebels was like the gang that couldn't shoot straight. We may have had no preparations for departures; we were just a bunch of naive preachers who thought we would get a fair hearing.

There are a number of good things that could come from Christians' part-East Coast Rebellion' of 1974," in charge, the dissidents defeated and weather friends fled in fear, church members were stumped and confounded. To what end?

But, as is usually the case in strong- hearted and God's nature comes apparent: true.

Truth can be hidden or buried for a while, but truth has way of coming to light. It is a light that cannot be hid. It is like a leaven in the meal, and leaven and deceit are exposed. That shining may not happen soon or all at once, but eventually the truth will.

United hustlers

While standing on the sidelines for 43 years watching this process repeat itself, I have seen church splits decimating the hundreds of church breakup, small and large. I perceive patterns that emerge.

From the patterns and from person- al experience I can draw lessons that may offer understanding, perspective and, yes, hope.

There are splits, and there are splits

Not all splits are bad. Not all splits are necessary and some are good, even noble, if the issues are truth and righteousness. I don't deny my hands over the need for "unity" among the Church of God and that some changes have to take place. But, please, never confuse earthly "unity" with the spiritual body of Christ.

Ideally, all members of human reli- gious assemblies would also be mem- bers of the Body of Christ and behave accordingly. Alas, we don't know the ideal, but we know God, and we know that God and the OTC's work had morphed together before we were kicked out of, the OTC, you had been delivered an appointed grace, and that grace was not to be revealed to you. So I am, my friend, that thought would have occurred to you and was revealed to be conditional. I'm sure my friend felt lost but couldn't do anything about it, so he decided to stay or remain a member or minister in good standing, and be out. Things are not what they seem.

Don't worry about status

My advice: Don't base your friend- ship upon status within an organiza- tion. A division may preserve individual good thing. But, as is usually the case in strong- hearted and God's nature comes apparent: true.

The unitymongers are self-serving sometimes things don't work.

The Bible is a composite of 2,000 years or older, written in ancient languages to peoples in cultures and contexts that are not fully understood. Much of it can be plainly under- stood; some of it is difficult. Properly "doing theology" requires specific background, skill and access to the tools of scholarship. The Bible does not bully, but is just for use by others. That "other" is also an "image bearer" whose minds are alien to the spirit of God. Forgiveness follows the same prin- ciple. "For if you forgive men when they forgive you, your Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive your brethren, your Father will not forgive you." (Matthews 6:15-15).

Love, of course, is a decision to pay respect to another. Theologians may use other ways to define forgiveness, but it is the giving bond that knits us together. It is what lies behind the virtues of godly character and action.

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A minister urged me not to succumb to a lesser Christian faith

Can we Return to Genesis?

Continued from page 1 to the teachings of the New Testament. This involved hundreds of hours of study, of course, and I learned a great deal, acquired my best drawings, and took a personal interest in the end, the church—the WCG—simply appeared to be fundamentally incorrect, I felt. It seemed the only way really to test this was to make a public announcement. I had formed people who were likely to disagree. But why? And how could I do without such a story? As I was trying to sort out all this, one of the directors of WCG work. He graciously agreed to do so. About a month later my wife received a call from him, saying that I was grateful to have him do so. The observances were two: received a call from him, saying that to a passage of Scripture that teaches one of the directors of WCG church the church—the WCG—simply moved out of its place!“

The split in our church occurred over a single critical issue: Shall we look to Scripture, popes and theologians for our beliefs, or shall we look to Scripture alone? Once this question is answered for you, the other decisions fall right into place.

I then asked for his reaction to a passage from my paper that concludes between the claims of the New Issue No. 175 (July 31, 2015) Commandments cannot be authorita-

I then reminded him that this doc-

true faith on the Godhead, and we

scripture, is in fact nowhere found in

that we humans can never understand. To cite Jesus’ instruction to reli-

Weird, but true. What about the rest?

firmed that these indeed were the

found in Scripture, but Trinitarian

of the triunity of the Godhead not

the faith of tens of thousands of people

the miracle of E-mail I sent my papers

the layers of irony and contradiction

But here is the most common response

Church leaders and sure, to give them

I then asked, “Could you direct me to a passage of Scripture that teach-

Church leaders) and that I should “give

we would not be allowed to

As I was trying to sort out all this, one of the directors of WCG church leaders, a master’s?”

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The man’s response to this was that

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Those are the feast of Tabernacles sites mentioned at least twice over every 15 years. The caravan is aware of a particular time for information. The listing abbreviates Church of God International (CGMI); Church of God a Worldwide Network, commonfaithnetwork.com. Obviously, that some Church of God organizations allow believers to attend with them only by special permission. Therefore, if you wish to attend one of those churches, it’s not only the first contact the sponsoring church or its representative. Examples of other sites listed include: The Church of God, feastgoer.org.; Congregation of Yahweh, Sept. 30- Oct. 6, sooj.org/index.html. This listing abbreviates Church of God Intercontinental (CGMI); Church of God a Worldwide Network, commonfaithnetwork.com. Obviously, that some Church of God organizations allow believers to attend with them only by special permission. Therefore, if you wish to attend one of those churches, it’s not only the first contact the sponsoring church or its representative.
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— Licensed to Explore the Ancient World —
When we were in grade school (6th to 5th or 6th now, in the States) we were supposed to have learned reading comprehension. Exercises and examples were designed to force us into actually thinking about what we had read so we could extract the critical ideas from the work in question.

Far too many people rush through a reading assignment and let many of the critical ideas slip past them due to not having learned to practice careful reading of a work. This article touches on the ability of a reader to think past their preconceived notions of what they think a paragraph says.

Let’s pretend we are part of the world. On December 1, I tell my children they needed to clean their room starting on the 13th day of December 12. Then on the 5th of December I tell them again that they were to clean their room for 12 days, and whatever they find under the bed on the first day is to be placed under the Christmas tree.

Now, after reading those instructions, what do you think they are supposed to do? Are they supposed to get things out from under the bed? Do you think they are supposed to do? Are they to clean their room starting on December 12? Are they supposed to get things out from under the bed on the 12th? Everyone should know where this is going.

Based on the above hypothetical scenario, the kids were supposed to get things out from under the bed on the 12th? They were supposed to do? Are you think they are supposed to do? Are they to wait until the morning which the Lord shall choose to cause His Name to dwell. 3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction: 4 And there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy borders seven days; and there doth not remain of the flesh which thou dost sacrifice at evening on the first day till morning.

I think you get the idea. Seems as if God was pretty clear that they were to eat unleavened bread during the Passover timing, there were at least 18 hours or more from the death angel to the time they marched out of Egypt. This page is part of Connections: Member to Member, the advertising section of The Journal. This page contains paid advertising.
The Ezekiel WATCHMAN

God’s Warning Message

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the LORD (Malachi 4:5; Matthew 17:10-11).”

“The United States Is Dying”

Alton B. (Don) Billingsley

The United States Is a Dying Country—July 17, by Steve McCann—For many years that distasteful reality has been painfully obvious to those of us who immigrated to the United States having experienced first-hand the human suffering brought about by the near total destruction of a continent and the brutality of totalitarian rule throughout the world. The underlining cause of so much death and destruction over the past century is the destruction over the past century is threelfold: immorality, despotism and radical ideology.

Legalized Abortions—“I could only watch over the past 42 years as the American people have sanctioned, through legal abortions, the death of over 54.5 million children. Once this disregard of human life took hold, the citizens of this nation were susceptible to wholesale changes within society.

The Addiction of Society—“Our society is absolutely addicted to entertainment (most of which is utter trash), tens of millions of us are hooked on drugs (both legal and illegal). . . . Our financial system is consumed with greed, we treat our military veterans like human garbage, and most of our “leaders” in Washington, D.C., are deeply corrupt. In America today, 64 percent of all men view pornography at least once per month, it is estimated that one out of every four girls is sexually abused before they become adults, and we have the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the entire industrialized world. . . .

The Addicted Baby Parts—All over the United States, the body parts of aborted babies are being bought and sold, and the U.S. government gives the organization at the heart of this sick “industry” hundreds of millions of dollars a year. This week, another incredibly shocking undercover video has been released which has given us even more evidence of what Planned Parenthood is really up to . . .

This is wickedness at a level that is almost unspeakable, and it is being bankrolled by the U.S. government . . . .

End-time prophecy warns that Word will be given to flee, possibly within the next three years, more or less, according to God’s Time Table, before the demise of this or other nations of Israel! And to be counted worthy (Luke 21:36), preparation MUST BE taking place now—both spiritually and mentally—in order to be counted worthy to escape before nuclear disaster strikes (Revelation 18:4-5; Jeremiah 30:4-7). Promise from God: God has made a PROMISE of protection for those who are of the Philadelphia Era of His true and faithful Church for clinging to the FULLNESS of His true teachings, as taught by His late apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (Revelation 1:5; Jeremiah 30:4-7).

The Sale of Aborted Baby Parts—All over the United States, the body parts of aborted babies are being bought and sold, and the U.S. government gives the organization at the heart of this sick “industry” hundreds of millions of dollars a year. This week, another incredibly shocking undercover video has been released which has given us even more evidence of what Planned Parenthood is really up to . . .

This is wickedness at a level that is almost unspeakable, and it is being bankrolled by the U.S. government . . . .

An inside view of this world—viewing the conditions in everyday society in America, violence, lack of justice, racial riots, diminishing of authority and respect for Law Enforcement, moral collapse, abortions, rejection of religion—of God and His Holy Bible, not only in America, but the world—recently led the disillusioned Bill O’Reilly on Fox News Channel to make the following observation: “This world is going to blow up . . . and will unless something happens to change it!”

The Coming Demise of the Nations of Israel—End-time prophecy makes known the people of God who choose to remain within the cities of the United States and Israel—will soon have the BIG BOMB dropped on them (Ezekiel 6:6; 12:20).

Warning from Holy Scriptures—God’s true and faithful people are being warned that Word will be given to flee, possibly within the next three years, more or less, according to God’s Time Table, before the demise of this or other nations of Israel! And to be counted worthy (Luke 21:36), preparation MUST BE taking place now—both spiritually and mentally—in order to be counted worthy to escape before nuclear disaster strikes (Revelation 18:4-5; Jeremiah 30:4-7). Promise from God: God has made a PROMISE of protection for those who are of the Philadelphia Era of His true and faithful Church for clinging to the FULLNESS of His true teachings, as taught by His late apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (Revelation 1:5; Jeremiah 30:4-7).
A merica's Deadliest Export: Democracy
US foreign policy is no secret. It is plainly obvious that the USA involves itself in the affairs of other nations for its own benefit. It has overthrown more than 50 foreign governments, most democratically elected. Dropped bombs in more countries than one can count, killed or injured millions, made the lives of many more a living hell.
Romania used the Roman term meaning Let them hate as long as they fear. A member of the Bush Administration was.Vector. No motto. US diplomat John Kiesling in his resignation letter to the US government after the war policy asked if the motto is that of the US.
When the huge Pentagon was planned in 1941, Senator S. Marchant always asked, Unless the war is to be permanent, why must we have permanent accommodations for its ex-
citizens of such size? Or is the war to be perma-
nent?" Perpetual war was conducted ever since. The Nazis were accused of by the Allies, of attack-
ing other nations unprompted. So the US would not just attack if for defense, but for offensive.
Many US leaders in the 1800s expressed glorifying war, and the US military newspaper of the day said good of the world that the English-speaking race in all its branches should hold as much of the world's surface as possible. The Cold War and the Vietnam War was the same thing, claiming even fighting in space and cyber space. Including the ability to deny others the use of the space. Including the "Air Dominance, Space Dominance and Cyber Dominance".

So they are not your father's imperialistic war-
ers, but the present version are no less imperialist and claim even fighting in space and cyber space. Including the ability to deny others the use of the space.

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**STOP SHOUTING and STOP HIDING**

I CHALLENGE all offshoot WCG sinisters 1 Kings 18:19 and dare you offshoot WCG sinisters to SPEAK UP and defend your lies of WHY you do not obey God's 4th Commandment in 1/2 the World! (International Date Line). Just, like the Poop moves God's Sabbath to SUNDAY.

You can't change God's Bible Words of Exodus 20:8 and have Sabbath on Friday; only have 1 pilgrimage Feast Days. (Deut 14:1).

"Admit to God that you are breaking "HIS" instructions and REPENT/CHANGE your ways, or why are you breaking God's WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS. Stop hiding in silence! You cannot have it both ways. God's WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS when "you are BREAKING" God's INSTRUCTIONS. For that makes you ALLIERS.

... repent all you Ministers/CHANGE! And stop God's words above WORDS, from people's God's words!

**For if we go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES" (Hebrews 10:26-27).

The Obedient Church of God / P.O. Box 1278 / Omak, Washington 98841

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Does Romans 7 show Paul a Slave of Sin?

**For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I do is not, that I do not practice: but what I hate, that I do” (Rom 7:14-15).**

In fact, Paul tells us there is One who can deliver us from our condition, Jesus Christ. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2). This Law of Sin is the same one described in 7:23 five verses before. Death in 8:2 is included in parallel, as equivalent. The Law of Sin is death working in us.

Christ enabled Paul to break free from that law or power that kept him from doing what he knew he should do. How could that happen? “. . . God did by sending His own Son. . . . condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:3-4). Paul was able by seeking to please his Savior to ignore the pulls of the flesh and walk to His higher standard. He set Christ’s example in the forefront of his mind. He was no longer held captive to the power that made him sin. No wonder he could say, “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:24). “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be made dead, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Rom 6:6).

Paul’s confusion, frustration and angst in Romans 7 was from a time before he came to appreciate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Once he understood and accepted that sacrifice he was able to set aside his own priorities (dictated by his flesh) to build his relationship with His Master and Lord. Jesus’ life and death teach the fundamental spirit and principle behind God’s law, His covenant. “But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament [Old covenant], because the veil is taken away in Christ. . . . Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away” (2Cor 3:14, 16).

It is only through a careful examination of Christ’s selfless conduct and teaching that one can understand His expectation of us. Physical things must be secondary. “. . . You cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat 6:24).

Some allow themselves sin, citing Paul’s example from before his conversion, from before he was released by Christ from the law of sin that brought death. They believe that the spirit of God easily coexists in one who sins, in spite of: “. . . For what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2Cor 6:14), and other similar exhortation. Don’t wait for someone ordained of men to look into this for you. Understand God’s way, which is His covenant on which Christ guided His life. A surface reading is insufficient. One won’t have the veil of misunderstanding lifted if they’re not really carefully studied the foundation and all aspects of Christ’s life.

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Our Peace We Give to You

Dear Brethren,

We hope this letter finds you walking the road to salvation yoked beside our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ/Messiah. For if we are not yoked with Him we will not have a true hope, for He is our hope.

In this day and in this age we who have been called by the Father are being both enticed and assaulted in every conceivable way possible. However, please do not become overly discouraged.

I say overly because what is taking place all around us has been declared to us in the Holy Scriptures long ago so that we would not be caught unaware as to the times we live in. It has all been spelled out long ago. As Linda often tells me and our children, someone had to be here at this time of vile behavior and evil abounding.

There is very little in the world to encourage us when it comes to what we witness each day, and that in fact is exactly why we do not focus on it. Yes, we are present in the world but not of the world. There is no hope to be found in it. Our hope is embodied in our relationship with our Creators; our Savior/Husband and our heavenly Father. There is no hope in men or in the ways of man.

One does not have to look very far and long at the events taking place around us to come to that conclusion if we have the spirit of God/Elohim dwelling in us. The actions of our governing bodies in our respective countries can be summed up as pure evil these days. It has overtaken every high office in the land. Their respective actions are being proclaimed as good and the things of God/Elohim as evil.

No need to elaborate for we should all be able to bring such things to mind if we are being alert to the happenings around us. What I do want to elaborate on is our hope in Him who can fulfill and accomplish in us individually the work which the Father has started at our calling.

In Hebrews 11:1 we read: “Now Faith is the substance (or realization) of things hoped for, the evidence (or confidence) of things not seen.”

Simply put, if our hope is not focused on the things of God/Elohim, we will not have the faith which is required to be pleasing to Him. For verse 6 tells us: “But without faith it is impossible to please (Him), for he who comes to God/Elohim must believe He is a REWARDER of those who diligently seek Him.”

Do not let anyone ever tell you that you can’t be pleasing to God. Yes, you can, and is all predicated on the work of faith! God does reward us according to our actions which are conducted in faith which are pleasing to Him!

Have you been discouraged from diligently seeking our Savior and our Father? I can certainly understand if you have. However, it must not become a permanent thing. A temporary or momentary lapse is common to us all, but it should be only just that: temporary or momentary. There is no doubt in my mind that we are at the end of the age. All the signs associated with it are surrounding us at this time in vivid displays and only increasing in intensity.

Dear brethren, this is not something to be discouraged about, but on the other hand we should be encouraged by it, for it clearly tells us about the time frame we are living in. We are at the 11th hour of our journey on the road to salvation and just prior to the return of Christ/Messiah.

We should be focusing on our relationship to and with our Savior and in fact beseeching Him to the point of pestering Him to complete the work in us that we can’t complete ourselves. In Luke 18 we read the parable of the widow pestering the judge. It is in that venue that we are told the following in verses 7-8.

Luke 18:7-8: “And shall God/Elohim not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? (Oh, yes, our Lord bears long with me so I also know He bears long with you.) I tell you that He will come speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes will He really find faith on the earth?”

Those are the words of our Savior! He was to some extent, here, lamenting, but not wavering in what He knew to be true, but experiencing a temporary or momentary doubt because He was flesh and blood at that time just as we are. He clearly knew what would happen, for God/Elohim said so, but His human nature was showing, just like ours does all too often. That is a fact which we should acknowledge in our relationship with Him.

Hebrews 4:15-16 makes it clear: “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Are you in a time of need? I know I am! I need His help more and more each day to stay focused and to overcome the pulls of this world and of the flesh. Some may think if that is the case I must be failing. I don’t think that. I believe this is recognition of how much I need Him in everything I do. If I rely

Often when brethren find themselves in a bad way they think Christ/Messiah has left them when nothing could be further from the truth.

This page is part of Connections: Member to Member, the advertising section of The Journal
Christ/Messiah is attempting to choose the balance of those who will inherit all things with Him as the bride in the household of the Father for eternity.

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God/Elohim is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear (endure) it.”

Look to Abraham’s time of temptation with his son Isaac. Do you think he was not tempted to walk away from what he was asked to do? He was as human as you and I.

Genesis 22:1-2: “Now it came to pass after these things that God/Elohim tested Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! And he said here I am. And He said, take now your son, your only; Isaac whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

Can we possibly imagine what was running through Abraham’s mind? Sure, he remembered the promises about Isaac, but Can any of us equate any trial or temptation we are going through with the likes of that one placed on Abraham?

We know what happened next; we can read about it in verses 3-13. Let’s just read verse 12 to refresh our memories:

“And He said, do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him for now I know you fear God/Elohim, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me.”

What depth of trial or temptation will we need personally to endure to prove our faithfulness to Christ/Messiah? Abraham showed that he believed God/Elohim above all else, and would follow Him wherever He went.

In Revelation 14:4-5 in speaking about His bride we read that very same thing. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were bought from among men, firstfruits to God/Elohim and to the Lamb.

And in their mouth was found no guile (deceit, falsehood), for they are without fault before the throne of God/Elohim.”

So where do we go from here, brethren? We go before the throne of God/Elohim to claim the promise from Christ/Messiah that He will give us the strength to endure and in fact complete what we cannot do ourselves.

That to me is very uplifting and reassuring in these very difficult and evil times we live in. He will give us the strength to overcome if we are unwavering in our hope in Him. Please remember what He says to us: “You do not receive because you do not ask.” Never stop asking, and be patient in the hope which is in you, and do the works of faith. Our peace we give to you.

—Brian and Linda
The Journal

Have you wondered about ‘W’?

Continued from page 1

Have you wondered about ‘W’?

Continued from page 1

doubt lifted like a misplaced mist, and his face softened, like his hand, and he matter-of-factly replied: “Nothing. It stands for nothing. I added it years ago.”

I believe he said something about needing to add an identifying letter for postal purposes and that he wanted a letter that worked well with his name.

Rooted incident

He did not overspeak. He seemed to want a bit diminished, not being able to say that the W stood for something likeWestinghouse or West-morely or yelled. He did, and he did it with honest plainness.

He seemed relieved to let it out. He apparently felt okay trusting me with his admission. I think back that it was the contrast of this plain speech, learned from his Quaker upbringing, with the bombastic orations that normally boomed from Mr. HA that created this incident in my memory to this day.

I liked him that day and the way he went about confessing that he, unlike most of us, had no middle name.

—Philip Arnold

The J is for James

CGI HQ hires full-time liaison employee

Mr. Skelton began attending the Feast at age 5 and has never missed a Feast.

Mr. Skelton, who has served as an itinerant preacher, an instructor for the CGI’s Ministerial Appreciate Program (MAP) and pastor of the Mal-las–Fort Worth congregation of the CGI since his 2010 ordination, will also serve as a liaison to the ministry as well as a member of the church’s board of directors.

As a traveling minister, not only does Mr. Skelton visit with and speak in CGI congregations, he also fellowships with and speaks for locally governed (often called independent) Church of God congregations that are loosely affiliated with or otherwise have a friendly relationship with the CGI.

One such congregation is the Church of God Anacoco, in Anacoco, La.

“I can’t think of a better of servant of God for the new position,” said Chester Stewart, a member of the Church of God Anacoco and longtime friend of Mr. Skelton.

“Wynn has no hidden agenda. He just wants to serve God and the brethren.”

Mr. Skelton recently officiated at the funeral service for Mr. Stewart’s wife, Linda, who died in May 2015.

Mr. Skelton is a lifelong Church of God attendee and member. He began attending the Feast of Tabernacles with the Worldwide Church of God, at age 5, and has since never missed a Feast.

He attended Ambassador College in Big Sandy, graduating in 1977. He and his wife, Kim, reside in White Oak, near Longview, Texas.

Summer camp focuses on service to others

Each afternoon, after the Bible study and when the campers weren’t busy working on their service projects, they played a variety of crazy games.

Win It games in which campers faced off against each other in silly compe- titions.

For example, in Use Your Noodle each camper had to pick up several objects using only an uncooked spaghetti noodle held in his or her mouth, and in Separation Anxiety they had to quickly separate piles of M&Ms by color or onto coordinating-colors plastic bags.

“The Minute to Win It games were one my favorite parts of camp,” Danni Hawn said. “I really fun to watch every- one play the Sack It Up bean race.”

On Thursday campers formed four teams to ide with some fun, a rousing game of Human Hungry Hippos, where they took turns acting as the hippo, being rolled around the room by their teammates and trying to capture colorful plastic balls with a large hoop.

Just because the sun went down at the end of each day didn’t mean the party had to go on.

Evening activities featured an evening Walk, where participants try to glow-in-the-dark capture the flag on Monday, a nighttime glow-stick pool competition on Tuesday, and a campfire and a Campbell on Wednesday, and a lively dance held Thursday.

Making memories

By the time the camp drew to a close, participants, campers and couns- elors alike had a full week’s worth of food memories to carry with them for the rest of their lives.

“Camp was great!” exclaimed counselor David Havir III. “Can’t wait until next year!”

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