



## Record High BT Program Response and “BT Extras” Debut

By Peter Eddington

Only two weeks ago we reported *Beyond Today* television program “The Message of the Antichrist” had generated the highest weekly response for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. However, we now are pleased to state that another program has superseded its results. The program, “Easter: The Rest of the Story,” which aired from April 12-18, 2020, produced 690 total responses and also achieved the lowest cost per response out of 41 programs aired so far this fiscal year.

In this enlightening episode, host Steve Myers carefully explained how the Christian Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread provide the full meaning of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. An informative free booklet, titled “Easter: The Rest of the Story” and a free one-year subscription to *Beyond Today* magazine were offered to all respondents.

*Beyond Today* TV programs on religious holidays, such as Easter



Steve Myers presented the program, “Easter: The Rest of the Story,” which generated the highest weekly response and the lowest cost per response for this fiscal year.

and Christmas, often draw good viewer interest. Nevertheless, it’s certainly possible that since many people have been sequestered in their homes during the

global COVID-19 pandemic, more people than normal took the time to watch the program on television or the Internet. Could perhaps God be employing this

difficult circumstance to make people aware of the truth of the Bible and their personal need to

Please see page 3

## Members Rally Virtually During the COVID-19 Crisis

By Ariana Del Signore

Nearly everyone is affected in some way as COVID-19 rocks the globe. Schools are closed and many are working from home or unemployed. Many medical workers cannot go home for fear of infecting their families. High school and college seniors face either an underwhelming, virtual graduation ceremony, or no ceremony at all. Anticipated weddings are being webcast due to shelter-in-place orders.

Many wonder what all of this means. What will the new

normal look like after coronavirus? How is this impacting the Church of God: our relationships, Sabbath services and even our faith? While facing the unknown, it can seem harder and harder to “be anxious for nothing” (Philippians 4:6). Social distancing may be saving lives—but emotionally, it can feel isolating and very difficult.

Yet all around the world, humans are making efforts to join together virtually.

Please see page 2



Members of the virtual choir sing “How Good and How Pleasant.” Individual videos were sent in and then compiled by Corbin Rose.

## In This Issue

### Ministerial & Member Services

Mark Welch provides encouragement and an update on the Church during the impact of COVID-19—pg. 2

### Council Letter

Anthony Wasilkoff reflects on the blessing of assembling together, which can often be underappreciated—pg. 3

### Announcements—pg. 4, 10



### Church News

Read about two Women’s Weekends, a barn dance, UYC in Kenya and a printing tour—pg. 9-10

### Remembering Humble Beginnings

In light of UCG’s 25th anniversary, Rex Sexton writes on the beginning of the modern era of the Church—pg. 11

### Consider Your Finances

Howard Marchbanks provides four tips to help you consider your finances in times of uncertainty—pg. 12

### The Good News

#### Pentecost: A Spiritual Springboard

(John LaBissoniere)—pg. 5

#### The Way of Submission

(Dave Mills)—pg. 6

#### The Tenth Commandment

(Don Hooser)—pg. 7

#### Giving Our Best To God

(Reinhard Klett)—pg. 8

## GCE Moves to Online Format



Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, on March 16 during a videoconference, the Council of Elders passed a resolution moving the annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders to an online meeting only, rather than meeting face to face in Cincinnati.

WHEREAS, as a consequence of the COVID-19 worldwide outbreak and the resultant (and continuing) restrictions or advisories against unnecessary travel or even gatherings of more than 10, and

WHEREAS, given the fact that said virus is more dangerous for people over 65 years of age, which demographic includes a large percentage of UCG elders who planned to attend the GCE,

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby resolved:

1) The General Conference of Elders (GCE) and its related meetings will not be held face to face or in person this year; 2) Instead, an abbreviated GCE business session and reports will be held on Sunday, May 3, via webcast with the Sabbath services of May 2 to be via live (or prerecorded) webcasting; 3) The Council meeting scheduled to May 4-6 will be held by teleconference; 4) Balloting packets which are being sent out will include instructions that all ballots are to be sent in by absentee ballot (via mail, fax or other electronic means) with subsequent reminders from home office that all ballots cast are to be via absentee ballot. The Council then discussed the proposed agenda for the abbreviated annual meeting of the GCE now to be held via webcast, which was approved unanimously.

GCE Planning Task Force



We are now living in unprecedented times. In the nearly 65 years I have lived, nothing like this COVID-19 situation has occurred. It is somewhat surprising to me that, for the most part, most around the globe seem to be cooperating with governmental directives on federal, state and local levels.

Clearly, these are not normal times. Many wonder if it is a lack of faith to comply with the many common-sense instructions on how to abate the spread of the virus.

It is a sacrifice to distance ourselves from one another, because most people thrive on human contact, on touch, and on personal, close communication.

The Bible is clear that there are times when it is prudent and best for human beings to quarantine themselves, lest they spread disease. Now is such a time, according to those who are most aware of how disease spreads. So much is still unknown in regard to COVID-19.

We have continued to observe the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days throughout this crisis. We will continue to worship God on a daily basis. We will continue to be faithful to God the Father and to Jesus Christ, our Savior, despite sacrificing personal contact with one another for a time.

When circumstances change, we will go back to worshipping and fellowshiping “up close and personal” as we have in the past.

I have been very pleased with the responses I have been getting from our ministry during these difficult times. They are truly dedicated to serving God and all of you in ways that, I believe, are pleasing to God. Thank you for being patient as we have implemented new webcasts and continue to strive to communicate with you more effectively. Please continue to reach out to one another, more than ever, and show your love and care by expressing it by phone and in other appropriate

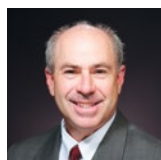
ways to all your local brethren. Please help your pastor to be made aware of any needs within the congregation for yourself and others. We want to help while taking reasonable measures to keep from spreading the virus.

We recently had a web meeting with all regional pastors in the U.S., and I am happy to say that we are all working together to provide for the needs of the brethren.

Each regional pastor gave a very encouraging report showing how the ministers in their regions are doing their best to ensure all members are being contacted and taken care of. These difficult times are challenging all of us to rise up to meet that challenge. As a re-

sult, we are all becoming more competent and confident that with God’s help we will learn a great deal from these troubling times. Members are showing greater concern for one another and we are actually drawing closer together as a people. It is often in adversity that we grow and learn the most. I am grateful there is a great deal of unity among our ministry and fellowship at this critical time.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to your pastor for help. He wants to provide the help you need and will do his best to serve you. Our ministry is never too busy to do the right thing. As we deal with this “present distress,” we are faithful that “this too shall pass.” May that day come speedily! **UN**



Mark Welch serves as operation manager for Ministerial and Member Services. He has served the Church as an elder and pastor for over 30 years and currently works at the home office in Cincinnati, Ohio. He can be reached at mark\_welch@ucg.org.

## Members Rally

Continued from front page

People whom God is not yet calling are displaying Christian attributes despite the anxiety gripping their hearts. They reach out to check on people and pool their efforts to help others.

Importantly, the Body of Christ is doing the same. In the Church of God, there have been efforts to produce resources, connect virtually and care for isolated brethren. These are not programs initiated by UCG leadership, but innovative members who are making things happen.

One member from Cincinnati, Ohio, began an online virtual choir. The compilation of contributed videos (including a sign language version) was played as special music for the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. The pastor of the Cincinnati congregation, Steve Myers, started a program in which each member or family in the congregation was assigned a group of several people to call and check in on. A member from New England started a ladies’ Facebook group so women in the area can interact during the week and video call on Friday evenings.

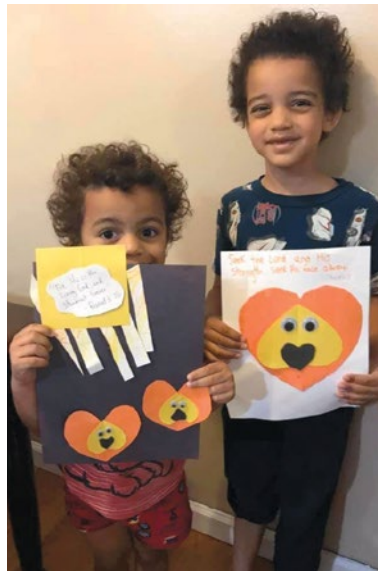
Some pastors keep the local Zoom call open for an hour after weekly Sabbath services so brethren can fellowship. A pastor’s wife in Indiana began teaching virtual Sabbath school lessons over Facebook Live video with

corresponding crafts and activity pages for parents to print out for their children. Other members have sewn and donated masks, started a Church of God special music group, opted for takeout to support local restaurants and started more interactive online Bible studies. When I see all of these things happening, I wonder: can social distance *really* keep brethren apart? It reminds me of Romans 8:35-39. Nothing can separate us from the love of God—agape love is *that strong*. It has been inspiring to see many people channeling that same strength and zeal into serving the brethren and their communities—despite the discomfort and grief we all feel as we navigate our present and wonder about the immediate future.

Trials often expose cracks in our character and help us grow—if we allow them to.

This is an unprecedented time to be living, working and loving each other in the midst of a trial that physically separates us—and God is watching our reactions.

In times like these, I think of people like Daniel, Esther or Joseph and ask myself, “Am I thriving wherever I find myself, as they did?” As events play out, I hope we continue to be inspired by each other and use this as an opportunity to develop and demonstrate unity. **UN**



Above: Kids from around the world have participated in the virtual Sabbath school.

Below: Instrumentalists in the virtual choir begin “One Faith One Love” before dozens of singers join in.



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Some of us grew up in homes where attending church was a regular weekly occurrence.

Others of us attended a church service only on very special occasions, maybe only two times a year—typically Christmas and Easter. Yet others of us grew up in homes where church services were never attended, even if we believed in God and practiced Christian values. I fell into the latter category. I had many friends who went to church, but as a child I did not attend because my parents and most of my relatives did not.

However, at age 13, I discovered the *World Tomorrow* radio program on CFQC Saskatoon in Canada and began to listen to it regularly. Soon I subscribed to *The Plain Truth* magazine and the Bible Correspondence Course along with many, many booklets. By the age of 16 I started to observe the weekly Sabbath and did so by myself because there was no one else to keep it with. I remember how meaningful it was, even as a teenager, to cease personal pursuits for 24 hours and instead focus on spiritual perspectives and values. The experience was profound and it remains that way to this day.

Holy time was an amazing discovery and experience. However, after keeping the day by oneself week after week, month after month, year after year, a person comes to realize that something is missing. In a way, it was comparable to Adam, who felt lonely because “there was not found a helper comparable to him” (Genesis 2:20). Adam needed a companion similar to him. He needed another person like himself to share life with. Similarly, I craved

to meet a fellow believer who was also convicted to rest and worship on the Saturday Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath as a solitary individual was wonderful in its own way, but after a while it became clear that something was lacking—notably, fellowship and assembly.

Eventually I wrote for a visit and was met by Dean Wilson in the summer of 1965 during one of his cross-country baptizing tours. As a result, I was put in touch with a family in Saskatoon and was able to travel there to meet them and keep the Sabbath day with them. It was thrilling to meet a family that practiced the same beliefs and exercised the same values as I did. While there was no congregation, there was another family who had similarly been called. I was delighted to eventually be introduced to

them. A local congregation was established soon afterwards and it was a thrill to meet with them a few times before heading to Ambassador College in the late summer of 1966.

In 1 Corinthians 7:26 the apostle Paul spoke of “the present distress;” this may have been persecution or perhaps some other type of distress. Today, we too have been facing a kind of “present distress” due to the ravages of the coronavirus which has affected virtually every nation on earth. Everyone has been impacted in ways that most never expected and to the degree and extent that most, even experts, never fully envisioned.

One of the restrictions we have had to face is not being allowed to assemble on the Sabbath and Holy Days. In Hebrews 10:25, Christians were admonished to

not forsake the assembling of themselves together as was the manner of some, but instead to exhort one another—and so much the more as they see the Day approaching. These instructions take on new meaning in times of duress.

Being able to stay home on the Sabbath and truly rest wears thin fairly quickly. Before long, a person realizes that something vitally important is missing. Most of us have had the huge blessing of going online to watch an archived Church service or being able to watch a live webcast from the home office week after week. But it is not the same as travel-

ing to a local congregation and meeting fellow believers face-to-face, singing hymns together in person, participating in the worship service together and then staying after the Church service to break bread with one another and enjoy sustained fellowship.

Social isolation has been a key part in fighting the coronavirus and it has unintentionally created a new normal. Work, education and commerce have been undertaken remotely for quite some time and with remarkable levels of success. Some experts predict that this will be adhered to extensively after the virus has passed.

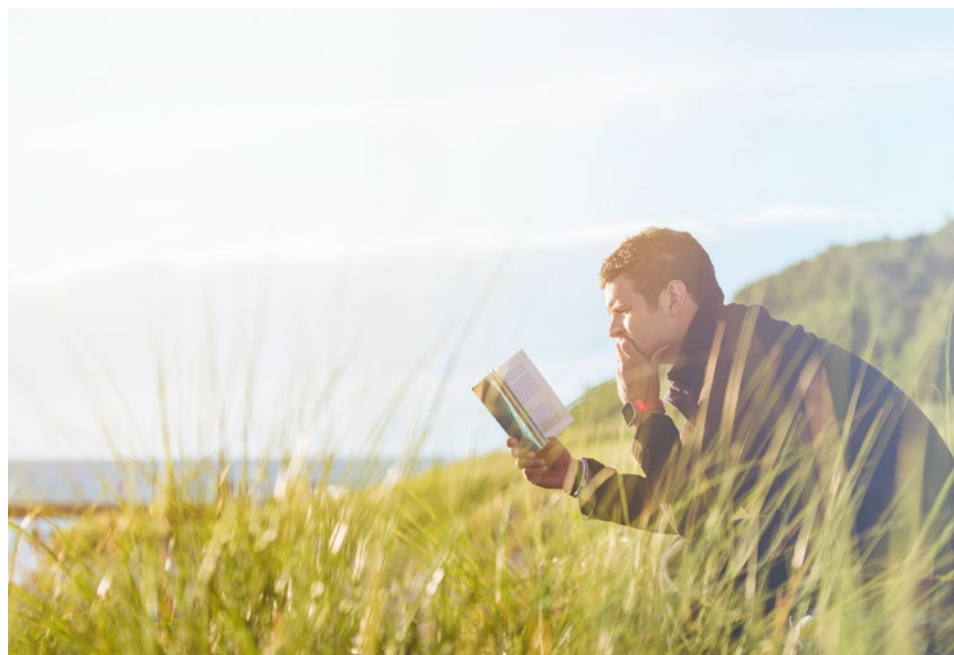
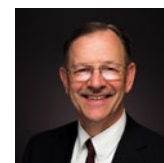
Working from home and worshipping from home may be more convenient, but as one expert pointed out, it doesn’t allow people to develop a sense of culture with one another.

This can only happen when we spend time with one another.

Too often I take my good health for granted. It is only when I become sick, which from time to time I do, that I reflect and say to myself, “After I get well again, I will not take my good health for granted.” The ability to assemble with fellow believers is a huge blessing which we can also too easily take for granted. Only after deprivation can we assemble again with renewed joy, exuberance and appreciation.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and this should be especially true for the Christian heart. **UN**

Anthony Wasilkoff serves on the Council of Elders and the UCG Canadian National Council. He can be reached at [anthony\\_wasilkoff@ucg.org](mailto:anthony_wasilkoff@ucg.org).



Ben White/Unsplash

*Keeping the Sabbath as a solitary individual was wonderful in its own way, but after a while it became clear that something was lacking—notably, fellowship and assembly.*

## Revised GCE Agenda for Sunday, May 3

- 1 p.m.–1:15 p.m.—Call to Order, Approval of 2019 Minutes & Opening Comments (Frank Dunkle)
- 1:15 p.m.–1:45 p.m.—Video or Live Address from the Chairman (Donald Ward)
- 1:45 p.m.–2:15 p.m.—Address from the President (Victor Kubik)
- 2:15 p.m.–2:35 p.m.—Address from Ministerial and Member Services (Mark Welch)
- 2:35 p.m.–2:50 p.m.—Break
- 2:50 p.m.–3:10 p.m.—Address from Media and Communications Services (Peter Eddington)
- 3:10 p.m.–3:30 p.m.—Video Address from the Treasurer (Rick Shabi)
- 3:30 p.m.–3:35 p.m.—Announce ballot results (Frank Dunkle)
- 3:30 p.m.–4:15 p.m.—Deceased Elders and Wives Tribute Webcast Video (Greg Thomas)
- 4:15 p.m.–4:20 p.m.—Announce Ballot Results Webcast (Frank Dunkle)

## Updates from Ministerial and Member Services

In February, Randy Urwiller was made an associate pastor. He is now pastor for the Ruston (Louisiana) and Texarkana congregations, and he will continue to assist pastor Don Ward in East Texas.

On Feb. 29, Marcelo Saavedra was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Marcela, serve in the Santiago, Chile, congregation. On April 9, Michael Fike was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Nancy, serve in the Tampa, Florida, congregation.

Chris Rowland

## Beyond Today Continued from front page

respond to Him and His Word?

We have also recently launched a new series titled, “*BT Extra*.” These more in-depth videos patterned after our BT dailies include more scripture graphics, photos and accompanying video clips to help illustrate the topic being discussed. We have just begun a new seven-part series titled “The Path to Pentecost,” which can be previewed on YouTube.

Here is a listing of BT Extra videos available so far from our main BT Daily video blog page:

- The World Continues to Turn.
- Coping With the Pandemic.
- Revelation’s Relevance for Today.

And now the seven-part series, “The Path to Pentecost,” has been launched—with episode one available for preview on YouTube while we prepare it for upload to our website:

We pray this new *BT Extra* video series will compliment your study of the Bible and give you additional perspective on current events and world news—all in light of Scripture and biblical prophecy. **UN**

**Zanetta Ruth Wagner**

March 15, 2019

**Justin & Mariah Franke**

Dec. 15, 2019

**James Donald Buckmaster**

Sept. 23, 1945-Oct. 14, 2019

**Jeanette Ann Dean**

March 22, 1954-March 22, 2020

## Births

### Zanetta Ruth Wagner

Andy and Lisa Wagner of the Twin Cities, Minnesota congregation are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Zanetta Ruth. Zanetta was born March 15, 2019 at 8:09 a.m. weighing 8 lbs., 7.5 oz. and measuring 20 in. long. Big brothers Elijah, Oliver and Theodore are all delighted to have a sister to love. Overjoyed grandparents include Dennis and Kathy Lausted of the Eau Claire, Wisconsin congregation and John and Teri Wagner; great-grandparents Lloyd and Norma Nelson of the Southern Minnesota congregation.

## Weddings

### Justin & Mariah Franke

David and Sharon Fitch and Shari Franke are very happy to announce the marriage of their children, Mariah Barbara Ann Fitch and Justin Michael Franke on Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019 in Hastings, Michigan.

The ceremony was officiated by David Fitch, father of the bride. The bridal party included Katerina Fitch, Breanna Greer, Natalie Greene, Courtney Franke, Bryan Franke, William Roth, Noah Boyd, Andrew and Caleb Fitch. Several who were especially missed and couldn't take part in the ceremony were Charles and Arlene Franke (grandparents), and Samantha Murray (bridesmaid). We are so thankful for all those who attended or watched on Facebook Live to see the memorable event. Special thanks to the wedding party for making the trip, all the attendees, and those who helped decorate (especially the Greer and Franke

families and Ed Welch) to make it all so beautiful and special.

The love and support shown to the newlyweds has been greatly appreciated by both families. We are all grateful to God for answering many of our prayers, including the weather for traveling that weekend. Justin and Mariah are happily married and living and working in Soldotna, Alaska.

## Obituaries

### James Donald Buckmaster

On Oct. 14, 2019, Jim Buckmaster died. He was a true servant of God. Jim was born in Bakersfield, California on Sept. 23, 1945. Growing up in post-WWII America, Jim became an expert car mechanic—focusing on tuning muscle cars, street rods and a broad variety of race cars. God stepped into Jim's life to focus his wayward energy and intelligence, and on March 3, 1972 he was baptized into the Body of Christ. Jim said more than once that God saved his life when he was called to repentance.

Jim spent most of his life in Wisconsin, and attended a number of congregations around the Madison, Wisconsin area.

He was a loyal and supportive friend to all; a champion of the people. He headed up the Grandparents Rights of Wisconsin for several years. Through much of his effort, and testimony in committee, two laws were passed to make it possible for grandparents to petition for visitation with their grandchildren. (The visitation petitions were for cases of divorce, death of a spouse and single parents—situations where a child's parent may no longer want a grandparent to have a relationship with their grandchild.)

He was mentally gifted, one of only 1,200 registered members (in the world) of Intertel (An International Society of the In-

tellectually Gifted). He owned a number of businesses over the years; always connected to the automotive industry. He ultimately became a mechanical design engineer who created many marketed products.

As a dedicated member of Worldwide Church of God and then United Church of God, he served regularly, leading hymns and giving sermonettes and sermons. He was ordained a deacon on April 26, 2008. He took great care to prepare his messages, always seeking ways to address the congregation's needs. He created an inspiring video on Creation that was used as a Bible study at several Feast sites and various congregations. He thought deeply about how to build uplifting sermons for the Feast of Tabernacles and other Holy Days.

In 2012 God healed Jim from cancer that was expected to kill him, but as a result of the devastation of cancer and chemo treatment he dealt with daily extreme nerve pain for seven years (until his death).

He had bypass surgery just before the Feast of Tabernacles 2019. He was recovering well when his bile duct got blocked by a gall stone. By the time the medical community diagnosed the problem, Jim had irreversible sepsis from which he died.

The only thing that he asked for his Memorial Service was that the thank-you cards that he received over the years be put on display. These were cards that he received for his kindness; the generous giving of his time, talents and financial support for many people (cards that never went public). There were 242 thank-you cards displayed on 13 foam core boards. There were 181 cards still in his "box of appreciation."

His lifestyle was to work hard as if he had no talent and keep his focus on succeeding at whatever he put his hands to do. He was

fierce in the faith—his last race was won.

Jim was preceded in death by his three children Julie, Shari (Laine) and Brian and his only granddaughter Shana. He never burdened others with his immeasurable grief and instead channeled his energies into serving others. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Shirley and his only grandson, Alexander Schweitzer as well as nieces and nephews.

Jim now rests in the grave awaiting the call of his Elder Brother and Savior. He leaves behind a wonderful legacy of service to God and His people and we look forward to seeing him in the resurrection.

### Jeanette Ann Dean

Jeanette was born in South Africa, where she lived with her family until she was 18. Her South African upbringing was a big part of who she was. She held fond memories of her childhood years on the family farm next door to the game reserve, and her school years were spent at boarding school. She delighted her children, and later her grandchildren, with stories of drunken elephants, feral hippos and her cheeky schoolgirl antics.

At the age of 18, Jeanette left South Africa for England to attend Ambassador College at Bricketwood. Later in her college degree she transferred to Pasadena in America. After graduating, she moved to Brisbane, Australia, on a fiancé visa and married Bruce Dean one month later, on April 18, 1976. From then on, she served as a dedicated pastor's wife and mother during assignments in the states of Queensland and New South Wales, specifically Albury, Wollongong and finally Sydney. After retirement, Bruce and Jeanette moved to Canberra to be closer to their daughter and grandchildren.

Jeanette was a woman of action and service to others. If some-

thing was important to her, she did something about it. For instance, she didn't just talk about the importance of education, she returned to school in her early 40's and attained a Master's degree in Post-Colonial English Literature. She used this degree to work and serve in her local community as a librarian. She didn't just rely on the Clean-Up Australia Day initiative to help reduce litter in her local area one day of the year, she picked up litter in her local neighborhood on a regular basis. She saw the importance of Sabbath school lessons for kids in all congregations, so she made sure she taught a lesson for the children whenever she could, particularly in the smaller congregations (even when there were only one or two children in attendance). She knew the teens in the Church were important, and was key in getting the United Youth Camps up and running in Australia with Bruce. She spent many summers at camp, getting involved wherever she was needed (very often the laundry) and developing important relationships with the Church teens. Many of those relationships continued into their adult years.

Jeanette was also responsible for getting Women's Weekends started in Australia. Over the years she mentored and encouraged other ladies to take on the mantle after her. Jeanette saw the Women's Weekends as a necessary way for the women of the Church to build and strengthen relationships with each other and with God. She knew the importance of connection. She put time and effort into connecting with people and maintaining relationships, be it catching up at Church services, a card in the mail, a phone call or a text message. At services, she was always one of the first to welcome new people and to sit with the elderly or engage with the children.

Jeanette Ann Dean was a determined lady of faith. She set an encouraging example, not just of knowing God, but in applying that knowledge to how she lived every day. She was a loving and supportive wife and best friend to Bruce for 44 years, a dedicated mother to Renee and Graeme, a proud grandmother to Oliver, Isabelle, Charles and Samantha and a devoted daughter and sister. In true Jeanette style, everything was neat and organized as

*Please see page 10*



# GN

## The Feast of Pentecost: A Spiritual Springboard

God's Holy Spirit, which is the essence of His perfect, loving nature, helps us produce the fruit of righteousness—if we do our part. Let's consider using this year's Pentecost observance as a springboard for greater spiritual development.

*By John LaBissoniere*

For 40 days following His crucifixion and resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ met repeatedly with His disciples, instructing them in “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’” (Acts 1:4-5).

The Father's great Promise was fulfilled on the first New Testament Pentecost in 31 A.D. when 120 disciples were gathered “with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4).

It was no ordinary day on which the disciples had assembled when these extraordinary events transpired. Instead, it was on the “Feast of Weeks,” one of the seven biblically-mandated Feast Days (Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 23:4-44). Also, as the passage explains, the disciples “began to speak with other tongues.” These were not mysterious babblings as some people assume, but actual known languages. This astounding miracle especially benefitted people who had traveled from other countries to observe the Holy Day and who spoke only their native languages (Acts 2:5). These visitors “were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each *in our own language in which we were born?*’” (Acts 2:7-8, emphasis added).

### What shall we do?

Immediately after this the apostle Peter gave a powerful oration about Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection. Upon hearing his inspired preaching, many of the assembled multitude were “cut to the heart,” meaning they felt deep, sorrowful emotion. As a result, they asked “what

## The Good News

John Rodem/Unsplash



*Those of us who have received God's Spirit after repentance and baptism can apply its power in our hearts and minds to generate spiritual fruit.*

shall we do?” (Acts 2:36-37). Peter boldly answered by saying: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2:41).

During that electrifying period and in subsequent weeks and months, the apostles gave powerful “...witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33). The gift of the Holy Spirit proved to be an enormously energetic force—the very essence and manifestation of God's righteous, loving divine nature.

Today, those of us who have received God's Spirit after our repentance and baptism apply its power in our hearts and minds to generate the positive, vibrant spiritual fruit of righteousness (James 3:18). As Galatians 5:22-23 explains “the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” The Holy Spirit makes available the capacity for each of us to build holy, upright character while also helping us carry out the vital work of the Church in preaching the Gospel and preparing a people (Matthew 28:19-20).

However, what about those individuals who God is calling right now who are *aware* of their need to repent, be

baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, but have *not yet* taken those important steps? If you are among those people, is it now time for you to act in order to benefit from God's marvelous divine gift that can wonderfully transform your life? Moreover, for those of us who *have* received the Spirit of God, are we doing our part to *fully* employ its power every day? Or, have we allowed ourselves to become complacent or distracted so that we are no longer bearing much or any spiritual fruit?

The scriptures reveal that just having the Holy Spirit is *not good enough*. The apostle Paul encountered this fruitless situation in the Corinthian congregation where baptized members were “behaving like mere men.” Rather than using the energy of God's Spirit to grow spiritually strong and perform selfless service towards others, they were producing “works of the flesh”—works of strife, envy and division (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Paul had to admonish them for neglecting their divine obligations. “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you” (1 Corinthians 3:16)?

### Stir up the gift of God

What occurred in Corinth should be a clear signal to us that *we are not immune* to sinking into a similar adverse condition. The problems and distractions that arise in our lives have the *potential* to push us toward spiritual negligence if we are not careful (Romans 8:13; 1 Timothy 4:14). Paul offered crucial guidance about this to a young minister named Timothy by encouraging him to vigorously “stir up the gift of God” (2 Timothy 1:6). It would be incumbent upon us to take to heart Paul's key advice. Indeed, the Holy Spirit *must* be put to work zealously in order to generate results that please God (Jude 20-21).

### *The Holy Spirit must be put to work zealously in order to generate results that please God.*

As we observe the Feast of Pentecost this year, could those of us who *have* the Holy Spirit employ it as a dynamic *springboard* or incentive to more effectively “fire up” its enormous force in our lives? And, for those who are aware of their spiritual needs, could Pentecost be the pivotal turning point by taking the heavenly Father's calling to the next level—meaning repentance, baptism and receiving the gift of His Spirit?

The scriptures plainly reveal that when we are filled with godly righteousness there is no room left for the undesirable, negative fruit of our human nature (Galatians 5:19-22). Let's therefore fully employ the power of the Holy Spirit so we can grow spiritually stronger, unselfishly serve others and deeply honor our great and loving Eternal Creator. **GN**



# The Way of Submission

The simple biblical doctrine of submission helps us to have healthy relationships in our marriages and families, at church, at work and in our communities.

*By Dave Mills*

Submission is based on a humble and meek attitude, actually esteeming others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). It is a viewpoint turned away from the self and toward others. A submissive spirit is not strong-willed and opinionated, but willing to listen to and consider the opinions of other people. It does not want its own way so badly that it cannot give in to the needs or desires of others. It endeavors to be a peacemaker.

The primary Greek word for “submission” is *hupotasso*—a military term meaning to rank under, to arrange under, to submit, to be subject, to assign beneath. *Hupotasso* means to place ourselves under or beneath. It is voluntary—we must choose it. No one can impose it on us.

The opposite of submission is selfishness, being opinionated, having a strong self-will and only looking out for one’s self. This often leads to biting and devouring one another (Galatians 5:15). Without submission, our relationships suffer—in our marriages and families, at church, at work and in our communities. We cannot have healthy relationships without submission—it must be an essential ingredient in all our relationships.

A submissive spirit does not mean we never stand up to a wrong or evil. There are times to stand up for what is right: for example, when Jesus on two separate occasions drove out the animals and moneychangers at the temple (Matthew 21:12-13; John 2:13-16). The apostle Paul also, when he was falsely accused, stood up and appealed to Caesar’s judgment seat (Acts 25:10-12). The way of submission does not mean weakness—quite the opposite. When we must stand up, we should do so with a right attitude and a right spirit, never with hatred or hostility. We regret in our heart that it has become necessary to stand up; we would much rather sit down and reason together, and to agree and be friends.

## The Value of Submission

There is a lot about submission in the Bible. Of course, first of all we are to “submit to God” (James 4:7). He is our Creator, and therefore we readily submit to His rule in our lives. We submit to His will for us, even when it is not necessarily what we want or expect.

Scriptures also instruct us to submit in our numerous relationships with our fellow man. We are to submit to civil government, unless there is a conflict with God’s laws (1 Peter 2:13-14). Employees are to be submissive to their bosses, even if the boss is harsh (1 Peter 2:18). In the family, there is to be a lot of submission between husbands and wives and children (1 Peter 3:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-33; Ephesians 6:1-3).

In the Church, there is to be submission to leadership God has appointed (1 Corinthians 12:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17). Younger people are admonished to be submissive to older people (1 Peter 5:5). And all the members are instructed to “be submissive to one an-



*We cannot have healthy relationships without submission—it must be an essential ingredient in all our relationships.*

other” (1 Peter 5:5), “submitting to one another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21).

But it goes further—there is submission even to our enemies. Jesus said to pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Paul wrote that if your enemy is hungry and thirsty, give him food and drink (Romans 12:20). By submitting to the needs of our enemies, we are imitating our Father in heaven, who sends His rain on the evil and the good (Matthew 5:45), and is kind to the unthankful and the evil (Luke 6:35).

Altogether that’s a lot of submission—to God, to civil government, to the boss at work, in our families, in the Church and even to our enemies.

## Biblical Examples of Submission

The Scriptures provide many excellent examples of the way of submission.

In Genesis 13, when there was strife between Abraham and Lot’s herdsmen, Abraham solved the problem by exhibiting submission. Abraham said to his nephew, Lot: “Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brethren” (Genesis 13:8). Abraham then proposed that they separate and go in different directions—and uncle Abraham let his nephew choose which direction he would go. So they separated and preserved their relationship. What a beautiful example of submission!

Another good example is Joseph with his brothers in Genesis 50. After their father died, the brothers feared that Joseph would seek revenge for the evil they had done to him. When they came asking forgiveness, Joseph broke down and wept. He told his brothers: “Do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones” (Genesis 50:21). Joseph comforted them and spoke with kindness to them. By submitting to his brothers even though they had wronged him, he helped to heal

the breach in their relationship.

In the teachings and life of Jesus Christ, we see the way of submission. Jesus taught to turn the other cheek, to be willing to suffer wrongfully and to be willing to come up on the short end (Matthew 5:38-42). He said that we are to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us and to pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44). He exhorted us not to seek to be the greatest, but instead to be a servant to our fellow man (Matthew 20:20-28). Then Jesus submitted in the greatest possible way, yielding His life on the stake for our sins. Jesus taught and exemplified the way of submission perfectly.

We also see the excellent example of the apostles and elders in the early church. In Acts 15, at the Jerusalem conference concerning circumcision, a spirit of submission is evident among the apostles and elders. After “much dispute” they listened to the experiences of Peter, Barnabas and Paul (Acts 15:6-12). Then James said, “Men and brethren, listen to me”—and he gave a recommendation concerning circumcision which “pleased the apostles and elders” (Acts 15:13-22). As the apostles and elders submitted to one another, led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28), they reached a spiritual consensus on circumcision. What a wonderful example of submission in the leadership of the early church.

We have often seen the same collaborative spirit in the modern era of the Church of God as in the early church, both in the ministerial leadership and in the membership of the church. The way of submission works. May it continue in the years ahead.

Submission is a very important biblical doctrine. Let us learn to defer in humility to one another, loving others so much that we readily submit to their needs and desires to preserve peace when doing so does not break God’s law.

In all our relationships, let’s be living and practicing the way of submission! **GN**



# The Ten Commandments Series

## The Tenth Commandment

By Don Hooser

*“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s” (Exodus 20:17).*

If you knew nothing about the Bible and tried to guess what God’s Ten Commandments are, you probably would not guess the Tenth Commandment. Even the apostle Paul would not have guessed it (Romans 7:7).

But this commandment, together with the rest of the Bible and especially the New Testament, lets us know that God, who knows our every thought, is judging our hearts, thoughts and motives as well as our behavior. He expects godliness in our deeds *and our desires*, in our actions *and our attitudes* (see Isaiah 55:8-9; 2 Corinthians 10:5). Personal character is a matter of our hearts as well as our hands.

Coveting also robs us of contentment, gratitude and peace of mind. And evil thoughts often lead to evil actions (James 1:13-16; James 4:1-4; Mark 7:21-23). Coveting can lead to murder, adultery, stealing and lying.

The Bible gives us many strong warnings about covetousness and the related sins of avarice, greed, envy, jealousy and materialism (Luke 12:15; Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:10-11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). People covet not only physical stuff but all kinds of things.

Long ago, the English word “covet” simply meant desire. Two verses, 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 1 Corinthians 14:39, are about a positive desire for spiritual gifts, but the King James Version translates the Greek word for desire, *zēloō*, as “covet.” But in modern English, covet usually refers to one of the worst kinds of lust. It is not lust for what is obtainable in an ethical way such as earning or purchasing it. *It is lust for what belongs to someone else—one’s “neighbor”—when he is not willing to sell it or give it to you.* If everyone would “love his neighbor as himself,” he would thank God for the blessings his neighbor has instead of craving to take away what belongs to his neighbor!

### Covetous versus contented versus satisfied

The opposite of covetousness is contentment. Quite often the word “satisfied” is used as a synonym for “contented,” but not in this article. It is not wrong to be dissatisfied with your present condition or situation when you have the opportunity to improve them in an ethical manner. For example, if there is no important reason for you to live in a dangerous neighborhood, you don’t have to be satisfied with that location when you are able to move to a safer neighborhood. God wants us to have godly goals, the right kind of ambition and godly methods of striving for those goals. But God wants you to have a contented state of mind no matter where you are. God certainly doesn’t want us to ever be satisfied with our present level of godliness. We can call that being self-satisfied, apathetic, lethargic and lukewarm. God wants us to fervently *flee* temptations and spiritually grow!

Paul regularly demonstrated that with the help of God, one can be content in even the most miserable

circumstances. He gave us the best biblical explanation of contentment in Philippians 4:4-14, and the following quotes are from the New International Version. Paul had had an incredible amount of suffering and “troubles” in his life (Philippians 4:14). In fact, he wrote this epistle while in prison. Nevertheless, he wrote, “I have learned to be *content whatever the circumstances*. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being *content in any and every situation*, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want” (Philippians 4:11-12, emphasis added throughout).

Notice the virtues that promote and accompany contentment: “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4). “Do not be anxious about anything” (Philippians 4:6). “Prayer” (vs. 6). “Thanksgiving” (vs. 6). “The peace of God, which transcends all understanding...” (Philippians 4:7). Think about pure and noble things (Philippians 4:8). Contentment focuses gratefully on what one has rather than pitying one’s self for what one does not have.

### Needs versus wants

Psalm 23:1 (KJV), says: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” The popular meaning of “want” has changed since 1611 when the KJV was published. The New Living Translation makes the meaning clear: “The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need.”

However, most people still don’t believe Psalm 23:1. Adam and Eve didn’t believe it. In our materialistic and affluent society, we are dazzled by a seemingly endless variety of products and we convince ourselves that we *need* lots of them. We are heavily influenced by advertising to believe that accessories are really necessities. We unwisely “compare ourselves” and envy (2 Corinthians 10:12), and we arrogantly think we “deserve” better.

Regarding this subject, chapter 6 of 1 Timothy is jam-packed with important lessons (again using the NIV). Some people “think that godliness is a means to financial gain” (verse 5). For example, having an appearance of being religious is often good for business around holidays like Christmas and Easter to enhance their money-making power. But, truly, “godliness with contentment is great gain!” (1 Timothy 6:6).

***Paul regularly demonstrated that with the help of God, one can be content in even the most miserable circumstances.***

“But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1 Timothy 6:8). In affluent societies, it is hard to take this literally. But when ministers and members visit our church brethren in other areas of the world, where they may only have the bare necessities of life, they are often inspired by their contentment. They are often less distracted by materialism—focusing more on the glorious, joyful prophecies and promises of the Kingdom of God!

“Those who *want to get rich* fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the *love of money* [covetousness!] is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Timothy 6:9-10). Being wealthy is not evil or a cause of evil, and God has often helped people to become wealthy. However, being infatuated with money or lusting for riches leads to all kinds of evil. Compare with Ecclesiastes 5:20, NIV—“Whoever loves money

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*Coveting also robs us of contentment, gratitude and peace of mind.*

never has enough.” (One theme of the book of Ecclesiastes is covetousness versus contentment.)

Advertising fuels the fires of desires and covetousness. And many politicians gain popularity by promising “free” stuff that is paid for with taxpayer money (largely the taxes paid by future generations).

Sadly, those who spend all their income on themselves are not tithing and donating to their church, they are not putting money into savings, and they are not giving to others who have serious needs. It is important to learn the *way of give* versus the *way of get* (Acts 20:35).

### Covetousness is idolatry

Idolatry is any violation of the First Commandment. In two scriptures, Paul equates covetousness with *idolatry* (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5). When one is obsessed with possessing something, that person is idolizing it. These scriptures help us to better understand the meaning of “covet” and how serious it is when we break the Tenth Commandment.

We can think of the Ten Commandments as making up a perfect circle. For one thing, this visual makes every commandment seem equally important since no one commandment is higher or lower on a list. More clearly, this puts the Tenth Commandment right next to the First Commandment. Breaking the Tenth Commandment is one way of breaking the First Commandment. God commands us to look to Him as our primary Provider (Matthew 7:7; James 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:17).

Please read and reflect on the sixth chapter of Matthew. Quoting from the NIV: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” (Matthew 6:25-26).

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But *seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*” (Matthew 6:31-33).

And if we remain faithful to God, He will resurrect us and grant us everlasting life in the Kingdom of God!

Let’s conclude with one final inspiring scripture: “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5). **GN**

# Giving Our Best to God

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

By Reinhard Klett

We are admonished by Jesus Christ, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-38).

This tells us that God expects us not to hold back in any area of our lives—instead of settling for mediocrity, we are to give our very best. In practical terms, the more we develop our full potential through personal and spiritual growth, the more we can be of service to God and express His love through our service and contribution.

The book of Malachi contains some strong admonitions to the people of Israel: "You offer defiled food on My altar, but say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible...' You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' and you sneer at it," says the LORD of hosts... 'And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?' Says the LORD" (Malachi 1:7, 13).

Is there a principle that applies to our lives today—even at a time when we do not make animal sacrifices?

"But cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—For I am a great King," says the LORD of Hosts, 'And My name is to be feared among the nations'" (Malachi 1:14).

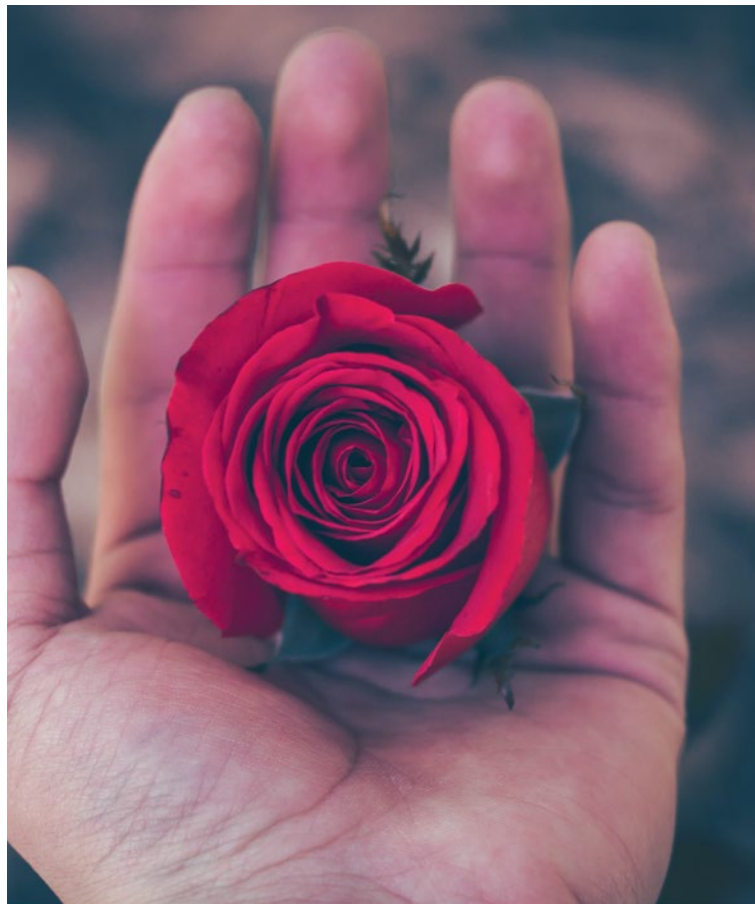
There was deception and hypocrisy on the part of those who made sacrifices—the people pretended to follow God's instructions, but they did it grudgingly and half-heartedly. They were not fully obedient to God and did not offer their best; they just offered what they didn't really want anyway. They were not grateful and generous.

This principle is illustrated in other places in the Bible. For example, why was the offering of Abel accepted?

"And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering" (Genesis 4:3-5).

Abel's offering was respected because he gave "of the firstborn of his flock and their fat" (Genesis 4:4). The

Piotr Makowski/Unsplash



*Are we giving the best of what we have in terms of our time, our priorities, our resources, our talents and even our skill development?*

Hebrew word *cheleb* translated as "fat" in this verse also means the "choicest, best part." Abel truly had a giving attitude.

Why was Cain's offering not accepted? God said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?" Cain did not "do well" with his offering. Something was not up to par.

Another example can be found in the New Testament. Ananias and Sapphira had the same attitudes as both Cain and the people of Malachi's time. Some of the wealthier brethren sold land and gave all the proceeds to the apostles for distribution to those in need. Ananias and Sapphira gave only part of the proceeds, claiming they gave it all. They were hypocritical in that they lied and pretended to be more generous than they actually were. In reality they had a selfish, stingy way of thinking (Acts 5:1-11).

Contrast that with the attitude of the widow whom Jesus Christ praised for her attitude. We read in Mark 12 that "Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood'" (Mark 12:41-44).

What can we learn from those examples? They all address the commandment Jesus Christ gave us: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37).

Where are we falling short on giving the best of what we have—and who we can be—to God? The example

***Where are we falling short on giving the best of what we have—and who we can be—to God?***

of the widow's two mites shows that this is not about comparing ourselves among ourselves; it's not about who is giving the most. Are we giving the best of what we have in terms of our time, our priorities, our resources, our talents and even our skill development?

We all fall short to some degree or another. If we do not realize that, we can become lukewarm and accept mediocrity (Revelation 3:14-18). This can lead to a spiritual version of polluted offerings—giving God much less than what we are able to.

To grow spiritually we need to ask ourselves: How can we develop a generous, unselfish and giving attitude toward God and our neighbor? How can we give of the best of what we have? Do we give Him the time of the day when we are most fresh and alert to study His word? Or do we just squeeze it in somewhere, so we fulfill our "obligation" to Him grudgingly?

Do we follow God's instructions with enthusiasm and in the best way we can?

For example, what is our focus at the Feast each year? Having a great vacation, or growing spiritually in the depth of our understanding, in the level of our commitment to God and in our service to others?

***Do we follow God's instructions with enthusiasm and in the best way we can?***

Cain was jealous of his brother because Abel's offering was respected. When God appears to be more involved in the life of someone else than ours, is it because God is not fair? No. If we want more of God in our lives, we need to give more of ourselves to God. James wrote, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded" (James 4:8).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Where and how have we been holding back in serving God? Let's give Him the best of our time, talent, resources, energy and enthusiasm! In return He will give us all we need to fulfill the purpose that He has in store for us—in this life and as members of His family forever. **GN**

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## Women's Enrichment Weekend Held in Oregon



Left: Darla Moody's presentation, "Run for Your Life" was given on Saturday afternoon after Sabbath services. Right: Ruby Scruggs organized the silent auction, which raised \$1,100 for the Good Works program.

The Portland, Oregon Women's Enrichment Weekend welcomed approximately 100 ladies from Washington, Oregon, California and Kentucky on Feb. 21-

23, 2020. We were hosted for the 14th year by the lovely Canby Grove Conference Center. This forested riverfront venue provided a natural environment for

the theme of the weekend "Running with Horses."

Becky Hornor's opening presentation on Friday evening, "Yes You Can!" set the tone for the weekend. Through her experiences with running and God's Word, she shared that we can indeed "run with horses" without limitation by our physical capabilities. Tammy Kelly graced us with a song, "Before I Kneel," a worker's prayer to conclude the evening.

After breakfast the next day, the women gathered for Sabbath services. Tammy Kelly directed a combined ladies' choir singing "You are Mine." Guest speaker Paul Moody offered spiritual enlightenment in his sermon through an account in Jeremiah. Jeremiah gives an example that helps show that with God, we can speed past horses. On Sabbath afternoon, Darla Moody's

presentation "Run for Your Life" inspired us all with the courageous life story of Jon Colter. With tremendous strength and endurance, he set his focus on the goal as a reminder for us to run and not grow weary. Rounding out the Sabbath, our panel presenters Katie Spiry, Celia Bradley and Celia Hofer shared motivating and uplifting stories of lessons learned through study in Proverbs, the powerful gift of friendships and being spiritual fit by exercising obedience. Later, Cheryl Carlson offered a lovely vocal solo, "Do They See Jesus in Me?"

Saturday evening the ladies enjoyed the annual and very popular silent auction organized by Ruby Scruggs. The energetic auction was anything but silent. Together the ladies raised \$1,100 for the UCG Good Works program.

On Sunday, Tina Slocum led

an interactive workshop trivia game that had us "galloping" through many lessons learned. Following this active "contest" among the attendees, Sharon Browning, Tia Christopher, and Celia Hofer presented a song "As Long as I have Breath." To complete the weekend, Christina Pate spoke on "Your Growth Curve." Christina shared tools to help remove toxic thoughts so we can endure and "Run with Horses" in our unfailing focus on God's ultimate plan.

The bonds of friendship, laughs and tears shared on this weekend were expressed in a closing hymn called "Daughters in the Lord" by Mark Graham. Many attendees expressed that the weekend was inspiring, relaxing, invigorating and "just what I needed," and are already making plans to attend next year!

*Tina Slocum, Becky Hornor and Ruby Scruggs*

## 55 Gather in Missouri for Women's Weekend



The women in attendance at this weekend enjoyed quality fellowship time, enriching discussions and thoughtful presentations.

Approximately 55 women from the heartland and far-flung places such as Maryland, California and Washington State gathered for the 2020 Women's Enrichment Weekend in southwest Missouri from Feb. 14-16. The theme for the weekend was "Choose Joy—Happiness is Not Enough." Our guests were Aaron and Michelle Dean, with Mr. Dean giving the sermon on the Sabbath and Mrs. Dean kicking off the Women's Weekend with her presentation, "Finding Joy in an Unconventional Life." We were also excited to have Jean Upde-

graff attend from the Garden Grove, California congregation. Jean is the "official, unofficial" archivist for the Women's Enrichment Weekends around the world. Her presentation was "History & Perspective of UCG Women's Weekends—Educational, Encouraging, Enriching & EnJOYable." As part of our ongoing effort to keep the event affordable, food was provided by several church areas throughout the weekend after a catered meal on the Sabbath. The silent auction of crafts and other delights raised approximately \$1,800 to support the

women's enrichment weekends in Zambia. Music included a saxophone solo by Jamie Justice from the Springfield, Missouri congregation, titled, "His Eye is on the Sparrow," and other recorded music, including the tune "Accentuate the Positive" from the 1940's. A highlight of the presentations was a talk by three women from three different generations in one family, Amanda Schmidt, Dorothy Schmidt and Karen Allwine. Several commented on how fantastic it was to have a young person as one of the speakers. Other speakers included Elaine Carlisle, Deana Kemp and Lorraine Barnett leading a small group discussion. There was no shortage of food or laughter. The theme proved to be uplifting and several commented on leaving the weekend in better spirits than when they arrived. The men once again enjoyed a chili dinner at a farm owned by a member Warren Ott and brunch on Sunday morning. We hope that you will consider coming to our Women's Enrichment Weekend 10th anniversary next year, Feb. 12-14, 2021. Mark and Barbara Welch and LeeAnn Luker will be joining us, as all were part of our inaugural event in 2012. Save the date!

*Merna Eppick*

## UYC Program Held in Kenya



Teens and children from various parts of Kenya attended camp near Meru.

Seventy-six boys and girls from UCG congregations all over Kenya attended United Youth Camp from Dec. 2-6, 2019. This year's camp was held at one of our Feast facilities, located near the town of Meru.

This year's camp theme was, "Living God's Way." The program schedule was quite busy throughout the week with daily activities spanning most of the daylight hours. The teens were taught principles on various subjects geared to improving their Christian life and overall goals. Topics included:

- Drug and substance abuse
- Christian living discussions
- Specific talks geared toward both the girls and boys
- Media: benefits and limitations
- Internet as a resource, but with risks
- Social media used the right way
- Principles of public speaking

Camp concluded with a hike on Mt. Kenya. Everyone had a great time. The teens left camp having built robust friendships and with determination to grow stronger in their Christian walk.

*Monte Knudson*



## Phoenix, Arizona Congregations Host Barn Dance



The Phoenix East and Phoenix Northwest congregations spent a fun evening dancing and fellowshiping at the first annual barn dance.



As the sunset settled on the evening of Feb. 29, the Phoenix congregations joined together with pep in their step and a twang on their tongues. It was the first annual Checker Buster Barn Dance, a square dance

hybrid created to cater to newcomers and pros alike. To kick the event off, the Phoenix East congregation hosted a country fair buffet with southern inspirations, setting the mood for a cozy, jubilee-filled evening.

When the sun set, people began to strap on their boots and don their ten-gallon hats. Everyone from age four to 85 joined for some boot scootin' fun.

Brian Gabbard, a member of Phoenix Northwest congregation, had this to say about the origin of the dance: "Legend has it that the Checker Buster Barn Dance was made by a singing cowboy named Buster, his horse named Dan, a shadow called Tall and his posse: the Candy Bandit, a girl named Danger, Whimsy the jackelope and a butterfly named Dottie."

Bringing the legend to life with their pizzazz and funky moves, the instructors of the dance were the young adult volunteers of both congregations. The dance was so much fun and appealed to so many that the Phoenix churches hope to make it an annual regional event. Find a horse and pony on down into the sunset toward Arizona—we'll be waiting for you next year! Y'all come back now, hear?

*Zoey Gabbard & Jordan Vargas*

## Editorial Staff Takes Tour of Hopkins Printing



Photos by Mitch Moss

On Feb. 7, Matt Hernandez, Mitch Moss and I met in Columbus, Ohio, for a tour of Hopkins Printing, which prints *Compass Check* magazine and the United Youth Camp magazine among other things for UCG. I had just sent the Camp Magazine file to Hopkins, and their prepress team scheduled it to be printed while we were there.

Upon our arrival, we were met in the lobby by the president of Hopkins Printing, Roy Waterhouse, who also serves as an elder in the Columbus congregation. Mr. Waterhouse gave us a tour of the facilities, walking us through the whole print process

from prepress to mailing, introducing us to the team along the way. In the press room, we examined the proofs for the Camp Magazine, and once we signed off on them, production began. As sheets rolled off the press, Mr. Waterhouse explained the offset print process.

As someone who primarily works on the editing, digital layout and design of publication creation, it was helpful to see the physical manifestation of my work.

We're thankful to Roy Waterhouse for his time and for the quality they produce for us.

*Ariana Del Signore*

## Announcements Continued from page 4



**R.C. Pritchett**

Sept. 30, 1926-April 1, 2020

### *Jeanette Ann Dean*

she died on her 66th birthday. Jeanette was sure of God's promises for her future. Her race is now run and she is asleep until the last trumpet sounds.

### **R.C. Pritchett**

R.C. Pritchett was born Sept. 30, 1926 and died on April 1, 2020 at the age of 93. He was preceded in death by his wife of 30 years, Ernestine Elsie (Biser) Pritchett in 1982, his daughter,



**Wilma Weisz**

April 13, 1920-Feb. 13, 2020

Donna Starr Pritchett in 2003 and a grandson, Grant Allen Pritchett in 1987. He is survived by his daughter, Judy Rose Danford (Bob) from Denver, Colorado, and his son, Larry Dale Pritchett (Vicki) from Duncanville, Alabama, 4 grandchildren, Bret Pritchett, Laura Lytle (Brad), Scott Danford (Theresa), David Danford (Shenney) and 3 great-grandchildren, Bobby Danford, Maryann Danford and Sabrina Danford.

He was raised during the Great Depression by his mother, who raised 12 children. He joined the

Navy in 1945 and served during World War II and the Korean War with a break in service between the wars. He received a disability discharge in 1953 and worked for the U.S. Post Office until his retirement in April 1978. He went on to various handyman jobs, obtaining his Journeyman Electricians license and a certification for appliance repair. He played softball and basketball with his church team into his 70's and liked to garden. He also played tennis until his late 80's and loved to dance until shortly before his death.

He was baptized into the Church of God in 1961, attending first the Radio Church of God before it became known as the Worldwide Church of God, and then he attended the United Church of God.

We are not able to hold a funeral service at this time, but he will be remembered and we plan to have a memorial at a later date.

### **Wilma Weisz**

Wilma Carolyn Bloomfield Weisz, 99, of Bryan, Ohio, died peacefully on Feb. 13, 2020 at

Fountain Park Assisted Living.

She was born in Rochester, New York on April 13, 1920, the daughter of Arthur and Florice Bloomfield and the oldest of three children. She lived in and around Rochester for 16 years. The family then moved to Indiana and she graduated from Butler High School in Butler, Indiana. After graduation she worked as a proofreader for the Higley Publishing Company in Butler. Two years later she went to South Bend to become a secretary for the Bendix Aviation Company.

On June 13, 1943, Wilma married Richard Weisz of Edgerton, Ohio, and they moved to Bryan. Richard worked at The Aro Corporation as an engineer. They had three children, Cheryl, Randy and Sandra (who died shortly after birth). When Randy started school, Wilma took a part-time position in the Williams County Courthouse as secretary to the County Superintendent of Schools, which became full-time when both children had graduated. She retired after 28 years. Richard and Wilma were happily married for 69 years. Richard died in February 2013. He and

Wilma loved music and traveling and were Charter Members of the Fountain City Square Dance Club in Bryan. She traced her ancestry as a direct descendant of Mayflower passengers John Alden and Priscilla Mullins.

In 1967, Richard and Wilma began attending services in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and were faithful and active members for the remainder of their lives. Wilma played the piano for church services for many years. She was virtually unbeatable in Scrabble and the card game Quiddler and was particularly noted for her wit and humor. On her 90th birthday she answered the question "What's the secret of your long and healthy life?" Her answer: "I don't take prescription medicines, and I hear the good die young—and I think that's helped me."

At age 95 Wilma learned how to use an iPad to do a wide correspondence with email and Facebook and she loved to listen to sermons and Church service webcasts on the Internet. She aged gracefully right up to the end, keeping her focus on the Kingdom of God. Wilma will be sorely missed. **UN**



By Rex Sexton

As we count our blessings on the 25th anniversary of the formation of the United Church of God, it is important to take a look back at the humble beginnings of this era of God's Church.

After dark on July 3, 1924, a road-weary Model T Ford drove up to the house of Horace Armstrong in Salem, Oregon. Arriving to visit with Horace, his wife and their two youngest children, 20-year-old twins Dwight and Mary, after an 18-day trip in the open-air vehicle were six people: Horace's son, Herbert, along with his wife, Loma, their two daughters, Beverly and Dorothy Jane, Loma's brother and sister-in-law, Walter and Bertha Dillon.

Herbert had established himself selling advertising and conducting surveys for newspapers, primarily in the Portland, Oregon area. The family rented a home in northeast Portland.

Just two years later, in the early autumn of 1926, Herbert's advertising business was nearly wiped out due to a national program requiring laundromats—the primary accounts of Mr. Armstrong's business—to cancel local advertising. At a time of near despair over the business collapse, Herbert and his family made another visit to his parents' place in Salem. Loma Armstrong made friends with a neighbor named Ora Runcorn, an avid student of the Bible. Mrs. Runcorn led Loma on a verse-by-verse scriptural study of the Sabbath, simply reading aloud the verses. Loma excitedly relayed this "new truth" to her husband.

As relayed in *The Autobiography of Herbert Armstrong*, he at first resisted the idea and set out to prove that "all these churches could not be wrong." Mr. Armstrong spent many days at the Portland Public



Left: Ben Light, pastor of Salem and Eugene, Oregon on the bridge at Dever Creek, where Herbert Armstrong was baptized.



Right: The Ira Curtis Home. Pictured are Ben Light and Mr. Calvin Cole, who kept Feasts in Belknap Springs, Oregon and attended the Scrael Hill church.

Library researching the existence of God, evolution and various Bible teachings. After months of Bible study and looking at the teachings of various churches, Mr. Armstrong made a decision:

"This church (The Church of God Seventh Day) came closer to the Bible qualifications than any I knew... I began to fellowship with their scattered and few members in Oregon... We were living in Portland at the time... but there was a sprinkling of them through the Willamette Valley between Salem and Eugene, in Oregon—mostly farmers... They welcomed the fellowship of myself and Mrs. Armstrong." (*Autobiography*, Volume 1, p. 358, 1986 ed.)

In the last months of 1926, the Armstrongs began attending with the small Church of God Seventh Day congregation near Jefferson, a small town a few miles south of Salem. Ministers from the Church of God Seventh Day traveled to smaller areas once a year for six-week Public Campaigns. That winter a pastor named E.A. Stith traveled from Meridian, Idaho to hold lectures near Jefferson. The lectures were held in a white wood frame schoolhouse north of Albany. The building later became the Morningstar Grange. It has been enlarged and is still in use today.

Member Mrs. Letty Benight and her daughter, Alice, also lived in Jefferson. Letty's grandparents had been in the Church of God Seventh Day when the Seventh Day Adventists broke off from them in 1863. Alice later married Charlie Henion, who had moved to Oregon in the 1930s from Oklahoma at about the same time as Otis and Nellie

Cole and the five Tierce sisters. The Coles had three sons who later served in the ministry. All five of the Tierce sisters married and raised their families in the Salem area. A number of their sons became pastors in later years. All the sisters were faithful to God's truth to the end.

I first met Mrs. Alice Henion in 1982. My wife, Patty, and our two children moved to the Albany area after the church hired me to serve as an assistant pastor working with Mr. David Mills in the Salem and Albany congregations. During the next three years I researched the events in Mr. Armstrong's book and tried to meet all the early church members who were still alive and in the area. Some were members of the Worldwide Church of God—others in the Church of God, Seventh Day were also friendly and willing to tell me their stories. Following is word for word, as I remember it and wrote it down, the account of Mr. Armstrong's baptism as told by Alice Henion. She was 13 years old at the time but said she could recall it as "clearly as yesterday:"

"Elder Stith, from Idaho, was here for six weeks of nightly meetings. The Armstrongs were staying in Salem with his parents, but came down here for every meeting. Mr. Armstrong and Elder Stith were engaged in intense conversation for a long time after each meeting, sometimes for over an hour. After about three weeks of the meetings had gone by, Elder Stith baptized Mr. Armstrong after one of the meetings. There was a wide place in Dever Creek that we used for baptisms and the entire group would go to watch and pray for the new one." Her account has been verified by her son, David Henion, who still lives in Jefferson, and a granddaughter of Elder Stith who lived in Spokane, Washington in the late 1980s.

Mr. Armstrong continued to study and grow in understanding. In the summer of 1928 he was

asked to give his first sermon. The subject was "The Sabbath Covenant" and was given at the meeting room used by the Jefferson congregation above the old Dever Store. The Ira Curtis family owned a home near Black Dog landing. In November of 1930, a church business meeting was held at their home and Mr. Armstrong was asked to attend (p. 409). After this meeting Mr. Armstrong was recognized as a leader and gradually was called into the ministry by Jesus Christ. The home is still standing, although it has suffered floods several times.

The Oregon Conference of the Church of God Seventh Day was formed as a separate corporation in November of 1930, with the purpose of coordinating the scattered small congregations from Portland to Eugene. The conference ordained Herbert Armstrong in the spring of 1931 and he began doing regular six week campaigns in the area, usually with a minister sent from Stanberry, Missouri. While Mr. Armstrong's efforts were blessed with fruit—new converts to the truth—the other men began to teach Pentecostalism and other ideas, often moving to undermine Mr. Armstrong.

It was the depths of the Great Depression, so the conference was unable to provide Mr. Armstrong a salary. For two years he got by doing advertising in Astoria while pastoring and teaching. Mrs. Bertha Dillon, Mr. Armstrong's sister-in-law, related to me in 1983 that the Armstrong's poverty was far worse during that time than is recorded in Mr. Armstrong's autobiography. She and her husband often took over food and firewood to Loma and the children.

Mr. Armstrong continued to preach on the Sabbath and give public lectures. In March of 1932 the Oregon Conference of The Church of God ordained Herbert Armstrong a second time, this time as a "minister, and apostle of the true primitive faith..."

In February of 1933, after three more years of poverty, learning and teaching, Mike Helms told Mr. Armstrong that the congregation in Jefferson had just enough donations to hire him as their pastor and asked him to serve. His salary was \$3 per week. The church secretary at the time, Emma Mitchell (now Yoder) laughed as she told me years later about writing those small checks, but said that was all the church could afford to pay.

The Armstrongs were living in a small house in Salem at the time, but an opportunity came up for him that summer to conduct public Bible lectures in the Eugene area at the Firbutte school house. The lectures led to a congregation of about 20 people despite continual undermining by two ministers who wanted to teach different ideas. In August of 1933 Mr. Armstrong decided to refuse his \$3 per week salary, move to Eugene and continue teaching God's truth to this small but growing congregation.

On Oct. 9, 1933 Mr. Armstrong spoke on the radio for the first time. It was a 15-minute program on KORE, a small 100-Watt station in Eugene. He spoke on the promises to Abraham. So many people contacted the station requesting a written copy of the program that the station manager offered Mr. Armstrong a regular Sunday morning program of 30 minutes for \$2.50 per week. Mr. Armstrong lacked the money, but trusted God to provide. On the first Sunday morning of 1934 the *World Tomorrow* broadcast went on the air in Eugene. The first issue of *The Plain Truth* was printed on Feb. 1, and the rest is history.

Today we are thankful that the United Church of God is blessed with stability, resources to do God's work and a faithful ministry. It is good to occasionally remember our humble beginnings and to thank our God that He has been Our Shepherd all along the journey. **UN**

Below: Scrael Hill Church, built by members of the Church of God Seventh Day in Jefferson in the 1940s.

For many years they considered Mr. Armstrong their pastor and Ambassador College students occasionally gave sermons here in the 1950's and 60's. Today it has been turned into a residence.





April 26-May 2	<b>The God-Centered Universe</b> Presented by Darris McNeely Literature offered: <i>Who Is God?</i>
May 3-9	<b>Eat Clean!</b> Presented by Steve Myers Literature offered: <i>What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?</i>
May 10-16	<b>Was Jesus a Socialist or a Capitalist?</b> Presented by Gary Petty Literature offered: <i>Managing Your Finances</i>
May 17-23	<b>Making Your Life Work</b> Presented by Darris McNeely Literature offered: <i>Making Life Work</i>
May 24-30	<b>Is It Time To Find a New Church?</b> Presented by Steve Myers Literature offered: <i>The Church Jesus Built</i>
May 31-June 6	<b>What Is Living Faith?</b> Presented by Gary Petty Literature offered: <i>You Can Have Living Faith</i>



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## BY THE NUMBERS

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Responses to “Easter: The Rest of the Story” program.

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## Consider Your Finances *In Times of Uncertainty*

In light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, people are worried not only for the health implications, but many are also concerned about their current and future finances. Here are a few things to consider in the days and months ahead:

### Create a Budget

If you don’t already have one in place, now is a good time to develop a spending plan to pay your bills and manage expenses. This requires looking at your monthly take-home income and outgo. Start keeping track of everything you spend for 1-3 months and then average your expenditures per category. If you discover you have a deficit, see if there are any expenses you can eliminate or adjust. Or find additional ways to earn more income. Having a budget helps you take control of your spending, and provides you with a good overview of how your money is being used.

### Build up Your Emergency Savings

Most financial experts recommended that you have 3-6 months of living expenses saved up. This means having enough money to cover your housing, utilities and insurance; basic needs like food and personal care as well as other financial obligations such as student and car loans. To know how much your savings should be, make an accurate list of what your current living expenses are, and gradually start saving toward that goal. An emergency fund provides a safety net and will cushion the blow of any surprise financial setbacks like loss of job, sudden car repairs or medical bills due to a health crisis.

### Keep Debt to a Minimum

Debt can’t always be avoided—especially when purchasing a home or financing your education. However, when possible, avoid using credit cards to buy items you don’t have the cash to purchase, and can’t pay off by the end of the billing cycle. Unchecked credit card debt is one of the most financially destructive actions you can take.

### Practice Generosity

In times like these, it’s important that we take care and look after one another. For those of us who are in the position to help others financially, we must do so. However, generosity extends far beyond money. It also entails making a phone call to check in, sending a card or note, offering words of encouragement or making a grocery store run. Letting people know that they are cared for and loved goes a long way.

In times of uncertainty, look to God for strength and encouragement. Be wise managers of what you have been given and take encouragement from scriptures such as 1 Peter 4:8-11 (NIV):

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

*Howard Marchbanks, CFP®*