

OneAccord

September-October 2014



The Narrow Way: Accept the Challenge

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How Do I Love
My Enemy?

FOI Volunteers
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personal from the president

Feast of Tabernacles

Within the Church of God the most anticipated event of the year is the Feast of Tabernacles! The excitement begins each year in February when the sites are announced on *In Accord*. Normally we have 700 to 800 connections for each *In Accord* and an estimated 1,200 to 1,400 viewers. But when Ministerial Services announces the Feast locations, we have twice that many! This year we had 1,400 connections and an estimated 2,000 viewers.

One might think it is easy to choose the Festival locations each year. After all, in each region of the country there are dozens of nice resorts to choose from. But it isn't quite that simple. The demographics of the Church, the availability of meeting space, and the cost of lodging and food must be considered when identifying a Festival location. This year we are returning to the Gulf Coast, and the initial reaction has been very positive. On the day registration began, Orange Beach, Alabama, was completely filled in less than an hour. We anticipate an attendance this year in excess of 1,500 people, which will make it our largest site in several years.

Choosing a site in Alabama (although on the border with Florida) puts our southeastern location quite a distance from members in central and southern Florida. Since our overall goal is to serve the brethren, we plan to closely monitor how things go this year before deciding whether we need an additional location in the southeastern U.S. for 2015. A survey was completed, and there were numerous discussions with the pastors in Florida before the recommendation was made by the Festival team to choose Orange Beach. From all I have heard, it is a beautiful site with many fine lodging establishments and miles of white sand beaches. My wife and I will be there this year for the first half of the Feast, and then we travel to Steamboat Springs for the second half.

As a young boy growing up in Arkansas, I attended the Feast of Tabernacles with my family in Big Sandy, Texas. We never *chose* Big Sandy—in fact, we had never heard of Big Sandy! Because of the small size of Big Sandy, in the early years we referred to the Festival location as Gladewater, which was the nearest

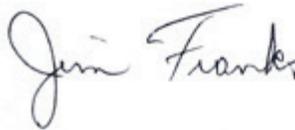


“city” (if it is accurate to call Gladewater a city).

Each year we knew where we were going, and we knew where we would be staying. Big Sandy was the only site in the U.S. from 1953 to 1961, and by and large your only choice for housing was camping. There were a few small hotels in the general area; but as a child, my impression was that 90 percent of those in attendance camped on the grounds. It was a great experience, but I would hardly call Big Sandy a resort area.

Like many others, I have many fond memories of those simpler days. Our Feasts were composed of services, more services—and then more services! Well—not exactly—but sometimes it felt that way. We had time for fellowship and to build a bond of friendship with brethren.

I hope that your Feast will be the same this year. We have a much larger variety of Festival locations—from beach settings to beautiful lakes to mountains. You can choose to go to any of these sites, but don't forget why you are going. The Feast of Tabernacles should be first and foremost a spiritual experience. It is a time for learning, fellowshiping and serving the brethren. I hope you will enjoy it while making lasting memories!



JIM FRANKS
President of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association
@jimfranks

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CHURCH of GOD
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Right Dave Myers teaches Survey of the Gospels Below the new students play a mixer game; students listen to orientation; some of the new students get to know one another at the welcome meal



Foundation Institute Welcomes Class of 2015

by ERIK JONES

The 2014-2015 Foundation Institute school year kicked off over the weekend of Aug. 16 and 17. This year we have 19 students enrolled. The students began arriving one by one in early August and taking up residence in their assigned apartments. This year we have four FI apartments, all within close proximity to each other, at the Mission Eagle Pointe apartment complex, where 17 of the 19 students are staying.

On the evening of Aug. 15, nearly all the students had arrived in Allen, Texas. The students gathered that evening at the apartment clubhouse for a welcome meal. This allowed students to get acquainted with each other and meet the FI faculty. After the meal, Ralph Levy presented the monthly Friday Night Live Bible study with the students as a “studio audience.” Dr. Levy covered three challenges young adults typically face in college.

The students were formally introduced to the Dallas congregation the next day at Sabbath services when Dallas pastor Andy Burnett welcomed them to the area and asked each student to stand during the announcements.

On Sunday morning, Aug. 17, the students assembled in the FI classroom for orientation. After orientation, Student Affairs officer Clyde Kilough led the students in a number of mixer activities and games after a delicious lunch provided by Ina McLemore and a crew of volunteers.

The next day, students assembled at 8:30 a.m. sharp for their first class of the year, the Survey of the Gospels, which is being taught for the first time by Dave Myers.

The third FI class is enthusiastic and attentive. The headquarters office staff looks forward to interacting and working with them throughout the school year.



CAMP CARTER

Our 71 campers and 40 staff members converged on Camp Carter in Fort Worth, Texas, June 29 to July 6 for yet another week of camp. Many campers who have attended year after year stated this year was our best yet. The YMCA facility hired a new chef last year, and this year we ate like kings!

We offered several new classes this year. With funds provided from the annual Boot Scoot fund-raiser held in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, we were able to offer an advanced archery program for the campers. One of our local members introduced disc golf; and we also had a foods class, where campers formed and decorated “cake balls,” which they later devoured! The day at the lake proved to be a hit, as campers enjoyed tubing, skiing, wakeboarding and hanging out with their brother and sister dorms.

Every year we offer proficiency awards in various activity classes at camp. One proficiency of note was awarded to Preston Stolley (from the Fort Worth congregation), who set a new Camp Carter record in the chin-up contest by performing 25 full-range chin-ups.

Other activities included Thursday Night Games Night, where campers competed for their dorms in gargle-singing, forehead Oreo cookie-eating, kids’ movie theme song trivia, M&M candy straw moving, classical music interpretive dance, name that camper/staff member, Bible “Who Am I?” and more!

Friday night we enjoyed a steak and chicken dinner followed by a Bible study by Doug Horchak. He presented a PowerPoint study on three individuals in the Church in Myanmar, India and East Africa who are following the narrow way (this year’s camp theme). Camp ended Saturday night with a dance.

Thank you, parents, for the excellent job you’re doing with your children. They set a great example this year. It is truly a joy to work with your kids—God’s young people.

Andy Burnett



CAMP SEQUOIA

A total of 33 campers and 29 staff began a week of fun, friendship and focus on the narrow way July 20 to 27. It was an inspirational week as well as a challenge for many new campers as they tried activities and experiences that they had never before tried.

Camp began with orientation and then a neon welcome dance. Black light and laser lights filled the room. At one point all campers were on the floor and enjoying a new year of camp. The dinner of burgers and fries and root beer floats for dessert made the event a hit.

The first day's activities included the annual novelty Olympics, which ended again with an 80-foot slip and slide. Throughout the week, campers took part in dance, gaga ball, speedaway, flag football, archery, riflery and skeet shooting, volleyball, basketball, swimming, disc golf and the challenge course. This year our riflery head, Craig Hoyer, also challenged campers to a biathlon by having them run the challenge course and then shoot at targets for the highest score. A full day of hiking, rock climbing and a traverse across a ravine made it possible to really enjoy the outdoor surroundings of the Sierras. The last day of activities ended with "Survivor," which was put together by Tracy Carter. Campers had a variety of tasks to complete throughout the camp, including working together as a dorm to put together a puzzle with the camp theme.

Campers learned about "The Narrow Way" at Compass Checks and Christian Living classes. Campers were given clear direction that there are many ways that lead to destruction, but only one narrow way that leads to life.

Each day was started with a Compass Check to point everyone in the right direction, and each evening ended with a Christian Living class and campfire. This year the camp featured "Camp Sequoia's Got Talent," hosted by Jon Pinelli and added a karaoke night. All were treated to some talented campers in a beautiful sunset campfire setting.

Activities concluded on Sabbath afternoon with some very good camper speeches, and then a banquet meal specially prepared and served by staff. Camp then concluded with a camp dance.



The staff did a fabulous job serving this year, and we are grateful for their service. Some staff members served in multiple areas, filling in the needs of the camp. The campers this year seemed very excited about the activities and living together in a somewhat secluded and millennial setting atop a mountain in the southern end of the Sequoia National Forest.

We look forward to another great year in 2015!

Paul Carter

CAMP SEQUOIA EXTENDED SESSION

Extended Session for Camp Sequoia began Sunday, July 27. This year Paul Carter and Jon Pinelli led four campers and one additional staff member through the giant sequoias, camping in a nearby campground and going on a two-day backpacking adventure into the High Sierras.

Campers carried full packs 6.2 miles up the mountain on the Lakes Trail, a beautiful trail that rises from 7,200 feet to over 10,000 feet. One of the most scenic views available in the Sequoia National Park is from Watchtower (a beautiful sheer cliff and focal point), which is nearly four miles into the hike. Upon arriving at our destination, campers pitched tents next to Pear Lake, which is a beautiful glacial lake at the top of the mountain. They enjoyed fresh-caught trout and prepackaged meals before Christian Living and settling off to sleep.

The next day campers fished and hiked around the lake as well as enjoyed a nice cold swim in the crystal clear (and frigid) waters of the lake. After lunch, the group headed back down the 6.2-mile trail along the majestic cliffs and enjoyed a hot meal at Lodgepole, which is the main area in the center of the park. After another night camping among the trees in a regular campground, the group headed south to Santa Monica and enjoyed bodysurfing and boogie boarding in some great waves.

From mountaintop to ocean, those who went on the extended session were challenged and rewarded for three full days of adventure.

Next year is sure to be just as exciting for the older teens who would like to take on the challenge of Extended Session.

STRONG ROCK CAMP



Why did our campers at Strong Rock want to come to camp? Two reasons stood out from their registrations and surveys:

1. Fellowship with teens who believe the same way.
2. A desire to learn more about God's way of life.

With little doubt, all CYC campers during the summer of 2014 stated similar reasons.

Believing the same way and the desire to learn more about God's way of life matched the CYC theme for all teen and preteen camps—"The Narrow Way: Accept the Challenge." Whether at a Compass Check or Christian Living class or the Sabbath sermon, which spoke of "the Way" as a path or a gate, the lesson was always clear: We follow the difficult road as we travel toward God's Kingdom.

Choosing friends and fellowship with those of like mind have proven to be major keys in successfully negotiating the difficult curves of our Christian life. Satan and the world seek to pull us off the path; true friends edify and encourage us to stay the course.

Because God's people consist of a little flock and are so scattered, camp affords our young people the opportunity to renew friendships and form new ones. At Strong Rock, teens and staff from 16 states quickly jelled cohesively to form bonds that in many cases will last a lifetime. Every year, including 2014, more fellowship time is requested (and there is never enough).

If you asked each camper which activity bonded them the most, you would receive a variety of opinions, but all were a part of establishing solid friendships. Some activities allowed for closer one-on-one communication; others provided more opportunities to encourage one another. Being together in dorms created friendships throughout the day. Many venues allowed our campers to play together as teams.

An email to me from a parent after camp ended summed up how important proper friendships are: "[My son] had an opportunity to see and talk with girls who believe in God and are being raised to have morals. ... The things our youth [in the world] think they need to brag about is so sad! ... [He] was sad to see the week end! ... He said this was the best summer he can ever remember! He said the week at Camp Strong Rock is the reason it was the best summer ever!"

Greg Sargent





CAMP HERITAGE

Camp Heritage, which ran from Aug. 10 to 17, was the final chapter for CYC's summer program. This year our campers rose to meet the challenge, not only in response to our national theme, "The Narrow Way: Accept the Challenge," but also in daily activities.

Weather conditions on the mountaintop weren't as "camp-friendly" as in years past, forcing numerous schedule changes. Staff capably met these challenges with flexibility, while campers universally enjoyed the spontaneity with beautiful and cooperative responses and attitudes.

Rain-sodden outdoor activity venues gave way to impromptu indoor dance lessons, team-building exercises, bunko and Bible charades on Monday, Tuesday evening and much of Wednesday. The three days without rain were sunny and pleasant, though cool temperatures necessitated a sweatshirt outbreak (one overnight low was 48 degrees!).

All campers sailed in crisp winds over Lake Courage. Two-man tubing behind a high-powered ski boat left laughter and joy-filled grins in its wake. The Challenge level (aged 15 to 18) girls' dorm characterized their program this year as "extreme sports" as they plunged into the newly added activities of tubing, high ropes and trapshooting (with 20-gauge shotguns). All Challenge-level campers reveled in the ever-popular eight-mile white-water rafting trip on the Lower Youghiogheny River. A specialized search-and-rescue exercise introduced the whole camp to the seriousness of veering from the right path. Daily Christian Living classes emphasized making choices (there are only two—God's way and not God's way!) and left the whole camp pondering the consequences of those choices in matters of obedience, submission, trust and leadership.

Camp Heritage attracted a number of staff members and campers who joined the program this year for the first time. We look forward to seeing these "newbies" return in 2015 for another great year.

Why not consider adding your name to that list? The dates for Camp Heritage 2015 are Aug. 9 to 16. Mark your calendar, and we'll see you there!

Doug Johnson

Plans are beginning to take shape for the 2014 Winter Family Weekend in Louisville, Kentucky. The fellowship, fun and educational opportunities begin on Tuesday evening, Dec. 23, and end late Saturday night, Dec. 27.

Check members.cogwa.org/wfw on Sept. 22 to find out this year's theme along with where to register and where to make your housing reservations. Housing reservations will open on Oct. 26, 2014. Save the date and begin making your plans now to come join hundreds of your spiritual family members in Louisville in December for four days of making memories.

MEMBERS.COGWA.ORG/WFW

**2014
WFW
LOUISVILLE
DEC. 23-27**



Vivian Waddle and Amanda Harring in Zimbabwe; Courtney Tobin, Tanya Horchak and Erica Bennett in Zambia

Building Bonds and Breaking Barriers: An Interview With FOI Volunteers

Four volunteers traveled to Africa to teach English to members in Zambia from July 25 to Aug. 1 and in Zimbabwe from Aug. 1 to Aug. 10. We interviewed three of the volunteers—Amanda Harring, who served in Zimbabwe, and Erica Bennett and Courtney Tobin, who served in Zambia—to talk about volunteering in Africa.

One Accord: What made you decide to go?

Erica Bennett: I love to travel and experience different settings and cultures, and I've always wanted to go to Africa. I was so excited to meet and get to know the brethren in Zambia and learn about how different their lives are from mine, and yet how we fit together as members of the Body of Christ.

Amanda Harring: We're supposed to use our gifts/training to serve others. Being a classroom teacher who has taught internationally, I felt that even though it's only a weeklong program, I could help. Two of my passions are teaching and traveling. Why not use those passions to help serve my fellow Church members?

Courtney Tobin: I love traveling and meeting new people, especially God's people. I knew it would help me to grow spiritually and have a new outlook on life and the way we live. I wanted to be reminded of the pure things that God tells us to focus on. I also wanted to serve in order to make others prosper and grow.

OA: What lessons, activities and games seemed to work better for the students?

AH: They loved the tongue twisters! I would see them write them down and practice them on their breaks. They also really liked to be challenged. They didn't want single words, but instead wanted to practice whole sentences. They liked a game where we threw a ball with vocabulary words around and whatever word your hand touched, you had to use in a sentence. They also liked writing stories, and some were a bit competitive and tried for the longest and fewest mistakes possible.

OA: What was your first impression of the brethren?

EB: The patience and generosity of the members there was the first thing that I noticed. It also struck me how thankful they were for what they had. Every prayer that was said before a meal included thanks to God for what they had to eat and asked blessing from God for those around them who had nothing to eat.

CT: The congregation was the warmest and most welcoming congregation I have attended. Every single person welcomed us with open arms and helped to create an atmosphere so wonderful and joyful.

OA: What was the greatest challenge?

EB: Having no ESL experience, it was difficult to figure out how to teach those who knew no English at all. It was also tough figuring out how to help those who knew a lot of English get the most out of the classes while also helping those who knew less (or none) to learn as much as possible! But honestly, the hardest part was leaving!

CT: Knowing what was actually being understood. It was difficult to know if certain students were understanding some of the English conversation that was taking place. It was even hard at times to know if they were understanding what we were asking when we were asking if they understood.

AH: The greatest challenge was having different skill levels. It's sometimes hard to know what pace you need to take because if you go too slowly, many will be bored; but if you go too quickly, many will be lost.



OA: What was the most inspiring event/moment of your trip?

CT: The last day of classes the students gave a short speech in English to show all they had learned. Several of the students thanked Erica and me for sacrificing and helping them learn English. I was so moved by their attitude, patience, passion and understanding. I was moved to tears and was so sad that the classes and the week were coming to an end.

AH: I don't know if there was one specific event or moment. I think just how hard everyone worked was inspiring. Teaching high school students in the U.S., I'm used to students wanting to do the least amount of work possible to still pass. Everyone in the classes worked hard the whole time. Some came even though they were sick because they didn't want to miss out on anything they could learn. That was inspiring to me.

OA: What, if anything, surprised you?

EB: I didn't really know what to expect, going to Africa for the first time. But I think the thing that surprised me most was the juxtaposed advanced technology, like cell phones, solar panels and TV dishes, alongside mud huts, coal bucket "stoves" and tubs for washing clothes. I was also surprised how much of American culture and politics the Zambians knew—in some cases, they were more connected than I was!

OA: How do you think this trip will change you or your perspective?

EB: I was so impressed by the selfless prayers of the Zambian brethren and their incredible patience. I really want to become more like them!

CT: I miss it every day. I look at things differently now, value things and view relationships differently. I have a greater appreciation for the blessings I have received from God and I am grateful

To see more photos from the FOI projects in Zambia and Zimbabwe, go to [Facebook.com/cogwa](https://www.facebook.com/cogwa)

to have met people who touched my life in the way that they did.

AH: I think it makes me more appreciative of the little things I have in my life. You hear the phrase "First World Problems" and laugh, but it's true. Some of the so-called problems we have as a prosperous country are actually quite laughable.

OA: How were you able to connect with the brethren?

EB: The evenings when our projector stopped working and we could no longer watch the *Life* videos actually turned out to be some of the best. We sat around coals and talked for hours about the differences in our culture and theirs. We tried to explain what it was like to fly in an airplane. We talked about marriage, family and children in our cultures, about our perspectives on beauty and modesty, about how they earned their livelihoods and the many struggles some of them are going through with unemployment. Those conversations, many of which were half in English and half in Tonga [a native language in Zambia], were what I felt really bonded us together.

AH: I tried to bring out the similarities we have. Most of the members [in our class in Zimbabwe] were married women. I think it helped that I'm also married, so we could talk about our husbands and families. We also tried to have an atmosphere where people could ask questions and joke around.

CT: We connected through our common love for God and His plan. We connected in both verbal and nonverbal accounts. Human relationships and human nature exist, regardless of culture or language barriers. Bonding came so easy, and in some ways I feel closer to them than people I have known for years. ☺☺

Learn more about Foundation Outreach International at [foundationoutreachintl.org](https://www.foundationoutreachintl.org)

God's Festivals: The Road Map to Salvation

God's festivals are the road map—the markers that illuminate God's plan of salvation along the pathway to eternal life.

by TIM RICKARD

SEVERAL YEARS AGO MY FAMILY HAD THE opportunity to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in Queensland, Australia. During our visit, we got to see the Great Barrier Reef, one of the seven natural wonders of the world. As we snorkeled, we saw schools of fish, coral, sea anemones and giant clams with some of the most vivid and luminescent colors I've ever seen! It was like being in the middle of a *National Geographic* special.

It's wonderful, isn't it? The Feast of Tabernacles gives us the opportunity to see some of the most beautiful places in the world. However, pretty sights and exciting activities are not the main reason we go, are they?

God's festivals have far deeper meanings than sightseeing or even fellowshiping with family and friends. Whether it's the Days of Unleavened Bread or the Feast of Tabernacles, we keep them because they are timeless reminders of our ultimate destiny. They are the road map that reveals God's great plan of salvation for all mankind.

In my line of work (information technology), a road map is a structured representation that reveals a development plan over a period of time. It provides a framework to help plan, coordinate and reach consensus about where the business ultimately wants to go with its technology.

In matters of salvation, the holy days are the road map—the framework that reveals God's development plan over a period of time, helping us to understand His master plan. They illuminate the pathway to eternal life so that all of us—"each one in his own order" as the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:23—can complete the journey and be partakers of the rich heritage that was purposed before the foundation of the world.

In this article, let's examine God's festivals in the context of their literal events and spiritual truths, taking a brief look at the origin of these days and what actually took place at that time or will take place at a future time. We will then look at the spiritual truths depicted by the actual events, which reveal the big picture of what the days are really all about.

Passover

The first 14 verses of Exodus 12 give us the details of what happened on that very first Passover in ancient Egypt.

God explained through Moses that they were to kill the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the first month at twilight, and spread some of its blood on the doorposts and the lintel of their houses. The blood of the lamb would be the symbol by which they would be saved that night, for God said, "I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. ... And when I see the blood, I will pass over you" (verses 12-13). The verb translated "pass over" means "to hop, skip over, or spare" (*Strong's Concordance*, H6452).

This was the literal event! At midnight God struck the firstborn of Egypt, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not one Egyptian house where there was not one dead. But because of the blood of the lamb, the children of Israel were saved.

What about the spiritual truth? The Passover commemorated God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, but the great spiritual truth that it pointed to was the coming of a Deliverer who would ultimately save all people—Jesus Christ! Just as the shed blood of those first Passover lambs saved the Israelites, the shed blood of Jesus

WHILE THE SPRING FESTIVALS ARE MORE ABOUT THE WORKINGS OF GOD IN THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS, THE FALL FESTIVALS EMPHASIZE GOD'S DRAMATIC INTERVENTION IN THE AFFAIRS OF MANKIND.

Christ saves us from the wages of our sins, which is death (Romans 6:23).

Jesus Himself instituted the new Passover symbol of the wine to teach us this important truth about Himself. He told His disciples on that fateful night, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). He also instituted the symbol of the bread, which represented His broken body for us. As He said in John 6, "I am the bread of life. ... If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (verses 48 and 51).

The Passover in the Old Testament foreshadowed Christ's crucifixion. The New Testament Passover is a memorial of that crucifixion. The apostle Paul lets us know that by observing it we "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). As we keep it each year, we are reminded that God is the forgiver of sin who will grant us eternal life in His Kingdom through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our Passover.

Feast of Unleavened Bread

Right after instituting the Passover, God proceeded with instructions for Moses and Aaron on how the children of Israel were to keep the Days of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:15-20). God explained that for seven days no leaven was to be found in their houses, nor were they to eat anything leavened (verses 19-20). They were also to have a holy convocation on both the first day and the last day (verse 16).

The literal events that occurred on that very First Day of Unleavened Bread were:

- God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt by a "mighty hand."
- They had with them cakes of dough that had no leavening.
- They journeyed into the wilderness leaving Egypt behind them.

The spiritual truth of these days is that we are to leave spiritual Egypt behind us. They remind us that with God's help we must get rid of sin—represented by leaven—from all areas of our lives. Paul made this point to the Corinthian church by reprimanding them for their tolerance of sexual sin by one of their members. He instructed them to "purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened" (1 Corinthians

5:6-8). In addition to putting out sin, we are to replace it with good thoughts and actions—symbolized by the eating of unleavened bread.

God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt, and He delivered them from a harrowing experience on the banks of the Red Sea. They came through those parted waters, where God shortly afterwards buried the Egyptian army behind them. He brought them out on the other side of the Red Sea to go forward into a new way of life, and there is no way they would have been there without His deliverance! There is no way we would be where we are today spiritually without God rescuing us from sin.

Feast of Pentecost

After the Feast of Unleavened Bread, God commanded that His people keep the Feast of Harvest. The most popular name for this feast among the Jews is the Feast of Weeks. The Greek word is *pentekoste*, or Pentecost, which means "50th," because of the seven weeks plus one day that is counted to determine when to celebrate it.

There are two notable, literal events associated with this day:

First, there was the wave-sheaf offering. This was the first of the harvested barley that belonged to God as a special offering, and it was "waved" by the priest on Sunday following Passover. This day started the count to 50 until one arrives at the Day of Pentecost.

Second, on the first Pentecost after Jesus Christ's resurrection, God poured out His Holy Spirit on His Church. This is recounted in Acts 2.

What are the spiritual truths that these events point to?

Something interesting to note: Why did God choose the 50th day, the Day of Pentecost, to pour out His Spirit? Jesus specifically told them not to depart from

Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which would be baptism with the Holy Spirit. Why didn't God pour out His Spirit shortly after Christ's resurrection? Why wait so long to give them the Comforter that He promised them the night before He was crucified?

The fact that He waited until the Day of Pentecost is very significant! Some might say that it was convenient for God to wait because His followers would be gathered together to keep the Day of Pentecost. But God doesn't often do things just because they are convenient. In fact, He oftentimes does the inconvenient thing, at least from our perspective, in order to make a point. By waiting until the Day of Pentecost to pour out His Spirit, was He making the point that this holy day, and by extension all the others, signifies important aspects of His plan of salvation?

The great spiritual truth about the Feast of Pentecost is that Jesus Christ is the ultimate wave-sheaf offering! The ceremony that God gave to ancient Israel pictured Jesus Christ's acceptance by His Father as "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). When God founded His Church by imparting His Spirit to those believers on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, He was expanding His spiritual harvest. It was the beginning of what Joel prophesied, quoted by Peter in his sermon in Acts 2:17, that God will ultimately pour out His Spirit on all flesh.

Feast of Trumpets

We now make the transition to the autumn festivals, with the Feast of Trumpets leading the way. While the spring festivals are more about the workings of God in the lives of individuals, the fall festivals emphasize God's dramatic intervention in the affairs of mankind.

The literal event, described in Leviticus 23, was "a memorial of blowing of trumpets," commanded to be done on the



first day of the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar. We also know that ancient Israel used trumpets for at least three things: 1) for calling meetings together, 2) for festive events and 3) for a call to war. Since they are able to transmit sound over long distances, trumpets were excellent instruments for attracting people's attention.

The spiritual truth that this holy day points to is the return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead in Christ. In at least four places in the New Testament—two from Paul (1 Corinthians 15:50-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), one from John (Revelation 11:15) and one from Jesus Christ Himself (Matthew 24:29-31)—we read about the blowing of a trumpet in connection with this magnificent event.

The Feast of Trumpets pictures the moment when things finally start to get better for good! At the sound of the seventh trumpet, Jesus Christ will be on His way from heaven, and when He gets here all the powers of this earth are finished! The "dead in Christ shall rise first," as the apostle Paul wrote, and then the faithful who are alive and remain will rise up after them. It marks the begin-

ning of the end for the world as we know it. And it signifies hope for God's people, knowing that a better world is at hand!

Day of Atonement

Similar to Passover, the Day of Atonement teaches us about the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. However, unlike Passover's more personal focus, the Day of Atonement carries global implications.

Let's briefly summarize three literal events associated with this most solemn day:

- **Fasting.** The children of Israel were commanded to afflict their souls or, in other words, to fast and abstain from food and drink for this 24-hour period.
- **Ritual of the two goats.** This ceremony is described in Leviticus 16, where one goat is chosen to represent the Lord, and the other the scapegoat or, as it is more appropriately rendered, *azazel*, meaning "goat of departure." The goat chosen to represent the Lord was offered as a sin offering, and the goat of departure was presented alive before the

Lord. Note that this goat was not to be killed, but rather it was to bear all the iniquities of the children of Israel and carry them into an uninhabited land.

- **Sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat.** During this same ceremony, the high priest was to take the blood of the slain goat into the Holy Place, the most sacred part of the tabernacle, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat for the “uncleanness of the children of Israel ... because of their transgressions, for all their sins,” as it says in Leviticus 16:16.

The overarching spiritual truth of this day is humanity being reconciled to God. After Jesus Christ returns (pictured by the Feast of Trumpets) and puts down the nations of this earth, it will be time for humanity to be reconciled to God.

These spiritual truths are pictured by the literal events described above:

- We fast to draw close to God, expressing our humble desire for Jesus Christ to atone for our sins. With much of the world being devastated by the events leading up to this time, a humbled humanity will at last be reconciled to God.
- The two goats represent Jesus Christ and Satan respectively. The first one was slain, and its blood offered on the mercy seat for the people of Israel, picturing Jesus Christ’s shed blood for humanity (1 John 2:2). The second one was presented alive. The sins of the people were confessed over it, and it was sent away into the wilderness, picturing the removal of Satan from this world. This event is described in the first few verses of Revelation 20. Global reconciliation isn’t possible until the antagonist and source of the problem is put away.
- And then finally, the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat is symbolic of what Christ did and continues to do for us. Because of Him, we enjoy direct access to the true mercy seat—the very throne of God Almighty in heaven! This was dramatically demonstrated at the moment of Christ’s death, when the veil of the temple was torn in half from top to bottom.

The Day of Atonement pictures the loving reconciliation we have with God, made possible by Jesus Christ.

Feast of Tabernacles

God commanded the children of Israel to keep the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days. This was at the end of the fall harvest, and it was to be a time of celebration for the abundance God had given. In both Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16, the instructions to them were to “rejoice before the LORD.”

A literal event that took place during this festival was a command from God for the Israelites to leave their homes and dwell in booths, or temporary dwelling places. This was to remind them of their release from slavery and their living in temporary dwellings when God brought them out of the land of Egypt. In contrast to the slavery and suffering they experienced in Egypt, they were to rejoice in the Feast—the whole family, including those in need such as the widows, orphans and strangers (Deuteronomy 16:14). This festival emphasized the blessing and prosperity God had given (verse 15).

The spiritual truth pictured by this festival is the *restoration of all things*, as Peter said, “which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). This destination on the road map to salvation is a time of restoration!

The prophet Isaiah wrote freely of this time, describing how the day would come when God’s government would be established throughout the entire earth and how its increase and peace would have no end (chapters 2 and 9). He wrote of how wild animals and children would all dwell together someday in harmony and safety (chapter 11). He wrote about streams bursting forth in the wilderness and the desert blossoming as a rose (chapter 35). All of this speaks to a coming glorious age when the earth and all creation will rejoice, just like God commanded ancient Israel to do during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Tabernacles are temporary dwellings, just as our physical life is transitory. This is also another spiritual truth that is depicted by this festival. The Spirit-led individuals of Hebrews 11 “all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (verse 13). The Feast of Tabernacles is an annual reminder of our temporary state and that we, like our father Abraham, wait for “the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (verse 10).

However, even this time pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles is not the final dream. There is one more holy day, and Leviticus 23 calls it “the eighth day.”

The Eighth Day

Also known to us in the Church as the Last Great Day, this last holy day of God carries tremendous meaning for the great sea of humanity that has lived and died down through the ages. Once again, the words of the apostle Peter ring out, “For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). What this day pictures makes possible God’s desire for all men and women to be saved (if they so choose), and to come to the knowledge of His truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

What were the literal events that took place on this Eighth Day of the Feast? Outside of a solemn assembly and a Sabbath rest, we don’t read of anything else that specifically occurred on this day in ancient Israel.

This Last Great Day shows that God will offer eternal life to all. All who have ever lived without full knowledge of God’s way will be resurrected to physical life in the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-12). They will be taught from the Bible and given the chance to have God’s Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 37:14).

In the end, every human will have had a full chance to accept God’s calling and become His children!

For those of us who know these wonderful truths now, the spiritual fulfillment of the eighth day is not for us—it’s for them! It’s for those who’ve never had the opportunity to know God’s magnificent truth. We know who they are: They’re people most of us work with, people we interact with on an everyday basis, people who are our friends, people we are related to, people we love and care very much about. Their day is coming!

This is one of the greatest spiritual truths we can ever know!

It’s the grand finale on God’s road map to salvation, and it underscores the fact that God is not the God of the few, but the God of all people!

As a theology instructor of mine once commented, of all the truths of God that have been restored, the understanding of God’s festivals is perhaps one of the greatest. In fact, they show how God will bring about the everlasting redemption of mankind. ©(A)

Question: How can we love our neighbor who worships in a religion that preaches we are infidels who deserve to die?

Answer: What you have described is a very challenging situation, but it is one that is discussed in the Bible. Jesus said, “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect [spiritually complete or mature], just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:44-48).

How can we do this? We can first look to Jesus Christ’s example. Consider this quote from our Life, Hope & Truth article “Love of God”:

“Jesus practiced what He preached! Since Jesus led a sinless life, He did not have to die. ‘For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 6:23). He could have rightly claimed eternal life. But rather, He stood in the gap and said to His Father that He would take the death penalty for the sins of His friends—and, more significantly, for the sins of His enemies.

“This attitude is an essential part of understanding the love of God. Even in the agony of the crucifixion, Christ spoke this way of His enemies who were killing Him: ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do’ (Luke 23:34).

“Do you have this kind of godly love? It is one of the hardest things to have—but the rewards are worth it! Yet there is even more to your development of godly love.” (Read more in the article “[Love of God.](#)”)

Loving someone does not always mean you are able to interact with him or her. Due to circumstances, love sometimes needs to be from afar. More important, we all need the love and nature of God within us to be able to love our enemies. See “[Jesus Christ Taught Peace and Nonviolence.](#)”

The type of love that God desires all people to have for each other is not possible without God’s Spirit empowering us to think like God thinks. God loves mankind (John 3:16) because of man’s potential to become God’s own children. Only when we begin to view all people as potential children of God can we begin to view them as God does. We will not love their ungodly acts, but we can pray fervently for God’s Kingdom to come so they can learn the way of peace and love.

That is the core message Jesus preached, announcing the gospel (“good news”) of the Kingdom of God. If you have not yet done so, we invite you to read our e-book [The Mystery of the Kingdom](#). As you will see, the gospel is not what most assume it is! ©[Ⓐ]

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Top to bottom Osmonde Douglas (third from the left) visits with the congregation in Trinidad at the home of Carlisle Beal (third from the right); brethren in southwest Michigan fellowship at their campout

Trinidad Congregation Welcomes Visit From Elder

It was with pleasure that the Trinidadian congregation welcomed one of our Caribbean elders, Osmonde Douglas, who visited from July 24 to 27, 2014. This visit allowed him to spend time with one of our seniors, Carlisle Beal.

Mr. Beal's wife, Salima, died in December of 2013. Needless to say, he has been very lonely since, but he has been able to maintain a positive outlook and remains strong due to his faith in God.

For Sabbath dinner, Mr. Beal opened his home to Mr. Douglas and the brethren. It was a very enjoyable evening. Mr. Beal prepared a delicious meal and was a wonderful host. As is customary, Mr. Beal had a few questions for Mr. Douglas, who also updated those present on the work and our part in God's service. Mr. Beal expressed his joy and gratitude for the visit and hoped that Mr. Douglas would stay at his home for future visits.

On Sabbath, the service was broadcast via COGWA.TV with Mr. Douglas delivering the sermon. After the service, there was an interactive Bible study on Psalm 19 in which the attributes of God were explored. We continued the discussion afterward with a meal.

The brethren expressed their gratitude and are looking forward to a social activity, which is being planned for the near future.

Steve Basant

Southwest Michigan Campout and River Run Weekend

Brethren of the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, Michigan, congregations roughed it in style at the home and property of Hervé and Helen Dubois July 11 to 13.

"Family" was the theme of Mr. Dubois' and Mr. McConnaughey's messages during Sabbath services in the Dubois home. They emphasized the importance of godly

parenting and being prepared not only to face trials but also to teach our children how to deal with inevitable trials in their life. Afterward, the 22 people in attendance enjoyed wonderful food and fellowship, with a hearty bonfire and card games in the evening. Our seniors and visitors left for the comfort of their homes after the Sabbath activities.

On Sunday morning, everyone was awakened to "Reveille," played by Mr. Dubois on a cavalry trumpet, announcing coffee had been prepared and a delicious pancake breakfast would soon follow!

After fueling up for the day, it was time to gear up for an appointment with the Muskegon River and several hours of tubing, kayaking and canoeing on the rapid current. What a fantastic weekend!

Rebekah Leyden

Auckland, New Zealand Congregation Says *Au Revoir* to New FI Student



Recent graduate Danielle Caudle and her sister, Gabi

With a heavy heart, we said goodbye to Danielle Caudle on the Sabbath of July 5, 2014, before she traveled to the United

States to attend Foundation Institute.

Danielle is a recent graduate of the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She completed a double major in French and European studies. She will be the first person from the New Zealand congregation to attend Foundation Institute, beginning in August this year.

Danielle is a helpful and sincere person who has been a positive influence on our youth. She likes playing tennis, traveling, cooking and spending time with her younger sister, Gabi.

Danielle's absence in services and at church activities will be felt. However, we are confident that the lessons Danielle will learn at FI will have a tremendous impact on her life. We are very excited for her and look forward to seeing what plans God has in store for her.

Natasha Khalil

Greensboro, North Carolina

Seniors Honored at Special Dinner

On Sabbath, July 26, 2014, the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation honored our senior citizens with a special dinner. Prior to the occasion, the seniors were asked to fill out a wish list, filled with all the foods they would like to have. Thanks to the “younger” ladies, most of their wishes were fulfilled. The highlight of the dinner was the servers, who ranged in age from 58 to 3 years old!

The seniors were graciously escorted to their seats and served their meals, along with desserts and drinks, by the younger and youngest members of the Greensboro family.

Ron Kelley



Clockwise from the top Seniors in Greensboro, North Carolina, feast on a wish list of favorite foods; newlyweds Robert and Kristen Mazza don giant sombreros; newly ordained deacon John Duncan and his wife, Angie

Nashville, Tennessee

Deacon Ordained

On June 7, 2014, the Sabbath before Pentecost, John Duncan from the Nashville, Tennessee, congregation was ordained a deacon. John and his wife, Angie, have been serving their Church family in various ways for more than 20 years. The elated congregation celebrated his ordination with refreshments and fellowship after services. It is so exciting to see such growth in God's Church!

Amy Duncan

including one given by Robert Mazza, Sr., bestowing this second generation with sombreros originally given to him and his wife, Trish, while in Mexico for their anniversary. Many happy wishes to the newest Mr. and Mrs. Mazza!

Heather Schwartzrock

chicken wings; and they presented him with a police badge, police cap and a T-shirt with his name written on it. They also gave him a medal and a very nice plaque with his name listed as an honorary officer. It was quite a special day for him.

Scot is very weak and tired these days and is experiencing more pain. He greatly appreciates the prayers of his fellow brethren.

Beloit, Wisconsin

Congregation Throws a Fiesta for Newlyweds

The Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation held a fiesta on July 26, 2014, after church services in honor of the newly married Robert and Kristen (Black) Mazza.

Since the couple had recently returned from their Cancún honeymoon, the fiesta featured a Mexican potluck complete with *polvorones* (wedding cookies) and *conos de nieve* (snow cones). Decorations highlighted the couple's "Keeper of the Stars" reception theme, and a slide show from the Minnesota wedding played during dinner. The evening closed with several toasts,

Dallas, Texas

Member Fulfills Lifelong Dream

Scot Dane, a member in the Dallas, Texas, congregation who is suffering from stage IV colon cancer, was able to fulfill a lifelong dream on Aug. 7, 2014.

The hospice caring for Scot offers a final wishes program; and as a result, he was able to ride along with a police officer in the squad car for part of a shift. For just one day, Scot was able to live his dream.

Afterward, the police department threw a party for him with cake, tea, fruit and



Scot Dane spends the day as a police officer

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Auburn, Alabama

Member Graduates With Bachelor of Science Degree



Camille Reding graduated from Sweet Briar College in Sweet Briar, Virginia, in May of 2014 with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and minors

in chemistry and biology. Her final cumulative GPA was a 3.79.

She was treasurer of Alpha Lambda Delta, as well as a member of two other honor societies, Psi Chi and Iota Sigma Pi. She was an active participant in SAACS and the pre-vet club. She also tutored and was a lab assistant for general chemistry and organic chemistry, and she served as a grader and tutor for statistics for behavioral science. She made the dean's list every semester of her college career.

While attending college, she worked for a large animal veterinarian with alpacas, llamas, horses, sheep and other farm animals.

Camille presented her senior research, titled "Thru-Hiking the Appalachian Trail: The Effect of Motivation and Personality on Successfully Accomplishing Long-Term Goals," at the Southeastern Psychological Association's 60th Annual Conference. Her research sought to further understand what methods of motivation are best for long-term goals. Additionally, she looked at whether people with certain personality traits are able to complete long-term goals more proficiently.

After graduating, she married Dylan Roemhild and moved to Auburn, Alabama, where she is currently applying for admittance to Auburn's School of Veterinary Medicine to become a large animal veterinarian. Camille now has a job as a veterinary assistant at a small animal clinic. Her favorite pastimes are hiking in the woods, riding horses, playing tennis and bowling.

BAPTISMS



Heidi Himsel and her father, Blaney Sproul

The Indianapolis, Indiana, congregation announces the recent baptism of Heidi Himsel. Heidi grew up in the Church, and she counseled for baptism in her local area with Lyle Welty. While visiting her home in western Pennsylvania, she was baptized on May 31, 2014, by her father, Blaney Sproul, a local elder in the Morgantown, West Virginia, congregation.

It is with great joy that we welcome Heidi as she joins the Church of God in this awesome journey of life to God's Kingdom.

Lyle Welty

BIRTHS



Victoria Elizondo

Juan and Terresina Elizondo welcomed the birth of their daughter, Victoria, who was born Feb. 23, 2014, at 7:19 a.m. She weighed 6 pounds 14 ounces and measured 19.5 inches long. The family attends the Atlanta, Georgia, congregation.



Ava Jones

Jonathan and Amy Jones are very happy to announce the birth of Ava Lynn Jones. Ava was born on May 1, 2014, weighing 7 pounds 6 ounces. Jonathan and Amy, as well as proud grandparents O.D. and Sylvia Jones and Tim and Jody Whitley, are all members of the Houston North, Texas, congregation.

WEDDINGS



Camille and Dylan Roemhild

It is with great pleasure that Linda Worsham and Russell Reding announce the marriage of their daughter Camille Reding of Evington, Virginia, to Dylan Roemhild of Iva, South Carolina. The wedding took place May 18, 2014, on the beautifully landscaped grounds of a historic bed-and-breakfast near Mount Airy, North Carolina. Bruce Gore, minister of the Atlanta, Jefferson and Macon, Georgia, congregations officiated. The couple now resides in Auburn, Alabama, where they attend the Birmingham, Alabama, congregation.

ANNIVERSARIES



Mary and Jack Hendren

After services on the Sabbath of June 7, 2014, the members from the Corpus Christi, Victoria and Harlingen, Texas, congregations honored their pastor Jack Hendren and his wife, Mary, with a 50th wedding anniversary celebration.

A meal of barbecue brisket and chicken and all the trimmings was enjoyed by the congregation. After the meal the Hendrens cut a 50th anniversary cake, and the congregation toasted them with a round of champagne. They were presented with gifts from the congregation, including a personal anniversary photo album, a handmade quilt and various other gifts. Many of the gifts had an avian theme since the Hendrens are avid bird watchers.

The congregation expressed gratitude for the fine example of marriage the Hendrens have set for the Church and others.

Arnold C. Mendez Sr.

Pat and Cy Holdsworth celebrated 60 years of marriage, with the Buffalo, New York, congregation on July 12, 2014.



Pat and Cy Holdsworth

Their story began when the two of them met on a blind date through mutual friends in 1951. A few years later, after Cy

went for a military tour of duty, they got married on July 9, 1954.

Later, Cy got interested in Herbert W. Armstrong's radio broadcast when listening to it on the way to work. He told his wife about it, and they wrote in for *The Plain Truth* magazine. They attended their first Feast of Tabernacles in 1958 and got baptized while they were there.

The couple has five sons who are now adults with their own children and grandchildren. They talk about their 15 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren all the time.

The congregation celebrated the occasion with a special cake and a card signed by the congregation. Congratulations to the Holdsworths for 60 years of marriage!

Stephan Koenig

OBITUARIES

Ramona Ashford Johnson, 58, of Kendall Park, New Jersey, died on June 9, 2014. She was born on Feb. 12, 1956, in Winnsboro, South Carolina. She was the daughter of the late Charlie and Mary Ashford Jr.

Ramona was educated in the South Carolina Fairfield County public school system and attended several colleges in South Carolina and New Jersey. She enjoyed working part-time with children alongside friends and teachers in the New Jersey Lawrence Township School System.



David and Ramona Johnson

She enjoyed reading the Scriptures, cooking, working with arts and crafts, traveling throughout the United States and (most of all) spending time with her family.

Left to share in her legacy of love and devotion is her husband of 36½ years, David E. Johnson Sr. Also left to cherish many fond and precious memories are her four children, Ramona (Bradley) Johnson Sullivan, Roslyn D. Johnson, David E. Johnson

II and Rachel E. Ashford Johnson; and one granddaughter, Jacqueline J. Sullivan.

Ramona is also survived by her sisters, Hobia (Raleigh) Blackman, Mary Ashford, Lillian (Willie) Mickle and Sabrina (Michael) Armstrong; her brother, James (Cynthia) Ashford; and a host of relatives and friends.

Ramona was preceded in death by brothers Bernart, Charley and Robert, and sister Charlene Ashford.

Ramona's funeral services were conducted by John Foster, pastor of the St. Louis, Missouri, congregation, and Don Waterhouse, pastor of the Augusta, Georgia, and Columbia and Florence, South Carolina, congregations.

David Edwards, 63, a member of the Meadville, Pennsylvania, congregation, died July 18 after a short but intense battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Linda, their three children (Jennifer, Lisa and David) and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was also survived by his two sisters and two brothers, though his brother Marvin died July 21, just three days after Dave's death.

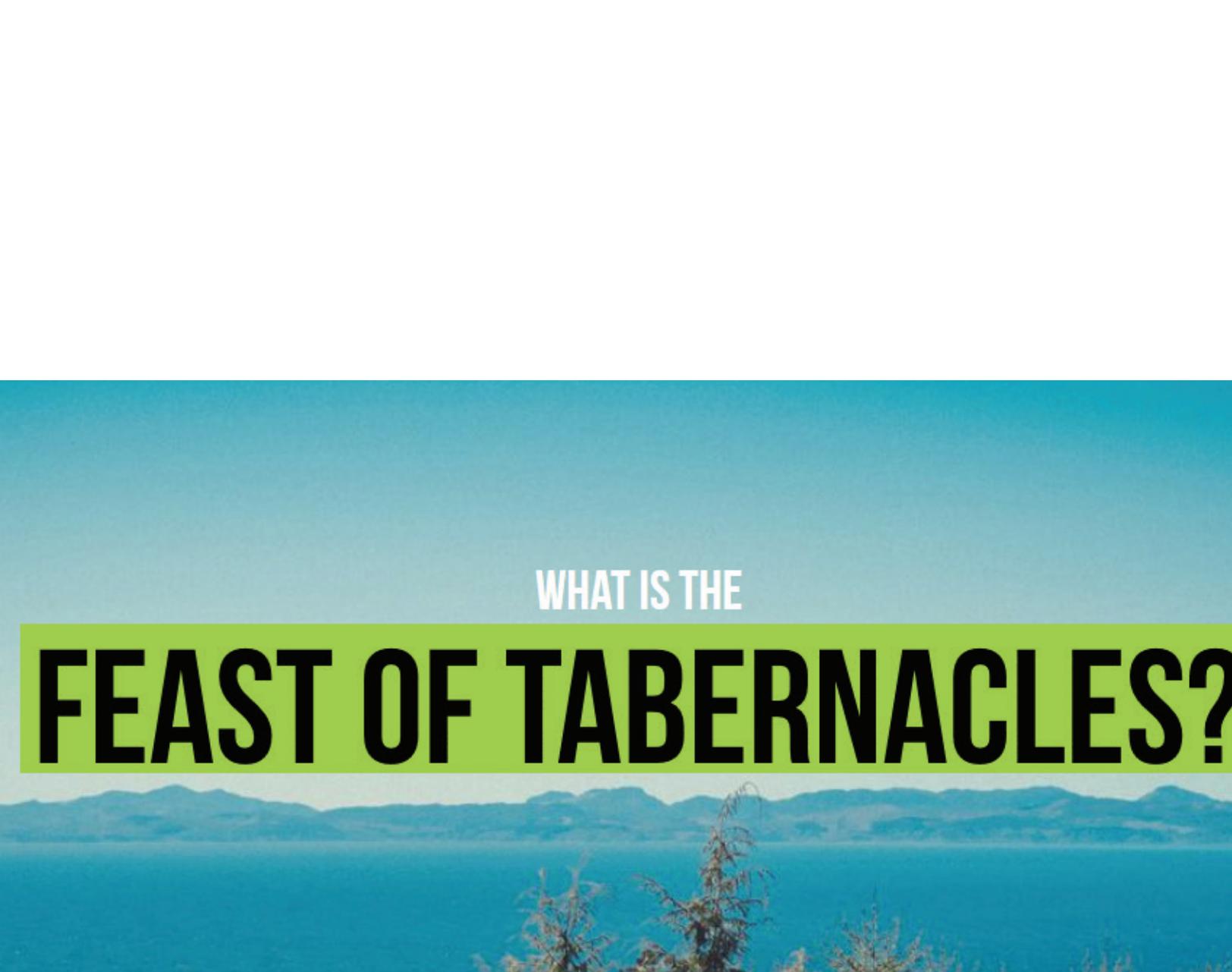
Dave was a quiet servant who simply found what needed to be done and did it.



Dave and Linda Edwards

He had been a member of God's Church for 24 years, and his jovial laugh and enthusiastic fellowship will be missed in Meadville. Just two months before his death, Dave and Linda moved back into their rebuilt home following a house fire in January that destroyed the home they had built 28 years earlier. His skill and energetic pursuit of both physical (such as service to others with his woodworking skills) and spiritual goals (there was never a question about his passion for seeing God's plan come to fruition) set an example for all who knew him.

Funeral services were conducted on July 23 by Doug Johnson, pastor of the Meadville, Pennsylvania, and Cleveland, Ohio, congregations.



WHAT IS THE

FEAST OF TABERNACLES?

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, DURING THE FALL HARVEST SEASON, IS A WEEKLONG CELEBRATION PICTURING 1,000 YEARS OF GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH. THIS WILL BE A BOUNTIFUL SPIRITUAL HARVEST.

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