

OneAccord

December 2014



Visiting
Our
Scattered
Brethren

CYC: Camp
Directors Plan for
the 2015 Program

Salt and Light:
The YOLO
Mentality

Writer's Block:
A Special Part of
Our Family

personal from the president

December Activities

December will be a busy month for the Church of God, a Worldwide Association. Two of the most important meetings of the year will take place during the first two weeks. And the final full week is the Winter Family Weekend in Louisville, Kentucky, followed by Winter Camp in Wisconsin.

Dec. 3 to 4 the Festival team, along with all U.S. coordinators, will convene at our headquarters office in Allen, Texas, to discuss plans for the 2015 Feast of Tabernacles. This past year we had our “best Feast ever.” Now that seems to be an old cliché, but this year we truly did have a great Feast, with a number of firsts. Our attendance was up by almost 500 people over 2013. And for the first time in our history we held a Feast in Ireland, which turned out to be very successful.

The Feast meetings will focus on what we learned this past year and how we can improve next year. Potentially, we may have five new U.S. sites in 2015, located in the Northwest, the Southwest, the Northeast, Colorado and Texas. For those who like variety, 2015 will be an exceptional year. In addition to new sites, we are also planning a return to the Big Island of Hawaii. Whether you prefer the beach or the mountains or an exotic international location, you will find it among the sites for 2015.

The week following the Feast meetings, the Ministerial Board of Directors (MBOD) will hold its annual meeting at the Allen office. In the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, the board meets once per year to review and approve the budget, strategic plan and operation plans for the next fiscal year. There were advances in all areas this past year, but we want to do even more.

The third event in December will be the Winter Family Weekend. We anticipate that more than 1,000 people will gather from around the country to enjoy four days of fun, fellowship, biblical education and sports activities in Louisville, Kentucky. This year Media operation manager Clyde Kilough will be the guest speaker on the Sabbath.

At the end of December and the first week of January, Winter Camp is scheduled to take place in Wisconsin. Based on early registration, we are expecting a record attendance of staff and campers. Even though the weather and the terrain are different from our other camps, the goals are the same. As



well, there will be the same dedicated staff to serve our youth.

Because of the world’s celebration of Christmas, December can be a difficult month for families, creating a strain on relationships. Both the Winter Family Weekend and Winter Camp provide an opportunity to get away from it all and be with brethren of like mind.

In the conclusion to 2 Corinthians the apostle Paul writes to the brethren: “Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11). Each time we are together—whether at the Feast or an activity such as the WFW or a youth camp—we strive to follow this advice, knowing that God, who is a God of love and peace, will be with us. There is so much division in the world around us that for a group to be of one mind is rare, but what a breath of fresh air it is when it does happen! I believe this is why the Winter Family Weekend and our youth camps are so successful.

Please pray for the success of our meetings; and if you are traveling during December, do so with care. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Winter Family Weekend in Louisville.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Franks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

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CHURCH of GOD
 A WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Camp Directors Meet to Plan 2015 Program

COGWA Youth Camps directors and wives spend 2½ days at the headquarters office to discuss what made this year’s program successful and how to make next year even better.

by KEN TREYBIG

The COGWA Youth Camp team met at the headquarters office for 2½ days of meetings Nov. 10-12, 2014, to discuss this year’s program and to plan for next year’s camps. These meetings have proven over the years to be an excellent way to generate synergy for the program, give us a chance to share things we learned from this year’s program, discuss any concerns that arose, brainstorm about ways to further implement the Christian Living theme and share tips from the other directors as we plan for the coming year.

The camp directors’ wives were in attendance as well (since they are often the ones handling a lot of the paperwork and details needed for a successful camp), and they gave valuable input for the program.

Items discussed included a short review of this year’s teen and preteen camps by each of the directors and an overall financial report of camp expenses as well as projections for the national budget through the end of the year. We discussed the trends seen in responses to surveys of campers, staff and parents. Various directors discussed policies and procedures, and we discussed the options for the Christian Living theme for next year.

Britton Taylor reviewed insurance claims for the year and discussed the need to always be vigilant about safety since the camp staff takes on the responsibility of caring for the precious children of Church members. Jim Franks and Doug Horchak also addressed the group, giving some feedback about the program from the administration’s perspective.

Considerable time was spent with the entire Media team as well. Kelli Hogg gave some feedback on the positive comments that came from having one Facebook page for all camps this year. Clyde Kilough led a discussion of the camp video to be

Clockwise from the top right Ken Treybig addresses the group; the camp directors and wives review video from camps in 2014; Eric Evans, James Capo and Gary Black listen to discussion

shared with the Church next spring and discussed website design and articles. Each director also spent some time in the studio recording a short video describing some of the unique aspects of the atmosphere, venues and traditions of his or her camp, which will be available on the camp website next year. The suggestion had been made earlier that it would be nice to provide potential campers with a better feel of what to expect at a particular camp.

Wednesday’s half-day meetings were devoted to technology as we consulted with Jerry Rehor and Kelly Cunningham. Local camp accounting information is now being managed and stored in a central area, and plans for next year include implementing a digital photo upload system so campers and staff members do not have to mail photos to the directors. The directors are excited not to have to scan all those photos too! There was also a discussion about offering online payment for camp fees. Each camp would need its own payment gateway, but our provider is willing to provide those at a very reasonable fee. The service is being offered for the Winter Family Weekend this year, which will be a good test case for how it could be done for our camps.

There were many comments over the course of the meetings about what a good example our campers and staff are to the employees and owners of the camp facilities we rent. It is always inspiring to our camp staff to see so many young people excited about living God’s way of life, and that positive environment is definitely noticed by those in the public with whom we interact.

The program has shown very good fruits in the lives of our Church families, and these camp meetings are an opportunity each year for us to discuss how to do an even better job of connecting young people with each other, with adults in the Church—and especially with God. ©A

Campers Strengthen Their Belief in God at Winter Camp in Chile

by DANIEL SEPÚLVEDA SOLÍS

This year, we were able to enjoy three days of teen camp in the outskirts of the city Melipilla, Chile, located 1½ hours from the capital, Santiago. We were in the same place as last year, but now the location offered a lot more amenities, all thanks to the kindness of Roberto Hernandez and all of his family, who allowed us to use their house and accommodated us comfortably.

A total of 68 teens attended camp, and more than 10 adults helped in the preparation and organization of the camp. On the Sabbath, we had a total of 86 people in attendance. The camp theme was “God Is Real”; and throughout the presentations, sermons, sermonettes and Bible studies, speakers attempted to present God exactly as He has shown Himself to us. In this society one of the tools most used against our teens is the idea that God is not real and that, therefore, it is not necessary to obey Him, much less believe Him or do as He asks. It is very rare that one of our teens turns to another form of Christianity or willingly practices another type of religion, but it is common to see them, led by doubt, leave the Church and live, think and feel as if they never heard or learned God’s Word.

Because of these pressures, this year we tried to face this issue head-on and prove to our teens in a rational and convincing way that there is no other logical possibility or alternative to the existence of God. On the contrary, all that we see, hear, study and understand points to a Creator; and this same Creator, in the present time, has decided to work with us, His few, yet precious people.

On Sunday we had the opportunity to watch the documentary *God of Wonders*, which shows with clear examples impressive details of God’s creation and how He has left a track in everything created. The video shows how the Creator reveals Himself in the life of the hummingbird and its perfectly synchronized flying, in the strength and power of lightning and the benefits it brings to agriculture, and in the subtlety and beauty of a snowflake.

Per tradition, we also had a dance, and this year the teens proposed that it be a costume dance. A lot of them participated enthusiastically with elaborate costumes. Others, however, opted to disguise themselves as sleeping bags—a very simple alternative and very entertaining. The only inconvenience was the heat that was produced by being inside a sleeping bag while dancing, but that didn’t stop anyone from participating in a fun dance.

Everyone returned home on Sunday around 6 p.m. when the



bus hired by the teens brought them back to the capital. Those from Temuco in the south of Chile returned home that same night, so they could go back to school the next day. No doubt they were exhausted from the trip, but also happy and confident, knowing that God is over everything.

I cannot miss the opportunity to thank God for all the care He pours out on us. I am witness to how He makes careful efforts to call our teens to participate in this great privilege of being a part of His people. It’s moving to notice that God is clearly working with our children, giving them the only and greatest purpose in life—the blessing and privilege to be born into His future and wonderful spiritual family. ©A

Visiting Our Scattered Brethren in Africa and Europe

The regional director of the French-speaking areas takes a trip to connect with brethren in the Congo, Cameroon, Togo and France.

by JOEL MEEKER

During October and November I made a pastoral trip through the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Togo and France. A pilots' strike forced me to reprogram this trip after the Feast of Tabernacles rather than before the Feast as it was initially planned.

My first destination was Kinshasa, the capital of the Congo, where I arrived on Thursday night, Oct. 30, after 24 hours of travel from Dallas. There were signs in the airport and signs in the hotel warning of precautions to take to avoid contracting Ebola. At the time I arrived, there had been 66 cases of Ebola reported in the Congo, and 49 deaths, in a rural region about 350 miles (550 km) from Kinshasa. The risk was small, but the disease does such horrible things to victims that the fear was very real, and the measures to prevent the spread of Ebola would follow me throughout Africa.

On Friday I made visits to the homes of people who have newly begun attending services with us. Such personal visits are very much appreciated, and I try to make several each time I'm in the Congo. We first drove down paved roads, then onto the rutted sand and puddles that serve as streets in much of the city. I first visited André and Marie in the clinic where Marie was recovering from an appendectomy. We went on to visit several other families, small groups, and individuals.

On the way back to the hotel, we stopped at the newly rented church compound. This large house, surrounded by a wall topped with razor wire (as they all are here), serves as the meeting hall for Sabbath services and weekly Bible studies. It also served as the Feast of Tabernacles site. Several families camped on the grounds to be able to attend the whole Feast. The official church office is maintained on the site as well; the Congolese government requires a fixed office for every church organization, so that officials know where to find church leaders in the event of any kind of problem. I was happy to see the meeting hall had been repainted. More painting and cleaning still needs to be done in other areas.

We had 70 people present for Sabbath services. More would have come, but some people cannot easily afford the \$2 round-trip cost to come to services. I offered to have the Church pay half the cost for those that needed help, but even this was not enough for everyone.

I gave the sermon on biblical keys to answered prayer. After services, we had a counseling session for people preparing for baptism. This was my third meeting with most of them.

On the way back to the hotel, we stopped at a military base so I could anoint an officer's wife who was sick with malaria.

The guard at the front gate was suspicious of me, since I had a camera tripod. He complained that I might be a spy coming to shoot video of military secrets on his base. He finally let us pass; but I was very careful not to do anything suspicious, not to take any photos and to leave the tripod in the car.

In the afternoon I had a meeting with the local leaders to go over needs and future plans. Among other things, I left some assistance to buy several large bags of rice to distribute among the neediest members in the congregation.

From Kinshasa to Cameroon

Sunday morning I caught a flight to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Although I only needed to travel to Cameroon about 700 miles away, there are so few flight connections that I had to fly through Addis, almost 2,000 miles away, and then fly back across the continent.

In Kinshasa I had to have my temperature taken, fill out a health questionnaire and be interviewed by a nurse to verify I had no symptoms of Ebola. Upon arrival in Addis Ababa, in a chaotic arrival area, all passengers had their temperatures taken, and we again had to fill out health forms. It took more than two hours to get out of the airport.

The next day I worked all day in my hotel room near the airport. Tuesday morning I flew back across Africa to Douala in Cameroon, where my temperature was taken on arrival. Also our boarding passes were checked to make sure no passengers had come from a country with active Ebola cases. Cameroon is refusing all such passengers. My boarding pass showed me coming from Ethiopia, so I was allowed to enter.

Early Wednesday morning the driver and I started the four-wheel-drive expedition to a remote village in central Cameroon, 200 miles from Douala. It took six hours on often poor roads to reach the village where we have two faithful members, Jules and Simon-Pierre, whom I have known for nearly 20 years. They work at a sugar refinery on a contract basis, farming fields in between contracts. This had been our first visit in quite some time because of the difficulty and time-consuming task of reaching them.

I offered them a soft drink, and we caught up on all the news. I gave them some printed copies of our most recent French literature, and we discussed communication issues and how we can better serve them. They were very thankful for the visit, this little evidence that they are considered important members of the Body of Christ. We needed to be back in the capital city of Yaoundé before dark when travel becomes more dangerous. So, after two hours, we said goodbye, and I said I would do my best



Clockwise from top Brethren at the church hall in Kinshasa, Congo; Jules and Simon-Pierre read Church literature; Odette Zipki and her husband, Guy Ahialebedzi; brethren in Lome, Togo; new attendees in Kinshasa; Jules and Simon-Pierre, our brethren in Cameroon



to come back again in the spring and perhaps spend the night.

We arrived back in Yaoundé at nightfall just in time for a torrential rain that shut down electrical power to most of the city. I sat in the dark using my phone for illumination until the power came back on half an hour later.

Thursday morning at 8 a.m. I had a meeting with Arnel and Deborah, brother and sister university students who are new to our association. We sat in front of the hotel and talked for three hours. They had questions about recent church history, about our association, about our plans for preaching the gospel and caring for the flock and several Bible questions too. It was a very encouraging time, and they were very enthused by this contact. They have other family members who will also be joining us, so it looks as if we will be having a Feast of Tabernacles site in Cameroon in 2015.

Back in Douala, I had one more visit request from a man who discovered us on the Internet and said he was very interested in the Church. In actual fact, he turned out to be a jazz promoter looking for help to sponsor a music festival! It was a short visit.

From Cameroon to Togo

Friday morning I flew to Lomé in Togo, where Guy and Pierre met me (and my temperature was taken yet again). We discussed plans for the next few days and caught up on our news.

Friday evening we had a Bible study at Guy's house, which is their usual venue. I covered the life of Miriam, Moses' sister, who was an important leader in Israel.

Sabbath morning I spoke on the topic of believing God. We broke for a lovely lunch prepared by the ladies of the congregation. Then we had an impromptu Q-and-A Bible study that ended up lasting two hours. John, a man totally new to the Church of God, found us on the Internet and has begun attending services. He had many questions and was excited by the answers. We enjoyed our fellowship all day until it got near to sunset, when we went our different ways.

Sunday I had several individual visits and counseling sessions and held another Bible study to further explore a question that had come up on the Sabbath: "What is the Great Tribulation?"

Monday I again had individual visits and counseling sessions, which culminated Tuesday in the baptism of a new member, Odette Zipki. Odette is the wife of Guy, one of our local leaders; and her story, which took her from hostility to the truth, from impatience to curiosity to commitment and now to baptism, is most inspiring.

From Togo to France

Tuesday night I said goodbye and flew overnight to Paris. Thursday I had a meeting with an old friend from a sister association, extending the right hand of fellowship. Friday was a work day in my room. My daughter Tatiana is studying this semester in Paris, so I enjoyed being able to have dinner with her.

On the Sabbath we had eight people (several others were traveling) present for a Bible study, which I gave on the question "Who is the Antichrist?" We enjoyed talking for several hours afterwards. Services in Paris are not too frequent, so the time together is much appreciated. We seem to have a core group forming in Paris, and we pray the momentum will continue to build with God's blessing.

Early Sunday morning I began the trip back to Dallas. God willing, my next African trip should be around the spring holy days. Thank you for your prayers for God's guidance and protection on those of us who travel on behalf of the Church. ©

The YOLO Mentality

This world promotes the slogan “You Only Live Once.”
But since our time is limited, shouldn’t we think carefully
about how we choose to live that one life?

by CHARISMA LAWLER

One of the most influential people today is a young woman named Miley Cyrus. A popular actress and singer, she has become a poster child for breaking boundaries and challenging social norms. In contrast to historical women who broke boundaries by doing positive things (such as Amelia Earhart and Jane Austen), Miss Cyrus breaks boundaries by challenging basic codes of morality and decency.

The young celebrity has come to represent a mentality that is common among today’s younger generation—the mentality known as “You Only Live Once” (or YOLO).

The popularity of YOLO

Miley Cyrus’ song “We Can’t Stop” is a disturbing summary of this modern outlook on life. In a nutshell, the song describes the theory that people should be free to do whatever they want and not care about anyone judging them for it.

Miss Cyrus described her thoughts on the song in her announcement of it: “I feel like this song really is for them [my fans] and how I feel—that I can’t stop and I’m going to be who I am and they should be who they are and that they can’t stop and no one can stop us. ... It really is an inspir-

ing song for my fans. We don’t care, we can do what we want.”

Not only are her words influential, but the way Miley Cyrus presents herself is affecting the minds of young girls today. Her influence—in everything from her revealing clothing to her sexual dancing—is corrupting the minds of young girls and showing them that propriety and modesty are values of the past. Her message is exactly what she stated in the above quote: “We can do what we want.”

A life of carelessness

The philosophy behind YOLO is that people should throw caution to the wind and enjoy and live life however they want, regardless of the consequences. This way of thinking erases any clear line between right and wrong, responsibility and recklessness, intelligence and idiocy. What Miley Cyrus and those who espouse this way of thinking are saying is that you only live once, so do whatever feels good and enjoy life.

The YOLO mentality gives people an excuse to live carelessly. YOLO is the whole idea of being reckless—doing what you want regardless of the consequences

and how others feel about your actions. It is completely contrary to the values that God wants us to have. “He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, but he who is careless of his ways will die” (Proverbs 19:16, emphasis added).

It is telling to see when the slogan “You Only Live Once” is applied. It’s not when you’re up all night studying for your college exams, trying to get a degree that you only live once. It’s not when you’re being conscientious about your behavior and striving to

There is nothing wrong with enjoying life, especially when we’re young. But it must be done in a godly and balanced manner.

make a good impression and influence people positively that you only live once. It’s not when you’re sacrificing and planning for your future that you only live once. It’s not when you’re careful and discerning about who you will marry so that you can

have a lasting, successful marriage that you only live once.

Instead, it's used when you want an excuse to be stupid, lazy and reckless—such as taking that fourth shot of whiskey someone hands you at a party!

Life is limited—so make the most of it!

Abandoning the YOLO mentality won't make us recluses or socially inept. There is nothing wrong with enjoying life, especially when we're young. But it must be done in a godly and balanced manner.

This balance should include a respect for others and authority, even though it's the opposite of what society tells us to do.

Living life doing whatever we want will get us nowhere. But living life with hard work, dedication, patience and a high standard of morality and behavior can give us an abundant life that is full of fun, excitement and greatness (John 10:10).

While the phrase YOLO is used for the wrong reasons, it does contain a nugget of truth. The Bible tells us that this physical life is limited.

Because our physical lives are limited, we're told to "walk circumspectly, not as

fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16). There's more to life than having a blast whatever way we choose! As Hebrews 9:27 explains, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." We should strive to live wisely and properly use our time.

For another perspective on how the ideas of our culture do not match God's way of life, read "[Don't Follow Your Heart, Get a New One!](#)" @A

This article appeared on the Young Adult Blog at members.cogwa.org/young-adult-blog/the-yolo-mentality.

WRITER'S BLOCK

Our Youth: A Special Part of God's Family

by BARBARA LEE

Our Church family is comprised of many different parts, and each of these parts has a function. "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (Romans 12:4-5).

A special part of our Church family is our youth. In fact, according to a recent report, 40 percent of those who attend are under the age of 35! This is the next generation of God's work and our physical church organization.

I asked several of the youth in the Church for their feedback on being included in the congregation.

"I think the adults in the Church and our congregation (mainly the ministers) do many things well regarding the youth," one said. "Once in a while, the sermons really catch the youths' attention—whether it is on how to repent of past sins, how we can serve in the Church and our local congregations, or how to be good examples to people inside and outside of the Church."

Another mentioned, "Adults in the Church [not just ministers] also do well with including the youth in any areas they can. In my congregation, the youth have an opportunity to have a teen Bible study on the first Sabbath of every month."

These are positive comments, but how can we adults in the Church do a better job of including this special part of God's family?

Let's take a look at how to build a strong generation for God's work. How do the youth want to be treated? How can we make them feel valued as members of the family?

1. Get to know the youth in the Church

It doesn't matter if you are in your 40s, in your 90s or somewhere in between, the youth are ready to share their energy and zeal for life! Spend time getting to know the young people in your congregation, and form connections. The more time we spend

talking with our youth, the more we will understand their goals, hopes and dreams and also their struggles and disappointments, which are sure to come along as well.

Once we get to know more about our youth and their daily lives, we will also be in a position to encourage them. "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12:10).

One young person commented, "It's fine when the adults give us advice on various topics, but encourage them to keep it positive. They all have many stories on things that happened to their friends and family. However, keeping it to the positive examples is what we need!"

2. Share service opportunities

Our young people attend Church regularly and understand that there is a lot involved in setting up and holding services every Sabbath. One way to build stronger relationships with the young people is by sharing service opportunities with them. They may not always know or see what needs to be done, but most are happy to help when asked!

One young person commented, "I like that they want to get us involved; and when they do, they are excited about the project. It makes us more interested in it too. And lots of encouragement makes us feel reassured that we are doing a good job."

Once we have been working alongside our youth for some time, consider the next step: Give them the responsibilities. Let them own these as their own. Let them be in charge of the task in question, but be available for questions, concerns or just for guidance.

Some ideas for such opportunities are chair setup/takedown, potluck/food setup, mothers' room duties, performing special music, participating in an instrumental ensemble, running the sound equipment, running the webcast or helping with stage decorations. There are certainly more possibilities that each one of us can offer.

Another young person advised, "If they would like us to help with something, we would like advance notice—more than a week, if possible. And we really wouldn't like to be pressured into doing something. Normally we will help, but sometimes we just have too much going on. We also like group projects because if more people are doing it, we are more likely to enjoy it than view it as a burden."

In summary, get to know the youth in the Church! Include them, serve with them and encourage them. Be positive, and enjoy getting to know this special part of God's family! @A

Question: I will stop keeping Christmas because I now know that it is not really Jesus' birthday. God is the boss, so I do what He says. But I do not know what to do about the fact that I have many grandchildren who are very much into Christmas. I will have a good talk with God about what to do, because He knows my heart is worried.

How a person explains his or her decision makes a big difference in the family's reaction to the change.

Answer: As you put it so well, God is "the boss"! So, you are right to do what He says about Christmas. He also appreciates your concern about your grandchildren, for He wants you to have the best possible relationship with them.

We have seen a variety of reactions within families when one family member stops observing Christmas, and we have learned that how a person explains his or her decision makes a big difference in the family's reaction to the change.

First, pray for God to give you wisdom to choose the right words to use in explaining this to your family—and ask Him to give you favor in their eyes. Then, talk with them about your change of belief either in writing or in person (whichever works best in your family). Emphasize to them that you respect their personal convictions and that you are not going to try to change what they believe. This approach many times softens what could otherwise be a harsh reaction.

At the same time, ask the family to respect your change of belief as a personal decision. Tell them that you are not going to change your mind. That should ward off any attempt to argue with you.

And tell them that your love for your family has not changed—and that you will continue to give them gifts—but at other times of the year.

While this wise and gentle approach can soften the family's reaction, we need to offer a word of caution. You should not set your heart on the family seeing things exactly as you do, because there is a spiritual factor at work. Only a short time ago, you likely would have been shocked (perhaps even offended) if someone suggested to you that Christmas was a pagan holiday.

Jesus explained in John 6:44 that this gift of understanding comes directly from the Father. The best-chosen or the cleverest argument cannot cause anyone to know what God has not shown them. You can take heart in the fact that your example sends a powerful, unspoken message (Matthew 5:13-16), both to your children and to your grandchildren.

It is possible that some of your family members will ask you questions about your beliefs. Our material on Christmas will give you the information you need to be able to answer. See "[Christmas: Should Christians Celebrate It?](#)" and "[The Birth of Jesus.](#)"

Let me know if I can be of further assistance from this office. ©A

Twin Cities, Minnesota Deacon and Deaconess Ordained

On the Sabbath of Sept. 27, Dustin and Jana Ellison were ordained deacon and deaconess in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, congregation.

Dustin and Jana celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary on Sept. 26. Dustin is a third-generation member of God's Church, and Jana is a second-generation member. Both were raised in the area, attended the Church summer camps and now serve our youth at Winter Camp on a regular basis.

The couple is active in serving the young adults and teens of the congregation. Dustin gives sermonettes, leads songs, conducts teen Bible studies and serves as our Festival adviser. Both are active in special music and have planned numerous events in the congregation.

Four of the five Twin Cities elders were present to participate in the ordination with our pastor, Gary Black. With Feast fever already high, it was a special Sabbath as the congregation rejoiced with the Ellisons at their ordination!

Barbara Lee



Top Don Erickson, Don Finger, Jana and Dustin Ellison, Gary Black, David Witt, Cory Erickson; *Bottom* Richard Rand, Greg and Jan Swartz, Doug Horchak, Karen and George Meeker and Marian and Greg Sargent

Columbia, Missouri Congregation Celebrates 50th Anniversary

A sunny Sabbath afternoon greeted about 120 people at the 50th anniversary of the Church of God in Columbia, Missouri. The celebration took place on Nov. 1, 2014.



Dale Mellerup, Doug Horchak and David Smith

The Columbia church first met on Oct. 24, 1964, at the Columbia Labor Temple. Hal Baird Jr. was the minister.

The prevalent theme of the anniversary celebration was faithful perseverance. Dale Mellerup and David Smith, two members who were present at the first or second meetings of the congregation, were honored with a plaque.

Guest speaker Doug Horchak, operation manager for Ministerial Services, gave the sermon titled "Waiting on God With Faith and Patience."

The service was led by Columbia's pastor, Greg Sargent, who acted as host and song leader. Richard Rand, who was pastor of the congregation for 11 years during the 1970s and 1980s, gave the sermonette. Also present were former pastor George Meeker and elder Greg Swartz, who gave the opening and closing prayers.

The Columbia choir sang "We Are Called," and John Maskrid of the Wichita, Kansas, congregation sang "The Anchor Holds."

After Sabbath services, those present enjoyed looking over a large display board, several photo albums and a slideshow of photos.

The evening concluded with a catered dinner and desserts, including a special anniversary cake.

Pat Freeman
Photos by Brad Anderson

Georgetown, Guyana Brethren Have the Best Feast of Tabernacles Yet

Guyana, the Land of Many Waters, hosted the Feast of Tabernacles for the first time in the history of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association. On several days, we had a high attendance of 14 brethren. This group was comprised of members from two countries, Barbados and Guyana. Most of the attendees, however, were

Clockwise from top left Brethren at the Feast in Georgetown, Guyana; the Feast site in Guyana; Hannah Willoughby shows her hand at the Bentonville, Arkansas, picnic; Michael Hope, Farnum Taylor and Joan Taylor await one of their courses at the Bentonville, Arkansas, progressive dinner



from the interior of Guyana. The sons and daughters of God's family were most cheerful and enthusiastic.

Members were elated to have been able to attend the Feast together on the mainland. In previous years, they would travel to Brazil or to a location in Guyana near the Brazilian border.

Members heard profitable and inspiring messages from the Barbados Feast site. They were also thankful for the seminars by Osmonde Douglas who was present throughout the Feast. We spent time not only feeding on God's Word but also enjoying some scenic sites. There was also an educational tour of the zoo. These activities were organized by our deacon in Guyana, Gary Atkinson.

The interior brethren rarely get the opportunity to visit the mainland and so they were very grateful to be at the Feast site.

On the Last Great Day they were able to enjoy feasting together at a nearby restaurant. We all had a sumptuous meal. During this meal, we were able to forge even greater bonds and meaningful camaraderie with one another.

At the close, the brethren asked where the next Feast would be held. Upon hearing that it was going to be in Georgetown, the glee could not be more radiant.

Overall, they expressed that the Feast was essentially beneficial and that they are now better prepared to confront the challenges ahead. They also indicated that Karl Scantlebury had been most helpful, being able to effectively connect to the webcast from Barbados.

Moreover, the brethren remarked that this year's Feast would assist them in having a more profound relationship with God as well as their Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

They stated it was the best Feast yet. They expressed their gratification in knowing, too, where they will be keeping the Feast in 2015.

Karl Scantlebury

Rolla and St. Louis, Missouri

Littlest Volunteer Learns How to Serve

The Rolla and St. Louis, Missouri, congregations focused on the theme of service during the fall holy day season. Flavious Adkins, 82, and Henry Brunick, 3—both of

the St. Louis, Missouri, congregation—set the perfect example of serving and working together in harmony while organizing and putting away the congregational hymnals.

Tammy Holman

Houston, Texas

Crafters Make Dishcloths for Meals on Wheels

On a sunny Sunday, Oct. 26, 2014, the Houston South chapter of Helping Hearts and Hands had their kick-off meeting with seven eager crafters in attendance. We started with a luncheon of taquitos, guacamole, salsa, turkey wraps, fried chicken, potato salad, snickerdoodle bars and coconut pie.

Stefanie Rochelle brought us up to date on the grant we received from Hilltop Outreach Program. Currently, we are making washcloths for Meals On Wheels. The washcloth volunteers have already made 175 washcloths. Harris County has approximately 4,000 clients, so we have a way to go. We were thrilled to have some new volunteers to accomplish this goal.



Clockwise from top left Flavious Adkins and Henry Brunick collect hymnals after services in St. Louis, Missouri; Irene Roy, Susan Scott Smith, Shirley Murrell, Melba Ferrell, Crystal Williams and Shirley Scott make dishcloths for Meals on Wheels; brethren fellowship at the annual picnic in Van Buren, Arkansas; the Trenton, Georgia, congregation shares a meal after Sabbath services at the Cloudland Canyon State Park



Plans are to reconvene at least every quarter to see where we stand. In the future we are planning on providing preemie hats and perhaps receiving blankets for nearby hospitals.

Susan Scott Smith
Photo by Stefanie Rochelle

Trenton, Georgia

Inspiring Mountaintop Sabbath Invigorates Congregation

The Trenton, Georgia, congregation held outdoor Sabbath services at Cloudland Canyon State Park in Rising Fawn, Georgia, on Sept. 13, 2014. The park sits atop Lookout Mountain and has a beautiful view of the valley below. Holding Sabbath services here has become a biannual tradition due to the inspiring surroundings. It was a beautiful fall day with pleasantly cool temperatures and sunshine.

The pastor of the Birmingham, Alabama, and Trenton, Georgia, congregations, Tom Kirkpatrick, spoke on the subject of God and mountains. He covered physical aspects of mountains in God's creation and various scriptures that discuss

mountains in the Bible. A key point was that the mountain of the Eternal's house will be established on the top of the mountains and all nations shall flow to it (Isaiah 2:2).

A potluck was served after the service. Several attendees lingered late into the day to soak in the peacefulness of the setting and enjoy extended fellowship time.

Annette Epperson
Photo by Sarah Kirkpatrick

Bentonville, Arkansas

Summer Activities Bring Congregation Together

The Bentonville, Arkansas, congregation gathered together for an old-fashioned church picnic on July 20, 2014. Thankfully, the hot summer weather cooperated by providing us with a lovely breeze. Members of all ages simply enjoyed time together over delicious fried chicken, salads and homemade ice cream.

On Saturday evening, Aug. 23, the congregation took part in a progressive dinner hosted by three families. Thirty-eight members traveled from home to home,

partaking in appetizers at one home, a sit-down smoked brisket and chicken barbecue dinner at another home, and the finale of make-your-own sundaes and s'mores at another. Fellowship and conversations continued from home to home to home. All enjoyed the progressive dinner!

Vicki Willoughby

Van Buren, Arkansas

Annual Picnic

The Van Buren, Arkansas, congregation enjoyed a picnic on Aug. 17, 2014, at Lake Fort Smith State Park, located in the foothills of the beautiful Ozark Mountains. In addition to great fellowship, they enjoyed a meal of hamburgers grilled to perfection by master grillers Larry Caldwell and Tom Clark. The brethren feasted sumptuously on the hamburgers and delicious side dishes, desserts and plenty of homemade ice cream and sherbet.

After the meal, participants engaged in a watermelon seed spitting contest, horse-shoe tossing and canoeing on beautiful Lake Fort Smith.

Aurora Gossett

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHS



Lillian Danielle Mez

It is with great joy that Eric and Teri Mez of the Atlanta, Georgia, congregation announce the birth of their daughter, Lillian Danielle Mez. Born on July 15, 2014, Lily weighed 7 pounds 5 ounces and measured 20½ inches long. She is dearly loved by grandparents Henry and Rhonda Mez and Larry and Frances Haney.



Charlotte, Aaron, Mary and Hope Henderson

The Buffalo, New York, congregation welcomes Hope Elise Henderson. Born Aug. 20, 2014, 6:29 p.m., Hope measured 20.5 inches and weighed 6 pounds 10 ounces!

Baby Hope was born with spina bifida, but a quick surgery and much prayer and fasting by the family and brethren saw her condition improve dramatically in God's hands. Though she will have some hurdles to overcome in her young life, she should be able to live a normal one in time. The family wishes to thank everyone who had Hope in their thoughts and prayers over the last few months.

Anne Koenig



Ron Kelley, Tiffany Burns and Arnold Burns



Arnold Burns, Roger Robertson and Ron Kelley

BAPTISMS

We are happy to announce three baptisms in the Greensboro and Raleigh, North Carolina, congregations.

Tiffany Burns of the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation was baptized on Friday, Sept. 5, 2014. The ceremony was conducted by her pastor, Ron Kelley, and assisted by elder Arnold Burns, Tiffany's father-in-law.

Roger Robertson of the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation was baptized on Oct. 5, 2014, by Ron Kelley and assisted by Arnold Burns.

Isabella Sein of the Raleigh, North Carolina, congregation was baptized on Oct. 10, 2014, by Ron Kelley during the Feast of Tabernacles at Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Isabella is one of the brethren who emigrated from the Karen region of Burma.

Ron Kelley



Ron Kelley and Isabella Sein

We encourage members to send announcements to be featured in *One Accord*. We feature events in members' lives, including baptisms, births, engagements, weddings, significant anniversaries (25, 40, 50, 60, etc.), graduations and obituaries. Typically they run between 50 and 100 words; however, we ask that all submissions stay under 250 words. Please submit a high-resolution color photo along with the written copy to your congregation's reporter.

WEDDINGS

Christian Orrego and Irma Chavira are thrilled to announce their marriage, which took place on Aug. 17, 2014, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Christian is from Argentina, while Irma is originally from Mexico. She and Christian met each other last year when her flight to Chile made an unexpected stop in Buenos Aires. It was love at first sight, and not long after, she decided to move to Argentina, where they became engaged. They wanted to share this day with family and closest friends, so they decided to have a small wedding. Everyone enjoyed it very much. The happy couple now resides in Monte Grande, Buenos Aires.



Christian and Irma Orrego

Cony Mendez

Sally Reynolds, daughter of Jerome and La Verne Reynolds, and Randy McConnaughey, son of Gary and Jane McConnaughey, were married at 11 a.m. on Aug. 24, 2014, in an outdoor ceremony at the Eagan Community Center in Eagan, Minnesota. The ceremony was performed by the father of the groom. The wedding was followed by a lunch reception with cupcakes and dancing. Approximately 100 friends and family members were in attendance.



Randy and Sally McConnaughey

The couple attends the Twin Cities, Minnesota, congregation. They reside in Eagan, Minnesota, where Randy works in IT support and Sally is a communications generalist for a local school district.

Barbara Lee

ANNIVERSARIES



RoseAnn and Jim Cannon

Forty years ago on Sept. 1, 1974, in a lovely intimate backyard ceremony in Pasadena, California, Jim and RoseAnn Cannon committed their lives to one another.

Over the years Jim and RoseAnn have built a life together, one of love, service and constant devotion to God, to their family and to each other. They are each other's best friend and confidant, and they have set a great example for what it means to put God first in their lives.

The West Palm Beach, Florida, congregation celebrated their anniversary with flowers and a special cake on the Sabbath of Aug. 30, 2014.

Elizabeth Glasgow



Virgil and Billie Walter

Following Sabbath services on Sept. 6, the Ocala, Florida, congregation joined in celebration and honor of the 60th wedding anniversary of Virgil and Billie Walter.

Virgil and Billie were married on Sept. 10, 1954, in Akron, Ohio. Their marriage was blessed with two sons and one daughter, all baptized into the Church. Two of them, also, were Ambassador College students.

When asked to what they attribute their 60-year marriage and what they would recommend to others, Mr. Walter said, "Good communication. Don't argue, communicate."

Mrs. Walter said her thought has always been to base her marriage on biblical principles.

Jim Blount

Young adults in the Church of God are eager to take their place in service to God and His Church. The Church is referred to as a spiritual temple, and we are the “living stones” that make up that building. Each stone is important to the integrity of the house and must be prepared for its place. During our third Young Adult Leadership Weekend, Feb. 13-15, 2015, we will explore the theme “Living Stones: Your Part in Strengthening God’s House.”

LIVING STONES

Your Part in Strengthening God’s House • Feb. 13-15, 2015

Some of the concepts we plan to cover are:

- **History of the Modern Church**
Where are we today?
- **Holding Fast**
Maintaining our commitment to God
- **Let No Man Despise Your Youth**
Small group interactive discussion of 1 Timothy 4:12
- **The Importance of Unity**
“Are all COGs equal?”
- **When Leaders Lead**
Serving in your local congregation
- **What Does It Mean to Be a “Living Stone”?**
- **FOI Project Brainstorming Session**
Small group interactive discussion

YALW Young Adult Leadership Weekend
members.cogwa.org/yalw

The Church of God, a Worldwide Association, invites our young adults—high school grads through age 39—to attend the next installment of our Young Adult Leadership Weekend. The 2015 YALW will be held simultaneously at seven sites across the United States—**Atlanta, Branson, Columbus, Dallas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis and Portland.**
