

OneAccord

May 2017

2017 Branson Weekend

Journeys and Reflections:
Richard and Judy Rand

Adventures Abroad:
Part 1: A Pastoral Trip
to the Middle East
and Asia



personal from the president

What Is the Future of the Church?

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Please ponder that question for a few minutes. When Jesus Christ spoke about the Church, He promised that “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). Since its founding in A.D. 31, there has always been a Church. It was not always easy to identify, but it has never ceased to exist. We believe Christ’s words are as true today as they were in the first century.

We know what this meant for the past, since it is confirmed by history. But what does it mean for the future? Will the Church simply exist, hidden away and insignificant? Or does God have an important job for the Church?

Scripture tells us that an important mission was given to the Church. The disciples were told to preach the gospel to “every creature” (Mark 16:15), making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them (Matthew 28:19-20). This responsibility is especially critical in the time of the end (Matthew 24:14). Sometimes it is hard to wrap our minds around the magnitude of that job.

During the time of the apostles, the choices for spreading the gospel were in person or by letters. Today our options are almost limitless. When you consider the Internet, social media, TV, radio and the printed word, it all gets complicated. Some believe that you are not really preaching the gospel unless you are on TV. Others believe you must have a magazine with hundreds of thousands of subscribers to prove you are preaching the gospel. We do not disparage either of these vehicles, since both have the potential of reaching thousands of people, but they are not the only options available today.

We have been very successful with our Internet efforts, thanks to some truly talented young men and women. But can we do more? Of course! The real question is not *can* we, but *how* can we? Our desire is to try everything that is within our means. If God called thousands of people into the Church tomorrow, that would change things dramatically. But, to this point, He has not done so. Of course,

this doesn’t mean that He won’t. We can bemoan the small size of the Church and our limited resources, or we can put our future into God’s hands and stay the course, focusing on doing what we can to preach the gospel without abandoning the care for the brethren.

It is with this mission in mind that we have decided to purchase a plot of land in south McKinney, a northern suburb of Dallas. It is located about 10 minutes from our current office in Allen, Texas. When we close on this land, we will own a valuable piece of property consisting of approximately 6.5 acres. The land is located near an area owned by the city of McKinney that has been designated for a major future development. Indications are that this development will begin in a few months, causing all property in the general area to increase in value.

We are purchasing this property for the purpose of constructing an office building with a mailing center and a classroom to serve as the permanent home for the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, and Foundation Institute. Instead of paying rent each month to lease an office, we will be investing in our future through a permanent home. The mission of the Church hasn’t changed, but how we perform that mission will change as God opens new doors.

We continue to ask for your prayers and your support. And, above all, we pray daily for God’s direction in everything we do.

Jim Franks



Jim Franks

President
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CHURCH of GOD
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FMP Weekend Hosts Six Couples

By Doug Horchak

Six couples from around the United States traveled to the Church office in Allen, Texas, for two days of training, March 25 and 26, 2017. These husband-and-wife teams were recommended by their local pastors to be involved in the 2017 Focused Mentoring Program. The following couples participated in the weekend:

- Kris and Molly Kobernat, Dallas, Texas.
- Lee and Robyn Page, Orlando, Florida.
- Jim and Romney Chapman, San Antonio, Texas.
- Zach and Emily Smith, Akron, Ohio.
- Matt and Erica Pavlik, Cleveland, Ohio.
- Kevin and Rebeca Braswell, Stockton, California.

The Focused Mentoring Program (FMP) began in 2013 and was designed to provide couples with a yearlong, focused, hands-on experience with their pastors in their local church areas. Pastors selected couples based on their current experience in serving the congregation. Of course, their pastors discussed the FMP in detail with them prior to their committing to the program.

FMP is somewhat unique, in that the couples are taught using live webinars once a month on Sunday mornings. The

webinars focus on various aspects of serving and shepherding God's people, with classes such as "Teaching as You Have Been Taught," "Serving and Its Impact on Family" and "The Importance of Character and Integrity." In addition to the live webinars, each of the FMP participants is provided with 150 hours of online Foundation Institute biblical classes. Most important, the couples interact with and receive mentoring from their pastor and his wife during that year.

During the course of the weekend, classes were presented by COGWA's president, Jim Franks; Clyde Kilough; Doug Horchak; and Britton Taylor. In addition, there was a special women's session conducted by Tanya Horchak and Sharron Franks.

Couples that are chosen for the mentoring program understand that the goal of FMP is for them to become familiar with what is involved in shepherding God's people and to receive education enabling them to more effectively serve the Church in the years ahead. While being involved in this program is a stand-alone opportunity, we hope that this exposure to the various aspects of serving God's people in the pastoral ministry will have a positive impact on their involvement in the Church in the years ahead. ☺☺



Boot Scoot Raises \$15,000 for CYC Program

By Kelli Hogg

The 11th Annual Boot Scoot Barbecue was held on Feb. 11, 2017, in Grapevine, Texas. Over 350 guests dined on beef ribs and homemade desserts before kicking off an evening of fun with dancing, a bake sale, raffle, silent auction and photo booth. This year also introduced the new Plinko board game, which proved to be a successful fundraiser and fun activity. The Union Branch Band, with members from the Houston and Fort Worth congregations, once again provided music. All proceeds from the event went towards the COGWA Youth Camp Scholarship and Activity Fund.

“The Boot Scoot in Dallas-Fort Worth was an absolutely amazing first-time experience for this Florida boy,” commented Jace Miller. “The atmosphere of this event was like none other. The live music, silent auction and endless carnival games inspired people to empty their pockets for the COGWA youth. This is an event I hope to continue to attend for years to come.”

Volunteers from the East Texas, Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston congregations donated auction items, helped decorate and set up, and worked the night of the event. After expenses, the event raised \$15,000 for the camp program. “It has always been our family’s goal to see to it that any child or teen who wants to attend camp can do so without worrying about the cost,” said Boot Scoot co-organizer Brenda Hogg. “We are so thankful to everyone who contributes to the event—setup and take down, donating items, attending the event and spending hard-earned money.”

Save the date for next year! The 12th Annual Boot Scoot will be on Feb. 10, 2018, again in Grapevine, Texas. ©A



On Monday, Dec. 26, 2016, campers and staff (including two campers visiting from Zimbabwe) met at the Braambos Camp in the beautiful area of Magaliesburg, just north of Johannesburg, for the third CYC camp in South Africa.

This camp was different, in that it was run entirely by the Church. Previously, the meals were prepared by the camp owners. This year a hardworking kitchen staff, made up of members from the Johannesburg congregation, joined us. Wonderful aromas and bouts of laughter drifted out of the kitchen all day. We are very grateful to all those who prepared the delicious meals and helped out in the kitchen.

Our campers also helped out with kitchen duty, a new experience for them, which they handled very well. Pre-teens swept the floors, while teens and young adults washed gigantic pots and pans.

Another change was that our staff included junior staff members, young adults who were previously campers. These new staff members very successfully organized and led various activities at camp.

The theme for the camp this year was “Treasures in Heaven,” taken from Matthew 6:19-21. Campers were encouraged to focus on the Kingdom of God, laying up spiritual treasures and building their relationship with God.

Activities at the camp included regular Bible studies, an obstacle course, volleyball, touch rugby, softball, soccer, group dynamics, swimming and evening team-building activities. We also held a treasure hunt with clues that led to treasure, including a list of the fruit of the Spirit, hidden around the camp. We also offered craft classes for the preteens, during which each camper painted and decorated a mini treasure chest.

Once again, it was a very successful and enjoyable camp, and we are grateful to the Church of God, South Africa, for funding the camp. Thanks also to all those who helped to organize and run the camp and to our campers who participated wholeheartedly and enthusiastically! ©A

COGWA YOUTH CAMP SOUTH AFRICA

By Leanne Helfrich



Photos by David Scarborough and Katie Freeman



22nd Annual Branson Presidents' Day Family Weekend

Brethren enjoyed a jam-packed weekend as they learned more about how to walk as Jesus Christ walked.

By Lyndi Fultz

Almost 400 brethren from 10 states and one Canadian province gathered together in Branson, Missouri, Feb. 17-20, for a four-day and three-night event focused on fellowshiping, rejoicing and learning together. This year's theme was "Walking in His Steps—Learning to Walk as Christ Walked."

The opening reception Friday evening was crammed wall to wall with excited brethren rejoicing together to kick off the 22nd Annual Branson Presidents' Day Family Weekend. For many it had been a long four months since they had seen each other at the Feast. For others, it was a chance to begin new friendships. There was lots to eat and drink, and everyone enjoyed meeting with old friends and making several new ones.

The weather this year—unlike some years—was spectacular. As wonderful as the weather was, it paled in comparison to the sunny dispositions and happy exuberance of brethren spending peaceful time together. Many of those attending called the weekend a "mini-feast."

Sabbath morning and Sunday morning featured seminars that provided opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to walk in Jesus Christ's footsteps. Topics ranged from our need for Christ's compassion to learning how to properly understand and control the God-given emotion of anger. Another seminar discussed the need to emulate Jesus Christ by becoming more positive Christians. One pastor discussed the hidden mystery on how to walk like Christ, while another shared helpful guidance on how to love your neighbor as yourself. One of our special guests, David Johnson, covered separate topics related to walking in the Spirit and the historic changes that are evident in the so-called Christianity of today's world. Each seminar was featured twice, so members could take in five of the seven seminars.

Sabbath afternoon, another guest speaker, Doug Horchak, gave a powerful sermon based on Jesus Christ's telling His disciples to change the way we think (Matthew 18:1-4). He emphasized our need to learn how to think like Jesus

Christ and develop His traits.

Following services, a lot of fellowshiping and a wonderful barbecue dinner topped off the Sabbath. Saturday evening we had a rip-roaring children's carnival with lots of excitement for young and old. The children participated in over 20 different carnival games! The excitement on the children's faces demonstrated part of what Jesus must have meant when He said we are all to become like little children. Later in the evening, a family dance kept the evening lively and provided another chance for fellowship.

On Sunday, seminars continued in the morning and a longer seminar was held in the afternoon. Following the morning seminars, many of the "young at heart" had a roller skating party, where some realized they weren't as young as they once were. In the afternoon many attendees took a trip to Branson's Wild World, where they were able to feed and handle many of God's creatures. For those able to stay Sunday night, the weekend was topped off with a pizza party, more fellowship and table games. ☺☺



Twin Cities Hosts Annual Families Glorifying God Weekend

The family weekend provided Bible studies, seminars and activities for all ages.

By Barbara Lee

The theme for our annual Families Glorifying God Weekend was taken from Joshua 24:15: “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” The special weekend in the Twin Cities took place March 17-19, 2017.

The weekend began with a Friday evening Bible study presented by our guest speaker, Larry Salyer. He set the tone for the weekend as he reminded us that young people are set apart as a result of their parents being called by God.

Sabbath services began at 1:30 p.m. with a full church hall. The excitement in the room was noticeable, as many greeted friends whom they had not seen in quite some time. We experienced firsthand what Psalm 133:1 describes: “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

The sermon—titled “Which World Do You Live In?”—also focused on the theme of the weekend. Our 11-piece instrumental ensemble helped accompany the song service, and we were treated to two special music pieces during services. It was a very special Sabbath service.

Following services, snacks were served prior to two seminars. The first seminar, presented by Cory Erickson, was “The

Intersection of Godly Character and Personal Influence.” The second seminar, by Gary Black, was “Our Choices and Their Impact on Others.” During the seminars, children’s activities took place to keep our youngsters busy, enjoying the Sabbath afternoon.

Following the seminars, we enjoyed a catered meal together. By this time our teens and young adults were getting ready for their dance.

During the dance, the adults and children participated in a family game night, as well as a service project. The service project was for Sole Hope, an organization that provides volunteer groups with kits to cut out shoes to be sent to children in Africa. So, we had a “shoe cutting” party!

Sunday we had a family ice-skating party at a nearby indoor skating rink. After lunch was served, the weekend activities were complete.

Our thanks go to Al and Sheri Kroska, who organized the weekend, and to countless others in the congregation who took on the various responsibilities to make the weekend possible.

If you have never experienced one of our family weekends, plan on joining us next year! ☺☺





Part 1: A Pastoral Trip to the Middle East and Asia

Our regional pastor for this part of the world chronicles his semiannual trip to visit some of our most isolated brethren.

By David Baker

On the Sabbath of April 1, 2017, I had the pleasure of spending some time with U.D. Priyantha and his sons Stephen and Mark in Kuwait City. The journey began on Wednesday morning, March 29, and entailed flying from Charlotte, North Carolina, to New York City to Amsterdam and finally arriving in Kuwait City at 9:15 p.m. on Thursday, March 30.

Insight into Kuwait

Kuwait is located in the northeast corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It is one of the smallest countries in the world in terms of land area. It is, however, rich in terms of oil reserves, with an estimated 104 billion barrels in crude oil reserves—approximately 10 percent of the world’s reserves. According to the World Bank, Kuwait is the fourth richest country in the world per capita, and the Kuwaiti dinar is the highest-valued unit of currency in the world. In some countries I visit, I will exchange one U.S. dollar for more than 100 units of the local currency. When I arrived in Kuwait, I exchanged US\$60 for 16 Kuwaiti dinars!

From 1946 to 1982, Kuwait experienced a period of prosperity driven by oil and its progressive culture. This period is sometimes referred to as the Golden Era for Kuwait. After the invasion of the country by Iraq in 1990 and the expulsion of the Iraqi forces in 1991, the country has once again continued to develop. One aspect of the development is the demand for foreign workers. As of 2016, Kuwait had a population of 4.2 million people—1.3 million Kuwaitis and 2.9 million expatriates or foreign workers. Expatriates account for approximately 70 percent of the population. One of those expatriates is U.D. Priyantha.

Living as a stranger in a strange land

Priyantha, a Sri Lankan national, came to Kuwait in 1997 at the age of 24. He started out working as a domestic helper. He was then able to work in a furniture shop, and he now works as a floor salesman for a large electronics showroom. In order to observe the Sabbath, he works from midnight until 8 a.m. Sunday through Thursday. He is paid a basic salary each month and then must fulfill a moving quota of sales in order to receive a bonus. Without the bonus, he could not survive.

Priyantha mentioned that it is becoming more difficult for many foreign workers to live in Kuwait. Prices for housing, transport, food, education and other basic needs are continually rising, and their pay does not keep pace. However, at this time he feels it is necessary to continue working and living in Kuwait rather than return to Sri Lanka. Jobs are not easy to come by in Sri Lanka, and the standard of living is higher in Kuwait. His sons, Stephen, aged 15, and Mark, aged 13, have never lived in Sri Lanka.

The Sabbath with the Priyanthas

We enjoyed a wonderful Sabbath together. We met in my

hotel room for discussions and a Bible study. The questions were very thought-provoking: Eli’s sons as compared to Samuel’s sons, how we understand the Song of Solomon, etc. I covered the subject of godly love in the Bible study, and then we continued our discussions at a nearby Chili’s restaurant. Yes, many American restaurant franchises can be found in Kuwait City. In fact, they are probably the most prevalent restaurants in the city. After our enjoyable lunch together, we said our goodbyes until my next visit later in the year.

Please continue to remember Priyantha and his sons in your prayers. Priyantha has a problem with his feet and standing for long periods of time on the hard showroom floor only makes it worse. He can’t afford to take time off from work to have surgery. He also needs to receive a good bonus each month just to survive. The boys are doing well in school, but it is a very difficult struggle to pay for their school fees each term.

Off to Sri Lanka

I arrived in Colombo, Sri Lanka, at 6:15 a.m. Sunday morning, April 2, after a six-hour flight from Kuwait. What I didn’t expect was the sea of humanity upon arrival. The Colombo airport has only one runway, and it had to be repaired and repaved. In order to accomplish this task, the airport had to reschedule flights arriving and departing Colombo to allow the work to be accomplished. The runway was to be closed from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day from Jan. 6 through April 6, 2017. This has created considerable congestion in the terminal, especially at immigration, duty-free shops and customs. What would normally take a few minutes took more than an hour of jostling through masses of people. I finally arrived at the hotel by 8:30 a.m. but was not allowed to check in to my room until 10 a.m. I was able to get 1½ hours of sleep before a scheduled meeting at 1 p.m.

Sri Lanka (which was called Ceylon during the British colonial period) is a very beautiful island country located in South Asia near the coast of southeast India. I had the opportunity to live in Sri Lanka from 1985 to 1990, working on an Ambassador Foundation project. Visiting Sri Lanka is like returning home in some respects. Sri Lanka is a diverse and multicultural country and is home to many religions, ethnic groups and languages. There are legends that King Solomon’s ships actually traveled to Sri Lanka.

Meeting with Sri Lankan brethren

Prior to my trip to Sri Lanka, I had exchanged emails with a new contact from Life, Hope & Truth. He was searching the Internet for “kingdom of God” and discovered our website. He is a former Jehovah’s Witness and has asked many questions. We agreed to meet shortly after my arrival in Sri Lanka. We had a very enjoyable meeting, and he will continue to explore the Life, Hope & Truth website. I am sure I will be answering many more questions from him. It was a joy to

meet someone who had never been aware of the various Churches of God and had many genuine questions about our teachings from the Bible.

After our meeting, I did my best to stay awake until a reasonable bedtime. Even though I tried to sleep for at least eight hours, I felt exhausted by Monday morning. However, with these trips, once the schedule begins, there is really no way to deviate from it without major complications. I had a breakfast meeting scheduled for 7:30 a.m. Monday morning. I enjoyed spending breakfast with one of our members who works near the hotel in which I was staying. We discussed various challenges that he is currently facing.

Following breakfast, I traveled to Mount Lavinia and met with another group of our members. Many of them were recovering from colds and the flu. I had the opportunity to anoint a couple of them. We discussed various issues, such as the upcoming Passover, Night to Be Much Observed and personal trials they are facing. Your prayers for all of the Sri Lankan members would be much appreciated. On a very positive note Mrs. Jean VanHeer, one of our members, recently underwent an operation to remove a tumor at the base of her spine. This was causing her severe pain, as well as other complications. She is recovering well from the operation and is feeling much better.

After our meeting, I returned to the hotel and slept for about four hours in the afternoon. I needed the sleep to prepare for an overnight flight to Bangkok on my way to Yangon, Myanmar.

On to Myanmar

Wednesday, April 5, I boarded an early morning flight to Yangon. I am always amazed at the thousands of people that pass through the large airports of the world. Bangkok's international airport, Suvarnabhumi, is the 12th busiest airport in the world, handling more than 800 flights per day and averaging more than 123,000 passengers per day. Somehow most people manage to connect with their flights and reach their destinations. I have been traveling to Myanmar for 13 years. Initially, the flights were sparsely filled with a few Westerners, Burmese and Thais. Now the flights tend to be full, with lots of tourists from many parts of the world, as well as businessmen from the West and Asia.

When I arrived in Yangon, our member, David Ye Gyan, met me. David supports his family by driving a taxi, and so he was also my taxi driver for the next 24 hours. As we drove into the city, I couldn't help but reflect on how things have changed since Myanmar stopped being boycotted by most of the world. Yangon used to be a sleepy colonial town reminiscent of the 1940s or '50s. The city seemed to be lost in time with wide boulevards and just a few cars that were all old and dilapidated.

Since international sanctions were lifted in 2011, incredible changes have occurred—some of which I would not describe as development. The streets are now jammed with cars of all varieties—some luxury cars and SUVs, as well as newer-looking Asian brands. Yangon now has a Mercedes dealership, and I have even spotted a Bentley. Rush hour traffic is terrible! The roads are more parking lot than boulevard! High-rise buildings are popping up all over the city, and the skyline is dotted with construction cranes. Large shopping malls have opened with various Western-franchised shops and fast food outlets. One reason for the fast-paced development is Myanmar's rich natural resources, such as jade, gemstones, oil, natural gas and other mineral resources. Recently, a large jade boulder, estimated to weigh more than 50 tons, was discovered in northern Myanmar.

Meeting with the Ye Gyan family

From the airport, David and I traveled to his home in one of the suburbs of Yangon. There we met various members of David's family. We discussed a variety of topics about their life in Yangon and challenges they face as members of the Church. As I mentioned earlier, David supports his family by driving a taxi. He pays the owner of the taxi a daily amount, so he must have several customers each day in order to cover the expense of the car. This arrangement allows David to observe the Sabbath and holy days because he can take time off as needed. Between customers, David reads our literature and can check our website using his cell phone. David's wife, Ruth, also helps supplement the family income by running a small restaurant in front of their house.

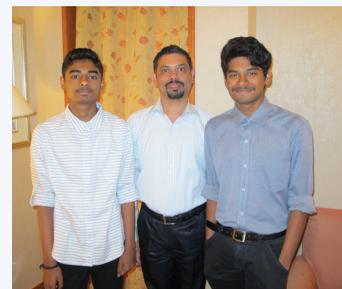
David gathers with a group of about 10 people each Sabbath and instructs them from articles in our literature. I asked David about the challenges they face as members in Myanmar, and he said they were like sheep without a shepherd because, for the most part, they do not have trained leadership. I have held leadership seminars over the years in Yangon, and hopefully the Church will begin to grow at some point in the future. One of the developments that has opened a door for preaching the gospel is the accessibility of the Internet and widespread use of cell phones.

Early Thursday morning, April 6, David drove me to the airport for my flight to Singapore. It is always sad to say goodbye to David and his family. I enjoy spending time with them and watching them grow spiritually. But with the goodbyes is always a promise of returning in a few months. Please pray for our tiny group in Yangon. I forward them regular updates from our office in Allen, and they regularly pray for the members mentioned in the updates. 🙏🇲🇲

Stay tuned for Part 2 in the June issue.



Kuwait City



Stephen, U.D. and Mark Priyantha



Lunch with the Priyanthas



David Baker; Jean and Rodney VanHeer; Esther, Shan and Nathan Toussaint; and Dayanandani



David Ye Gyan and his taxi in Myanmar



Richard and Judy Rand



Richard Rand was attending Washington State University, pursuing a business administration degree in 1960, when he heard *The World Tomorrow* broadcast on the radio in his dorm. Herbert Armstrong was speaking about seven laws of success. He covered the first six laws and then encouraged listeners to write in to find out the seventh. Since Richard was very interested in becoming successful, he took up the challenge and requested the article titled “The Seven Laws of Success.” That first encounter led to his membership in the Worldwide Church of God in Seattle, Washington, in September of 1962.

After graduation, Richard’s father was offered a job in Eugene, Oregon, and Richard helped the family move. His dad said it was a good thing to get the family away from “that church.” Little did he know they were moving to the area where “that church” had been founded! Richard later applied to Ambassador College and was accepted in 1965, along with several other young people from the Eugene church.

Meanwhile...

Meanwhile at the eastern end of the country, Judy (aka Florence) Morse arrived home from work one day to find the parish priest and her brother in a heated discussion. The topic? The three days and three nights that Christ was in the tomb. Her brother, composed and respectful, seemed to know more about the Bible than the priest. At one point, the hot-headed clergyman, unable to win his argument, threw the Bible down on a table in utter exasperation. Judy’s admiration for her brother really grew that day.

As a result of that visit, Judy began studying the Bible using the booklets her brother had accumulated over the years. She decided to apply to Ambassador College and was accepted to attend in 1964.

Four years later, Richard and Judy were married in Eugene in June of 1968, nearly 49 years ago. They have four incredible children and three champion grandchildren.

Q: Over the years, what did you enjoy most about pastoring and serving God’s people?

Becoming good friends with many brethren and teaching what the Bible really says to them was very uplifting. The picnics and social occasions helped us get to know them so much better than a home visit. The weddings, births and graduations drew us together, and many of the members became as close as family. Our entire married life included brethren from the Church. We shared good times and bad times, and we wouldn’t have fared very well without them.

Q: You must have had many inspiring experiences serving God’s people. Could you share one or two that stand out above all the rest?

In addition to seeing the wonderful fruits of God’s character being exemplified by the brethren, there were instances of members’ mates—who had been totally against the Church—becoming members themselves. They were inspired to look into and accept the Church’s teaching because of the positive

changes they saw in their converted husband or wife.

The death of our infant Mary after only six hours of life was especially hard. The love and concern of the brethren was so helpful in getting us through that sore trial. It was a bittersweet day because her twin was perfect in every way. The knowledge of the resurrection is so comforting to us, and we hope to see little Mary again one day. Also, the kind support of the Church administration at that traumatic time meant a lot to us.

Q: What positive impact did your experience in pastoring have on your family?

Our children were blessed in many ways as a result of our experience in the Church. Lifelong friends and mates, travel opportunities to international and domestic Feast sites, and camp experiences have enriched all of our lives. Getting to know and love brethren of many different backgrounds has given our family a positive outlook and the ability to get along in society.

Q: What was the biggest “lesson learned” for you as a couple while shepherding God’s people?

A shepherd tries to help the brethren, being kind and gentle, rather than forcing them or intimidating them. They are God’s sheep and need tender care. Intimidation doesn’t really work, but love and genuine concern for the good and welfare of God’s people do. We found that there are times—especially when facing trials—that we need the comfort and help of our brethren as much as they need ours.

On the Road Again

The following are the congregations that the Rands served between 1968 and 2007:

South Bend, Indiana

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Kalamazoo, Michigan

Columbia, Missouri

Lake Ozark, Missouri

Kirksville, Missouri

Belleville, Illinois

Roseburg, Oregon

Coos Bay, Oregon

Midland, Texas

Hobbs, New Mexico

El Paso, Texas

Coleman, Texas

Miami, Florida

West Palm Beach, Florida

Fort Myers, Florida

Q

I keep the Sabbath, which is Saturday. My husband wants me to also go to church with him on Sunday, which he believes is the Sabbath. He gets angry with me about it. What should I do? Thank you, and God bless you.

Through this column, we want to provide you with a window on the work of the Personal Correspondence Department. Because we interact mostly with people new to God's truth, some topics might not seem directly applicable to you. But think how you would answer the question if someone asked it of you! And many answers will contain spiritual principles that you can apply in your life, even if the question isn't one you would ask.

A

We respect your commitment to the biblical Sabbath, and we are sorry that this has caused conflict in your marriage. To help you work through the situation, I suggest that you ask yourself a different question: Will going to church on Sunday with your husband truly resolve the conflict? Isn't your conviction that the seventh day is the Christian Sabbath the heart of the matter? Your deeply held faith is part of who you are, not something that you can deny or suppress.

The fact that you previously went to church with your husband on Sunday indicates that you either believed Sunday was the biblical Sabbath or that you hadn't questioned it. (Many Sunday worshippers have not.) Either way, we realize how your change in thinking could upset your husband. Putting yourself in his shoes can help you to be understanding—but it does not mean that you should deny what you have come to believe.

A difference in religious convictions can become a source of serious marital conflict if couples approach it in the wrong way. The wrong way would be for one spouse to insist that the other act against deeply held religious convictions. The right way to deal with a difference of this magnitude is to respect the other's choice. I understand that is challenging! It requires trust, patience, gentleness and love, and it requires the couple to appreciate and hold onto the areas of their relationship that they have in common.

Undoubtedly, you have been praying for God's help in this. I encourage you to

PERSONAL CONTACT

with CECIL MARANVILLE



continue doing that, specifically asking Him to inspire you to use the most effective words when discussing it with your husband. (For help with praying effectively, see "[How to Talk to God](#).") I suggest that you reassure your husband of your love and of your desire to make him happy. Tell him that you have no intention of pressuring him to act contrary to his religious convictions. But graciously ask him to give you the same respect and trust. Ask him to be patient. In time he will see that by following your convictions, you are a better person in every way, including as a wife.

You didn't mention if you had read our booklet or articles on the Sabbath. They will reinforce and deepen your conviction that you should obey this key commandment. And they address the scriptures people commonly use to claim the Sabbath was changed or done away. I am not suggesting that you should use this information to argue with your husband. Debating about religion is wrong! No one can be argued into believing something. Rather, we offer the information to you to answer any questions you might have, as well as to help you reinforce your conviction.

[We offered *Discern* and our booklet on the Sabbath and referred her to articles on relationships, marriage and communication.]

I realize that this is a sensitive matter and that I have likely not addressed every question in this brief email. Please let me know if I can be of additional help. ☺☺

CHURCH POTLUCK

What's cooking in your congregation?



AKRON/CANTON, OHIO, HOSTS PENNY ROLL AND BUNCO BONANZA!

On the Sabbath of Feb. 11, 2017, the Akron/Canton, Ohio, congregation gathered together for a delightful evening of food and fellowship. We ordered 40 pizzas from Akron's own pizza BOGO and indulged in a variety of delicious gourmet pizzas. When the sun had set and our bellies were full, everyone broke out their pennies, dimes, quarters, Washingtons, Lincolns and Jacksons to be counted for our grand total.

The evening transitioned into our much-anticipated auction. The auction consisted of beautiful "no-sew" blankets and a broad selection of premium CYC-printed clothing. The hot ticket item this year was a handcrafted poplar wood chest made by Tom Pabin.

When the auction concluded, we segued into an exciting game of bunco. The players rolled the dice in search of threes as shouts of "Bunco!" echoed from table to table. The highest awards of Skittles and Milk Duds were given to those with the most bunco wins and losses. It was a record-setting year. We raised \$1,800.11 to help defray our tier-two expenses while enjoying a fun-filled evening with our Church family.

Gabe Ellis



CLEVELAND HOSTS GAME DAY SOCIAL

The Cleveland, Ohio, congregation enjoyed a "game day"-themed social following services on Feb. 4, 2017. The twist? It was the men's turn to cook! All the guys made and brought their favorite game-day food—and were there ever a lot of crockpots! The food was delicious, and all the ladies enjoyed a day out of the kitchen.

In keeping with the game-day theme, many participated in a lively bunco game after the meal. Winning a prize in this dice game meant receiving a white elephant gift—goofy items contributed by Church members.

Erica Pavlik



BUFFALO HOLDS COIN-ROLLING SOCIAL TO BENEFIT COGWA YOUTH CAMPS

On Feb. 18, 2017, the Buffalo, New York, congregation held their annual coin-rolling social. Each year the proceeds from the coin roll benefit a Church-related cause. This year \$237 was raised for a scholarship for COGWA Youth Camps.

Stephan M. Koenig



MICHIGAN MEMBER HELEN FARNSWORTH TURNS 90!

On the Sabbath of Dec. 3, 2016, the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids, Michigan, congregations celebrated longtime member Helen Farnsworth's 90th birthday!

Mrs. Farnsworth was baptized along with six others in a member's farm tub in Midland, Michigan, in 1973. She had learned about the truth through the radio program hosted by Garner Ted Armstrong. After listening for about a year, Mrs. Farnsworth contacted the Church and asked for a visit with a minister. She was then invited to church services by Midland's pastor, Mr. Gross, a couple of months later. Her favorite Feast of Tabernacles was her first—Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin—which she traveled by bus to attend.

Mrs. Farnsworth's home in Detroit was quite a distance from where services were held in Midland, so she would drive to her summer farm home in Remus on weekends and go on to Midland for church services on the Sabbath—approximately 230 miles one way every weekend!

Mrs. Farnsworth has three sons and four grandchildren. Her husband, Albert (Gene), who died in 1979 after 35 years of marriage, never became a member but was supportive and respectful of her beliefs throughout their marriage.

Helen Farnsworth is a light to the southwest Michigan church family. Her youthful spark and quick humor are bright strands in the fabric of our congregation. She is a faithful follower of God's truth, always armed with goodies for the children after services, and she gives the most incredible, loving hugs.

Rebekah Leyden

GREENSBORO YOUTH CONDUCT SABBATH SERVICES

On Sabbath, Feb. 18, 2017, the Greensboro, North Carolina, youth conducted services.

Colin Dolby enthusiastically led hymns as Katie Fuhrman and Sonya Jeffords accompanied on the piano and flute, respectively. Brandon Burrow gave the sermonette with a quiet zeal. Jay Burns gave his first sermon, which was very inspiring and won't easily be forgotten. This was one Sabbath service that will remain in our hearts and minds for quite some time!



Beverly McKnight



GEORGIA MEMBER GRADUATES WITH DEGREE IN MOLECULAR AND CELL BIOLOGY

On Dec. 16, 2016, Breana Walton graduated from the Augusta University Honors Program with a bachelor of science degree in molecular and cell biology. She was a member of both the National Collegiate Honors Council and TriBeta Biological Honor Society. She was awarded a full voucher from the Translational Research Program at MCG, and she attended and had research accepted at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference held in Seattle, Washington. Breana completed her thesis project in genetics and was a HOPE Scholarship recipient.

Breana's goals include attending graduate school to earn a master's degree in genetic counseling, becoming a teacher or earning a doctorate in cell biology. She also hopes to attend Foundation Institute in the near future.

Breana is the daughter of Ken and Jeanne Walton and is a member of the Augusta, Georgia, congregation, where she serves as pianist.

After Sabbath services on the day after her graduation, Breana was honored with a special luncheon consisting of an assortment of hors d'oeuvres and a graduation cake. She was also presented with a desk clock in recognition of her achievement. We wish her all the best as she embarks on the next chapter of her life.

Ann Hewston

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.), 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.

BAPTISMS



Shane Patillo and pastor, Justin Adkins

On the Sabbath of Sept. 17, 2016, the Sedgwick, Arkansas, congregation welcomed Shane Patillo as a new brother into the Body of Christ. Shane was baptized by Justin Adkins, pastor of the Memphis, Tennessee, and Sedgwick and Little Rock, Arkansas, congregations. Family and members of the Sedgwick congregation were present to witness the joyous occasion. Afterward, a reception was held at the church hall.

Justin Adkins

Michelle Scarbrough and pastor, Larry Lambert

On Friday evening, Jan. 20, just after 10 p.m., Michelle Scarbrough, of the Charleston, West Virginia, congregation, was baptized into the Body of Christ. The baptism and laying on of hands were performed by her pastor, Larry Lambert, in a private ceremony attended by her husband, Kevin, and their daughters, Hannah and Brooklyn. Congratulations, Michelle! Welcome to God's family.

Larry Lambert



WEDDINGS



Dexter Julag-ay and Florence Nonifara

Dexter Julag-ay and Florence Nonifara were wed on Dec. 22, 2016. The wedding was held in the nice and tranquil Planta Hotel in Bacolod City, Philippines. The ceremony was performed by Bacolod City pastor Florante Siopan. Approximately 150 family members and friends were in attendance. Dexter and Florence met 12 years ago in high school and through the years maintained a good relationship.

On Nov. 17, 2016, the two were baptized together in Panaad Park in Bacolod City. The baptism was performed by Mr. Siopan, who was assisted by elder Norman Julag-ay. Dexter and Florence both attend the Bacolod congregation.

Congratulations to the new couple!
Florante Siopan

BIRTHS



Solomon Henderson

Solomon Gabriel Henderson was born Jan. 14, 2017, to Aaron and Mary Henderson of the Buffalo, New York, congregation. At the time of his birth, he weighed 9.5 pounds.

He now joins his siblings, Charlotte and Hope Henderson.

ANNIVERSARIES



Tom and Molly May

On Nov. 19, 2016, the Tulsa, Oklahoma, congregation gave Tom and Molly May a lovely bouquet in honor of their 25th wedding anniversary. Tom and Molly (Carson) first met in 1988. Tom was from Springdale, Arkansas, and Molly was from West Monroe, Louisiana. Both attended Ambassador College, graduating in 1990 and 1991. They were joined in marriage on Nov. 17, 1991, in Monroe, Louisiana.

They have been blessed with two lovely daughters, Monica, a sophomore in college at the University of Tulsa, and Allison, a freshman in high school. Both of them are a great help with our sound and video system here at church.

Since our pastor, Paul Luecke, ordained him as a deacon last year, Tom has continued to serve our small but growing congregation faithfully. Tom and Molly's dedication to God and His way of life are appreciated by all of us here. We look forward to helping them celebrate many more wonderful anniversaries together.

Lynne Simms

ORDINATIONS



Tom and Julie Burrow, Joel Meeker, Ron Kelley and Elizabeth and Jack AungMin



Betty and Pat Lynch

Pat and Betty Lynch celebrated 50 years of marriage on Feb. 4, 2017. Their courtship began in August 1966 at the Lockheed aerospace plant in Marietta, Georgia. They were among the 30,000 people employed there at that time. After a whirlwind courtship of six months, they were married.

Pat and Betty became interested in the Church through *The World Tomorrow* program and *The Plain Truth* magazine. Both had read the magazine before meeting. They were baptized in March of 1971 in Atlanta, Georgia. The Lynches have two children: Sherry A. Fuessel, who lives in Denver, Colorado, and Patrick Jr. (Ricky), who lives in Marietta. They have four granddaughters and two grandsons.

After over 20 years of planning, Pat and Betty finally retired to the mountains of Colorado. They live on a ranch southwest of Colorado Springs at 8,500 feet in elevation and love it more each day! The Lynches' home is quite some distance from the congregation in Castle Rock, but we see them every week at services. The congregation happily honored them with a reception after services on Feb. 4, the exact day of their anniversary. The Lynches add a great deal to the congregation, and we are very pleased to have them here.

Larry Neff

We are pleased to announce the ordination of Jack AungMin as a deacon in the Raleigh, North Carolina, congregation.

Also, Tom Burrow of the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation was ordained an elder. Mr. Burrow recently completed the Focused Mentoring Program.

The ceremony was conducted during our annual Super Social on the Sabbath of Feb. 25. All four of the North Carolina congregations (Asheville, Hickory, Greensboro and Raleigh) combined for the event.

Ron Kelley read the scriptures pertaining to ordinations, and afterward, Joel Meeker gave the ordination prayers. All of the seven other North Carolina elders participated in the laying on of hands as well.

Ron Kelley

OBITUARIES



Myrtle Wood

Myrtle Wood, 97, of the Memphis, Tennessee, congregation, died in

hospice care on Friday, Oct. 14, 2016, after a short illness.

Mrs. Wood was born Aug. 20, 1919, in Lodi, Mississippi, to Thomas and Ellen Harrison. At a young age, she married Walton Wood, but he was tragically killed in 1949, leaving her to raise seven children by herself. She was employed as a factory worker for many years. Interestingly, during her life she never owned a car or learned to drive. Her kids said they did a lot of walking.

Myrtle was one of the founding members of the Worldwide Church of God in Memphis in the very early 1960s. She remained loyal to the truth, and was a fixture of the Memphis congregation until about two months before her death.

Up until shortly before her death, Mrs. Wood lived in her own home. She enjoyed gardening and the outdoors. She is survived by three sons, William, Charles and Bobby; two daughters, Shirley and Ruby; 18 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren; and seven great-great-grandchildren.

Funeral services for Mrs. Wood were held Tuesday, Oct. 18, in Oakland, Tennessee. Justin Adkins, pastor of the Little Rock and Sedgwick, Arkansas, and Memphis congregations officiated.

Myrtle lived a long and eventful life. She longed for the return of Jesus Christ and the coming Kingdom of God, for which she now awaits.

Justin Adkins

Fitzgerald Gittens

Fitzgerald Gittens died on Dec. 16, 2016, at the age of 89. He was a long-standing member of the Church of God in Barbados. His funeral service was conducted on Jan. 9, 2017, by Osmonde Douglas, the local elder in Barbados. Mr. Gittens was a widower whose wife, also a member of the Church of God, died in 1970. He is survived by four daughters, 10 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren. His daughter Sharon currently attends the Barbados congregation of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association.

Tyrone Yarde

GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

WE NEED YOUR BIOS

Class of 2017! We would like to feature all of our high school graduates in the July *One Accord*. Send your answers to the questions below plus a high-resolution photo (no cell phone pictures, please!) by June 15.

1. Graduate's name.
2. Parents' names.
3. Congregation and pastor's name.
4. High school accomplishments.
5. Church activities/hobbies/interests.
6. Plans after graduation.

Also include your phone number or email address (we may use it to confirm spellings, etc.). Please give your bio and photo (conforming with biblical standards of dress and hair length) to your congregation's reporter. We do reserve the right to edit for clarity and a 200-word maximum length.

Thank you!

