

A young man with blue eyes, wearing a white helmet and a yellow t-shirt, is climbing a rope. He is looking upwards with a focused expression. The background is a blurred, rocky surface. The text 'OneAccord' is overlaid on the top of the image.

OneAccord

September/October 2017

Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Cloudy World

Feast of Tabernacles
IT'S TIME to Keep the Feast!

**Journeys and Reflections:
Jim and Barbara Chapman**

personal from the president

Importance of Patience

On Aug. 8, Sharron and I, along with Doug and Tanya Horchak, returned from a three-week trip to southern Africa. Sharron and I made church visits and conducted leadership meetings in four countries—Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and South Africa—while the Horchaks were involved with FOI projects in Zimbabwe and Malawi.

Altogether, on this trip we visited 11 congregations and met with 552 out of 675 members. It was quite a trip! I was very impressed by the dedication of the ministry and the membership. We have a total of nine ministers serving this large region. Africa is probably the richest continent on earth when it comes to natural resources, but one of the poorest when it comes to the standard of living. According to the United Nations, 20 percent of those who live on the African continent live below the poverty line, which is defined as less than \$2.50 per day.

The ministers who serve the brethren in this region do so under some extreme circumstances. In South Africa we have five elders: Neville Smith, Morgen Kriedemann, Stanley James, Neil Becker and Jimmy Nicolau. In Zambia we have Kambani Banda; in Zimbabwe, Harris Hlazo and Steve Tshabalala; and in Malawi, Elifazi Salawilla.

The challenges of travel faced by the ministry and the members in southern Africa are manifold. It seems that you can never expect things to go as planned. On this trip we broke down three different times while traveling to and from services—two flat tires and a starter problem. When we planned combined services in Mumbwa, Zambia, we rented two buses to transport the members. Both broke down and caused a delay of more than two hours for the start of Sabbath services.



A similar incident occurred in Malawi, where the bus we had rented to transport the members from Lilongwe to Blantyre also broke down. These members arrived in time for the meal, but missed services entirely.

It was a common saying on this trip that while traveling in Africa you expect breakdowns and delays, and if they don't happen, or if their impact is minimal, you rejoice! The opposite is true here in the United States. We expect things to be on time, and if they aren't,

we complain loudly! Of course, we don't have to deal with the poor roads and broken-down vehicles that are so common in this region of Africa.

One thing you learn while traveling anywhere, but certainly in southern Africa, is the importance of patience. As the elder in Harare told us during the various breakdowns, "Be patient and don't panic. If



you know you will be late, panicking will only make matters worse." It is this more laid-back approach that helps the ministry and membership handle the difficulties of travel. This is an important principle about patience that those of us living in the fast-paced Western society should also apply. Breakdowns are disruptive to schedules, but to stress over them only takes away from the true joy of spending time with the brethren.

The word used for patience in Galatians 5:22 in the New King James Version is "longsuffering." This is an old English word that means to "bear with" or "put up with" and has the concept of enduring hardship. Our delays on this trip were mostly inconvenient, but they did create a level of anxiety. You really want to arrive on time and to begin meetings on time, but often that is simply impossible, especially in this region of Africa. We learned not to let that take away from the purpose for this trip—to spend time with the brethren.

In spite of their numerous challenges, especially when it comes to transportation, the ministers and brethren in southern Africa are dedicated to God's way of life and resilient under adverse conditions. If you ever have the opportunity to travel to this region, please do so! You won't regret meeting the wonderful people who live in southern Africa; just be sure to bring along an extra measure of patience!



Jim Franks

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4



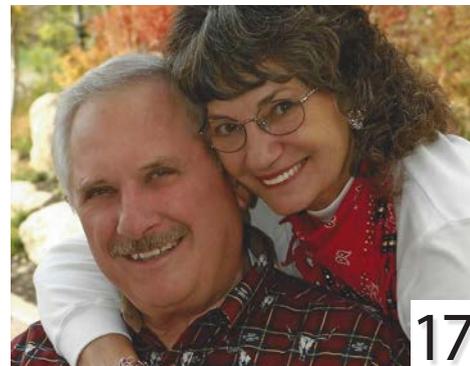
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12



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17

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4 **Foundation Institute Begins Sixth Class**

6 **Foundation Outreach International:**
Making a Difference

8 **Summer Camp 2017 Reports**

12 **IT'S TIME to Keep the Feast!**

14 **Our Examples at the Feast of Tabernacles**

16 **You Shall Rejoice!**

17 **Journeys and Reflections:**
Jim and Barbara Chapman

19 **Church Potluck**

22 **Announcements**



Foundation Institute Begins Sixth Class

On Aug. 14, the new FI students began classes in what will be a milestone year for FI.

By Erik Jones



On Sunday, Aug. 13, the Foundation Institute (FI) class of 2018 gathered in the FI classroom for orientation and a delicious lunch prepared by Cecilia Iturra and a team of volunteers from the Dallas congregation.

After lunch, orientation continued with a meeting covering housing issues. This year FI has an enrollment of 20 students from 12 states. Of those students, 16 are living in the FI apartments. This is also the fifth class since we began offering student housing in 2013. Including this year's class, 81 students have lived in the FI apartments.

This year's students (in alphabetical order) are Natasha

Allwine, Marley Anderson, Christie Burnett, Rhianna Cartwright, David Everman, Ginger Hicks, Courtney Houghton, Corbin Jackson, Dora Jennings, Wyatt Johnson, Emerald Noggle, Timothy Rickard, Ciara Steele, Judy Troyer, Vivienne Villaescusa, Breana Walton, David Windsor, Brianna Wine, Jonathan Wine and Charles Wright.

The next morning students were seated and ready for classes to begin at 8:30 with Dave Myers teaching Survey of the Gospels 1. Mr. Myers began the first class by covering the importance of Jesus Christ's life and the historical background of the Gospel accounts.



To give our readers a feel of what a typical day in class is like, here's the schedule of classes the students had the first day: From 8:30 to 10:20, Mr. Myers taught the Gospels module. From 10:30 to 11:20, Ralph Levy covered Pentateuch 1. From 11:30 to 12:20, David Johnson taught Epistles of Paul 1. The students had a lunch break from 12:20 to 1:30. Then in the afternoon classes resumed and from 1:30 to 2:20 Dr. Levy taught Major Prophets 1. Next, from 2:30 to 3:20 Doug Horchak taught Principles of Christianity. The day wrapped up with Erik Jones teaching a special class on notetaking strategies from 3:30 to 4:20.

This sixth class will be a milestone year for FI in many ways. From the past five FI classes, we have graduated 89 students. Therefore, when the current class graduates in May, FI will have had over 100 graduates!

The end of this class year will also mark the end of classes being held in our present classroom, located in a rented suite directly above the Church's headquarters office. Next year's classes will be held in a new, larger classroom that will be part of our new office building in McKinney, Texas. It's not too early to begin planning to be a part of that exciting class! @③

Foundation Outreach International: Making a Difference

By Doug Horchak

Imagine flying for 23 hours—over 13,000 miles—to the continent of Africa, then taking another two-hour flight to the developing countries of Malawi and Zimbabwe in southern Africa. That is exactly what four young adults from the United States did in late July as volunteer teachers for the Foundation Outreach International English projects in this remote part of the world. These volunteers made this journey in an effort to “make a difference” in the lives of others.

My wife and I had the privilege of working with and accompanying the volunteers on what was (for three of them anyway) their first visit to the continent of Africa. It was a visit in which they helped teach 56 students in two countries in weeklong education projects to improve the members’ English skills and knowledge of the hymns they sing every Sabbath.

Donny Stoner (from Louisville, Kentucky), LaNora Lee (from Houston, Texas), Travis Hees (also from Houston) and Mackenzie Jennings (from Dallas, Texas) made up the team of volunteers who served as English teachers. Donny and LaNora served in Blantyre, Malawi, teaching more than 25 brethren during the week of July 23-28, while Mackenzie and Travis were in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, working with over 25 brethren from the remote region of Gokwe during the week of July 30-Aug. 4.

English for rural brethren

Each of the four volunteers used the training they received in the two months prior to serve the members through positive reinforcement and encouraging the use of



English. Since the vast majority of the 56 students had a bit of English instruction when they were small children, they did respond to a few words in English. However, being rural brethren who live in a remote area, virtually all of their daily communication is in just one or two of the many native tribal languages of Malawi and Zimbabwe. As a result, they lose much of what they learned as young children. More crucial is the fact that most of them lose their confidence to even try to

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Making a difference

When we think about the concept of making a difference, the impact of teaching and helping the members of Africa immediately comes to mind. However, LaNora, Donny, Mackenzie, and Travis all became aware of the major difference that was made in their own personal lives as a



result of their participation in the Foundation Outreach International English projects this summer.

Below are some excerpts from the “lessons learned” articles that they submitted.

Think about American society today. Everyone has an iPhone, a nice laptop, car, house, furniture, appliances, great clothes, etc. And we work hard to support this lifestyle that we are focused on constantly. All we can think about is upgrading to the next phone, paying off our mortgage, redesigning the bathroom in our house to a more contemporary design.

But I was surprised to find in Malawi that these things are not their focus at all. These people have very little money and modest houses with dirt floors. They have no cars, very few have a phone, and yet they didn't care about these things. They had what they needed to get by, and they worked hard for it—but their focus was on God. Their focus was on the soon-coming Kingdom.

We asked the students on the last day to tell us their biggest dreams. Almost every single one of them said something along the lines of getting right with God or making it into the Kingdom. I was floored by their response. I figured that people in this situation would be wanting to have a nice car with a big house and an easy job to afford it all. So much can be learned from their focus on spiritual things, instead of the physical.

Donny Stoner, Malawi English Project

In addition to their holding members of God's family so dear, they also have a very strong desire to learn. Both in learning about God's way and the actual English classes, they displayed a strong, genuine curiosity and passion. Once we began the classes, all of the nerves I had previously about teaching completely disappeared. The students were so ready to learn that it made teaching a breeze.

Every single day was full of laughter and genuine effort because, not only did they want to learn English, they liked it. Daily, they worked to gain a better understanding and to help each other grow. Even more inspiring, they have such a general enthusiasm for life.

From my entire week there, I think what I loved the most was that they never complain. Rather than focusing on the negative of a situation, they just say, “Oh well, this is Africa!” and continue on about life. During bad situations, they know that the ultimate end of suffering is God's Kingdom, so it's very real to them.

LaNora Lee, Malawi English Project

The first day also taught me that my students were patient and happy people. It took me a few minutes to gather my thoughts and to figure out what we were going to do, and the brethren sat there patiently with smiles on their faces. They were just happy to be there. ...

Throughout the week I grew closer and closer to the brethren. I learned more about their lives and how they lived. Some of them were not able to have electricity or hot water, and some only got water certain days of the week. Like the brethren, I had the opportunity of experiencing cold water showers! It made me realize how I take for granted electricity and hot water. These things are of little thought to me, but so important to them, and it made me appreciate what I have.

After my week there, I did not want to leave. I have never grown attached so quickly to a group of people, God's people.

Mackenzie Jennings, Zimbabwe English Project

This was the eighth year for these projects in southern Africa. Throughout that period of time, well over 120 brethren from three countries have been served and encouraged by young adults who have volunteered and been trained to serve God's people in this very special part of the world.

We hope that next year other qualified and motivated young adults from the U.S. and elsewhere can make a difference serving God's people in Africa. It is an experience that will also make a profound difference in their own lives as well! ☺☺



LaNora Lee and Donny Stoner



Travis Hees and Mackenzie Jennings





Summer Camp 2017 Reports

Camp Carter

By Andy Burnett

Camper slots filled early this year for Camp Carter. We reached capacity about two weeks before the application deadline. A total of 48 staff and 111 campers from all across the country assembled for an action-packed week at YMCA Camp Carter in Fort Worth, Texas, July 2-9.

This year's theme, "Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Clouded World," provided an ideal canvas for our Christian Living classes, Compass Checks, Q&As, Bible study, sermon topics and discussions. I do not cease to be impressed by the knowledge, insight and quality of character that many of our young people display at camp. We give credit to God for the manner in which He has worked in the lives of parents and children in the Church, so that young ones, the next



generation, are able to see clearly in this ever-darkening world.

Campers stayed busy and active all week, as those who frequented the COGWA Youth Camps Facebook page noted. Even though we were hit by several storms throughout the week, none of the weather systems impacted our lake activities (tubing, skiing and swimming) or our regular activity schedule.

This year several members sponsored two brand-new activities: an "Amazing Race" activity, where dorms worked in teams to complete challenging and zany tasks; and a luau, where campers



enjoyed Hawaiian and surfer music while participating in various games (hula hoop and limbo contests and a bean bag toss) and satisfied their palates with Hawaiian Punch and freshly made cotton candy, popcorn, snow cones and hot dogs. Even though the event took place only an hour and a half after dinner, campers and staff somehow managed to find room in their tummies to enjoy the treats!

Every year we strive to put together a good blend of venues. This year's schedule included activities that were physically demanding (basketball, volleyball, soccer, strength fitness



and high ropes apparatus), mentally challenging and/or team-building (escape room, Amazing Race and low ropes), skill-developing (archery, riflery, skiing, food preparation and eating, and dance), spiritually inspiring (the aforementioned classes with biblical instruction) and socially fulfilling (fellowship time, dorm time, all-camp games and mixers, and dances).

Thanks again to our volunteer staff whose labors were stellar! Next year Camp Carter will fall a week later than usual: July 8-15, 2018. Plan now to attend and be sure to register early!

Camp Sequoia

By Paul Carter

There are times in our lives when we have a good expectation that something is going to turn out well, and we look forward to it with great anticipation. As camper and staff applications began to come in for the 2017 camp year for Camp Sequoia, I had such expectations. I originally thought it would be hard for this year's camp to compare to the previous year's camp—especially since last year's was one of the best. But the staff and campers who attended made 2017 a fabulous year!



The first day of activities always includes novelty Olympics, which is a goofy way to relax and get to know one another. That,

followed by a slip and slide, makes for a great way to get wet and cool off.

This year we added new activities, such as “bubble ball” and new challenges for team building. Bubble ball was an instant hit, and campers and staff kept coming back for more. Even though the temperatures were high and it was a hot activity, I heard little or no complaining because of the fun and excitement of the sport.

For team building, this year campers



had to work together as teams to set up tents! Each team had two who were blindfolded and another two who could do nothing but give instructions. Time allowing, they also had to take it down blindfolded. They also played a game of disc golf, where those blindfolded played the game only by the direction of teammates. Both of these tied in very well with the theme, “Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Clouded World!” Vision is not always something we can physically see, and we have to work together and have something clearly laid out in our minds.

Camp started off with a welcome dance, and at several points, every camper was on the floor dancing. That participation continued throughout camp and through the last dance as well.

Campers enjoyed the regular activities, such as basketball, volleyball, speedaway, flag football, clincher ball, challenge course, golf and dance, as well as rock climbing, riflery, skeet shooting and archery.

Last year a forest fire came within a half mile of the camp and actually did burn through the rock climbing area that was up in the mountains above the camp. Thankfully, nothing in the camp was burned. The fire not only left the rock climbing area usable, it also left the two main trees that were used for the program, when others around them had burned. God was merciful to allow the camp we use to be spared.

In the evenings we gathered by the



amphitheater for Christian Living, followed by campfire. Each night of campfire was different, with karaoke, camper skits and talent nights. The weather at that time of the evening is below 70 degrees, making it an optimal time to gather around a natural campfire.

At the conclusion of camp we all enjoy a nice Sabbath banquet that includes camper speeches and special awards. This is followed by a casual dance and then the dreaded goodbyes—at least for another year!

Camp Sequoia Extended Session

By Paul Carter

For the last four years we have been able to offer Extended Session to older campers. Beginning immediately after camp, we undertake a challenging but rewarding four-day excursion of hiking, camping and other activities that drive and reward the participants. In the past we have hiked the Sierra Mountains, enjoyed canyoneering, rappelled waterfalls, explored (and slept in) caves, hiked Catalina Island, and enjoyed sea kayaking and snorkeling.



This year we were back in the Sierra Mountains, but with some additional goals to achieve. The theme of camp was “Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Clouded

World.” In years past we have hiked to the farthest trail maintained by the Sequoia National Park and camped at Pear Lake, which is a beautiful glacier lake just above the tree line in the Sierras. We enjoyed that again and looked at the stars from 9,200 feet. Light pollution (besides the moon) is almost nonexistent, and the stars seem to encompass you as you gaze at the universe above.



As we came near the lake, there was still snow on the ground in places, and campers and staff enjoyed a snowball fight on the last day of July and first day of August in California. A rare treat indeed!

But that wasn't it. There was another lake that we have wanted to attain. It is off the trail maps—most likely because it is over the rock-covered pinnacle of the Sierras. Very few ever expend the time and effort to get to this particular lake. The struggle and challenge is simply too much for people to envision the reward that comes with it.

We left our tents and backpacks behind, and the second day hiked another 2,100 feet into the mountains. This is a two-mile hike, but most of it is “ascending.” We hiked around some smaller lakes, walked through snow in areas and rose above what many ever get the opportunity to see. Some asked why we couldn't just enjoy the lakes we had already come to or the one we were camped at. But we had a goal! I tried to express to the campers how special this lake was (having only researched it myself), and they willingly kept going! After nearly two hours we came to an area with three beautiful mountain lakes. The campers got excited and talked about how pretty they were. As I gazed to the southeast, they realized that we weren't there yet. One more massive ridge lay in front of us, but it was near! We could see it afar off! We hiked up the ridge, and as we crested 11,300 feet, we reached our destination!

We gathered on the highest part of the ridge above Moose Lake and looked down on the largest lake we had seen this trip, still half covered with ice and snow. The snow floating in the water had a brilliant blue color to its edges, and the contrast of the white snow against the deep color of the water created a magnificent view. Jagged mountain ranges could be seen that were miles and miles away. We took about 10 minutes just to drink in the beauty!

Several campers made the comment, “Now I know why we came this far!” They had achieved something very few are able to do. Another said “If we had been dropped off here by a helicopter, it wouldn't have been the same!” How true that is! When you remove the labor and diligence that is put into something, the investment and the reward are not the same!

Each night we debriefed and went through lessons of the day. There were physical lessons of hiking, and spiritual connections to the lives of the teens. We talked about the challenges, both physical and spiritual, and how each must be faced.

Jon Pinelli and I had a “vision” that we wanted to share with the teens. They began to see that along the way, but they also had adversity and challenges to overcome. We don't appreciate things in life nearly as much if we don't have to struggle very hard to obtain them. God has given us a vision of something He has prepared. He tells us that in this life we are going to have tribulation, but He also tells us that nothing can be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us. There is a future and an eternity He wants to share with us!

We learn to appreciate not only having a destination or a goal, but we also learn to appreciate the challenges we have to face! We know that we have to overcome, we have to endure, we have to grow, and we have to go above and beyond. The reward is laid out, but the path is narrow and difficult, and (just like Moose Lake) there are few who find it.

Over the course of three days, the campers diligently endured nearly 33 miles of backpacking, hiking and walking. It was by far one of the most rewarding and gratifying Extended Sessions yet.

Camp Fort Bluff

By Ken Treybig

Two years ago it became obvious we would need to move our southeast teen camp to a new location as costs had sharply escalated at Strong Rock. After over a year of searching, Todd Carey wrote on Sept. 1 of last year that he had found a new facility for us to use—Fort Bluff in central Tennessee, just outside the town of Dayton (site of the famous 1925 Scopes Trial, which involved the teaching of evolution in public schools).



That vision of a new home for our camp became reality this summer. A total of 82 campers from 18 states and three countries outside the United States—Canada, England and South Africa—and 44 staff members enjoyed the beauty of Fort Bluff from July 30 through Aug. 6.

The view from Johnson Bluff, at the edge of the camp, is spectacular. It overlooks the valleys below traversed by the mighty Tennessee River, which begins near Knoxville, runs through middle Tennessee into Alabama, and then turns north to empty into the Ohio



River at Paducah, Kentucky. On a clear day it is said you can see up to 60 miles toward Georgia and both the Nantahala and Chattahoochee National Forests.



With such beautiful mountain views, the theme of “Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Clouded World” was quite appropriate. Campers participated in the usual biblical education of daily Compass Checks and two Christian Living classes, a Friday night Bible study and nightly tuck-in discussions with dorm parents.

As well, campers enjoyed the usual teen camp activities, such as flag football, speedaway, soccer, basketball and volleyball. However, the large facility is also the headquarters for the National Association of Christian Athletes and offers a waterslide, large swimming pool, putt-putt golf, human foosball, cornhole, horseshoes and “9 Square in the Air.”

Campers never lacked for interesting activities during the day. Evening activities included an informal dance on Monday night, open activities, novelty Olympics, a campuswide scavenger hunt and a closing dance on Saturday night. The size of the camp—with 800 beds—meant we were unable to have the facility to ourselves, but by scheduling meals at slightly different times, the owners were able to keep our groups separate most of the time.

Many of the campers and staff were returning from previous years at Strong Rock, but there were also new friendships and lots of memories made during the week. Gloria Carey, who came to serve as office and business manager, was able to help with the first year at this new facility. On the Sabbath Mrs. Carey was presented with three large cards



from staff members, the girls’ dorms and the boys’ dorms, expressing their appreciation for all the work she and her late husband did to make this year’s camp possible. In addition, a photo album is being prepared as a keepsake for her from this year’s camp, which fulfilled their vision for a new location.

Camp Heritage

By Scott Lord

This year CYC Heritage saw new growth. Part of that new growth was in the number of attendees. We had 54 campers this year, including eight new 12-year-olds. In 2016 we had 48 campers, so with an increase of six campers, this was our highest number since the start of COGWA. We also had a record number of new staff members. This meant that almost a third of the people at Heritage this year had never been there before.



The theme this year was well-received. It became clear to all that we grow in understanding of God’s way as we have better vision. “Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Clouded World” was discussed in our daily Christian Living classes, dorm discussions, our Compass Check, the Sabbath seminar and, of course, Sabbath services.

We were reminded to check our blind



spots, to “come and see” God’s mighty works, to remember that Satan blinds and deafens this world so that they cannot see and hear, but God grants us insight and vision to see the right way toward the Kingdom of God. Campers took the theme to heart this year, as demonstrated by their dorm decorations, Sabbath note boxes and lessons learned from white-water rafting and many other events.



This year campers enjoyed all the usual activities—sailing, water polo, archery, riflery, soccer, volleyball, softball, basketball, tennis and cooking—as well as gaga ball, a new activity for Heritage.

The younger campers enjoyed a beach party at Lake Courage while the older campers went rafting down the Youghiogheny River.

The Sabbath began Friday evening with an FOI presentation. We were blessed to have four staff members who attended one of Foundation Outreach International’s programs. The staff members showed slides and encouraged the campers to begin thinking now about “giving back” and serving on one of these programs. Sabbath included the regular brunch, seminar, hymn sing and Sabbath services. After dinner, many of the staff gathered at the traditional Heritage Rock to watch the sun set over the lake and to reflect on the abundant spiritual lessons and blessings of the week. After sunset, everyone at camp enjoyed the annual Saturday night dance.

Sunday morning we had a brief Compass Check, reminding the campers to not let the opportunity of attending camp pass by without it having some kind of an impact. We were told to remember the vision that God showed us during camp and to let that vision help us to “choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19).



IT'S TIME to Keep the Feast!

We eagerly anticipate the Feast of Tabernacles as the highlight of the year. What can we do to make sure we take full advantage of our time at the Feast and get the most out of it?

By Mark Winner

In large sporting events there is often a raucous introduction to the starting lineup or beginning of a match. For example, in the 1990s the Chicago Bulls basketball team introduced their starting lineup (which included the greatest player to play the game up to that time and possibly to date—Michael Jordan) with laser lights and a song called “Sirius” by the Alan Parsons Project. It worked the crowd into a frenzy for tip-off.

In another sport the announcer begins simply by stating, “Ladies and gentlemen, *iiiiittt’s time!*” Again, the crowd goes wild and music breaks out as he continues to introduce the athletes.

To those who are not sports fans, this may seem rather silly on the surface, and perhaps it is. However, I hope all of us feel the same way about the Feast of Tabernacles. I hope we not only get excited, but also appreciate the meaning of the Feast and plan to use our time wisely while attending.

Remember the purpose

Why do we go to the Feast? What is its purpose? A question that was often asked in past years was, *Why are you here?* We are here for numerous reasons, but perhaps the greatest is to focus our attention on the great, living God—the God of the universe. We attend the Feast of Tabernacles to glorify Him—to honor and worship Him. There is no nobler thing that a human being can do. The truth is that the Feast is

the highlight of the year for those in God’s Church.

Each year during the Feast we turn to a passage in Zechariah that refers to a time in the future when everyone on earth will keep the Feast of Tabernacles: “And it shall come to pass that *everyone* who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall *go up* from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to *keep the Feast of Tabernacles*” (Zechariah 14:16).

There are a couple of very important points to consider here. Clearly, “*everyone*” will be keeping the Feast. Second, everyone will “*go up*” to keep the Feast. In verse 17 we are shown the location of where everyone “goes up”—to Jerusalem.

Now we can’t all go to Jerusalem today. However, those God has called out of this world and into His Church do follow the instruction in Leviticus 23 to go keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This year, beginning on the evening of Oct. 4, we will gather at various locations around the world where God has placed His name and begin keeping the Feast with the tithe we have saved specifically for this purpose as God has commanded (Deuteronomy 14:22-26).

Focusing on the future

What is it we need to hear and focus on while there? We will focus on the fact that God is our Creator, who has given

us life for a great purpose. We will focus on the fact that He is a loving God who will ultimately reveal Himself to all human beings—all who have minds with which to think. We will focus our attention on God’s purpose and His will as He revealed it in His Word.

God unveils our future, the future of this world and the future of every human being that has walked the earth. These are the things that are revealed through the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

We will also be instructed in God’s way of life. This is something His family hungers and thirsts for—the truth of God. He calls this period of time a *feast* and proceeds to show that it is to be both a spiritual and physical feast.

One of the important lessons we learn in keeping God’s feast days each year is the importance He attaches to the meanings of these days. If this is your first Feast of Tabernacles, it will be very special for sure. But if this is your 25th or 50th Feast, what you’ll find is that your appreciation for the meaning of these days increases—and that is part of what God designed.

You’ll hear much more about the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles and what God has in store for us—as well as the meaning of the Last Great Day and what God has in store for those who have lived and died never knowing the truth of God—once you arrive and attend this year. So I won’t take more time here. On the other hand, I would like to remind you of something that requires planning now so we can take full advantage of the time we have once at the Feast.

Plan now because time passes quickly

Ever notice how quickly time passes? How about the time you were eager to take your vacation? It may have seemed as though time moved slower than ever leading up to your vacation. But then it was on you, and before you knew it, the vacation was over and you were back to work. The vacation was wonderful; however, it flew by and it hardly felt as though you got time off!

The Feast of Tabernacles seems to pass with that same speed each year. We arrive with excitement and perhaps a degree of “the tireds.” But even though we might be a little tired from all the last-minute preparations to get ready and arrive, we look forward to seeing our spiritual family—both old friends and the new ones we will make this year. We look forward to having a meaty spiritual diet in church services each day. And, of course, we look forward to being away from everything back home as we focus our time on being reenergized spiritually and physically. But what we find is that it is also a challenge to take full advantage of our time at the Feast. Why do I say that? Because—just as in the case of that vacation we were anticipating—without a plan of how to fully take advantage of our time at the Feast, the time passes in a flash, and we are back home once again.

So what can you do to make sure this doesn’t happen? Do you have a plan? Here are steps you can take to make this “the best Feast ever!”:

- **Take time in the weeks leading up to the Feast of Tabernacles to reread passages that explain why we keep these days and why we look forward to their fulfillment.**

For example: “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:2-4).

This is exciting to read and gets us focused on why we are gathering together to keep the Feast. We look forward to this future time of peace—a time when all will be taught about God and what will lead them to becoming a member of His family for eternity.

- **Pray about and plan in advance how to use each day so that you are getting the time you need with God.**

One of the biggest disappointments and frustrations we could have is to go home after keeping God’s Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day, knowing that we really didn’t make or take the time we should have with God. Prayer and Bible study is something very personal between us and God. He knows how much we appreciate what He has given us in the meaning of these days based on the amount of time we spend with Him. And as I’ve already mentioned, the days pass all too quickly. So, it is imperative that we prepare for time with God in prayer and study in advance of arriving at the Feast. When we do this, we gain more from the messages, and we exhibit tremendous fruit in our example to others as well.

- **Plan in advance very specifically how to use your time with your family—both your physical family and your spiritual family that will be with you.**

For example, we can desire to get together with several people at different times during the Feast, but if we don’t plan that up-front by contacting them in advance or as quickly as we see them once there, the days will pass before it actually happens.

For all U.S. and some international Feast sites, you can also go online at feast.cogwa.org to see the schedule for the site you are attending. This will help you make plans in advance so you can take full advantage of the time you have before returning home.

The truth is, the Feast will be here before you know it. As the highlight of the year, it is crucial that we plan to take full advantage of our time away from home and with our spiritual family. I can sense the enthusiasm picking up as I imagine you do too. And I can already hear in my head the announcer saying, “Ladies and gentlemen—*iiiiitt’s time!*” Happy Feast to you and yours. ☺🕒

Our Examples at the Feast of Tabernacles

Plan now to take a good example and a positive attitude to the Feast. You'll serve not only other Feast-goers, but also future members of God's family who will encounter God's way of life by seeing your conduct.

By Phillip Sandilands

Every year when we prepare for the trip to one of God's Festival sites, we make a list of things to bring with us. This list usually contains items that will either fit in a suitcase or perhaps in the trunk of our vehicle. But have you ever considered other, nonphysical things that you should also take with you to the Feast each year? This article will focus on one aspect of making this Feast better for others, both those within our group, but also, just as important, those outside our Church family.

We have been admonished many times not to view the Feast of Tabernacles as merely a vacation. It is so much more than that! When we're planning a vacation, we usually focus on packing the most fun possible into a limited amount of time. But the purpose for our attendance at the Feast is to reflect on a time to come and not just on the time we have now. How can that important distinction change our approach to keeping the Feast?

The example that we show others has an impact on the work of the Church. Of course, how we conduct ourselves at the Feast should be typical of our conduct at all times. But we need to particularly focus on our example at the Feast time when who we are and how we act can be so much more noticeable. Along with our suitcase of clothes, we should also pack an intent to set the best example possible of our faith in God's plan for humanity. But it isn't something we just mysteriously do at the Feast. Rather, it is something that should be planned. What does this festival picture in our minds? Let's look at one aspect of the future that this festival portends and how our attitude, approach and example demonstrate God's plan..

A time without Satan's influence

Consider two passages in the opening sequence of Revelation 20: "He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:2-3, emphasis added throughout).

"Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God. ... And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (verses 4-5).

If we combine those two ideas, we see that the Millennium pictures two concurrent events: the rule of Jesus Christ (assisted by the saints of God) and the removal of Satan's interference and attitudes. When we attend this festival this year, neither one of those two components will be in effect yet. Christ has not yet gathered us to rule with Him, and Satan will still be at large, trying to infect the Feast with his attitudes.

But if this festival is designed for us to look forward to a time when both components will be in force, how should we treat it now? We must do our best to be an example of a group that

does not allow the influences of Satan to steer our actions. If we plan now to have the best attitude we can, it will help us keep Satan's attitudes from creeping into our examples. We must take time to not only prepare the physical items we will be packing, but also take time on our knees to request that God give us the proper mind-set to reflect the Millennium, when Satan will not be present. We might even meditate in advance on how we will react to possible snags in our Feast plans. Here are a few ideas on how we can do this.

Public conduct

After services, we go to a nice restaurant and order a favorite meal—perhaps one that we cannot afford the rest of the year. But when the meal arrives, we find that it is overcooked and not at all as we desired. What reaction should we have at that moment?

It helps to consider more than just the meal. The server, the cook, the management and many of the guests at the restaurant are likely not familiar with us or the Feast of Tabernacles. But guess who all those people are. They are potential members of God's family, just as we are today! What memory of the Feast will they take with them after we leave town and go back home? Will they recall a polite group that cheerfully dealt with challenges and inconveniences? Or will they recall the angry, impatient and demanding attitude that they have often seen in diners at their establishment? What an impact our response can have on a future member of our family!

It also doesn't matter how old or young we are. Consider Paul's admonition to a young Timothy:

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. ... Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Timothy 4:12, 15-16).

Paul was telling Timothy to be prepared at all times to reflect God's core values and doctrines. This requires advanced planning. We need to consider before we go how we can be an example to others.

Young adults, how much alcohol is too much? Plan now to draw the line and not overindulge.

Teens, can you plan to give your parents a stress-free Feast? They give you many opportunities to have fun. In return, give them eight days of no hassle.

Young and old alike, with whom will you come into contact while at your site? Wait staff, store clerks, convention center employees and local law enforcement are just a few. We should strive to ensure that our behavior gives them a positive impression of this event and a positive image of God.

Consider a Foundation Outreach International Hilltop project

Every year at the Feast in Orange Beach we have conducted a food drive for the local community. Let's use this one example to stir up some creative ideas for furthering God's core principles. When it was first introduced to me as the Festival coordinator, I could see the potential of the help it could be. But I must admit, I did not realize the full impact that it would have on the local community.

Each year in Orange Beach we put a table with a banner that reads "Food Drive" in the corner of the meeting hall and make an announcement so the Feast attendees know what it is for. The Orange Beach food bank provides us with a list of the most-needed items, which we place on the table for our people to see. Then every day a food bank representative comes by with a van and takes our donations.

At first, it seemed to me that this would be something that would help the community, but that only a few people in the community would ever know where these items came from. Nonetheless, it was a great way to help the less fortunate in the area and practice the way of give. However, it proved to go beyond that. The results can be illustrated by this excerpt from a letter we received from the local community.

"To the Visiting Angels
From the Church of God, a
Worldwide Association:

"There aren't words enough to express the depth of our gratitude to all of you for your generosity to this community. Thanks to everyone who came here and gave so freely to help people less fortunate. So many families, so many children will benefit from your giving spirit.

"The Church of God group meeting in Orange Beach represents far and away the single largest contribution to our food pantry—last year and again this year. Last year you contributed over two tons of goods; and this year you have topped that figure with an incredible three plus tons—over 6,000 pounds of food, household supplies, personal hygiene items and baby supplies.

"We are so grateful that you have chosen to give in this manner. We praise God for His gifts and favor."

This letter was sent not only to us, by way of thanks, but also to members of the Orange Beach City Council. I was told that it was brought up in council meetings and that council members discussed how their city could better provide for our group and the success of our convention in the future! This one act of kindness led to the mayor and other local officials being aware of our attitude and motives as a convention group. Imagine any other group that came into town for a convention doing this. Most groups focus on their meetings, and look for what they can get from the community. We have made a lasting impression as being a group that doesn't come here just to enjoy the beach, but to express a way of life and show godly character.

The effort to sponsor this is simple. A banner, a table and a few volunteers to staff the table. That's it! And, of course, we are not limited to food drives. Think about what other opportunities there might be at your local site. If you are interested in sponsoring something, FOI can assist in reimbursing some set-up costs.

What are your ideas?

Rather than spend more time with examples from our perspective, let's turn the conversation over to you. What ideas do you have to prepare for an excellent Feast? What lessons have you learned in the past, both good and bad, that may be of help to others?

Perhaps we can broaden our fellowship at Sabbath services to discuss this. Maybe speakers can talk about it in sermonettes, or Sabbath school teachers can add it to a lesson given prior to the Feast. Perhaps young adults can discuss it when considering a service project. Possibly our elderly can relate stories of Feasts past that can give a unique perspective to others who may be listening.

What will we pack this year in our Festival suitcase? Hopefully we will include a well-thought-out plan for setting the best example of God's ultimate plan for all of humanity. We promise you—it won't take up any more space in your luggage, but it will be used more than any other item you bring! ☺☺

Foundation Outreach International Needs You!

By David Register

At the Feast this year, you will likely read and hear an announcement about meeting with a representative of FOI (Foundation Outreach International). We will be looking for volunteers and support for our projects and programs and offering information at all of the U.S. and some international Feast sites. FOI currently sponsors several different projects including:

- **Jordan.** FOI and its board members have a decades-long partnership with two educational projects, one for underprivileged, special-needs youth and one at one of Jordan's English-speaking schools. This is a special 10-month service project for qualified volunteers.
- **Ghana and Kenya.** Young adult volunteers are needed for two-week projects to serve as staff at youth camps in both Ghana and Kenya.
- **Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.** For these three projects, we need volunteers to help teach English. Learning basic English helps our Church members in these countries to communicate better and be more successful.
- **Embark.** This is a special mentoring program designed to help high school seniors, college students and anyone seeking to choose or change their career. Successful professionals guide others with advice and counsel in a mentoring program built for success. This program is free to participants.
- **Hilltop Outreach Program.** Participants in this outreach service program can apply for and receive a grant to fund a humanitarian activity in their local community. The purpose is to promote community outreach through service and volunteerism.

We hope you will meet with our FOI representative at the Feast this year and consider one of our projects or programs. Thank you for your help and financial support. You may find more information on all these projects and programs at foundationoutreachintl.org/projects.

You Shall Rejoice!

Using these keys can help you and others keep God's command to rejoice at the Feast!

By David Treybig

What? You've got to be kidding! I have to rejoice at the Feast of Tabernacles?

Yes. As one of several scriptures commanding this Festival behavior notes, "And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and *you shall rejoice* in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you" (Deuteronomy 12:7, emphasis added).

Furthermore, we are to make sure everyone in our household rejoices, as well as "the stranger and the fatherless and the widow" (Deuteronomy 16:11). And this rejoicing is supposed to occur every day of the Feast! (Leviticus 23:40).

Clearly, we're charged with some pretty serious, heavy-duty rejoicing for an extended period of time!

So what's your plan? How will you accomplish this important part of Festival observance? Here are two keys that can help.

Key #1: Enjoy sharing your physical blessings with others.

Enjoying fine food and drink with the second tithe we have saved is certainly one of the ways we are told to rejoice at the Feast (Deuteronomy 14:26). But have you considered how rewarding it is to share some of your blessings with those less fortunate?

Picking up the cost of a meal for widows or those with minimal second tithe—as well as spending time with them—is an act of service that can be enjoyed by the givers as well as by the recipients. Rejoicing becomes easier when we take pleasure in the joy we can give to others as well as experience ourselves.

Key #2: Enjoy the spiritual blessings you have received.

Physical things can be enjoyable, but the Feast of Tabernacles has far greater meaning than simply physical prosperity. The Bible speaks of joy we should have in being called by God and living in accordance with His way of life.

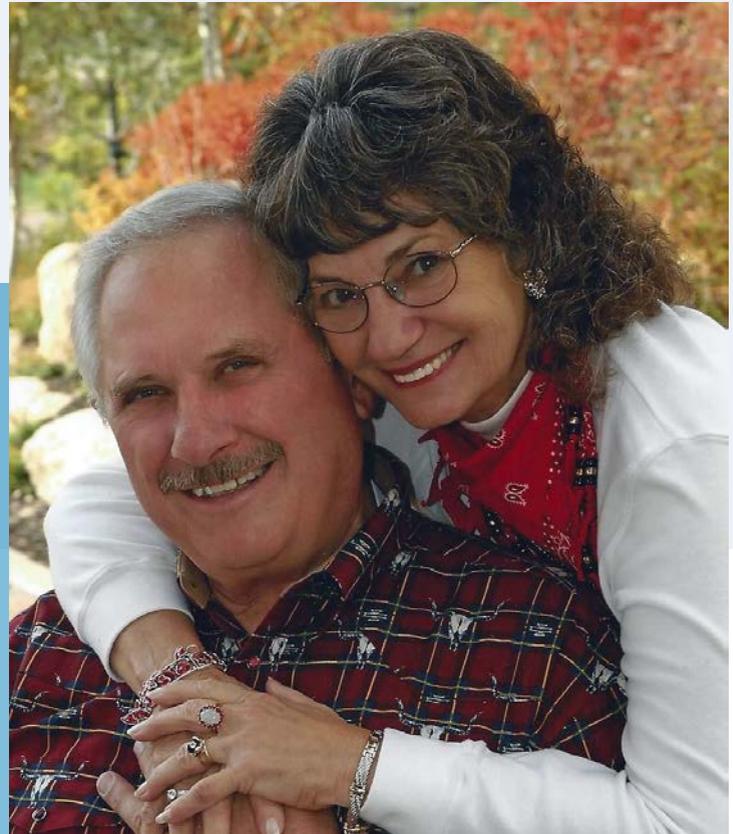
In heartfelt repentance, David prayed, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation" (Psalm 51:12). The prophet Isaiah noted, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3), and Habakkuk said, "Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:18).

The Feast is a good time to meditate on the wonderful blessing of our calling. We can reflect on how God has blessed us both physically and spiritually.

Rejoice! ☺☺



Jim and Barbara Chapman



Jim and Barbara Chapman began their journey into the full-time ministry in 1966. They were serving as deacon and deaconess in the Northern California churches. They had three children—Janelle, Wayne and Jim—and owned a business. During this period, the Church asked men to come to Ambassador College for one to two years of training and then sent them out into the field ministry. So, the Chapmans left the business behind and began a great adventure serving God’s people.

In 1967 Mr. Chapman started out assisting in the Visiting Office while serving as associate pastor at various times in the Pasadena and three Los Angeles congregations. He pastored both in Glendale and Santa Barbara and began the Las Vegas, Nevada, church—all from Pasadena. He also coordinated the Feast of Tabernacles in Squaw Valley. Meanwhile, their daughter, Erin, was born.

Mr. Chapman said, “It was a unique time in Church history as the Church was growing rapidly, and we will always cherish the opportunities we were extended. It was an incredibly busy time, keeping up with Church, college and Imperial School activities.”

The next stop on the journey was 1972 in Dayton, Ohio, where they served two active congregations and coordinated the Feast of Tabernacles in Lake of the Ozarks and Mount Poconos. These congregations had 100-plus energetic teens. The teens earned the money to buy a bus, and Mr. Chapman took them on trips all over the country.

In 1976 it was on to New Orleans, Louisiana, where they served the congregation and coordinated the St. Petersburg, Florida, Feast site.

Then, in 1979, they went back west, serving the Reno and Las Vegas and, later, Carlin, Nevada congregations. The church circuit was over 400 miles at first, so they did the circuit by plane. Mr. Chapman also coordinated the Squaw Valley Feast site in 1981 and 1982.

In 1986 they went back south, pastoring the Jacksonville, Ocala and Gainesville, Florida, congregations and coordinating the Jekyll Island Feast site until 1993. In 1993 they returned to California to serve the Redding and Chico congregations.

The year 1995 brought new beginnings with the start-ups of Red Bluff, California; Medford, Oregon; and Reno, Nevada—back to a large circuit again! During this time, Mr. Chapman coordinated the Redding Feast site. The Chapmans continued this pace until their retirement in 2001.

Working with youth

Part of the Chapmans' adventure has been working with youth. They have served at camps in Alaska, Texas and California. Mr. Chapman tells a story of a particular hiking trip:

"Twice while in Pasadena three men and I took 35 boys on a 10-day backpacking trip starting on the eastern slope of the Sierras and coming out on the western side near Kings Canyon. After walking in two days, we camped by a beautiful lake on a dead-end trail. The boys all loved to fish and caught at least 200 small, but delicious, trout. They insisted on eating their catches each night. In total, we hiked between 35 and 40 miles over the 10 days. ... Believe it or not, some of those young boys still talk about those trips whenever we meet. No one got hurt, and they all worked hard to help each other."

Joys of pastoring

When asked what they have enjoyed most about pastoring and serving, the Chapmans replied, "The people God called that we were allowed to work with, visit, become friends with—hands-down, [this] has been one of our greatest blessings for all the family. ... We were all learning together and trying to put it into practice in our lives. ... It has been

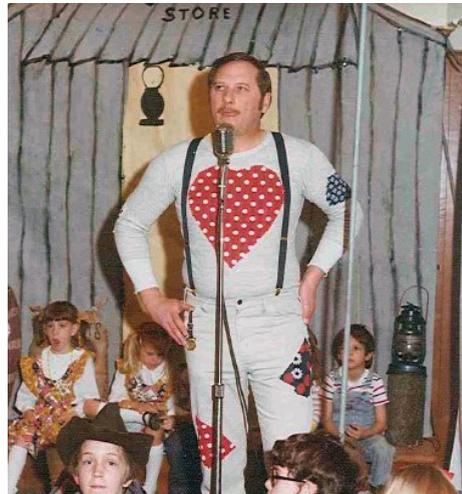
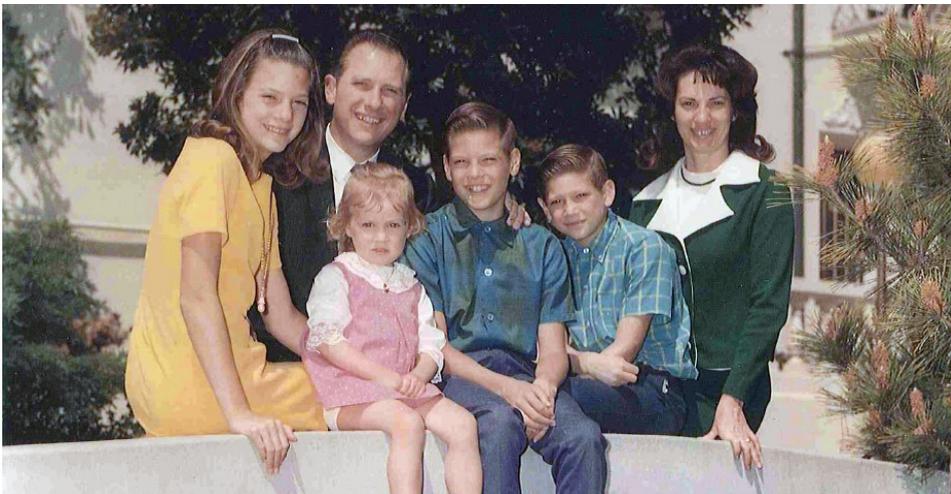
very inspiring for us to see so many of the young people we have worked with become ministers and leaders in the Church."

The ministry has had a positive impact on their family. "Our children especially enjoyed the years at Imperial School and being a part of the 'Early Crew' in Squaw Valley, helping to prepare the arena for the Feasts. Also they had the opportunity to live in different areas of the U.S. and broaden their experiences and gain friends they wouldn't have met otherwise. All three of our living children are involved in the ministry and have serving hearts, which we feel they learned while helping us."

Looking back

The biggest lesson learned? The Chapmans said that the ministry really is a calling. When you answer that call, God has your back and will give you what you need to do the job He has given you.

They feel they have been enriched and blessed by the brethren they have known. Many business and community leaders and neighbors have kept in touch over the years. The Chapmans find that humbling and heartwarming because even those outside the Church see something different in God's way of life. ☺☺



On the Road Again

The following are the congregations the Chapmans served between 1967 and 2001:

Pasadena, California
Los Angeles, California
Glendale, California
Santa Barbara, California
Las Vegas, Nevada*
Dayton, Ohio
New Orleans, Louisiana
Reno, Nevada*
Carlin, Nevada
Jacksonville, Florida
Ocala, Florida
Gainesville, Florida
Redding, California

Chico, California
Red Bluff, California
Medford, Oregon
*Served in this congregation twice

The following are the Feast sites the Chapmans coordinated:

Squaw Valley, California
Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri
Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania
St. Petersburg, Florida
Jekyll Island, Georgia
Redding, California

CHURCH POTLUCK

What's cooking in your congregation?



ASHEVILLE, KNOXVILLE AND LONDON BRETHREN GATHER FOR PENTECOST WEEKEND

On Pentecost weekend, June 2-4, 2017, brethren from the Asheville, North Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee; and London, Kentucky, congregations met together at the Carson Springs Baptist Convention Center in Newport, Tennessee. Ralph Levy was the visiting speaker from headquarters.

There was plenty of good food and fellowship to be had at the peaceful convention center, which the brethren were blessed to have to themselves.

Kicking off the weekend, Dr. Levy gave a seminar on Friday evening and a Bible study on Sabbath morning. Other speakers on the Sabbath and Feast of Pentecost were Ed Werden, Brian White, Jeff Baker, David Hicks and Eric Evans, presenting a great mix of thought-provoking messages.

On Saturday night, some of the brethren came together for a hymn sing, which was enjoyed so much it was hard to get everyone to stop singing!

Special music offerings over the weekend included "Bow the Knee," performed by Jeannie Evans and accompanied by Rachel Blackston; "Doxology" (lyrics by Sandi Patty), performed by Eric and Jeannie Evans and Martha White; and "Faithful," performed by Martha White.

Jennifer Cox



WICHITA CONGREGATION CELEBRATES TWO GRADUATES

The Wichita congregation held a cake and punch reception to recognize two recent high school graduates, SommerLyn Anzo and Chase Martin. Pastor Paul Luecke presented them with cards and gifts on behalf of the brethren.

SommerLyn, daughter of Thomas and Anna Anzo, finished her high school requirements for graduation with homeschooling. She is now enrolled in Hutchinson Community College, where she is studying cosmetology.

Chase Martin, son of Howard and Diane Martin, graduated from Augusta High School. He plans to attend Wichita Area Technical School, where he will study structural design in aviation.

Lynda Wasser





EAST TEXAS HOSTS FATHER'S DAY BRUNCH

What hungry dad could resist the inviting spread of pancakes hot off the griddle, waffles, egg casseroles, home-baked goodies, fresh fruit, bagels and more? Such was the menu on June 17 as the East Texas congregation hosted a Sabbath brunch welcoming all fathers, young and old.

The table decorations paid homage to the men with unique centerpieces: duck decoys and antlers for the hunters at large, a working model train set for the young at heart, toy tractors for the inner farmer, and tools for the handyman and hobbyist.

Some of the men braved the heat index and carried their piled-high plates outdoors to the patio to enjoy the breeze (albeit from floor fans)! The preteens served the juice and coffee, which proved to be a bit of a balancing act but all went well.

Special guest and speaker was Clyde Kilough, Media operation manager from headquarters in Allen. He delivered the sermon message titled, "Nature and Law, God and Us," about God's glory, handiwork and laws governing nature in our expanding universe.

The brunch was a delightful addition to the Sabbath and a special way to honor the fathers in the congregation and show appreciation for all their service.

Ken Treybig

KNOXVILLE MEMBER LORI ELLIS GRADUATES FROM ACADEMY

Lori Ellis, a member of the Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation hit a special milestone in her life! The mother of four and grandmother of four graduated with a diploma in esthetics from Sandra Academy of Salon Services, Inc., in New Tazewell, Tennessee, on June 14, 2017. The next step she will be taking is to become licensed as a skin specialist in the state of Tennessee!

Congratulations, Lori! We wish you great success!

Judy Swanson

DALLAS MEMBERS ENJOY ANNUAL PICNIC

It may have been overcast and sprinkling, but that didn't stop the Dallas brethren from fellowshiping for several hours over Memorial Day weekend as we enjoyed our annual church picnic. It was a dreary day, but how can spirits be dampened when there's barbecued beef brisket involved?

The Dallas brethren have been enjoying an annual church picnic nearly every year dating back to the late 1990s.

Over 140 brethren attended the picnic this year and enjoyed croquet, cornhole, park rides, board games and—for our younger members—jumping in any puddles large enough to produce a splash.

What an incredible blessing it was to fellowship over a meal and have fun as a family. The Dallas brethren truly experienced Psalm 133:1—it was very good and quite pleasant to dwell together, sharing in our annual church picnic.

Mary Lallier





AUSTIN MEMBERS BOND CHEERING ON THE HOME TEAM

On Aug. 1, 2017, a small group of brethren from the Austin, Texas, congregation attended a local minor league baseball game! It was enjoyable to get together midweek to fellowship and cheer on our Round Rock Express team. This has become a late-summer tradition for the congregation. Everybody had a great time, and we hope we can do this for many more years to come!

Taylor Rocheleau



STEVE AND JUDY FERENCHIAK THANKED FOR 33 YEARS OF SERVICE

The congregations of Hickory, Greensboro and Raleigh, North Carolina, each presented Steve and Judy Ferenchiak with a gift along with a farewell reception as we thanked them for their 33 years of service to our congregations.

They have recently moved to Asheville, North Carolina, and will be serving the congregations pastored by Eric Evans. They will be greatly missed!

Ron Kelley



OCALA CONGREGATION CELEBRATES RARE 50/50

The Ocala, Florida, congregation was excited and blessed to celebrate and participate in a rare 50/50 event. Following Sabbath services on May 20, 2017, the members were given the opportunity to honor Roy and Pauline Demarest on their 50th wedding anniversary, as well as to recognize the Demarests' 50 years of service to the Church of God. Two beautiful cakes were used, one for each occasion.

The Demarests first met at a New York City church picnic when they were teenagers. Roy was introduced to the Church through his mother, who began listening to Mr. Armstrong in 1956 and was baptized on a baptizing tour in 1957. Pauline's mother began listening to Mr. Armstrong in 1947 and began attending services in New York City when the Church began there in 1959.

They began dating and were engaged in 1966, during Roy's senior year at Ambassador College. Roy and Pauline were married, along with another couple, Hugh and Linda Wilson, in a double wedding at Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas, by Leslie McCullough on June 5, 1967. They were then sent out as a couple to assist in the ministry in Evansville, Indiana. In the 50 years since, they have served God's people in Indiana, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Maryland and—now for 32 years and counting—in various Florida congregations.

They have three sons, Cliff, Chad and Dan, all of whom are members of COGWA, along with their wives. They have been blessed with six grandchildren, ranging from 18 months to 20 years old.

When asked what their secret to a successful life and marriage was, Roy's first response was to say, "Find and marry the right person." He also said that the two smartest things he has ever done in his life were to say yes to God and yes to Mr. McCullough who asked if he would take Pauline Baxter to be his wife.

Pauline said, "I attribute our successful marriage to our sharing the same spiritual goals and having God as our partner. We are compatible in so many ways and have worked together as a team in our family and Church."

Jim Blount

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



Jacob Keys



Brandon Weaver

In the past 17 months we have conducted two baptism ceremonies in the Houston South, Texas, congregation. Jacob Keys was baptized on April 9, 2016, by Larry Salyer with assistance of a local elder, Frank Pierce, and a visiting minister, Clyde Kilough, for the laying on of hands. Jacob's wife, Andrea, is a member, and they have one daughter, Sabri, who is now 4.

This year, on June 10, Brandon Weaver was baptized by Larry Salyer with the assistance of Frank Pierce. Brandon is a third-generation Christian. He is the son of Shirley Murrell and the grandson of Melba Ferrell. His wife, Roselyn, was also present at the ceremony. The Ferrell family was in attendance, and it was the last church activity Melba attended before her unexpected death seven days later.

As it happens, the Keys and Weavers

are close friends, and the Keys were at Brandon's baptism.

Both occasions were hosted at Royden and Julie Morgan's home, and refreshments were served.

Larry Salyer

ORDINATIONS



Emori Tunaosara Tolo

Emori Tunaosara Tolo was ordained into the ministry June 10, 2017, at a combined service of the Suva and Ba congregations on the island of Fiji. The ordination ceremony was conducted by visiting ministers André van Belkum and Art Verschoor.

Emori was baptized in March 1980 and ordained a deacon in April 1990.

Standing next to him during the ordination ceremony was his wife, Sereima. They have five children.

Emori works for an Australian mining company. He is responsible for liaising with local villagers and community leaders, government stakeholders, providing updates on the exploration progress of his company, answering questions and addressing any concerns.

Emori will be a great support for the Fijian brethren, who were overjoyed to have a local minister in their midst. We look forward to working with Emori and Sereima in the years ahead.

André van Belkum

BIRTHS



Abigail Jane Anglin

Abigail Jane Anglin was born May 11, 2017, to A.J. and Rita Anglin and daughter Emma.

Abigail weighed 7 pounds, 14 ounces and measured 20½ inches long. Paternal grandparents are Anthony and Christie Anglin, and maternal grandfather is Mark Cheramie.

Emma's parents were hoping for a boy, but 3-year-old Emma informed them that she wanted a baby sister and had prayed for one. And it was so.

Rita, Emma, grandmother Christie and now Abigail regularly attend services of the New Orleans, Louisiana, congregation pastored by Phillip Sandilands.

Buford Louque



Anaya Shirley Bowman

Marlin and Meghan Bowman are the proud parents of the newest addition to the Ullswater, Ontario, congregation. Anaya Shirley Bowman was born at 11:22 p.m. on June 22, weighing in at 9 pounds, 10 ounces.

She was named after her grandmother, Shirley, who died in a tragic car accident

three weeks before she was born. Anaya means "God answers." Anaya is the first child of Marlin and Meghan and the second grandchild of Aden and Shirley Bowman. She brings much joy to the family and the congregation.

Jennifer Bowman



Kelty Joy Boyle

Dustin and Liz Boyle of the Eau Claire, Wisconsin, congregation happily announce the birth of their third child, Kelty Joy, on March 23, 2017. Big sister Clara and big brother Walker are very eager to have a baby sister. Kelty weighed 8 pounds, 3 ounces and was 19½ inches. Tom and Darla Boden are the happy grandparents.

Liz Boyle

of the groom, Justin Adkins, who pastors congregations in Memphis, Tennessee, and Little Rock and Sedgwick, Arkansas.

After a short honeymoon trip off the Lake Erie island of Put-in-Bay, they returned home to St. Louis to begin their new journey. Ethan is a welder in a machine shop, and Amanda is a dental assistant in an orthodontic office.

Amanda Adkins

including one who was born three weeks after her death.

On the kitchen wall in the family home there is a whiteboard that always has a quote. The last quote Shirley wrote, which is still on the whiteboard, reflected how she viewed and treated others: "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."

Jennifer Bowman

OBITUARIES



Shirley Bowman

Shirley Bowman will be remembered as a devoted wife and loving mother who was always looking for ways to serve and help others. She loved hosting people, enjoyed planning surprises for others, always had a listening ear, and treated everyone with love and care.

At the age of 56, Shirley died tragically in a car accident on Wednesday, May 31, 2017.

The third of six children, she grew up on a farm and went on to teach at a parochial school for two years. It was during her years as a teacher that she met and married her husband, Aden Bowman.

Aden and Shirley came into the Church in 1988 after learning of the truth through literature a friend passed on to them. They were baptized together in 1992.

They were married for almost 34 years and had seven children together: Jennifer, Marlin (Meghan), Virginia (Erik Summers), Charlene, Darcy, Emily and Lillian.

At the time of the accident, they had one grandson, Ryan. Shirley was eagerly anticipating two more grandchildren in the coming months,



Melba Jean (Walding) Ferrell

Melba Jean (Walding) Ferrell, 79, a member of the Houston South, Texas, congregation died in her sleep, Saturday, June 17, 2017. Born in Anderson County on Sept. 2, 1937, she graduated from Galena Park High School and received an associate of science degree.

She worked as a suite secretary for the University of Houston-Clear Lake and found so much joy in her role that she continued to carry around her parking pass even after retirement.

Her true joy in life, though, was fulfilling her role as mom and grandmother. She never missed an opportunity to support her family and worked to keep everyone smiling and laughing.

Melba was a godly woman and was truly committed to praying for others. She never met a stranger. She aimed to leave a piece of her heart with everyone she met. We all deeply miss her and her big smile.

Melba had four children, nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Several of them attend the Houston South congregation. Melba's grandchildren were a real treasure to her, and her grandchildren will remember her as the world's best Mimi.

Susan Scott Smith

WEDDINGS



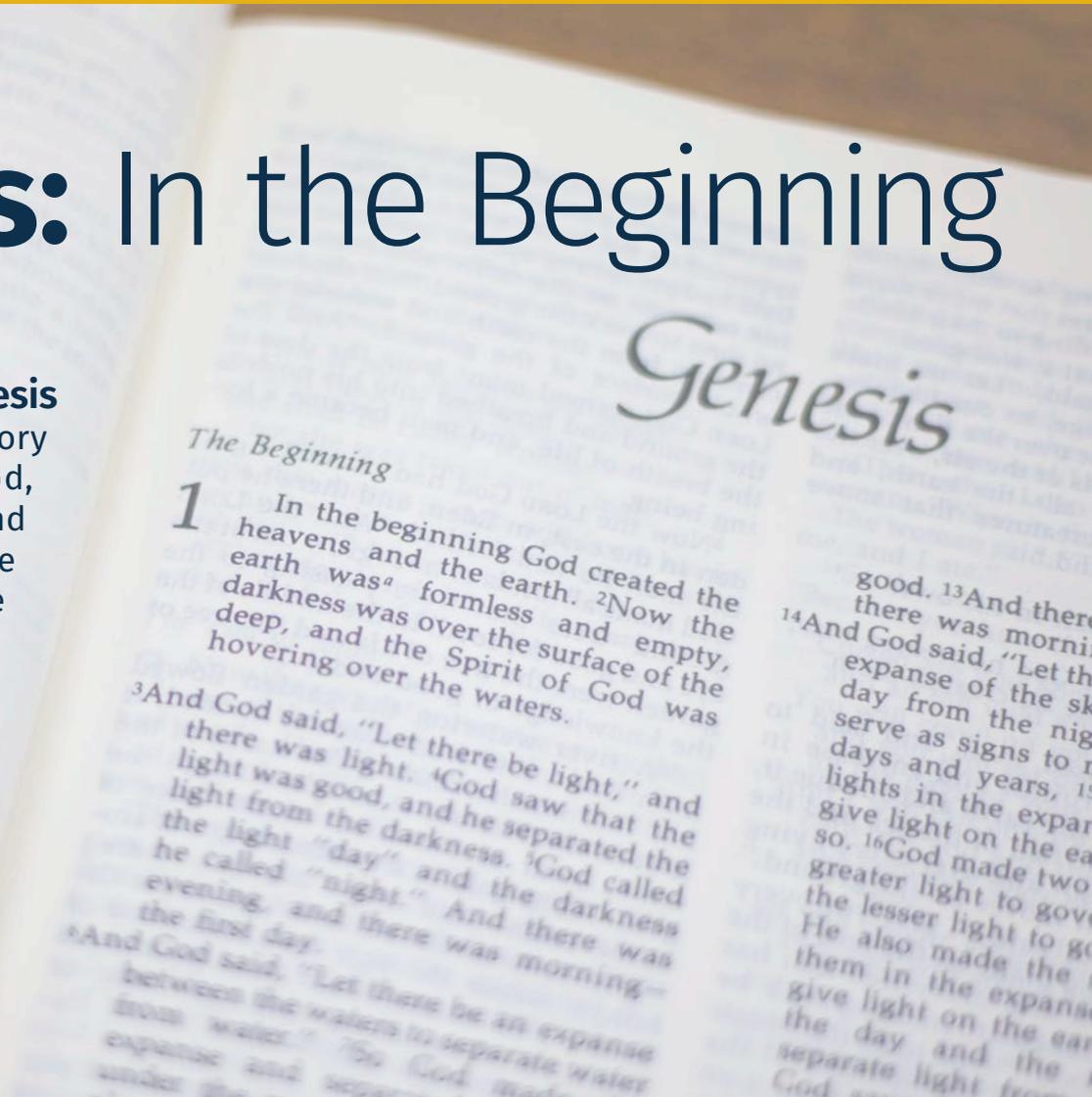
Ethan and Amanda Adkins

Amanda Marie Henderson and Ethan Daniel Adkins of the St. Louis, Missouri, congregation were married on July 2, 2017. The ceremony and reception were held in Avon, Ohio, the hometown of the bride. The couple was surrounded by 90 close friends and family; 11 states were represented that day!

They were blessed with the opportunity to be married by the father

Genesis: In the Beginning

The fascinating book of **Genesis** describes prehistory, the story of Adam and Eve, the Flood, the patriarchal histories, and the story of Joseph and divine providence. It gives the background for millennia of human history, leading up to the last days prior to the Kingdom of God.



Beginning Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2017, at 8 p.m. (ET)

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