

OneAccord

March/April 2018

BARBADOS CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Journeys and Reflections

Bill and Judy Swanson

Foundation Institute

Equipping the Men and
Women of God

**FEAST OF
TABERNACLES**

2018 SITE
DESCRIPTIONS

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personal from the president

Passover, Night to Be Much Observed and the Days of Unleavened Bread

Enthusiasm for the Feast of Tabernacles really ramped up recently with our early registration for the site in Italy. Within two minutes of opening the registration portal on Sunday, Feb. 11, we had 350 people register, which is our maximum seating capacity for the auditorium, and within 10 minutes we had well over 500! In order to be fair to everyone who desired to go to Italy, some recommended we employ a lottery system and others recommended that we have the computer arbitrarily pick from those who register. But after much discussion, we chose the simple and old-fashioned way of first come, first served. We currently have 350 acceptances and more than 200 on the waiting list.

It does seem that we begin Feast of Tabernacles preparations earlier each year, and if we are not careful, we can allow that preparation to take our focus off the more immediate need to prepare for the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. God's commands emphasize the importance of preparing for the spring festivals: we are to examine ourselves before partaking of the symbols of Christ's shed blood and beaten body (1 Corinthians 11:28-29).

The night following Passover is the Night to Be Much Observed. This year that will be on Friday night, March 30. There are a number of long-standing traditions involved in the observance of this night. When my family began attending services in the early 1960s, we referred to this evening as the "Night to Be Much Remembered." But a search of old Church literature reveals that we weren't consistent. As far back as 1961, we often used the term "Night to Be Much Observed," taken from the King James translation of Exodus 12:42.

In the earlier years of the Church (1950s to 1960s) each congregation around the world gathered for a meal on this special evening. We still believe it is important for us to observe this evening, but the Bible leaves open *how* we do that. We have no biblical model of a meal among the Old Testament Israelites on this evening, nor is there a New Testament model for us to follow. *How* we observe this evening is a matter of church tradition.

As the Church grew rapidly in the 1960s and congregations became so large that the amount of work required to have a group meal became excessive, Herbert Armstrong made the decision in 1970 that we should observe this evening by gathering in private homes or in private rooms in restaurants or hotels.

In the late 1960s congregations in Big Sandy and Pasadena were well over 2,000 people, and it was a major undertaking to feed that many people in one evening. Those who prepared the food, served the food and cleaned up afterwards spent many hours in doing so.

Mr. Armstrong sent an announcement to all the churches on April 8, 1970, formally changing the way we kept the Night to Be Much Observed. Pastors were to "tell the brethren to have two or three families eat and fellowship together on that evening in an attitude of thankfulness and rejoicing for the deliverance from sin which we as New Testament Christians experience. The host or leading man should ask God's blessing on the meal and the occasion, but no further 'sermonizing' will be necessary."

Today the Church's tradition allows for different ways to observe this evening—in a private home, in a private room in a restaurant or hotel, or all together as a congregation. Since most of our congregations are smaller in size, it is possible once again to observe this evening as a group without creating a lot of additional work.

The Night to Be Much Observed begins the first day of Unleavened Bread. For seven days we eat no leavening, and prior to the beginning of the first day, we remove all leavening from our homes (Exodus 13:7). This is a very special time with deep spiritual meaning for all God's people (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

It is only March, but as you can see in this issue of *One Accord*, it is time to begin making plans for the Feast of Tabernacles. At the same time, what a shame if we fail to prepare properly for the Passover, the Night to Be Much Observed and the Days of Unleavened Bread. It is very important that we do both!



Jim Franks

President
Church of God, a Worldwide Association



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CHURCH of GOD

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Feast of Tabernacles
2018 Site Descriptions

Argentinian Campers Remember Their Creator

A spiritual focus combined with friends and fun activities made this a memorable year for everyone attending.

By Karen Elizondo



A total of 21 campers and eight staff members enjoyed a wonderful teen camp in the beautiful southeastern city of Sierra de la Ventana, Argentina, from Jan. 15-20, 2018. This year we had a camper from Chile, along with his parents. We also welcomed two first-time campers from Argentina. It was very special to witness how our small group of teens is more united every year.

The campsite is very spacious and has lots of green areas, where we were able to have all of the outdoor activities. Thankfully, God provided warm and sunny days without rain, allowing all of the scheduled activities to take place without any problems.

Days filled with activities

After settling into the dorms and having breakfast, we began the activities of the day, starting with the main instructions for the camp, given by the local minister, Alfredo Arboleas, followed by forming the teams for the campers. We had lunch, then continued with the afternoon activities, which included swimming in a nearby river and having a snack before moving on to the sports.

The camp schedule included activities with a spiritual focus in the morning and sports activities (such as archery, volleyball and soccer) during the afternoon. Breakfast was at 9 a.m. every morning, followed by a Bible study at 10 a.m. Afterward, we had an activity called “Remember Your Creator,” in which the teams had to answer questions related to the camp theme by searching the Scriptures and presenting their conclusions to the rest of the campers.

Following this activity, the teens had the opportunity to give short speeches, where they talked about their thoughts,

experiences and lessons learned over the past year—thus sharing a bit about themselves with the rest of the group. Most of the teens gave speeches, and all of them participated with enthusiasm in all of the activities.

We also had a daily Bible study, given by Mr. Arboleas, with the help of Pablo Carvajal and Ariel Rosales.

Thanks to our visitors from Chile, the teens were able to learn archery, an activity that had never been offered before in the Argentinian camp. Also for the first time, we had ultimate Frisbee, which the teens enjoyed, working together to get their team’s Frisbee to the finish line. After the sports, we had dinner at 9 p.m. and then ended the day by playing games as teams.

Concluding events

On Thursday afternoon we returned to the city of Bahía Blanca, where we stayed at the minister’s house for the last two days of camp. Friday was the last day of the sports activities at a park nearby, where we held the Christian Living activities in the morning, as well as lunch and sports in the afternoon. We had Sabbath services in the morning with the Bahía Blanca congregation, and in the afternoon we had the last “Remember Your Creator” activity and camper speeches.

We’re very grateful that God allowed us to participate one more year in the teen camp of Argentina. There were definitely a lot of spiritual lessons learned. We felt the peace and unity in each activity through God’s Spirit, as well as His guidance and protection.

May God bless us this year and help us stay motivated to put into practice everything we learned until we see each other again at next year’s camp! @@



Peru Holds Youth Camp

Almost 20 campers had fun and learned more about God's way as they spent time together at Peru's teen camp.

By Carlos Saavedra



This year, the setting of the youth camp in Peru was once again the lodging of La Chacra in Taricá, Huaraz. With God's protection, 19 campers from the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, gathered there, at the base of magnificent snow-capped mountains, from Dec. 27 through Jan. 2. During those days, they all partook of various activities that allowed them to grow and be strengthened in the way of God and the unity of His people.

The motto of this year's camp was "Be Strong and Very Courageous"—a reminder of God's command for Joshua to obey all of God's instructions so he could prosper in everything he did.

During the cold and rainy afternoons, we held Bible studies where the wisdom of Solomon was taught to the campers through the book of Proverbs so that they could learn how to build a purposeful life. We had a Bible study each of the five days of work and study spent at camp. Also, the campers

were given group tasks that they had to achieve and then present to the rest. They had to do research and learn about young people in the Bible who sought the will of God rather than their own desires, comfort or safety. Our youngsters certainly learned great lessons and were able to see parallels between their own lives and the lives of these biblical heroes.

There was also a lot of play and fun within the limits established by God. Outdoor activities took place during the mornings, when the sun heated the mountains and invited the campers to do sports. We had soccer, volleyball and other sports that demanded high physical activity and which the campers loved. One of the highlights of the week was a talent show that everyone participated in. We closed the camp with a trip to the high hills, followed by a lunch in the restaurant of a Church member in Huaraz. That was the last day of a very profitable and blessed youth camp that was full of beautiful and beneficial moments, for which we thank our God. ©A



"I was hesitant about taking a year off to go to FI, but I'm so glad I did. The knowledge and experience I gained was unlike anything else. FI is an amazing program, and I'm extremely thankful to have gone. Everything from the classes, to the student activities, to the overall environment is phenomenal."

—Tatiana Meeker

"Foundation Institute is the best investment I have ever made. FI is a valuable experience that provides the necessities one needs to navigate every level of the spiritual journey we all undertake. All of my foundations of Bible study, prayer, service in the Church, marriage, and Christian living were laid when I attended this unique, immersive, and all-encompassing nine-month program that changed my whole worldview and outlook on life as a Christian."

—Caleb Breidenthal



EQUIPPING THE MEN AND WOMEN OF GOD

What's the most important thing in the world to you—and what are you doing to give it the attention it deserves?

By Jeremy Lallier



Life is full of important decisions, especially if you're getting ready to head out into the world on your own. Maybe you're figuring out college. Lots of questions there. Should you even go? Which one should you choose? What should you study? What kind of degree do you need? How will you pay for it?

Speaking of paying for it, what are you going to do for a job? What are you good at? What are you passionate about? What can you actually get paid to do?

You don't need to have all the answers right this second. In fact, you probably don't. These are some of life's more daunting questions, and while they do demand answers, most of us need time to sort it all out. It's too much to tackle all at once.

And yet, as important as all those decisions can be, we haven't even mentioned *the* most important decisions of all:

The ones involving your relationship with God.

Those are the ones that really matter. Sure, your education, your job, your home, your family—those things are all huge. They matter. They're going to impact the rest of your life.

However, where you stand with God is going to impact the rest of eternity.

That's a bigger deal than where you decide to go to school. It's a bigger deal than what you do for a job or even who you marry or where you live. Our relationship with God is the most important thing in our lives.

Are you treating it that way?

Learning to read the road map

Every year, Foundation Institute hosts a nine-month Bible program designed to equip its students with a greater understanding of God's Word. It's a deep dive—14 courses centered on the most important truths the Bible has to offer.



"Going to FI was the best thing I have ever done. The shoring up of one's spiritual foundation is a journey all should take, and it is good for all ages. Take the time; make the sacrifice; get ready for Christ's return. You will not be sorry. Don't just talk about it. Do it!"

—Lonnie Pierce

"I wanted to attend FI to learn more about the Bible, but I gained so much more than that. I learned how to effectively study and grow spiritually every day, which seems to be a common difficulty for many people my age. I also had the opportunity to really get to know all the ministers serving the Church at headquarters. This was an experience that motivated me to get more involved in the work of the Church."

—Emily Everman

"It's hard to put into words what a blessing my short year at FI was. I knew that I wanted to experience a structured, nine-month journey through the Bible with a group of like-minded people, but I don't think I ever imagined the scope of impact that it would have on my life. FI put the Bible and all the scattered names and events of it into context for me, so that the whole book gained depth and meaning, and the Christian living principles we discussed became tangible, applicable and real. My life today is still being changed by what I learned at FI."

—Erica Golden



"I can't rave enough about Foundation Institute. It has changed my life in ways I could never imagine. Before attending FI, I didn't understand a lot during sermons, and now every time I hear a scripture read, I think back to what was taught at FI about that particular verse. What I learned is lasting knowledge. Not to mention my closest friends now are the individuals I attended FI with. To sum it up, I came out of FI with lasting knowledge, friendships, and memories. I highly recommend anyone who has this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity take advantage of this program. You won't regret it!"

—Melissa Buchanan

"Foundation Institute is an amazing environment to build lifelong relationships—something that you wouldn't get from FI online. FI is a chance to learn God's Word among your brethren and draw close to them."

—Jacob Golden

"Foundation Institute was more than just a good experience. It was life-changing. You will take the knowledge, the wisdom and the friendships with you forever."

—Wyatt Snyder



But going there requires a sacrifice. It requires stepping away from a lot of life's other important decisions in order to focus on *the* most important decision of them all:

How central is God going to be in your life?

The other stuff? It's important. The rest of your life might be just a blip, but it's *your* blip, so what you do with it matters. But that's exactly why focusing on God first is so important.

God has the answers for the other questions. He has invaluable advice about the decisions you're going to have to face. In His Word, He lays out the road map to a happy, fulfilling, successful life. He offers insight into education, work, marriage, home life. Whatever big and important decisions are ahead of you, the Bible can help you find the choices worth making. And that's what Foundation Institute is for—it's your guide to the Bible.

A solid foundation

The most integral part of any building is the foundation, and the most integral part of our lives is our relationship with God. Paul wrote, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17, English Standard Version).

A lot of people wonder how they could possibly afford to step away from their lives for nine months to attend Foundation Institute. There's no denying that it's a big commitment that requires a lot from anyone who attends. But if God is the most important part of your life—if His Word and His promises are the foundation you want to build your life on—then the more important question is this:

Can you really afford not to go? ☺🙏



For more information about Foundation Institute (and to apply for the upcoming 2018-2019 class), visit

<https://FoundationInstitute.org/>

Bill and Judy Swanson



Bill Swanson entered Ambassador College in 1960 as an older student after serving a tour in the U.S. Navy. He was named freshman class president and became part of the visiting team for the Pasadena churches.

Bill was dating Judy Marshall at a time when Herbert Armstrong urged younger students to delay getting serious until their junior or senior year. When word reached Mr. Armstrong about Bill's interest in Judy, he asked, "You heard what I said there, didn't you?" Bill answered, "Yes, sir." Then Mr. Armstrong said, "I didn't mean you," and laughed! So Bill and Judy got engaged and were married in June 1962.

The beginning

The Church of God began growing so quickly that there was a shortage of manpower to help serve in the field. So after Bill's junior year in 1963, he was sent to the Bay area to assist the minister there with the Oakland and Sacramento, California, and Reno, Nevada, churches. This partly entailed flying round-trip to Reno for Friday night services, then driving to Oakland Sabbath morning and on to Sacramento in the afternoon.

Growth and expansion

In 1964 their first child, Loma Jean (Jeannie Evans), was due around the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, and so Bill attended the Squaw Valley, California, site on his own. It was there that he was ordained into the ministry.

About two years later, their son Richard was born, and the Swansons returned to Pasadena so Bill could complete his studies. After graduation in 1967, Bill and Judy had more

opportunities to serve: pastoring churches in Knoxville, Chattanooga and Kingsport, Tennessee, and Asheville, North Carolina, and establishing new churches in Alabama. And as they did so, they also added two more sons, Allen and William, to complete their family!

"Since we had to travel on roads before the Interstate highways were built, I was given permission by Mr. Armstrong to get my pilot's license so I could fly to my church areas, and God worked out many miracles for us concerning the weather," Bill recalled.

In 1975 it was back to Pasadena for a refresher course, and then on to serve in Rapid City, South Dakota, and Chadron, Nebraska. The Swansons started a family band while there, playing for socials and building a strong family bond. They were transferred to Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1979 and established additional churches in Rock Springs, Wyoming, and Ogden, Utah.

After a memorable family trip to Jerusalem and the Holy Land for the Feast of Tabernacles in 1983, the Swansons returned to the U.S. and called New Jersey home for the next several years.

New challenges

Due to unrest in the Church in mid 1990s, the Swansons served brethren in a number of congregations in the upper Midwest. In the years that followed, his duties ranged from Feast coordinator, summer camp instructor, guest speaker and pastor for various scattered small congregations, as the need arose.

The Swansons were sent to the Philippines to serve the congregations there. "We spent our time visiting, baptizing

and starting up a leadership class for the men and women so we could help pastor the growing congregation there from the U.S. as soon as we returned home. With the help of wonderful leaders there, we were able to establish a Feast site in Baguio City before we left,” Bill recalled.

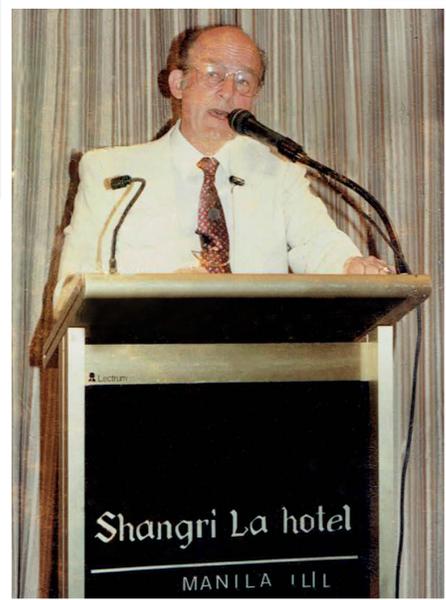
In the fall of 1996, Bill suffered a heart attack, forcing him to curtail his church responsibilities. He later retired from the active ministry in 2002. In 2015 at COGWA’s international ministerial conference, Bill and Judy Swanson were among the couples who were honored for 50 or more years of dedicated service to God and His people.

Reflections

Looking back, the Swansons reflected on family. “The positive impact that pastoring has had on our children was that they had the privilege of making and keeping friends with people from all over the country and had the opportunity to travel and experience things that most children never get the chance to do. We learned to adapt to change as we moved and lived in so many different places. We are blessed, in that three of our four children and their children are active and serving in God’s Church today.”

Bill continued, “The challenges of living the life of a minister, his wife and family are far outweighed by the joy of serving and working with people whom God has called and is calling. The inspiring part of my ministry was seeing young men and women, and even older ones that we had mentored, later be used in God’s ministry and service.

“The most important lesson we learned while pastoring was that the brethren don’t care how much you know, they want to know how much you care!” ©A



On the Road Again

The following are the congregations the Swansons served from 1963 to 2002 (in chronological order):

Oakland, California
 Sacramento, California
 San Francisco, California
 San Jose, California
 Reno, Nevada
 Asheville, North Carolina
 Knoxville, Tennessee
 Chattanooga, Tennessee
 Kingsport, Tennessee

Nashville, Tennessee
 Bowling Green, Kentucky
 Nashville West, Tennessee
 Huntsville, Alabama
 Gadsden, Alabama
 Florence, Alabama
 Rapid City, South Dakota
 Chadron, Nebraska
 Rock Springs, Wyoming

Green River, Wyoming
 Salt Lake City, Utah
 Ogden, Utah
 Montvale, New Jersey
 Middletown, New York
 Indianapolis, Indiana
 Terre Haute, Indiana
 Columbus, Indiana

Q

You say [in “[Elisha the Prophet](#)”] that Elisha brought “joy to people through miracles from God. His gentle spirit enabled him to have a positive influence.” How does this view explain his action in cursing, in the name of the Lord, the little children who made fun of his baldness causing 42 of them to be torn apart by bears? Would it not have been more fruitful to have talked to the children in order to educate them in the ways of acceptable politeness?

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



PERSONAL CONTACT

with CECIL MARANVILLE

The comment you quoted was a summary statement about Elisha’s life’s work. We agree that the incident you mentioned was tragic. It was also unusual.

First, these were most likely not little children. The Hebrew word translated “little children” in the King James Version is translated “youths” in the New King James Version (2 Kings 2:23). *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* explains that it is a “masculine noun referring to a boy, a young man, a servant. It is used of a young person, a boy (Gen. 19:4); one old enough to serve in battle or as a personal private force (Gen. 14:24; 1 Sam. 21:2[3]; 30:13, 17); or as a helper in the army (1 Sam. 14:1)” (2003).

The indication, then, is that these youths were old enough to know what they were doing and to be held accountable for their actions. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* agrees and explains the implication of their chant:

“As Elisha was traveling ... several dozen youths (young men, not children) confronted him. Perhaps they were young false prophets of Baal. Their jeering, recorded in the slang of their day, implied that if Elisha were a great prophet of the Lord, as Elijah was, he should go on up into heaven as Elijah reportedly had done. The epithet baldhead may allude to lepers who had to shave their heads and were considered detestable outcasts. Or it may simply have been a form of scorn. ... They regarded God’s prophet with contempt” (notes on 2 Kings 2:23).

The youths mocked God, who commissioned these prophets. And the words “in the name of the LORD” imply that *He* inspired the prophet to put the curse on the youths and caused the bears to attack.

We agree with you that it would have been ideal to talk with the youths and lead them to change their attitudes—if that would have been possible. In fact, the task of God’s prophets was in large part to warn people when they needed to change before calamity struck, as we explain in our article “[Purpose of Prophecy](#).” God makes it plain that He prefers never having to take punitive action (Ezekiel 33:11).

Even when men make it impossible for God to extend mercy, He typically causes good to result. Did the injuries suffered by those 42 lead to others responding to God when they wouldn’t have otherwise? We don’t know, because the Bible does not say. Clearly, God emphasized through the tragedy that Elijah and Elisha were His true servants. It could be why Elisha was able to deliver God’s message unhindered for the next 50 years.

In summary, many details about the event mentioned in 2 Kings 2:23 are unknowable. In light of what is knowable, we have to conclude that the mob that mocked Elisha was—at that time—beyond reasoning with. Incidentally, their story is not yet ended! God has a plan whereby they will receive His mercy. To see how this is possible, see our article “[Are Most People Eternally Lost?](#)” ©A

CHURCH POTLUCK

What's cooking in your congregation?

HICKORY ENJOYS CARD-MAKING SOCIAL

The Hickory, North Carolina, congregation enjoyed a potluck and card-making social following services on Jan. 27, 2018. After a delicious potluck meal, brethren gathered around tables to fellowship and use their creativity to make greeting cards. Supplies and expertise were provided by ladies in the congregation, who offered fun and clever ideas for the card-making process. On the back of each card, a label was placed saying, "Lovingly made just for you by the Hickory congregation of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association."

Over 30 beautiful get-well and encouragement cards—all of which contained scriptures—were created. These cards will be sent on behalf of the congregation to individuals, families and shut-ins who are going through personal struggles and illnesses.

Kristin Bettes



BIRMINGHAM MEMBER ACHIEVES WHITE COAT

Camille Roemhild, a member of the Birmingham, Alabama, congregation, celebrated her White Coat Ceremony at Auburn University's College of Veterinary Medicine. The white lab coat represents medical professionalism, and the ceremony provides third-year students a symbolic transition from classroom study to the clinical phase of veterinary education. She will start her clinical rotations in March 2018 and complete her DVM in May 2019.

She was joined on this special day by her husband, Dylan; father, Russell Reding; father-in-law, Sean Roemhild; and two friends, Epiphany and Keilah Soward.

Camille Roemhild



BARBADOS CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday, Feb. 10, 2018, the COGWA Barbados congregation celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in Barbados with a formal dinner and dance at the Radisson Aquatica Resort Barbados. (The actual anniversary was Feb. 3, 2018.) Special guests included COGWA President Jim Franks, who spoke about principles of faithfulness to the 74 in attendance at the Sabbath service; the Caribbean regional director, Arnold Hampton; and brethren visiting from the United States and the Caribbean.

The Saturday night celebration included a cultural performance by local brethren, a video display of old WCG members, a presentation of “50th Year Recognition” certificates to 17 members, and a toast of gratitude to the great God. The next day’s celebrations culminated with a family picnic.

On the Sabbath of Feb. 3, 1968, Herbert W. Armstrong personally started the church in Barbados with 111 in attendance. Those present included the regional director at the time, Dibar Apartian; Stan Bass, who was pastor from 1968-1972; Joseph Ashby, a former elder of the Church of God (Seventh Day) who switched to follow the truth of keeping God’s annual holy days; and members who were baptized on previous ministerial visits.

Tyrone Yarde



VISIT TO COGWA GRENADA

On Thursday, Feb. 8, 2018, Church members in Grenada were visited by COGWA President Jim Franks and his wife; the Caribbean regional pastor, Arnold Hampton, and his wife; and an elder of the Barbados congregation, Osmond Douglas. Also known as the Spice Island, Grenada boasts 45 beaches, rain forests, calm sea, crater lakes, waterfalls, mountains, hills and valleys, and numerous spectacular sights. On arrival, the ministers and wives toured many historic landmarks.

Later that evening, they were joined by the Grenadian brethren for dinner. There was lively and informative discussion around the table. The ministers had opportunity to experience and enjoy some of the local culture, such as a tasty dish and lively evening entertainment.

The brethren were overjoyed with the visit and discussions with the visiting ministers. It was obvious that the Eternal God is an integral part of the lives of our Grenadian brethren. They exhibited a deep and tenacious sense of purpose. The brethren showed their appreciation to the Franks and Hamptons by presenting each family with a gift.

Tyrone Yarde



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.

Anniversaries



Jim and Rose McTiernan

Jim and Rose McTiernan celebrated their golden anniversary on Sabbath, Jan. 6, 2018. After services, the St. Petersburg, Florida, congregation enjoyed finger foods, followed by a special video highlighting the McTiernans' 50 years together. After the presentation of a cake and cards, fellowshiping capped the activities.

Jim was born and reared in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He graduated from West

Scranton High School and enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

Rose Zulkoski was born in Kinston, North Carolina. Her family moved to Pennsylvania, settling in Chinchilla, a small town north of Scranton. She had graduated from Clarks Summit Abington High School and was attending a business college when a girlfriend and her boyfriend convinced her to go on a blind date with Jim.

While on leave from the Navy, Jim and Rose were married in Scranton. After his discharge, the couple returned home, where they lived until Jim retired after 27 years of service as a payroll supervisor with the Department of the Army. They then headed for St. Petersburg.

Their marriage was blessed with three children: Jimmy, Janet and Michael. The family began attending the Worldwide Church of God in 1977 in Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania. Jim was baptized that year; and Rose, three years later in 1980. Jim was ordained as an elder on Pentecost in 1999 and currently serves in that capacity in the St. Petersburg congregation.

Charles Haughee

Baptisms



Ronnie Graves with Justin Adkins

After Sabbath services on March 4, 2017, members of the Sedgwick, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, congregations welcomed Ronnie Graves as a new brother into the Body of Christ. Ronnie was baptized by Justin Adkins, pastor of the Sedgwick, Little Rock and Memphis congregations. Family members and brethren of the Sedgwick and Memphis congregations were present to witness the joyous occasion.

Justin Adkins

Births

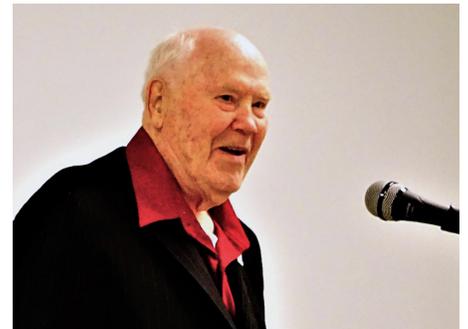


Elaine Autumn Keener

Matt, Rebecca and Evie are excited to welcome Elaine Autumn Keener to the family! Ellie was born Nov. 17, 2017, weighing 8 pounds 4 ounces and measuring 20½ inches long. She's a beautiful, happy little baby, and her family loves her so very much

Rebecca Keener

Obituaries



Cyril Holdsworth

The Buffalo, New York, congregation of COGWA lost one of its most senior members in God's Church. Cyril (Cy) Holdsworth died peacefully after many health battles on Aug. 2, 2017. He was 88 year old.

Cy's spiritual walk began when he became interested in Herbert W. Armstrong's radio broadcast, which he listened to on his way to work. He told his wife about it, and they wrote in for *The Plain Truth* magazine. They attended their first Feast of Tabernacles in 1958 and got baptized while they were there. He and his wife, Patricia, have been longtime members and pillars of the Church for decades.

A memorial service was held for Cy in Buffalo on Aug. 6.

Stephan Koenig



The Feast Is for the Whole Family!

By Jim Franks

Three times a year *all your males* shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed” (Deuteronomy 16:16).

Is this verse telling us that only the males in a family are commanded to attend the Feast? The answer is no! In studying the Scriptures, we see that everyone was included. In fact, we know that from the very beginning, the historical application of this command included the whole family. We also learn from prophecy that *everyone* will be expected to attend the Feast during the Millennium.

In Zechariah’s prophecy about the Millennium we read 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. And it shall be that whichever of *the families of the earth* do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain” (Zechariah 14:16-17).

We also know that as a child Jesus Christ traveled with His family each year to attend the festivals. In Luke 2:42-47, we find an example of Him at the age of 12, traveling with His family to Jerusalem for the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. (After leaving Jerusalem for their home in Galilee, Joseph and Mary could not find their 12-year-old Son, but assumed He was with other relatives.)

It is true that the command in Deuteronomy focuses on the males in the family. The father was the patriarch or head of the family. If for some reason (sickness, childbirth, etc.) the whole family was unable to attend, the father or an older son would go alone, as the representative of that family. This would be an unusual case, but I am sure it did happen on occasion. The intent of Deuteronomy 16 seems to be that at every festival there should always be someone from every family, even if, on occasion, it was only the father or an older son.

For us today, the Feast of Tabernacles is truly a family festival, picturing the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on the earth. All family members are expected to attend the Feast, from the youngest to the oldest. But not just attend the Feast, they are expected to keep the Feast. That is, to understand that the Feast is a spiritual experience and a time for worship, not just for doing fun things or seeing the sights in a particular area.

You’ll find here the listing of the Feast of Tabernacles sites for 2018. As you begin making your Feast plans, be sure to include everyone in your family. And, during the Feast, let’s find the time for special family activities in addition to the meals we will share. As our children grow older and enter their teen years, they often go in different directions to be with their friends. But, as parents, we should find the time to do things together as a family, no matter the ages of our children. The Feast of Tabernacles is for the whole family! ©[®]

BRANSON, MISSOURI

Over the years multiple thousands of Church members have gathered in Branson, Missouri, to worship God for eight days and rejoice in His coming Kingdom, soon to be established by Jesus Christ. Why have hundreds returned to this site every year?

The Branson Feast site is popular among our brethren

for many reasons. It is near the geographic center of the contiguous states and therefore easily accessible by car for many. The average high and low temperatures are 78 and 50 degrees with 50 percent average humidity. By late September, bittersweet vines, dogwood and black gum trees are turning, providing the beginning of spectacular hues and amazing views in an explosion of color.

Motels are extremely affordable, and cabins and

condos have excellent rates—most being only a couple of miles from our meeting location, the White House Theatre.

And that location is another plus—with its ease of parking, beautiful state-of-the-art theater and spacious lobby that seems tailored for the loving fellowship God pens in His book of life. The West Wing Event Center, where seminars, children’s classes and meetings occur, is next to the main hall.

Family-oriented

activities, hiking trails and entertainment will round out the finishing touches that will certainly make your Feast experience in Branson an excellent one.

Fragrance-controlled room available: Yes.

Tax rate for accommodations: Varies from 6 to 12 percent.

Closest airports: Springfield/Branson National (SGF), 55 miles; Little Rock, Arkansas (LIT), 178 miles.

Greg Sargent



Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

CATSKILL MOUNTAINS, NEW YORK

This will be our first Feast in the Catskills—at the Villa Roma Resort and Conference Center in Callicoon, New York (about 6 miles outside of Pennsylvania). Church services will be held in the Forum, a spacious room with well-designed acoustics for church services and free nightly entertainment.

Resort housing includes one- and two-bedroom suites (with and without kitchens) and traditional rooms (without kitchens). All rooms have refrigerators, full-size or mini (height 30+ inches). If needed, one can bring a hot plate, electric skillet, etc.

Resort dining includes the Main Dining Room, Roman Garden Café (open late), Eleanor’s Italian Kitchen, Cappuccino Bar (offering Starbucks coffee), Beechwoods Bar and Grill, Dolce’s Ice Cream Parlor, Marty’s Lounge, Mezzanine Bar, and Pool Grill (weather permitting).

Resort activities are horseback riding, go-karts, bumper boats, indoor pool, outdoor pool (weather permitting), sports complex (bowling, bounce houses, rock climbing wall, fitness center), 18-hole PGA golf course and

more. There’s also a salon, spa, kinetics, boutique and gift shop. Resort-sponsored day/night care service for kids is available.

Two family-friendly outings are under consideration: a West Point Military Academy tour (about an hour and 40 minutes away) and a visit to Gulliver’s Gate, an interactive exhibit in New York City’s Times Square (about two hours away). A potential concurrent Times Square event is the National Geographic Encounter: Ocean Odyssey.

Fragrance-controlled room available: To be determined.

Tax rate for accommodations: 13 percent.

Closest airport: Stewart International Airport (SWF), 64 miles.

Kevin Epps

FORT MYERS, FLORIDA (SATELLITE)

Fort Myers, Florida, is a limited-access satellite site and is primarily for:

- Those for whom the distance to their assigned site (Orange Beach) would be too great.
- Those who cannot afford to travel to their assigned



Rapid City, South Dakota

- Feast site.
- Those who cannot take the extra time away from job and/or school to attend their assigned site.

The beauty of the Gulf Coast, the many attractions and the excellent venue for accommodations and services made this a clear choice again for 2018.

Services will be held at the Holiday Inn at the Town Center, which offers over 30 top-of-the-line restaurants for brethren to choose from. Most people will wish to stay at the Holiday Inn, where breakfast comes free with your room if you are with the Church.

This area of southwest Florida offers many attractions. The Edison and Ford Winter Estates are open daily for tours. The causeway to Sanibel and Captiva Islands is 30 minutes away, as is the bridge to Fort Myers Beach. All have beautiful white-sand beaches, and there are plenty of seashells to gather on Sanibel and Captiva. The popular Naples Zoo is 35 minutes away, and the western Everglades National Park’s Ten Thousand Islands guided boat tour is just one hour away.

Temperatures in September range from the mid- to the upper 80s. We expect 200 or more at this site.

Fragrance-controlled room available: Yes.

Tax rate for accommodations: 11 percent.

Closest airport: Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), 5 miles.

Jim Haeffele

NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS

New Braunfels is a small town of approximately 60,000 people located in the hill country of Texas, just 30 miles northeast of downtown San Antonio. Its German heritage is evident in the city’s history, culture and cuisine.

Services will be held in the New Braunfels Convention Center, where we will have exclusive use of this beautiful facility throughout the Feast. Complimentary coffee and tea will be provided every morning prior to services. Anticipated attendance is 350.

Nestled where two rivers converge, New Braunfels offers many recreational opportunities that include water. Whether it is enjoying the famous Schlitterbahn Water Park, wakeboarding without a boat at the Texas Ski Ranch, floating one of the rivers, or swimming in the largest spring-fed pool in Texas—there are plenty of ways to get wet!



Branson, Missouri



New Braunfels, Texas



Orange Beach, Alabama



Fort Myers, Florida

For those interested in history, there are seven museums to visit and the historic district of Gruene (a district within the city of New Braunfels) to explore. And for dining, there are many restaurants nearby where visitors can sample German dishes, Texas barbecue and contemporary fare.

If you'd like to venture beyond the local area, San Antonio is just 30 miles south on Interstate 35. There you can tour the historic Alamo, wander the River Walk, go up the Tower of the Americas, visit SeaWorld and enjoy Six Flags Fiesta Texas theme park.

The average high temperature in New Braunfels in October is 81 degrees.

Fragrance-controlled room available: Yes.

Tax rate for accommodations: 13 percent.

Closest airports: San Antonio (SAT), 30 miles; Austin (AUS), 55 miles.

David Treybig

ORANGE BEACH, ALABAMA

Serving the southeastern area of the United States, this year's Feast of Tabernacles will be held at beautiful Orange Beach, Alabama. Services will be held in the Orange Beach Event Center, located in the Wharf district. The Wharf has many fine restaurants, shopping, a marina and lots of outdoor activities for the whole family. Many area restaurants are now catering to our dietary requirements, so look for those establishments when you arrive.

We expect the weather to be quite warm this year as the Feast will be two weeks earlier than last year. As a

result, we expect to have wonderful outdoor activities that include Family Day, a golf scramble and a teen activity.

There are multiple beach locations—stretching across several miles—that allow for parasailing, diving, deep-sea fishing, glass-bottom boats, dolphin tours, beach volleyball and a host of other Gulf-related activities. If your interest isn't beautiful white sand, then just minutes from the beach are golf, sailing and several theme parks for the young at heart. As this area is rapidly growing, check out the new adventures in nearby Foley, where a new amusement park has been opened.

If your plans call for a beach venue for this year's Feast of Tabernacles, we welcome you to Orange Beach, Alabama!

Fragrance-controlled room available: No.

Tax rate for accommodations: 13 percent. (Note: Some Orange Beach accommodations include taxes and fees in their rates.)

Closest airports: Pensacola (PNS), 36 miles; Mobile, Alabama (MOB), 66 miles.

Phillip Sandilands

PIGEON FORGE, TENNESSEE

Nestled in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, Pigeon Forge is a top family vacation destination. The Feast takes place at the time when fall colors are in full array, and the area's natural beauty brings out the outdoorsman in everyone. If you enjoy quality family time, good family entertainment, a wide selection of restaurants and plenty of shopping, you will love Pigeon Forge.

Although the area is known for its many crafts stores, musicians, go-kart tracks and miniature golf courses, it also boasts an active, well-represented outlet mall. Additionally, neighboring Gatlinburg offers the beautiful Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies. We are planning to put together a well-balanced activity schedule sure to interest all tastes.

Housing consists of a variety of motel rooms, with many offering a full breakfast in the rate. There are also beautiful one- to four-bedroom condos or—for those with extended families wanting to share—large chalets and cabins that sleep up to 30! Housing prices begin at \$70 per night and go up from there. This is also an area with several campgrounds for those who might enjoy camping during the Feast.

Pigeon Forge is easily traveled. There is a divided highway through the middle of the town. The Smoky Mountain Convention Center has free parking and has no steps, so it is also easily accessible for everyone. Hope to see you in Pigeon Forge!

Fragrance-controlled room available: Yes.

Tax rate for accommodations: 12.25 percent.

Closest airports: Knoxville (TYS), 36 miles; Nashville (BNA), 208 miles.

Mark Winner

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City and the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota are a premier family destination. For years in the 1980s and 1990s Rapid City served as a wonderful site for members to gather to worship

God and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. The site was always very popular, and over the years many brethren have expressed a desire to return. This year, with Rapid City being a one-year site, we are able to fulfill these requests.

The Best Western Ramkota Hotel in Rapid City will serve as our host facility for the annual family reunion of the Church of God.

Rapid City provides a fantastic setting for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. There is amazing natural beauty in the area, lots of family activities, educational and historic sites, and three national parks within a short distance.

There is a good variety of housing types and costs, ranging from first-class hotels to extended-stay properties and some cabins and rental homes. (Most cabins and rental homes are 30 to 45 minutes away.) Daytime temperatures at the end of September are generally in the high 60s and 70s.

Attendance will be limited to about 600 people, and we expect the site to fill up. If you would like to join us in the beautiful Black Hills, register early on, and we'll look forward to seeing you in Rapid City, South Dakota!

Fragrance-controlled room available: To be determined.

Tax rate for accommodations: 9 percent, plus a \$2 per night city occupancy fee.

Closest airport: Rapid City (RAP), 11 miles.

Mike Blackwell

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

The San Diego area is home to a spectacular coastline,

Getting Your Feast Plans Off to a Good Start

By David Treybig

When you register for the Feast of Tabernacles 2018, please keep these points in mind:

- **Use your COGWA portal account.** Remember that account you used last year when you registered for a young adult weekend, camp or the Feast of Tabernacles? Use this same portal account (web address is <https://portal.cogwa.org>) to register for the Feast this year.

There is no need to create another account. In fact, creating another account clogs our system and creates more work for those managing our database. So save yourself and our support staff some time by using the account you created last year.

We do recommend you check your account to make sure your email address is accurate and information for your family members is up to date. If you've forgotten your password, contact the Church at registration@cogwa.org for help resetting it.

Of course, if you don't already have an account, you'll need to create one. When someone is new to the Church or when a young person becomes an adult, he or she will need his own account. To clarify, families with a husband, wife and minor children just need one account. When children turn 18, it's time for them to have their own account.

Once created, your account saves you time and helps the Church more efficiently serve the brethren. It's a win-win!

- **Plan to volunteer.** When you register for the Feast, please remember to volunteer. While you can always come back to your registration to make changes and volunteer, it is easier to do this when you register. And volunteering early helps department heads plan in advance how to set up and manage their areas of service.



Catskill Mountains, New York



San Diego, California



Victoria, British Columbia



Woodbury, Minnesota

fine dining, museums, zoos and much more, and will once again be the site for the Feast of Tabernacles for the Southwest in 2018. San Diego weather offers a pleasant climate year-round.

We are meeting again at the Crowne Plaza for all services during the Feast. The resort is located on Hotel Circle and is just a few miles from Old Town San Diego, Mission Bay, Sea World and other attractions. The Crowne Plaza worked out well as a meeting venue and is beautifully landscaped with a Hawaiian theme.

Because a large number of our members stay at the Crowne Plaza, it greatly reduces our cost and provides us with a wonderful meeting space. The hotel has given us a reduced rate, complimentary Internet, and in-room refrigerators and microwaves. Other nearby hotels and vacation rentals will be available.

Church-organized activities will include Family Day, seniors' luncheon, teen and young adult hospitalities, a teen beach party, a dinner cruise and more.

Local activities are plentiful, with snorkeling, surfing, kayaking, paddleboards, deep-sea fishing, whale watching, local wine tasting, mountain biking, golfing, scuba diving, tide pools and visiting the famous La Jolla area. San Diego offers a wide variety of restaurants, a number of which sit on the water with views of the Pacific Coast or San Diego Harbor.

Fragrance-controlled room available: No.

Tax rate for accommodations: 12.7 percent.

Closest airports: San Diego (SAN), 5.7 miles; Orange County (SNA), 82 miles.

Paul Carter

VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

We are pleased to announce that we will be back in Sidney, British Columbia, for the 2018 Feast. Located on Vancouver Island, Sidney is a short 20-minute drive from downtown Victoria, the provincial capital. We will be holding our services at the Mary Winspear Centre, which has space to comfortably seat up to 700 people.

If you are driving, you can get to the island by ferry from either British Columbia or Washington state. You can also fly into Victoria International Airport, located right in Sidney.

The climate in Victoria is considered cool Mediterranean, and you can expect daytime highs in the 60s and lows in the 40s. There is always a chance of showers during the fall season.

There is a variety of housing and restaurants to appeal to everyone's needs and budgets. Several housing establishments are located right across the street from the Mary Winspear Centre, and more are available within a four-block distance. Restaurants in Sidney are varied in cuisine and price. And, of course, you have even more choices in downtown Victoria.

Activities abound in the Victoria area. Visit historic Butchart Gardens. Take in one of several local museums. Tour a local British Columbia winery or enjoy high tea at the historic Empress Hotel in downtown Victoria. This is just a small sample of things to do.

If you have never experienced Canada, come spend time with our Canadian brethren at this year's Feast of Tabernacles. You will not be disappointed!



Coffs Harbour, Australia



Lican Ray, Chile

Fragrance-controlled room available: No.
Tax rate for accommodations: 13 percent.
Closest airport: Victoria (YYJ), 2 miles.

Jon Pinelli

WOODBURY, MINNESOTA (SATELLITE)

This year the satellite site for the Wisconsin and Minnesota area will be in Woodbury, Minnesota, an eastern suburb of St. Paul and only 13 miles from the Wisconsin border. "Satellite site" means that services will be provided via webcast from one of the other Feast sites. While we will be a small site, there will be plenty of good fellowship.

Services will be held at the Residence Inn (205 Radio Drive, Woodbury, MN), and we have a block of rooms set aside so that brethren can stay on-site. (There are also a number of other hotel options in the area.)

This Residence Inn is an extended-stay hotel and is a short drive from historic downtown Stillwater. It offers a free weekday shuttle service within a 5-mile radius. Local attractions include Lake Elmo Park Reserve, many good restaurants and retailers. There are many attractions in the greater Twin Cities area as well, including Como Zoo and the Mall of America.

A complimentary breakfast buffet is provided each morning, and each room includes in-suite kitchens so you can prepare your own meals. The hotel includes a business center, free Wi-Fi and on-site laundry. Pets are allowed. You may also enjoy the outdoor fire pit and are welcome to utilize the patio grill. Monday to Wednesday you are invited to enjoy the Residence Inn social hour for snacks, drinks and conversation.

Fragrance-controlled room available: No.
Tax rate for accommodations: 7.125%.
Closest airport: Minneapolis–St. Paul (MSP), 20 miles.

Gary Black

INTERNATIONAL FEAST SITES

AFRICA

Mugina, Burundi
Man, Côte d'Ivoire
Douala, Cameroon
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Kumasi, Ghana
Migori, Kenya
Salima, Malawi
Flic-en-Flac, Mauritius
Benin City, Nigeria
Giti, Rwanda
Uvongo, South Africa
Kpalimé, Togo
Mapoko, Zambia
Gweru, Zimbabwe

Awarewaunau, Guyana
Runaway Bay, Jamaica

EUROPE

Winchester, England
Normandy, France
Cortona, Italy

LATIN AMERICA

Villa la Merced, Argentina
Santa Cruz, Bolivia
Lican Ray, Chile
El Rodadero, Santa Marta, Colombia
Antigua, Guatemala
San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
Huanchaco, Peru

NORTH AMERICA

Orford, Québec

ASIA/PACIFIC

Coffs Harbour, Australia
Pacific Harbour, Fiji
Kochi, India
Taupo, New Zealand
Baguio City, Philippines

CARIBBEAN

St. Lawrence Gap, Barbados
Petite Calivigny, Grenada

Note: Not all locations in this list are final. Please check feast.cogwa.org for up-to-date information on international sites.

REGISTRATION BEGINS APRIL 1

ATTENTION THOSE WITH FRAGRANCE-SENSITIVITY ISSUES

We are aware that some of our members suffer from sensitivities to fragrances. We try to address this issue at the Feast sites where we can do so. We cannot control all the issues necessary to make an area truly fragrance-free, so we cannot guarantee a "fragrance-free" room. But certain sites are able to provide a "fragrance-controlled" room or "fragrance-sensitive" area, where we try to control the area to ensure, to the best of our ability, that those who have fragrance issues will generally find this area to be an aid in dealing with their sensitivities.



Have an inspiring Passover and
Days of Unleavened Bread!