2019 Winter Family Weekend
The Spirit of Unity

Sharpening Iron
Caring for the Brethren

International Leadership Program
Focused Mentoring
In this issue of One Accord I have written an article updating everyone on the status of our latest leadership development program. This year we are introducing phase two of the International Leadership Program. We are calling it “2020 International Leadership Program—Focused Mentoring.” The purpose of my article is to explain to the Church what we are doing to develop leaders in congregations outside the United States.

Before addressing the subject of leadership development, let’s take a short journey down memory lane. In 1945 and 1946 Herbert Armstrong made three major decisions for the Radio Church of God.

First, he decided to move the Church’s headquarters from Eugene, Oregon, to Pasadena, California. Even back then the Church distributed magazines and booklets, but it was primarily a radio ministry in 1945. Mr. Armstrong chose to move the headquarters to California to be closer to the broadcast facilities that he needed to continue a nationwide radio ministry.

Second, based on the scriptures about the Feast of Tabernacles, a decision was made that same year that members should leave their homes and live in temporary dwellings (booths) for the duration of the Feast.

Third, a decision was made to begin Ambassador College in the fall 1946, though, because of various problems, the college did not actually open until 1947.

Ambassador College was born out of a perceived need to provide young people with a liberal arts education based on God’s Word. While the college was co-ed from the beginning and was not solely for the purpose of developing young men for the ministry, this was indeed one of the expected outcomes.

During the 50 years of its existence, Ambassador College expanded to three campuses with close to 2,000 students. Each year there were hundreds of graduates leaving college with four-year degrees in theology and speech. There were other degrees offered over the years, but the development of ministers focused on these two areas of training.

Ambassador College provided an opportunity for focused mentoring where young men and women could be trained in Scripture, in speaking, in counseling and in leadership. Opportunities for the students to apply what they were learning were provided by the college. Young men and women would travel to local congregations in the area where the young men would give sermonettes or lead songs. It was a laboratory for the development of Church leaders.

When Ambassador College closed its doors, the Church was faced with a question: How do we train future ministers for the Church? Pastors, teachers, educators and local leaders for the congregations now had to come directly from the local congregations. There was no way to replicate the training that was provided at the college.

In search of answers, we asked how Paul approached the issue of leadership development. There are two important scriptures that give us insight into that answer from the first-century Church.

In Titus 1:5 Paul instructed Titus to “appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.” He followed up on this command with guidelines on who to select, outlined in verses 6 through 9. Paul gave clear instructions to Titus. But who were these individuals who were to be appointed as elders? They had no college. These appear to be individuals who were already attending in the local congregations.

Paul also instructed Timothy, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). Here Paul established a chain, a connection for the future. He taught faithful men, who then taught others, who then taught others, and so on.

Teaching is essential to leadership development, and leadership development is a never-ending need in the Church. I am excited that God has blessed us with the resources so that we can engage men and women in the Church throughout the world in a program dedicated to leadership development!
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February 2020

CHURCH of GOD
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2020 International Leadership Program—Focused Mentoring

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February 2020
It was almost exactly two years ago that we launched our most ambitious leadership training program. This new program began in the wake of having three pastors die in a period of approximately one year. Although two of the men had been ill for some time, the actual timing of their deaths was a shock to the Church.

While we have known for some time of the need for new pastoral leaders, these three sudden deaths provided the impetus to launch the new leadership program. We named it the “International Leadership Program,” or ILP for short.

Our focus was on congregations outside the U.S. We began in Guatemala in February of 2018 and from there traveled to 10 regions, concluding in England in August of 2019. In each location we held a special Sabbath service, followed by 1½ days of classes, and ending on Sunday evening.

More than 400 individuals attended these weekend classes in the 10 regions. We knew from the beginning that a weekend of classes would not answer the needs the Church has for pastoral leadership. So, before we completed the first round of classes, we were already planning for phase two.

As part of the program, we created a new website dedicated to leadership development. And on this new website, we created a separate landing page for the ILP attendees (all 400 of them). In order to receive a certificate of completion, each person who attended the weekend was required to go to the new leadership website and download a series of classes on the fundamental beliefs of the Church and seven other classes dedicated to leadership development.

**Continuing to train**

For phase two, our plan is to return to all 10 regions over the next 10 months and once again conduct a series of classes. But this time the class size will be considerably smaller. This program is being called “Focused Mentoring” and is patterned after a similar program that has been very successful in providing ministerial leadership for congregations in the United States. We have high hopes that this international component will be as successful in congregations outside the U.S. as it has been in the U.S.

The program is designed to provide “focused” training for a group of 10 to 12 couples from each region. These couples will be invited to attend a weekend of classes, similar to what was done in phase one. As well, since there is no international ministerial conference this year, we are adding a ministerial meeting in each location on the Monday after the classes. These meetings will be for the purpose of training the mentors.

Phase two of the program is designed to address both those who will be mentored and those who will do the mentoring. Two administrators and their wives will travel from headquarters in McKinney to each of the 10 regions to serve as primary instructors. We will also produce additional classes to be posted on the leadership website.
This second phase of the program was officially launched on Dec. 19, 2019, with a webinar that included representatives from each of the 10 regions. On this webinar we discussed the specifics of the program and potential dates for each of the regions.

Developing leaders
Now the real work begins! Over the next year, we will be focusing our attention on the 10 regions and those who will be invited to attend this phase of leadership development. The couples not selected this year from phase one of the program will have the opportunity to be selected in future years. Our plan is to continue this program for the foreseeable future.

Keep in mind that the attendance of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, is divided equally between the United States and the rest of the world, but 75 percent of the ministry lives in the United States. This means that 25 percent of the ministry is caring for 50 percent of the members. One of our goals for the new program is to narrow this gap.

Paul encouraged Titus to appoint elders in every city (Titus 1:5), and he encouraged Timothy to locate faithful men who could teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). Our desire is to follow that same pattern. We see in Paul’s Pastoral Epistles that he was deeply concerned about the future of the Church and the development of new leaders.

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, and He appointed offices of responsibility (Ephesians 4:11) within the Church. One of the most significant of those offices is that of pastor. Dedicated and compassionate pastors are very important for the Church in the years going forward. Clearly, future pastors will come from within the Church, but where will they get their training and education? It is our goal to provide for their training and education through this program and others that will follow.

We read where Jesus Christ was moved with compassion when He looked around and saw “sheep” scattered and without a “shepherd” (Matthew 9:36-38). I don't think Christ would feel any differently today. Currently we have pastors outside the United States who serve whole countries and are only able to visit local congregations a few times per year. One of our goals in COGWA is to provide a pastor for every congregation, no matter where it is located.

There are two important new components to phase two of the ILP. One is the assigning of a mentor from headquarters to each region. The second is the development of a regional training facility where newly hired ministers can go for further training under the direction of a senior pastor in some of the regions.

The “2020 International Leadership Program, Focused Mentoring” is our latest effort to train leaders for the future of the Church. Education, specialized training and practical experience will be the hallmarks of this second round of the ILP. Please join me in praying for its success.

Auckland, New Zealand
Elmina, Ghana
Johannesburg, South Africa

Auckland, New Zealand, congregation
The Gospel of Mark emphasizes the untiring efforts of Christ to see, understand and then take action in caring for people from all walks of life.

One of the initial accounts in Mark helps us to understand the unending actions of Christ to reach out to those in need. According to Strong's Concordance, a word that Mark used often in his Gospel is *eutheos*.

This word is used over 40 times in the Gospel of Mark. It means “directly,” that is, “at once” or “soon.” *Strong’s Concordance* also defines *eutheos* as “forthwith, immediately, shortly, straightway.” It is oftentimes used to show how Jesus would speak, comfort, heal, correct or perform a deed and immediately move on to another task at hand.

Jesus was God in the flesh. He grew tired, and there were times when He had to rest; but as soon as possible, He was about the tasks at hand: preaching the gospel and caring for people.

**Caring for God’s people in today’s world**

Many of us are very busy with many personal responsibilities. Some are job-related, and others are “free time”-related. We may spend valuable time with family and friends. Recreation or hobbies may take some of our time. Use of the Internet, including Facebook, Twitter or other activities, may take up a great deal of our time.

An important question we need to ask ourselves is, “How much time do I spend in caring for God’s people, our brethren?”

What we do not want to happen is for someone in our congregation to slip through the cracks and not receive support and help in a time of need.

**Practical actions to care for God’s people**

It does not go without notice and some concern that there are many in God’s Church who are suffering from problems of all kinds: unemployment, family problems, health issues, discouragement, depression or addictions. Each of us does have a responsibility to God and His people to become aware of the needs of our brethren and do what we can to let them know that they are not alone.

For example, many if not most local churches have someone designated as a card maker. The cards are produced and usually are placed on the information table for us to sign. For those who are able to attend services on a regular basis, it is an added blessing to be able to stop by the information table, read to whom the card is addressed and simply sign the card. Letting someone know that there are brethren who care about him or her is most encouraging.

It seems like a week does not go by that a recipient of these congregation-produced cards does not comment on how much encouragement he or she received. Young people can help with this too. One simple action each of us can take is to make the effort each Sabbath to stop by the table and sign the cards.

In addition, many will either email or send cards of a more personal nature to a person who needs help and encouragement. That only adds to the support that God gives His people through our personal efforts.

**Special prayer**

In the past there have been individuals who wanted prayer but were hesitant to have their names mentioned publicly. That is entirely a personal matter. If a person desires to remain anonymous in a prayer request, it does not mean God cannot hear prayers for them.
Several years ago in a local congregation I asked a member and his wife to recruit some of the brethren to offer special prayer for brethren who needed help but wished to remain anonymous. The husband and wife team readily agreed to do so.

As specific individuals brought their problems to me, I would call the team leaders and give them the information regarding the member of God’s Church. They would then contact the other team members, and special prayer was offered for the person.

Over the next few weeks the team leaders would ask me how the person was doing, and I would update them. The people for whom they were praying were most thankful for the fact that brethren in the Church would take their own time and pray for them despite not having a name attached to it. What mattered most was praying for someone who had a need.

Brethren unable to attend services regularly
Another group of brethren who need our special attention are those who are unable to attend Sabbath services, Bible studies, social activities and other programs of the Church.

Some of our elderly brethren are confined to nursing homes or assisted living facilities. In other cases they may be living with family members who are not a part of the Church. Jesus would never intend that they be overlooked or neglected in any way. Jesus was always active in His ministry, seeking out those who needed special care, including those that others might shy away from or simply ignore.

In Mark 1:40-45 we read the following: “Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, ‘If You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, I am willing; be cleansed.’ As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, and said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction” (emphasis added).

This example stands out as exemplary in the ministry of Christ. He went to the physically unclean as well as the spiritually unclean. (Note that the first miracle in Mark’s Gospel is the casting out of a demon in the synagogue.) Mark’s account says that Jesus actually did what most people would never do: He touched a leper. This act of love and compassion showed the leper there was Someone who deeply cared about his condition enough to do the unspeakable by actually touching him.

Regardless of the type of difficulty or where the person was, Jesus acted when He knew there was a need. His example of actively caring for our brethren today is no less important. But He wants and intends that we, too, actively care for our brethren, those who would be most encouraged and uplifted by knowing that we are praying on their behalf to our Father and Christ. When the apostle Paul spoke of our becoming a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2), this is one way he envisioned it. We give of our time and energy for the sake of someone other than ourselves.

We need God’s help to produce good fruit
In Mark 1:35 we read that after spending time healing and helping others, Jesus found time to pray to His and our Father. Jesus knew that, despite the needs of others, our time going to God and asking Him for His blessing, intervention, strength and personal help is absolutely necessary. We should never become so busy that we neglect so important a responsibility of keeping in contact with God and our Savior Jesus Christ. They, through the Holy Spirit, grant us the spiritual strength to be Their servants.

Therefore, it is necessary that we do as Christ did and find the balance in how we spend our lives.

None of our brethren should ever come to a point where they feel abandoned or left alone. God intended that each of us do our part in serving God and His people. By serving God’s people, we are serving God (Matthew 25:31-46). It is helpful to check with your pastor regarding an individual you are concerned about since there may be special or extenuating circumstances he can help you with.

Jesus Himself is very much aware of the difficulties each of us faces daily. He is continually working to help all of us with His own personal intervention through His Spirit. But He wants us to be with Him as He serves the needs of others. He is the only perfect servant, but as we strive to be like Him, our efforts will bear fruit.

Perhaps there are members of your congregation you have not seen lately or who have been going through some rough times. A phone call, a note in the mail, an email or asking if you could come by and see them may be exactly what they need. And God, through you, can give a special blessing to them. ☺️
On Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2019, over 1,000 individuals arrived at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky, for the annual Winter Family Weekend. “The Spirit of Unity”—this year’s theme—was evident throughout the many activities, seminars and fellowship opportunities.

The extended weekend opened Tuesday evening with a free pizza dinner followed by a family dance. Some played table and card games, as well as cornhole, taking advantage of the special environment for fellowship.

Starting Wednesday, weekday basketball and volleyball games kicked off at a nearby sports center. In addition to adult and teen sports, organized preteen games kept the youngest busy each day.

Beyond sports, FI Continuing Education seminars were also available Wednesday through Friday. Seating was in high demand for these popular WFW staples.

Each evening included special events. On Wednesday the popular Children’s Clothing Boutique was again a resounding success—and this year a Prom Dress Boutique was added. The EEI “Make It! Take It! Teach It!” activity was well-attended by parents and children. Workshops for song leaders, pianists and those interested in writing for the Church’s websites and publications were also included. The ever-popular Family Novelty Olympics provided laughter and excitement for young and old alike. And, finally, karaoke and a cornhole tournament kept participants active late into the evening.
Thursday evening’s activities included the Family Fun Fair. The inflatables and kids’ games filled the ballroom with excited young people, delighted family members and plenty of laughter. A jam session showcased a variety of talent, while the audience enjoyed the great music.

On Friday many attendees took a break from sports to enjoy bowling and arcades. This year the activity included laser tag, a gravity ropes course and billiards. In the afternoon preteens enjoyed an art class.

On Friday evening most attended a general Bible study focused on “The Spirit of Unity” theme derived from Ephesians 4:1-3. At the same time, the YALW (Young Adult Leadership Weekend) component of the WFW kicked off with a young adult Bible study highlighting unity through worship, followed by a dessert reception for the young adults.

On Sabbath morning those registered for the YALW enjoyed breakfast and seminars specifically targeted for young adults. Teens and adults attended a variety of morning seminars covering elements of unity. In the afternoon’s church service, Jim Franks, COGWA president, delivered a sermon highlighting the three faces of unity. Hundreds of webcast connections, including several congregations, were able to join the service remotely. A live French translation of the service was also provided.

On Saturday evening attendees enjoyed themed dances for teens and adults while preteens shared time watching movies. Fellowship spilled into the halls as attendees wrapped up another successful WFW, having experienced the “Spirit of Unity” firsthand.

We thank the many volunteers, as well as WFW coordinator Nathan Willoughby, for the outstanding event. Please make plans to attend the 2020 WFW in Louisville, Kentucky. Mark your calendars for Dec. 22-26! ☺️
Ministerial Services Operation Manager and Regional Director Visit Brethren in Asia

On Jan. 23, 2020, Doug Horchak, Ministerial Services operation manager, and Dave Baker, regional director for Asia, Australia and the Middle East, returned from a two-week trip to Asia, visiting members in Singapore, Myanmar, Malaysia and Indonesia.

On the Sabbath of Jan. 11, they had church services and spent most of the day with our brethren in Singapore.

They then flew to Myanmar—or Burma, as many of the populace, in government and otherwise, still prefer to call it—and spent the next five days visiting our four members in that area and meeting some prospective members for the first time.

They were also able to give eight seminars to 17 students in the capital city of Yangon. The classes covered each of the seven festivals of God and concluded with a class on the subject of the Church.

Our local member in Yangon, David Ye Gyan, helped host our meetings in his brother-in-law’s home and did virtually all of the translating for some of the students who understood only Burmese.

The majority of those attending were not baptized members, for whom the understanding of God’s holy days was new. They all were very focused on learning what they could from these Bible classes. And that was encouraging.

Messrs. Horchak and Baker’s next stop was Malaysia, where they held Sabbath services and a Bible study with a small group of God’s people in Kuala Lumpur. The families of these brethren have long histories in the Church, going back to the 1980s.

After spending two days in Malaysia, Messrs. Horchak and Baker flew up to Chiang Mai, Thailand, to inspect a couple of hotels as possible venues for a Feast of Tabernacles we might hold in that part of the world in a few years. Chiang Mai was the ancient capital of Thailand and is now a tourist destination.

The final stop was Batam, Indonesia, to visit Edward and Lilik Simanjuntak and their daughter. The Simanjuntaks are Christians in this Muslim-majority country, yet they have been successful in living God’s way and setting an example of service and integrity in their relationships with others in their community.

Edward first became motivated to learn English when he began reading the Church of God’s publications in the 1980s. He ended up learning English so well that he now teaches the language, as does his daughter.

After his 15-hour flight home, Mr. Horchak commented that the trip was a reminder of the challenging work of our ministers who, like Dave Baker, live in the United States, but have international duties that take them around the world to serve those God has called.

Recent Ordinations

The following men were ordained as elders in September and October 2019:

- Philip Dick (wife, Jennifer), Sept. 7, 2019
- Clay Mills (wife, Renee), Sept. 30, 2019
- Dan Summy (wife, Jeanne), Sept. 30, 2019
- Gary Lutz (wife, Sherry), Sept. 30, 2019
- Mike Summy (wife, Rachel), Oct. 5, 2019
- Tim Dicky (wife, Lisa), Oct. 5, 2019

2020 Feast Registration

Now Prepare to register for the Feast by logging in to portal.cogwa.org and updating your household’s information.

If you do not have login information and have never created an account for any Church event, visit portal.cogwa.org and click “Create an Account.” Once you’ve created an account with your information, be sure to add all members of your household.

If you already have an account, log in. Once you’re logged in, update any outdated information, including email address, congregation, mailing address, etc. Be sure to add or subtract any household members who have moved in or moved out.

It is very important to ensure that all members of your household (spouse, children and any dependents living in your house) are included in your portal account. The registration system will automatically calculate the number of attendees based on the family members in your portal record.

Feb. 23 Registration begins for Greece and Jordan.
The Houston South, Texas, congregation said farewell to Larry and Judy Salyer on Dec. 7, 2019, after the couple’s more than eight years of service to the congregation. Thankfully, the Salyers are retiring nearby (in the Dallas area), and we look forward to seeing them in the future whenever they can visit. (They do, after all, have close family in the area.)

Jim Franks and Doug Horchak gave the messages on this Sabbath and recounted the years of service the Salyers have given to the Church since the 1960s. Houston was blessed with having them serve in the area three different times!

The Salyers were presented with a beautiful blue vase with poignant etching, a testament to their service. Our congregation also presented them with flowers, two framed pictures for their new residence, and a photo album of all the South members, with touching messages from the members and memories of the wonderful events we have enjoyed while they were in our area.

Our fellowship hall was beautifully decorated with aqua accents, and we all enjoyed fellowship and a smorgasbord of chicken salad sandwiches, turkey and chicken wraps, stuffed eggs, veggie and fruit trays, nuts, chips, pickles and olives. Dessert was a delicious cake enjoyed by all.

Susan Scott Smith

HOUSTON SOUTH HONORS SALYERS

NORTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CHILI SOCIAL

On Nov. 3, 2019, 40 brethren from all four North Carolina congregations came together at the home of pastor Ron Kelley and his wife, Nancy, for our annual North Carolina chili social. The afternoon was filled with fun and games, delicious homemade chili and spirited fellowship.

Leanna Mangels
MORGANTOWN MAKES CIDER

On Nov. 10, 2019, the Morgantown, West Virginia, congregation had a beautiful fall day for a cider press. Ron Stahl opened his home to the brethren, who worked as a team to complete the task of making cider for all.

Everyone enjoyed fresh cider and took some home to enjoy. The ladies provided a delicious potluck, and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Sherry Beilstein

ROANOKE FAMILY FUN WEEKEND

Nov. 16, 2019, was a very special Sabbath for the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation. We met at the Pittsylvania Recreational Center in Chatham, Virginia, and were able to connect via webcast to our sister congregations of Princeton/Charleston, West Virginia, and Williamsburg, Virginia. Services included an inspirational message given by Tom Burrow, an elder in the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation.

We then all prepared for a very special evening indeed. The Roanoke congregation hosted a pizza party and family dance. In addition to Roanoke members, we had numerous members from the Williamsburg and Greensboro congregations. Members prepared a salad bar, a ton of pizzas were delivered (with grilled chicken available as an option to the pizzas), and an incredible “cookie bar” was prepared for dessert.

Once everyone had their fill of pizza and cookies, it was determined that those calories had to go ... so the music and dancing commenced. And what music and dancing and celebrating there was! With music provided by our deejay, Tom “Jazz Man” Burrow, there was line dancing, slow dancing, swing dancing, and even dancing to a couple of rock and roll selections. At one point, the lights were turned out, and the children treated everyone to a light stick “fireworks display” set to music.

For those who could stay overnight, we also hosted a family novelty Olympics from 9 to noon the next day. (Most of the remaining pizza and cookies were properly disposed of during the course of this event.)

This was our first annual Roanoke Family Fun Weekend, and we hope to make it a yearly event. There was just so much fun, joy and fellowship shared by young and old alike. It makes one wish we could have events like this every weekend. Thankfully, we have the knowledge that events like this are only a pale foreshadowing of the joy and fellowship we will all be able to share in God’s soon-coming Kingdom.

Robert Worsham
Shayna Smith

Nadia Soto

Jacob Hoaglun

Danny and Alesha Hall, and Nita and Michael Hall

Baptisms

Jacob Hoaglun

On Aug. 17, 2019, a new member was baptized into the Body of Christ by our Houston South, Texas, pastor Larry Salyer. Frank Pierce and Zach Smith assisted.

Nadia Soto

On Aug. 17, 2019, a new member was baptized into the Body of Christ by our Houston South, Texas, pastor Larry Salyer. Frank Pierce and Zach Smith assisted.

Nadia is a fourth-generation Christian. Her parents, Angela and Ozzie Soto, attend the Houston South congregation along with Angela’s mother, Kathy Ewing. Kathy’s father, James Anness, was the first member of this line in the Canton, Ohio, congregation.

Shayna Smith

The Durban, South Africa, congregation welcomes Shayna Smith to the spiritual family of God. Shayna was baptized at her parents’ home on the Sabbath of Dec. 14, 2019, by Neville Smith, pastor of the Durban congregation. Shayna has attended services from childhood together with her mother, Sharon.

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.
Steven Burke was born in Fargo, North Dakota, to Arthur and Lena Burke in April 7, 1951, and died on Dec. 7, 2019, after a long battle with cancer.

Steve earned a mechanical engineering degree from the University of Minnesota. After hearing The World Tomorrow program as a senior in high school, he became interested in what the Church taught and was baptized in 1972. In 1975 he married Mary Shriver, and the two of them served the congregation in many ways. Working with the Y.O.U. program was one of their favorites. He and Mary accompanied teen groups on camping trips to Glacier Park and the Grand Tetons. His service to the teens continued for 17 years. He and Mary were ordained deacon and deaconess in 1989.

Steve was best known for his wit, contagious sense of humor, his ready smile and laugh, and his love of pranks. He was playful and entertaining.

He had many hobbies that varied from judo to 3-D printing. Scuba diving was one of his favorites.

Steve was a man of faith, and his years of poor health only deepened his trust in God. He looked forward to eternal life in God’s family.

His love of serving was top priority for him, and despite his illness, he continued to do so until his death.

He had a huge heart and was kind and generous. Steve was one of a kind and will be greatly missed.

Steve is survived by Mary, his wife of 44 years, and he was preceded in death by his parents.
The Ruston, Louisiana, congregation is sad to announce the death of W.T. Brooks, known as “Dub” by his closest friends.

Mr. Brooks was born in New Hope, Alabama, Nov. 22, 1925, and died in Bernice, Louisiana, May 27, 2019, after a long and courageous battle with general debility and dementia.

He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Betty; daughter, Kari Hinton, and her husband, Delmus; son, Tommy Brooks; three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

After retiring from the construction business, where he built roads, bridges and other concrete structures, Mr. Brooks enjoyed fishing, gardening, grilling and working with wood. He was known for smoking a mean block of cheese. Several Church members in the Ruston and East Texas congregations were gifted with beautiful cutting boards he crafted by hand.

His presence is greatly missed by all who knew him.

Johna Barnette

Esther Anna Marie Hope died suddenly of a heart attack on Dec. 19, 2019. A memorial service conducted by pastor Thomas Clark was held on Dec. 22 in Van Buren, Arkansas.

Esther was born in Mesa, Arizona, on Aug. 27, 1971, to Larry Jessen and Esther Chlarsen. Her family moved to Mulberry, Arkansas, while she was a child. The family camped while their house was being built, an experience that gave Esther a love for nature, especially gardening and growing flowers.

Esther graduated from Mulberry High School and went on to receive her bachelor’s degree from the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. She worked as a medical billing and coding clerk until the time of her death.

Esther and her husband, Michael, met in 1995 and married in 2002. They began attending Sabbath services after being introduced to the Church of God in 2000. She was baptized in 2007.

Esther was a dedicated mother. Next to God, her children were the center of her life. She made friends everywhere she went, and the many friends (both in and outside the Church of God) who attended her memorial are a testament to her caring nature and love for people.

Esther is survived by her husband, Michael; children, Aaron Nathaniel and Autumn Marie; her father, Larry Jessen; and three brothers, Larry Jr. of Fort Smith, and Ralph and Rodney of San Jose, California. She was preceded in death by her mother.

Esther’s loving nature and beautiful smile will be missed by her family and her many friends.

Aurora Gossett

Phyllis Anne Gore

Phyllis Anne Davey was born to Charlie and Elsie Davey of Bisbee, Arizona, on Oct. 5, 1944. She was the oldest of seven children. With all her younger siblings to help care for, Phyllis had a lot of responsibility around the house. This prepared her to later manage her own home and family.

After graduating from high school in Bisbee in 1962, Phyllis was accepted to Ambassador College in California. There she met Bruce Gore. She remembered laughing a lot and having a great time on their first date.

When Bruce proposed, Phyllis had one year left before graduation. He asked her if she would change her planned B.A. degree to an “MRS.” degree. She accepted, and they began the next step of their lives: ministerial training in Indiana. Over the following 50 years, their pastoral work took them to numerous states, including Indiana, Illinois, Georgia, North Carolina, Kansas, Louisiana, California, Arizona, and Alabama, before they finally returned to Georgia.

Between 1967 and 1980 the Gores had four children: Daniel, Valerie, Shari and Cindy. Phyllis always made sure her family came first. She kept a clean, orderly, quiet, warm and cozy place for husband and kids to come home to.

Every Friday night, she made a special meal to begin the Sabbath. No matter what might be going on at school, in the church or in the world, her family home remained an oasis of calm.

She was practical, hard-working, supportive, down-to-earth, loving and strong. She always put others before herself with a humble servant’s heart.

Phyllis loved to read and camp and enjoy nature. She loved studying the Bible with her morning cup of coffee, serving in the ministry and listening to people. She genuinely cared and loved others.

Phyllis believed success was having a happy, close-knit family, and she was most thankful for her kids and 14 grandkids.

Phyllis Gore: wife, mother, grandmother, sister, servant and friend. She was a gift from God, and we will carry her love and shining example with us for always.

Phyllis Anne Gore

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Phyllis Ann Davey

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The Gore Family

Esther Anna Marie Hope

Esther Anna Marie Hope died suddenly of a heart attack on Dec. 19, 2019. A memorial service conducted by pastor Thomas Clark was held on Dec. 22 in Van Buren, Arkansas.

Esther was born in Mesa, Arizona, on Aug. 27, 1971, to Larry Jessen and Esther Chlarsen. Her family moved to Mulberry, Arkansas, while she was a child. The family camped while their house was being built, an experience that gave Esther a love for nature, especially gardening and growing flowers.

Esther graduated from Mulberry High School and went on to receive her bachelor’s degree from the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. She worked as a medical billing and coding clerk until the time of her death.

Esther and her husband, Michael, met in 1995 and married in 2002. They began attending Sabbath services after being introduced to the Church of God in 2000. She was baptized in 2007.

Esther was a dedicated mother. Next to God, her children were the center of her life. She made friends everywhere she went, and the many friends (both in and outside the Church of God) who attended her memorial are a testament to her caring nature and love for people.

Esther is survived by her husband, Michael; children, Aaron Nathaniel and Autumn Marie; her father, Larry Jessen; and three brothers, Larry Jr. of Fort Smith, and Ralph and Rodney of San Jose, California. She was preceded in death by her mother.

Esther’s loving nature and beautiful smile will be missed by her family and her many friends.

Aurora Gossett

William Thomas Brooks

The Ruston, Louisiana, congregation is sad to announce the death of W.T. Brooks, known as “Dub” by his closest friends.

Mr. Brooks was born in New Hope, Alabama, Nov. 22, 1925, and died in Bernice, Louisiana, May 27, 2019, after a long and courageous battle with general debility and dementia.

He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Betty; daughter, Kari Hinton, and her husband, Delmus; son, Tommy Brooks; three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

After retiring from the construction business, where he built roads, bridges and other concrete structures, Mr. Brooks enjoyed fishing, gardening, grilling and working with wood. He was known for smoking a mean block of cheese. Several Church members in the Ruston and East Texas congregations were gifted with beautiful cutting boards he crafted by hand.

His presence is greatly missed by all who knew him.

Johna Barnette
PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR BEATING HOPELESSNESS.

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