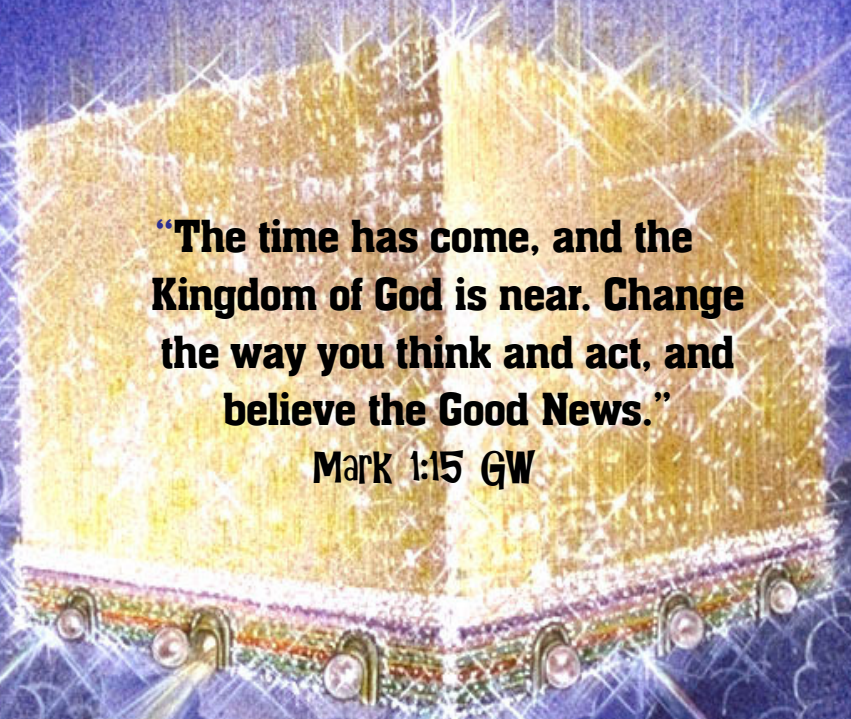


E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom

VOLUME 1 NOVEMBER, 2009 ISSUE 11



**“The time has come, and the
Kingdom of God is near. Change
the way you think and act, and
believe the Good News.”**

Mark 1:15 GW

In this Issue:

**Sincerity, Morality or Truth?
Jerusalem, A Cup of Trembling
Contending for the Faith
Angels
News From the Churches**

**Dedicated To Spreading The Good News Of God's Coming
Kingdom To Be Established When Jesus Returns**



EDITORIAL

Co-Editors: Kent Ross - Wally Winner

Welcome to our second issue of the E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom. Our intent is to revitalize the publishing of the news of the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God, a truth emphasized by our forefathers in the faith, and is the theme of Jesus' preaching.

In this issue you will find exciting news of three churches that have celebrated years of preaching, teaching and trying to exemplify those truths down through the years – 150 years for the Brushcreek Church, and 50 years for both the Bedford Church of the Open Bible and the Troy View Church, all a part of the churches in the Ohio/Northeast Conference.

We invite others of our churches to share their anniversaries and pictures of those events. We also are starting, with this issue, news of deaths and baptisms within our fellowship. We also invite you to send those to us, including digital photos to we can all rejoice in the good things that God is bringing to pass, but also to share in the grief of our family of God, but a grief that is abated by our Hope in that Coming Kingdom.

We also share the joy of three new church works that are beginning, all within this past year. One is in South Carolina, near Easley, and two in Indiana, one near Knightstown and one near South Bend, in Granger. What great news of the spreading the Good News. All three grew out of Bible studies that soon began meeting as church groups. No buildings for these three, though what will happen in the future is unknown, but like the early church they meet to rejoice in their faith and in spreading it to their neighbors. The one in Granger also celebrated their first baptism into the faith.

We have a Bible study about the history and importance of the Faith of Abraham, a name which for years was usually attached to our churches as in the Brushcreek Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. That title was not just a name, but built out of the hope Paul explained in Galatians 3, maybe a truth that has recently been obscured. But also we look at a Voice from the Past, this time from Pastor Harry Sheets. Each issue will feature an outstanding article from one of these forefathers. Some are studies to use with your Bible in hand, and others to read and be blessed in doing that.

As we read the newspapers, listen to the news, watch our computers everyone is becoming aware of the impending nearness of the Return of Christ to this Earth. According tom the Bible, we'll see things getting increasingly out of hand before they are changed and restored. He's Coming to Restore the Kingdom of God. Yes, it will be right here on this planet, a planet to be re-configured, but this planet made new. As we bury blessed members of God's family, it is always with the realization . . . Soon and Very Soon We Are Going to See the King!

Enjoy and keep in touch as together we keep the faith and love our neighbors, love them enough to share with them the Hope of His Coming, especially as we enter into this season of Thanksgiving and when the entire society celebrates the birth of Jesus, which ever so many don't even acknowledge!

We welcome new subscribers to this free E-Magazine. Just send us your name and dtate and we'll subscribe you to the next issue of the E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom!

cogcast

a broadcast ministry of the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

Broadcasting daily on the internet the unique focus of praise to the King, preparation for and the proclamation of His Coming Kingdom.

<http://www.cogcast.org/>

Once on the web site, find the microphone and click on it.
Higher speed connections are recommended



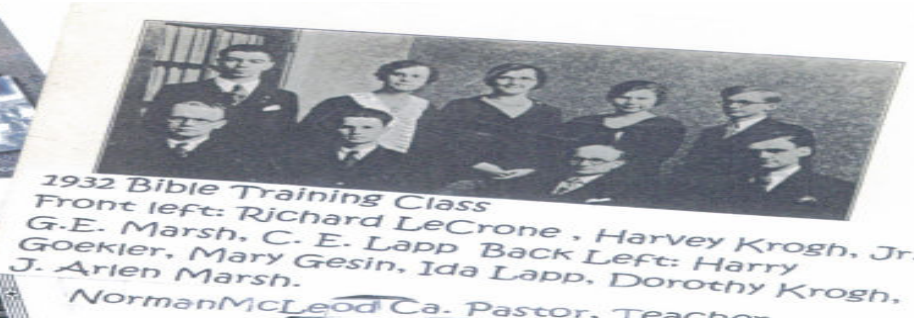
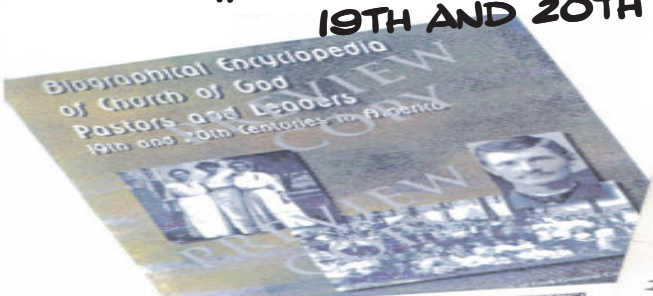
You will be glad you stopped by to listen to some of the music, messages, and speakers from the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. Our file-streaming webcast primarily features original sermons and messages, prayers, music, and public domain songs and hymns throughout the programming as spoken and performed throughout our church body. We hope that as you listen you will be blessed by the word of God. Please continue to keep this ministry in your thoughts and prayers as we strive to spread and grow the message and the membership in the coming Kingdom of God!

Join us for our worship service video broadcasts live at **Joy Fellowship** each Saturday starting around 5:00 p.m. EST

We are now podcasting selected messages. Look for The COGcast Podcast on the web or in the iTunes store, and subscribe for free.

BIOGRAPHICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHURCH OF GOD PASTORS AND LEADERS 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES IN AMERICA

AUTHORED BY JAN STILSON OREGON, ILLINOIS



1932 Bible Training Class
Front left: Richard LeCrone, Harvey Krogh, Jr., G.E. Marsh, C. E. Lapp Back Left: Harry Goekler, Mary Gesin, Ida Lapp, Dorothy Krogh, J. Arlen Marsh.
Norman McLeod Ca. Pastor, Teacher



I. Haupt, Author of Michael Servetus
D. M. Hudier, Evangelist.



M.O. Williamson, Guthrie Grove Pastor



Jimmy and Roslynn Carter with Oregon Habitat 1993-1999



BRUSH CREEK CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

On July 24th-26th, Brush Creek Church of God in Tipp City Ohio celebrated its Sesquicentennial Anniversary. It was a glorious weekend filled with incredible speakers as well as well as a great deal of fun and fellowship. Over 250 present and former members as well as many guests joined us for the weekend.

We began the celebration with a “sermon and a song” from the incredibly gifted Robin Todd from Lacy Washington followed by an ice cream social. On Saturday we heard from Pastor’s Kent Ross (A History of the Church of God, Abrahamic Faith), Dale Swartz (Where Do We Go From Here), Joe Martin (A Fearless Faith), Dan Gill (Coming to the Faith) and Bruce Reye (Back to the Basics). It was an incredible blessing to be inspired by each speaker. Although there was no prior planning, each speakers message built on the previous one. God’s hand was evident throughout the celebration. Each of these sermons are available to watch on our website at www.brushcreekchurch.org under the “sermon” tab. We also enjoyed a Pig Roast on Saturday afternoon with many dishes made from our 150th Anniversary Cookbook with recipes dating back over 100 years!

Pastor Dave spoke on Sunday morning followed by a time of thanks and re-dedication of the church. We recognized our many church members with 40, 50 and 60 years. A special recognition was made for three of our members Lorna Pearson a member for 74 years, George Hoke who has been a member for 76 years, and Betty Morris who is our longest member at 77 years. We also ran a DVD of pictures that Hale/Sarver Funeral home was gracious enough to produce for us.

Two rooms were set up to display many old photographs, documents as well as several old articles. The original baptismal book was also on display with baptisms dating back to 1864. Everyone enjoyed going through all the items and even finding relatives from days gone by. There was even an old Restitution Herald dating back to 1911.

God has truly blessed Brush Creek for the past 150 years. I truly believe that we have been blessed by God because we have stood for 150 years on that firm foundation passed down to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is a true joy to be able to minister to such a wonderful group of dedicated people. We pray that if the Lord should tarry that He will bless us with many more fruitful years of sharing the precious and glorious message of the Coming Kingdom of God.



**50 GOLDEN YEARS OF THE
BEDFORD CHURCH OF THE
OPEN BIBLE**

**689 ADAMS STREET
BEDFORD, OHIO**

1959 - 2009

*Printed September 2009 for our church's
50th anniversary.*

The Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith has had several sanctuaries for worship in northeastern Ohio during the past 100 plus years. The largest of the congregations was the Golden Rule Church of God on Diana Avenue off E. 140th Street in Cleveland. Under the leadership of Pastor Melville Lyon from the late 1920s into the 1940s, Golden Rule flourished as a neighborhood church. When the area changed culturally and members moved away, two groups of worshippers from Golden Rule established new church in other areas of northeastern Ohio. Led by the Stadden and Swartz families, a place of worship was built in Columbia Station during the 1950s.

Members of the Cramer, Humphrey and Marsh families organized Bible studies in the Bedford area in 1952 at the Howard and Hazel Cramer home on Bartlett Road. The believers rented the YMCA on Tarbell Avenue and had Sunday services in the basement and later at the Masonic Temple.

Bill Humphrey spotted a for sale sign at the church building on Adams Street and with a loan from the Arlen Marsh family the group purchased the place of worship. After incorporating as a nonprofit organization on June 23, 1959, the believers moved into their new church with Arlen Marsh officiating. Despite working a full time job in downtown Cleveland, the learned Arlen was the pastor of our congregation until he resigned in May 1962.

As the Golden Rule Church of God congregation declined, some of their members transferred to the Bedford Church. Among the early arrivals were Dan Hayes, his daughter Nancy and her husband Mike Furlich, Fred Schuld Sr., Gordon Davison and Elizabeth Giles. In the Fall of 1962 Fred and Doris Schuld, with their three young sons Ted, Rodger and Karl, joined accompanied by Doris' mother Fairy Lyon. In 1964 Fairy contributed a new piano to the Church of the Open Bible.

Charles and Mary Ellen Jones transferred from the Golden Rule and brought carloads of kids from Country Lane in Geauga County. Families from Country Lane that began attending our Church included the Murrays



Rodge Schuld talking to Mary Helen Jones

and Whaleys. Golden Rule continued to give leadership with Ellsworth and Eunice Frederick and their son and daughter-in-law,

Jim and Penny Frederick and their son David. Marcella Richter brought her John 3:16 faith. Her son Dick became our chief landscaper. Frank Roper who lived with the Richters has been the generous provider of organs for the church, first building one for the sanctuary and later buying a beautiful new one with stereo sound for our services.

David Onderdonk and family transferred to Bedford. He brought energy and business skills.



Picking up Food



**Joyce Bolhous, Sharon Cain,
Stephen Bolhous, David Krogh**

With Pastor Rex came his talented and energetic wife Grace and young family. Unfortunately because of the small size of our congregation, Rex had to work full time outside the church to support his family. Pastor Cain started a youth group, The Bereans, and his wife Grace was our choir leader and also organized the Agape Society, the Ladies Christian Service Organization.

Pastor Rex left for a full time pastorate in Dayton, Ohio in February 1969. Fresh out of Oregon Bible College, Stephen Bolhous and his wife Joyce

Frank Perkins served as our preacher from June 1, 1962 to March 22, 1963. During the summer of 1963, Jack Hearp, a student at Oregon Bible College at the time, served as our pastoral intern and visited homes in the Bedford area.

From the middle of 1963 until August 1964, members Howard Seabeck and Fred Schuld Jr. were the principal speakers for Sunday services. That summer God blessed our congregation when Rex Cain who was ministering a church in Missouri accepted our call to be our pastor.



David and Wanda Cheatwood

accepted our call to serve and arrived in September 1969.

Charles and Mary Ellen Jones purchased a house on Washington Street in Bedford and rented it to Steve and Joyce. After four years the Bolhaus family resigned and moved to the Church of God Church in Minneapolis.

For several summers in the 1960s and 1970s, the Bedford Church held Vacation Bible School. Not only did these classes introduce neighborhood youngsters to the Bible and its teaching but brought in the Szekely family, too. Al and Arlene were so impressed with their children's enthusiasm about VBS they decided to attend services and have been faithful and hardworking members ever since.

During Dave and Wanda Cheatwood's years at Bedford (September 1973 to 1979) the young people's group was at its peak and were leaders and regular attendees of northeastern and national youth conferences. Pastor Cheatwood was a busy person working full time to support his family and preaching on Sunday in 1974-75 at both Golden Rule and the Church of the Open Bible.

The church discontinued receiving pastoral aid from the General Conference in 1974 and purchased the house on Washington Street from Charles and Mary Ellen Jones on June 24, 1979 for use as a permanent parsonage for our church. The congregation February 11, 1979 accepted the newly revised Constitution.

Four more pastors marked the decade of the Eighties and early Nineties. Alan Shaw, another recent graduate from our Bible College served from September 1980 to August 1982. A former schoolteacher, a learned and erudite pastor Ken Howe was here from September 1982 to August 1984. Dave Onderdonk drove to southern Texas to bring back Austin Railton and his exuberant wife Cecil to serve our congregation from September 1984 to August 1989. For the next three years, September 1989 to August 1992, young and enthusiastic Tom Schmitt was our pastor.

Ed & Joyce Schroth



David Cheatwood Teaching Sunday School Class



Charles & Lois Pryor



Stan & Vileen Powell





Dale Ramsey Playing New Organ



Listening to the Organ Concert

Tom left us to eventually become a school administrator in Rockford, Illinois. Each one of these four pastors and their families brought the gospel message to us and helped us become better Christians.

Ellsworth Frederick and his wife Eunice were leaders of the congregation in improving and beautifying the interior of our church with new carpeting and beautiful wood pews installed.

Steve and Pam Weaver and their two children arrived in the late Seventies with their enthusiasm and leadership. Their weekly round trip from Stark County is over one hundred miles. Steve grew up in the Dayton Church of God. Their youngsters Rachel and Andrew have been outstanding leaders in both our church activities in the northeast and general youth conferences.

Among other families who faithfully drive long distances to attend our services are Dan and Nancy Koston, Dave and Kathy Onderdonk, Frank Roper, Beth Marsh and son Richard, and Mark and Karen Cain and family.

In the early 90s, Pastor Rex Cain returned after pastoring the Macomb, Illinois Church of God. His wife Sharon and children Mark, Sarah and Danny accompanied him. The longest serving pastor in the 50 years of our church, Rex is an excellent preacher who brings us fresh messages that enlighten and reinforce our faith. As a member indicated "...he is very computer literate and communicates with Church of God members internationally and with local brethren by the use of e-mail. Pastor Rex has a fine sense of humor. He is a reliable and sincere Church leader."

The mid 1990s saw a new lighted church message sign. The pastor's son Danny Cain kept the sign fresh with Biblical verses and after attending Atlantic Bible College is now a pastor in Oregon, Illinois.

In August 1994 we paid off the church mortgage on the parsonage and during the summer of 1996 vinyl siding was applied to the parsonage, a gift to the church from Howard and Hazel Cramer.

While small in number the Agapes have been very active and is a social bond among the ladies of the church. The annual "Revelation" party each December to reveal secret pals is eagerly looked forward to by the ladies involved. For years the Agapes held rummage sales to raise money for various church projects. Greeting cards recognizing members' birthdays, anniversaries, get well and just thinking of you have helped bind distant friends and relatives to the church.

An especially valuable member of our church is Clyde Whaley. Without Clyde it would be difficult to hold church services several Sundays of the year because he faithfully snow plows the church parking lot. Also, Clyde trims our trees and landscapes the church and parsonage lots.

Our church is located in a neighborhood of fine families who already are strong in their chosen faith and churches. While church visitors constantly remark how friendly our congregation is, they return to their traditional places of worship. The major reason through the years that our church has not grown is



Trio Rehearsing

because of economic mobility and migration of members. Former brethren live all over the United States. Several members of our families continue to faithfully attend and spread the Gospel in the churches they attend. Bill and Ginny Cramer who live in Jefferson, Ohio have organized bible studies and conduct services in their area.

An especially enthusiastic and talented Jennifer Wetzel worshipped with us for several years early in this century. Jennifer's Sunday School creative openings were always something to look forward to. Before she moved to Paducah, Kentucky as a school librarian she served as librarian at Ravenna High School.

Pastor Rex keeps in contact electronically with former members and has widely spread our message nationwide.

Through the use of the Internet we were blessed to have "Skip" and Marge Reed and their family join our church and become very active and faithful members.

In the 50 years of the Bedford Church of the Open Bible, our pastors have baptized more than 58 people into a life with Christ. Although many of those baptized have moved away, they took their beliefs in Jesus as their personal savior and the near return of Christ to the earth to establish his kingdom. Our goal continues to be strong believers in the Church of God General Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. We eagerly wait and watch for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior.

Printed September 2009 for our church's 50th anniversary.

Historical Committee
Arlene Szekely
Kathy Kostyo
Fred Schuld
4 of 5



Anniversary Flowers

A Note from the Pastor

The history above represents many captivating stories of God's love and grace.

Being asked to write a few lines about those who have left Bedford to continue in various other ministries I find to be impossible. There are so many whose faith through the 50 years were shaped here at Bedford by the believers. If I tried to name them, many would be missed. But they have gone out to the highways of life touching the hearts of others for Christ through many avenues such as schoolteachers, professors, ministers, and leaders in the military and in their communities. Indeed, in every walk of life, followers of Christ are to be ambassadors for Him. And, there are some who, because no Church of God is near, attend other churches and often end up teaching, preaching, doing youth work or involved in music ministries while still maintaining or teaching our faith.

With our different gifts and abilities we work together to share God's amazing grace with a world that needs hope. The coming Kingdom of God is our common mission; and it is in that goal that our diversity finds unity. It is where our differences are set aside for God's great plan.

It is our prayer that you will seek God's vision for your life through God's sacred and eternal Word.

Thanks for helping us celebrate our church's 50th anniversary! You are welcome to worship with us anytime!

Basking In The Afterglow

Now we must begin working on the next 50 years! But it's hard to forget the highlights of last weekend. Seventy-five people packed into our limited space and were inspired by Cheatwood's lesson, Bolhous' challenging sermon and Ramsey's rapturous concert! It will take a long while for these sweet memories to fade.

Our thanks to EVERYONE involved in making this weekend special. The ladies did a great job of providing food – I heard many compliments. Pam & Rachel Weaver decorated the church in a golden 50th anniversary theme complimented by red – even helium gold & red balloons decorated inside and outside. Pam also did a wonderful PowerPoint that took us down memory lane and captured the attention of everyone. Thanks for the hours it took to put that together!

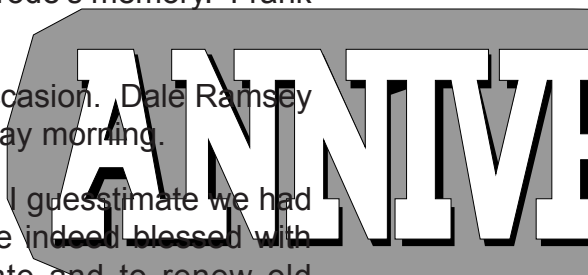
Fred Schuld, Arlene Szekely & Kathy Kostyo put together a very nice 5-page history of our church. We got 17 pages of e-mail greetings!

We dedicated the organ to the glory of God in Roby Korode's memory. Frank donated the organ to our church.

Everyone got a gold memento pen engraved for the occasion. Dale Ramsey brought music that provided two musical "specials" for Sunday morning.

Counting the emails, memory letters, visitors & guests, I guesstimate we had near 200 touch base with us for our anniversary. We were indeed blessed with people who came from far and near to help us celebrate and to renew old acquaintances.

Our thanks to Lawrenceville and North Hills for bouquets, to Pleasant Hill and Brushcreek for making donations to Gideon's International in honor of our anniversary.





FAMILY BIBLE CHURCH OF GOD, GRANGER IN



We began as a Sunday night home Bible study in March 2008 and really had no intention of starting a new church. There were simply some Church of God families in the Granger area who were interested in meeting and studying together. About six months later, a couple other families asked if something could be started for their children and asked if a Sunday morning Sunday School could also meet. These families were not involved in the Sunday night study due to the meeting time. So we began meeting for classes in the fall of 2008, providing both a children's class and an adult class and continued with our Sunday night group as well.

In the spring of 2009, Marcia Railton initiated a special 40 days of prayer and Bible study, asking us to seek to receive a clearer understanding of what would be the best church arrangement for us, one in which our families could worship together while pleasing God and serving others. This began on Easter and ended on May 21, 2009 and was done independently by family. Soon after we had a meeting to share with each other where we felt God was leading us. We discussed eight options but it was unanimous to combine our two groups and look for a facility to rent and begin holding worship services on Sunday mornings.



John Railton stopped in at a funeral home in Granger to inquire about renting it on Sunday mornings. The funeral director told him a church group had been renting it for three years but had purchased a building and would be moving within a month. It would be available for rent within a few weeks. Our congregation then met at the funeral home and toured the beautiful facility which was more than adequate for our needs. The location is within one mile of many within our congregation. After the tour we sat outside in their outdoor chapel area and voted to rent it beginning in Sept. God was working with us



and this was a direct answer to prayer. Ephesians 3:20 comes to mind, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen."

Now we needed a name and a little organization. We met in August to take care of some business. Over 30 names were submitted but Family Bible Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith was the name we agreed upon. Our first service was held on Sept. 13 and was a joyous day for all of us as we came together to worship and

praise our God and his son Jesus. That afternoon over 70 family and friends gathered at Camp Mack in Milford, IN for the baptism of Moriah Railton, who was immersed in Lake Waubee by both of her grandfathers, Pastor Ray Hall and Pastor John Railton. Moriah's parents, Jason & Marcia Railton, invited everyone to a cookout and fellowship after the service. What a wonderful way to celebrate the birth of our church with a new member in the body of Christ.

Our pastor is John Railton but he and Tim Gould share in the preaching responsibilities. We are anxious to be obedient, to serve God, to be a witness of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus. From the beginning we are encouraging all in the congregation to find a ministry and to be involved in the worship service itself. Caregiving is important to us and many were involved in providing all the funding and labor for building a ramp for a church member, providing a meal for a visitor's family following surgery and gathering groceries for a family in need. Women's Bible studies are held each week in two locations. Marcia Railton has hosted a Backyard Bible Club in her neighborhood each summer with many of our ladies assisting. Fellowship opportunities have included picnics, pizza suppers, Easter potluck breakfast, euchre nights, and sausage making. We'd love it if you'd pray for our new church, asking God to grant us wisdom as we seek to be the church he wants us to be.





Journey Outreach

Easley, South Carolina

Sherry McAlister

Journey Outreach is a new Church in Easley, SC dedicated to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to the unchurched in the surrounding community. It consists of a core group of four families with Church of God backgrounds in South Carolina, Ohio and Minnesota.



Our core group began discussing planting a new Church in 2008.

Once we decided to move forward in faith, we considered a number of towns but felt led by God to focus our attention on the city of Easley which has a population of over 17,000. After considering several locations, we found a building which we felt could meet our needs and was located directly across from a large middle school. Our research showed us that the area around this building was second and third generation homes and apartments which normally have a high percentage of people who are not actively involved in a church.

After deciding on the building and negotiating a lease, we embarked on the necessary renovations which proved both challenging and expensive. Although the process of completing the renovations and getting the city's approval took longer than we expected and was frustrating at times, we felt God blessed us through the process and used the time to prepare us to begin reaching out to others.

The Church name, Journey Outreach was suggested by one of the members of our group to signify our journey to the Kingdom of God and our responsibility to reach out to others along the way.



We held our dedication service on September 27, 2009. Daryl Moore from the Pleasant Hill Church of God in Pleasant Hill, Ohio was our guest speaker. The attendance for our dedication service was over 50 including many from the existing Churches of God in North and South Carolina.

In the past few months, we have hosted several community outreach events and have handed out hundreds of flyers in the surrounding neighborhoods. At one of our events, a couple from the community told us that they had lived in Easley for over six years and Journey Outreach was the first church to invite them to anything.

God has blessed us with a steadily increasing attendance to the point that we are averaging around 20 each week which is roughly double the number in our core group.

Our Sunday morning worship service is at 10:00 AM and our mid week service is Wednesday evening at 6:30 PM.

Please pray for God to bless Journey Outreach to be successful in bringing unchurched people in the city of Easley to salvation through Jesus Christ.

A Conference on "The Signs of the Times"

Arlen F. Rankin



Nearly 70 brethren and truth-seekers gathered at the Wenatchee, Washington, Church of God Faith of Abraham on October 24th for a day of presentations, discussion & fellowship as we considered "The Signs of the Times—a biblical look at the end of the age."

Four major topics of import were considered. Paul Rankin spoke on "The Social Conditions of the Last Days." Tony Dart presented thoughts on "The Religious Conditions of the End Times." Arlen Rankin looked at "The Political and Military Conditions as This Age Closes" with particular emphasis on the Middle East and Ezekiel's prophecy of war. Kirby Davis brought these things into focus by considering believers "Facing the Last Days with Faith & Hope." Andrew Stanford filmed and recorded the entire series and has edited and made it available on a three DVD set. This may be obtained from him for \$22.00 by contacting him at 4300 Mission Creek Road, Cashmere, WA 98815 or homevp@hotmail.com

It is without question that we are living in momentous, troublesome and even perilous time as world conditions crescendo to the point that God will intervene and send His Son to change all things—social, religious and political.

When the trees begin to bud, we know that summer is soon to be here. Likewise, when we see things prophesied before us, we understand that the kingdom is near. Though we know not when Jesus shall return, we are not left in darkness that we should be deceived or surprised as by an adversary or a thief.

Jesus, speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees, says, "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red and in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matthew 16:1-3).

Jesus, speaking to his disciples, says, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these thing come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21:28-30).

Paul, writing to the Thessalonian Church, says, "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night...but ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3).

Jesus, speaking to his followers, says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, No, not the angels which are in heaven, Neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is...what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:32-37; cf. Matthew 24:36-42).

Peter admonishes, "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves..." (1 Pet. 4:7, 8).

Paul addresses Titus stating that God's grace has appeared to all men, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world [age]; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

Markers: Deaths & Baptisms



Deaths:

Bedford Church of the Open Bible, Ohio – Charles G. Jones

Charles G. Jones age 90 of Bainbridge Township passed away peacefully October 27, 2009. Beloved Husband of Mary Ellen. Loving Father of Robert (Nola) Jones of Atlanta GA., Lorna K. (Wayne) Johnson of Hutchinson MN., and Lowell (Sara) Jones of Burton OH. Dear Grandfather of 7 and Great grandfather of 8. He was a long time faithful Christian being involved in his church and the Lord's work with loyal devotion.

Charles proudly served in the Army Air Force during WWII. (See funeral service on following pages)

Jaynes St. Church of God, Omaha, Nebraska – Ken M. Millard

May 1, 1928 - Oct 20, 2009

Omaha. Preceded in death by wife, Shirley; daughter, Cynthia Millard. Survived by daughter, Deb (Ron) Cizek; son, Scott (Michele) all Omaha; grandchildren, Matt and Carrie Clure, Brett Clure (fiancee' Jaycie Madison), Alex Millard, Andrew Millard, Spencer Millard, Mike and Jaime Cizek, Jeff and Aimee Cizek; other family and friends.



Baptisms:

North Hills Church of God, Springfield, Ohio – Milner and McCleary family



We had the great joy this October of baptizing an entire family on one Sunday... Dad, Mom, son, daughter, & Grandma. To be honest, it was a ton of fun. I'd read in the book of Acts where entire families were baptized together, but I'd never personally experienced it. What a joy. As if baptizing an entire family isn't great enough, I had the personal satisfaction of watching two of those five baptisms performed by members of our church.

Amy Cunningham is a high school senior this year who has served our summer camp as a counselor for several years. She was crowned Homecoming Queen of her high school this year, but she lives her life with an eternal perspective and a servant's heart. She regularly invests in our younger students at church, and she exemplifies what it means to be a young Christian woman. The daughter, Kirsten, felt deeply impacted by Amy's influence in her life and felt it would be special if Amy baptized her. As a pastor, I heartily agree.

Rob Koons owns a local restaurant, but he also sees his life in a larger context. He is a part of our mid-week student program & has worked tirelessly serving our young students. The son, Dorian, feels very close to Rob and asked if he could be baptized by Rob. Again, I was more than happy to oblige. I had the honor of performing the other three baptisms (dad, mom, & Grandma). But I'm so pleased to see the multiple levels of spiritual relationships being built within our church as our older students mentor younger students, as local business owners spend their extra hours investing in young lives. If I think it's an honor to do baptisms as a pastor, you can only imagine what a moment it is for church members to baptize others. And think of the ownership Rob & Amy now feel in the spiritual growth of these two students.

Sadly, all too often it's only pastors who get the privilege of baptizing people. Unwittingly we rob our people of that joy... and the following spiritual responsibility to disciple those we baptize. Maybe most people never think anyone but the pastor is allowed to baptize people, but I often encourage it. I think it's a great way of continuing existing relationships in a significant way. If our people are instrumental in the process of conversion, why not let them celebrate the conclusion of those conversions? What a great thing to be part of God's continuing work on earth through the church.

This funeral message empasises the wonderful hope for all believers.

Funeral Service for Charles (Bud) Jones (90)
Born 9-1-19 / Died 10-27-09
Services Oct. 30, 2009 – Pastor Rex Cain

I've known Bud & Mary Ellen for about 45 years getting acquainted with them when I first came to Bedford in 1964. It has been a long and rewarding time of Christian fellowship. I'm sure Bud was at each of the 2,340 services during those 45 years. He loved his church and was always there when the doors were open. He was serving as an elder when he fell asleep in Christ.

Bud was a faithful and devoted husband, father, grandfather and Christian. He served the church and was a tremendous example of a man of faith. If nothing more were said of his qualities, this would be more than you could say for the majority of people in this world.

Bud was very unassuming and not given to talking about himself, so the following information came to me yesterday – some which I had not known. My appreciation to Fred Schuld who gave me these interesting facts: Bud and his wife, Mary Ellen, had been married for 63 years! He earned a Master's Degree from Kent State University, he taught math at the Independence school system from 1958 to 1978 and was an assistant principal. Further, he was a track coach and in 1963 he received the Jennings's Master Teacher's Award. Bud also served on our Church of God General Conference Board of Directors. And from Donna Whaley Dublin, I learned that for relaxation, Bud very much enjoyed playing his saxophone for many years in the Great Geauga County Fair Band.

One pastor in his sympathy note wrote saying this: *Bud Jones was a fixture in the Ohio Conference, the forerunner of the Northeast Conference. His dedication to principle and biblical truth stands as an example for all who knew him. He will be missed, but rests in peace along with all the faithful who will be awakened at the sound of the trumpet.* (Russ Magaw)

You could trust Bud with your life. He was always there, always concerned, always looking for ways to please people through his faith in God. He loved young people; I rode on a bicycle trip with Bud and a group of young people back in the 1960s. I have a picture of him lying on the ground a bit exhausted (as I was), but he was there to show the youth that good Christian fellowship is an important element in living the Christian life. He was an encourager.

Even when he was in the military during WWII, fellow soldiers tried to persuade him to get into smoking and drinking, but he would have nothing to do with it. So, even at a young and influential age, he was determined to give his life to his God. This type of dedication is rare, but so admirable. He was truly committed to the Lord and he lived a life above reproach. I look forward to seeing him again soon in the glorious Kingdom he so often talked about and longed for.

PRAYER:

Father, we bow our heads and our hearts before You for these few moments to pay respect to our loved one who has fallen asleep in Christ. Also, to call-to-mind the precious promises of God that are guaranteed to us through the resurrection of Your Son to immortality. We SORROW NOT AS OTHERS WHO HAVE NO HOPE, rather we take courage knowing that WHAT YOU HAVE PROMISED, YOU ARE ABLE ALSO TO FULFILL! May Thy Words, which are spoken here, be a source of genuine hope and strength in the days ahead for those who will feel this temporary loss most deeply. This prayer we offer in the Name of Jesus, Amen.

There Is Hope!

We come together today acutely aware of our mortality. Death - whether timely or not - is always our dreaded enemy. Yet, it is the enemy that has already been destroyed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to immortality. Because He is alive (even as we meet in this solemn assembly), our hearts take courage, for Jesus is coming again, and our tears shall turn to joy. It is true as David wrote, **WEeping MAY Tarry FOR THE NIGHT, BUT JOY COMES WITH THE MORNING** (Ps. 30:5) ... meaning, with the joy of the resurrection morning!

The Apostle Paul (who had seen the Lord and reviewed the future in vision which, he said, he could not put in human language) wrote this: **THE SUFFERING OF THIS PRESENT TIME IS NOT WORTH COMPARING WITH THE GLORY THAT IS TO BE REVEALED TO US** (Rom. 8:18). Then he added, **THE WHOLE CREATION IS GROANING IN TRAVAIL ... EVEN WE OURSELVES ... GROAN INWARDLY AS WE WAIT FOR ADOPTION AS SONS, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODIES** (Rom. 8:22,23).

Though we may sometimes doubt it, God is well aware of what is happening around the globe. He sets our times. He knows the beginning from the end of our days even before we are born. Yet death confronts us all. Unless we are fortunate enough to live until the return of Christ, we must all face it. But in spite of this awful truth, God has not left us without hope.

Once Martha, whose brother had died, came to Jesus in tears and said, **LORD, IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE, MY BROTHER WOULD NOT HAVE DIED**. Then she continued, **AND EVEN NOW I KNOW THAT WHATEVER YOU ASK FROM GOD, GOD WILL GIVE YOU**. **JESUS SAID TO HER, YOUR BROTHER WILL RISE AGAIN**. **MARTHA SAID TO HIM, I KNOW THAT HE WILL RISE AGAIN IN THE RESURRECTION AT THE LAST DAY**. **JESUS SAID TO HER, I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE; HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME, THOUGH HE DIE, YET SHALL HE LIVE, AND WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE** (Jn. 11)

Martha had great faith in the coming resurrection, and likewise, so should we. In fact, as the writer to the Hebrews put it, this faith **IS AN ANCHOR TO OUR SOUL** (Heb. 6:19). Such hope is what keeps us steady on this storm-tossed-sea-of-life in which we live.

Notice again what Jesus said: **HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME THOUGH HE DIE, YET SHALL HE LIVE...**

Jesus is promising eternal life even though death should come to us before He returns to this earth. Jesus is proof-positive that there is a resurrection, for Jesus has been raised and is alive this moment ... and shares in your grief this hour.

Jesus then makes this interesting statement: **AND WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE**. At first glance, it sounds as if Jesus is contradicting himself. But here is what He means: **WHOEVER LIVES** is a reference to Christians who are alive at His return ... they shall never die!! The apostle echoes this truth when he wrote elsewhere, **THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST, THEN, WE WHO ARE ALIVE, WHO ARE REMAINING, SHALL BE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM** (that is, the resurrected dead) **TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR ...** (I Thess. 4:17).

So, once again, we find from Scriptures that whether we are alive or dead at His return to earth to establish the Kingdom of God (which Bud longed for), it's of no difference to Christians. The resurrection chapter of the Bible even teaches that the dead will rise first, then the living - to meet the Lord in the air. As Jesus said, **HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME, THOUGH HE DIE, YET SHALL HE LIVE**. What hope!

What comfort! And this, of course, was Bud's hope as well.

I would like to read one of the most heart-warming and inspiring passages in the N.T. – an encounter Jesus had one day when he was walking into a village near a cemetery and a funeral procession was coming toward him. In those days, of course, they walked to the edge of town where the cemetery was for the residents of the community. Men carried the coffin in their hands.

Luke 7:11-17 (New International Version)

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son

¹¹Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹²As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

¹⁴Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." ¹⁷This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Can you imagine this scene? What great truths we learn from this incident in Jesus' life. Note that it reads, "The Lord's heart went out to her." Jesus understands our pain, he possesses deep compassion for those who are hurting and feeling the sting of death. He asked the widow who now had lost her son, "Don't cry." Why? Because I can return your son to life and give you eternal hope. Can you hear Jesus saying "Don't cry?" While it is perfectly natural that we do, I believe Jesus is teaching here that there's really no reason because of the hope of the resurrection and immortality to come – a time we can't begin to imagine! The way the world is going, that day may be very soon.

Then Jesus walks up to the coffin and touches it and tells the young man, "Get up! ... and the dead man sat up and began to talk!" What an incredible but wonderful shock that must have been to see a dead person sitting up in his coffin and instantly talking! What power is demonstrated here! And what does that do for your faith? Well, it truly strengthens mine to know God will one day touch millions of Christian coffins around the world and people will come alive, and talk, and rejoice in their resurrection! This big incident in a small village carries a vast message to the world. Our God lives. Our God is alive and powerful. He can do anything. So, as Paul wrote, "we grieve but not like those without hope." Our tears are different than those who do not know God. Our hope is strong because God has proved Himself the true God for centuries upon centuries – from the beginning of time!

The apostle Paul summed it up very well for us by writing: FOR IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN, EVEN SO THEM ALSO WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM. FOR THIS WE SAY UNTO YOU BY THE WORD OF THE LORD, THAT WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD SHALL NOT PRECEDE THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP. FOR THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT, WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL AND WITH THE TRUMP OF GOD: AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST: THEN WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS, TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR: AND SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD. WHEREFORE, COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS (I Thess. 4:14-18).

PRAYER:

Merciful Father, surround these loved ones and friends of Bud with Thy everlasting arms. Let them feel Your presence and Your strength in their daily lives as they adjust to this personal loss.

Comfort them by the fact that You are working out a wonderful Plan in this world, and with the truth that death (for a believer) is not the end, but only an interlude between this mortality and the immortality that is coming at the return of Jesus. Help them to perceive that sleeping Christians have all the advantages; for their trials are over, they will avoid the trauma of thy wrath in the days ahead, and their next conscious moment will be to awaken in the likeness of Christ with a perfect spiritual body. We remember Jesus' words: BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD, BLESSED INDEED SAYS THE SPIRIT, THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABORS, FOR THEIR DEEDS FOLLOW THEM! (Rev. 14:13)

I ask especially for a PEACE THAT PASSES UNDERSTANDING for Mary Ellen, her children and extended family. And, to the many others of his church family and relatives and friends who will miss his presence among us.

Father, with Your words of hope, we walk the days ahead with confidence knowing You will bring to pass all that You have spoken. Thus, we leave Bud in the loving and safe arms of Jesus who will awaken him on that resurrection morning.

These things we pray in the Name of our Lord and soon returning King, Amen.

At The Grave

Rev. 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

Rev. 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."

Rev. 22:20 "He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

In the last book and last chapter of the Bible, it seems Jesus was wanting to make it very clear (by repeating himself 3 times) that he was "coming soon and his reward was with him."

May all of us standing here have this same hope as Bud did as he gave himself to Christ for many long faithful years.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we pray for this family and for Mary Ellen that they will experience the strength and courage to walk forward in the days ahead trusting in Your everlasting promises. And may our church family and other loved ones know this strength as well.

We give thanks in the truth of Your Word that guarantees that while we may lay to rest this day our loved one, it is not the end. Indeed, it is an interlude ... only the beginning, for Bud (and all who love the Lord). We shall be awakened at the Return of Jesus and rise to meet Him with an immortal spiritual body. It shall be a day when, as Malachi wrote, WE SHALL LEAP LIKE A CALF FROM THE STALL. That is a picture of just total joy to be alive in the glorious presence of Christ in God's righteous Kingdom.

We rejoice in these promises and take strength in them while we mourn. We take courage in Paul's words, WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED, HE IS ABLE ALSO TO FULFILL.

We do long for the day WHEN GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM OUR EYES, AND DEATH SHALL BE NO MORE. We give thanks and offer this prayer in the Name of Jesus who has already been victorious over the grave and death. Amen.



Sleep

He sees when their footsteps falter,
When their hearts grow weak and faint.
He marks when their strength is failing,
And listens to each complaint;
He bids them rest for a season,
For the pathway has grown too steep;
And folded in fair, green pastures,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

He giveth it, Oh! so gently,
As a mother will hush to rest
The babe that she softly pillows
So tenderly on her breast;
Forgotten are now the trials
And sorrows that made them weep,
For with many a soothing promise,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

All dread of the distant future,
All fears that oppressed today,
Like mists that clear in the sunlight,
Have noiselessly passed away;
Nor call nor clamor can rouse them
From slumbers so pure and deep,
For only His voice can reach them,
Who giveth His loved ones sleep.

Weep not that their toils are over,
Weep not that their race is run;
God grant we may rest as calmly
When our work, like theirs, is done!
Till then we would yield with gladness
Our treasures to Him to keep,
And rejoice in the sweet assurance,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

BIBLE STUDY

"THE ORIGIN & NATURE OF ANGELS"

I. The Origin of Angels

A. Their existence is assumed by Scripture, both good and evil

- 1. Created by logos - John 1:3**
- 2. Perhaps Psalm 148:2-5 also speaks to that.**
- 3. When John 1:3 speaks to "all things"**
 - a. Col. 1:16 - "by Him", or "because of Him" - visible and invisible**
 - b. Eph. 6:11,12 - "not against flesh and blood . . ."**

B. Only God has immortality (I Tim. 6:16), so the angels are created beings, but when?

- 1. Before Gen. 1:1 seems indicated by Job 38:4-7 ("angels", Heb. "sons of God")**
- 2. Clearly they were there by Gen. 3:1**

C. There are no definite number of them, but it is many

- 1. Dan. 7:9,10 - ten thousand times ten thousand = 100 million**
- 2. Matt. 26:53 - twelve legions of angels - there are 3,000 to 6,000 in a legion**
- 3. Heb. 12:22 - thousands upon thousands**
- 4. Rev. 5:11 - 100 million again**

II. The Nature of Angels

A. They are not glorified human beings.

- 1. Like, but not the same - Matt. 22:30 - at least in respect to marriage**
- 2. Man was made lower than the angels - Psalm 8:3-5**
- 3. But man will be higher (in Christ - Heb. 2:77 ff), and judge angels - I Cor. 6:3**

B. They are not material

- 1. Spirits, not flesh and blood - Heb. 1:14 & Eph. 6:12**
- 2. Often revealed in bodily form**

- 1. Gen. 18,19 - talking with Abraham - theophanies
(appearing in God's stead)**
- 2. Luke 1:26 - Gabriel speaks to Mary**
- 3. John 20:12 - two angels by Jesus' empty tomb**
- 4. Heb. 13:2 - entertaining angels**

C. They are a company, not a race.

- 1. They neither marry, nor are given in marriage and they cannot die - Luke 20:34-36a**
- 2. Word angel is in the masculine gender, and are referred to as sons of God, but there is never a reference to sons of angels.**
- 3. Mistaken, or appear as men - Luke 24:4 & Mark 16:5, and probably Acts 1:11**
- 4. Though they sin (II Peter 2:4), God evidently made no provision for taking care of their sins - Hebrews 2:14-18**

D. They are greater than men in knowledge, but they are not omniscient.

- 1. Evidently have advanced wisdom - II Sam. 14:20
(perhaps hyperbolic)**
- 2. But that wisdom is clearly limited - Matt. 24:36 - for no one knows the day nor the hour**
- 3. But it is beyond the natural, for even the evil ones knew Christ
- Luke 4:34**
- 4. But they seek more knowledge - I Peter 1:10-12**

E. They are stronger than men, but they are not omnipotent.

- 1. They are mightier than men - II Peter 2:10b,11**
- 2. They are mighty and powerful - Psalm 103:20 & II Thess. 1:7**
 - a. Illustrations of this include:**
 - 1) Freeing apostles from prison - Acts 5:19 & 12:7**
 - 2) Earthquake and rolling stone from tomb - Matt. 28:2**
 - b. But they have some limitations:**
 - 1) Cosmic warfare - Rev. 12:7-9**
 - 2) More cosmic struggle - Dan. 10:12,13**
 - 3) Even Michael has limitations - Jude 9**
 - 4) As does Satan - Job. 1:12 & 2:6**

F. They are more noble than men, but not omnipresent.

- 1. Stand as witness with God and the Lord - I Tim. 5:21**
- 2. They cannot be in more than one place at the same time and must travel**
 - a. God's servants - Zechariah 1:7-11**
 - b. God's and others - Job. 1:7 & I Peter 5:8**
- 3. They come with God's bidding - Dan. 9:20-23**

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Pastor Dave Hixon, Brushcreek Church of God

A too often prevailing attitude seen in the religious world and even in The Church of God is that of doctrinal indifference. “So what if they teach this and that, what does it really matter?” This is the statement often made to express this doctrinal tolerance. The real question should be, “how would **God** have us view the matter of doctrine and does the truth really matter?” To answer this question and to establish what our thinking should be relative to matters of doctrine, let’s look at Jude verse 3:

“Jude 3- “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.”

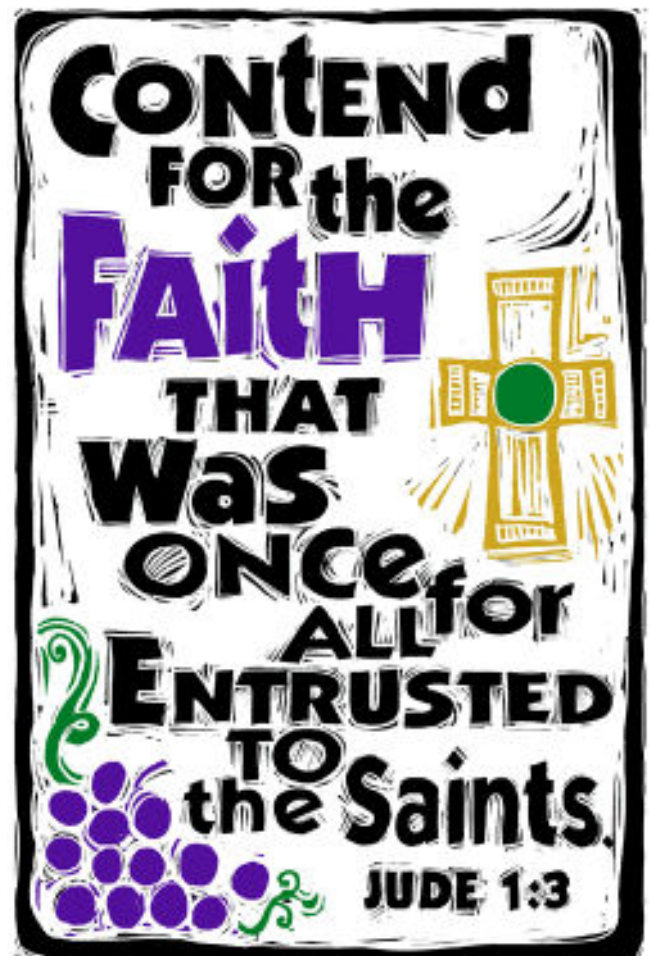
It is evident that the inspired Jude had intended to write a letter to these brethren about the “Common Salvation” but because of the presence of false teachers, he wrote this short epistle pleading with them to contend for the faith.

Doctrinal corruption can cause one to forfeit one’s salvation (Gal. 5: 1-4, Col. 2: 7-9). So we see the necessity for contending for the faith. Now let’s examine in depth the words that Jude used in this short letter.

Jude tells us to “contend earnestly for the faith”. As I dug deeper into the meaning of this word contend some very surprising things came out. The Greek word translated “contend” here is epagonizomai. In the Greek it is a very powerful word.

When we go to Vines Dictionary it explains the word this way: ***“epagonizomai signifies “to contend about a thing, as a combatant” (epi, “upon or about,” intensive, agon, “a contest”), “to contend earnestly,”. The word “earnestly” is added to convey the intensive force of the preposition.”***

So we see that the word earnestly is added to show us that we are to use a great deal of force. What was interesting as I studied this verse was the fact that this same word was used to describe Greek wrestlers. In wrestling, both offensive and defensive moves are used.



Many get the impression that contend means simply to defend. This statement is simply not true. While we should, by all means, defend our beliefs, Jude here was saying more than that. That we should be SHARING the faith once for all handed down to the saints.

How important was doctrine (the teachings of the Bible) to the early Apostles? Let's open our bibles and see for ourselves. We see Paul, formerly known as Saul, giving instructions to a young Minister in **2 Peter 3:14-17-**

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Paul tells Timothy to "continue in the things you have learned and become convince of". He goes on to say that this wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Jesus. By Paul's own words, how sure should we be of what we believe? Sadly, most people in today's world will put more effort into researching a new car, a vacuum sweeper or even a cell phone than their own faith that can bring them ETERNAL LIFE!

Lord knows, in this world we live in today, doctrinal error abounds. This should not take us by surprise. We are warned numerous times in the scriptures (Galatians 1:6-7; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Matthew 24:4-5). By Paul's own words we have an eye opening warning. It is a warning not only for the Elders at Ephesus that he was speaking to, but for us today as well. In **Acts 20:27-31** Paul gives this warning,

"For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."

Paul was so opposed to doctrinal error that in **Acts 15:4-30** he as well as Barnabas not only debated with those at Antioch about their false belief about circumcision, they left and went back to Jerusalem to find the source of this false teaching.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, these men that we read about, Paul, Matthew, Steven, Luke etc... BELIEVED this truth of Jesus Christ, not only about the man Jesus but His teachings as well, so profoundly that they gave their very lives so that we may have the God given gift today to read what was written and have the opportunity for everlasting life in the Kingdom of God. I pray that the same can be said of us when either death closes our eyes or our Lord returns. If we will not "contend for the faith", God will raise others up who will.

We need to urgently gain an appreciation for the truth and then stand for that truth. The thinking that there are no absolutes but only shades of gray is completely opposed to scripture. The truth of God's word has been compromised, politicized, and twisted in every imaginable way (2 Pet. 3: 16, Eph. 4: 14, 15). We must return to the true gospel concerning Jesus Christ AND everything He taught. Because this precious Gospel message, of the Kingdom of God, has the power to save (Rom. 1: 16).

My Prayer for all of you today is, when Jesus Christ returns to this earth, He WILL find faith. If we cannot stand for Jesus now, will we be able to stand before Him on that day we all pray for?



VOICE FROM THE PAST

Sincerity, Morality or Truth: Which is more Important?

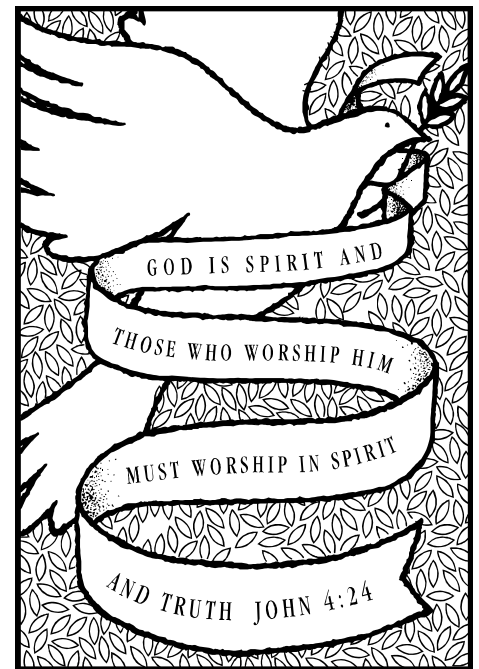
By Harry Sheets

JUST how important is truth in the plan of salvation? Does it really make much difference what we believe? Isn't sincerity much more to be desired than truth? Isn't right living the deciding factor in salvation, rather than truth? These and other similar questions, are frequently encountered in conversation with people. Sometimes, we fear, these questions are asked by those who want to dodge responsibility for studying God's Word. Many other people are earnest and sincere and are really seeking information. Perhaps these questions have been bothering you, so we would like to consider the importance of truth.

Jesus at the Well

Jesus, when talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, said to her: *"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:23, 24, R.S.V.).

Let us analyze this teaching of Jesus. Jesus indicated that there was a time when God accepted blind worship, if such worship was done in the spirit of worship, or with proper frame of mind. Apparently, this was what many of the Samaritans were doing. They were worshiping without true knowledge. Jesus told the woman that the time had arrived when it was necessary to worship in spirit and truth. No longer was blind worship sufficient. Truth was made a necessary ingredient of worship. Paul, furthermore, tells us that the Father is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and truth. Then he adds this uncompromising statement, *"Those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."* Worship in spirit, or sincerity of mind, is not enough, neither is it sufficient just to have the truth. When one has the combination of sincerity and truth, then he can worship as he should. Paul recognized the importance of truth when he warned the Galatians against following another gospel. So strong was his conviction, that he pronounced a curse upon anyone who would preach any other gospel. Paul would be considered narrow-minded today, but, since he spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we must accept his statement as the only correct and safe one to follow.



The Word of Truth

In Acts 17:11, Paul praised the Bereans for being *"more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those*

things were so." Searching the Scriptures was their only safeguard, for in this way only, could they be certain of believing the truth. James 1:18 tells us of God, *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."* It is through truth that we are begotten as sons of God. Belief in a falsehood cannot possibly make us sons of God. When we have studied until we know we have the basic truths of the Bible, then we can say with Paul in Romans 8:16, 17, *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*

David tells us, in Psalm 96:13, that when the Lord comes He will *"judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."* To be on the right side of the judgment, we should know the truth. Jesus said, *"The truth shall make you free."*

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul accused the Gentiles of being sinners before God. One of the specific charges that he made against them was that they *"changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature, more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever."* Turning truth into falsehood is a human trait. Paul, who was sent to the Gentiles, accused the Gentiles of such practices, and Jesus, who was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, accused the Jews of *"teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."* These false teachings were believed, followed, and defended for truth. The people who believed these falsehoods are not going to be excused in the day of judgment. Paul warned the Romans that the judgment of God would be *"according to truth"* (2:2).

The Gentiles paid a frightful price for turning the truth of God into a lie. Notice the words of Paul in Romans 1:24, 26, *"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. . . . For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections."* Read the rest of chapter one of Romans for the sordid picture of what happens to people who depart from the truth of God's Word.

Worship God

The beginning of the downfall of the Gentiles was their willingness to worship the creature more than the Creator. Which are you honoring the more, the gift or the Giver? Remember, we are told to worship God in spirit and in truth. Are you doing it?

Paul wrote a grave warning to Timothy of what would happen in the last days, saying, *"The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths"* (2 Tim. 4:3, 4, R.S.V.). How true that is today! People reject the teachings of the Bible. They are not studying to see if what they believe is in harmony with the Scriptures. It has been said, and I believe it would be true, that if Jesus were to return to the earth and start out as an itinerant preacher, the same as before, preaching the same pure gospel, He would be rejected by this generation as surely as He was by those who lived two thousand years ago. The gospel Jesus preached is seldom preached today, and when it is preached, it is rejected. People do not want sound teaching today, any more than they did in Jesus' day.

Paul warned the Thessalonian brethren of the coming deception. Paul speaks of one *"even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thess. 2:9-12). Last-day people, given over to judgment because they will not accept and believe the truth! In contrast, notice the words of Paul for the faithful, *"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth"* (2 Tim. 2:13). What a contrast! One group was given over to deception and judgment because they would not believe the truth, and the other group was sanctified by the Spirit because they believed the truth.

BIBLE STUDY

What's Abrahamic About the Faith?

Kent Ross, Springfield, Ohio

Once our Church was known as the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. That title was retained by another group of churches, while our group seemed to drift toward a more “corporate-like” name, the Church of God General Conference. There is nothing wrong with that newer name, except that many of our people today don't know much about Abraham, or why his name and agreement with God is so important.

Bible Learning: Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness sake – Romans 4:2,3 - ²If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

1. But it started with the man, then named Abram, that God called to found a nation, His special nation. A people who were to show the world His way.

God made a covenant, or agreement with a man named Abraham, and his descendents – Genesis 17:1-8 – “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. ² I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”

³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴ “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram ^[b]; your name will be Abraham, ^[c] for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶ I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷ I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

2. Who are his descendents?

- a. Abraham's first-born son was Ishmael

Genesis 16:1,2,15 – ¹ Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, “The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her.” Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

¹⁵ So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne, but he was illegitimate.

- b. Abraham's second born-son was Isaac – his legitimate son – Genesis 21:1-13 – ¹

“Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac ^[a]



to the son Sarah bore him. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶ Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." ⁷ And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

⁸ The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. ⁹ But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, ¹⁰ and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

"The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. ¹² But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. ¹³ I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

c. What about after that, Abraham's grand-children?

1) Isaac had two sons, but it was again not his first-born who would inherit – Genesis 25:19-34

⁹ This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, ²⁰ and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹ Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. ²² The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. ²³ The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." ²⁴ When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. ²⁵ The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. ^[b] ²⁶ After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. ²⁷ The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. ²⁸ Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹ Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. ³⁰ He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

¹ Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

² "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

³³ But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright.

2) So the second-son, Jacob inherited the birthright.

3) So the Biblical principle reveals itself:

a) The first does not inherit, but it is the second who inherits;

b) Adam was formed first, but it is the second-Adam that inherits – 1st Corinthians 15 - ⁴⁴it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body,

there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”^[a]; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

- c) Adam and Jesus; Ishmael and Isaac; Esau and Jacob, and perhaps even the Jews and Gentiles reveal the premise.

Bible Application:

1. Does that old covenant, or agreement still have any substance to it? Malachi 1:1-3
“An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi. “I have loved you,” says the LORD. “But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’ ”Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” the LORD says. “Yet I have loved Jacob, ³ but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals
2. Romans 9:4-13, see footnote on verse 5 - Or **“Christ, who is over all. God be forever praised! Or Christ. God who is over all be forever praised!”**

“the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

“It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ⁸In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring. ⁹For this was how the promise was stated: “At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.”

“Not only that, but Rebekah’s children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: ¹²not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

3. Galatians 3:6-9, 26-29 tells us more of the story:
“Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”^[a]
⁷Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ⁸The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”⁹So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.²⁶You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

What Does It Matter:

1. So what happens to the Jews, who are yet Abraham’s seed, will happen and have the same impact on us who are now adopted into that family and heirs.
2. Jesus said, regarding the Signs of the times – Matt. 16:2,3
²He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. ³And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?
3. The Jews of Jesus day didn’t understand, nor comprehend the “signs of the times.”
These Signs are for us to watch and see, and Look Up for our Redemption and Inheritance is getting closer and closer.
4. In the next Bible study we will consider more on Israel, God’s “sign-post nation.”

LOUISE LAPP CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

THOUGHTS TO PONDER AND BELIEF CASE AND OPENING LINES

By Pastor Delbert Rankin

For anyone, a hundred years is a long time. From now it reaches back to the waning weeks of 1909. The Twentieth Century was approaching but a mere ten years old.

In 1909, the rumblings of international conflict were pushing the world toward the Great War (years later to be called the First World War), opium was federally prohibited in the United States, the NAACP came into existence, the Hudson automobile began to be manufactured, the first American university school of nursing started in Minnesota, the communication radio was used for the first time for sea rescue, both the North Pole and the South Pole were discovered and reached, what was to be Connie Mack baseball stadium opened in Philadelphia, Taft became U.S. President, Joan of Arc was declared a saint and beatified, Tel Aviv in Israel began to be built, a 22-year-old woman drove a Maxwell automobile from New York to San Francisco in 59 days—a first, *Shine On, Harvest Moon* hit number 1 on the popular music chart, the first American airplane was sold commercially, Jim Thorpe played pro-baseball—later causing forfeiture of his Olympic medals, the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution opened the door for income tax collection, the first U.S. army plane was tested and delivered, the first Lincoln head pennies were issued, Indianapolis race track opened, construction began on the Pearl Harbor naval station, all this amidst many other developments. Like any other year, the world continues on and civilization advances. Those reaching 100 in 2009 were born, of course, that year as well.

One such lady was born November 6, 1909. In her active years she espoused and maintained Christianity as a lifetime vocation. A member of the Church of God, she was a minister's wife, following her preacher husband to congregations and to conferences, supporting him wherever he went, tolerating his dry wit. She was blest with a family and was a hospitable homemaker, a musician, a hymn writer. From the soul of her hymns came the complete gamut of the Christian experience. We'll let them take us along the way, the truth and the life.

"O God, our Father, great Thou art, We worship Thee with humble heart; Thy hands alone the worlds did make, and planned the course that each should take...Eternal, evermore the same." Reviewing His great creative handiwork, His just and right testimonies as our guide, His great love through Christ, "we love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). His power, His ultimate intent to place Christ upon Zion's hill, His invitation for us now (in preparation for the ultimate, future eternity) to come and be His servants, all point us to the "One God and Father" (for our God is one, in its simplest, personal sense) where seekers must start (Hebrews 11:6). There they learn that He is approachable through Christ, and oneness with Him is our purpose to fulfill.

This lady's personal testimony speaks from experience: "I'm buried with Christ in watery grave." Certainly through Christ's death (immersion in water symbolizes his death and burial) we are freed from our sins. "I'm dying with Christ to sin's awful power" and enslavement. Self and flesh must go; they must be overcome. "I'm risen with Christ," making "me a new creation within." "Life ever new" is a day in, day out wonder and joy!

From the juncture of "One God, one Lord, one faith," "one hope" and "one way," she reveals reality: "Only one life, 'Twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last." So the prayer comes from her lips: "Lord, use my life to glorify Thee, and bring the lost to Calvary." There is no higher purpose in life than winning souls for Christ with the truth and love of God and with a view toward salvation.

That purpose was borne out in her life two-fold. She in English rhyme recalls the Hebrew 'A-Z' word picture of what it is to be a virtuous woman—Proverbs 31:10-21. "Beauty fades and soon is past. She who lives for God and others, Has a beauty that will last." A life committed to melodious and harmonious worship of the One God through His Son is not for just one or two times a week but, as we say it today, 24/

7, in all we do. “We will worship and adore Thy name. And with all one heart, seek to know and do They will. Amen.” Week in, week out, enduring, persisting faithfully!

Finally, and especially, I am sure, meaningful to her heart is the message of good news—the very core and goal of God’s salvation message—that was revealed in Jesus’ ministry as he came “preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14-15)...and showing it (Luke 8:1) with foretastes of the powers of the world to come. “John saw the heaven and earth made new...The Holy City coming down, the New Jerusalem.” Read Revelation 21:1-21 and 22:1-5. Then, in that city, the saved will walk, basking in its light. God joining them, the curse of mortality and its attendant conditions are removed and give way to the eternal, everlasting, never-ending, universal Kingdom of God.

Today our hymn writer and sister in the faith is blind.

Her eyesight may be gone but her mental faculties remain keen; her son Jon says she still has all her marbles.

She may be blind but if her fingers are placed at the correct key starting positions, they tell us that she still can play the piano beautifully.

Though she can no longer read the Bible, she sees by faith the Lord who has revealed the great and precious promises of the age to come and the salvation of God: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened” (see Isaiah 35:4-6).

With all, she shall behold her Savior as he comes again—Revelation 1:7—and stands on Mt Olivet.

With the faithful like Job, with physical restoration and eyesight—”with my own eyes”, she, at the last, will behold God, who, too, will stand upon the earth—Job 19:25-27.

Louise gave parting words to recent church visitors, with a tearful embrace: ‘I will see you in the Kingdom.’



In this 1957 photo, Louise Lapp is shown on the right end of the seated front row. Seated to her right is her husband C.E. Lapp. Both were instructors at Oregon Bible College at this time. Who else do you recognize?



JERUSALEM, A CUP OF TREMBLING

With the recent death of Yasser Arafat, Jerusalem is once more in the news, as the Palestinians made known his wish to be buried at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Israel denied this request, and burial was made instead at Ramallah, several miles away. Recent decades have

witnessed constant turmoil between Jews and Arabs over the very existence of the Jewish State of Israel and particularly the Jewish desire to re-establish occupancy of their ancient temple site, now held by Islam.

Long ago the Prophet Zechariah foretold the conflict that would rage over the status of Jerusalem, a conflict that could not even begin until enough Jews had returned to their ancient homeland to establish themselves once more as an independent, sovereign state. In 1948, such a state became reality for the first time in 2000 years—an event long expected by diligent Bible students!

Zechariah foresaw the current turmoil and described Jerusalem as “a cup of trembling unto all the people round about” (12:2). He went on to depict Jerusalem as a “burdensome stone for all people” and suggested that “all the people of the earth” would be gathered together against it (verse 3). Looking at the recent wrath pronounced against Israel in the United Nations and by some nations in the European Union, one can easily see that the Jewish Nation is being made a scapegoat for many evils that their enemies have accused them of, with the implied threat that Israel will be made to suffer, even be attacked by many nations, if they do not consent to their own demise at the hands of the Palestinians!

Zechariah, however, does not foresee a final success for Israel’s enemies. He sees them roundly defeated at Jerusalem and throughout the Holy Land. He sees the intervention of God Himself to protect and save His covenant people and to rout all their adversaries. A reading of chapters 12 and 14 will make this very clear! Jerusalem will not be destroyed, even though attacked and half of the people taken captive before the LORD intervenes to rescue them. The picture of what God will do to the attackers is not a pretty one (14:12).

All of this contrasts very definitely with what Jesus said would happen to Jerusalem within a generation after He was rejected. Luke describes what was to be the Roman attack on the city and temple, one which would result in the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem, with all the surviving inhabitants being taken away (21:20-24). All of this was exactly fulfilled in A.D. 70, as Daniel 9:26 had foretold centuries earlier, a prophecy later reiterated by Christ Jesus.

We who believe are called upon to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:6), a city that is not destined to be destroyed again but to be rescued and delivered by the hand of Almighty God, through His Son, Messiah Jesus. (Read and ponder Psalm 2, and rejoice in the glorious future promised to Jerusalem, described in Isaiah 2:1-4.)

William Wachtel