

OneAccord

May 2012



Around the Dinner Table

Catching
Up With
the Jordan
Volunteers

*From the
President:
Lessons
From Africa*

*Portraits of
Faith: Give
and Take;
Girl on Fire*

from the president

lessons from africa

Africa is one of the most intriguing and interesting places you could ever visit. The continent has a mystery about it that attracts you to come back over and over again. I have lost track of my total visits to Africa, but it would be more than 15 in the past 13 years. My first trip was in December of 1999.

I still vividly remember that first visit and feeling so helpless. The problems that we saw were staggering. How could we possibly be of any assistance? One of the first lessons I learned about Africa is that simply giving money is not the answer.

Billions of dollars from many well-meaning governments and nongovernmental charities have poured into various Africa nations in the past 40 years. But what has been the result? More corruption, more poverty and many more people suffering.

One morning during our trip to Africa during the Days of Unleavened Bread this year, Joel Meeker and I visited the city hospital in Kigali, Rwanda. Based on U.S. standards, it is quite limited. It is comprised of a number of one-story buildings often housing outdated equipment. We came to specifically visit the dental section of the hospital.

When we met with the dentists who were working there, they all asked if we knew Dr. Greg Swartz. For



those who don't know Dr. Swartz, he is an elder of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, serving in the Columbia, Missouri, area. He also has his own dental practice.

Dr. Swartz visited Rwanda in 2004 and decided that he could do something to serve the brethren while improving the challenging condition of the dental department in the state hospital.

When he returned to the U.S. he planned several visits to provide dental care for our brethren and ongoing dental training for dentists. Eventually, in 2009 he established a charity named "Smile Rwanda." His purpose was to provide updated equipment, supplies and training for dentists to use in Rwanda. Over the course of the past few years, he and his charity have provided seven modern dental chairs along with many necessary medical supplies.

Each year Dr. Swartz returns to Rwanda and provides dental care for the Church members and others during his stay. The faces of the dentists and

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CHURCH of GOD
A WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Dr. Swartz, left, and a very happy patient

"Lessons from Africa," continued from page 2

members light up when his name is mentioned. Dr. Swartz and his charity have made a huge impact on many people in this faraway country.

As I travel around Africa, I also see

the result of many projects that were sponsored by the Church in years gone by. I hope to see the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, pick up that mantle and be able to assist members in these diverse parts of the world in a positive way, whether it is through a nonprofit foundation or some other

means within the Church.

Paul writes in Galatians that we should "do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). It is easy to look at places like Rwanda and be overwhelmed by the problems we see instead of focusing on the good that we can do if we are willing to work at it.

In Hebrews we read that "God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints" (Hebrews 6:10). I hope we never lose this desire to see the lives of our brethren improve in these remote areas of the world.

We should never become so overwhelmed by seemingly insurmountable obstacles that we forget what a difference one person can make in the lives of others!

Attention: High School Graduates!

Congratulations! We would like to feature the 2012 high school graduates in the July *One Accord*. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by **June 1**.

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

Also include your phone number or e-mail address (we may use it to confirm spellings, etc.). Please give the bio and a recent photo (conforming to biblical standards of dress and hair length) of the graduate to your congregation's reporter.

We do reserve the right to edit for clarity and a 200-word maximum length. Thanks!



Catching Up With the Jordan Volunteers

Dallas, Texas, elder Phil Sandilands traveled to the Kingdom of Jordan to spend Passover and the First Day of Unleavened Bread with our volunteers in Amman.

by Phil Sandilands

During this year's spring festival season, I was privileged to make a trip to Amman, Jordan, to visit our four volunteers serving in this year's volunteer service program and spend an event-filled four days!

As in years past, at the invitation of the Jordanian royal family, our young adults have been serving at two facilities in Amman. Joshua and Eva Messerly, who were married just prior to coming to Jordan, serve in the Young Muslim Women's Association (YMWA) Bunyat School for Special Education. Jessica Schultz and Stella Helterbrand both work at the Amman Baccalaureate School.

I arrived in Amman on Wednesday evening, prior to Passover and was driven 45 minutes to the apartments where our young adults live. The air was quite chilly in the evenings for the first two days. In fact, Amman had snow on the ground just a few weeks prior to my arrival.

Baptism in the River Jordan

Thursday morning will be a memory that I will cherish forever. The four volunteers and I made the trip down to Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan. This is the traditional site where John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ. While we do not know for sure if this was the actual spot, there are archeological dig sites there that have uncovered an area where stone ledges had been built along the waterway.

The river today is several hundred feet from this site, as the natural paths of rivers change over time, and we hiked our way down to the river's edge. This was to be a special day for a very special young lady. Eva Messerly was about to be baptized in the Jordan River! Not many people can claim that! I told the tour guide what we were going to do, and he arranged for the other tour groups to visit a nearby

church to give us some privacy (even though there were several people on the Israeli side who were watching).

What we didn't plan on was the temperature of the river. The prior week's snowmelt was still coursing down the river; and when we stepped into the Jordan, we both couldn't breathe for a few frigid seconds! After we regained our composure (and breath), I had the honor of baptizing Eva in the same waterway that many of her fellow Christian ancestors had been baptized. The experience was an emotional one for all of us, to say the least.

Cory Erickson, the project's leader, had conducted all of the baptismal counseling with Eva, but couldn't make the trip for her baptism. Thanks to technology, however, he was able to see a portion of it. We drove back to Amman and connected with Mr. Erickson via Skype. We then finished the ceremony with the laying on of hands while he watched via the Internet! What would our ancestors think if they could have seen that?

A meaningful Passover

That evening we had 12 baptized members, including several visiting friends from the United States and Eva—our newest sister in the faith—for a memorable Passover service. Just prior to the service, I was reading my notes and heard the Muslims' call to prayer over the minarets located throughout the city.

It struck me that we were able to observe God's commanded festival at the time He prescribed, even though we were all visitors in a foreign land. It reminded me of Hebrews 11:13-16 where Paul referred to our ancestors as

Continued on page 10

Give and Take

After 50 years of marriage, Stanley and Valda Stiller continue to be devoted to the truth and each other.

by Jodie Maczeck

On March 3, 1962, Stanley and Valda Stiller walked down the aisle and began a life together that has spanned over 50 years.

I spoke to Valda recently and asked her a few questions about their life together.

Having met at a Lutheran church youth group, they came into the Church in 1969 and were baptized on the same day in January 1970. Valda remembers the water being extremely cold. That might have been due to the fact that they were baptized in a cutoff corrugated iron water tank in the back yard of a friend's house. Ever since that frigid beginning, they have faithfully stuck to God's way through thick and thin.

They live on a farming property near Guluguba, which is some six hours west of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. They were very isolated in their early days in the Church, not having much contact with Church people and receiving literature and personal contact only occasionally.

As time went by, God called more members in the surrounding areas, and soon a small congregation of about 18 members emerged. At first, they met in each other's homes, but before long they were able to meet in a hall in the small town of Miles, some 40 minutes from their home.

Sadly, the separation of affiliations has left them isolated once again. With today's technologies, however, Stanley and Valda are able to attend Church every week via Skype online video phone services in Brisbane. Stanley and Valda tell me that having the regular contact with Church family makes them feel closer to everyone and a part of the congregation.

I asked Valda what the key to a happy marriage is. She told me, "It is about give and take. Even when you are angry with each other, you let it go. Always stick together through the good and the bad and finally, always talk to each other."

Over the years Valda has found that she and her husband think the same. They have been together for so long they have a strong connection to each other and how they are feeling.

I also asked Valda what advice she had for our young ones. "Don't live together!" she exclaimed. "It doesn't make you happy. Once you are married, that is the time to grow and learn together. The Bible tells us the way to live."

Stanley and Valda have four wonderful children, Andrew, Estelle, Randolph and Fenella, who have given them 12 gorgeous grandchildren. They have been in the Church for 42 years and are a wonderful example to all of us. ☺

Jodie Maczek attends the Brisbane, Australia, congregation of Church of God, a Worldwide Association, where she serves as the One Accord reporter.



Valda and Stanley Stiller cut their 50th wedding anniversary cake

Girl on Fire

Brand-new to the truth, Ashley Hilgen became intrigued and excited about a brand-new relationship with God.

by Katie Froedge

Three years ago, Ashley Martens found herself in a life-changing conversation with the one who would become her future husband. During that pivotal dinner, the subject of religion came up and, instead of being put off, she became intrigued. Ashley was raised in a very strict Baptist home and felt unsatisfied with the teachings that always left her looking for something more.

After years of attending nowhere, there she was, sitting across the table from a man who was telling her things she had never before heard, and she couldn't get enough. Shortly thereafter, she started attending the Kansas City congregation and never stopped going. Everything she heard made sense in a way that nothing before had. She started reading her Bible, and she was so excited to have a relationship with God and to be able to learn more and more about His way of life.



Ashley Hilgen was baptized Feb. 12, 2012

What impressed her the most was witnessing God's people welcome her with open arms into the love of a family that became her own. She had never experienced anything like it—people following God's way and proving that it works. She witnessed the blessings of His way of life and wanted it for her own life.

Eventually she married that man at the dinner, Aaron Hilgen; and now, the Kansas City congregation is very pleased to announce that on Feb. 12, 2012, Ashley Hilgen was baptized into the body of Christ. We welcome her with open arms into an everlasting family where we are all truly one, bound by the Holy Spirit of our living God.

When asked if there was a meaningful scripture or inspiring story that helped her through the baptism process, Ashley responded with Matthew 6:25-34. For someone who has not grown up knowing the Father's loving care, it can be difficult to understand and to have the faith that He will provide.

Ashley knew she needed the Holy Spirit to be able to have more understanding and faith. She decided to put away the stresses of this life and to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," and we are all eager to see the blessings that will be added to her both physically and spiritually in the years to come. ☺☺

Katie Froedge is a member of the Kansas City, Missouri, congregation, where she serves as a One Accord reporter.



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Showing Up

A little-known woman in the Bible demonstrates the power of a mother's love.

by Arnold Hampton

Syndicated columnist Erma Bombeck once wrote: “The easiest part of being a mother is giving birth. The hardest part is showing up for it each day.”

Mothers are so very important and have provided great comfort and stability for their children through the years. The Bible is replete with examples of motherhood—Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Deborah, Hannah, Mary, among others. But there is one mother who is probably not well known—Rizpah. This woman is one of the great heroines of the Bible and an outstanding example of motherhood, all because she showed up each day.

In Joshua 9 the Gibeonites deceived the Israelites into making a covenant with them to let them live (Joshua 9:3-14, 18-21). This was a binding agreement. Just as when we make a covenant with God at baptism and at marriage and are expected to keep it, the Israelites made a treaty—ratified by an oath before God—and were expected to keep it.

Saul violated this promise when he attempted to wipe out the Gibeonites 350 years later. As a result, God brought a famine on the land of Israel. David then called the Gibeonites to his throne room and asked what he could do to make amends. The Gibeonites asked for seven of Saul's descendants so they could kill them, disgracing and dishonoring the house of Saul. David delivered the seven men—two of whom were the sons of Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines (2 Samuel 21:8-9)—to the Gibeonites.

What can we learn from Rizpah?

Rizpah suddenly found herself in a devastating trial some mothers unfortunately face: dealing with the death of a child. Yet even the death of her two sons did not stop her

from continuing to be a devoted mother.

Rizpah was an example of devotion and dedication. For six to eight months she kept the birds of prey and the wild beasts from devouring the bodies of her sons because she wanted a proper burial for them (2 Samuel 21:10).

Rizpah protected her children. She could not have stopped her sons' execution, but for over half a year she protected their bodies. Mothers have done that throughout history, but today there's a greater need. Our children are at risk today to the vultures that are circling—music, media, substance abuse, promiscuous sex, pressures to conform—all methods used by Satan the devil to devour our children (1 Peter 5:8).

Rizpah suddenly found herself in a devastating trial some mothers unfortunately face: dealing with the death of a child. Yet even the death of her two sons did not stop her from continuing to be a devoted mother.

Rizpah was an example of love. She demonstrated a love for her sons by her commitment to die before she let some wild beast have her sons' corpses. She determined to make any personal sacrifice in order to gain a proper burial for her sons. Rizpah represents every mother who puts her children's needs before her own.

There was nothing that could give Rizpah her sons back or fill the hole in her heart; but because of her actions, King David took notice. He had her sons buried in the proper fashion (2 Samuel 21:11-14).

What about us? Are we diligently battling for the lives of our children? Are we surrounding them with prayer? Are we persevering, or do we become intense only in a crisis? We need more of the spirit and determination of Rizpah to show up every day. ©^A

Arnold Hampton is the pastor of the West Palm Beach, Florida, congregation. He also serves as a member of the Ministerial Board of Directors.

Question: How Do I Know I Have the Holy Spirit?

from "Bible Questions and Answers"

<http://cogwa.org/guidance>

Answer: One of God's greatest gifts is the Holy Spirit, and it provides a lifeline to God by which He gives many of His other wonderful gifts. The Holy Spirit gives a Christian spiritual power and understanding and makes it possible for us to become more like God and eventually inherit eternal life. So it is important to know how to receive the Holy Spirit, how to stir it up and how to be assured that we have it.

How does the Bible say we receive the Holy Spirit?

Jesus Christ told His disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit after His death. On the Day of Pentecost, the beginning of the Church of God was announced with powerful miracles, and Peter preached an inspired sermon describing how we can receive the Holy Spirit:

"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38).

Other passages show that the Spirit is usually given to the repentant believer after baptism when a minister lays his hands on the person and asks God to give the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

Repentance, belief, baptism and the laying on of hands are the steps God asks us to follow before He gives His Holy Spirit, so if a person has not followed these steps, he or she does not have the Holy Spirit in him or her yet.

What does the Bible say we should do to avoid quenching the Spirit?

In David's impassioned prayer of repentance, he pleaded with God, "Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11). He knew that if he didn't keep repenting and seeking God, he was in danger of an unpardonable sin, for God will not forgive us if we do not repent.

Paul also gave warnings to Christians not to grieve, neglect or quench the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

To avoid these dangers, a Christian must do the opposite. Instead of grieving the Spirit, we should pray daily for God's

Spirit, follow the leading of the Spirit and sow (grow in) spiritual things (Ephesians 1:17-18; Galatians 5:16; 6:7-8).

Instead of putting out the fire of the Spirit, Paul encourages us to "stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

What are some evidences of the Holy Spirit?

The Bible lists many things the Holy Spirit enables us to do. Paul wrote that God's Spirit opens up our spiritual understanding of things that seem like foolishness to those without spiritual discernment (1 Corinthians 2:10-14). Through regular prayer and study of the Bible, the Spirit helps us grow in understanding of God's plan and our part in it. It writes God's laws on our hearts and minds, helping us internalize God's way of life and think like He does (Hebrews 8:10). It enables us to transform or change our minds (Romans 12:2).

Jesus said the Spirit will provide us with help and guidance (John 14:16, 26; 16:13). One of the most important evidences is that "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). Godly love is described in more detail in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Though we all fall short, a Christian should see this fruit growing in his or her life.

Paul lists other important fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." Christians will examine themselves to see how much this fruit is growing and will regularly ask God to provide His gracious Spirit to help them grow more.

It is God's plan for us to repent, be baptized, receive His Spirit and then be transformed in mind to become more and more like Him. By praying for, yielding to and stirring up the Spirit, we will see the spiritual growth that assures us God's Spirit is working in us. ©A

The Personal Correspondence Department responds to questions from people who contact the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, about the Bible and Christian living issues, as well as general inquiries about COGWA.

strangers and pilgrims on the earth who were waiting for the city that is being prepared for them from God. Our volunteers know even better than many of us how it feels to be a visitor in another land for many months.

The next day eight of us took another trip down the same highway, but instead of turning north to the baptism site, we turned south and spent the morning at the Dead Sea. I have visited this area before, and it is always an amazing experience to see people floating in this salt-rich water. With no exit rivers, this lake, which is over 400 feet below sea level, has become one of the saltiest places on the planet. We enjoyed several hours of mud and salt, and then we had a nice lunch by the water.

That afternoon we drove back to Amman, and the volunteers and guests all pitched in to prepare a wonderful meal for the Night to Be Much Observed. First, we drove to the market to get groceries—and that is a place all should experience. The aromas of spices wafting through the market—curries, turmeric, coriander—all blended together in the air. The vegetables were also piled high in

LIVING AS EXAMPLES

Phil Sandilands joins Stella Helterbrand, Jessica Schultz, and Eva and Joshua Messerly, who have been living in Jordan for nearly a year as volunteers at the YMWA Bunyat School for Special Education and the Amman Baccalaureate School.

the market stalls. If you have visited this area, you know that the main vegetable is the cucumber—and there were more there than I have ever seen anywhere else!

The service for the First Day of Unleavened Bread fell on the weekly Sabbath this year, and 15 of us met in the apartments for a Bible study, followed by a meal and fellowship before then having the main service.

Touring the schools

On Sunday morning I went with Joshua and Eva to the Bunyat School for Special Education. It was a moving experience to see how the school, under the direction of Princess Sarvath, has established this much-needed program. On the tour, I watched as instructors taught the children how to fold clothes, how to put on and take off their own jackets, how to take care of their daily needs, such as brushing their teeth, washing their faces, etc. For many, these tasks are hard, and the loving care they are shown allows them to improve in their ability to get along in life.

For those who are older and have the ability, the school also provides vocational education. Many are trained in wood-working, cooking and other skills. I was able to sit with four to five young children and assist with their weaving class. Many of you might recall from your own childhood making pot holders on a small square plastic loom. This is similar to what they had with string and yarn. The process





“Seeing the volunteers reminded me of Hebrews 11:13-16 where Paul referred to our ancestors as strangers and pilgrims on the earth who were waiting for the city that is being prepared for them from God. Our volunteers know even better than many of us how it feels to be a visitor in another land for many months.”

TAKING THE PLUNGE

Eva Messerly prepares herself before Phil Sandlilands baptizes her in the Jordan River. Eva was able to participate in her first Passover with her fellow volunteers that evening.

of weaving helps teach them manual dexterity.

That evening, we fellowshiped one last time, as I would have to leave for the airport in the morning. While I was glad to be returning to my family back in Dallas, Texas, I was sad to leave four wonderful people, who are showing through their stellar example how to live godly lives while in this world. I can see why this project has been so successful for many years. This is truly a needed service, and I am proud of how well our young adults have done.

If any of you would like to be volunteers in the future, please let us know! The opportunity will be a life-changing experience! ☺☺

Phil Sandilands is an elder in the Dallas, Texas, congregation.

May 2012

Spending the Feast in the Holy Land

Now is the time to seriously consider joining brethren from around the world in Jordan this year for the Feast of a lifetime! Explore the ancient Nabataean city of Petra, walk the Roman ruins of Jerash and scuba dive in the beautiful Red Sea. Many are also planning to take an exciting extension tour of the Holy Land of Israel. **Applications are due by May 11**, so please act now if you are interested. Please contact Cory or Colene Erickson at ericksoncc@comcast.net if you have questions.



www.jordanfot.org

Around the Dinner Table: Gather Together and Make Memories

Teaching our children hospitality begins in the home.

by Vicki Willoughby

A member-focused version of what was posted on the "Christian Parenting Blog" April 4, 2012

TODAY I FOUND MYSELF REMINISCING ABOUT how many memories have been made around our supper table. Through the years we have, as much as possible, made it a habit to eat the evening meal together. During the week, the meals might not have been all that spectacular, but the time together was priceless.

Just the other night we were at one of our children's homes, and two of our children mentioned a couple of things that they remembered from meals gone by. The comments were not necessarily flattering reviews of those particular dishes, but we all had a good laugh.

From an early age, children can learn the importance of being generous and warm around the dinner table. When they are older, they will share that generosity and warmth with others.

Children learn how special the Sabbath is

Our children soon learned that when Friday evening came, it was going to be more special. As we came into the Sabbath together, they knew that the meal that night would be better than the split pea soup, the cow's tongue or the liver and applesauce that they had earlier in the week.

The table would be set with care, and there would be a tablecloth and stemware on the table. The children were keenly aware that a dessert would be on the menu for this particular evening's meal.

At a young age our children began to know that the Sabbath was a special time. The meal was a cut above and the time together was especially enjoyable, all because it was God's

Sabbath day (Exodus 20:8).

Whenever possible, we still try to have our children—and now their children—over on Friday evenings for a meal together. Everyone helps out with some of the food preparation, and the grandchildren even get involved in the table settings and helping prepare for the Sabbath meal. Having the opportunity to share conversation and catch up on all of their lives is very important, and the time we are able to have discussions on various Bible topics can be very uplifting.

A gathering place

A few years back, my husband built a dining room addition onto our home. After the room was completed, we took time to shop for a table that could accommodate our growing family. We wanted to find something that would be large enough that we could all gather around together.

This room is now the focal point of most of our family gatherings; and as our family grows through marriages and grandchildren, we are filling this room with even more memories.

Not all of our family members live close by, so we look forward to times when all of us can be together. These times are such a blessing as we gather together with food and family conversation.

As our family has grown, my husband has encouraged me whenever possible to use more disposable items to make clean up easier, especially on the Sabbath. We want the meal together to be remembered for the great time, not the burdensome cleanup.



Let us be given to hospitality

Learning how to be “given to hospitality” (Romans 12:13) starts in the home, with your own family. When your children are young, they will see the example set before them. As they respond to each other in simple ways, they learn how to give and share with others as they grow into adulthood.

Not everyone has a large room or a large table, but we can still get together in some way. So whenever and wherever you can, go and gather together, teaching and making memories. ☺☺

Vicki Willoughby and her husband of 39 years, Jack, live in northwest Arkansas where they attend the Springdale congregation of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association.

Join us in the mountains for 10 days in the wilderness over the Fourth of July holiday. We'll spend one day gaining wilderness training and two days rock climbing while camping in a campground by the Poudre River.

From there, we'll move west to spend the next several days in the spectacular mountains spanning the Continental Divide. Our days will be spent in the backcountry of the Arapaho National Forest backpacking, orienteering, team-building, camping and trout fishing. We'll spend the Sabbath in the beauty of the Rocky Mountain high country.

The Challenger Program is open to young adults, from high school graduates through “30-something,” married or single, baptized or unbaptized. Applicants must meet health and fitness requirements for the program, be committed to thorough preparation in advance and have ministerial recommendations. The cost for this program is \$300 per person.



<http://camps.cogwa.org>

Orlando Hosts Kids' Mini-Weekend



Ella Demarest
in a kids' game
(photo by Amy
Ranew)

On Feb. 4, 2012, the Orlando, Florida, congregation enjoyed a condensed family weekend. The day kicked off with a helpful sermon from Orlando pastor Roy Demarest on effective child rearing, which was followed by a delicious potluck meal.

The focus on the children continued after sunset with a costume parade featuring their favorite movie characters. Then it was time for fun and games that included toddler races, Ping-Pong ball bounce, apple towers and many more challenges for kids of all ages. The night was rounded out with karaoke performances by the adults and kids.

Article by Jenn Demarest

California Preteens Explore the Wonders of the Wilderness on Hike

Members of the Los Angeles and Bakersfield, California, congregations met together in the Angeles National Forest on Sunday, Feb. 12, for a preteen hike.

A total of 14 preteens and a handful of adults enjoyed hiking along the river. Gold panners can still be seen along the river, hoping to find a nice chunk of gold—or at least a few flakes.

All of the preteen hikers were able to successfully cross the river while walking on a log. They were then able to enjoy the beautiful canyon with walls

that projected upward on both sides. A family gold panning activity is being planned for the congregation later this summer.

Photo and article by Paul Carter



Preteens and guides gear up for the wilderness hike

North Carolina Brethren Set Aside Diets for Souper Social

On the Sabbath of Feb. 11, 2012, the four North Carolina congregations came together for the second annual "Souper Social." We were also joined by a few brethren from Virginia, South Carolina, Ohio and Florida. Many hands worked together under the capable directions of Arnold and Hilda Burns, a local elder and his wife.

We had a thought-provoking sermonette by Jeff Baker, an elder serving the Asheville congregation, on "What Would You Do for a Million Dollars?" Our guest speaker was Ralph Levy who gave us an excellent sermon on influence in and out of the Church.

After being well-fed spiritually, we enjoyed a variety of delightfully tasty soups, tacos and sandwiches. Those who set aside their diets for the evening were able to indulge in many delectable, fattening desserts!

Upon completion of the meal, the real fun began. Many of the brethren, teens and preteens went into the gym to play volleyball, basketball or soccer.

There were numerous games, such as ring toss and bowling, set up in the lobby for the younger children. The best one was called musical clothes. The children had to put on layers of clothes as the music played! The adults enjoyed various card games, such as Spades and Sequence. Others had fun playing Apples to Apples. Many of the brethren simply enjoyed what we do best—fellowshipping.

Article by Beverly McKnight

Two Longtime Deacons Ordained Elders in Fort Worth

Feb. 11, 2012, was a special Sabbath for those of us in the Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, congregations.

We met for a combined service to hear Clyde Kilough give us an update on media. Afterwards, we listened to visiting pastor Doug Johnson give the sermon; and following services, we enjoyed fun and fellowship that evening at the annual Boot Scoot fund-raiser for our teen summer camp program. It was also a great privilege to witness the ordinations of Dave Johnson and Barry Richey as elders in the Church of God.

Dave Johnson began attending with his parents in 1959. He graduated from Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, in 1975. He has attended in Fort Worth for 10 years and was ordained a deacon in the Dallas congregation in 1999. His brother, Doug Johnson, pas-

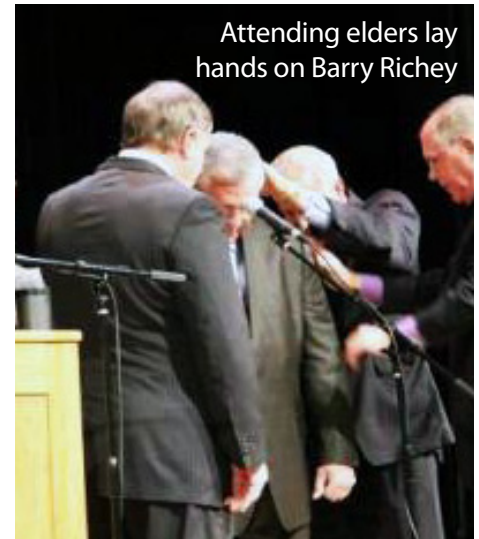
tor of the Cleveland, Ohio, and Meadville, Pennsylvania, congregations, led the ordination prayer for him.

Mr. Richey began attending with his parents in the 1960s. Mr. Richey was ordained a deacon by John Foster in Canton, Ohio, in 1984. He and his wife, Donna, moved to Fort Worth in the spring of 2005. Interestingly, they've served under all but one of the pastors on stage for this ordination over the past 28 years. Mr. Richey said, "For me, that was a special honor to remember, as we have grown to love and respect them all so very much."

The elders performing the ordinations were Britton Taylor, pastor of Fort Worth, Texas, as well as Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Doug Horchak, Ministerial Services operation manager; Mr. Kilough, Media

operation manager; Mr. Johnson, pastor of Cleveland, Ohio, and Meadville, Pennsylvania; and Ken Treybig, pastor of East Texas and Ruston, Louisiana.

Photo and article by Michelle Rickard



Attending elders lay hands on Barry Richey

South Carolina and Georgia Brethren Grill to Perfection

On Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 5, 2012, 35 brethren and family members from the Columbia, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia, congregations got together for a cookout unlike any other.

We met at the Delmar Nutrition Center near Leesville, South Carolina, located about halfway between the two congregations. Built as a one-room school for both grammar and high school students in 1896, it was expanded to three rooms by 1900. It continued to serve the Delmar community as a school until it closed in 1952. The building is listed among the historical sites of South Carolina. The peaceful rural setting among hardwood trees and pines plus an unseasonable 75 degrees could not have been better.

The highlight of the day, however, was, without a doubt, the three main meat dishes.

Several whole lamb roasts, marinated the night before, were cooked over an

open-pit grill, and additionally, we had Greek-style lamb gyros, also prepared with the same marinade, sautéed with vegetables in a hibachi over the open-pit fire. The gyros were served with a homemade tzatziki. Last but not least, our third meat dish was delicious

shredded venison slow-cooked in a homemade barbecue sauce.

The cookout was a great success and everyone enjoyed the variety of dishes served and the time spent with our extended Church family.

Photo and article by Nancy Lochner



Grill masters Ken Zenauskas and Steve Harper hard at work

Sledding Day Makes for Fun “Whirlwind of Controlled Chaos”

Bright and sunny California skies were our guide up to the Sierra Nevada mountains on Sunday, Feb. 26. The skies were beautiful; the weather was perfect; and the Stockton, California, congregation was ready to enjoy a wonderful day of snow tubing. Event organizer Asa Sanchez located an ideal spot at the Bear Valley sledding hill. The groomed hills proved to be the perfect mix of thrill for the children and safety for the parents.

The day started off with traditional snow tubing. Each rider took turns speeding down the hill. Kindergarten students Alex Sanchez and Noland Farnon took to the snow tubing easily and lugged the tubes uphill in an enthusiastic zeal of doing it “all by myself.” However, later on in the day, more daring feats were created, and

soon the children were whirling down the hills in tandem. Several of the children tied their tubes together, creating either a singular train or massive orbit of youngsters spinning down the hill in a whirlwind of controlled chaos that caused the children to screech with joy and excitement.

In fact, the tandem tubing was such a hit that other children, who happened to be using the snow hill as well, asked to join in on our group’s fun. Youngster Isabelle Sanchez summed up the day by stating, “It was cool having a train full of friends!” At the end of the day, Aaron Farnon, a father of three, eyed the snowmobile course, also located at Bear Valley, and noted that maybe next year, there’ll be “zooming” down the hills.

Photo and article by Linda Farnon



A train of friends barrel down the hill at Bear Valley

Zebras Join Brethren for Durban Church Picnic and *Braai*

On Wednesday, June 21, 2011, a public holiday in South Africa afforded us the opportunity to gather for a picnic at the Kenneth Stainbank Nature Reserve. The nature reserve is situated within the Durban metro and is easily accessible to most of the brethren.

Although the majority of our outlying members were unable to attend, a total of 23 brethren were able to be there. Considering that the average Sabbath attendance is in the lower 30s, it was a very good turnout.

We were blessed with beautiful weather, with a clear blue sky and a gentle breeze. The relaxing surroundings just added to an already perfect day of fun and fellowship.

Two very tame zebras grazed near our picnic spot and seemed unconcerned with the activity close by. A troop of vervet monkeys made a nuisance of themselves earlier in the day, but they soon disappeared for “greener pastures.” And a wise old owl looked down

at us with his large, round, curious eyes.

The day would not have been complete without the traditional South African *braai*, so the fire was lit, and the men grilled the meat while the children played soccer and the women continued to chat.

What a pleasant day—beautiful weather, good food and fine company!

Photos and article by Neville Smith



Above: Sethabile Linda relaxes in the shade with her daughters



Mbuso Duma and Mandla Nhlathi supervise the *braai*



The visiting zebras, or are they horses in pajamas?

Dallas Teen Boys' Retreat Focuses on Leadership

This year marked the Dallas teen program's sixth weekend retreat for teen boys and their fathers. On the weekend of Feb. 25-26, 2012, 11 teen boys and nine fathers and teen leaders retreated to the peaceful country setting at the newly remodeled Bass Lodge in Daingerfield State Park in Daingerfield, Texas.

The purpose for the weekend retreat is to build lasting friendships and learn more about God's way of life through focused educational discussions, Sabbath services and having fun in a Christian male atmosphere.

This year, the sermon and other discussions included: "Becoming Men of Responsibility and Dignity," "Hearing God in a World of Distractions and Interference" and "Never Giving Up: Loving and Praising God in Our Trials and in Our Blessings."

The group always eats well at the retreat. There were pans of venison lasagna and enchiladas, pancakes for



Doug Horchak gives the sermon from a makeshift lectern

breakfast and a multitude of snacks. The group attempted to burn off the good food calories by playing a lively and exhausting game of Capture the Flag in the woods at night! After the game, there was free time to watch a movie, play cards or sit by the fire and chat.

It is our desire that the teen boys gain lasting value from the discussions about male roles and leadership, and continue to build on the lasting memories from their experiences at the retreat.

Photo and article by Greg Vaughn

Fun, Food and Service Round Out Dallas Girls' Retreat

Nine laughing, giggling girls sat around a large table eating a delicious Sabbath brunch of breakfast tacos and fruit. This was the beginning of the Dallas Teen Girls' Weekend 2012!

After brunch, Tanya Horchak led a discussion about the importance of building a solid spiritual foundation grounded on the truth of God.

We discussed how we must be careful to take care of our "roofs"—our minds—and not let in anything destructive that could harm our foundation. But between each roof and foundation is a unique "house."

We wrapped up the discussion by taking a temperament quiz to see how each person in the room was different. The girls also listened to a sermon by Tom Kirkpatrick on the book of Esther. It described how God is involved

in every aspect of our lives.

After the Sabbath, we had a delicious pasta dinner and played Taboo (a fun word game for two teams). It was interesting to see how everyone's different personality showed in playing the game.

On Sunday, after eating some delicious caramelized French toast with fresh fruit, we made lap blankets for our local shut-ins. Afterward, some of the teen girls went to enjoy music performed by the Allen Philharmonic Symphony.

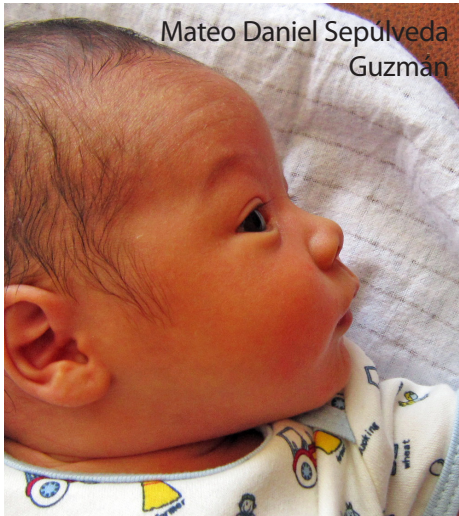
The weekend was a great opportunity to get to know each other and learn more about God's way of life. The atmosphere was truly like being part of a big family!

Photo and article by Ginny Morris and Cecilia Gomez



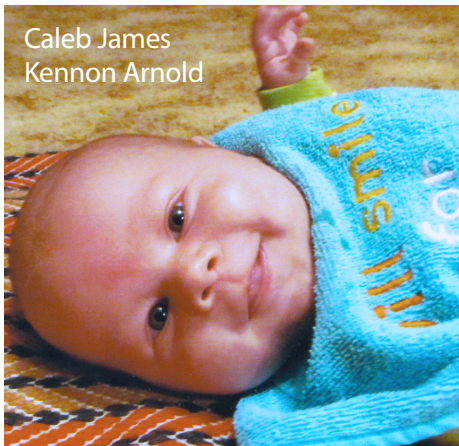
The lap blankets made by the Dallas teen girls will be given to local shut-ins

Announcements



Mateo Daniel Sepúlveda
Guzmán

Daniel and Barbara Sepúlveda, of the Santiago, Chile, congregation, are happy to announce the birth of their first baby, Mateo Daniel Sepúlveda Guzmán. He was born on Friday, Jan. 20, 2012, weighing 7 pounds 9 ounces and measuring 20.2 inches in length. Mom and dad feel very blessed and are very excited about being new parents!



Caleb James
Kennon Arnold

Johnathon and Chancy Arnold are pleased to announce a new member of their family, Caleb James Kennon Arnold. Caleb was born on Nov. 4, 2011, and weighed 9 pounds. He measured 22 inches long. Big sister Olivia, aged 3, and brother Mark, aged 1, are thrilled to have a new brother and are adjusting nicely. Johnathon and Chancy attend the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation. All the members are delighted to welcome this new addition to their congregation.

Births



Maximiliano Solís
Chavez

Rodrigo and Carolina Solís, of the Santiago, Chile, congregation, are happy to announce the birth of their first son, Maximiliano Rodrigo Solís Chavez. He was born on Feb. 15, 2012, at 8:06 p.m., measuring 19.2 inches in length and weighing 6 pounds 4 ounces. Mom and dad are thrilled to have this new addition to their family.



Nissa Luwanja

Monday, Feb. 13, 2012, at noon, became a very memorable moment for the family of Andrew and Mirriam Luwanja, when they received the gift of a baby girl named Nissa. Nissa weighed 3.1 kilograms (6 pounds 13 ounces). She was born at Bwaila Hospital in the city of Lilongwe, Malawi. With their firstborn Natasha, they now have two daughters. The Luwanjas attend the Lilongwe congregation of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association.



Ryan Raymond holds his new
son, Reece Antonio

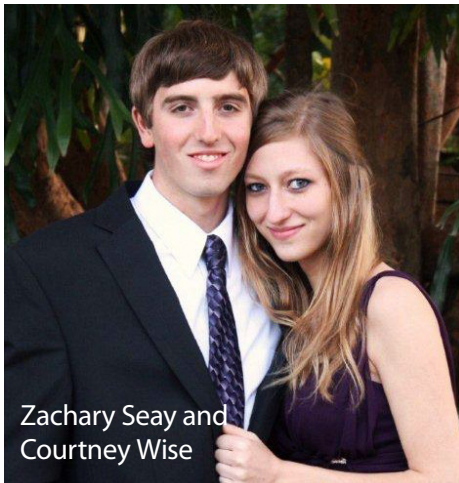
Ryan and Renee Raymond of the Barbados congregation became the proud parents of a baby son, Reece Antonio Raymond. He was born on Nov. 14, 2011. He weighed 9 pounds 5 ounces and measured 21 inches. He is active, joyous and full of smiles. He is the only son of the Raymonds, who also have four daughters. Certainly, the Raymonds are beaming with excitement and giving much praise to the Eternal for blessing them with a son.



Asher Eli
Pennington

Garrett and Liz (DePriest) Pennington happily announce the birth of their son, Asher Eli. He was born Oct. 23, 2011, weighing 6 pounds 15 ounces and measuring 20 inches long. Asher is the third generation of the Pennington family attending the Louisville, Kentucky, congregation.

Weddings & Engagements



Zachary Seay and Courtney Wise

David and Annie Wise are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Courtney L. Wise, to Zachary R. Seay, son of Randy and Nancy Seay and grandson of Carol Volkers. The couple and their families attend the Miami, Florida, congregation. An August 2012 wedding is planned.



Mignonette and Leroi Moore

Elation filled the Bridgetown, Barbados, congregation as two marriage ceremonies were performed during the months of August and December 2011.

The first wedding joined Leroi Moore and Mignonette Clarke on Aug. 14, 2011. This was followed four months later on Dec. 11 when Brian White and Neisha Ashby were also married.



Neisha and Brian White

Both ceremonies were held at the Coral Ridge Gardens Chapel in Barbados. The officiating ministers at the weddings were pastor Arnold Hampton and elder Osmonde Douglas.

We wish Mr. and Mrs. Leroi Moore and Mr. and Mrs. Brian White God's blessings and many fruitful and divinely inspiring years together.

Anniversaries



Samuel and Gene Opera

In December 2011 the Buffalo, New York, congregation celebrated the 50th anniversary of Samuel and Gene Opera, both longtime members of the Church. Their anniversary date is Dec. 2. The local congregation celebrated the event with a special cake and small ceremony for the couple.

Wanda Cunningham, 85, died on March, 30, 2012.

Mrs. Cunningham was from the small West Virginia coal mining town of Tunnelton. By age 14, both of her parents had died, leaving her to help feed and care for their large 17-member family.

As a young woman, Mrs. Cunningham moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked for the Pentagon during World War II. She was a lightning-fast typist. For security, she took shorthand on single sheets of paper to eliminate the impressions on a pad. There is a photograph at the Library of Congress that shows people in a conga line in Lafayette Square Park near the White House, celebrating the end of World War II. Mrs. Cunningham is in that picture.

Mrs. Cunningham met her husband, Merle, at the Arthur Murray Dance Studio in Dallas where they were both

Obituaries



Wanda Cunningham

high-level dancers. Together, they had three children and celebrated their 59th anniversary this past February. Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham were both baptized in 1964 and served as deacon and deaconess before Mr. Cunningham was ordained an elder in the Dallas, Texas, congregation.

Mrs. Cunningham and her family loved hosting meals for brethren and Ambassador College students on Friday evenings in their home. She was an amazing cook and baker, preparing very special Sabbath meals. She always said that being a stay-at-home mother and wife was the busiest, most fulfilling job for her.

For many years, Mrs. Cunningham and her family attended the Feast in their favorite locale, Pensacola, Florida. Upon Her husband's retirement in 1998, they moved to Pensacola, where they served under Harold Rhodes.

Mrs. Cunningham is survived by her husband, Merle, (Pensacola, Florida); son, Kelly (Dallas, Texas); and daughter, Vicki (Atlanta, Georgia).



Edward Figgs

Beloved husband, father and grandfather Edward Figgs of Milford, Delaware, died Nov. 12, 2011. Mr. Figgs, 75, was a longtime member and pillar in the Delmar, Delaware, congregation. Mr. Figgs was born in Dagsboro, Delaware. He was a veteran of the Army and Air Force. He worked for the state

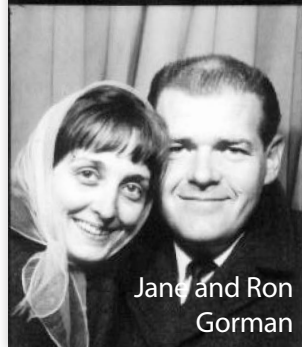
of Delaware and as a painter. He was married 45 years to his wife, Sharon, who is also a member in Delmar. He is also survived by a daughter, Beverly Muench, and his grandchildren, Kelsea Figgs and David and MaKaylah Muench. Mr. Figgs will be greatly missed. The memorial service was held in Milford and was performed by Mr. Figgs' pastor, Todd Carey.

Ronald "Ron" Gorman, a longtime member of the Twin Cities, Minnesota, congregation, died Jan. 16, 2012.

Mr. Gorman was born Dec. 15, 1934, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Robert and Mildred Gorman. From 1956 to 1960, he served in the Air Force as a tower operator. After returning to civilian life, he made his living as a trucker, driving mainly local hauls that allowed him the free time to pursue his numerous passions: sports, music and his wife, Jane.

Growing up in Minnesota, Mr. Gorman loved winter, ice and hockey; and as an adult, he helped organize a community team. His love of the game led him to work for a safer game, one where everyone could have fun. He continued to play until just a few years before his health deteriorated.

Mr. Gorman also loved music, particularly jazz. Although he played in a Minneapolis rock band, The Tornadoes, he was better known for his involvement in local jazz ensembles.



Jane and Ron Gorman

One late night following a gig in 1964, Mr. Gorman was out with friends when he heard about God's truth. He started reading his friends' copies of *The Plain Truth* and immediately began attending services. Within months, he was firmly committed to his newfound faith and heeded his calling when he was baptized in March of 1965.

Music introduced Mr. Gorman to the Church, and he quickly shared his talents with his new congregation by joining the Twin Cities Church band, which was popular enough to be invited to play events around Minnesota and even in neighboring states, North Dakota and Iowa.

Before services one Sabbath in 1967, Mr. Gorman met a young woman, Jane Lambert, as she was leaving morning services. They quickly became friends and were married in January 1968. Together, they enjoyed traveling, attending various Feast sites around the world, including Hawaii and the Caribbean. Their favorite sites were Australia, England and Kelowna, in British Columbia, Canada, which they visited many times.

Mr. Gorman lived an active and full life, busy with many interests. He will be remembered for his humor, many talents and passion for and steadfastness in his faith.

We encourage members to send announcements to be featured in *One Accord*. We plan to feature events in members' lives, including births, engagements, weddings, significant anniversaries (25, 40, 50, 60, etc.), graduations 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.