

The Church of God IN THE NORTHEAST REGION

Olive Branch

THE



November-December 201

P. O. Box 2002, Uniontown, PA 15401 - www.tcog-ne.org

The Church and the World Must Be Different

Excerpts from Felix Garcia's message to the General Assembly of 1989

We must be careful to not allow the same spirits to infiltrate the Church today that were afflicting the Church at the time Brother Garcia preached this message. May these words and this timely warning speak to our hearts, that we be cautious about what we allow into our lives and into the Church. —James Horne

Today's phenomena is the rage of trying to see just how close one can come to the world in behavior in appearance and in belief and still remain "Church of God." And of course I'm using a cliché... People are defiant in their actions and behavior, testing just how far they can go with their act. It's an incredible craze. It's becoming a dare. It's as though people would like to have two faces, two aspects, two likenesses. One for Sunday, which would represent the spiritual, and another one for the rest of the week, which would represent the worldly, the carnal. One likeness to God and one likeness to the world. I believe that they're thinking that one should be able to change his or her likeness or image back and forth as the occasion requires. To do this, people go to great lengths to justify their actions... One of the reasons the Church today is feeling this very pressure is the complaint that the Church is too strict and that we, the Church, have carried things to the extreme. That the requirements of holiness in the Church are unnecessarily too demanding. That we're too puritanical for the times, or for the day we live in. Today's thinking is free love, do your own thing, be your own boss, live it up-it's

your own life anyway. That's what people are thinking today. This crowd would like for the Church to lessen its stand on holiness and relax the requirements to one's own judgment or criteria and self-apply just what he or she personally feels is right for himself or herself. Leave it up to me and my conscience, they say. This crowd would like for the Church's input or advice to be optional. Some would like for it to be done away with completely. Self-rules, selfdetermination, I want to live my own life, they say. And the cry among them is, Lighten up on the heavy teachings! Do away with the Advice to Members! We know what's best for us! We'll do what we think is best for ourselves. Modify, they say. Modernize our stand on holiness issues so we can be compatible with the rest of the Christians and with the times that we're living in. Perhaps this will help us and we'll have greater numbers. I'm all for greater numbers, but not at the cost of the standard of Christian holiness. This is what we're hearing today. This is the pressure that is being applied to the Church today, though it is being done in a very subtle and insidious way, which is difficult to detect. The pressure is no less there and being applied, and some are promoting it even openly.

I've had some people speak to me who are concerned that membership in the Church is restricted to people who must meet certain conditions. For example, you must be saved or you cannot be a member or join The Church of God. Everybody knows that. You must be saved and one must know it and show it in their lifestyles and all of the acts of his life must show that he's saved. I'll tell you what turns me off, is to hear some of the worldly entertainers say that they are born again Christians, with a cocktail in their hand or singing a worldly tune. And they tell me they're born again Christians? And I say never!

You must fill certain marriage requirements: no double marriages and no common law unions... The rules in the Bible apply to everyone. That membership is for those who abstain from social diversions such as social drinking and alcoholic beverages, attending movies or dances, or

worldly entertainments. No sexual misconduct, married or single, among men and women, or among people of the same sex. If that is known, you should never be admitted into the membership of the Church!

I'm not really that old. I'm not an oldfashioned individual. I like good times. But you surely must draw a line wherever the

world is corrupting your soul! You hear so much talk about movies and that sort of thing. Some people are getting around this business of going to the movie houses. Now all they do is discreetly go rent one of the new movies and bring it home. And I don't see any difference in that and going to a movie house. I was visiting a minister in his home this year. When I got there they were sitting in the living room and having refreshments. I came in and nobody turned the TV off. We just talked over the sound of the TV. Finally we settled back and I said, "What are you watching?" And he said, "Oh, this is a video." I said, "Wow. I've never seen that before." We were watching and all of the sudden the scene changes and here's a lady stark naked in this movie. I don't know what to think! I mean, you've got little children watching this kind of stuff! I'm all for you watching Voice of Salvation on your videos. Or parts of this Assembly. And I believe that there are some healthy things on television. But the world has infiltrated everything around us and you'd better watch your step!

But membership is restricted to those who hold firm to the position of inward grace versus outward adornment. The wearing of jewelry, make-up, indecent apparel—should never happen in The Church of God! Look, I'm not hung up on this business. I believe that the Holy Ghost can talk to our hearts and—hallelujah!—bring conviction to us! Glory to God! The problem is not with the issue, the problem is with us, the people. I'm not preaching something new. I'm not! This is stuff that was practiced by the early church! By the beginning of the very Church we're members of today, this side of the Dark Ages. I'm not preaching something new. What I'm trying to tell us is that there is a spirit, an influence working in the world today trying to deviate us, trying to sidetrack us.

Some people say that this subject is unnecessary, that jewelry and outward adornment has nothing to do with the inside. Well, I've got news for you. It has something

> to do with the inside. Because what is inside of you will be reflected on the outside of you. Hallelujah. Yes, there are those who want the Church to make concessions regarding these important matters. Although this is evident, the Church must state loud and clear that no conformity with the world will help the Church. It will not improve the Church. On

the contrary, it hurts the Church. We must never, never yield to this pressure. If there are such extremes, let it be that the Church would choose the extreme of holiness. The extreme of ultra-conscientiousness. The extreme of being scrupulous. The extreme of being clean. This is the best choice for us! I wish you'd say amen. This is the best choice for us! I know that this posture could provoke criticism from the liberal flank. But I'm also sure that this is more pleasing unto God. I believe He would like this much better. I prefer to be criticized because of my extremes in holiness. I believe that I would prefer to be criticized because I am pleasing God.

The Church is required by God to take a firm stand against worldliness. We are admonished that holiness becometh the Church. Psalm 93:5 says, *"Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever."* And again He speaks in 1 Thessalonians 3:13, *"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."* Surely we must understand that the Church and the world must be different. We shouldn't and must not even resemble each other.

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No conformity

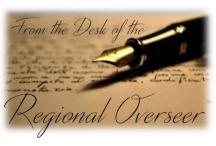
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WORLD

will help the

Church

On October 4th, my family and I began our trip for the Northeast Ministers Convention that was scheduled for October 6th. Uniontown hosted this function and they had a wonderful meal for those attending and were very gracious hosts. The Convention was good, and we enjoyed the various boosts and blessings received there. On Sunday, October 7th, my family and I were blessed to minister at the Church during the morning and evening services. After taking care of some errands on Monday, we headed east and were with family for several days before leaving for New York. On October 13-14, we were in the New Rochelle area. We visited Sister Taylor



who was in the hospital and had a nice visit. After traveling through New York City and across Pennsylvania, we returned to Uniontown from October 15 -17, and were able to research the area more and establish a P. O. Box for the Region. We were also able to meet Sister Sturgill in Vandergrift, PA to take care of some needed transitional church business on the 16th. We arrived back in Alabama late on the 17th, having been in the Northeast for 14 days and having traveled about 3,000 miles for the Lord. In this time I have also been working on CPMA and other responsibilities. I appreciate the ministry and membership in Uniontown for their patience in helping with services during this transition. It is our plan to head back to Pennsylvania this coming week for the Fall Retreat, October 26-28, and be back in Uniontown for services on November 4th. Please continue to keep our housing situation in your prayers. We trust the Lord will give direction on relocation and help us to sell the house in Alabama soon.

I pray that you are enjoying this latest edition of The Olive Branch! With this being our November/December bi-monthly edition, my family and I would like to say, "Happy Thanksgiving" and "Merry Christmas" to all of our readers. The holidays are special times for us, filled with fond memories of years gone by and the glimpse of expectation and hope as we look ahead. We are thankful for God's abundant blessings, not just on Thanksgiving, but every day of the year. We are blessed to know Jesus, who came as a babe with the plan of God's redemption for all mankind.

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18). "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

May God's love and presence be very real to all of you as you gather for these special days together with family and friends. Let us pray for one another and show His love in all that we do.

Love & Prayers, Brother James Horne

Embrace the Vision, The Word, The Work

<u>To Embrace</u>: to take up especially readily or gladly

Vision: the act or power of seeing

- The Vision: The Church of God, The Fullness of Perfection, The Will of God
- The Word: The Whole Bible, rightly divided; The New Testament as our rule and practice and government. The Twenty-nine Bible Truths, and the Advice to Members
- The Work: Obedience to the Word in our lives, and to fulfill the Great Commission stated in Matthew 28: 19, 20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all



nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Sunday School Challenge—the Five P's

Be Prayful... Be Prepared... Actively Participate... Be Spiritually Empowered Actively Practice...

> Regional Sunday School Coordinator, Elaine Smail



Our new theme for the Women's Missionary Band 2018-2019 is **The Lifeboat** with John 3:15 as the them verse: "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." God is counting on us, The Church of God, to get the message of

salvation out to this lost and dying world. Give a faith offering to World Missions this month of October. Our goal is \$100,000. We serve a big God. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always hav-

ing all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

To God be the glory, great things He has done and is still doing in The Church of God! Love and prayers.

Regional WMB Coordinator, Peggy Fordyce

The Church of God in Monongahela has had a very exciting 2018.

Every year our Sunday School **W** are so blessed to have such an experienced, wise shepherd of our flock. We had a huge cake decorated for the occasion, presented him with a certificate, and a book filled with pages of notes from his church family and complimentary things to say to him.

The Monongahela church is also blessed to have two amazing Sunday School teachers. John Burdett and Elaine Smail both add such wonderful insight to the lessons. We are all learning so much and appreciate the enlightened lessons. Last quarter we had great lessons about self will, and this quar-

General Statistics 2017-2018 Souls Saved — 3,637 Sanctified — 9,723 Received Holy Ghost — 7,567 Baptized in Water — 1,562 Missions/new field — 349 Covenant Members — 25,899 New Churches Established — 23 Light I simply love this publication! For me, reading The Evening Light is a way for

The Evening

me to **stay connected** to my brothers and sisters domestically and internationally. After attending BTI, I felt a connection to my Church like never before. I wanted to continue to be spiritually fed, keep abreast of the work of the Church, and **stay connected** to the greater Church. *The Evening Light* accomplished all of this for me and it will do so for you as well. Expertly written and spiritually-inspired articles, testimonies and pictures cover the pages. Through the years, the quality has upgraded resulting in a truly professional publication.

If you are not receiving *The Evening Light*, please consider doing so soon and **stay connected**. For a digital edition the cost is \$8 per year. The paper edition is \$20 per year. Contact General Headquarters at (423) 339-8264.

-Elaine Smail

ter is titled, "If Ye Know These Things, Happy Are Ye, If Ye Do Them." *"The* statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psa. 19:8).

Sister Barbara Romano, our Women's Missionary Band Leader, is always encouraging new ways to boost our missionary offerings. She decided to appoint two team leaders and assign everyone in the church to one of the teams. Susie Guglielmi and Sharon Guthrie are our team leaders and they have both been tasked with finding new ways to raise more money for missions. The most recent was the flea-tique on October 6th where we made over \$700 for Missions. GO TEAMS!

As we go forward in our labor for the Lord, please remember Sister Katherine Charles in your prayers. She is now in a nursing home and her address is included if you would like to send her a card.

Katherine Charles c/o Manor Care 505 Weyman Road Pittsburgh, PA 15236

Respectfully yours, —Judy Smitley, Reporter Brother Horton is newly appointed to this position. In a recent *Even*ing Light, he shared his inspiration for the theme. Its origin is Philippians 3:16, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

Brother Horton remembered an IYC when he pleaded with the Lord about the vision he received of The Church of God. Among other things, his prayer was, "Lord, I don't want to just believe this way because my father believed it this way." He loved and trusted his earthly father but he needed his heavenly Father, through the Holy Ghost, to once again



give him the divine assurance of the revelation he was earnestly clinging to. He received that assurance in two words: "You're alright." These words were not meant for him personally but rather they were a confirmation of the revelation he had already received of Christ and the Church. He felt it was indeed a confirmation to continue to "Walk by the same rule, and to mind the same thing..." After being asked to serve as the General BTI Director, Brother Horton was convinced to use this as our theme.

BTI is a learning opportunity to delve deeper into the things of God. It is also an unforgettable, glorious spiritual experience. One who has attended BTI can attest to the level of knowledge and spirituality that is gained. I have always described BTI as being like heaven on Earth. The two years I attended are forever written in my mind. I was spiritually impacted and my heart was touched in ways I cannot even put into words. I believe BTI was a significant time of growth in my spiritual life.

Our General Overseer, Brother Oscar Pimental, wrote about BTI in the April, 2017, edition of *The Evening Light*. His message further solidified my passion for BTI. Here is what he said: "No doubt, through the ages God has always desired to reveal to faithful men and women more than surface material. It is not good enough to merely know the truth intellectually, or know God only by truth historically; but more than that, we must know the real and actual power of God that can surge through an individual, inspire an individual, move an individual and grant him stick-to-itiveness so that he is not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

"Stick-to-itiveness? Yes, stick-to-itiveness! When you have not only been taught at BTI, but also caught the spirit that is prominent you will find that it is not hard to stick to the doctrine, stick to theocratic government, stick to God-given revelation, stick to Jesus Christ the Son of God and win, no matter what."

Wow! Not only is BTI like heaven on Earth, it gives you the stick-to-itivness power! Life-changing is BTI... Who's going to the next BTI?

Correspondence courses are also available for those who are unable to attend BTI.

Regional BTI Coordinator, Elaine Smail

Greetings to everyone! The theme for the VLBs this year is **Enemies on the Run**. Brother Farthing based this off of Judges, chapters 6 and 7, telling an account of Gideon's life. It begins with the Lord narrowing down how many men would fight in the battle with Gideon. He ends up with 300 men, and they go on to defeat the Mideonites. Verse 20 of chapter 7 says, "The sword of the Lord, and Gideon." We know that the Lord was with Gideon in this



time, and the enemies ran because they knew they could not stand against the Lord. Just as Gideon had the Lord on his side, we do as well. May this be an encouragement to us as we journey through trials. May the joy of the Lord be our strength!

Pray for our VLBs in the Northeast Region and may the Lord bless you all!

Regional VLB Coordinator, Alicia Smail

Regional ABM Coordinator, Louise Smail

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Our Theme for the CPMA for the 2018-2019 Assembly year is: HERITAGE. Webster's dictionary defines the word "heritage" as:

1. Property that descends to an heir

2. Something transmitted by or acquired from a predecessor; legacy; inheritance; something possessed as a result of one's natural situation or birth; birthright.

Before we can truly understand the importance of the legacy of The Church of God (our destiny), we must first understand its history.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and

thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). Here we find God's promise to Abram (Abraham). In this communication from God, Abraham was given three distinct promises: 1) the land promise ("a land that I will shew thee"), 2) the national promise ("I will make of thee a great nation"), and 3) the spiritual promise ("and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed").

However, to be an heir of the promise, there were certain conditions that had to be met. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord" (Ex. 19:5-8). So, we see that God's promise to Israel was CONDITIONAL. There was a responsibility on the nation's part if they were to receive the blessing. We find in the scripture Israel's ultimate rejection which made way for the Gentile nation to be grafted in; and in approximately A.D. 28, on one of the horns of Mount Hattin, Jesus assembled His small band of disciples and organized His Church.

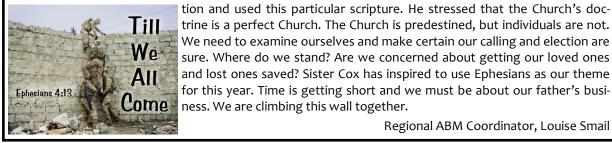
The Church of God has faced many adversities and attacks from Satan, yet she has always prevailed, for Jesus said that the gates of hell shall not prevail again her. Only God knows what the future holds for His people, but one thing is sure: The Church of God, His Holy Nation, will go on to perfection!

The Church of God must NEVER FORGET who she truly is and the significance of her identity and legacy. There are many churches, faiths, doctrines, and religions, but there is only ONE true Bride of Christ.

Aren't you thankful that YOU are part of her?!

Regional CPMA Coordinator, Lisa Smith

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The meaning of perfect is "without defect, flawless and excellent in all respects." On a Sunday morning, our minister preached a message on perfec-





"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2). This truth should induce great soberness and



Rebekah Horne, Assistant Editor

carefulness in our hearts. It implies the necessity of being truthful and upright not only in outward appearance and conduct, but in the inner man. For those who have been in the Church for some time, it would be easy to slip into just going through the motions. We know what is appropriate and what is not. We know what is expected of us in speech, appearance, and conduct. We are familiar with our Biblebased doctrine and Advice to Members. It would be easy to act the part. Some people intentionally attempt to hide their "alter ego," hoping their inconsistencies and hypocrisies will remain undetected, while others can be guilty of wearing a mask and not even knowing it. Either way, we could call their more careful and intentional behavior their "church face."

To "behave" means to act in a particular way. As a general rule God doesn't want us to act a certain way. Don't behave. Be good. Think about the difference between the two. More importantly, be real. Don't put on a show for anybody. Don't worry about what other people think of you or what impression you're making. Just be who you really are. It doesn't matter how wonderful or spiritual other people may think you are, "for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2:3). The real you is going to be revealed sooner or later. It won't do any good to have everyone around you thinking you are a sweet, kind, loving Christian if God, who sees and knows the hearts of all men, knows you to be angry, selfish and mean when other eyes and ears aren't around to see and hear. If you seem to have dual identities, one of them is not real. The real you is the one you find when you think no one else is around, not the one who knows how to "behave."

Ask yourself, Am I more concerned about what other people think about me than I am with who I *really am?* We should heed the wise counsel given to us in our Advice to Members and examine ourselves on occasion. David knew it was possible to be unaware of the contents of his own heart, so he prayed, *"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults"* (Psa. 19:12). It would do us well to evaluate and pray as David did, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked

way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139:23, 24), with the awareness that nothing can be hidden from God. Earlier in this same chapter David acknowledged just that (vv. 1-4), stating that God knows every move we make, He is present with us wherever we are, He knows our thoughts when they are "afar off" before we even think them, and our words when they are still on our tongue, before we've had a chance to speak them.

Peter instructs against the fakery of trying to appear a certain way to others on the outside and exhorts us to concern ourselves with "the hidden man of the heart ... " (1 Peter 3:3, 4). That's the real you. God sees down to the very core of your being and is fully aware of all the things that are unknown to others. He knows who you really are, how you really feel, what you really think about, what you secretly long for or desire, how you treat your family, how you spend your money, what you allow your eyes to see or your ears to hear. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). What a fearful realization! But not only fearful, also relieving. It is so freeing to realize that God already sees and knows exactly who you are way deep down on the inside. There is nothing you can confess to Him, be it sin, weakness, or failure, that He's not already fully aware of. Your life, heart, and mind are an open book to Him. With this understanding, combined with the revelation that Jesus serves as our High Priest and is touched by the feeling of our infirmities, we are encouraged just a few verses later, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (v. 16). Yes, grace that is all sufficient to wash away any hypocrisy in our lives and make us into what He really wants us to be through and through. Don't try to hide your struggles or weaknesses. They'll eventually be brought to light because, "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets" (Dan. 2:28). So don't waste time perfecting your act and donning your "church face." If you've been guilty of that to any degree, it's time to get real.

Special Note: Articles intended for publication in the next issue of The Olive Branch should be received on or before <u>December 20, 2018</u>. These submissions will be for the **January-February 2019** issue. Please send to Rebekah L. Horne, Assistant Editor, at: P. O. Box 2002, Uniontown, PA 15401 or e-mail: RLHorne77@outlook.com

MINISTERS CONVENTION

We had a wonderful time in the Lord as we gathered on October 6th for the Ministers Convention. It was great to see everyone well in mind, soul and body! The Convention theme was "Hold Fast... Continue!"





Our regional auxiliary leaders each boosted their respective work and encouraged us to continue utilizing these tools given to us by the Almighty

God that we may complete His work fully and completely. Brother Horne exhorted the ministry to hold fast and continue with theocracy and the

Church Message. The Lord blessed our oneness of mind and mission as we began a new year in the Lord's work! —Denise

blessed mess of mission began a in the ork! -Denise Satanek

Ministry Memoir

All ministers have been asked to submit a picture of themselves along with their date of birth, rank of ministry, date licensed or began ministry, position/locations served, spouse's name, children's names, and like information to General Headquarters by the end of the year. *Please Note* New Regional Office Address: The Church of God P. 0. Box 2002 Uniontown, PA 15401

Greetings from Uniontown! We appreciate all those in the region who attended the farewell gathering for Brother & Sister Smith. The Smiths have served the Northeast Region so lovingly and faithfully for the past 12 years. Their works will continue to be a blessing to this region for years to come. They were certainly true to their calling! Since our regions are neighbors, our hope is we will have the opportunity to worship with the Smiths and their new region in the future.

We are settling in with our new regional overseer/pastor and his family. We extend a very warm welcome to Brother Horne, Sister Rebekah, Katie, Josiah and Sam!

We also have an opportunity to purchase church furnishings for our church at a reasonable cost. We look forward to sharing this blessing with you in future editions!

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Rev. 3:8).

Our heart's desire is to see souls won for Christ! We are anxious to see the great things God can do with just "a little strength…"

-Denise Satanek, Reporter

Make sure your local church is represented in our Regional paper. We would love to have reports from every local church. Feel free to send in pictures as well. Articles are also welcome.



DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

December 20, 2018 — January-February 2019 issue February 20, 2019 — March-April 2019 issue April 20, 2019 — May-June 2019 issue June 20, 2019 — July-August 2019 issue August 20, 2019 — September-October 2019 issue