



# THE Olive Branch

July — August 2019



## THE CHURCH OF GOD IN THE NORTHEAST REGION



P. O. BOX 2002, UNIONTOWN, PA 15401  
CONNECTICUT, MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW HAMPSHIRE, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, RHODE ISLAND & VERMONT

### Blessed or Cursed?

James R. Horne, Regional Overseer

Although sometimes the Church has been accused of focusing on the negative aspects of disobedience, it is truly the heart of the Church to show the positives of being faithful to the doctrines found in the Word of God. God has wonderful things in store for those who just humbly do what He tells them to do. Subjects of obedience, such as tithing, can sometimes be difficult to bring up, especially for a local pastor. Those who would fight against paying tithes might point fingers and say, "There they go again—it's all about the money." That statement is far from reality. The truth is, our ministry is obligated to preach the whole Bible to the whole world. The equation from Scripture is simple: if you pay tithes you will be blessed. Malachi 3:10, 11 says, "*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...*" As with all points of doctrine, there are blessings for obedience and consequences for disobedience. The other side to this equation for those who do not pay tithes is, "*Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me*" (v. 9). We obviously do not want the judgment of God on us, do we? No, we want and need His blessings! We want Him to rebuke the devourer.

Brother Pruitt said in his message to the 94<sup>th</sup> Assembly, "The Church does not force one to pay tithes. It simply tells you what God requires and then it is up to you to do as you will and then bear the consequences of your choice." Yes, there are consequences to every decision and we will be blessed or cursed accordingly.

Let the Scripture (where we find all of our answers) clarify: "*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings*" (Mal. 3:8).

Malachi shows us the bottom line. When we do not pay tithes, we are robbing God. The General Assembly has established the following teaching from the Bible: "Tithing is the paying of one tenth of our increase into the treasury of the Church. It began with Abraham, continued under the law and received Christ's approval. Giving differs from and is in addition to tithing. Both are part of God's plan to finance His work on earth. Read Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-22; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; Hebrews 7:1-21." God doesn't need our money, but He wants us to prove Him. If every member faithfully tithes and gives offerings, there will be no want for "*meat in [God's] house.*" It is God's mechanism of financing His work on earth. May the windows of heaven be open to you, dear reader. Let's be obedient and blessed.



The WMB theme scripture is John 3:16, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus said there is a lifeline of hope for whosoever believeth in Him. Christ launched the lifeboat Himself and He commissioned the Church to "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" (Matt. 28:19, 20). As God's people, how are we going to answer the call to "Go ye"? Hopefully the Lord will find each one of us willing to go and give.

Regional WMB Coordinator,  
Peggy Fordyce

## WMB General Assembly Announcements:

**Clothes Closet** – Please bring clothes, shoes, shampoo, soaps, suitcases, etc. for our overseas delegates.

**Craft Table** – Needs crafts and donated items already priced for sale. Also needed are volunteers to work the craft table during the Assembly; there will be a sign-up sheet there.

**WMB Ladies' Choir** – Make plans to be a part; practice times will be announced at the Assembly.

Greetings from  
Monongahela!

# Monongahela

Our Missions leader, Barb Romano, has kept us encouraged and focused on the many missionaries who are all around the world spreading the good news. She always has great ideas for fund raisers and she reminds us every week to pray and fast for our missionaries and the many people in our community who need our prayers.

Barb is always looking for ways to motivate us to support Missions. She created two teams, one led by Susie Guglielmi and the other by Sharon Guthrie. It is amazing that her teams promote teamwork while fostering some fun-loving competition. Each of the team leaders have used various sales as fund raisers. Sharon sold pepperoni bread, Texas Roadhouse rolls, and assorted other things throughout the year, with all of the proceeds going to Missions. Sharon's dedication has certainly paid off in dollars for Missions. Susie spends countless hours setting up for the Monongahela Fleatique. This event draws hundreds of shoppers to the area and is a way to draw attention to our church. One of these events is held each June and each October, and has raised a lot of money to support our Missions. This event also adds visibility to our church, and may encourage some to join us in worship. Praise be to God.

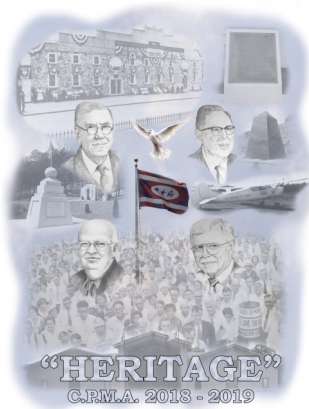
Isaiah 68 says, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." That is the spirit we all need in doing Missions work, and I am grateful we have so many willing workers in our church family.

Last week, Sister Barbara Romano led a service of celebration. We celebrated a successful year for Missions and a chance to look forward to what the Lord wants us to do in that area for next year.

The church family at Monongahela sends good wishes.

Respectfully yours,  
-Judy Smitley, Reporter





“For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations” (Psa. 61:5, 6).

In Psalm 61, David's heart is heavy as he cries out to God. As he begins to consider

God's goodness and His loving protection, his tone changes to one of praise. In particular, David focuses on the spiritual blessings God gives those who fear His name, and this thought lifted David's soul.

In this life, when people think of inheritance, they often imagine large estates, large bank accounts, or some other worldly treasure. These riches, however, do not last; and they can be lost as easily as they are gained. But unlike a worldly inheritance, the inheritance given to God's people will never perish, spoil, or fade. We are heirs to the very kingdom of God; joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and our inheritance is eternal life in the presence of Almighty God.

Our identity is not found in the jobs we hold, the homes we own, or the social status we attain. Our heritage and our inheritance are bought and paid for by the blood of the Lamb of God. We are the chosen of God, redeemed in Jesus Christ. Our identity is in Christ, and as the Church, we are functioning members of His body here on earth. This spiritual heritage is not given to everyone, but only to those, as David declared, who fear the name of

the Lord. Our heritage brings with us a great inheritance, as was so beautifully penned in the song, “I Hold a Clear Title”:

I've heard people talk about heaven  
and describe its beauty so rare  
So one day I purchased a title to a mansion  
in that land so fair  
It was given to me without money  
for it cost my dear Savior His life  
He died on the cross without murmur  
for me He paid a dear price  
My deed was both signed and recorded  
the day Jesus saved me from sin  
My name was engraved in bold letters  
in the Lamb's Book of Life, safe within  
I'm an heir to a mansion in glory  
then from this life here I shall roam  
I'm waiting for Jesus to call me  
then I'll down my cross and go home

I hold a clear title to a mansion  
that Jesus has gone to prepare  
Fire cannot harm it, thieves cannot touch it  
and it will never need a repair  
The termites can't mar its foundation  
for on the Rock of Ages it stands  
I feel that it's almost completed  
and ready for me to move in

It will be worth it, Church, to remain true to our heritage, for the inheritance is beyond imagination!

*“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).*

Regional CPMA Coordinator,  
Lisa Smith

The beauty of holiness is directly proportionate to the amount of truth operating in our lives...  
Holiness and truth are inseparable. Holiness is God's truth in action. If holiness does not come from the inward desire of the heart, it is mere legalism. Outward holiness, not springing from an inward truth-relationship with the Lord is not holiness at all; it is forced adherence to the laws of God. True holiness and beauty is when the truth outlined in God's Holy Word penetrates mankind's heart, eradicates his sinful nature, and then controls his every nature from inside out. The beauty of holiness is manifest in every action and deed. Those who come in contact with these individuals know there's something different about their lives. They have found an inward adornment that manifests the touch of the Master's hand.

—Maudie Wood, Former General ABM Coordinator





Greetings, my brothers and sisters of the Northeast! A few weeks ago, I had the honor to attend BTI at our General Headquarters in Tennessee. I would like to take some time to share with you how the Lord touched my heart through that experience.

As I reflect back to BTI, the word that comes to my mind is LOVE. I truly felt God’s love and His presence all throughout each and every day at BTI. The devotions were filled with encouragement, and the Lord moved through each speaker. I could see the love they had for the Lord and their desire to serve Him. Also, the classes were outstanding! The teachers were full of love for Christ, the Church, and their students. It spilled over as they taught us and shared their godly wisdom and experience with us. It was an honor to be able to learn from such wise men and women of the Church. Additionally, the services were filled with the presence of the Holy Ghost, and the messages were truly inspired from the Lord. We had a beautiful service at Fields of the Wood and it was so humbling to reflect upon the Arise, Shine of the Church. Lastly, the people and the place. I felt the Lord through each conversation with those I met at BTI. Each person genuinely cared for one another, and it was a testament of God’s love.

I encourage you to prayerfully consider attending BTI, for it will truly change your life. While there, you feel such a sweet spirit and feel a deeper connection to the Church. May you be encouraged that when you follow the Lord, “*all these things shall be added unto you*” (Matt. 6:33). May the Lord bless you abundantly and please continue to be in prayer for the VLBs of the Region!

Regional VLB Coordinator,  
Alicia Smail

## Words of Encouragement

**We are at our best when we encourage others with our words, with our actions, with our presence.**

When he was a young boy, Benjamin West attempted to draw a picture of his sister, but he succeeded only in making a mess. His mother saw his creation, kissed him on the head, and remarked, “Why, it’s your sister Sally!” West would later say that it was his mother’s encouragement and the kiss that made him an artist—and the great American painter he would become. Encouragement is a powerful thing!

In Galatians 6:9, we are told, “*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*” I have always thought that Paul was telling us as we journey through life to keep on keeping on... don’t give up or give way to discouragement but keep your eyes on “*the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:14). Keep encouraged! When our words and actions are positive and uplifting, and our presence emanates the Spirit of God, we



can be encouraging to others and encourage ourselves.

Regional  
Sunday School  
Coordinator,  
Elaine Smail

## 2019 Third Term BTI Graduates

**Katherine Horne  
Rebekah Horne  
Elaine Smail**



Also attending BTI from our Region this year:

Nathan Elmadollar & Alicia Smail — 1st Term  
Josiah Horne — 2nd Term    Thomas Kelley — LPD

I recently attended the Third Term of Bible Training Institute. It has been seven years since I completed Terms One and Two. Finally, I was able to return and graduate from the program. What a blessing and an encouragement it was for me to achieve this goal!



The classes were filled with extensive Bible based instruction for each chosen topic. I was honored to be taught by some of “the best” of The Church of God. So encouraged was I that I wanted to share with you, what I consider, some of their inspirational quotes. Of course, I am sharing these quotes out of the context in which they were taught. Also, I don’t know if they are original or borrowed quotes. Nevertheless, I believe they are “stand alone” words that will inspire and encourage you.

The **Pastoral** class was the first of the day and taught by Brother Brian O’Dell. I have a long list of his passionate quotes but will limit it to just a few:

- Don’t let your insecurities keep you from abiding in God’s perfect will. Your sufficiency is not in self but in God.
- To be effective, I have to get out of God’s way! Let God do His business through me. It is not about me!
- Obedience is the key to God’s smile on your life.
- The closer we get to God, the easier it is to hear from Him.

The **Life of Christ** class was taught by Brother Robert Hawkins. It was impossible to cover all of the material, but what we did cover was of great value. Here are only a few of his remarks.

- Don’t let common sense override obedience to your faith in God.
- Grace is God’s power to do in you what you can’t do yourself.
- If you want the best, be the best!
- The proof of our relationship with God is found in our relationship with others.

Our General Overseer, Brother Oscar Pimentel, taught **The Pauline Epistles** class. The primary focus of this class was an in-depth study of the books written by Paul to Timothy and Titus. Obedience and

holy living were stand out themes in this instruction. Space allows for just a bit of his insight:

- We tend to want to KNOW before we DO. With God just DO! Obey and have faith. Then, God will reveal the KNOW to you.

- A person’s character is what God knows you to be; it is the real thing. Reputation is what others think of you; it is like a shadow.
- God will always take care of us, He will never fail. He has a failure record of zero.

The class about **Church Doctrine** was taught by Brother Roger Ammons. The Church of God and the Kingdom of God was the focus. His wisdom was revealed through these quotes:

- If you love God then you will trust Him. If you trust Him, then you will obey Him.
- We should not be anxious about material needs, but rather be primarily concerned about the Kingdom of lost souls.

The final class of the day was **Church Business**. Brother Jason Hill, General Headquarters Treasurer, let the class know from the start that there’s no business like Church of God business. He went on to share many other nuggets of great value:

- Accountability breeds responsibility. The one who complains about how the ball bounces, is probably the one who dropped it.
- Thoughts are words to God. We are accountable for them.
- The more God gives you, the more you should give God.

It is my hope and prayer that you will be encouraged by these quotes. But what could be better than these quotes? Having your own personal BTI experience! This year’s BTI enrolled 7 members from the Northeast Region. Praise the Lord! Please prayerfully consider attending BTI. God bless you and God bless BTI!!

Regional BTI Coordinator,  
Elaine Smail

# KITTANNING

What a mighty God we serve! As I read all the articles in the *Olive Branch*, I try to glean all that is being done by our mighty God throughout the Northeast Region. I must admit that sometimes, as I read and hear of the move of God in the churches, I wonder just what I can input from Kittanning.

Then God places it in my heart to know that God is moving in Kittanning, too. We have seen the healing hand of God in many of our bodies, as well as growth in our souls to draw near to God. The sermons preached by our ministry have been inspiring and God-anointed, stirring us to submit to the Lord and seek His will for our lives. But our small membership is faithful and trusting for "that day" when the inflow will come.

We do ask continued prayers for Brother Sheldon Flick, who has been hospitalized recently for blood issues. Since Brother Sheldon was healed of cancer in the last few years, he must be monitored and checked for any abnormalities, but each time he is able to be in church he has a wonderful testimony of how God has delivered him one more time. Praise the Lord!

Brother Bill Flick's wife, Diane, has been placed on dialysis and is in need of prayer.

Brother Gary Sturgill and his wife, Olivia, do desire the prayers of all for their son, Christopher, as well as for themselves. Christopher is a special little boy who has been diagnosed with autism, and it is a struggle for Gary and Olivia as they learn how to deal with the things that present themselves in this matter.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the Regional Convention.

-Arlene Sturgill, Reporter

## Editor's Note—

Since the time of the above writing, Brother Sheldon Flick has passed away. Please keep his family and the local church at Kittanning in your prayers as they grieve this loss.

## Greetings from the Regional ABM

### Department

As you read this article, summer will be well on its way. The rain has caused a

great amount of stress due to projects that need to be completed. But I remember a day that our family would pray for rain because we depended on it for our necessary living. God is still in control and knows what He is doing. Our bodies are getting frail and we wonder when Jesus is going to return. We ask the question, "Are we living in the end times and will Jesus return soon?" The world does seem to be getting worse, and this should remind us that someday Christ will come again to bring an end to this present world. Jesus taught that certain events or signs would point to His coming and we certainly see many of these today.

So, is Jesus' coming near? It very well may be—although the Bible warns us not to make precise predictions as some men have. But we must be alert and ready for His coming by being certain of our commitment to Christ, and approaching every day as if it were our last. "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning" (Mark 13:35).

Sometimes I find myself impatient with God about His return. I wonder, what can He be waiting on? The tragedies around us, the suffering of people we love, and even the stresses of daily life all seem bigger than the fixes on the horizon. Then someone tells their story of having met Jesus or I discover God is still at work in the messes. It reminds me that there are stories and details God knows that I do not. It reminds me to trust Him and to remember that the story is not about me. It is about God's plan to give to others who do not yet know His Son. Let us be patient in well doing. God bless you as we work together and not miss the mark.

Regional ABM Coordinator,  
Louise Smail





When a baby is soon to be born, new parents may spend hours poring over books and Internet sites, talking to family

# What's In a Name?

Rebekah Horne, Assistant Editor

and friends, perhaps even studying their ancestry in search of the perfect name for their child. They might consider the sound of the name as well as its meaning, giving special attention to the spelling and any nicknames—good or bad—that might be derived from it. Why do they do this?

Your name is how you are identified. Sometimes a name seems perfectly suited to a person and other times it can seem ill-fitted. If you met a farmer dressed in dusty overalls with a sprig of straw dangling from his mouth, you might be surprised if he introduced himself as Reginald or Beaugard. You would be equally surprised to meet an English diplomat wearing an expensive suit and slicked back hair named Hank or Bubba. When parents contemplate the options for naming their baby, they choose a name that will suit what they envision or desire that child to become.

Surnames developed over the years with varying origins. Occupational surnames became common, such as Smith, Taylor, or Baker. Other names described the person himself, such as Short or Brown. Other surnames came about as family classification, like Jackson or Fredrickson (the son of Jack or Fredrick). These names were intended to better identify and describe the bearers as well as reduce confusion as to *which* Jack or Frank was being referred to.

Scripturally, names have great significance. Throughout the Old Testament we see that locations were given names according to what took place there. When Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, he named the place Ramath-Lehi, taken from a word meaning “jawbone.” Afterward, when he was thirsty and cried out for water, *“God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereof... wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore”* (Judges 15:19), which means “fountain.” When Jacob dreamed about the angels ascending and descending on the ladder that reached heaven, he awoke frightened and said, *“Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not... this is none other but the house of God”* (Gen. 28:16, 17), so he called the place Bethel, meaning “house of God.” These places were named after something significant took place there. *“Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood”* (Psa.

132:6). The “it” in this verse was referring to the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the government of God that

had been lost for some time. As was foretold throughout Scripture, God’s government was “lost” or covered over for hundreds of years. After A. J. Tomlinson prayed and prevailed on Burger Mountain in 1903, rediscovering God’s Church and enabling its government to begin to function once more, the location came to be known as “Fields of the Wood,” referencing the prophecy about rediscovering the government of God. That’s what happened there so that’s what it was named, just as Jacob called the place “Bethel” after he experienced his vision.

The same is true of personal names. The name Lucifer means “morning star,” but when he rebelled and was cast out of heaven his name was changed to Satan, “adversary; arch enemy; accuser; the devil.” His name is his description. Abram’s name was changed to Abraham, “father of a multitude,” when God made that promise to him. Jacob the “supplanter” was changed to Israel after his encounter with the angel, *“for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed”* (Gen. 32:28). Simon’s name was changed to Peter and Saul’s to Paul when their lives were transformed by Jesus, a testament of the change that had occurred.

What is your name? The name given by your parents isn’t of eternal significance, but how does your Heavenly Father refer to you? What name suits you according to how you live your life? What is it that best describes you? In the Bible, men who found favor with God were referred to by adjectives. God said that Noah was just and perfect, Job was perfect and upright, Daniel was greatly beloved, and Abraham was the friend of God. What about you? There could be no greater honor than to hear the voice of God calling you His good and faithful servant one day. Does that describe you well? For those who are saved by the blood of Jesus, we are each promised in the world to come that God *“will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written”* (Rev. 2:17). Our Heavenly Father will no doubt take more care than any earthly parent in choosing just the right name for us; a name that will suit us and be special to Him, representing qualities He is proud of in us, but only if we can wear the title of *“good and faithful”* here on this earth.

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**Special Note:** Articles intended for publication in the next issue of *The Olive Branch* should be received on or before **August 20, 2019**.

These submissions will be for the **September—October 2019** issue. Please send to Rebekah L. Horne, Assistant Editor, at:

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TO BE HELD AT  
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KINGSPORT, TENNESSEE

August 6-11, 2019



*The Church of God*

Arise, Shine; for thy light is come..."  
Isaiah 60:1

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