

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5

the **OLIVE BRANCH**

FALL 2008

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A publication of
The Church of God
Northeast Region

Transformed by Him

From Glory to Glory: Part 5

As we walk with the Lord, we come to have a set of expectations regarding Him – of how we may approach Him, of how He will respond to our calling unto Him. But, as He so chooses, the Lord brings us unto a deeper walk with Him, and an ever more glorious understanding of Him – often using experiences unlike any we may previously have had with Him.

Hosea and Isaiah in the Old Testament and Paul in the New Testament each described this ongoing revelation relationship:

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth. Hosea 6:3

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:9



That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. Philippians 3:10

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13,14

Jesus described the process in John 13:7: *Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou*

OVERSEER continued on page 5

The Northeast Region met in regional convention July 9-11 in Uniontown, PA. About 100 attended services. Among the special offerings was one of more than \$2,100 for Coins for Missions. Bro. Roger Ammons, overseer of Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan, was guest speaker.

In terms of appointments, there were no pastoral changes. Auxiliary appointments included: Sis. Nancy Horchar, ABM coordinator; Bro. Wendell Flick, BTI coordinator; Sis. Stephanie Satanek, childrens programs coordinator; Bro. Roger Fuester, CPMA coordinator; Sis. Peggy Fordyce, Ladies Retreat coordinator; Sis. Lisa Smith, music coordinator; Sis. Nora Edinger, assistant editor of *The Olive Branch*; Bro. Gary Satanek, Sunday School coordinator; Sis. Arlene Sturgill, treasurer; Sis. Diana Seese, WMB coordinator; Sis. Alma Kelley, Youth Camp coordinator and Bro. Levi Stephens, VLB coordinator.

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Regional Convention



*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he **counted me faithful**, putting me into the ministry
1 Timothy 1:12*

From a human perspective, the Apostle Paul's time as a zealous persecutor of Christians should have excluded him from being used in God's service. Paul himself said in 1 Timothy 1:13-15 that he had been, "*a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious...(among) sinners; of whom I am chief.*"

In spite of what he was, everything changed when the Lord God saved Paul. He embraced the Christian life with the same fervency with which he had opposed it. He seemed to especially labor to be **faithful** in every assignment, no matter how big or how small. Because of Paul's faithfulness, the Lord entrusted him to be one of His foremost promoters.

Paul understood that everything he ever accomplished for God's

WMB



2008-09 Theme:
"Faithful Servants"
Hebrews 12:1



WMB Coordinator
Diana Seese

kingdom was due to the enabling power of God. He was not deceived into thinking that his own intelligence or personal drive brought about God's will. But rather, Paul was grateful for the opportunity to be tested and found faithful.

As it was with Paul, our ability to serve the Lord is not based on our past, but on our faithfulness today. If we are faithful with whatever task God entrusts to us, God will enable us to accomplish it.

Whether the Lord has asked us to pray for souls, pray for our loved ones, minister to a person in need, lead a Bible study or to care for those who are sick, we should strive to be

faithful. If we do, we will experience His enabling. If we are faithful in little things, God will entrust us with more and more. We will be able to join Paul in praising God for having counted us faithful, too.

Let's be **counted faithful** to the commission that the Lord entrusted to The Church of God. There are still souls that need to hear the gospel. No matter how small or large the work, the praying and the giving is, let's strive to be faithful in all we do for the Lord.

Speaking of faithfulness, thank you to the region for approximately \$2,100 that was turned in for this year's Coins for Missions program.

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CONTACT US

The Olive Branch is a publication of The Church of God Northeast Region, which serves churches in Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania and new works throughout the greater area. It can be viewed online at www.tcog-ne.org.

Reports and other **submissions for the WINTER issue** must be received by **Dec. 15**.

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But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Matthew 9:36

Oh, to have the heart to do good to people as Jesus did. When He looked at the multitude, He was, "moved with compassion." Think about this: not only did Jesus see people with this compassion, He did something about it. What did He do? He healed the sick, fed the multitudes and genuinely cared about people and their souls.

Remember also how He handled the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. He knew all about her entangled life, yet He took the time to tell her about the Living Water. In Mark 5, the Bible also tells about a man no one could control who went around cutting himself on stones. This was a man running the graveyards acting crazy. This was a man possessed. Imagine what you or I would have done if we had encountered this man. We might just have run in the other direction.

There are still all kinds of people walking this earth and most of us don't like dealing with them -- but Christ cares for them. He went

around making a difference -- we must do the same.

The verse in Jude 1:22 is one that needs to jump out and grab each one of us:

And of some have compassion, making a difference.

The questions we ought to ask are: How much compassion do I really have? Am I making a difference in the world I live in? Do I encourage instead of discourage? Am I sharing Christ with others like I should? Do I honestly care for people's needs? Am I a blessing to others? My prayer this year, as we start the ABM work anew, is that we take each one of these questions to heart. Can we make the difference that needs to be made?

Church, time is so short. Things are wrapping up. We MUST do all we can do to help keep the spirit of the ABM alive. Let's assist one another in taking care

ABM

2008-09 Theme:

*Let us love one another
1 John 4:7*



*ABM Coordinator
Nancy Horchar*

of the physical and spiritual needs of one another. Let's do our very best to increase fellowship and love among the saints. Let's reach out in compassion to those who need to know about the saving grace of Jesus Christ. It will be great to get to heaven, but, in the meantime, God has put us here for a purpose. And that purpose is to be that willing servant to make a mighty difference in someone's life.

On another note: It is time, once again, to pay your Emergency \$5. Also, churches need to keep prayer bands up and running. Also, remember our regional overseer and his family in prayer. The Northeast Region is an awesome responsibility.

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2008-09 calendar

Western District Convention – Saturday, March 21, Grove City, PA

Eastern District Convention – Saturday, April 4, Pittsville, MD

Ladies Retreat – May 1-3, Camp Sunrise, Markleysburg, PA

Regional Youth Convention – May 15-16, Uniontown, PA

BTI – May 31-June 14, Cleveland, TN

Youth Camp – June 19-22, Mt. Chestnut, Butler, PA
Northeast Regional Convention – July 17-19, Uniontown, PA

General Assembly – Sept. 8-13, Abba's House in Chattanooga, TN

OVERSEER

continued from page 1

knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

While Jesus, on that occasion with the disciples, was referring to His washing of their feet, this statement is generally true about many things that we experience in our walk with Him. Time and again, we can look back in amazement at what we've just gone through, and at how He chose to intervene in our behalf. What we may be facing today (if for no other reason) will come to be revealed as preparation for something yet greater in the future.

Consider the experience of David regarding his fight with a lion, then a bear, and ultimately with Goliath. When standing before King Saul, David explained in 1 Samuel 17:37:

(37) The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

Could David have known or even imagined when he was confronting the lion, and later the bear, that these events were God's preparing him for confronting Goliath?

From time to time in our walk with the Lord, each of us undergo *transformational experiences* that greatly change and expand our understanding of and relationship with the Lord. Our spiritual eyes are opened wider and our understanding of who He is, how He moves and how we relate to Him is enlarged. We'll consider in this and coming sermons a series of such transformational experiences that the apostles had,

as described in the latter half of Matthew 14:14-36, Mark 6:32-56, and John 6:5-21.

These passages of scripture open with the account of the Master feeding the 5,000 by using a small boy's lunch of five loaves and two fish. The recounting of this miracle by three of the Gospels -- Matthew, Mark and John -- was more than about Christ demonstrating his power to supply much needed food.

The disciples' recounting of this miracle as importantly reveals the transformational experience that their own participation in this miracle represented. We are shown how Jesus employed this miracle as a unique learning experience by which He could teach His disciples some valuable lessons. This teaching by *involving the learner* is employed by the Master throughout his earthly ministry.

This miracle contrasts the Good Shepherd's views regarding the people with those of His disciples. Jesus viewed the people in great need, on whom He had great compassion. Jesus focused on ministering to the needs of the people. His disciples, being focused on the circumstances, viewed the people as a burden beyond their ability to address.

Consider the two verses Matthew 14:14 and Mark 6:34:



*Regional Overseer
James Smith*

(14) And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

(34) And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

No mention is made of a specific healing that He performed among these people. Rather, emphasis is on how He was moved with compassion for them. In contrast, consider how the disciples looked on this situation, as provided in Matthew 14:15:

(15) And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

To send the people away to find food for themselves was certainly one possible solution, but Christ preferred to use this opportunity to teach his disciples a valuable lesson – one that they not only would witness, but one in which they themselves would participate. In response to their concern, the Master poses to them a question as described in John 6:5,6:

(5) When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

(6) And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

Their response is given in John 6:7-9:

(7) Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient

for them, that every one of them may take a little.

(8) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

(9) There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

Their first thought was to purchase the needed food, which was quickly recognized as beyond their means. A lad from the crowd had offered his own lunch, but that was clearly insufficient. There were present on this occasion 5,000 men, besides women and children – the total size of the crowd could easily have been 12,000-20,000 people!

Jesus was about to perform a new miracle – one that His disciples would never forget – one in which they would play an important part!

First, He had the disciples have the people to sit down. He had not yet said what He intended to do. They could only act in faith that He indeed had a plan! What do you suppose they said to the people as they bade them to be seated? After the people were seated, Jesus revealed what He would do – John 6:11:

(11) And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

Did Jesus touch every single piece of bread and fish that was given out by the disciples? This could have taken hours. Or, did His blessing and breaking of the small boy's basket of food provide His disciples with an unlimited supply that multiplied as they went among the crowd giving it away?

Consider for example the widow who fed Elijah during a great famine, whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil never was exhausted! The account is given in 1 Kings 17:14-16.

I am inclined to believe that the experience His disciples had this day was much like that widow's. She never had more than a single barrel of meal or a single vessel of oil. Yet they never ran dry during the famine.

As with that miracle, there are lessons in what the disciples learned through participation in this miracle of feeding the multitude.

First, something needed to happen (to be done) for the disciples to catch the vision of their Master – that vision of the need before them! They had previously been told in John 4:35 to: *Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.* But they had not caught the vision .

The Master engaged his disciples' participation in this miracle as an important step in the transformation of their vision, not just of His ministry but of what eventually would be their ministry, too.

Can you imagine what the experience must have been like to begin passing out food with the expectation that it would soon run out – only to see that it multiplied even as it was given away?

The Master could have first materialized all the food needed to feed this crowd before the disciples had dispersed the first piece. Then anyone could have dispersed the food. The disciples participation would have been inconsequential.

Instead, the disciples had to continually give away what they had – only to find that they couldn't (give it all away)! Thus were they personally engaged in this miracle – providing food person to person.

Likewise, how many times have we been told how we ought to believe, how we ought to feel for the lost and undone, etc.? What must the Lord do for us to catch the vision? How many times have we assured ourselves, "When I have sufficient (you name it – time, money, health, ability, whatever), I will gladly allow it to be used of the Lord to bless others?" Yet that day never comes. Why not?

Could it be the Lord prefers that we step out in faith and obedience to Him? Then, we not only will see but will participate in the miracles He will provide. Time and again (Matthew 26:25,31,34; Mathew 10:19; Mark 13:11, Luke 12:11,22), He had told His disciples to "*Take no thought ...*" but rather to put their trust and confidence in Him.

We see something as mundane as providing someone a meal can be such a glorious experience. If we are willing, the Master can take our simplest efforts and turn them into something far greater than we ever could have imagined – something that can be a profound blessing to others, and can provide us an opportunity to know Him in ways far beyond what we ever would have imagined.

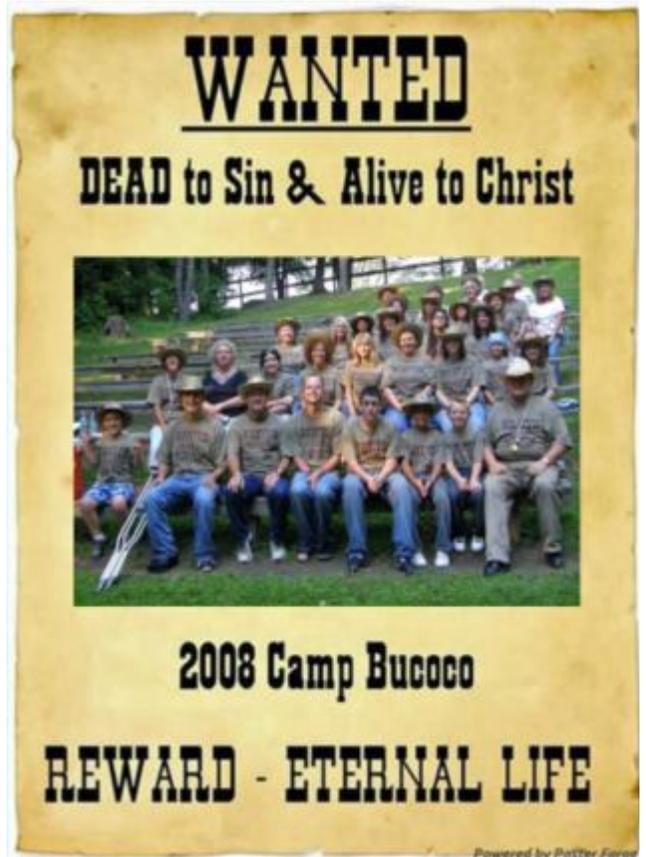
The Lord wishes to fill everyday of our lives with such opportunities – opportunities to learn ever more about Him, and opportunities to minister to others. Opportunities to behold His glory revealed to us and through us.

Youth Camp 2008

Youth camp was conducted July 24-28 at Camp Bucoco near Pittsburgh. More than 30 campers and staff attended this year's event, which was coordinated by Sis. Alma Kelley. The theme was a Western one, "Wanted: Dead to Sin and Alive to Christ." Evangelist was VLB Coordinator Levi Stephens.

Sis. Kelley reported several campers who claimed new spiritual experiences -- including three saved, two sanctified and four baptized in water.

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Plan ahead: Youth Camp 2009 dates to be announced soon!

School has already been in session for several weeks, but there's still time to improve how you're doing.

Here is a list of tips that should help you in class. Each tip also has an extra hint and a scripture to help you get closer to Jesus!

1. Get enough sleep -- Rest in the Lord.



"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him..."
Psalm 37:7

2. Get a healthy breakfast -- Have prayer and Bible study at the start of the day.



"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."
Psalm 5:3

3. Follow the rules -- Use the Bible as your guide.

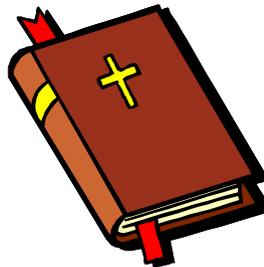
"But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."
Luke 11:28

KIDS Corner



Childrens Programs
Coordinator
Stephanie Satanek

4. Develop good work and study habits -- Develop good Bible study habits.



"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman

that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

5. Give it your best try -- Do your best for Christ.

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."
Colossians 3:23, 24

6. Get along with your classmates -- Fellowship with other Christians.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship

one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
1 John 1:7



7. Get to know your teacher -- Know Christ More.

"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."

1 Chronicles 28:9

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Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Philippians 2:16

Our theme for the Victory Leaders Band is again centered on the "race." This year the emphasis is placed upon the "Destination," or heaven!

Paul mentions the whole point of the race is to win! In worldly

minds, the point of the race is to win "a corruptible crown," but in a mind that as been renewed and transformed by the mercies of God (Romans 12:1-2), it's an "incorruptible crown," eternal life.

I would like to encourage our youth to "endure unto the end" (Matthew 24:13). You could be facing something tough at school, home or work, but keep your mind on the **Winner's Circle!** Whatever trials we must go through, it will be worth it to stay faithful to the Saviour.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art

VLB

2008-09 Theme:

Destination: The Winner's Circle
1 Corinthians 9:24-27



VLB Coordinator
Levi Stephens

that Christ, the Son of the living God.

John 6:67-69

I have already been able to meet several of our young people and talk about our youth work for the Northeast Region, and hope to soon meet the rest of our youth. I would also like to visit our local churches, as soon as it can be arranged, to boost and encourage our youth work!

I can be contacted by phone at (540) 520-6323 or by e-mail at levigstephens@hotmail.com.

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Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

Where can we find the Word of Truth being taught – at The Church of God's Bible Training Institute.

My prayer is that each one feels the excitement I am feeling concerning BTI this church year.

BTI

2008-09 Theme:
That We May Know Him
Daniel 11:32



BTI Coordinator
Wendell Flick



New church organized

To meet in suburb of NYC

The region's newest church was organized Nov. 15 in New Rochelle, NY, a suburb of New York City. Two women – Sis. Pearline Taylor and Sis. Joyce Bryan – are the charter members.

Sis. Taylor, who had been a female evangelist in the Church of God of Prophecy for more than 30 years, will be the pastor and Sis. Bryan will serve as clerk and treasurer. Sis. Bryan was also a long-term member of the Church of God of Prophecy.

Initially, the church will meet in the home of Sis. Taylor.

Regional Overseer James Smith also met with other interested individuals on the organization trip. "We have great hopes of receiving yet others into the Fold in the near future," he said.

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Top: Pastor Pearline Taylor takes the church covenant from Regional Overseer James Smith.

Middle: Sis. Joyce Bryan becomes a charter member of the New Rochelle, NY Church of God as Bro. Smith administers the church covenant.

Bottom: (left to right) Sis. Taylor, Bro. Smith, Sis. Nancy Smith and Sis. Bryan celebrate the organization of the region's newest church.



Some final thoughts...

When I look at the amazing life of the Apostle Paul, one of the things that strikes me is that he had an unusually orderly spirit.

Specifically, each time scripture records that he was asked or challenged about his faith, he always responded with the story of his conversion. He was never distracted by the circumstances at hand or provoked onto a pet-doctrine soap box. He understood that his unbelieving hearers most needed to hear his story -- his personal and miraculous encounter with God.

When it came to speaking with unbelievers, Paul's testimony was always the simple start to a simple gospel. This was in spite of his own rich understanding of God and God's ways -- an understanding he was perfectly willing to share with fellow church members through his many letters.

Maybe it was thinking about Paul's ability to consistently

present spiritual things in a wise order that made his words in Ephesians 3:17-19 stand out in a new way to me recently. Let's take a look at what he prayed for his friends:

(17) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

(18) May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

(19) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Many people in today's Christian world are all for verses 18 and 19. Who, after all, wouldn't want to experience Jesus's and God's love in its fullness?

But, notice that Paul didn't begin his prayer for his fellow believers at Ephesus with that thought. His primary prayer was that Jesus would be in their hearts -- or that they would walk in true salvation.



*Assistant Editor
Nora Edinger*

Just as Paul's introduction to the gospel always began with the story of his own salvation, Paul's prayer for his fellow saints was that their own salvation stories would be a springboard. He wanted them to start with that glorious "I know you and you know me" moment described in Matthew 16 and move on to being "rooted and grounded," and, only then, to plumb the height, length, depth and breadth of God.

From Paul's writings, we can infer that he had done all of this. Therefore, he wrote from experience when he prayed the Ephesians would grow in orderly fashion -- beginning with true salvation; growing deep, strong roots through the watering and light of God's Word; growing to understand and know Jesus's love; and growing until they were filled with God.

And so it is today. For the church to flourish, each of us must grow daily in grace. Let's each ask ourself: Am I truly rooted and grounded? Or, am I trying to skip ahead on God's orderly path to growth?

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