

“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

SUMMER 2008

THIS ISSUE

Ladies Retreat
photos.....page 2

WMB news.....page 3

Contact us.....page 3

Meet Lawrence,
MA..... page 4

CPMA news.....page 5

ABM news.....page 8

Regional briefs.....page 8

Calendar.....page 8

Youth camp
application.....page 9

Some final
thoughts.....page 10



A publication of
The Church of God
Northeast Region

From Glory to Glory: Part 4

The regional church theme for 2007-2008, titled “*From Glory to Glory*,” comes from 2 Corinthians 3:18:

*(18) But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image **from glory to glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The first sermon of this series provided an overview to this theme. Paul commences in 2 Corinthians 3 to lay out the purpose and function that the glory of the Lord should fulfill in the life of a Christian.

In the second sermon we examined the presence and the glory of the Lord manifested before the Israelites as they traversed the wilderness from Egypt into the promised land. And, in the third sermon, we have considered manifestations of God’s glory during the days of the prophets, namely Isaiah.

While we could continue to examine other Old Testament

examples, we now turn back to the New Testament and to the life of the apostle Paul.

We could think of being able to view God’s glory as a goal or objective that the child of God pursues.

Certainly, all of us are to strive “*unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:13). Surely that would qualify us to behold his glory?

We would be wrong – God’s *glory* and God’s *grace* are greatly intertwined. *God’s grace* has been described as His “*unmerited favor*,” and similarly, *God’s glory* could be called His “*unmerited presence*.”

We now consider Paul’s first

OVERSEER continued on page 6



*Regional Overseer
James Smith*

Ladies Retreat 2008

Nearly 40 women and girls from the North East Region and neighboring West Virginia attended Ladies Retreat 2008 at Camp Sonrise in Markleysburg, PA in early May.

Evangelist Kim Taylor of Tennessee was guest speaker. Peggy Fordyce of Uniontown, PA was retreat coordinator.

The retreat theme was one of the many names to describe Jesus: The Rose of Sharon.

One woman experienced salvation at the retreat. Many others claimed spiritual victories ranging from sanctification to physical healing.

+++



Clockwise from top: Sis. Elaine Smail of Monongahela, PA shares a moment with her daughter Alicia, 11, one of a handful of youthful attendees. West Virginia attendees from The Church of God's neighboring region celebrate after reaching the cross at the top of one of several hiking trails at Camp Sonrise. Sis. Angie Pitts of Uniontown, PA participates in a humorous skit. Attendees from throughout the region participate in a prayer line. Sis. Lisa Smith of Uniontown, PA, right, and Sis. Mary Lou Bodnovich of Monongahela, PA minister in music. Guest speaker Kim Taylor of Tennessee enjoys fellowship in the Camp Sonrise cafeteria. Attendees from West Virginia and Pennsylvania masquerade as flowers during one of the instructional sessions.

And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Matthew 4:19

While missions are a global effort, there is also a great work where each of us lives today -- reaching souls and being fishers of men and women for God.

Jesus told his first disciples to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men. These men left their fishing nets and were taught by Jesus to help others find God.

Jesus started his earthly ministry with the same message as John the Baptist: turn from sin and turn to God. This message of repentance is where we also must begin today. To be a fisher, we must first become a follower of our Lord -- turning away from our self centeredness and self control and a turning our lives over to the direction and control of Christ. Then we can help others do the same.

When the first disciples truly did this, they moved from productive trades to spiritual productivity. We might not all be able to leave our secular jobs, but we can share in the experience of bringing "fish" into God's boat if we will put the examples of Christ into practice.

WMB



2007-08 Theme:

*"Into His Harvest Fields
-- Fasting, Praying
Working."*



*WMB Coordinator
Diana Seese*

First, Christ taught His disciples how to reach souls through the power of His Holy Spirit.

He also taught them to respond quickly to God. When Jesus was putting together the church's early ministry, Peter and Andrew (who had already met Jesus) eagerly left their nets, willingly followed Him and expected their lives to be changed forever by doing so.

James and his brother John also followed Jesus, and did not make excuses why it was not a good time. They left at once to follow when He called.

Can we also launch into the deep as He calls -- without delay?

Jesus' ministry of teaching, preaching and healing also showed an example of deep concern for mankind. His teaching showed His concern for

understanding of God's plan. His preaching showed His concern for commitment. And, His healings showed His concern for wholeness.

Are you concerned enough to go fishing for the Lord? The sea of humanity has many fish just waiting for someone to present the Bread of Life to them.

Let us heed the example of the apostles and eagerly enter the waters. The Bible says soul winners are pleasing unto the Lord and that he who wins souls is called wise. May we all be about the Fathers' business. As we ask the Lord's direction, He will lead us to His those souls that are ready to yield to His Spirit.

+++

CONTACT US

The Olive Branch is a publication of The Church of God Northeast Region, which serves churches in Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania and new works throughout the region. It may be viewed online at our regional website www.tcog-ne.org. Beginning with this issue, *The Olive Branch* goes to a quarterly release. Reports and other

submissions for the FALL issue must be received by **Aug. 1.**

For more information contact:

The Olive Branch/Nora Edinger; 49 Poplar Ave.,
Wheeling, WV 26003; (304) 232-0204;
newdesignwv@yahoo.com

or Regional Overseer James Smith; P.O. Box 4188,
Clarksburg, WV 26302-4188; (304) 657-4258;
overseer@tcog-ne.org

-----Meeting Lawrence, MA-----

¡Bien venido!/Welcome!

On April 12, the North East Region of The Church of God welcomed a new local church in Lawrence, MA.

En el doce de abril, La Iglesia De Dios norte oriental dieron la bienvenida a una nueva iglesia en Lawrence, MA.

The Lawrence church, which is located in a northern suburb of Boston, was organized with four members: Pastor Jose Zorrilla, his wife Sis. Delores Zorrilla (a lay minister), another licensed evangelist, Bro. Milvio Alcantara, and his wife Sis. Margarita Alcantara (also a lay minister). All four have been Christians for many years, first in their native Dominican Republic and now in the U.S.

La iglesia de Lawrence, que esta cerca de Boston, fue organizado con cuatro miembros: Pastor Jose Zorrilla, su esposa, Hermana Delores Zorrilla, y el pastor, Hermano Milvio Alcantara y su esposa Hermana Margarita Alcantara. Las dos hermanas son pastores tambien. Los cuatro miembros han sidocristianos por muchos años, primero en La Republica Dominicana y en el Estados Unidos.

About 20 other people have been meeting with Bro. Zorrilla in their homes and in rented facilities when available. These precious people are primarily from Dominican Republic, with many contacts back home and in the New England area.

Hay más o menos 20 otras personas quien se juntan con Hermano Zorrilla ensus casas y en otros lugares. La mayoría de esa gente preciosa son de La Republica Dominicanatambien, con muchos contactos todavia en La Republica Dominicana y en el area de New England.

+++



Pictured are:

Top (left to right): Sis. Delores Zorrilla, Bro. Bienviendo Feliz (a translator from General Headquarters), Sis. Margarita Alcantara (clerk and treasurer), Bro. Milvio Alcantara, Pastor Jose Zorrilla and Regional Overseer James Smith.

Middle, left: Pastor Zorrilla. Middle, right. Bro. Alcantara.

Bottom (left to right): Bro. Alcantara, Sis. Alcantara and Pastor Zorrilla.

What lies ahead for The Church of God? Many of you are wondering why Bro. Fuester is asking such a dopey question, but it just might be a question of importance. If we consider that the New Testament gives predictions of a last days falling away, the question cannot be dismissed out of hand. Even in the first century AD, we know that false prophets rose up and led believers astray. In Acts 20:29, we read of "grievous wolves entering in among you not sparing the flock." Elsewhere, we find prophecy that wickedness will abound, believers will leave their first love, and that the love of many will grow cold.

Indeed, the picture is so dismal that Jesus asked, "*When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" What prompted Him to ask this? He knew all that we would be eyewitnesses to today: horrific school shootings, the increase in blatant homosexuality, terrorist acts becoming a frequent occurrence. Essentially He was saying, "In the midst of this, will you continue to believe -- will you continue to trust in me?"

On the other hand, Isaiah 54:3 suggests that there will be a great, worldwide awakening just before Christ's return:

Thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

The question is -- how will this final revival take place? In the midst of all the iniquity we see, something earthshaking will have to happen. In Isaiah 47, the prophet talks about the

CPMA



2007-08 Theme:

"To Make All Men See What Is the Fellowship of the Mystery" - Ephesians 3:9



CPMA
Coordinator
Roger Fuester

destruction of Babylon and Chaldea. Throughout the Bible, Babylon is characterized as having a spirit of prosperity, ease and pleasure. This spirit is epitomized in Revelation 18, which has figured prominently in previous CPMA boosts and countless sermons. We need to remember that this Babylonian spirit has persisted in mankind throughout the ages.

What's more, it has been prevalent in this nation since the 1950s and peaked around the turn of the 21st century. How did God say he would deal with this spirit? Let's take a look at Isaiah 47:8, 11:

Hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am and none else beside me...Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

As we see home foreclosures mounting, the stock market tanking and the cost of living soaring -- the likelihood is increasing that this spirit of greed

and false security is going to be brought down.

How will this bring about revival? Let's look at what happens in good times in Isaiah 26:10:

Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

Revival won't come about until peoples' pocketbooks are affected and they can't count on their riches. In verse 9 of the same passage, we read *...when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness.*

The spirit of Babylon's days are numbered, and it will be broken down through unhappiness and misery. Yet, we should not view this with trepidation. We must instead remember Jesus's words from Luke 21:28:

When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.

+++

OVERSEER

continued from page 1

experiences with God's glory, as described in Acts, when he was yet a lost and undone soul! In Acts 6 and 7 is found the account of the martyrdom of Stephen. In Acts 6:8-10 we are told that:

(v.8) "... Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people," and the people who resisted him (v.10) "... were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." Being falsely charged, Stephen was brought before the council where (v.15) "... all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, **saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.**"

Present at that council was Saul of Tarsus (Paul) who also heard the mighty anointed defense that Stephen gave – not a defense of himself, but rather a defense of all that God had done to reach out to His people Israel. This outreach culminated with the Lord sending His Son to be smitten and to die.

We know Stephen's words were anointed because of the heart-felt response of his accusers:

(54) "When they heard these things, **they were cut to the heart**, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." (Furthermore) (58) "...the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul."

What had so upset the council that they "gnashed on him with their teeth" and would proceed to stone him to death? The answer is provided in Acts 7:55-56:

(55) *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand*

of God, (56) And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

This experience greatly affected Saul. Could what Stephen had preached unto them be true? Had Stephen really beheld "**the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God**"? The radiance about the countenance of Stephen (Acts 6:15) transcended his awful death.

As one of those present who were "cut to the heart," Saul's immediate response was to engage in an all-out persecution of the Body of Christ. The martyrdom of Stephen seemed only to push Saul further from the Lord. Despite the earlier warnings of Gamaliel in Act 5:39, "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God," Saul pressed on (Acts 9:1) "...breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."

He presumed to pursue and persecute the saints even to Damascus, little realizing that he was himself being pursued – by none other than the Lord. As described in Act 9:3-6, Saul was exposed to a bright "light from heaven," so bright that he was left blinded, and to a voice that confronted him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Could this really be the LORD speaking? "Who art thou, Lord?" Saul asked, already confirming his suspicion – his fear. The immediate response was unequivocal "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Saul's greatest fear was thus true – he indeed had been "found even to fight against God," (Acts 5:39) as Gamaliel warned. What

punishment, what restitution must he deserve for so transgressing against the Lord?



*The Conversion of Paul,,
on the Road to Damascus*

Saul's response was also immediate: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" As was the case with Isaiah in our last sermon, Saul now casts himself completely upon the mercies of the Lord. Whatever might be the Lord's verdict, Saul certainly deserved it! Whatever He would require, Saul certainly would do it! Yet, the Lord extended His mercy, His grace, and yes, His glory.

Saul was not an exception. All of us who have been convicted of our sins and have repented whole heartedly, we too have received a taste of the glorious mercies and grace of the Lord. Since that glorious day when you gave your heart and life to Him, have you continued to walk in His glorious presence?

What can be said of the walk of Saul as he forsook all and followed

his Lord? The Lord had already spoken to Ananias concerning Saul's future in Acts 9:15-16:

(15) ... Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: (16) For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

One might be tempted to think that Saul's conversion and service to the Lord was a special case or circumstance. He described his apostleship in 1 Corinthians 15:8-9 "*... as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*" In Galatians 1:14 Paul confessed "*...how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it.*"

This was a heavy burden of guilt and regret for anyone to bear, including for Paul. But the Lord also had provided the answer – 1 Corinthians 15:10:

(10) But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Rather than being the exception, the life of Paul is a perfect example of what the child of God should expect, and how the child of God should live.

We have considered several examples of "seeing the Lord's glory," but what about "living the Lord's glory" – about having that glory manifested in our lives?

The point that Paul introduced in 2 Corinthians 3 was the contrast between the Israelites under Moses seeing God's glory, and Christian's daily walking in (and thereby being changed by) God's glory.

The experience of walking (living) in God's glory was the focus of 2 Corinthians 4:6-18.

The manifestation of God's glory in us is due not to our "worthiness" (for we all are so unworthy), but rather to His divine purpose and plan:

(6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We thus see that the words of Stephen indeed made a profound impact on Saul of Tarsus.

Paul identified his own life experience with that shared by all Christians that have totally yielded themselves unto the Lord. As with Paul, we also will have "*great things we must suffer for His name's sake.*"

(8) We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; (9) Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; (10) Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

We all have the same path to walk, and the same promises of God. The particulars of each person's sufferings and trials may differ, but they all are for the same purpose. Paul summarized this purpose as three major points – one per scripture:

(15) For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

(16) For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man

perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

(17) For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

Verse 15 makes the direct connection from God's grace to God's glory – we cannot produce either: they both are from above. Our heartfelt thanksgiving for God's amazing grace toward us day after day, over and over again, redounds (directly results in) manifestation of God's glory revealed in us and through us – beginning with that day when we were saved by grace and continuing until the day we finally reach our heavenly home.

Verse 16 contrasts how we are to treat the *outward* man and the *inward* man. Through the daily working of God's grace and glory in our lives, we overcome the world. This is the Christian's *daily manna* (remember Moses?) we collect daily. God provides the grace and glory needed for that day.

Verse 17 compares the price to be paid with the goal to be reached. Again, Paul writes in Romans 8:16-18

(16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (17) And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (18) For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

It is high time that we, as did Paul, ask the Lord: "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" Then do what He says, and watch what happens!

+++

Ministering with the right spirit: To do this, we must be friendly and do all we can to get along with people. What a good place to start when you are working on improving your Christian walk. Just be friendly. How are we ever going to share Christ if we are not friendly to those people that God has placed in our path?

Friendliness can start with some simple things -- maybe just sharing a smile or going out of your way to say "hello." And, just think how doing something very simple can lead up to other things. Isn't that the example Jesus left for us when He washed the dirt off the disciples' feet in John 13. In these scriptures, we find that Jesus was a model servant and He showed this attitude to his disciples.

Washing the disciples' feet was a job for the household servant when the guests arrived. But Jesus wrapped that towel around Himself -- as the lowliest servant would do -- and washed His disciples' feet. Just this simple act taught the disciples how Jesus was so willing to serve and that they must be servants, too. Jesus didn't wash their feet to get them to be nice to one another. He had a further goal in mind. He wanted to extend His mission on this earth after He was gone and He wanted them to go into the world serving God, serving each other and serving all people to whom



ABM

**2007-08 Theme:
Ministering With
A Right Spirit**



*ABM Coordinator
Nancy Horchar*

they took the blessed message of salvation.

I want you to know it's not just being friendly but getting along with people, too. As Christians, that shouldn't be hard for us, but sometimes it is. It's not just the idea of getting along with the people of the world that we come in contact with but we have to get along with other Christians, as well. If we can't get along with our brothers and sisters while we are on this earth, then how can we get along in heaven?

Philippians 2:1-5

- (1) If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,
(2) Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same loves, being of one accord, of one mind.
(3) Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.
(4) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

(5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

To get along with one another we must have spiritual unity. We must work together with one heart and one purpose. When we work together, caring for the problems of others as if they were our own, we will create unity.

Are you being friendly and doing all you can to get along with everyone? Lord help us.

Also: If you haven't paid your emergency dollars yet, why not? Don't forget June 18 is the anniversary of our regional overseer and his wife. Please remember them. Host a prayer band meeting. Pray for the upcoming regional convention.

+++

2008 calendar

Northeast Regional Convention -- July 9-11 at Uniontown, PA

Youth Camp -- July 24-28 at Camp Bucoco near Pittsburgh

General Assembly -- Aug. 5-10 at Cleveland, TN (note change)



*Dead to Sin
&
Alive to Christ*

Did you realize that when God sent Jesus to die for you, He might as well have put your name and face in the blank space on the wanted poster above. Don't believe it? Read John 3:16 and think about it. If you're breathing, you certainly qualify as a "whosoever will."

Want to know more? Youth Camp 2008 is the perfect opportunity. "Wanted: Dead and Alive," is the theme of a Western-style camp scheduled for July 24-28 at Camp Bucoco near Pittsburgh. The camp is open to youth who are at least 6 years of age.

Don't wait to reserve your space in this round up. Campers will be heading out to Camp Bucoco before you know it.

Anyone interested in attending or assisting with the camp can contact **Camp Coordinator Alma Kelley at (724)-756-8840, or Regional Overseer James Smith at (304) 657-4258.** Regional pastors also have application materials. An application also can be downloaded from our Regional website.

+++

Some final thoughts...

Many of us probably remember a contemporary Christian song that was popular in the 1970s. It was called "I've Got Confidence," and one part of it featured the words, "I don't worry. I don't fret. My God has never failed me yet."

It was a good song then -- and it remains a good song because it is scripturally accurate. It's basically a first-person response to the assurances of Psalm 37 -- even sharing many of the same words. Check out Psalm 37:7a:

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself...

To "fret" can mean to "wear away, gnaw or corrode." Imagine a dog "worrying" a bone. That's the word picture for "fret."

To see another picture of "fretting" in action, one only need look at the news. People all around the world are fretting -- with good reason if they do not yet know Jesus personally. Their

fretting concerns: access to food, the price of gasoline and other commodities, the loss of loved ones and entire ways of life to natural and human-caused disasters, the reeling economy, the foreclosure crisis, war, disease and so on.

I don't in any way belittle these calamities that have come upon mankind. There is terrible suffering going on and we should do our best as Christians to help wherever we can.

But, we cannot join in the fretting.

First, it is not a good witness to the countless souls who need to see a living, breathing faith in Jesus. Second, it is damaging to our own souls because the root of fretting is a lack of trust in God.

It is harder to trust in certain circumstances than others, but



*Assistant Editor
Nora Edinger*

each Christian will surely face times that test faith. That known, how do we pass the test?

The answer is just as sure -- study the text book and spend as much time as possible communing with its author.

The Bible is full of accounts that will strengthen our faith: manna from heaven for the hungry (Exodus 16:14-15), water from a rock for the thirsty (Exodus 17:5), wild animals sharing their food with the exiled (I Kings 17:4).

There are God-made promises of daily provision in Matthew 6 and elsewhere. God even gave us a special name to call Him by -- Jehovah-jireh -- that means "God will provide."

Yes. Continual exposure to God's word will remind us that He never failed His people in the past and He will not fail us today or in the future.

As the 1970s song goes on to say, "trouble comes from time to time." But, let us honor Him with a faith that stop us from being the fretting or "worrying kind."

+++

THE CHURCH OF GOD NORTHEAST REGION
PO BOX 4188
CLARKSBURG WV 26302-4188