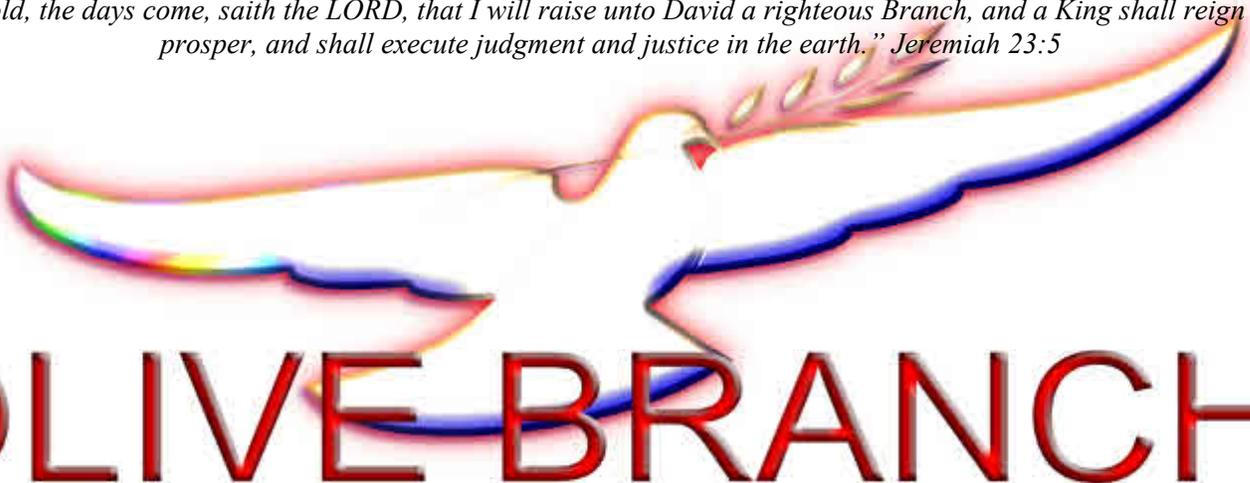


“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5



the
OLIVE BRANCH

APRIL-MAY 2007

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A publication of
The Church of God
Northeast Region

Preparing God's People: Part 3

This series of messages opened by considering the admonition in 1 Peter 4:17-18:

(17) For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

(18) And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

We have seen that judgment can carry the connotation of a remedy being applied to correct what is deficient or lacking -- to purge and purify the imperfect (Malachi 3:3-4). We looked to the days of Hezekiah described in 2 Chronicles 29 and 30 as a “type and shadow” of the last days total restoration of God’s plan -- the Church -- and of the inflow of God’s sheep that will occur. For those who will hear and heed God’s call, a glorious restoration awaits.

But what of those who will not listen, who will not heed the call?

Peter posed the question: “*what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*”



*Regional Overseer
James Smith*

Continuing with the current type and shadow, consider what happened immediately following the mighty restoration (perfection) and reunion (inflow) under Hezekiah. A short 3 ½ years following that mighty move of God, the northern kingdom of Israel under Hosea ceased to exist (2 Kings 18:9-12). Those who ignored the call of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30:1-2, 10-11) to

OVERSEER continued on page 5

Gathering together: District Conventions

Dozens of regional members and attendees visited two district conventions conducted in March. About 20 attended a March 10 convention for eastern churches in Pittsville, MD. About 60 attended a March 24 event for western churches in Uniontown, PA.

Regional staff boosted various auxiliaries at each event, with many western staff traveling together in a van to attend the eastern event. Programs also included preaching and music. The Eastern Convention was coordinated by District Overseer Ernest Miller, pastor of the Pittsville, MD and Newark, DE churches. The Western Convention was coordinated by District Overseer Edward Burdett, pastor of the Monongahela, PA church.

More convention pictures can be found on page 7.



Top: (left to right) Sis. Alma Kelley of Karns City, PA, Bro. John Burdett of Monongahela, PA, Sis. Peggy Fordyce of Uniontown, PA and Bro. Tom Kelley of Karns City participate in a skit at the Eastern District Convention in Pittsville, MD on March 10.

Middle, top: Bro. Sanchez of Pittsville speaks at the Eastern District Convention.

Top, right: Attendees of the March 24 Western District Convention in Uniontown, PA break for lunch in the fellowship hall.

Middle: Bro. Roger Fuester of Newark, DE speaks at the Western District Convention.

Middle, bottom: Sis. Dolly Nathan of the Philadelphia church holds son Jacob at the Eastern District Convention.



Left: Sis. Michele Sokol and Sis. Lisa Smith of Uniontown rest in a van that transported regional staff to the Eastern Regional Convention.

Psalm 41:1-3

(1) *Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.*

(2) *The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*

(3) *The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*

The Bible often speaks of God's care for the poor and His blessing on those who share this concern. God wants our generosity to reflect His own free giving. Just as God has blessed us, we should be willing to bless others and we can do this through giving to missions -- both to the special World Missions offerings taken in specific months and to other missions programs throughout the year.

Remember -- "blessed is he that considereth the poor" -- a statement and a fact. God loves to bless His people and there are promises of increase to those who give to the needs of the poor.

WMB



2006-07 Theme:
Work while it is day
... Behold the
Bridegroom cometh.



WMB Coordinator
Peggy Fordyce

Luke 6:38

Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

We must continue to "work while it is day -- Behold the Bridegroom cometh." Let our mission theme speak to us daily.

Other reminders:

-- Ladies Retreat is coming soon. There is an application on page 7 in this newsletter issue.

-- Missionary Partnership Alliance still needs pledges. Previous support has helped in such successes as the recent organization of two new churches in India. Each has about 10 former Hindus in attendance in spite of threats from the larger community. We have been asked to remember these brothers and sisters in our prayers -- also asking God to provide buildings for services.

-- Please continue to make items for the missions fund-raising table at the General Assembly.

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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 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 June-July issue must be received by April 15 as the assistant editor will be moving in May.

For more information contact:

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

Anybody who has been with the Church for any length of time knows that Satan comes against her with many stratagems. In this boost, we will focus on spiritual gifts, which Satan tries to use as a wedge to split the Body of Christ. The key passage, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, is one we have heard preached often, and this is good, because we need to keep it ever before us. I read an interesting story that provides a wonderful object lesson on this passage. The setting was a leper colony in India where a visitor was given a tour. At the noon hour, people converged on the dining hall from all parts of the compound. The visitor's attention was drawn by the sound of laughter. Two young men, one mounted on the other's back, were playing as a horse and rider and having a grand time.

As the visitor looked on, he was told the man playing the part of the horse was blind, and the man playing the part of the rider was lame. Together, they assisted each other, and discovered great amusement in doing so.



CPMA



*CPMA
Coordinator
Roger Fuester*

Picture the Church like that – each member using his or her strong point to compensate for another's weak point. That's the way it should be in every local church. In this passage, Paul compared spiritual gifts to the different parts of the human body. All are necessary, and when each carries out its job, the whole body profits.

To be sure, we all have weaknesses, but all of us also have strengths. This is the point that Paul was making when he wrote, "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary" (v. 22). We have need one of another — everybody is essential. May the Lord give us the strength, even in our weakness, to do His work.

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For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 3:38-39

The love of Jesus is so absolute and powerful that there is absolutely nothing in the universe that can separate us from that love. Neither death: when you confront the reality of death, understand that it cannot ever be able to separate you. Nor life: There is no difficulty, no trial, no pressure, no threat that can separate you. Nor angels, nor principalities: there is no heavenly or spiritual being that has the power to take the love of Jesus away. Nor things present or future: There is no event that will happen today or any other day that can separate you. Nor height nor depth: there is no distance that can ever be achieved that can separate you. Nor any other creature: There is nothing in all of creation that can separate you.

The only way you can be separated from Christ's love is to walk away from it. Let's remember: Each day that

ABM



*ABM
Coordinator
Nancy Horchar*

Remain and Maintain

you choose not to pray, that you harbor bitterness or resentment toward another person, that you behave unkindly is a step way.

If you have found yourself stepping away, may I urge you to come back into His love. How? In James 4:8, we are told if we will draw close to God He will draw close to us.

Also, don't forget to pay your Emergency \$5 and let me know if your church is 100 percent.

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OVERSEER

continued from page 1

come to Jerusalem to join as one unified people in worshipping the Lord did not know this was their last call.

2 Kings 17:13-14

(13) Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

(14) Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

Peter described their behavior in 2 Peter 2:22, as they willfully turned to the very behavior that God so despised.

(22) But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

They did worse than spurn God's call and God's way. They went about to create their own righteousness, as described in 2 Kings 17:15-17.

(15) And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

(16) And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

The “*moral majority*” remnant theory did not fit for Noah, it did not fit for Israel and it will not fit for the end time.

(17) And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

Their behavior exceeded the wickedness of the heathen about them. One molten calf under Aaron wasn't enough (see Exodus 32) -- they now needed two! Even so in our day all religions are treated “equally”-- believe what you will, or believe nothing if you wish. “You're OK!” The Israelites' sacrifice of their children for their own gratification is now being repeated in our day with the increasing acceptance abortion and other hideous acts (not named here) against innocent children.

Paul described this reprobate behavior in Romans 1:21-32 (Read the whole passage). Key verses are given below:

(21) Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

(22) Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

(24) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves:

(26) For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections:...

(28) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

(32) Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Many have read religious books such as the series “Left Behind” by Tim LaHaye, which offers a false hope that a significant “*moral majority*” will be left behind when the Church is raptured to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But such opinions do not fit the biblical pattern!

Their problem in Old Testament days was not a lack of religious interest -- indeed, the people of Israel were very religious. But their faith was in vain. The message levied against Israel in 2 Kings 17:15-17 had consequences in verse 18:

(18) Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

The “*moral majority*” remnant theory did not fit for Noah, it did not fit for Israel and it will not fit for the end time. Paul has warned us in Hebrews. 2:1-4 that unless we of the last days “*give the more earnest heed ... how shall we escape...*”

OVERSEER continued from page 6

(1) *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

(2) *For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;*

(3) *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

(4) *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Indeed, Paul clearly has warned us in Act 17:30-31

(30) *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

(31) *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

“Judgment” thus can also mean God’s wrath poured out upon those who have often hardened their hearts toward Him and continually spurned His calling and pleading.

May we all be preparing for His return now!

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LADIES RETREAT 2007 APPLICATION

The Church of God Northeast Region Ladies Retreat is May 4-6 at Camp Sunrise Mountain, Markleysburg, PA. The theme is “The Apple of His Eye” and the evangelist is Sis. Connie Wilson of Virginia.

Total cost is \$80 per person for two nights of lodging and six meals. Please send a \$10 non-refundable deposit with your application. Checks should be made payable to The Church of God and mailed to Sally Matthews, 34 Old Braddock Road, Lemont Furnace PA 15456

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Application deadline is April 15. Check-in is noon-4 p.m. Friday, May 4.

For more information, please contact Peggy Fordyce, director, (724) 437-5042

2007 CALENDAR

May 4-6 Ladies Retreat at Camp Sunrise, Markleysburg, PA

May 12-25 Bible Training Institute in Charleston, TN

July 13-15 Northeast Regional Convention at the Uniontown, PA church

July 30-Aug. 3 Youth Camp at Camp Bucoco near Pittsburgh

Aug. 27-Sept. 1 General Assembly in Cleveland, TN *(note time and place change from previous calendars)*

More convention photos



Top: Bro. Elliot Leighty, pastor of the Uniontown, PA church and several attenders of the Western District Convention participate in a skit.



Middle: the daughters of Bro. Greg and Sis. Dolly Nathan of Philadelphia pose for a photo at the Eastern District Convention.

Bottom: Sis. Denise Satanek, Bro. Gary Satanek and Sis. Lisa Smith, all of the Uniontown church, sing at the Western District Convention.



The regular *Olive Branch* church feature will return in the June-July issue.

Some final thoughts...

The Bible tells us to “fret not thyself because of evildoers,” (Psalm 37:1), but that is definitely one of those biblical commandments that is easier read than done.

Sometimes it seems as if evil is all around us. It stalks through the news in every imaginable form. It creeps into our workplaces, neighborhoods and families. Evil even rears its head in the Church from time to time.

All the badness can be so discouraging it is a blessed thing that we have the Bible to lift us up and turn our focus back to God. Besides Psalm 37, which is one of my favorites, think of all the passages that remind us that God is in control and that we

can live a victorious Christian life no matter where or when our life circumstances fall.

Noah’s story is one that quickly comes to mind. He lived in a time when the Bible says all of mankind’s thinking was evil. Yet Noah lived a life that pleased God. He didn’t just endure. He lived in a way that found grace in God’s eyes and was richly rewarded for it.

Or, think of Joseph. He found himself separated from the love of family and any of the comforts of home. Yet Joseph lived a life that pleased God. He didn’t wallow in bitterness. He didn’t sink into vengeance. He simply did what he knew to be right and, again, he was rewarded.



*Assistant Editor
Nora Edinger*

As the faith chapter in Hebrews states, time would not allow us to go through every biblical example of God’s goodness triumphing over evil. And, that’s just the Bible examples. Think of all the more recent Christians that we know or have read about that make us want to rise up and walk for Him yet another day.

That’s right. There are plenty of evil reports to be heard. But there are even more reports of peace, help, love, forgiveness, healing, holiness, joy and all of God’s manifold blessings.

If you are feeling discouraged today, think on these wonderful things until you are encouraged. As Psalm 37 says, there is no need to fret.

Also, please note the early deadline for the June-July issue mentioned on page 3, that results from our impending move.

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