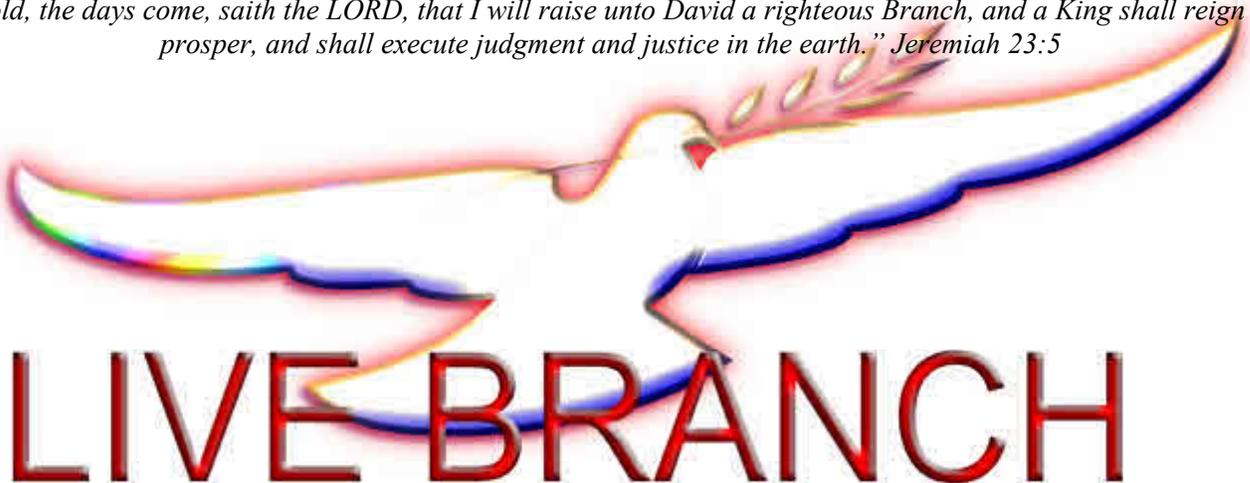


“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5



the  
OLIVE BRANCH

DECEMBER 2007-JANUARY 2008

## THIS ISSUE

Ministers Convention  
heads east.....page 2

WMB  
news.....page 3

Calendar.....page 3

Contact us.....page 3

Meet Pittsville, MD  
and beyond.....page 4

CPMA news.....page 5

ABM news.....page 9

Some final  
thoughts.....page 10



A publication of  
The Church of God  
Northeast Region

## From Glory to Glory: Part 1

The theme for the Northeast Region for the 2007-2008 church year, 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.*

We know the Church's ultimate objective: **perfection** – "... let us go on unto perfection" (Hebrews 6:1). But perfect in what sense? We are to be "perfect in love" (1 John 4:17,18). Perfection is also determined by what we do not do: "... If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man..." (James 3:2). Reaching perfection appears to be a complex process or state. How can we know what, if any, progress we are making?

Christ has identified our measuring rod: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Now, that is a tall order. We obviously will never be omnipotent, or

omnipresent (qualities of God). So, in what way are we to be "perfect as He is perfect?" Further still, how are we to reach that perfection?

We could attempt to compile a list of "do's and don'ts" – the approach that the Hebrews took with the many laws they added to the Talmud to assure that everyone kept the Law. For the early part of his life, this had been the way that Paul (then called Saul) pursued – being "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers" (Acts 22:3).

If not by a list of "do's and don'ts," how then will we reach perfection? We know that we both individually and collectively are to "come in the



Regional Overseer  
James Smith

## Fall meetings travel across the region

A series of ministers convention events broke tradition this year to travel to various churches throughout the region. Beginning in the Pittsburgh area in early October, the special services wrapped up along the East Coast in early November.

Bro. James Smith, regional overseer, said he changed the structure of the convention so that more people could attend. Indeed, well over a hundred attended the services.

In addition to evangelistic-style services, Bro. Smith presented some church business information during a workshop for regional appointees conducted in Uniontown, PA in September. Highlights of that meeting include:

-- The region's theme for 2007-08, "From Glory to Glory," is taken from 2 Corinthians 3:18.

-- Regional appointees are Sis. Nancy Horchar for ABM, Bro. Elliot Leighty for BTI, Bro. Roger Fuester for CPMA, Bro. John Burdett for Sunday School, Bro. Roger and Sis. April Millican for VLB, Sis. Diana Seese for WMB, Sis. Karen Leighty for Childrens Church, Sis. Peggy Fordyce for Ladies Retreat, Sis. Lisa Smith for music, Sis. Nora Edinger for *The Olive Branch*, Sis. Shirley Satanek as treasurer and Sis. Alma Kelley for Youth Camp.

-- The announcement that Youth Camp will also break tradition in 2008 to extend over a weekend. This will allow for some campers to attend an entire camp and others to attend just weekend



*Attendees of the most recent events associated with the fall ministers convention include:*

*Top (left to right) -- Bro. Ralph Sanchez, Sis. Dorothy Miller, Bro. Ernest Miller, Sis. Norma Pruitt (seated), Bro. Roger Fuester and Sis. Wanda Fuester at a service in Pittsville, MD, and,*

*Bottom (left to right) -- Bro. James Smith, Victoria Nathan, Bro. Greg Nathan, Sis. Dolly Nathan, Jacob Nathan and Ivy Nathan at a service in Philadelphia, PA.*

programming if that is all for which they are available.

-- The suggestion for a regional Internet prayer line. This has been implemented. You may request to be added to the prayer chain by contacting Bro. Smith at [overseer@tcog-ne.org](mailto:overseer@tcog-ne.org). Those of you who have previously given your email address to Bro. Smith have already received an "Invite" message. Just follow its directions.

+++

*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*  
John 4:34-35

We must not put in our minds that we have plenty of time. Some especially do not want to take time now to see the fields of the lost, the hopeless, the outcasts. But, Jesus tells you and I, Church, to lift our eyes, to get in a spiritual position to "see" the urgency of the hour. We must look up to the Father for divine direction in the mission work -- fasting, praying, working -- and look on the fields.

Do you see the lost souls on the harvest fields through the eyes of Jesus? He was moved with compassion when he saw them. Are you?

# WMB



2007-08 Theme:

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



*WMB Coordinator  
Diana Seese*

In Luke 10:1 it also says Jesus appointed ministers to send two by two into every city and place where He would go. Every city, every place -- is that not what the Lord commissioned The Church of God to do when He told us to go into all the world?

We must go (by fasting, praying, working) into every city, every place. That means our own mission fields in addition to far-off lands. Your field can be your loved

ones, neighbors and co-workers. God will lead you if you are willing to work in your field.

In Proverbs 10:5, Solomon said a son that sleeps in harvest causes shame. As God's sons and daughters, we need to work in a way that brings Him glory and will reap a great harvest. Will you labor for Him in this new church year?

+++

## 2007-08 Calendar

*Northeast Region District Convention (Eastern churches) -- March 22 at Pittsville, MD*

*Northeast Region District Convention (Western churches) -- March 29 at Grove City, PA*

*Ladies Retreat -- May 2-4 at Camp Sunrise in Markleysburg, PA*

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

*Youth Camp -- July 24-28 at Camp Bucoco near Pittsburgh, PA*

*General Assembly -- Aug. 26-30 at Cleveland, TN*

## 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 <http://www.tcog-ne.org>.

Reports and other **submissions for the February-March issue** must be received by **Jan. 4**.

For more information contact:

*The Olive Branch*/Nora Edinger; [paper@tcog-ne.org](mailto:paper@tcog-ne.org)  
or Regional Overseer James Smith; P.O. Box 4188,  
Clarksburg, WV 26302-4188; (304) 657-4258;  
[overseer@tcog-ne.org](mailto:overseer@tcog-ne.org)

-----Meeting Pittsville, MD and beyond-----

# Assembling together

In the western part of this region, church activity goes on much as it did before a worldwide church split in 1993 sharply reduced our ranks. There are church services three times a week or more. There are pastors for each congregation and a multitude of opportunities to fellowship both inside and outside buildings that are recognizable as churches.

Such is not the case in the eastern part of the region. Up and down the Eastern Seaboard, church families and individuals are scattered, sometimes so far from the closest Church of God that attending once a month is an accomplishment. Among these members are several familiar faces. There is Bro. Roger Fuester, our regional CPMA coordinator, who few may have realized is alone with his wife Wanda in the state of Delaware. In recent months, there is also Sis. Norma Pruitt, widow of General Overseer Emeritus Robert Pruitt, who has moved to Maryland to live with family.

Given those circumstances, one might expect a church feature from this area to be a short and sad one. But, that is not the case. Here are stories from our region's frontier and the tiny local church that is holding a whole coastline of members in its welcoming arms.



## At the center

For western churches from our region, Uniontown, PA is a natural gathering point given its large worship and fellowship facilities. For our eastern membership, the Pittsville, MD church provides that anchor. And, that puts Bro. Ernest Miller in an unusual spot.

Not only is he pastor of the six-member church at Pittsville, he assists with pastoral duties for another small church in Philadelphia, PA and serves as pastor-at-large for the small work in Newark, DE and for members that are scattered from Massachusetts to the north, to the Washington, D.C. area to the south.

Not that Bro. Miller is complaining.

"It was a dream come true, something I've wanted to do since I was a boy," he said of

taking up the clergy cross in 1995.

Once a member of the General Assemblies of the Church of God (Elders), Bro. Miller joined the Church of God of Prophecy in the 1950s and renewed his covenant with The Church of God in

1995. He served as an interim pastor briefly in the Church of God of Prophecy, but said the full pastoral duties he now has in The Church of God fulfill a calling he first felt when he was 12 years old.

He and Sis. Dorothy

Miller, his wife of 59 years, were so excited about the work, in fact, that they provided a building for the Pittsville church. Bro. Miller converted one of the body shop garages beside his home into a sanctuary.

In the other garage, Bro. Miller can also be found finishing up the restoration of a 1957 Chevy. He hopes to complete this final



*Pastor Ernest Miller*

This is the time of year when we look forward to the winter holidays, especially Christmas. I guess I started thinking about Christmas a little earlier than usual this year when I saw a news story the other night about the discovery of King Herod's tomb. To make a long story short, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem announced it has uncovered the grave and tomb of Herod, who ruled Judea on behalf of the Roman Empire from about 37 BC to 4 BC.

This is the same King Herod who was responsible for the slaughter of the innocents as recorded in second chapter of Matthew. You will recall from the account of the Nativity how wise men came to Judea searching for the newborn King of the Jews, having seen his star in the East (verses 1-2). Told of Jesus' birth, Herod ordered all boys under 2 years of age in Bethlehem and the surrounding area to be killed (verses 16-18). However, Joseph had been warned of the threat in a dream and fled with his wife Mary and the baby Jesus to Egypt (verses 12-15).

Though some people find it hard to believe that someone could murder all those helpless infants, it was completely in character with King Herod, who shortly before his death, decided against his sons Aristobulus and Antipater. They were executed in 7 and 4 BC, causing the Roman emperor Augustus

# CPMA



2007-08 Theme:

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



CPMA  
Coordinator  
Roger Fuester

to joke that it was preferable to be Herod's pig (*hus*) than his son (*huios*) - a very insulting remark to any Jew.

Not all news from the Middle East reminds us of Christmas, but quite a bit of it reminds of stories in the Bible. For example, on Nov. 1, was a story that reminded me of Jonah and the whale. Civil engineers in Iraq are worried that an earthen dam north of Mosul, the site of ancient Nineveh, could collapse any day and cause catastrophic loss of life. We recall that God sent Jonah to Nineveh, a very wicked city, to preach to the people there. At first, Jonah was disobedient, instead went to Tarshish. But, following his experience in the whale's belly, he went to Nineveh. The people responded to his message and repented of their sins -- so God spared them.

At this point, the account takes a bizarre twist -- instead of rejoicing that his message had resulted in such an amazing response, Jonah got hopping mad. He had no compassion for the residents of Nineveh in his heart. His attitude could be

summed up as follows: "Let the heathen get their just deserts." He wanted God to confine his love and mercy to Israel. God's love, of course, extends beyond Israel to the whole world.

This truth relates directly to the Great Commission -- taking the Gospel to the whole world. If there is no compassion for the lost, the Word of God will not go forth, and little will be accomplished. Yet this is our reason for being -- to be witnesses. It is not God's will that any should perish. We must seek to bring others to Sunday School and church, so that they can be led to the Lord and to The Church of God.

As we progress into the new church year, let us be sure to pay our CPMA membership dues, still just \$10 per year, and to support CPMA with our auxiliary offerings. Funds collected for CPMA are used to maintain our headquarters property, and we want to do so in a spirit that is pleasing to God.

+++

## OVERSEER

continued from page 1

*unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*" (Ephesians 4:13). What is this "fulness of Christ" and how do we reach it?

In His prayer to the Father as He agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ prayed specifically for our perfection! He also indicated the pathway to that perfection – the means by which we will reach that state of perfection. Read John 17:21-24:

- (21) *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*
- (22) *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:*
- (23) *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*
- (24) *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

These words (the conclusion of the prayer Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane) contain some of the most profound statements of the Bible. Here He ties together **four major themes** of His WORD.

He prayed not only that we "**may all be one**," (v. 21) but that we "**all may be one; as thou,**

**Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us**" (v. 21). The unity (oneness) of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) is one of the deepest doctrines of the Bible. And here we are pulled toward that same transcendence. In 1 John 3:2, we marvel at this mystery: "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.*"

Jesus goes on to tie our "becoming one" to our being "**made perfect in one**" (v. 23). The realization of "*I in them, and thou in me*" leads directly to our "**made perfect in one.**"

The outcome of our achieving oneness (unity) will be "**that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**" (v. 21). With our being "made perfect in one," an even stronger result will happen "**that the world may know**" – moving beyond believing (hoping) to knowing (fully convinced).

These three themes: "*may all be one*," "*made perfect in one*," and "*that the world may know*" are major doctrines that have been often preached. These three themes are tied together by yet another often overlooked theme. Following the prayer for our oneness (v. 21), Christ provides the means by which we reach that oneness (v. 22). He prays, "*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.*" Then, after His prayer that we would be "*made perfect in one*," the Son's last earthly request of His Father is that "*they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory...*" (v. 24).

Given the importance that Jesus has placed upon His glory

and the glory of His father, we surely are behooved to understand the role that this glory is to fulfill in our own walk and if we are ever to become one, to become perfect and the world is to ever know Him.

Let us now return to our text chapter: 2 Corinthians 3. That is where Paul builds upon the theme of God's glory as he lays the foundation for understanding the nature of our walk before the Lord, now that Jesus Christ has come. True, the people of Israel had seen many miracles, beginning with their deliverance from Egypt. One would think that their crossing the Red Sea had to be a life-changing experience. Yet they quickly ran into problems with their obedience to the LORD, and oh how they could complain!

Time and again, the Israelites were exposed to manifestations of the glory of God, but always at a distance. The people of Moses' day had little choice but to be observers. Their problem was their inherent sinful nature that separated them from God's presence. From their first experience at Mount Sinai, they beheld manifestations of the glory of God – the fire and smoke upon the mount (see Exodus 19:16-18 and Exodus 24:16-17); but they could not go up into the mountain. They could not even touch it lest they die.

The closest they came to beholding the glory of the LORD, up close and personal, is recorded in Exodus 34:29-35, where they beheld the face of Moses that shone after he had come down from Mount Sinai where he had been in the presence of the LORD.

As marvelous as that experience must have been for the people, in

no way it was comparable to the glory of God that a follower of Christ now can experience. Paul declared the inadequacy of any attempt at such a comparison in 2 Corinthians 3:7-8

- (7) *But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:*
- (8) *How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?*

Being in the presence, not of the LORD Himself, but of someone else whose face glowed from his being in the presence of the LORD, was an awesome experience for the children of Israel. Exodus 34:30-31 tells us how the people were moved with such fear they withdrew from his presence:

- (30) *And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.*
- (31) *And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them.*

Paul goes on to emphasize how that they "... could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: *But their minds were blinded: ...*" They were forced to wait until the day when the, "... veil is done away in Christ."

- (12) *Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:*
- (13) *And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:*

(14) *But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.*

In contrast of this "at arm's length" experience of the people of Israel, Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 the experience that should characterize the Christian's walk -- that should be experienced in the life of every Christian:

- (17) *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*
- (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.*

How many times have you heard someone quote from verse 17 "...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" together with such Scripture as Philippians 2:12 "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" as the basis for justifying a supposed new found "freedom" to do whatever they choose so long as they "feel good about it" ?

Closer examination of this passage of Scripture reveals that the *liberty* (or freedom) we are offered through the Spirit is one of freedom from fear of getting too close to the LORD. Indeed, Paul has declared that we now can "... come boldly unto the throne of grace..." (Hebrews 4:16).

Paul then concludes in verse 18 with the theme of God's glory for which Christ had prayed in Gethsemane -- that "*we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord...*" Unlike Moses who had to wear a veil, unlike Moses who had to be sheltered in a rock (Exodus 33:20-23), we can behold with open face the glory of the Lord.

But to what end or purpose should we want to behold His glory? Verse 18 then continues with the answer -- that we might be "*changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" We may do far more than just "behold" His glory -- we can be immersed into that glory so that we too are changed into that glorious state.

What glorious state? Even the apostles, who had walked with Christ -- who had seen Him in His transfigured state where "*his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*" (Matthew 17:2) -- could not adequately describe the end result that this glory-transforming experience would mean in us.

John grasped for words to describe what awaits us: "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*" (1 John 3:2)

With this sermon, we have commenced a journey through the Word of God to better understand what it means to live "*from glory to glory*" in Him. I trust you are as excited as I am to learn of and to tap into the "glory" the Son prayed the Father to bestow upon us.

In future sermons we will expand upon the experiences of Moses and the children of Israel; we will consider the prophets' search for God's glory; we will consider Paul's experiencing the glory of the LORD; and, yes, we will consider our Lord and Savior's own quest that the Father's glory might be revealed in Him.

Living "*from glory to glory*" should become our own way of life.

## PITTSVILLE

continued from page 4

part of his secular career by his 80th birthday in March 2008.

"This is my last round on cars. I'm just going to enjoy my church," he said, even if enjoying his church may be a little complicated.

It isn't every church, for example, whose far-flung attendees have to monitor NASCAR schedules in order to decide which Sunday per month to attend.

### The Frontier

That is what the Fuesters of Delaware do to avoid crazy traffic. The couple also keep the faith by meeting each Thursday night in their home with Bro. Leland Corbett, who lives about 20 minutes away, just over the Maryland border.

"We used our dining room as a small sanctuary," Bro. Fuester said of the early years of trying to maintain a more traditional church presence after the split. "We moved everything out and set up chairs, a keyboard, podium, songbooks, church literature and tracts.

"The only problem was folding chairs, which were pretty uncomfortable. Now we have church in our family room, which is less structured, but far more comfortable."

The Fuesters said frontier church life has its ups and downs. On the plus side, service times can be flexible when Bro. Fuester has to travel. On the down side, the isolation from a full-scale church can be downright lonely.

"None of us are preachers," Sis. Fuester said. "But Bro. Fuester usually handles the service. Sometimes he has prepared a message, but in recent years, we have been sent recorded messages from the Portland, TN church, for which we are grateful.

"Sometimes ... we have to remind ourselves that we are a light in this area. Sometimes we feel like a small candle. The three of us try to encourage each other."

They also especially appreciate the times they can get together with other East Coasters for larger services and fellowship, particularly now that Sis. Pruitt lives in the region and also attends a monthly service in Pittsville.

### New Pilgrims

That's the kind of thing a new family to the region is hoping will open up for them. The Millicans recently moved to Massachusetts after six years near a Church of God in Georgia. There, wife April was state BTI coordinator and the couple were both active in local church leadership. Husband Roger is career military and the Massachusetts move has left them more isolated than any of their previous relocations.

Without any Church of God within reasonable driving distance, the family of four is currently on its own at home in terms of regular worship: still, the couple is serving in the region as co-VLB coordinators.

"We have thought about visiting around (other churches) but are

a little scared to venture out," Sis. Millican spoke of desiring some fellowship. "Especially with the kids (Sarah 14 and Robin 10) -- we don't want them to see 'greener' pastures (of less Bible-based doctrine), so to speak.

"We are trying to find a system that works for all of us," she added, noting they desire the region's prayers. "It is hard not hearing a sermon the Lord is in, not fellowshiping in singing, just to see faces of people who believe the way you do ... Here, we don't have that. We are the only countermeasures for each other and especially the kids."

Yet, Sis. Millican said they can already see there are some blessings in their experience. Chiefly, they have a new sense of dependence on God alone. She said the family is also thankful they are living in a nation where they are free to worship and have some access to other church people.

"We are fed, warm and together and we know Jesus," she said. "I think we are much better off than our brothers and sisters overseas. So, it's not so bad."

Bro. Miller can echo that sentiment, noting that the reality behind such a fragmented church population is a growing lack of interest in living by biblical truth.

"Our only problem is no one likes our doctrine any more," he said. "But, I love the Word and I'm going to stick to it if it kills me."

+++

To be able to work and minister for our Lord, we must have HUMILITY.

In Philippians 2:5-8, Paul tells us:

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

In this passage of scripture, Paul tells us that Jesus chose to be humble and become a suffering servant so that we might have eternal life. As we now know, this was God's will for Jesus. However, Peter and the others could not understand this redemption plan as it first began to unfold.

The Word tells us that Peter even fought against it. His words, *"Be it far from thee Lord: this shall not be unto thee,"* (Matthew 16:22) were not words from God. They were the result of yielding to the temptations of Satan. They show us that pride and a lack of humility will not only cause us to think differently than God, but will lead us from the will of God.

This could have happened to Peter and maybe even the other disciples if Jesus had not provided the truth and the strength that they needed to hear out God's plan.

# ABM

2007-08 Theme:

*Ministering with a right spirit*

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10*

*"Get thee behind me Satan,"* was what they immediately heard from Christ in Matthew 16:23. It was a response that hit Peter right at the center of his problems. The truth of God always hits its mark, and Peter's pride and desire to see Jesus become a reigning, earthly king had surfaced. Jesus continued in this passage to address the issue quickly and fully by telling Peter, *"thou art an offense unto me for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."*

In our service for our Lord, we must have the right attitudes to follow Him and to be of use to him. Peter learned that in order to achieve this he had to lay down his personal desires and selfishness. If Jesus had not given Himself fully to the Father's plan, then mankind's redemption need would have gone unanswered.

Humility is a mark of excellence in the life of a believer. Not because *you* shine when you are humbled, but because, when you submit to God's will, *He* shines through you! Maybe,



ABM  
Coordinator  
Nancy Horchar

right now, you are facing a difficult situation. You can't quite understand why God has given this road to travel. We must allow God, in these times, to teach us how to humble ourselves under His mighty hand

As we read, Peter learned the lesson of humility. He also went on further and discovered a tremendous truth. Once humility accomplishes its perfect work, then God will exalt us at the proper time.

1 Peter 5:6 tells us, *"humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."* Remember: Blessings follow the obedience of a humbled heart.

In other ABM news, please remember to pay your emergency \$5 for the new church year. Also, try to do something special for our regional overseer and his family this holiday season. Also, if you haven't hosted a home prayer meeting, now is the time.

+++

## *Some final thoughts...*

It was interesting discussing the upcoming Christmas season with a recent visitor to our home. In his nation -- Japan -- Christmas is mostly a Santa-centered holiday that is similar in nature to Valentine's Day. There, he explained, Christmas is a dreamy, starry-eyed time for those who are in love.

Secular Japanese celebrants apparently like the idea of a season of awe, even if they aren't particularly interested (or aware of) the Messiah who ushered it into place.

Of course, we know that the Japanese are not alone in this futile effort. Many Americans also want to feel the "exceeding great joy" the wise men felt. But they don't want to follow any light from heaven.

Many want to experience the feelings of "peace, good will toward men," while rejecting any acknowledgment of -- let alone a relationship with -- the Prince of Peace.

How many people around the world will spend this season trying to buy, bake, decorate or party themselves into the "Christmas spirit?" How many will be disappointed when fleeting happiness is replaced by bills or the consequences of various kinds of overindulgence?

How much better if each of us would simply accept the Baby that God sent. How much better if each of us could hear heaven shouting the good news to our hearts -- "For unto YOU is born this day ... a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."



*Assistant Editor  
Nora Edinger*

Yes, wrapping our hearts around this tiny Immanuel is the right way, the only way to get the Spirit of Christmas flowing through our souls. Then we will be able to join the heavenly host with righteous, vigorous, awe-filled voices, saying: "Glory to God in the highest!"

And, as this issue points out in a special church feature, it won't matter if we are surrounded by believers in the temple, or if we're in the isolation of a grassy field or in a land far away from the center of God's action. The message of God with us -- "Immanuel" -- will reach us!

Immanuel here. Immanuel there. Immanuel the same yesterday, today and forever.

Never has there been and never will there be any better news than that. May that glorious thought remind us to rejoice throughout this season and into the new year.

+++

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