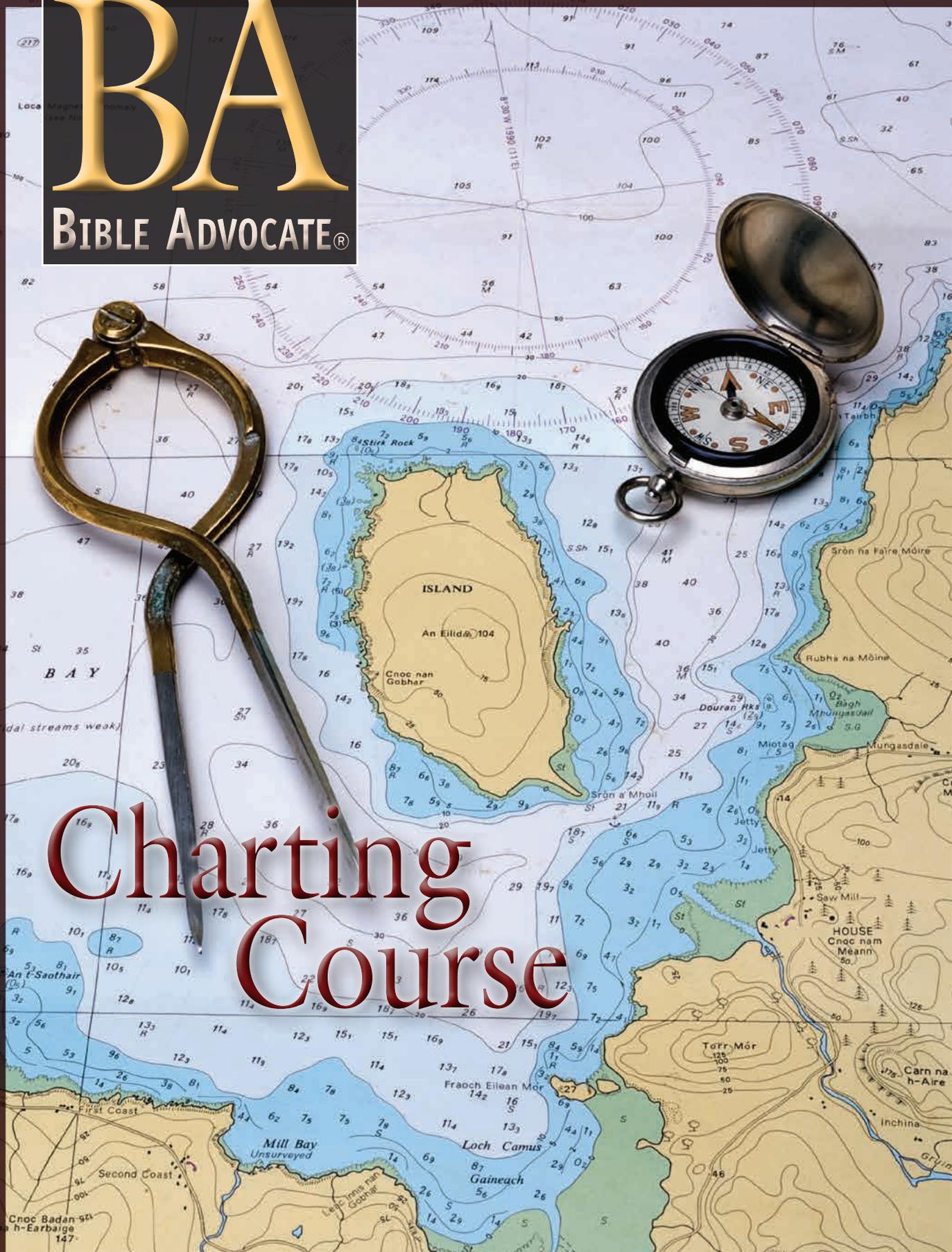


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2015: Crossroads

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A publication of the
Church of God (Seventh Day)
This magazine is published to advocate
the Bible, represent the Church, and
glorify the God of grace and truth.

Volume 149 • Number 4

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editor.

The BIBLE ADVOCATE (ISSN 0746-0104) is
published bimonthly by Bible Advocate Press,
330 W. 152nd Ave., Broomfield, CO 80023.
Periodicals postage is paid at Broomfield, CO,
and at additional offices. Subscription is free
to any who ask. POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to Bible Advocate Press, Box 33677,
Denver, CO 80233-0677.

Bible Advocate Press

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Subscriptions and Orders

Bible Advocate Press
P.O. Box 33677
Denver, CO 80233-0677
phone: 303/452-7973
fax: 303/452-0657
e-mail: bibleadvocate@cog7.org
orders: bap.orders@cog7.org

Notice: Send all address changes and other
correspondence to the address above.

Publications Agreement No. 40042428

Cover photo: @ Ann Murie—Dreamstime.com

The Bible Advocate Online appears at
www.BAonline.org.

Closing a Chapter

The magazine you hold (or read online) completes my eighteenth year as its editor. My first issue was the September 1997 BA, following the editorial service of Elder Roy Marrs. From then until now, 147 separate issues of the magazine have been published and distributed, totaling 4,108 pages of print, pictures, and covers.

Figure an average of 350 to 400 words on each page, and it comes out to over 1.5 million words we've sent your way in eighteen years. Several of those words and a few of those pages I'd take back if I could (thank you for your grace toward this editor!) — but not many.

I'm grateful to those who've worked alongside us most or all these years: Sherri Langton, Keith Michalak, Sylvia Corral, Hope Dais (and LeRoy, now deceased), Whaid Rose, and all the Denver office staff — a stable team; to the writers, readers, and donors who have made this ministry not only possible but also meaningful to many; and to our Lord, who gives us richly all things — including the editing task — to enjoy.

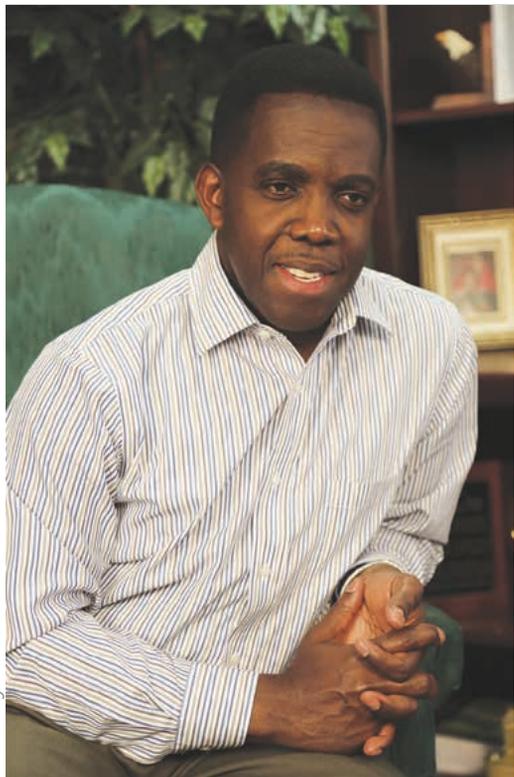
What's ahead for me? I'll work with your new editor (as of July 5), Jason Overman (see p. 25), on the next issue or two and keep on writing for BAP's literature needs beyond that. I'll continue as G. C. Missions director for CoG7 through mid-2016 at least. Later this summer, my wife and I will make a long-considered move to Oregon, God willing, where we'll be near two of our three daughters and twelve of our sixteen grandchildren. There we hope to be active in a new local church and find new opportunities for service in our new community.

Finally, not all of you will attend the Church's G. C. convention (June 29 — July 4 in Milwaukee), but many of you will. There we will review the proposed new General Conference bylaws, listen to and speak in the debate regarding them, and cast our votes either to adopt or reject the proposal. As you've read in recent BAs, this is no ordinary time in CoG7. Church business sessions in Milwaukee will offer time for each of us to seek extraordinary wisdom (truth) and exercise extraordinary self-restraint (grace) as we process what we hear and see and as we adjust to the reality of the outcome.

A harmonious church, like a happy marriage, is the union of good forgivers. Let's go for it!

— Calvin Burrell





Photos by Amber Schlenker

A Leader Reflects

The BA talks with outgoing G. C. President Whaid Rose about his eighteen years of service and his future.

BA: For the benefit of those who are unfamiliar, briefly review your personal spiritual journey.

WR: I was born on the island of Jamaica and raised by my staunch Seventh-day Adventist grandmother. I accepted Christ at age twelve and began my Christian walk as an Adventist.

Meanwhile, my mother found Christ through the witness of CoG7 members and migrated to the US. A compliant teenager, I attended an independent CoG7 with Mom when I followed her to New York City. Pastor Lael Tikili, a Midwest Bible College graduate, oriented me to CoG7 doctrines, whereby I eventually joined and was ordained to the ministry by that congregation, and became its associate pastor.

A series of circumstances then led me to transfer from NYC's Hunter College to Summit School of Theology in Denver for ministerial training (1982). I

served G. C. churches in New York and North Carolina, then returned to Colorado in 1994 with my wife and two children to pastor the Denver church. Three years later, I answered the call to serve as Conference president.

BA: You were not quite 37 when the General Conference gave you the keys to the joint, so to speak. What would you say was the passion that led to your rise to the G. C.'s top position at that age?

WR: The Lord gave me unique opportunities to minister around the Church in the years leading up to my appointment. My work as founder of a grassroots effort called Church Renewal Ministries gave me a platform from which to challenge the Church to spiritual renewal and evangelism, to become the grace-oriented Sabbathkeeping church for which the world waits. After several

years of encouraging the Church to do better, either the Church was ready to embrace a new vision for its future or it handed the keys to me out of frustration.

BA: Talk about the importance of vision, and recap your vision of a vibrant twenty-first century CoG7.

WR: Vision is essential to life: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18, KJV). Vision has been defined as "the picture of a preferable future" for one's life or ministry. It is coming to see that "there" (that preferable future) is better than "here" (the way things are at present). Casting a vision for "there" creates a common cause, a rallying point around which God's people find unity and strength as they lay hold of limitless possibilities for the church Jesus purchased with His own blood. Grasping and implement-

ing vision begins with the conviction that if *better* is possible, *good* isn't enough.

When held against the backdrop of our church's history and culture, the CoG7 vision is an exciting proposition. It's more than a dream; it's laying a new theological foundation for a church that stands in Christ alone, recognizing that "Jesus plus nothing equals everything; everything minus Jesus equals nothing." That conviction informs everything we do, including the way we read the Bible, observe the Sabbath, worship, show compassion, evangelize the lost, treat one another, and make disciples. It's a call to anchor our identity, security, significance, and purpose in being in Christ, not in being different from other believers. This enables us to live selflessly and courageously, transforming CoG7 into a city on a hill and transforming our world as Christ's ambassadors.

BA: Eighteen years is a long tenure — time enough for change in any organization. For what CoG7 changes since 1997 are you most grateful?

WR: Some things are difficult to measure, like reshaping culture and core values formed over a long time. Are we the same church we were two decades ago? Christ centrality and quest for Holy Spirit fullness have increased. A worship revolution is in progress. Ethnic and demographic changes increase. We view ourselves as a global church with growing commitment to missions at home and abroad. Many desire to break out of their four walls and minister to people's deep needs. Our strides in information technology, social

media, and interchurch communication, and the doubling of our annual budget, are among the evidences we're not the same church.

BA: How has the role and stance of CoG7 changed among its peers and counterparts?

WR: The General Conference has grown in ministry capacity, putting it a step ahead. Stereotypical ideas about "Denver" have changed as many look in our direction for a viable CoG7. We enjoy fraternal relationships with Sabbatarian organizations and growing respect from the wider Christian community as we've embraced more orthodox views on essential doctrines and as appreciation increases for the Sabbath concept and other CoG7 teachings.

BA: Perceptions are that your first thirteen-and-a-half years in office were largely free of conflict, and the Church's political winds were with you. But that changed quickly and noticeably a few years back. If this is true, what issues turned the tide for some folks? If handed the second chance, what would you do differently in that difficult year of 2011?

WR: Your assessment is correct, and it was disagreement over polity and ministry philosophy that turned the tide. This came to a head at the 2011 convention near Chicago

and has remained a major distraction. It reflects on my administration, so I'm happy to hand the keys to others who can lead us further. The way forward depends on the outcome of G. C. business in Milwaukee. We are a church at the crossroads. Will we move forward by embracing an organizational structure that facilitates greater cohesion and accountability, where leadership and membership mean something? Or will we continue to limp along in defense of local autonomy? Those are the two roads before us.

I now see how my comments in "that difficult year" served only to add fuel to the fire. If given a second chance, I would address my concerns through more appropriate channels.

BA: After being in the G. C.'s top spot for so long, where will you go now? To do what? Can you report on your family's plans



Marjolene and Whaid



Left to right, Nathan, Whaid, Marjolene, and Arvella Rose

as you prepare to switch hats and homes?

WR: With the busy-ness of life and ministry, we haven't had time or energy to focus on what's next. Whatever it is, I don't want to leap into it without careful thought and prayer. If the Lord gives me thirty more years of ministry, I'd like to spend them doing that one thing He wants — and doing it well. For the immediate future, the plan is to rest, to seek soul refreshment and heart preparation. With faith that God is using this experience to prepare me for what's next, I wait with patience and hope.

I'm grateful for the support of my family over these years. My wife and children have blessed me in my role, despite its impact on them. I hope to make it up by investing heavily in them in this new season. The conviction that success in ministry at the expense of family is no success at all means more to me now than ever before.

Our extended family is mostly on the East Coast, including our aging parents to whom we'd like to be closer. Our children are now adults and consider Colorado home.

BA: How's your medical health and vision, compared to ten years ago?

WR: In terms of general health, I'm doing reasonably well these days, though vision remains a challenge. Eighteen years ago I enjoyed 20/20 vision; now it has changed dramatically. I've developed a mysterious eye condition for which there is no name and which isn't treatable. Still, I've been able to continue my daily work and frequent travels, making my struggle less obvious to most.

Mysterious words from the apostle Paul surround his disclosure of a thorn in the flesh, which many believe was an eye impediment (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). The text doesn't identify the

thorn, but whatever it was, Paul saw it as a weakness God was using to perfect His strength in him. This is humbling for me. May the Lord's strength be perfected in my weakness.

BA: What two or three maxims of leadership wisdom would you most like your successor(s) to know without having to learn them the hard way?

WR: Don't seek after ministry; seek the fruit of a disciplined life (John Wesley). What a leader does for God should be the overflow of what God is doing in him. We teach what we know; we reproduce what we are (John Maxwell). The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant (Max De Pree). Successful leadership is a combination of both character and competence. If you have to choose between them, choose character. Keep short accounts. If you've been wronged, be David, not Saul. Finish well.

BA: If God called tonight and asked you 1) to give account of your service as CoG7 president and 2) why He should let you into His kingdom, what would you say?

WR: Regarding my service, I would confess the wonder that He would use me in this capacity and regret that though I gave it my best, I wasn't able to do more. As to why He should let me in, I would appeal only to the merits of Christ's atoning sacrifice for my sin, in which I trust by faith. **BA**

Transitions are always times of crisis, but crisis is *not* the enemy! Generational transitions, whether personal or organizational, are times of great opportunity.

The Church of God (Seventh Day), along with other members of the body of Christ, is facing transitional challenges. Churches in America that don't adequately face the challenges of transition in a culture gone wild are in a deep crisis to remain relevant, or to even exist.

Beautiful old churches with exquisite stained glass windows, vaulted ceilings, and magnificent pipe organs find themselves largely empty and falling into decay. Generational transfer — “Gen2Gen” — at this critical juncture in ecclesiastical history is in jeopardy of not happening.

As the Church of God (Seventh Day) attempts to step forward representing a “vibrant twenty-first century church,” it faces the same crises and challenges. The question becomes “What must occur for such a church to become a reality, not just a dream?”

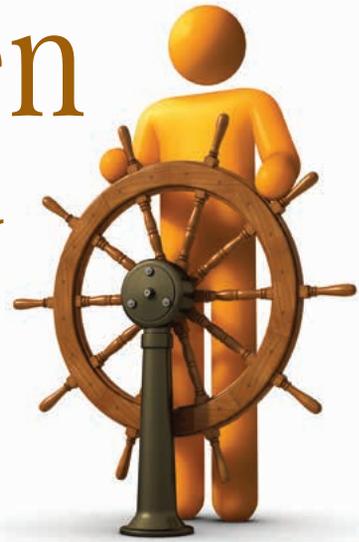
The answer begins with a good council of elders. True elders are eager to “sit in the city gates.” They don't play horse-shoes or shuffleboard all day but are at the center of spiritual commerce, at the comings and goings of all church activities.

Elders provide much needed counsel, guidance, insight, and wisdom. In being available (as a team), they give protection, direction, and blessing for the next generation of leaders and followers. They give not only inspiration but also the “extra fuel” of generational blessing.

Once they share their collec-

Gen2Gen Ministry

by An Old Friend



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tive wisdom and blessing, these elders need once again to “sit” in the city gates. There they applaud the God of the universe, alive and well in new century men and women.

Two metaphors will help us understand this “Gen2Gen” transition. First, the church is like a mighty ship at sea, and the next generation is standing at the helm. A helmsman takes every bit of information available to steer the ship, from both above and below. He relies on sharp vision and trustworthy data gathered on his instruments. He sets his course and makes corrections based on up-to-date information, collected with modern tools.

But this mighty ship is still guided from below — from the rudder, in constant connection to the helmsman above. Without either, the ship would run aground or be hopelessly lost at sea. There comes a time when, with aging eyesight and outmoded tools, a helmsman is best advised to “go below” and become a rudder, allowing the young and vibrant to stand at the helm.

The trick is to know just when

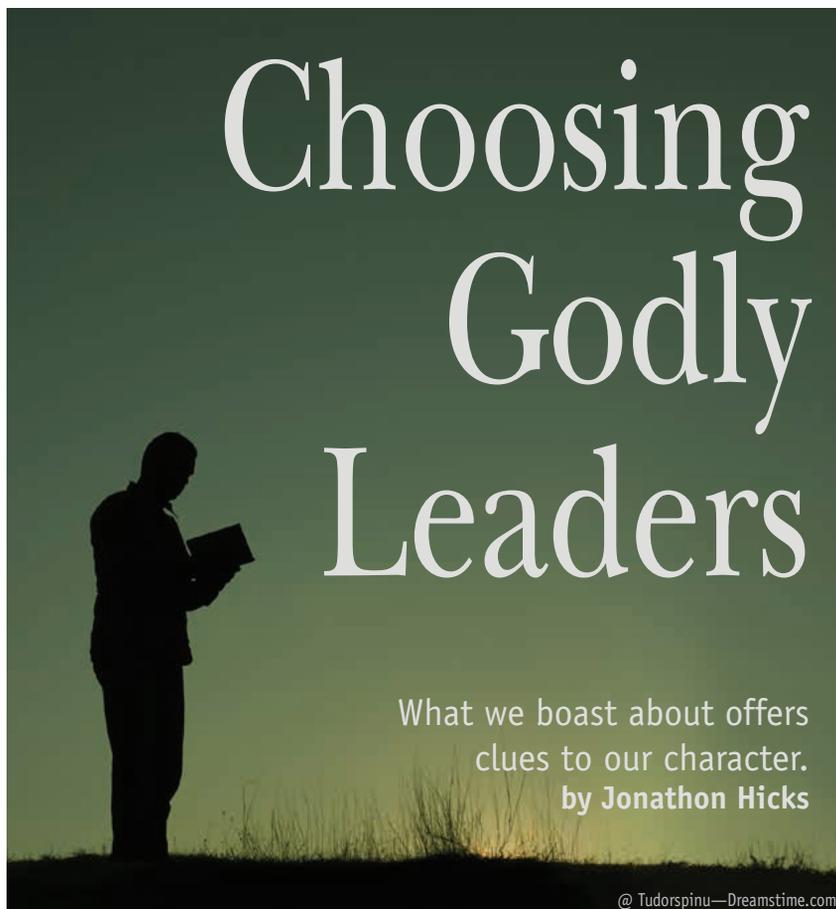
and how this can safely occur. That truly takes guidance from “above” and humility from both the young and old. If either fails to meekly assume their new positions, this spells disaster. Gen2Gen ministry gets this transfer right!

In the second metaphor, younger men and women are like runners in a relay, and elders are the coaches and mentors. They were once runners, but in due time, aging runners assume a more appropriate role at the sidelines, sharing their wisdom gained from years in the spotlight.

Failing to move to the coaching and mentoring roles at the right time, a runner will desperately hold onto the baton or the torch of victory. Only this would not be a victory lap at all; it would be a laughing spectacle and a crying shame to the body of Christ!

Transitions, Gen2Gen, are critical to becoming a vibrant twenty-first century church. Let us commit to transitioning well!

BA



This summer brings change in leadership for many congregations and for our whole denomination. We are the ones selecting most of this change, for better or for worse.

The church always resides at the crossroads between heaven and earth, between God's ways and man's ways, between life and death. The distinction between them is not always obvious, and often times the church must back up and make the decision again. This is what happened in Corinth when they accepted leadership that was appealing but not godly. It will serve us to ponder this as we consider leadership change.

Paul's humility

Paul and his fellow laborers

were the first to this city in the Roman Empire and raised up many righteous men and women in the heart of pagan culture. Soon immorality, divisions, and pride infiltrated Corinth's young congregation. Around them were many philosophers, rhetoricians, and leaders. As the congregation's memory of Paul and his love faded into an unflattering portrait, the appeal of these ungodly leaders grew in the Corinthians' hearts.

The philosophers of that era would go to the public market, gather a crowd, and expound upon their doctrine. If they were good, they would get coins from their audience. But if they were uninteresting or unpersuasive, they would leave, unpaid. When Paul first came to Corinth, he would've struck those in the mar-

ket place as just another philosopher or rhetorician.

But something was different about him. Paul would not accept money from the people. He would not talk about himself or his qualifications but about Jesus, His salvation, and His foolish cross. Paul's lowly, less than eloquent speech was not easy on the ears (1 Corinthians 1:17). All of this was on purpose in order that he might decrease in his hearers' eyes and that Christ might increase.

Paul's boasting

The Corinthian church slowly began to view Paul as sub-par when compared to other church leaders who were more like their surrounding cultural leaders. They wanted a more impressive apostle, or at least for Paul to come with letters of recommendation and commend himself to Corinth by telling of his powerful exploits.

Paul plays the fool and boasts (2 Corinthians 11:18), but not in what the Corinthians want. He tells of his sufferings. He says he's a better servant of Christ than they because of how many times he labored like a slave, was imprisoned like a slave, was beaten like a slave, and was in constant danger like a slave (v. 23). He "boasts" that God did not protect him from being shipwrecked three times, nor did He keep him from sleepless nights, hunger, and thirst. His relationship with God was not worry free but constantly plagued by anxiety, especially for all the churches that Paul loved.

Next, Paul mimics the highest military honor for the Romans, the *corona moralis*. It was a gold-

en crown made to resemble city walls, and was awarded to the brave soldier who first made it over the enemy's fortress. Here is how Paul applies for this reward.

In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands (2 Corinthians 11:32, 33).

Far from being the first up-and-over the wall into harm's way, Paul was the first to be let down to escape from danger. In an ironic twist on Roman courage, Paul applies for godly cowardice.

Paul goes on to tell the Corinthians that he has had visions (12:1-6). "Finally," they might say. "Something he can impress us with." But Paul remains silent. He says, "I know a man" who had a vision, thus distancing himself from his own experience. He tells us that he doesn't know whether he was in his body or not. Furthermore, he can't even tell us what he heard there. What looked like a promising aspect of Paul's ministry is done away with by Paul's humility.

This humility didn't happen by accident, but Paul says that in order to keep him "from being too elated" (v. 7) over his visions, he received a thorn in the flesh that prayer could not remove. He cried out on three separate occasions for God to get rid of the thorn. The answer came, and the answer was "no." God told him that His power is made perfect in weakness and that the thorn would remain in order to glorify Him.

Paul has played the fool. He has boasted like the Corinthians wanted him to do, but in all the

wrong things. Paul is not protected but in constant danger. He is not one who can tell about visions but must remain distant from them and silent about them. He is not one God always responds positively to but is told "no" regarding his heart's desire. If anyone is weak, it is Paul. But "for the sake of Christ, then," he says, "I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (v. 10).

By saying that he is not an apostle because it gets him power, amenities, and status, Paul proves his apostleship. No, he is an apostle by Jesus' calling. And just as Jesus went to the cross, Paul took to the mission.

Criteria for leaders

The Corinthians had chosen to follow leaders who reflected the world's ideals: strong, wise, and articulate. But Paul says that God's plan for leaders is different. God intends His leaders to demonstrate "cross strength" and "cross wisdom." "Cross strength" flies in the face of worldly strength and is not used to overpower but to serve and withstand persecution. "Cross wisdom" looks like foolishness

from the lens of worldly wisdom, because it is the wisdom by which Jesus took on frailty, was beaten, and was killed.

The Corinthians had to back up and reevaluate what God's leadership was all about. We should heed their example as we pick our leaders.

Do they have a love for the Church and the world that persists through suffering, or do they speak well? Do their weaknesses exalt God, or did their own strength elevate them to where they are? Are they here only by God's grace, or are they "super leaders"?

As we go about selecting leaders this summer, let's choose the "weak" ones — those the world would not want but whom God works so powerfully through. **BA**

With an MA in theology from Whitworth University, **Jonathon Hicks** is a hopeful pastor from Spokane Valley, WA, who also studies with LifeSpring. Scripture quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Bible*.



The Corinthians had chosen to follow leaders who reflected the world's ideals: strong, wise, and articulate. But Paul says that God's plan for leaders is different.



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In One Accord

From doctrines to polity, CoG7 does business with gusto and grace. by **Kenneth R. Lawson**

We called them “campmeetings,” and sometimes they were just that – with the main meetings in a big tent. For smaller groups, we went to the corners of the tent, or outside if weather permitted. We sat on folding chairs and were not always comfortable. We camped out in tents or small trailers. We loved those times.

The meetings were filled with singing, prayers, special music, and sermons that stirred our

hearts. We went home determined to live better, read the Word more, and truly worship our Lord, who is worthy.

There were disagreements at those campmeetings while we sat under a shade tree and listened to discussions with varying opinions, usually on doctrine and prophecy. Sometimes these sessions were energetically conducted. I always thought the loudest voice there must have been the winner!

At the Milwaukee convention, our accommodations and facilities will be different. The large and small tents will become convention meeting rooms in a modern hotel with many comforts, but the purpose for coming together will be the same. We will sing praises to His holy name, send prayers toward the throne of grace, and hear sermons from God’s Word and His servants. These worship segments stand out to me as the most important part of convention.

Another valuable segment of our Milwaukee meeting will be the business sessions held each weekday. At our last convention the membership asked a committee to draft a set of new bylaws for consideration at this 2015 meeting. That committee has completed its work, and potential bylaws are prepared for us to consider.

As intense as discussions on doctrine and prophecy were in our history, expressions in favor of or against the newly proposed bylaws will be just as intense. They will be considered in an open forum so that all members present can voice opinions and suggest amendments. We will be reminded of the “rules” for our discussion, like how many times we can speak and the time limit for each speaker. Then will come the moment when we members will cast our ballots, either for or against the proposed bylaws.

Here are two things to prepare us for those business sessions.

Proper behavior

First, when I walk to a microphone to speak, will I conduct myself in an ethical manner toward those I may disagree with?

Will I speak with respect, without unkind remarks that may reflect on the intent or integrity of others?

This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples — when they see the love you have for each other (John 13:35, *The Message*).

Second, when the ballots are counted, the results are announced, and business is completed, how will I react and behave toward those who were “on the other side”? Will the love Jesus asked me to display fall apart? Will my disappointment rise up and be revealed in ethical violations as I express myself or begin to distance myself from those with another view? Will I find myself in pockets of discontent, sharing my intense hurt and disappointment?

On the last day of convention, the Sabbath, will my heart be free to worship God without frustration, or will it be clouded with resentment? When we leave Milwaukee, will we be united so strongly by the Spirit that we can turn the world upside down with our faith and the gospel by truly being the church Jesus commissioned?

Let’s covenant together now that we will leave this convention so strongly unified in the purpose of Christ and the Church, and so strongly inspired as we worship His majesty, that the only one who will be disappointed will be Satan. Let’s allow no unethical behavior or speech in response to the outcome of the business sessions in Milwaukee. Let’s do our business in a godly manner, respecting and protecting each other in the process. Then on Sabbath we will pour our hearts out to the One who died on the

Convention Ethics

- I will treat all the members with respect.
- I will speak of all our leaders with respect.
- I will pray for a “guard” of the Holy Spirit on my mouth.
- I will not participate in any gossip.
- I will express my views in a spirit of love.
- I will cast my vote under the Spirit’s leading.
- I will accept the results in a spirit of true unity.

— Kenneth R. Lawson

cross for us. We will worship His majesty in unity.

Worship highlight

The most important thing about convention is not our accommodations, the daily program, the great fellowship, the children’s and youth programs, music, workshops, or sermons. And it is not the business agenda. The most important time at convention is when we worship the Lord on the Sabbath.

Will we worship under the influence of the Holy Spirit of

God and find delightful joy in the power of the moment, or will our Enemy influence us because of the potential anger and disappointment he might plant inside us? Defeat the Enemy, and let’s all worship God in the unity of the Holy Spirit. **BA**

Ken and Sandra Lawson enjoy retirement in Cottage Grove, MN, and attend church in St. Paul.

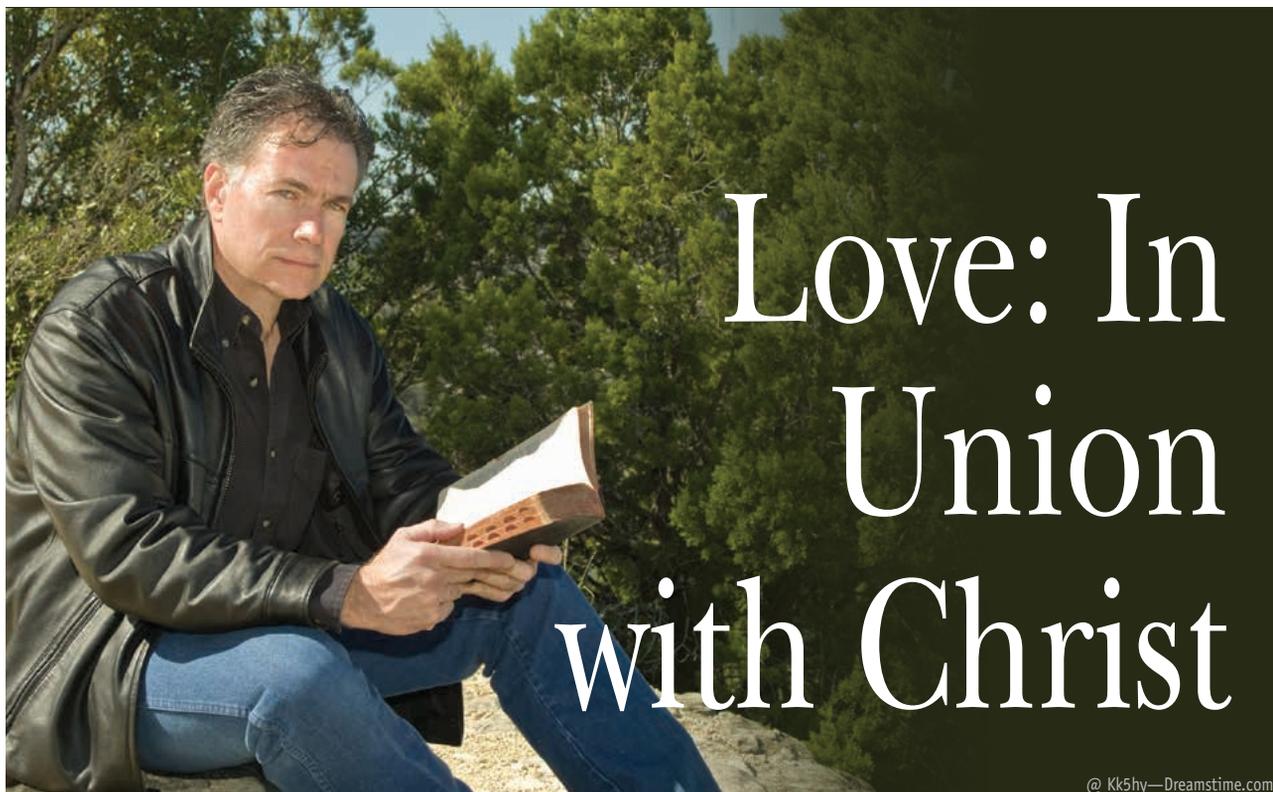


Scriptural Guide for Convention

And now, friends, we ask you to honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!

Get along among yourselves, each of you doing your part. Our counsel is that you warn the freeloaders to get a move on. Gently encourage the stragglers, and reach out for the exhausted, pulling them to their feet. Be patient with each person, attentive to individual needs. And be careful that when you get on each other’s nerves you don’t snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out.

Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live (1 Thessalonians 5:12-18, *The Message*).



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The greatest fruit for the highest cause can never finally fail. **by John Klassek**

Is the hope for Jesus' return close to your heart and mind as it was for first century disciples who believed that Jesus would return in their lifetime?

If you're like many believers, the answer is "no." It's so easy to be distracted and lose our focus on Jesus — not just His second coming but anything related to Him. The Devil, an expert in deception, wants Christ's followers to love Him less, to become lukewarm and overly busy. But when we're close to God in covenant relationship with Jesus, when He is the focus of our thoughts and actions, there's little threat for serious distraction and greater opportunity to love Him more.

Covenant relationship

Oddly enough, one of the hardest things is for us to openly proclaim our love for Jesus. Often we justify silence because speaking up isn't part of our church culture or part of our personality. Excuses are aplenty.

We can be glad, however, that times are changing within our church fellowships and in our personal lives. More people are coming to a knowledgeable faith of how Jesus works in us — that He knocks on our heart's door but doesn't push in. We must reach for the handle. Only when we swing open the door does Jesus intimately come into our lives.

We are called into a responsive relationship with Jesus — a covenant relationship bound by both expectation and responsibility. This relationship becomes a

deep, intimate, and accountable friendship.

Spiritual seed

When it comes to covenant relationship, baptism is the touchstone of all relationship standards. It brings us into marriage communion with Jesus Christ himself, sealed with the Holy Spirit.

The seed of the Spirit is planted at baptism with the laying on of hands. As years go by, that Spirit grows mightily, working with us and through us. When we enter the depths of a communion that will transcend and transform us into the very image of God's Son, our eyes become fixed on Jesus and His kingdom. We desire nothing this world can offer. Every other relationship, every other offer, and every temptation pales into insignificance. Even our immediate families,

spouses, parents, and children on this earth must become secondary to the relationship we have in Christ Jesus.

Loving Jesus

In union with Christ, we are in love with Him, His Word, His majesty, His righteousness, His will and purpose, His love and attention, His awe and glory – to which nothing compares.

Thus, we find ourselves talking about Jesus all the time. He's the head of every table, the Lord of our hearts. We openly confess our love for Him. His wisdom and presence adorn every gray hair, which the Father numbers. He is in our inner thoughts. His Word and will mold our days and shape our lives. We approach His throne of grace in all areas of our personal and family's lives, especially in the matter of finding godly spouses for our children – even praying for their spouses decades before they meet. We ask God for His help and guidance in all areas of our lives. Because of that covenantal relationship, we want Him from that moment onward to shape our destiny, only achieved by surrendering our will.

Loving others

As the love of God grows in us and we become a new creation in Christ, we become creatures of love. Telling those around us how much we love them because of Him becomes our testimony. Our actions will speak of love. Our children will feel loved, as well as be loved. Our motives will be understood through the lens of love. Discipline will not be harsh but loving, with kindly eye-to-eye contact.

People around us will feel and experience that love and ultimately attribute it to God's glory. We will truly be Jesus' disciples when we love each other.

To grow and thrive, love must come from God's Holy Spirit. It has to be in everything we say. Even the truth must be spoken in love! Because of love, we will listen intently to those in our families, churches, and communities. Those who oppose us we will kindly entreat. We will also be wise to the Devil's ruses, the attractive distractions that can, if only momentarily, confuse us should we take our eyes off Jesus. When we're tested, the fruits of our love in Christ will unite families and bring people together who also are in Christ.

Results of relationship

Yes, Jesus is coming one day – maybe in our lifetime. Now more than ever, may our focus be open and transparent before Christ first, and then to each other. May we be counted worthy to stand before Jesus. May there be no straw or chaff in our lives but only grain, and may we produce good fruit.

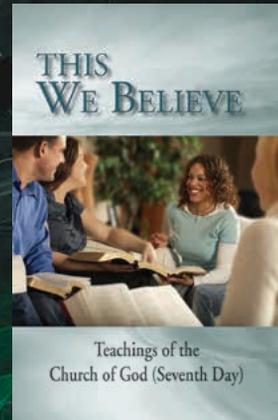
May we be people of the Book and use it wisely. May we be people quick to bless, quick to forgive, easy to entreat, eager to please. May our lives, in every detail, reflect the union we have with and in Jesus Christ. **BA**

John and Rebecca Klassek serve from their home in Northam, Western Australia, and lead a house church in Perth.



Are these books on your shelf?

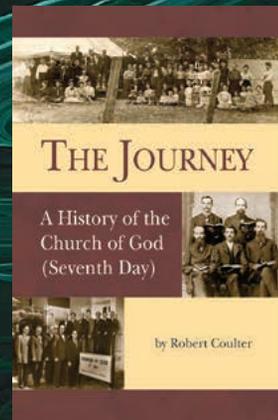
This We Believe: Teachings of the Church of God (Seventh Day):
\$10



The Bible Adventure — In 66 Steps by Calvin Burrell:
\$9



The Journey: A History of the Church of God (Seventh Day) by Robert Coulter:
\$29.95



Order from Bible Advocate Press, P. O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233; 303-452-7973; bap.orders@cog7.org.

Fifty years of ministry yield five lessons — and a late surprise. **by Glen Palmer**

After fifty years serving the Church, my wife and I were happily settled into retirement. The last nineteen years of pastoral ministry had taken us more than twelve hundred miles from children and grandchildren, but retirement brought us back to Denver, Colorado. What wonderful times we anticipated as we settled into our home. We were with family again!

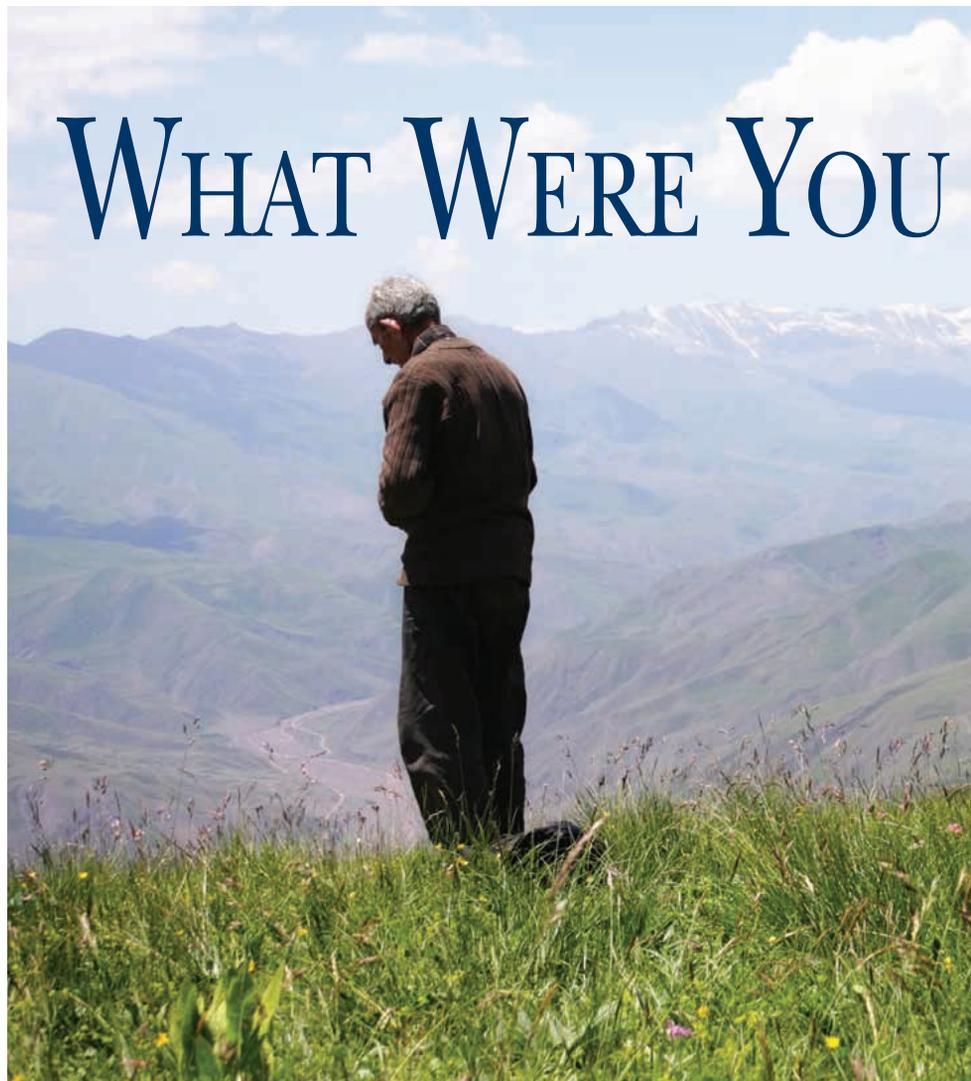
As usual, God had other plans. In late February 2015, I was asked to accept an assignment as superintendent of the Central District. Try as I may, God wouldn't accept the fact that I was retired. I assumed my new assignment March 1, 2015. The work begins again!

I have learned many things in my fifty years of ministry, and I will learn even more now. Here are five lessons that will help guide me.

Lessons applied

The God I serve is bigger than any assignment He gives me. I have no illusions that I am "the only man" for the job. Someone else can always do the job better than I. My confidence is bolstered by a quick backward glance at how God has faithfully walked with me through both the good and difficult years of ministry. I am sure that God will deliver on His promises to help me complete the task He's called me to.

Pulling together is always



more productive than pulling apart. It's no secret that most people like it best when they can have things their own way. Sometimes we cause friction and offense by insisting that our way is best. Even when you are confident that your way is the way to go, it is wiser and more productive to be patient to allow others to process your idea and come around to it. Tension created by insistence and impatience can cause others to resist and be hurt by our attitudes, and can destroy progress for years to come.

Change is continually taking place. Embrace positive change; redirect negative change. Gen-

erally speaking, people want positive change. The problem is that sometimes we aren't aware of the negative consequences that accompany some changes. Accept concepts of change as coming from honest people, and embrace the concepts that have proven to be beneficial. Then, rather than rejecting those that have not proven to be good, try to redirect the desire of the person toward what produces positive change in the area of their concern. In so doing, you have not alienated the individual but rather affirmed them as a concerned friend.

Seek forgiveness for mistakes

THINKING, LORD?



@ Forsterforest—Dreamstime.com

with a humble attitude, then move forward. Early in my ministry I made a huge mistake. My actions hurt the church and my credibility as a pastor. As soon as I became aware of the wrong I had done, I met with the church leaders and asked their forgiveness for my offense toward them and the congregation. As a result, the door opened for healing to take place. Too often we want people to accept that we are human and make mistakes without taking personal responsibility for the mistakes we make.

On the other hand, don't let your mistakes hold your future hostage. As I recently reread

the story of Peter's denial of Jesus, I was reminded that his mistake caused him extreme anguish. He wept bitterly! But he moved on and became the chief spokesman for God on the Day of Pentecost, when more than three thousand souls were saved! Avoid mistakes whenever possible, but don't let your mistakes stop the good you can do.

Love the people you serve.

Doing your duty is nice, but nothing takes the place of genuine love for people in changing hearts and lives. Do you recall a time when you sat in a restaurant and ordered a meal, and it seemed that the person serving

couldn't care less? How did you feel when it came time to leave the tip?

Do you suppose people feel differently when it comes to service they receive in ministry? Probably not. Love is not just a smile we put on our face to cover the real attitude we carry. It resides much deeper inside our being. And to be honest, the only possible way to express that kind of love to some people is to first receive it as a gift from God.

Looking ahead

I was privileged to serve extended terms as pastor — twenty-three-and-a-half years in one location and nineteen in another. I served in churches where a portion of the congregation had pulled away to establish a separate group, and I've helped resolve differences between them so they could reunite. I believe the spiritual gift set helped me in those situations.

As I begin this assignment, my desire is to build unity within the district I will serve, to clarify our purpose as a church, and to show genuine love for all those God has called me to serve.

Lord, what were You thinking when You called me to this task? Now I remember. It's not about what I am going to do but about what You, with all the rest of us, are going to do!

Maybe I can handle that. **BA**

Glen and Barbara Palmer's most recent pastorate took them to Harrisburg, OR, for nearly 20 years.



Church at the General Conference of the C

Home road: General Conference (since 1884) of the Church of
God Seventh Day (since 1858) in the US and Canada; ...

Leadership road: Early church structure was not elaborate,
but structure could be increased as the Spirit led (Acts 6:1-6).

Vision road: Christ Centered • Distinct, Not Exclusive •
Sabbath Observing • Bible Based • Spirit-Formed



Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her . . . the Lo

le Crossroads

Church of God (Seventh Day)

JULY

Passionate in Worship • Compassionate in Service •
Aggressive in Witness • Warm in Fellowship • Committed to Discipleship

CoG7's topmost human officers will change this month, and rewritten rules for our polity are being considered.

15

... several thousand members in 220 congregations collaborating around the biblical gospel, moving with interdependence and mutual respect toward a bright future.

21st Century Church

ard nourishes and cherishes the church (Ephesians 5:25-29).



by Peter Youngs

Early in Scripture, we are commanded to celebrate: “Thou shalt surely rejoice” (Deuteronomy 16:15). The instructions are clear. Israel achieved it with a “solemn” feast. Why didn’t someone tell us we can be solemnly happy?

Bob Marley came close in his “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” song. So get your umbrella drink, sit alone in the sun, and just be happy. Better yet, let’s stick together and keep searching for God’s glory.

Proverbs 15-17 is a useful meditation here. The underlying theme is our personal interaction and how it affects our spirit. This poetic wisdom is all about God’s glory in our hearts and how we need each other to accomplish this with joy.

“A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow

of the heart the spirit is broken” (15:13). “A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones” (17:22).

Before we can experience full joy, let’s try to understand the sorrow through which our spirits are broken. The word *sorrow* here is related to *idol* in the sense of carving or fashioning, and wounding.

When we are wounded by others, our heart suffers scars. Our scars are like an idol when they cause us to become unmoving — one definition of an idol. In our woundedness we can set ourselves, refuse to move, and erect walls around our position. Before we know it, the holy land we are mandated to occupy is dotted with walled positions on every hill and gopher mound because of the wounds we’ve suffered.

But these proverbs are written as contrast. Wounds either

drive us into lonely positions that repress our responsibility to move forward, or they cause us to respond and seek truth and meaning in our relationships. It is by the very same interaction with one another that our hearts are healed like a medicine, which can be translated as cure. The outcome is often dependent on the “counsellors” we feast with (15:22). “He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast” (v. 15).

This brings us back to God’s command to rejoice. God does not give a command without instruction, a sorrow without joy, a judgment without grace, or a curse without blessing. We have reason to rejoice because we are blessed. With a command to be happy, our only other choice is songs of denial.

We cannot partake of the glory of God alone. Through the grace and mercy of God we can enter into His present glory through Christ, but not without His body, the church. Let us meditate on the interactive contrasts in these proverbs and commit them to heal and knit our hearts together. For “where two or more are gathered in his name there am I in the midst.”

The glory of God in our heart is not alone; it is the joy of the Lord’s redemption and community, as commanded. **BA**

Peter and Kelene Youngs work from their home in Hutchinson, KS, and serve God’s people in the

Wichita area. Scripture quotations are from the *King James Version*.



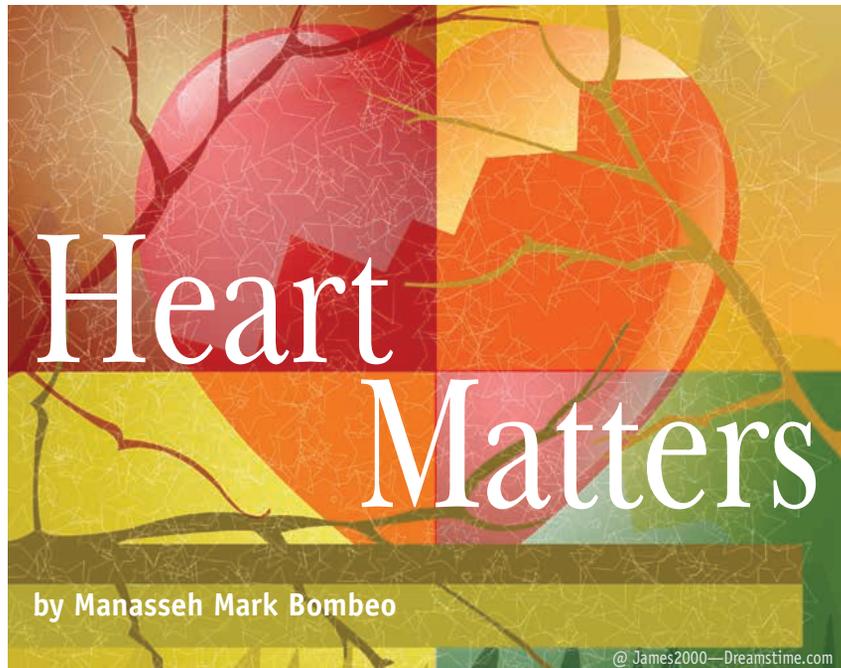
The obsessive and exaggerated observance of church system and practice is common in the modern church. Nothing is wrong with proper church systems. But a temptation lurks in the excessive desire for orderly service and religious programming above the spiritual health of people.

In my early search for God and truth, churches seemed to be community or political groups. They could even enroll people for the fires of hell because they failed a certain attendance pattern. Was I missing something vital to church discipline – something more important than simple worship and hearing God’s Word?

Then a word gave light to my confusion: *ecclesiasticism*. It resounded the phrase from the book of Ecclesiastes “Useless; it is useless” to my ear. Whether the word is related to the book or not, it had the same idea for me: an attitude of uselessness regarding church and tending to forget the meaning and privilege of gathering for God. Jesus addressed this problem in Matthew 23:2-4.

Pride corrupts the simple desire for a beautiful, collective offering, making it a yoke for others. We become too concerned with church appearances and prestige. Worst case for this would be the denial of our vulnerability to doing much yet meaning nothing. Hypocrisy has always been the risk as we teach righteousness – feeling too good about ourselves and our authority over others.

Jesus knew this. He was God made flesh, seeing and experiencing things that haunt us in this world. He taught us to be



humble as a lamb, as He was. Humility is our blind man’s rope line to safety.

We may start with true intent to obey God, but somewhere along the way we get caught in the competition to be the “number one church.” What things matter most to God and in His house? An order of service does not create love. The prior existence of love for God and neighbor causes the church system to be a sweet incense offering to Him.

One church question in my country has always been about clothing. Is it a “polo shirts in church” rule or “only dresses for girls”? This leads to long debates, yet we found guidance in the wisdom that what God desires most is our heart pointing in the right direction. This is the first step into God’s house.

A service without a heart is an empty service: “Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition” (Matthew 15:6), like a beautifully

crafted bottle containing nothing but air. If our church system is decorated with ego and lacks the heart of worship, it means nothing. What if all our presentations are really going nowhere, becoming empty?

God doesn’t want the church to be famous; He wants His name to be well known. His grace will be revealed to the world not through our well-presented patterns at church but by the saltiness of our hearts and the light of our souls.

Christianity is more than religious practice on a particular day. It is love from God and for God, intense and pouring over into acts of love and service for all His creatures. **BA**

Manasseh Mark

Bombeo is an ordained missionary serving the Philippine Conference through the church in Cagayan de Oro City.



G. C. Amendments Committee

Concluding the bylaw “Viewpoint” material previously published, the committee charged with presenting this proposal to members-in-session in Milwaukee offers the following response to opinions expressed in the May-June BA.

Re: *Levels of Organization*

One of the principles guiding the Bylaws Revision Committee was that *the Church was founded with God-given levels of authority and structure beyond the local church*. Biblical evidences of this include:

1. The authority of apostles and elders over numerous members and local churches, including: doctrinal authority (Acts 11:21-26; 15:1-35; 16:4-5), appointment of local elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5), and discipline of unruly members (1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 13:10; 1 Timothy 1:3, 4);
2. The sharing of resources and coordination of ministry to members of numerous local churches, administered at a level beyond the local church (Acts 4:32–5:2; 6:1-7; 11:27-30; Romans 16:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2); and
3. The addressing of epistles (authoritative directives on faith and practice) to numerous congregations and scattered members (Galatians 1:1, 2; Colossians 4:16, 17; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; 2 John 1:1; Jude 1:1; Revelation 1:4).

Elder Robert Coulter, on the other hand, suggests that he does not recognize any entity as the Church, except the local church. He makes a distinction between the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) and the Church of God (Seventh Day). He states that the General Conference (G. C.) is a “service arm” and not a church. This suggests that administrators, teachers, leaders, missionaries, etc. at the district and denominational levels are not ministers of the Church but simply provide para-church services.

The Bylaws Revision Committee rejected this view and affirmed instead that the G. C. is a visible organization of a portion of Christ’s body in the earth. The Church of God (Seventh Day) has organized at the local, state, district, and denominational

level for over a century, and God has placed gifted individuals to serve the Church in roles beyond the local church. G. C. members gather and minister at denominational, district, and local levels to fulfill their purpose as the Church. Regardless of the level of administration or gathering, the G. C. remains a church with Christ as its head. The G. C. is first and foremost an ecclesiastical entity – and only secondarily a civil entity. This view is biblical, and it is vital in affording us the religious liberties granted to churches in the US and Canada.

Re: *Members and Bylaws*

Elder Coulter writes that the proposed bylaws impose the will of the board of directors (BOD) and the G. C. president on Church members. This is inaccurate. The highest human authority in the G. C. – and the only one with the right to adopt or amend bylaws – is the membership in session. The bylaws do not impose anything on members; rather, members adopt bylaws to govern themselves. It is not the BOD or president who may abrogate or amend local church bylaws, but the G. C. bylaws that do this. The BOD does not impose on local churches. Rather, the *member-elected* BOD governs in accordance with the *member-adopted* bylaws.

Currently, members assign the BOD to “exercise all powers of this Conference when the Conference is not in session, except to amend these Bylaws” (Article IV, Section 4). The proposed revision maintains this exact relationship between the members and BOD. The members alone would retain the right to amend the bylaws and elect a BOD.

Re: *Local Church Organization*

Elder Coulter’s next concern is that the proposed bylaws preclude local church diversity. This is not the case. Care has been taken to allow for local custom. However, the current chaos of every local church organizing as it pleases – oftentimes without adequate leadership and structure – is addressed by insisting on the biblical leadership of elders and deacons (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5-9; 1

Response to May-June “Viewpoint”

Timothy 3:1-13). This won't result in reorganizing every congregation; it will result in reorganizing only congregations not currently overseen by elders and served by deacons.

Two years will be allowed for reorganization if the G. C. members adopt these guidelines. The proposed bylaws do not change the relationship between the G. C. and its member churches; they only call for accountability in that relationship. Rather, the member-elected BOD governs in accordance with the member-adopted bylaws.



Re: *District Boards and Superintendents*

Elder Coulter says that “District boards will no longer serve as co-administrators with superintendents of their districts.” This assertion is not entirely correct, as Elder Coulter proceeds to note the ongoing administrative role district boards would play under the proposed bylaws. Along with their superintendents, district boards will continue to administer the G. C.’s mission at the district level.

What will change is that district boards will no longer have veto power over Conference-wide initiatives. This seems wise. Why should the BOD have to receive approval from each district board before fulfilling the charge given to it by the members? Those who wonder why the G. C. seldom manages to achieve Conference-wide action should note the dysfunctional system of allowing veto power at the district and local levels. When one district board or pastor can override the entire Church’s board, then the will of the whole membership is subject to the whim of a very few.

By clarifying the relation among BOD, president, district superintendents, and their boards, the proposed bylaws provide for better communication, accountability, and unity.



Re: *Members and Leaders*

Elder Coulter wrote that the new bylaws don't allow the membership to “participate in the board's/president's decision-making process.” But it is impossible for ten thousand members across North

America to have operational oversight. That's why membership elects the BOD to govern the G. C. between conventions.

Elder Coulter's claim that the proposed bylaw revision ignores the parliamentary authority regarding the president's duties is mistaken. Within our organization, the convention's presiding officer is the BOD chairman, not the president. The Bylaw Revision Committee agreed that in our context, the parliamentary passage in question does not apply.



Re: *Organization and Gospel Work*

The bylaw revision project was championed by Elder Coulter two years ago, and he was eager to serve on the committee. During their two years of service the committee members continued ministering at the local, district, and denominational levels. The proposed revision is not a distraction from our collective work but seeks to make that work more united and effective.

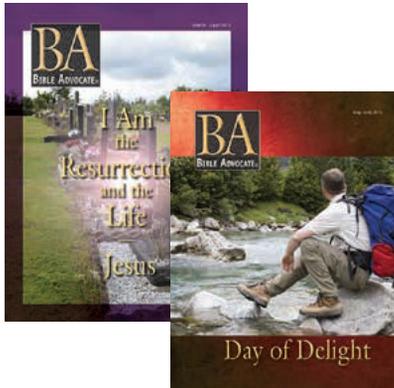


Re: *Doctrine and Membership*

Brother Robert “Mitch” Crisp raised concerns about the proposed bylaws and our church's doctrines. Contrary to his assertions, our current bylaws do discuss the establishment of doctrines. The establishment of doctrine is currently — and under the proposed revision, would remain — the duty of the North American Ministerial Council. There is no current or proposed provision for “punishing anyone who may disagree with doctrinal positions of the General Conference.”

Our creed remains open. There are no proposals to close our creed or to alter the process of changing our doctrines. Members and ministers maintain the right to hold distinct personal convictions while respecting and upholding the Church's official teachings. Ministers retain the responsibility of publicly teaching Church doctrine with the opportunity to advocate for change within the Ministerial Council. No changes are proposed along these lines.





Remembering LeRoy

It's wonderful getting a peek into the life of brother LeRoy Dais [March-April '15, p. 16] by those of us who never met him in person but became so acquainted with him through his work at BAP. Getting the vision and service in the person of LeRoy brings back fond memories and the inspiration I received from reading the BA and other BAP literature. I still have older copies in Ghana, which I revisited on a recent trip.

Thank the Most High for loaning us LeRoy and blessing us with free literature. Knowing it was his desire to freely get the magazine to us across the ocean brings me almost to tears. On behalf of the many international BA readers and BAP beneficiaries, especially from Ghana, I send condolence to the Dais family. His hard work and good fruits live on.

L. A.
Canada

I am so thankful that my dear friend, LeRoy Dais, is honored in our church publications. He made an awesome contribution to our church, as does his wife, my dear friend Hope.

J. L.
Tahlequah, OK

Blessing the editor

I express my appreciation for the space afforded my article ["Perfect Fulfillment," p. 19]. I've received the BAP booklets with your letter and business card that confirms your role in missions. Under your editorship, BA advocated gospel themes that are the lifeblood of our faith and hope. The *Route 66* book has been such an eye opener; I have better appreciation of some books of the Bible that I used to shy away from. We pray success in your new field of mission, assigned by the Lord. I trust the next generation of BA will become an international tool in reflecting the expanding global church.

T. M.
Zimbabwe, Africa

Sabbath support

Received my BA yesterday [May-June '15] and read it from cover to cover — great issue on the Sabbath. Thoroughly enjoyed every article.

L. A.
Facebook

As far as I know, the Ten Commandments are not multiple choice. If God has done away with the Sabbath command, then He has done away with them all. I don't know of a true Christian who would say it's OK to kill.

T. S.
Pendleton, OR

If we deem serving as a doctor, nurse, fire and rescue, or police officer on Sabbath as not approved for a Sabbath observer, should we then accept services from these people if our need arose on Sabbath?

L. P.
Manassas, VA

Re: *Counting Delegates*

Brother Crisp overestimates the size and influence of G. C. personnel as delegates while underestimating their diversity and freedom. Even if all thirty to forty G. C. employees (including all administrative staff, district superintendents, and ministry personnel) voted the same on every issue — which they do not — they could hardly control the outcome of a convention of five hundred-plus voters.

Re: *Electronic vs. Delegate Voting*

Sister Miriam Dixon stated her support for electronic voting over a delegate system. Perhaps an electronic voting system is preferable, but none has been proposed. Adopting a delegate system now doesn't preclude us from an electronic voting system later.

If the delegate system is adopted, delegates will be selected by their home congregations, who will be responsible for selecting trustworthy and Spirit-led delegates. This guards against the other concerns Sister Dixon expressed regarding delegates.

The 2015 Amendments Committee encourages members to view resources at cog7.org/bylaws.

Israel Steinmetz, Chair
Samuel Holland
Raul Romo

Higher

“Come up higher,” Jesus beckons,
Above petty offenses,
The friction of day-to-day living,
Hurt feelings that distract from faith.
Spread your wings. Soar high like an eagle.

“Come up higher,” Jesus urges.
Rise above failures,
Climb over mistakes,
Breathe the fresh air of forgiveness,
Know the freedom of walking with God.

“Come up higher,” Jesus calls,
Over the rough road of disappointment,
The rut of doubt, the ditch of sorrow,
The crevice of loss
Into the arms of the risen Savior.

“Come up higher,” Jesus says.
“Failure is past. Hope is your future.
Here, take My hand,
Plant your feet upon the Rock.
Rest with Me in heavenly places.”

Jewell Johnson





Christian Education for a Vibrant 21st Century Church

by **Darrel W. Walters II**

Most of us will agree that education is important, right? And babies are cute, and the Seahawks should have run the ball in the final play of the last Super Bowl. Certain things in life just go without saying.

So is it enough for us to simply agree that Christian education is important? How do we quantify important? How should we as a church show that we value Christian education?

To achieve our twenty-first century Church vision, we must decide as a body that we will unite in the common goal of investing in our youth and families. We don't own the twenty-first century; our kids do. If we want to put feet on this vision and put wings on the jet that will thrust us into the vibrancy we so desire and that God desires for us, then we must go all-in for the generation that will come to own this century.



There is a growing realization of this. Momentum is building for Christian education and family ministry. Now is the time to capture the energy and decide we are not content with being a group of autonomous islands. Let's do something we can all truly unite around and, at the same time, save our church from extinction in a society that increasingly convinces our children God is no longer relevant.

What is the implication here? We must expand CoG7 Christian education to the four corners of this country. The impact that LifeSpring and Spring Vale Academy have had on this church is incredible. The percentage of SVA students, parents, and staff still active within the Church includes half of our G. C. board and ministries directors, two superintendents, and a third of our ministers. That's considerable! And that's just one tiny school in Michigan. What could the percentage be if we had gone all-in

for Christian education years ago?

Let's go all-in now! The time will come when all of us — individuals, congregations, and districts — must decide to financially support an educational infrastructure. Let's start talking about it now. As we move toward a larger vision, please show your support for our current institutions. SVA exists to train up the youth of our church, and LifeSpring plays a crucial role in equipping our districts and churches with ministers who have the tools. As a unified body, let's prioritize education and anticipate that bold and exciting things will happen to our church when we go all-in.

Darrel W. Walters II is director of development at Spring Vale Academy (dwalters@springvale.us; 239-240-0073-cell). For more on SVA, see back cover.

CoG7 Leaders Appointed

The General Conference and Bible Advocate Press have announced selection of men for administrative and leadership roles in the Church.



G. C. President: Loren Stacy

Loren (63) is the son of Pastor Carl and Alvina Stacy and of Elder Roy Marrs, who became Loren's stepfather in 1958, after Carl Stacy's death. Loren grew up in Southern California. He graduated from the University of Southern California (BA, MS) and Summit School of Theology (M.Div.). In 1981 he became pastor of our Lodi, California congregation. In 34 years there, Loren has also served our church as Youth Agency director (1981-1986), West Coast District overseer (1986-1992), board of directors member (1985-2015), and chairman of the board (1997-2015). Loren and Karen Stacy married in 1978 and have a son, two daughters, and two grandsons: Sean, Rachael, and Connor Stacy; Erin, Brian, and Logan Petrotta; and Caitlin and Adam Meadows. Karen Stacy is an educational coach for the Lodi School District.

G. C. Executive Director: Jody McCoy

Jody McCoy, 53, of Austin, Texas, is the son of Ken and Gladys McCoy, who both came from Church families: McCoys, Waltons, Larsons, and Weirs. Jody grew up in the Conroe, Texas church, attended Spring Vale Academy, and graduated from Texas A&M with a masters in electrical engineering. Jody worked for Advanced Micro Devices 25 years, ten years in telecommunication and computer chip design and fifteen years managing a performance analysis team. In 2007 he began exploring the topic of creation for his Sabbath school class, a journey that continues. He left AMD in 2011 to do full-time research in science, religion, and philosophy.

Jody writes: "My goal is to lower the barrier for those who want to discover relationship with God. For many, the doubts aren't about His existence, but [about] His goodness. My desire is for us all to find rest in the truth that God is absolutely good. It is in this unqualified belief that we give ourselves to Him as Jesus gave Himself for us. In this faith, God becomes our God, and reality becomes far better than we ever imagined. Even the most resistant soul can believe God is good when they see His love and goodness in us."



BA Editor: Jason Overman

Jason Overman, 48, of Jasper, Arkansas, is the son of Ron and Vicki Overman. He has served as pastor of the Jasper congregation for 28 years and just completed 24 years of employment with the *Harrison Daily Times*, the last few years as general manager of that newspaper. He enjoys reading, travel, outdoors, music, and church and family time. Jason and his wife, Stephanie (of CoG7's Pruitt and Schlenker families), have celebrated 25 years of marriage. They are the parents of twelve-year-old twins, Tabitha and Isaac.



South Asian and Australasian leaders in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, May 6-10, 2015.

Photo by John Klassek

Window Opened!

Nations strung across North Africa through the Middle East, South Asia, and Oceania (the East Indies) are home to world religions and people groups that are most untouched by the Christian gospel: Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This belt of land has been dubbed the “10/40 Window.” It covers from the 10th to the 40th parallels north of the equator, and stretches from the Atlantic Ocean on the west into the Pacific on the east.

Five nations in this great and difficult mission field were visited by CoG7 Missions men in April and May 2015:

Pakistan. In this mostly Muslim country, Pastor Tom Benzen (Arkansas) and G. C. Missions Assistant Bryan Cleeton (Colorado) visited a vibrant and growing seven-year-old community of Christian faith led by Bishop Shamas Pervaiz and his son, Prince. They preached, learned more about

the church, and explored projects to sustain its growth.

Philippines. In this mostly Catholic country, Missions Director Calvin Burrell (US) and Pastor Phil Kordahi (Australia) visited the annual convention (600+ attendees) of this well-established church on the island of Mindanao. Pastor Billy Abugan serves as president of the Filipino national conference of CoG7.

Myanmar. In this mostly Buddhist country, Tom Benzen and Bryan Cleeton visited eight congregations and Asian Christian Theological Seminary, led by Pastor Tluang Kung, to preach, learn, and explore projects to help the church further develop.

Indonesia. In this mostly Muslim nation, CoG7 is limited to two small outposts: one near the capital city of Jakarta (served by Pastor Alfred Ander) and the other in the city of Manado (served by Pastor Ferdi Suoth). Calvin Burrell and Phil Kordahi spent three days in each area get-

ting acquainted and aiding the fledgling efforts.

Malaysia. In the cosmopolitan city of Kuala Lumpur, Bryan Cleeton and Calvin Burrell joined IMC President Ramon Ruiz and nineteen other leaders from six countries — those listed above plus India (a mostly Hindu nation) and Australia (Christian roots but mostly secular). Four days were spent in networking, planning, and praying for the cause of Christ’s grace and truth in this region of the world.

The 10/40 Window contains 35 percent of the earth’s land surface, 65 percent of its population, and 95 percent of its people who’ve never heard about Jesus. The recent efforts in that region represent several firsts for IMC and G. C. Missions of our church. Thanks for your prayers and support for our combined efforts to join the Father in His plan to bless every nation on earth through the Son-seed of Abraham!



Older, younger leaders confer: For two+ days each spring, your G. C. superintendents, ministries directors, and their teams meet to report and re-charge. The 37 shown here (ten from Texas, seven from Colorado) came to Denver in April and left to invest their best in Christian ministry another year. Can you spot the newest one on this team?



G. C. Bylaws Revision Committee

Two years ago in Omaha, Nebraska, CoG7 members-in-session called for a committee to propose revisions to our General Conference bylaws and present them for consideration by membership at the 2015 convention. Having finished their assignment, the committee members are shown (L to R) and listed here in appreciation for their diligent service.

Allan Burlison: committee parliamentarian (ex-officio); from Kingfisher, Oklahoma

Clyde "Chip" Hinds: veteran pastor, now superintendent of Southwest District; residing in Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Raul Romo: younger pastor and board of directors member; serving as pastor of the North Dallas, Texas church

Loren Stacy: pastor in Lodi, California, for 34 years; chair-

man, board of directors; G. C. president-select

Whaid Rose: veteran pastor completing eighteen years as General Conference president; from Denver, Colorado

Sam Holland, chairman: pastor in Hamilton, Ontario; Ministerial Council president; board of directors vice-chairman

Israel Steinmetz: younger pastor; instructor and dean of Academic Affairs for LifeSpring School of Ministry; living in San Antonio, Texas

Heber Vega: veteran pastor, now superintendent of Northeast District and secretary of the International Ministerial Congress

Robert Coulter: former G. C. president (24 years); pastor and Church administrator; now retired in Thornton, Colorado



SHINE Team's Tenth Mission

by Bev Brenneise

People need to know first that you care — before they care what you know. SHINE Medical & Dental missions treats the body first, and then, Lord willing, spiritual needs are met.

Thirty-seven team members (shown above) served in Aguascalientes, Mexico, April 12-20. They brought extra bags with medications and supplies for five days of free clinics, a rare opportunity for needy people. An additional \$30,000 of medications was purchased and shipped to Aguascalientes in advance.

The mission site — an open courtyard — served for registering, performing various medical procedures, and waiting to see dentists or doctors. After five clinic days, some 3,346 patients were seen.

Through the Mexican governments' Integral Family Development, SHINE used the services of qualified nutritionists, optometrists, a nurse, two dental assistants, and an audiologist. Twelve dentists, mostly from the local area, treated about 700 patients, some for multiple days as prosthetic plates were made and fitted. Teeth were cleaned, drilled, filled, and extracted. Other procedures and surgeries were performed or scheduled.

Seven doctors and a midwife treated 1,345 patients:

- A man suffering chronic pain. The pain left, and he returned the next day to profusely thank the doctor.
- A three-year-old boy with cerebral palsy and severe malnutrition. We couldn't give long-term care, but we gave them a one- to two-months' supply of milk.
- A two-year-old baby with deformed legs and no bed to sleep in; all the family slept on the floor. SHINE bought a special bed for the child.

- A woman with Turner syndrome was carried in. She had not walked until her family made a homemade walker. SHINE supplied her with a wheeled walker, giving her much more mobility.

Optometrists tested vision and 759 pairs of glasses were distributed. Hearing for 223 patients was tested, and 36 ear lavages were administered. Twenty-two special needs cases were identified, including cataracts, a club-foot, tonsils, and a 27-year-old woman who hadn't heard for two years.

Pastors held 36 counseling sessions during the clinics. At Sabbath services, around 100 people came forward for prayers. Then 200 boxes of food were distributed to needy families.

Donations for SHINE ministry may be made at cog7.org (select "Donate" on the home page; follow instructions) or mail offerings to SHINE Ministries at P.O. Box 2728, Elk Grove, CA 95759.

cog7.org Read the full text of this report online at baonline.org.

CoG7 Calendar

XXVIII Annual Hispanic Ladies

Retreat – September 4-7, Long Beach, CA; contact: Aseneth Orduño (310-930-0054)

Sis-Q Meadows Senior Adult Re-

treat - September 9-13, Cave Junction, OR; contact: aaron.henderson@marioncog7.org

Octoberfest in the Ozarks - Oc-

ttober 16-18, Jasper, AR; contact: jasonoverman@hotmail.com

Southwest District Women's

Retreat - October 30 - November 1; Camp Hoblitzelle, Midlothian, TX; September 18 registration deadline; contacts: Rosie Davila (361-739-1147; mdrdavila@hotmail.com) or Mari Cummings (361-960-4423; mariselacummings@hotmail.com)

Zambia: In April, IMC Zone 5 Representative Robert Crawford and a team from Gloucester, UK, visited Zambia. They trained 70 participants in a CoG7 sewing project and conducted pastoral training with Zambian leaders from Kalomo, Lusaka, Kitwe, and Solwezi, as well as neighboring DR Congo.



Philippines: In late April, this crowd of 600+ attended convention at the Church's camp facilities near Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao. Australian pastor Phil Kordahi and G. C. Missions Director Calvin Burrell were guests.



Pakistan: In the first-ever visit of a G. C. Missions representative to Pakistan, Bryan Cleeton addresses a crowd in FDA City near Faisalabad. Bryan reports several thousand CoG7 members in this mostly Muslim nation.



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International Congress

IMC News of the World

The next meeting of International Ministerial Congress will be in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in October 2016. Under the leadership of presidents Gustavo Hultgren and Richard Skorubski, the churches of Argentina and Uruguay report themselves ready to host this IMC session. With the passionate leadership of IMC Zone 3 representative Jorge Gillig, the South American churches have experienced growth, with new missions organized in Paraguay, Bolivia, and Peru, in addition to churches in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

We praise our God for the progress He has allowed in recent years. After our last IMC session in London (2012), work reunions have been held in most of the seven world zones. Fellowship has been strengthened, faith confirmed, biblical and administrative training provided, and new contacts made in several countries where people observe God's commandments and the faith of Jesus as we do.

Do you have friends or relatives in a country that needs the gospel? Please contact IMC President Ramon Ruiz Garza (ramonruizg@hotmail.com; 052+81 16375130) or IMC Secretary Heber Vega (hebervega@gmail.com; 301-351-5057).

SHINE, the international

medical and dental ministry, recently served on a mission in the city of Aguascalientes, Mexico. SHINE has completed eleven large and 24 mini-missions during the last ten years, without interruption. Would you like to serve with SHINE? Contact Ernesto Frausto (ernesto-frausto@att.net; 916-833-8997).

The Widows and Orphans ministry continues its work in areas of the African continent and other parts of the world, under the leadership of Brother Brian Baker. You may contact him directly at brianatbakersacres@juno.com; 970-776-6386.

The ministry of Cristo Viene has good news: Mario Mora and Rafael Parra, founders of this ministry, are joining the work as evangelists in Costa Rica and Colombia, respectively, where they live with their families. For more information, please contact ramonruizg@hotmail.com.

The Disaster Relief Fund has received donations from several countries to help heal the pain caused by Ebola in Sierra Leon, Africa. For more information about this or any other ministry of the IMC or Missions Abroad, you may contact bryan.cleeton@cog7.org or calvin.burrell@cog7.org at the general offices near



Denver, Colorado (telephone: 303-452-7973).

Finally, we refer to Elder Whaid Rose, who at the Milwaukee convention puts a period to his eighteen-year work as General Conference president. Elder Rose will be remembered for his gospel preaching and for his permanent support of Missions Abroad. We give thanks to our God for His leadership and trust that he will remain active as representative of IMC Zone 1 (US, Canada, and the English-speaking Caribbean). We pray that God may bless in his next phase, next to Marjolene and his lovely family.

Our sincere appreciation to all who support CoG7's International Ministerial Congress.

— Ramon Ruiz Garza
IMC President



Prayers

Invited to offer closing comments at his eightieth birthday celebration, Vance Havner, the legendary revival preacher from the hills of North Carolina, spoke not to his audience but to God in prayer.

I've said much to you on this page over these years, so on this final occasion I simply offer prayers to God:

Lord, I well remember that night when, at the tender age of twelve, I made the decision to follow Jesus the rest of my life. Only by Your sustaining grace, I've never wavered on that decision, never looked back. For this, I thank You.

For the journey begun by that decision, for where it's taken me – hills and valleys, places rough and plain – for the privilege of serving the Church in this way, for paths crossed, friendships made, love shared, mistakes, forgiveness, and for the love and prayers showered upon my family and me by so many, I give thanks.

Life happens; the years pass quickly. I'm tired, my eyes are dim; strengthen me for the remainder of the journey.

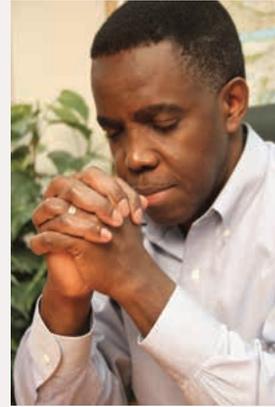
*Few, they tell me, finish well. Help me to not end before I finish, nor finish in a way that grieves Your heart, stains Your honor.**

The Greeks had an Olympic race in which it wasn't the runner who got to the finish line first who received the prize, but the one who made it to the finish line with torch still lit. That's it! Torch still lit, influence still intact, testimony still strong, is how I want to finish. Help me by Thy grace.

I'm making that unguarded, humble, simple petition that fell from the lips of Dr. James M. Gray, former president of Moody Bible Institute, my very own: "O God, don't let

me ever become the wicked old man."

Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, died as he lived: rescuing lives. The freak accident happened on Schroom Lake, New York, on June 2, 1956. Learning that one of the girls in the boat with him couldn't swim, he traded places, putting her in the safer spot. When the speeding boat bounced on a wave, shooting them both into the lake, he swam to her and held her head above water until the boat could circle back and she was hauled aboard. But as hands reached down to seize the rescuer, he sank out of sight. Trotman drowned, saving a life. The caption under his picture in the *Time* magazine article appropriately summed up his life: "Dawson Trotman, Always Holding Someone Up."



So, Lord, give me such a heart – one that's willing to trade places, giving preference to others, lifting up, not tearing down. Help me to rejoice in my expendability, anchoring my core identity in Christ, not in what I do or strive to become, and as comfortable at the back as at the front.

Vance Havner ended his prayer that night with these words: "Lord of the years that are left to me, I give them to Thine hand. Take me, make me, and mold me, to the pattern Thou hast planned. You be the Lord of what's left."

The years left to me now are less than those I've already lived. The shadows lengthen. *Lord, help me get home before dark.**

– Whaid Guscott Rose

* From Robertson McQuilkin



Eighteen Spring Vale Academy seniors celebrate their May 24 Commencement on the Owosso, MI campus. (top)

Right: Alyah Guerrero and Juan Marquez of Texas share the joy with retiring SVA teacher Joyce Olds.

Below (L to R): Graduates Adam Slawson (MI) and Molly Santisteven (CO), Alexandria Albert (MI), and Josiah Carbajal (MN) relish the moment with friends and family.

Fall enrollment at SVA is August 17-18, and space is available. Call 989-725-2391 or visit springvale.us.

