



# Christian Church of God Newsletter

Volume 19, Issue 3 April/May 2010

Hello My Church Family,

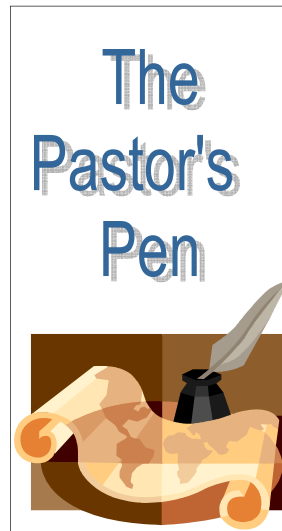
On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, we will be celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Church congregation here in Amarillo. Charles Groce, President of the Church of God International and a long-time friend to most of us, will be our guest speaker. There will be plenty of music praising our great God and one of our "famous" Texas steak cookouts following. Looking forward to seeing some of you we haven't seen for a while!

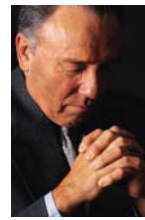
I've been asked to share some of our history. In January of 1980, while serving as the Pastor of the Worldwide Church of God in Amarillo, I requested and was granted a personal visit with Herbert Armstrong at his home in Tucson, Arizona. I was burdened with a host of pressing doctrinal issues and had grave concerns about the leadership and direction of the Church so I wanted to meet personally with Mr. Armstrong, as the organization's leader, look him in the eyes and ask him why so many unacceptable prac-

tices and teachings were creeping into the Worldwide Church of God. I wanted to hear directly from him his explanation and views on these issues, teachings and practices. I knew full well that to broach these issues and dare to question Mr. Armstrong would likely result in my dismissal, but I felt it my Christ-directed duty to look him in the eyes and explain why I could no longer work for him or support his leadership.

In the course of our 3 hour and 20 minute visit, I was fired, not once but 7 different times. "How can that be?" you might be asking. Well, I didn't go all that way and go through 3 months of consternation while awaiting my requested audience to turn tail and run after a brief encounter. Instead of skulking away after his outburst and a termination, I just launched into my next issue, and, of course, that prompted Mr. Armstrong to launch into another discourse and away we would go again....this I did 7 times! After the seventh firing I realized I had covered all the important issues, so I thanked Mr. Armstrong for his time, shook hands with him and with Dean Blackwell and Joe Tkach Sr. in tow returned to Pasadena where I left them behind and headed home to good ole' Amarillo.

|cont. pg 5 >





# GraceRhythms GraceRhythms

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the **unforced rhythms of grace**. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

~ Jesus/Matt 11:28-30, M,SG

When they said, "Let's go to the house of God,"  
my heart leaped for joy.

Psalms 122:1 (MSG)

Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but

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### Inside this issue:

<i>Thirty-year History</i>	1
<i>Chuckles</i>	7
<i>GraceRhythms</i>	11
<i>Moral Compass</i>	10
<i>Heartbeats</i>	8
<i>Celebrations</i>	4
<i>Brush Arbor</i>	9

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The rhythms of grace are somewhat like the clackety-clack-clack of a train on the railroad tracks. The tracks of the Law were laid down long ago, but no progress could be made without locomotion: the steam of grace fired by the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote: "For the grace of God, which can save every man, has now become known, and it teaches us to have no more to do with godlessness or the desires of this world but to live, here and now, responsible, honourable and God-fearing lives" (Titus 2:11, Phillips NT); "Live your whole life in the Spirit and you will not satisfy the desires of your lower nature" (Gal 5:16, Phillips NT).

So Grace teaches us, schools us, instructs us in the principles of the Law. But now our focus must be on Grace: "Now we find that the Law keeps slipping into the picture to point the vast extent of sin. Yet, though sin is shown to be wide and deep, thank God his grace is wider and deeper still! The whole outlook changes - sin used to be the master of men and in the end handed them over to death: now grace is the ruling factor, with righteousness as its purpose and its end the bringing of men to the eternal life of God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20-21 Phillips NT).



# A MORAL COMPASS<sup>10</sup>

## Directional Principles for Right Living

Give me your lantern and compass, give me a map, so I can find my way to the sacred mountain. (Psalm 43:3, MSG) O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8, NLT)



### CHARLES SPURGEON / PSALM 19

It would be idle to enquire into the particular period when this delightful poem was composed, for there is nothing in its title or subject to assist us in the enquiry. The heading, "To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David," informs us that David wrote it, and that it was committed to the Master of the service of song in the sanctuary for the use of the assembled worshippers. In his earliest days the psalmist, while keeping his father's flock, had devoted himself to the study of God's two great books—nature and Scripture; and he had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of these two only volumes in his library that he was able with a devout criticism to compare and contrast them, magnifying the excellence of the Author as seen in both. How foolish and wicked are those who instead of accepting the two sacred tomes, and delighting to behold the same divine hand in each, spend all their wits in endeavoring to find discrepancies and contradictions. We may rest assured that the true "Vestiges of Creation" will never contradict Genesis, nor will a correct "Cosmos" be found at variance with the narrative of Moses. He is wisest who reads both the world book, and the Word book as two volumes of the same work, and feels concerning them, "My Father wrote them both."

This song very distinctly divides itself into three parts, very well described by the translators in the ordinary heading of our version. The creatures show God's glory, Psalms 19:1-6. The word shows his grace, Psalms 19:7-11. David prays for grace, Psalms 19:12-14. Thus praise and prayer are mingled, and he who here sings the work of God in the world without, pleads for a work of grace in himself within.

*There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard (v. 3).* Every man may hear the voices of the stars. Many are the languages of terrestrials, to celestials there is but one, and that one may be understood by every willing mind. The lowest heathen are without excuse, if they do not discover the invisible things of God in the works which he has made. Sun, moon, and stars are God's traveling preachers; they are apostles upon their journey confirming those who regard the Lord, and judges on circuit condemning those who worship idols. The margin gives us another rendering, which is more literal, and involves less repetition; "no speech, no words, their voice is not heard; "that is to say, their teaching is not addressed to the ear, and is not uttered in articulate sounds; it is pictorial, and directed to the eye and heart; it touches not the sense by which faith comes, for faith cometh by hearing. Jesus Christ is called the Word, for he is a far more distinct display of Godhead than all the heavens can afford; they are, after all, but dumb instructors; neither star nor sun can arrive at a word, but Jesus is the express image of Jehovah's person, and his name is the Word of God.

—Treasury of David, The

" . . . The prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; . . . Pray for one another that you may be healed."  
— James 5:15-16.

## Prayer Requests



**Brian Booth:** Jeff's, brother, has finished Chemo & his cancer is in remission. Thanks for your prayers!

**Amber & Dylan Clark:** Grandchildren of Betty Clark, cerebral palsy.

**Betty Clark:** Returned to Plum Creek Rehabilitation Center.

**Vickie Crevoi:** Sister of Linda Booth, Chronic Progressive MS.

**Bonnie Cryer:** Had surgery for removal of malignancy on her lung. Recuperating at home now.

**Bobbie Farris:** Sister of Bonnie Cryer, suffered a heart attack and is not doing well.

**Sherry Evans:** Niece of Jerry McClenagan & Glennis McAlister, is very weak, suffering with cancer.

**Mary Jo Flatt:** James Bailey's sister, is doing well, having completed treatments for malignant bladder tumor.

**Paul Flatt:** James Bailey's brother-in-law, suffered a heart attack. He is undergoing alternative treatments & is improving.

**Bobbie Gatson:** Mother of Velvet Green, nerve and back problems.

**Harry Gonzales:** Pneumonia and other health problems.

**Velvet Green:** Suffers from schizophrenia.

**Benny Ray Hicks:** Betty Clark's daughter's brother-in-law, diagnosed with leukemia.

**Anna Law:** In need of a kidney transplant; she has dialysis three times a week.

**Larry Lyles:** Has liver cancer; is recuperating at home following hospital stay.

**Dollie Meil:** In a nursing home in Lubbock, Texas.

**Rudolph Rankin:** Has been diagnosed with prostate cancer; will undergo radiation treatment.

**Ted Rankin:** MS; he is somewhat improved.

**Jane Shaffer:** Sister of Joe Kirkpatrick, several malignant brain tumors.

**Laura Stephens:** Mother-in-law of Shannon (Sehorn) Stephens, cancer in lungs, kidneys & liver.

**Ann Stewart:** Suffering from mini-strokes.

**Jeanne Vincent:** C.B. & Darrell Sehorn's sister, breast cancer which has metastasized to the bone. She is stable but very weak.

**Ron Vorheis:** He is still having serious health issues.

**Janet Voss:** Undergoing chemo for cancer recurrence.

# Celebrations<sup>4</sup>

**Birthdays:**

APRIL

Helen Shaklee	4/8
Bonnie Cryer	4/9
J. R. Hamilton	4/18
James Vines	4/26
Damaris Green	4/29

MAY

Glennis McAlister	5-4
Linda Sehorn	5-16
Jeff Booth	5-19
Joe Kirkpatrick	5-19
Thomas Vines	5-19
Janet Voss	5-27

**Anniversaries:**

APRIL

Glennis & Weldon McAlister	4/24
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MAY

Shannon & Russ Stephens	5-20
Bill & Jackie Ballew	5-24

# 30th Anniversary

APRIL 24th

11:30 a.m.\* Song Fest

Pastor's Welcome

Guest Speaker: Charles Groce

Steak Cook-out & Fellowship

\* Note time / No Classes

# Brush Arbor Meeting on Hackberry Creek



Raised on a small farm in Oklahoma in the thirties and forties, I had the privilege of country experiences that I wish my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren could enjoy — if only for a short time. A part of that rich heritage was the church life. I'll be periodically sharing vignettes of that part of my life in these pages; it has stretched out to cover over seventy years of my life. Portions of the memories are a bit fragmented, but true at the core. Yes, I've embellished a scene or two, and most of the names are conspicuously absent. But I've kept the tone and spirit accurate.

~ JDM, Editor

## CHAPTER 3 / A HILL, HELL AND HIGH WATER

My maternal grandmother's maiden name was Ford. So was our family vehicle. One year younger than me, our gray '36 Ford pickup was our mode of transportation for going to town on Saturday and to church on Sunday. We had changed churches; now we had to go thirteen miles instead of two, and there was a long, steep hill on the way, about two miles from Hackberry Creek. My position on the seat was a small wedge of space right by the gear shift, my older brother and mother on either side of me. After the Sunday night service I would get very sleepy on the way back home, and sometimes get in the way of the gearshift when my father had to shift gears. Such a place was at the half-way point: a very steep hill. He had to shift down into the lowest gear to get over its crest. For years to come I would have nightmares about this steep hill, imagining our vehicle reaching its crest and flipping over backwards, flying through the air. In later years the crest of rock and caliche were shaved off.

Another time my father would need me out of the way so he could shift gears was when it rained, which wasn't very often. He and our '36 Ford pickup had their work cut out. He would change gears and spin the steering wheel to keep from getting stuck in the mud. Slipping and sliding, grunting and grinding, we'd finally get home with mud hanging from the fenders.

During these years we attended a campground church meeting close to Palo Duro River, about twenty miles away. Because we had to get up early for school the following Monday, our dad devised an ingenious plan for my brother Duane and me to get sufficient sleep. Well, it seemed to be a good idea at the time. He put a mattress in the back of the pickup and told us we wouldn't have to attend the service. It was conditional: we were to sleep, not play. Well, you know about how long we remembered that . . . long enough for Mother and Dad to get out of sight. Then we began to climb onto the top of the cab and jump onto the mattress. I guess we thought we were invisible and quiet. It wasn't long until Dad was there to put a stop to our raucousness. That was the last time we got to do that; we had abused our freedom.

It was about this time that our Ford pickup would be transformed to help make ends meet. Dad welded a large pipe to the exhaust, angled it up into the bed for the entire length, then angled it down at the tailgate. Behold: a heater for a school bus, with homemade benches down each side.

It's a wonder our vehicle survived all of this. I did my part to put it out of action at about age seven. I could barely reach the accelerator ("footfeed" to us) and clutch. And I could barely see through the steering wheel. Farmers tended to start their kids driving at a very young age. Well, the milk cows got out of our pasture and headed over the railroad tracks about a quarter mile from our house. There was an open field of young, tender wheat there, on which they were grazing. No need to saddle the horse; we had our trusty pickup. Dad took me with him. Once we were behind the cows, driving very slow in low gear, the cows moved steadily up the fence row toward the road. From there we would steer them toward our house and the pasture behind it. My father stopped and asked me if I wanted to drive. Of course I said yes.

Then he got out, started around the back of the pickup to get in on the other side so he could help me drive. Parents have been stymied through the centuries as to what their kid's thought processes are . . . or not! Sure enough, before Dad could get in, I slid across the seat, ground it into low gear, and took off. The cows were running like mad in front of me, kicking the remains of their digested wheat onto the windshield. All of a sudden we're getting very close to the road. The cows turned and ran lickety-split over the railroad tracks. | CONT. PG 6 |



# Heartbeats

Editorial  
Jerry McClenagan

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Prov 4:23 (NIV)

THREE-QUARTERS OF A CENTURY and counting. On the positive side, I reached another milestone, having turned 75 years of age in March. And I'm grateful for it in view of my family history: a grandfather, a father, and a brother having died in their forties.

My life in the ministry of the Church—both full-time and part-time—has covered over fifty-five of those years. My first sermon, at the age of 19, was preached on a Sunday morning in a church at Uvalde, Texas, if memory serves me. My text was Colossians 1:23, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister"— my key thought: "be not moved away from the hope of

the gospel."

I don't remember anything else about the sermon, but upon reflection I would have to say that the text should always be a part of my preaching ministry of the Church.

This "hope of the gospel" should ring out like a clarion bell in all our churches and in all our personal day-to-day activities. As Peterson translates it, "You stay grounded and steady in that bond of trust, constantly tuned in to the Message, careful not to be distracted or diverted."

Not one of us knows what awaits us around the next bend of the road. But we, with the songwriter, can say, "Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand, but I know who holds tomorrow, and I know who holds my hand." 🎵

# Pentecost

## SUNDAY

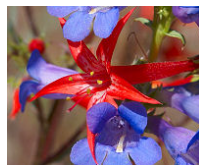
## MAY 23

### CEP 11 a.m.

### WORSHIP 11:45

# Happy Mother's Day

## MAY 9TH



## The Pastor's Pen



A number of folks in the Amarillo area began approaching me about organizing a Church here in Amarillo so they could continue in their beliefs, joining in worship with others of like mind. It took a couple of months for me to recover from my disappointments and disillusionment in my old church organization, but never bitter and never blaming God, after much prayer and plenty of discussion with my ministry partner Linda, I agreed that I should continue to serve my God and my Lord by ministering to others so long as there were others to minister to.

We rented a storefront space on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, bought some old pews which we refinished and re-upholstered, painted, paneled, cleaned and fixed up that old building and met for our first Sabbath Service the first Sabbath in March, ironically, exactly 7 years since my first Sabbath Service with the Worldwide group in Amarillo on the first Sabbath of March in 1973!

In 1987, after my second 7 years in Amarillo, and after establishing a building fund and purchasing a parcel of land on one of the few hills in Amarillo, we built a House of Worship, a Church that was a Church, not an activity center or multi-purpose building... no we built a single-purpose building to be used for nothing but worshipping God and serving our Lord and Savior! And here we are now, 30 years old, a dedicated and faithful band of believers carrying on with the Work of the Lord and ministering to those God has given us to minister to!

So on the occasion of this milestone, Happy Anniversary, and thank God for each and every one of you... those close enough to worship with us each Sabbath and those of you separated by so many miles who are part of our extended Church family.

*"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who*

*receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward"* (Matt 10:40-42, NKJV).

May God Bless You in Your Faithful Service,

*Jeff*



# Brush Arbor Meeting on Hackberry Creek

But not me! Oh, no, not me! Through the first ditch, over the road, through the second ditch, and through our neighbor's big corner posts and barbed wire fence, coasting past a huge telephone pole up to the railroad tracks.

When my father arrived, he untangled the barbed wire in silence, then nudged me over. I was stunned. And even though my dad was hot tempered, he never said a word to me about my stupidity . . . not then, not ever. I guess he was relieved that I wasn't hurt. Later, of course, he had to tell the neighbor, and had to rebuild his fence.

I digress. As I heard the preachers in those early years I don't remember anything they said . . . except the hell fire and brimstone sermons. My nightmares from those were even more frightening than climbing the steep hill.

♪ *There's a sad day coming, a sad day coming;  
There's a sad day coming by and by;  
When the saints and the sinners shall be gathered right and left,  
Are you ready for the Judgment Day?*

The song was the finale of the tent meeting service. The preacher had spoken with fervor about the return of Christ to this earth. There was nothing odd about the preacher; he was dignified and a good speaker. With powerful conviction he presented a message of hope to the audience. Well, of hope if you were "ready for the Judgment Day." But he didn't leave out the day of doom if one was "unsaved" when that Day arrived.

The resulting nightmare that night was vivid: I was in a large cavernous place, similar to what was portrayed in the Lord of the Rings movie of recent years. But there was one big difference: flames of fire were everywhere, and indescribable creatures moved about in the hazy smoke. I was on a ledge above the scorching flames frightened beyond words.

I was drenched with sweat when I woke up.

Some would argue that such preaching was scare tactics, that it was/is unhealthy to try to scare the "hell" out of someone. But doesn't it seem okay to do it if Jesus did? For He ended several of His parables with "weeping and gnashing of teeth" statements. A healthy fear can be the precursor to saving one's skin, it seems to me.

One day, not many years hence, I would face that fear . . . and do something about it.



# Chuckles

A cheerful disposition is good for your health; gloom and doom leave you bone-tired. —Proverbs 17:22, MSG

