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When the Son of Man Comes . . .

As I write this issue's column (November 1), attention is focused on the war Israel currently is waging against Hamas and Israel's other regional enemies. Attention is also focused on the promise of Christ's return. Is this the conflict that will lead to Christ's second coming?

I can't know what the state of current events will be when you read this issue of *Churchright*, but the statements of Jesus in Luke 18:1-8 certainly will be relevant. In this passage, Jesus tells the parable of the unjust judge (vv. 2-5), provides the interpretation of that parable (vv. 6-8a), but then ends with the pensive question "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (v. 8, NASB throughout).

Jesus often spoke of the end times and of how His followers should conduct themselves as we await His return. In Matthew 24:42, for example, Jesus says, "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming." This introduces two examples of being ready: a homeowner being ready for a thief and a servant being ready when his master returns. The faithful and blessed servant is the one whose master finds him obediently fulfilling his duties.

I'm pleased to report that the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the United States and Canada continues to be engaged in fulfilling the duties Christ has given all of His followers. We are doing our part to make disciples of Christ, to baptize them, and to teach them everything Christ has commanded. This issue of *Churchright* contains lots of good news about those efforts on Christ's behalf. Read and be encouraged.

Will Christ find faith on the earth when He returns? He certainly will if we all remain faithful. Luke 18:1 reveals the reason Jesus told the parable of the unjust judge: "to show them that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart." Pray, work, and don't lose heart as you focus on Jesus and follow His plan. One of these days will be *the day*.

— Loren Stacy
GC President



District News

Central

Contributors: Hugo Reyes and Ronald Rousseau,
Superintendent



Small groups workshop. On September 15-17, the Chicago area was blessed with the Come and See evangelistic workshop Family Groups for the Growth of the Church, presented by Ramon Ruiz, Daniel Flores, and Bryan Cleeton. More than 60 people gathered at the Damen church to learn how to engage their audience and start a family group in their home. On Sunday, NAMC President Daniel Flores spoke on ways to support GC Missions. This area is about to finish with the three Evangelism initiatives to make God's kingdom grow.

Northeast

Contributors: Esther Winchell, Stacy Rodriguez, and Heber Vega, Superintendent



Super Sabbath. On October 7, 360 people attended a blessed Super Sabbath in Owosso, MI. Joining the Owosso church were congregations from Freeland, Saginaw, Petersburg, West Olive, and Grand Rapids, as well as churches from Indiana, Ohio, and West Virginia. Even folks from as far as Ossining, NY, and Maryland attended the event. GC President Loren Stacy graced us with two messages! Beautiful praises and fellowship!



Blessed birthday. Elder José Antonio Vega, his family, and his congregation in Lanham, MD, celebrated his 9th birthday on September 30 (it is officially October 1). Some shared how much they love Brother Vega and appreciate his 68 years of ministry, 35 of them in Maryland. Three generations of the Moreno family were there, the fruit of his missionary work in Bogota, Colombia, in the 1980's.



WOW Retreat

The first Women of Worship (WOW) Retreat took place September 22-24 at Faholo Conference and Retreat Center in Grass Lake, Michigan. From the very beginning to the warm and sunny ending, this retreat couldn't have been more of what God intended. He made ways and clearly showed us the path He wanted us to take. Thirty-nine sisters attended from throughout the Northeast District.

This year we focused on the theme "LIFT: Living in Faith Together and Living in Faith Everyday." Throughout the weekend, we practiced that theme and were willing and proud to "Share your story." We are all in this together, but so often we feel alone and that we're not enough. But through the messages, worship, and testimonies, we heard a clear reminder that we are all daughters of the one and only King. We may have mud on our shoes from the walk between where we were and where God wants us to be, but we are His. He loves us unconditionally and wants us to see ourselves the way He sees us.

Please join us next year for the WOW Retreat, titled "Here I Am." It will be held again at Faholo on September 20-22, 2024. If you have any questions or would like a registration form, please email womenofworship-cog7@gmail.com.



Picnic. On September 24, the El Paso church held its yearly fellowship summer picnic. It was a day full of happiness as the brethren enjoyed each other's company.

Southeast

Contributor: Steve Krome, Superintendent



Super Sabbath. The Conference president, executive director, and district superintendents met in Atlanta, GA, for their semi-annual meeting October 13-17. They attended a Super Sabbath at the Marietta church, hosted by that church and the Stone Mountain congregation. Minister Walter Apen and wife, Lily, along with Pastor Hubaldo Hernandez and wife, Julie, coordinated the wonderful event, attended by 550 members from all over the Southeast District. Ronald Rousseau, superintendent of the Central District, and Conference President Loren Stacy delivered sermons. The Core Executive Team appreciated all the work by the membership of both churches that went into planning and presenting such a large event.



Youth retreat. "Let's Go Make Disciples!" New Hope United Church in San Antonio held its first annual youth retreat in New Braunfels, TX, the weekend of the eclipse, October 13-15. Seventy-two teens and counselors



attended from various CoG7 congregations in San Antonio, Austin, Houston, Corpus Christi, and El Paso. Pastor Ruben Alonso asked the youth to consider their heads, hearts, and hands and to share their faith in Christ with our community and world.

Southwest

Contributors: Victoria (Tory) Capetillo, Maria Beard, and Jacqueline Melgoza

SWD photos taken by SWD Media Ministry



Couples' reunion. On October 7, the El Paso church hosted a couples' reunion. They enjoyed a delicious dinner and relaxing time with one another to help strengthen their relationships. Let's pray that God continues to bless these couples and keep them strong in their faith.



Pastor appreciation. On October 21, the El Paso church celebrated Pastor Appreciation Month by recognizing Pastor Rubén Beard and his wife, Susana, and Co-Pastor Eduardo Villalba and his wife, Socorro. After the service, the congregation enjoyed fellowship with their pastors. Thanks to God for this night of great blessing!



Men's retreat. The El Paso church's Men's Ministry held a men's retreat in Cloudcroft, NM, on October 14. They spent time with the Lord, praising Him outdoors and contemplating His beautiful creation. Praise to God for taking them there and bringing them back safely!



Coming home. A youth event on September 22 drew 173 brothers, sisters, young adults, and youth to Houston to hear sermons on "The Prodigal Son." They also learned the importance of accepting others when they return to Christ. We are thankful to our brothers for their hard work in putting this event together. Please keep them all in your prayers.



Super Sabbath. More than 300 brothers and sisters attended the Super Sabbath on August 11-13 in Houston, the first city to finish all three Evangelism initiatives. Twenty-nine churches were represented, with Superintendent Chip Hinds present both days. On

Sunday, the workshop continued at the Olive Tree church in Galena Park. We are so thankful for the growth these initiatives have brought to our churches.



Welcoming Church. On October 14, the Monte Hermon church in Dallas held a Welcoming Church event, with Moises and Pete Capetillo as speakers. Among other things, they helped attendees identify blind spots in their local churches and understand that all members help their ordinary church become a welcoming one. Attendees focused on restructuring their mindset, service, and other areas in order to make guests feel welcome.



Super Sabbath. Brothers and sisters from Area 1 gathered together on October 21 for a Super Sabbath, held at Greater Life church. Three different groups blessed attendees with beautiful songs. Speakers Moises and Pete Capetillo preached special sermons focusing on koinonia (Christian fellowship) and the importance of practicing it in our churches with our people. Superintendent Chip Hinds attended the event, along with Jamin Teran (GC Communications director) and Bryan Cleeton (GC Missions director). All three gave presentations about the work being done through their Ministries.

Southwest Upcoming Events

December 2-3 - Welcoming Churches and Transformed Families, McAllen, Texas

December 22-25 - Dover Family Camp Youth Retreat

West Coast

Contributors: Aaron Carbajal, Kurt Lang, and Melva Smith

Baptisms. On September 23, with the blessing of a gentle rain at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, four young souls took a profound step in their faith journey. The serene waters bore witness as they were baptized, symbolizing their commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the park, this event became a testament to their newfound spiritual rebirth, celebrated by the CoG7 community in Las Vegas, NV. Left to right: Adrian Aviles, Elsie De La Rosa, Azul Solis, and Anjelieh Salazar.



Holiness Today

The Southern California Trimestral took place on September 23 in San Fernando with the theme “Holiness in Modern Times.” Hosted by the Word of Life church, the event featured Pastor Joel López and Minister David Lozano, with Sister Aracely Robles overseeing the youth program.

Pictured above: More than 474 participants attended the morning session. Midday, Superintendent Larry Zaragoza introduced a new church affiliated with the General Conference, located in Pacoima, California, and under the pastoral care of Brother Maynor Grajeda. This was followed by the ordination of Brother Tito Flores as minister.

The afternoon session saw increased attendance, with approximately 520 participants.



Art ministry. On October 21, the church family in Eugene, OR, was blessed by the husband-and-wife team of Randy and Lynnette Chalus as they ministered in art and the Word of God. While the songs “The Lighthouse” and “The Anchor Holds” played, Lynnette did a God-inspired chalk drawing of a lighthouse and anchor in a rough sea. When she finished, Randy asked us, “Where is your lighthouse? Who is your anchor?” Thank God for Jesus, our lighthouse and anchor of our faith!

Hitting the Mark

Seventy-nine men from Oregon, Washington, and Idaho “hit the road” for SIS-Q Meadows in southern Oregon to attend a WCD Regional Men’s Retreat October 20-22. We “hit the ground running” Friday evening with acapella praise and worship, led by Caleb Hawkins and Jacob Keim, icebreakers to connect us, and our opening message.



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“Hit the Mark” was the theme of the weekend, which included lots of time to practice and participate in an archery competition. “Hitting the target” was the goal, but the Broad Side of the Barn’s Best Friend was my favorite award!

Built around the words of Paul in Philippians 3:13, 14, messages by Pastors Loren Gjesdal and Kurt Lang “hit home” as they encouraged the men to press on toward the goal. We must do the work to leave it all behind (our self-righteousness and sin), pick up the goal of knowing Jesus and becoming like Him, and achieve the prize of eternity with our Lord.

Food provided by Ben Edwards really “hit the spot.” And many were up late sharing in some manly camaraderie before “hitting the hay.”

This certainly wasn’t a “one hit wonder.” Men were encouraged to stay connected and hold each other accountable as they went home, with the promise of gathering again soon!

– Kurt Lang

Eastern Canada

Contributor: Cassandra Field

Baptisms. The district celebrated baptisms on August 12 – four young brethren who decided to make Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior: Aubrey Williams-Pinnock, Camille Williams, Savannah Franklin, and Joshua



Onita. We are delighted to see how the Lord is touching the hearts of our youth! The baptisms took place at Pastor Aubrey Williams’ congregation in Brampton, Ontario.



Church picnic and Women’s Sabbath. On August 13, the church enjoyed a picnic at the Brampton, Ontario, church. Members shared food and fellowship, creating a welcoming environment for our members. On August 19, the women took charge of the service and encouraged others to growth in faith (pictured). They provided amazing and fruitful service to everyone.

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Artios Award

Artios Christian College is pleased to announce Superintendent Chip Hinds as the new Kenneth G. Knoll Distinguished Chair of Christian Leadership. Elder Hinds has devoted much of his life to service within the International Ministerial Congress, the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day), and

the extended family of Sabbathkeeping believers and churches around the world. Our students, staff, and faculty look forward to collaborating and benefiting from Superintendent Hinds' wisdom and experience in the years to come!

To donate to the Kenneth G. Knoll Distinguished Chair of Christian Leadership fund:

- <https://cog7.org/giving/#Give>. Select "Other" and mention "Artios Ken Knoll Distinguished Chair" in the text field.
- <https://my.artioscollege.org/en/give> (myArtios account required)
- Make your check payable to "The General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day)," and mail it to P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233. Write "Artios Ken Knoll Distinguished Chair" on your check's memo line.

Discussion and Prayer for the Middle East Conflict

The October 19 Artios Center webinar, *Response to the Middle East Conflict*, drew more than 140 registrants! The event featured brief overviews of God's

LIVE WEBINAR

Response to the Middle East Conflict
A discussion and time of prayer for the Israeli-Hamas War
featuring Whaid Rose and Jason Overman

THE ARTIOS CENTER FOR VIGILANT LEADERSHIP

dealings with the nation of Israel and CoG7's posture on the modern Israeli state. After a Q&A session, the remaining time was given to prayer for the quickly escalating Israeli-Hamas war, seeking God for peace, healing, and hope.

The webinar was recorded, not only for the benefit of registrants who didn't make the live event but for everyone else who might like to watch. Check it out at my.artioscollege.org/en/resources.

Calendar Events

- January 2 - Early Winter registration closes
- January 8 - Early Winter classes begin

Early Winter classes

- BIS 201** - Biblical Interpretation
- COM 121** - Written Communication for Leadership
- LEA 211** - The Leader's Emotional Health
- LEA 321** - Leadership in the Church of God (Seventh Day)
- MIS 311** - Evangelism and Discipleship

Register at <https://my.artioscollege.org/en/courses>



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