

March 2019



*Mission Edition*

**Pressing into All Nations with the Message of Christ and the Church**

A 3D-rendered globe showing a world map. The continents are colored in shades of green and blue, and the oceans are a light blue. The globe is centered on the Atlantic Ocean, showing North and South America on the left and Europe and Africa on the right.

**“Go Teach All Nations all Things”**

# Editorials . . .

## ***“Let us not sleep as do others . . .”***

What an exciting time to be a Christian and member of God’s church! We are the generation of God’s people ***“upon whom the ends of the world are come”*** (1 Cor. 10.11). We are living in the very last days of this present age---on the brink of the fulfillment of all things. Ancient prophecies are being fulfilled all around us almost daily---many of them being reported unwittingly by news agencies and being manifested before our very eyes through television and online visual technologies. Certainly then, this is no time to become distracted by the things of the world; we should rather in the words of the prophet, ***“shake [ourselves] from the dust”*** and ***“put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments”*** (Is. 52.1-2). Why? Because this present world is soon to pass away---***“Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner”*** (51.1-16). In the words of the apostle, we should rather therefore ***“stir up”*** one another and call to remembrance the divine warnings of things soon to come upon this world (2 Pet. 1.3, 3.1). Be wise, and be prepared for the ***“Day of the Lord!”***

So also, we are admonished by another apostle,

***“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, not of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation”*** (1 Thess. 5.1-8).

## **Making the Great Commission “Great” Again “GO . . . Teach All Nations . . . All Things”**

As believers and members of God’s church, we should never allow the enemy to cause us to lose our focus on the mission that Christ gave to His church before He ascended back to the Father--- ***“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . .”*** (Mt. 28.19-20).

Our pastor in Cleveland recently preached an inspirational message on our mission vision and responsibilities in Zion Assembly. He emphasized the need for the church to make the Great Commission “great” again---to “AWAKE” to the reality of a perishing world all around us! Substantial and compassionate World Outreach should always be a priority for us in God’s church. So, let us ***“set our hands to the plow”*** and go to work!

We must always guard against becoming ***“weary in well doing”*** (Gal. 6.9; 2 Thess. 3.13). This is a trick of the devil and ***“we are not ignorant of his devices.”*** We must fight back against the seductive spirit of apathy and indifference and remain ever ***“awake to righteousness!”***

We have in this mission edition of the VOZ highlighted five nations that are especially suffering under unstable or tyrannical governments. Indeed, some of our people are barely eking out a living. Our aim is to illustrate and magnify how much good our prayers and fundraising for World Missions is doing around the world. Our support, spiritually and materially, is greatly appreciated and of much encouragement to our overseers, missionaries, pastors, and precious people. We must not let them down!

As per our practice and discipline, we have set aside the month of March to focus on raising funds for World Missions. Our pastors and mission leaders and churches have now for fourteen years, without fail, proven their love for lost souls and their vision of God’s prophetic plan for His church---namely, to proclaim the full Gospel in every nation (Mt. 4.4; Acts 20.27), baptize and disciple believers (Mt. 28.19-20), perfect the saints ***“with the washing of water by the Word”*** (Eph. 4.11-16; 5.26-27; Col. 1.28), and gather together God’s people into one visible body of Christ (Jn. 10.16; 11.49-52; 17.20-23; Eph. 1.10; 2.11-19; 3.6; 4.4-16; Phil. 3.16; et al)!

We are hereby challenging our pastors and churches in the March Mission Drive to once again “roll up your sleeves”, ***“set your hands to the plow”***, ***“seek to excel”*** and go over the top for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Amen!

# *In This Issue . . .*

**We Must Not Let Them Down.....4-7**

**Church Of The Mission/Mission Of The Church.....8-10**

**Presiding Bishop's Annual Address (Sections III, IV, VI).....11-15**



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***"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb . . . and they loved not their lives unto the death"*** [Rev. 12.11].

# **We Must Not Let Them Down!**

## **Our Faithful Missionaries and Churches in Other Countries are Depending on Our Prayers and Financial Support here in the United States---while They Bravely Continue to Herald the Good News of the Kingdom and Build the Church of God. We Must Not Let Them Down!**

We are blessed to have so many courageous men and women of God holding up the standard of Christ and the church around the world---in 46 nations! Many of them are proclaiming the Gospel under horrendous conditions and great opposition. Some areas depend on us more than others, of course; some are in desperate need of our financial assistance and are always appreciative of our thoughts and prayers---especially during times of national crises: hyperinflation; food and fuel shortages; terrorist attacks; and war and internal violence. We are giving a few examples below to show how much some of our ministers and churches depend on us here in the United States, even in many cases for the necessities of life---food, water, and shelter. We are a lifeline for many who are struggling out on the sea of life. What wonderful opportunities the Lord is giving to us to show sincere compassion and generosity, and to demonstrate that we are “zealously affected always in a good thing!”

Remember the words and deeds of the Lord’s apostles,

*“Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11.29-30).*

*“And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars . . . gave to [Paul] and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which we were forward to do” (Gal. 2.9-10).*

*“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction . . .” (Jas. 1.27).*

*“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 Jn. 3.17).*

*“For if there be first a willing mind [to give], it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want . . . As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that hath gathered little had no lack” (2 Cor. 8.12-15).*

Finally, recall the words of our Lord himself:

*“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over; shall men give into your bosom. For with what measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Lu. 6.38).*

## Civil War and Persecution in Cameroon

Overseer Eric Eyong in Cameroon has reported to us that there is bitter civil war going on in his country. The situation is being reported also by national and international news agencies. The bloodshed has reached Brother Eyong's hometown of Kumbo. The French Cameroon military is burning houses, churches, and hospitals. Many people have lost their lives. Some of our people in Zion Assembly have been injured. The terrorists are shooting and killing men, women, and children. Brother Eyong reported to us on Feb. 17th, that fourteen of our members in a nearby church are now living with him, having escaped by the grace of God the gun fire and brutality all around them. The people in South Cameroon are being scattered and displaced. Among them are some of our church members fleeing for their lives. They are hiding in the bush, running to neighboring villages, and many of them are taking refuge in Nigeria. Two of our churches have been shut down---Konye and Kombeboji churches because of the violence. We have been able to send money from the Emergency Fund to assist and sustain our people with food and water and medical aid. Join us in prayer for our people in Cameroon, that God will keep His protective hand upon our ministers and members in this war-torn country.



These shocking photos were taken by our overseer, Eric Eyong, near his home in Kumbo, Cameroon. [Left.] two young men killed in the chaos. [Right] house ransacked and destroyed.

## Zimbabwe Embroiled in Violence and Political-Related Disorders

Our people in Zimbabwe are entangled in economic-related problems and political violence. There have been protests over the rising cost of living. This has resulted in huge price increases in food and fuel in an already impoverished nation. The protests have resulted in people being beaten, abducted, imprisoned, and killed. Our mission representative in Zimbabwe, Memory Jandura, reports that gun shots go off often and smoke is seen everywhere. Cars and buses are being burned. One of her sons has not returned home from going to a business center that had been riddled with violence. She requests our prayers in his behalf. She reports also that another son came home from school with his mouth bruised and swollen by blows from soldiers. They are invading the schools, beating teachers and students. Many of the students have been injured. The military is going from door to door in the neighborhoods pulling people out of their houses; others are being prevented from assembling together for worship. Food is scarce and the people are suffering.

**Update:** we have just received word [February 20th] from Sister Jandura that her eldest son made it home safely. Praise the Lord! She is giving God all the glory for His miraculous intervention. Join with us in prayer for all of our people in Zimbabwe and for peace for this nation.

## **Venezuela in Turmoil**

The national crisis in Venezuela is related economically to its oil industry but politically goes back to socialist President Hugo Chavez [1998-2013] who gradually increased his powers to approximate a near absolute authoritarianism. His death left the country in shambles politically and economically and paved the way for his successor, Nicolas Maduro, to establish a dictatorship. The recent protests and bloodshed have been precipitated by efforts to overthrow Maduro's government and to establish in his place Juan Guaido. The strength of this action came from the National Assembly that declared Maduro illegitimate, prompting Guaido to swear himself in as interim president.

The living conditions in Venezuela are dire. There is widespread contamination of food and water. Hundreds have been infected by disease and many have died. There is a critical shortage of food and medicine and medical supplies, and what is available is out of the reach of 90 percent of Venezuelans due to hyperinflation. To make matters worse the government of socialist dictator, Maduro, will not accept assistance from the United States and other countries, saying, "We are not beggars" and claiming that the offer of aid is only a ploy to humiliate Venezuelans. Meanwhile, people are perishing.

Trapped in this tragic situation is our overseer, Bani Rangel and our four churches and one mission. They are desperate for the basics of life. Only by the good graces and providences of our Lord have we managed to shuffle in some money to our overseer and people via a friendly banker to provide the means for food and a few necessities. Again, we are counting on our churches here in the US to pray down deliverance for our people and for all Venezuelans struggling to survive under this tyranny.

## **Desperation in South Sudan**

In 2013 the northern African nation of Sudan broke out in civil war, leaving in its wake the new state of South Sudan. Almost 200,000 have been killed and another 200,000 have died from war-related conditions---starvation, malnutrition, sicknesses, and diseases. Although a peace treaty was signed in 2018 the violence has continued. Some reports say that nearly 20,000 children have been enlisted in the army in South Sudan, and many of the girls are raped and forced into unwanted "marriages." It has created social and psychological desperation on the part of a great many---anxiety, depression, mental disorders, and psychological trauma. Woman and children are suffering the most.

Our overseer in Kenya, Bishop Elijah Wafula, had evangelized in the southern part of Sudan before the civil war began in 2013 and succeeded to establish three churches and one mission in this predominantly Muslim country. The Lord led him to some souls who were open to the Gospel of Christ. Our ministers and churches are endeavoring by the grace of God to cope with the horrible conditions mentioned above as they proclaim the Good News of Christ and His church.

## **Violence and Upheaval in Haiti**

During the recent well-publicized upheaval in Haiti [since February 7th], government, businesses, schools, and public transportation were shut down due to the violent demonstrations of multiplied thousands against the reported "corrupt government" of President Jovenal Moise. Skyrocketing inflation has more than doubled creating havoc for the poor to obtain food, water, and fuel. The protesters are linking their escalating trouble in Haiti with official government misspending tied to a Venezuelan program to provide subsidized oil [Petrocaribe]---that provided \$3.8 billion to the Haiti government. Where is the visible evidence that this money has benefitted the country? The protesters claim that there is widespread embezzlement--money siphoned off to a handful of government officials. Haiti, already the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, is in a great humanitarian crisis. The poorest of the poor [which applies to most of our more than 50,000 ministers and members in Haiti] are struggling to obtain even the basics such as beans and rice. The average wage of \$2.00 a day has been reduced in its worth to almost nothing due to hyperinflation. One of the ministers who drives a taxi to eke out a living said, "It's very hard to bring something home. [And] I have three kids."

Nevertheless, even under these conditions, our brave men and women are preaching the glorious Gospel of Christ and encouraging the people to give their hearts to the Lord and to come under the government and discipline of God's great church.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual National Convention in Mexico



January 9-10, 2019 was a time of celebration for Zion Assembly in Mexico. The theme for the convention was “**Be faithful unto the end.**” The convention was held in Frontera, Corazal, in the deep south of Mexico near the border of Guatemala. The speakers were used mightily of the Lord, including Francisco Gonzalez Lopez, Maura Diaz, Ovidio Lopez, Daysi Abrego, Nicolas Diaz, and our representative from headquarters, Brother Daron Miller, assistant World Mission director.

The delegates were encouraged to be faithful to the end. The messages were received enthusiastically, and a spirit of worship prevailed throughout the convention.

The national overseer, Bishop Danny Ramirez, organized and moderated the convention and received two new members into the church. Praise the Lord!

Brother Ramirez has labored faithfully and tirelessly to build the church in Mexico, often in spite of a number of health issues and attacks against his body. Several brothers from the churches in southern California have assisted from time to time. His faithful wife, Rosie, has worked by his side. She recognized the churches that participated in this year’s World Missions Drive.

Pray for Mexico. Laborers are greatly needed.



**National Convention in Frontera Corazal Chiapas**



**Ladies Parade of Nations for Missions**



**Pastor Nicolas Diaz Lopez administering covenant**



**Brother Miller ministering at Convention with Daysi Abrego translating**

# THE CHURCH OF THE MISSION---

The Spirit of prophecy spoke through Isaiah, saying, “*I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth*” (Is. 49.6). Here the church under the new covenant is foreseen, and the glory of her nature and purpose declared. Observe, the church not only has a mission, she is the mission. She carries within her the mystery of the Gospel; her life and character exudes salvation; she embodies the life and message of Christ, even as He embodied the “*fullness of the Godhead.*” This is the design of God for the church; for just as Christ was the express image of the Father in flesh (Jn. 1.1, 14; Col. 1.15; 2.9; Heb. 1.3), the church is called to be the express image of the Son; so that in and through Him she becomes the witness of the Father and His representative government on earth (Rom. 8.29; 2 Cor. 3.18; Eph. 1.17-23; 3.14-21; 4.4-6; Col. 3.10).

## Christ’s Incarnation Extended in the Church

I will speak more of the church as God’s instrumental government in a moment, but here I want to focus on the church as the body of Christ. Under this metaphor the church is an extension of the Incarnation---the enfleshment of Christ---and thus it is laid upon her to complete His mission in the world. We are thus “*Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal flesh*” (2 Cor. 4.10-11). And again, “*Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart*” (3.2-3).

This is why the apostle could say, I “*fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church*” (Col. 1.24). Thus as the church is “*beautified with salvation*” (Ps. 149.4), she is

the manifest glory of that salvation everywhere she goes; bearing His light and glory in her body, in her members. In this way, the church proclaims the message by being!

## We are His Workmanship

This explains the meaning of the prophet who, under another metaphor, proclaimed,

*“I will beautify the place of my sanctuary: and make the place of my feet glorious . . . And they shall call thee. The City of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One . . . I will make thy officers peace and thy exactors righteousness . . . thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise . . . The Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory . . . Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit [you shall be] the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified”* (Is. 60.13-21).

This is why the apostle proclaimed in the same Spirit of prophecy,

*“But God, who is rich in mercy . . . Hath quickened us together with Christ . . . And raised us up together, and made us sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. . . For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them”* (Eph. 2.4-10).

Our mission in Zion Assembly then is clear: we must “Go” and proclaim the Gospel but also embody the Gospel; for a message lived out is just as powerful as a message preached! Our objective is to plant Zion Assembly congregations in every city and community around the globe, so that every nation and tribe on earth can both hear and see the Gospel lived out first hand. They thus hear the voice of the church and

# ---THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

see her “*transformed from glory to glory*” into the perfect image of Christ. Our mission then is not only to “Go” with the message but “to be” the message. We must be a church with a mission, to be sure, but more importantly we must **be the church** of the mission!

## The Light of the World

Jesus said plainly, “*Ye are the light of the world,*” and “*salt of the earth.*” The prophet said, “*I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.*” Zion Assembly is thus called to be the manifestation of the mystery of God to the nations---“*which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,*” and again, “. . . *the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising . . . all they gather themselves together, they come to thee . . . the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces [wealth] of the Gentiles shall come unto thee*” (Is. 60.3-5).

This is indeed the glorious mystery that “*in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*” (Eph. 3.5-6). This is the cause of our exuberant rejoicing: for this eternal mystery is now revealed to us in Zion Assembly. We have been called out to be Christ’s church, and formed by a sacred covenant to fulfill His mission in the world.

## Jews and Gentiles in One Body

It may be seen here that the dispensationalists who hold that fleshly or natural Israel (which has rejected the Messiah, the “chief cornerstone” of God’s house) is still God’s chosen people, even in her apostate state, is a blatant contradiction of God’s eternal plan: for in the prophecies just cited, as well as prophecies elsewhere show that the ideas of a “royal priesthood” and “peculiar people” are now fulfilled and embodied in the church under the new covenant. Natural Israel has disqualified herself by rejecting the new covenant! “*For there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in the one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism . . .*” Clearly God does not have two covenants of justification running together at the same time, one for fleshly Israel and one for the New Testament church. The apostle Paul shows in fact that the church is the “*Israel of God*” (Gal. 6.16), the “*one new man*” made up of believing Jews and Gentiles in one body of Christ (Eph. 2.14-22). Under the new covenant, unsaved Jews and

barbarians are classified together (Col. 3.10-11); there are now only those who are saved and those who are not; and those who saved and in God’s spiritual kingdom are now being called together into one visible body of Christ on earth.

You see then brethren our great and high calling! Our people in Zion Assembly have answered this clarion call. Our wonderful people have dedicated themselves to Christ’s noble mission, and have worked and sacrificed in faith for this great cause---to reach every creature on earth (Jews and Gentiles) with this message of salvation. And the efforts have already yielded great dividends. The church has in less than fifteen years established churches and missions in 46 nations and 19 states in the US. Our overseers, pastors, and congregations are being taught and encouraged to proclaim and to embody “*the whole counsel of God*” in the regions and towns where they live and minister. This blesses our souls and excites our expectations. Yet the task is at this time still unfinished. Indeed the “*harvest is great.*”

Let me encourage you therefore to “gird up your loins” and “roll up your sleeves” and continue to fulfill the glorious mission that our Lord has assigned to us. Let us take heed to the admonition of the apostle: do not become “*weary in well doing.*” Pray for strength and joy and power---in Jesus’ name! To further emphasize the point, the apostle’s exhortation to evangelize the lost in Rom. 10.13-21 is primarily a reference to the Jews.

*“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of Good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Mores saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, all day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gain-saying people.”*

## Mission Strategy

You see then brethren our mission strategy. Our objective is to plant churches and to teach and train the ministers and members in the ways of holiness, so that they may be the light of God in love throughout the world.

This will require two methods. There are still places in the world in which the old mission strategy that began in the late 1700s is needed, that is, to send missionaries from here in the United States to go and live with the people on site in the various countries. But now for the most part, through the advance of Christianity for 200 years throughout the world, and the great advance in media technology, there are capable ministers and workers in most of the nations of the world. These are plenty capable of proclaiming the fundamental truths of salvation and evangelizing their own nations and tribal peoples. Our objective in these countries is therefore to show them the church, to incorporate them into the church, and to teach them more fully in the faith--- to guide them and furnish them with the knowledge and tools to do the job.

To be more precise and clear: our objective in these nations is to provide supervision, teaching and training, and material assistance from the International Offices. This in turn requires basically three things: **1)** Bringing the leaders here for teaching and training, which includes not only terms in the School of Ministry, but also to attend the General Assemblies. Scheduling mission tours are also helpful; **2)** Sending workers from here to provide teaching and organizational assistance; **3)** To provide financial assistance, including allotments, assistance for transportation, orphanages, buildings, and so on.

Mission work in the United States therefore involves for the most part the raising of funds to help prosecute the mission of the church throughout the world. And this is in keeping with the principle and practice of the New Testament church. The great missionary apostle calls giving of our material means a special grace of the Lord, and entreats us all to participate in the grace of giving. He highly commends the church at Macedonia for giving toward the needs of the ministry and other poor churches (2 Cor. 8.1-6). But the Macedonians themselves were very poor, for their country had been devastated by war and stripped of its wealth by the powers of Rome. Yet, though very poor materially, these saints had such an *“abundance of joy”* in salvation in their hearts, they managed, even in their *“deep poverty,”* to give liberally to others!

The Corinthians, on the other hand, were better off

than the Macedonians but they were not sharing in their material blessings, though they had before promised they would make charitable contributions. Now Paul commends them for their faith and love and diligence in other things, but shows them that they were falling short in their giving, particularly in regard to the promise they had made. The apostle therefore admonishes them to *“perform the doing of it.”*

He thus elaborates more fully upon the grace of giving, warning those who might hoard up riches while the needs are great everywhere in the church around the world. Yet he lays down no law, only gives his apostolic counsel, and shows that giving is in accordance with the nature of divine love and the divine will. His conclusion is:

*“For if there first be a willing mind [heart], it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that their may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack”* (vv. 12-15).

*gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack”* (vv. 12-15).

It may be seen that this principle was nothing new: for the apostle based it on the practice of the church in the wilderness, which had gathered the manna from heaven: of which *“[some] gathered more, some less”* but all were supplied according to his need (Ex. 16.16-18). This then should be our practice in Zion Assembly; but we will surely fulfill it only if we have an *“abundance of joy”* and love and salvation!

Now, in further consideration, we can accomplish the objectives mentioned above only as funds become available. And these funds will come into the International Offices only as we continue to branch out in this country and other prosperous nations. For every church that is established in these countries not only will, in turn, reach out to evangelize its local community, but will send a portion of its tithe and offerings to the International Offices toward evangelism and discipleship: for this is our Rule of Faith and practice. Reaching out and establishing churches in the United States and other industrialized countries in the world is therefore a primary objective in our missionary strategy. This is part of the prophetic vision of the church.

---WHP



# *Presiding Bishop's Annual Address*

Note: *Section V* was published in the September issue of the *VOZ* and *Sections I and II* were published in the February issue. This issue carries the remaining *Sections: III, IV, VI.*

## Section III

### **"GO Up . . . Bring Wood, and Build the House"**

#### **Pressing Forward with our Vision to Expand the International Ministries Complex**

We are now on the brink of being able to start the construction on the two-story expansion of our International Ministries Complex. As most of you know, this expansion has been envisioned and boosted now for over 9 years. We saw the need for more office and storage space as far back as 2008 (see *Assembly Minutes*, 2008, p. 21), and soon after that time we began to envision a Bible college so we could more thoroughly train and develop our ministers, missionaries, and dedicated workers in the peculiar teachings, government, mission and discipline of God's church.

In 2011 we adopted a plan called *The Prophets' Plan* to help pay off our international properties indebtedness and to finance a new loan to expand our International Ministries Complex and to fulfill our vision. This was laid out in the Presiding Bishop's annual address based on 2 Kg. 6.1-5 and was enthusiastically received and supported by the General Assembly. We followed this plan in the next few years and raised over \$300,000 dollars, which enabled us to pay off our indebtedness, which included also the purchase of the property next door to the church (Lloyd's Auto Sales) for \$160,000. We celebrated this grand achievement with a mortgage burning and groundbreaking ceremony during the School of Ministry in Cleveland on May 19th of this year. Since then we have paid off architect fees in the amount \$41,800 and engineering fees for the project in the amount of \$6,000.

So now, here we are. The need for the two-story addition is pressing us more now than it was seven years ago or even one year ago. It's time to build---to press forward! The prophet Haggai's prophecy is as applicable for us here today as it was to the Jewish exiles when it was first spoken 2500 years ago:

*"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts;*

*Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earns wages [earns them] to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house" (Hag. 1.2-9).*

I trust that you here today can feel, as I do, the weight of the Lord's commandment in this prophecy: **"Go Up . . . Bring Wood, and Build the House, and I will take pleasure in it, and . . . be glorified."** Again, was the Lord speaking here only to the Jews in Palestine who had recently returned from captivity in Babylon? or was this commandment also for us today? Most assuredly it is also for us today (cf. Rom. 4.23-24; 1 Cor. 10.11). For, to be sure, God is more concerned with the restoration, grace, beauty, and dignity of His house now under the terms of the New Covenant than He was over 2500 years ago under the Old Covenant---500 years before Christ had come to earth in flesh and purchased the church with His own blood!

#### **Why this Building Program is Needed**

Perhaps it would be good here to state more succinctly and systematically the reasons why this addition to our International Ministry Complex is so necessary at this time. There are three primary reasons: **1)** we simply do not have adequate space or facilities in our present building for the operation of our International Offices; **2)** it seems only wise and frugal that, since we are enlarging our existing building, we should go a step farther to include adequate space and facilities for our envisioned Bible college. As our director

of Education has already mentioned, the expectation for our college is to begin online Bible courses in January 2019 and by the fall of 2020 offer intensive two-week and three-week courses on campus, that is, for the students to attend classes in-house at the International Ministries Complex. Then in 2021 we plan to have a program in place which will include ten full courses (online and in-house) to qualify students for graduation from “Zion Assembly Bible College and Seminary” with a Biblical Studies Certificate (note, the name of the college is pending on the ABC’s report on Saturday and Assembly approval); and 3) the new addition and facilities will serve as a sign to onlookers of God’s evident favor upon our faith, ministry, and mission in Zion Assembly. It will mark us as a body that is on the move with a vision for the future---a fellowship that knows where it is going and is determined to get there! Our manifest progress will be impressive to the world in general, but more especially to “*other sheep*” who will be “*[asking] their way to Zion.*”

## Financing the Vision

We noticed above the example given in 2 Kgs. 6.1-5, in which the “sons of the prophets” counseled with their leader, Elisha, and informed him that the place for their school and residence was too small; and, thus, they begged permission of him to build a new and larger facility for their school and dwelling. Elisha consented and agreed to go with them to a place along the lower Jordan River Valley, and there they cut down trees and hewed them and built a house in which to dwell and to teach and train the ministers of God.

When we inaugurated this plan---**The Prophets’ Plan**---at the Assembly in 2011 to assist us in financing this construction venture, we estimated that the approximate cost of the trees in modern currency, including cutting them down, hewing [carving] them out, and fitting them into place in the new building amounted to about \$800 per tree (*cf. Let Us Rise Up and Build*, pp. 279-280). Our people responded wonderfully and sacrificially toward this noble vision, and this has brought us to where we are today; and, I believe, *The Prophets’ Plan* will continue to help us to complete the job.

To further help in financing this great building program and vision, I recommend twenty percent (20%) of the World Mission funds go toward this noble effort; for the new facilities will be directly connected with world outreach and the education and training of our overseers, missionaries, and pastors. If this seems good and wise to the ABC, the brethren may present it to the Assembly for final resolution.

One final thing needs to be clarified while we are on this subject. In 2013 someone here in Cleveland had offered to purchase and donate to the church a facility that

we could use for an Assembly Tabernacle, and possibly also expand and remodel it to use for our International Offices. In anticipation of this possibility, we resolved in the next General Assembly (2014) to create an Assembly Tabernacle fund for this remodeling. Under this plan the churches were to contribute on a regular basis and send in the funds to the General Treasurer with their monthly reports (see 2014 annual address, *Let Us Rise Up and Build*, pp. 388-389; *Assembly Minutes*, 2014, p. 50). As it turned out, regretfully, the person making this offer backed out, and we were left with a Tabernacle Fund that was rather obsolete.

We recommend therefore, in view of these developments and where we stand now, to create simply one international building fund and to dispense with the Tabernacle Fund and the Bible College Fund and focus rather only on constructing one project at a time: which presently will be on the pending two-story addition to our International Ministries Center. Then when this great project is finished and has been paid for, we can again think about building a Tabernacle and, at the appropriate time, reenact a Bible college fund.

If this strategy seems wise and acceptable to this Assembly, we could transfer the \$12,806.19 that presently exists in the Tabernacle Fund and the \$22,237.46 that exists in the Bible College Fund to the one simple building fund account---an account that could be called the International Properties Building Fund (IPBF). Accordingly, it will be through this fund that we finance the new two-story expansion of the International Ministries Complex and future projects. One final point in this regard: the monthly offering that has heretofore been received from the churches for the Tabernacle Fund will now be received for the IPBF (International Properties Building Fund) and sent to the General Treasurer with the local treasurer’s monthly report.

Finally, brethren, it may be worth repeating here the admonition given in the annual address in 2011 in promoting *The Prophets’ Plan*:

*“The main thing brethren is to get in the spirit of it, like the sons of the prophets did in Elisha’s day. There is nothing that we cannot accomplish together if we get in the spirit of it. That’s how the magnificent temple of God was built on Mount Zion in Solomon’s day. It was first in David’s heart, and the vision and affection for it then took hold of the people of God. The spirit of giving got into David and then into all the leaders and the people . . . the account is given in 1 Chronicles 29. The key to it all is shown in vv. 2-14, namely, they caught a vision of God’s house, and the vision conditioned their affections and will to make it a reality. David said, ‘I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God, and ‘I have set my affection to the house of my God’ (vv. 2-3).*

*And the people 'offered willingly and gave . . . to the treasure of the house of the Lord' (vv. 6-7). And when all was given, 'Then the people rejoiced. for they offered willingly, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy (v. 9). And when Solomon built the house of God there was nothing like it in all the earth.'*

## Section IV

### “School of Ministry Institute”

In casting a vision for a Bible college in the annual address in 2011, we were careful to point out that

“Notwithstanding the need for an institution of higher learning in the church, it is not our intention for the college to replace the School of Ministry, but that both serve together to meet the overall needs of education in the church. The School of Ministry will continue to serve for basic preparatory work for the ministry and especially for our outreach work in the nations while the college will serve to prepare our ministers more fully for national and international leadership and for a more excellent and thorough-going education” (*Let Us Rise Up and Build*, p.278).

Earlier in the address we noted that

“The School of Ministry has done a wonderful job since it was inaugurated in May 2005 in preparing our ministers and workers with some basic knowledge and skills for the ministry. More than 600 ministers and workers have graduated or have attended one or more years of the school. We thank God for that. However, the School of Ministry falls far short of the kind of thorough teaching and training that is needed to ‘thoroughly furnish’ and equip leaders with the knowledge and skills to enable them to take the church forward into the glory envisioned by the apostles and prophets---a world in which the church’s admirers will one day look on and say, ‘Who is she?’ (Song 6.10), and her ministers, like the angel in John’s vision, will say, ‘Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife’ (Rev. 21.9).

*“There is not a spiritual or moral attribute of the Christian believer that is more admirable than faithfulness. This praiseworthy quality is thus also magnified in God. The psalmist wrote a large portion of Psalm 89 to exalt this perfection in the Lord, saying ‘The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.’ And in admiration of the goodness and forgiving nature of the Lord, the prophet Jeremiah exclaimed, ‘great is Thy faithfulness’ (Lam. 3.23).”*

“Nothing short of developing a Bible college and seminary will enable us to offer the kind of thoroughgoing education needed to set our ministers apart and to equip them for the great end-times task of the church – to ground and settle them in the spiritual and biblical mysteries of the Gospel and the church, and to fully equip them for national and international leadership in the sophisticated and complex world of the twenty-first century” (*Let Us Rise Up and Build*, pp. 276-277).

In view of this educational vision for the church, perhaps it would be good to identify and distinguish the School of Ministry as an institution. The official title will then be School of Ministry Institute (SMI). Again, if this seems good and profitable for the church, the ABC may present it to the Assembly for consideration.

## Section VI

### Seeking Excellence thru Faithfulness and Spiritual Disciplines

**Note:** *the following section of the Presiding Bishop’s annual address was delivered on Friday morning [September 14th] in the recent General Assembly. It seems fitting to include it in this mission edition of the paper: for it encourages our ministers and workers to discipline themselves to work together in the government and divine order of the church for the glory of God and maximum yield of fruit for the harvest. If we will take heed to this counsel, we will surely excel in the October World Mission Drive: and a harvest of souls will be realized, and a stronger and more vibrant fellowship and union in Christ will emerge.*

There is not a spiritual or moral attribute of the Christian believer that is more admirable than faithfulness. This praiseworthy quality is thus also magnified in God. The psalmist wrote a large portion of Psalm 89 to exalt this perfection in the Lord, saying “*The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.*” And in admiration of the goodness and forgiving nature of the Lord, the prophet Jeremiah exclaimed, “*great is Thy faithfulness*” (Lam. 3.23).

I have in mind here, however, a structured or orderly faithfulness, that is, a faithfulness in the context

of the saint's position in the visible and corporate body of the church---a position in which each member finds his duly-appointed place in the government and work of the church and abides and labors therein faithfully to fulfill his part in the body of Christ. It is indeed impressive to observe a faithful man or woman who is ever about the Father's business, always going about faithfully, on time and consistently, to do what he or she is appointed to do; whether it is in reporting, in tithing and giving, in attendance to scheduled meetings of the church, or in fulfilling his/her part in duly-assigned duties in the context of the church's support ministries. When members are totally occupied in fulfilling their own duties and responsibilities, the devil has little, or no, opportunity to tempt them with worldly attractions and carnal things, or to preoccupy them with judging what others in the church may or may not be doing.

I have noticed in my fifty years in the ministry and fellowship of the church, that in nine out of ten cases in which a person is criticizing another person's work, he is not doing his own work. I heard of a woman some years ago that was always complaining to her husband about her neighbor's wash hanging on the clothesline in open view. She kept pointing out and saying, "Look how dirty and dingy those clothes are." Her husband finally got tired of her constant complaining and criticizing and took a cloth and wiped the dirt and grime from the kitchen window that his wife was looking through: and, behold, the neighbor woman's wash was white and clean!

I recall on one occasion while working in the coal mines of a man complaining to his foreman that he had been watching a fellow miner for over 15 minutes and that the man had been doing nothing the whole time except wasting the company's money. The foreman then asked the tattletale, "And what did you accomplish in those 15 minutes?"

Finding our place in the organization and corporate work of the church is vitally important; and it is just as important to abide in our place in the church: so that we may perform our assigned duties and complete the work apportioned to us (cf. 2 Cor. 8.10-15). The apostle Paul explained, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12.18). Earlier in this passage he emphasized that "there are diversities of gifts . . . differences of administrations . . . diversities of operations . . . But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (vv. 4-11). He then concluded his inspired explanation by emphasizing that not all have the same office, gifts, and position in the church; but all work together for the upbuilding of the church and toward the completion of her mission in the world (vv. 27-30). In fact, he boldly points out, using again the body metaphor, that some members which "we think are less honorable" are just as important to the proper functioning of the body as members which we

tend to see as more honorable (vv. 14-26). He reiterates and lays down the same principles in 2 Cor. 9.1-13.

The apostle Paul lays out further in his letter to Titus, whom he had appointed to oversee the churches in Crete (Titus 1.5), the kind of conduct that is expected of ministers and members in God's house. The core characteristics of this holy lifestyle are sobriety [sensibly], dignity, wisdom and thoughtfulness, soundness in faith and doctrine, discretion and sexual purity at home and in public, and brotherly love and patience; in a word, all of the members are expected to illustrate "a pattern of good works" and to manifest a behavior that "becometh holiness" (2.1-9). Significantly, he then sums up his instructions, saying, "showing all good fidelity [faithfulness]; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (v. 10).

## Tithing and Giving

While it is not explicitly singled-out in this specific passage in Titus; yet being a faithful tither and generous giver is implied in the commands to be "a pattern of good works" and "showing all good fidelity . . . in all things." Tithing and giving are core principles in God's Word and constitute essentially His financial plan for His church. To be negligent or slothful in this spiritual discipline is called robbery by the Lord, provokes His displeasure and places the disobedient member under a curse. On the other hand, to obey this ordinance invokes the Lord's spiritual and material blessings. Listen to the prophet:

*"Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord . . . Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me . . . in tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me . . . Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove Me now herewith saith the Lord . . . if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes . . . And all nations shall call you blessed . . ." (Mal. 3.7-12).*

We have mentioned the importance of tithing and giving several times in recent years because it is so essential to the mission and successful operation of the church, besides being a plainly-stated commandment of the Lord. When a few members fail to do their part in this important discipline, others must give more to make up for those who do not give their part. This ought not to be so. Ministers especially should be an example of this spiritual discipline: for as the apostle says in another place: "be thou **an example** of the believers, in word, in

*conversation [conduct], in charity, in faith, in purity”* (1 Tim. 4.12). Accordingly, counsel and reproof are in order when ministers preach one thing and live another, and discipline is necessary when they fail to respond in faith and humility to good counsel from those over them in the Lord. We simply cannot have ministers not reporting and not setting a good example in the spiritual disciplines of the church, including tithing and giving.

Let me encourage all of our people to be faithful in the commandment and discipline of tithing and giving: and then behold and watch the Lord do His part and fulfill His promise: *“[I will open to you] the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes . . .”*

## Teamwork

### Every member abiding in his/her place and doing his/her part

It is a beautiful and pleasant sight to see brethren manifesting holiness and godly living and working together in unity and harmony (Ps.133.1), with each member functioning according to his/her God-given gifts and abilities. Let’s think for a moment of the church in terms of a “team” such as a football or basketball team. What immediately comes to mind is teamwork. The success or defeat of the team is largely dependent on the coordination and cooperation of the individual players for the sake of the team. There are many teams that have an outstanding player or superstar, yet never seem to bring home a trophy: because their players don’t work together to achieve the maximum production from all the players collectively. On winning teams each player uses his abilities and skills to advance the objectives of the whole team. There is no room for slackers, nor selfishness and vainglorious conceit on the part of any individual player; each one does his part in coordination with other players to achieve the goal of the team---that is, to defeat the opposition and win! Then all may glory in the victory achieved by the whole team!

Behold how much can be accomplished when everyone abides in his place in the church and pours himself into his work for the glory of God and the church! On the other hand, the apostle warns against being disorderly and *“busybodies in other men’s business [matters]”* (2 Thess. 3.11; 1 Tim. 5.13; 1 Pet. 4.15): for busybodies inevitably gender strife and spread discontent and discouragement

throughout the body of Christ. Thus, the apostle Paul exhorts and commands *“that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we command you”* (1 Thess. 4.11).

## Busybodies and Disorderly Members

No one likes to think of himself/herself as a busybody or disorderly person; but as the old saying goes, “If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck: it is probably a duck.” There is another old saying, “If the shoe fits wear it.” If this be the case with any of our people, we exhort you rather to be wise, “consider your ways” and be converted to the “more excellent way!”

We read in Judges in the *“church in the wilderness”* the oft repeated observation, *“In those days there was no king in Israel: and every man did that which was right in his own eyes”* (Judg. 17.6; 18.1; 21.25). It is a reminder that where there is no government nor visible governor, the people go astray and are scattered, and the whole nation suffers from the disorder and apostasy. On the other hand, when each member of the church abides

in his calling (as a janitor, usher, singer, musician, treasurer, support ministries director or worker, teacher, evangelist, deacon, bishop, pastor, overseer, or general executive) and accepts his position in the church, applying himself zealously to fulfill his particular duties and responsibilities, the whole church is blest and

benefits from his/her faithfulness and self-giving. Thus, says the apostle:

*“We then [who] are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor [and fellow member in the church] for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself: but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me”* (Rom. 15.1-3).

Surely we can all see that disciplining ourselves to abide in our own calling and position in the church, and minding our business and faithfully performing our own appointed duties is the only way to edify and advance the church---I mean, the Lord’s church which we all profess to love; and it’s the only way that we will be able to see the rapture of *“a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing . . .!”*



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## **Conventions**

**Tennessee.....June 28-29 at the Crossville church**  
**South Carolina/North Carolina.....June 21-22 at the Greenville church**  
**California (South).....June 21-22**  
**WV/V/PA/MD.....June 14-15 at Idamay church, WV**  
**IN/KY/IL.....TBA**  
**MS/AL/LA.....TBA**

## **School of Ministry**

**April 7-12 Rialto CA**  
**May 5-17 Cleveland TN**

**General Assembly.....September 3-8, 2019**  
**(Venue: United Christian Church in Cleveland)**