



The Banner of Truth®

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*Season's Greetings*

*May the light  
of God's great love  
shine brightly in every heart and home  
this joyous Christmas season.*

## Editorial....

# Christmas At Your House 2013

International Overseer

John A. Wilkins, Jr.



Each and every year, if you are like most of us, we keep hoping that the Christmas season will be better and there will be more joy than ever before with the family all together for meals, gift exchange etc. Then after Christmas has come and gone again we look at each other with some degree of emptiness and disappointment. Many years ago there wasn't much money flowing for gifts and such but the closeness of Christmas was something you could feel as the family came in from their normal busy life. There was the Christmas Play at church, the nice meals together, the sharing of the happenings of life as we talked by the crackling fire in the fire place where real logs were burning and could be smelled. The real homemade fruit cake, or in my case the icebox cake was smelled all through the kitchen.

Today is different in the since that if we smell the logs someone will have to spray it from a can of fragrance or if we hear the crackle someone will have to play it from a recording. Yes, things are much different this Christmas. If we talk, it will interfere with our family texting their friends or other family members that just might be in the same house somewhere. Yes, the computers will be busy, the cell phones, I-Pads, tablets and other electronic devices will be humming with Christmas

wishes as we try to communicate the meaning of Christmas.

When the Christ Child was born is not known. The first Christmas was not celebrated until the year 350 AD when Pope Julius I officially designated December 25 to celebrate Christ's birth.

In the Christian religion, the practice of giving gifts at Christmas can be traced back to the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh that were given to the Christ child by the three Magi. The magi were kings from the East, wise men who traveled a great distance following a star, to find the Christ child and to bring him gifts. The original idea, it seems, was to bring gifts unto Jesus and Christmas was a holy day instead of a gift exchange day and was observed more than celebrated.

Here is the real deal, if we can share some warm moments with family and friends in the real spirit of Christmas we will come out of this feeling much better in 2013.



The key to it is all of us remember that the gift giving to one another is the world's idea of Christmas. Have you prepared your gift for the Christ Child?

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## With Heartfelt Sympathy

Sister Shirley Michael lost her Dad recently and now her brother. I know she would appreciate your prayers.

Sister Shirley we are praying for you.



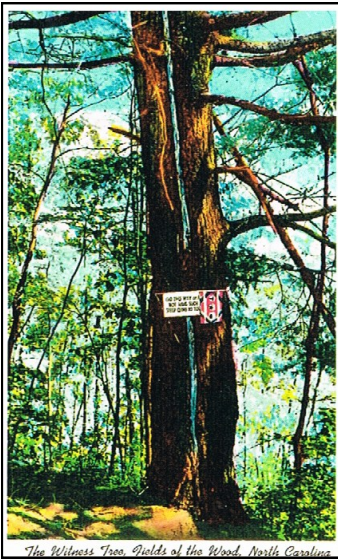
## Happy Birthday

September 20 — Harry D. Elder

November 23 — John Wilkins

December 14 — Cathy Elder

**Do you know of someone  
having a Birthday or Anniversary?  
Let us know...**



# “THE WITNESS TREE”

John Wilkins  
International Overseer

Throughout our history there have been many “WITNESS TREES”, some have witnessed good and some have witnessed evil. Men have been hanged from them and murders have been committed beneath them as well as other sins too numerous to mention. If they could talk, they would have a story to tell regarding what they have witnessed. This message addresses only two of them and what they have witnessed on our behalf. These trees tell us a story about God and His plan for man and His Church upon this earth. To the downfall of many, both trees have spoken loudly, but have been ignored by most of the world’s population to this day.

One of these trees is the Christmas tree which has been around for a lot of years. It is said to have begun way back in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Let us look at some recorded work of Countess Maria Hubert Von Stauffer in “The Christmas Archives” with a subtitle “The Chronological History of The Christmas Tree”.

## St. Boniface Story

“**W**hy do we have a

decorated Christmas Tree? In the 7th century a monk from Crediton, Devonshire, went to Germany to teach the Word of God. He did many good works there, and spent much time in Thuringia, an area which was to become the cradle of the Christmas Decoration Industry.

Legend has it that he used the triangular shape of the Fir Tree to describe the Holy Trinity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The converted people began to revere the Fir tree as God's Tree, as they had previously revered the Oak. By the 12th century it was being hung, upside-down, from ceilings at Christmastime in Central Europe, as a symbol of Christianity.

The first decorated tree was at Riga in Latvia, in 1510. In the early 16th century, Martin Luther is said to have decorated a small Christmas tree with candles, to show his children how the stars twinkled through the dark night.”

In this lesson we will deal more with reality than with legend. There are many stories regarding trees such as the “Legend of the Dog Wood” and the list goes on, but we will focus on facts that trees have spoken about God and His relationship with man.

## TREE # 1

There are many stories and legends as to what tree the cross, which held our Lord, was made of, but it really doesn’t matter about the species or type of

wood, it is the witness of this tree to the power of God to forgive SIN through the blood of God’s only Son. In the finished work of Jesus Christ upon this tree we have eternal life promised to us that love Him. He took upon His shoulders the SIN of all of us, yet He knew no SIN. Today we are living in a time when the mention of Jesus Christ will cause you much trouble as the war on Christmas is being launched all over the world and there is a reason for this. It is the birth of Jesus that we will soon celebrate. He was promised by God to come into the world to give us a remedy for SIN.

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* Isaiah 7:14

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.* Isaiah 9:6-7

*And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the*



*face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Isaiah 25:6-9*

*Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Isaiah 55:4*

Let me introduce you to the first Christmas tree as recorded in the Bible and then you will understand why the world is mad about Christmas.

*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 1 Peter 2:21-24*

The first Christmas tree had a man nailed to it called Jesus. He was an ornament to the Jews who intended to rid the world of His influence and teaching by this disgraceful execution called crucifixion which was reserved for the most dreaded criminals. He, Christ became a witness on that tree to all humanity all over the world and the words

of the prophets became a resounding symbol of all He came to do and His work lives on and to the increase of His government there shall be no end as Isaiah said in Isaiah 9:6-7. When Satan loses, He wants everyone to follow Him in His deception and trample all that Christ is under foot as He thumbs His nose at all Christians today. Many support these corporate toy stores and other places that forbid their employees to ever say, "MERRY CHRISTMAS", and it is all over the "FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE". You see without CHRIST on that first one, there would be no CHRISTMAS TREE at all. This is why they are fighting so hard to remove ALL REFERENCES TO CHRIST in this country called the United States of America which was once the greatest country on this earth. It now owes trillions of dollars to China and other countries of the world to which we are indebted to the point of no return.

*The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. Prov 22:7*

So, now we see why there is so much effort being made to do away with Christmas. It is now a holiday tree instead of a Christmas tree. The merchants are demanding that their employees say, "Happy Holidays" instead of "MERRY CHRISTMAS" because a few people claim to be offended by any reference to Christ. Where did the Christian rights go?

## TREE # 2

Many of you have heard of the "WITNESS TREE" in the Fields of The Wood and could tell the story which has meant so much to so many of us through the years. It was on this tree that a

copy of the flag of 1933 was nailed many years ago which pointed to the best climbing route to the "PLACE OF PRAYER", or as some will refer to it as the altar. It was at the "Place of Prayer" that our former General Overseer, Bishop A. J. Tomlinson, knelt and prayed until he was changed by the power of God forever to frame the biblical understanding and vision of The Church of God. Please keep in mind that this was on the early morning of June 13, 1903, and after this experience, he revealed what he had received from God to the group which was meeting in the home of W. F. Bryant down at the foot of the mountain. Please also note that he had not received the Holy Ghost yet, but he approached unto God and God revealed His Church to him at this time. It was not until some five years later that he received the baptism in the Holy Ghost during a message being delivered by Bishop G. B. Cashwell in Cleveland, Tennessee. This helps us to know that God uses whomever He pleases as they draw near unto Him.

*And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD. Jer 30:21*

Now it has been taught by The Church of God that it was here that God revealed His "Last Days Church" to modern man, and books have been written by great men of God who believed that until it became unpopular to believe much of anything. The tree that we are talking about called "THE WITNESS TREE", stood up the mountain from the

old W. F. Bryant home where the Church of God of the Bible was first revealed by the former General Overseer, Bishop A. J. Tomlinson, during a prayer meeting in that home. It stood there for years with a flag nailed to it over a sign that led people up that way to avoid the steep climb to the top where the altar is today, if they haven't torn it down. That old tree took a direct hit from the sky by lightning one day and lived to tell about it. The tree was split from the top down to where the sign and flag were and then it jumped over the flag of 1933 and continued on into the ground leaving open tree through which the sky could be seen. The only place in the tree body that wasn't opened up was the part behind the sign with the flag on it. Please keep in mind that this was the only flag the Church has ever been given by the Holy Ghost, the flag of 1933. For the next several years, that old tree lived and continued to stay green for a witness to the works of God. Today there are many new flags being designed all the time which so nearly resembles that one that no one can copyright protect their new flags, but there was only one given by the Holy Ghost in 1933. The "WITNESS TREE stood there all those many years, and if it could have talked, it might have said something like this, "I heard Bishop Tomlinson coming by the other day and he was talking with Bishop E. H. Griffith about the vision he had up on the top of this mountain. He said it came to him clearly what it took to be The Church of God of the Bible." Then Bishop Griffith chimed in and said, "You know, Brother Tomlinson, it still takes the same thing." Then the old tree takes a little break to remember many of

the things it has heard being said as men like Bishop L. S. Rhodes, Bishop Dorlan H. Queener, Bishop John Stubbs and so many others said as they walked up the mountain past the "WITNESS TREE". Now after many years, there is just an old stump left, I am told, but even the old stump is still a witness to all those conversations, and much more important is the fact that God is also. Many of these are now with the Lord, but some of us are still around that, having been by that old tree, have pointed to it and told this story over and over. The world system has aggressively attacked Christmas and is determined to stop the displays of the Christmas theme regarding Jesus Christ altogether. There is also an attack on THE CHURCH OF GOD and Her doctrine. Many who have grown up with THE CHURCH OF GOD feeding them and clothing them have decided our founding fathers were wrong and God now accepts anyone who calls themselves Christian, regardless of how they believe and live. Many of them have defaced the markers in the place which represents so many of us and our heritage and have even had the nerve to reinvent the Church doctrine. Some 10 to 15 groups just since 1991 have fallen away into self-proclaimed groups and some call themselves The Church after disregarding the witness against them, their own testimony of what God did in the Fields of The Wood on June 13, 1903. Yes, if the trees could talk, they would have a story to tell of those who once had a vision of the Church, but today they have lost it and teach that all are part of His Church if they simply confess Christ as their Savior. It still takes the same thing today as it did when those brothers were

searching out on their knees the plan for God's Church. The trees in the Fields of the Wood are not hearing much of these words regarding the vision today and things have really changed, but God has not and the true Church has not. These testimonials stand as a witness against all who forget the vision they once had as they testified that it came from God. Is there any wonder why we have lost our children to the world church today?

***I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am re-proved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*** Hab 2:1-4

Some have said, "The Church is over and no one believes in One Church anymore." Well some still do and God will use this remnant to do His work while these stand and watch wondering what happened. What will the "WITNESS TREES" say about your conversations? What will God say about your conversations?

***A Song of degrees. LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions: How he sware unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine***

*eyelids, Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.*

Psalms 132:1-10

Some have said, "You don't own the Fields of the Wood or the Flag of 1933 so what will you do about that?" The answer is clear; God owns them and it is His message still, so it would be better to ask, "What will God do about that?" I sure don't know, but I do know that many still believe in the message of Christ and His Church and all the trees and rocks in "Fields of the Wood" are a witness against all who will trample these truths under foot without regard to the Heavenly vision they have once had. The stones may have been altered, but the Word of God remains solid against the divorce and remarriage evil, fornication, lying, stealing and all the other things that were once upon the faces of stone in the place we call, the "FIELDS OF THE WOOD". The "WITNESS TREE" has heard our words and our shouting and speaking in tongues as we have glorified God in the presence of all these witnesses and God will call it all to record someday. We don't change the doctrine to fit us; we are to change ourselves to fit the doctrine. We must not measure ourselves by ourselves, as many have already done, it won't work to our good. Our United States of America was

promised "Hope & Change" by the present administration and what we got was "CHANGE" and not much "HOPE", but this is to be expected from the world, so don't worry about this too much. The Church has been promised that it will be conformed to fit into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and what we got was a mess that has taken the very doctrine we used to put our life on, and changed it to something that only leaves us with memories of what we used to have. Someone now has a "Facebook" page entitled "**Fond Memories of the Church of God of Prophecy**" and that is what many are left with. I am here to tell you that there are literally thousands who have not bowed their knees to Baal and neither will they. The Church as we used to know it is not recognizable today as His Church. What used to be the Church could never be His Church today because the principles of doctrine do not exist any longer there, but His Church lives on because He is leading the way. When the Catholic Church came out of the previous Holy Ghost led Church, the Church was not destroyed but merely covered over for a time by the man-made doctrine and creeds, and in order for Her to arise out of darkness, She had to go back to Theocratic Government. The Holy Ghost must lead Her still today in Theocratic Government and discipline in order to retain the right to be His Church.

When Bishop Tomlinson entered the prayer meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1903, things quickly began to change and take shape, so let me give it here in his own words.

"I came down the mountain and entered the meeting. Questions were asked, Bible

answers were given. They said they took the whole Bible rightly divided as their only rule of faith and practice. I said, 'Well if you take the whole Bible rightly divided, that makes it the Church of God. Why do you want to call it the Holiness Church at Camp Creek?' I said, "You have agreed that this that I have said makes it the Church of God, and will you be willing to take it and keep it the Church of God?" They said they were willing. I then asked if they were willing to take me in with the understanding that it is the Church of God---not going to be, but is the Church of God? They were willing. So I stood right there in front of the fireplace...Brother Spurling...took the Bible and gave it to me. He handed it to me and said, 'Will you take this as the Word of God, believe it, obey its precepts and walk in the light as God is in the light.' I thought deeply. I remembered what a time I had on the mountain. I meant business. God meant business."

**Excerpt taken from:  
(The Church of God of Prophecy  
HISTORY & POLITY)  
By James Stone**

These men meant business and were serious about The Church of God they had discovered in the Word of God and what it took then to be different from another denomination, it still takes today, and the trees have heard us talking and so has our God. Our words are a witness against us unless we embrace the TRUTHS which we have proclaimed to keep. Our promise to walk in the light is still valid and we are still accountable to it.

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain* →

*of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

Isaiah 2:2-3

The TRUTHS once upheld by those who entered here and shouted up and down the valley are as much truth today as they ever were. God's Word does not change and neither does God change His mind and overhaul His precious Word. He remains constant while everything around us changes, so we can be like others, but the Word says, "**And be ye not conformed to the world:**" and this is exactly what has happened.

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Romans 12:1-2

Who among us can wave the flag of 1933 in the face of Satan and lay claims to not changing or altering the doctrine of The Church of God? Those who have stood by their testimony in upholding the TRUTH of God's Word in the face of opposition, from not only the world, but also the so called Church, and proclaimed that He is the owner

of His Church not some man or committee. I challenge you today TRUE CHURCH to come forward, shaking off man's ideas and opinions and clinging to the blessed old book, the Bible. Let us come to the front lines of the battle and proclaim Him as the rightful owner of His Church and the Holy Ghost to be our leader. Let us wave the old time flag that the Holy Ghost cared enough to give us to distinguish us from the others in the General Assembly of 1933. The same thing makes us the Church that made us the Church then and we have not relinquished our right to be His Church and neither shall we! Let the enemies fight over who is right while we proclaim what is right instead. Many of them are continuing to fight over their title and rights to something that only can belong to Christ who became that ornament on the first CHRISTMAS TREE placed on Golgotha that fateful day thus purchasing THE CHURCH OF GOD.

Let us remember what we have said. The trees remember because they heard us, but more importantly, God heard us and He remembers. Did we mean business then and do we mean business now? They are our witnesses and as we look at the cross, it stands as our symbol of faith, and it is a witness of the power of God unto salvation and is a constant reminder of the finished work of Christ.

May this Christmas find us returning to our roots and our first love.

*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the*

*seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Rev 2:1-5*

There are two trees that remember, and they both continue to speak, though neither of them can say a word. When their picture is even displayed they both speak volumes. When one of them is put on a mountain side or up on a hill beside a major highway all the devils become angry and begin a campaign to have it removed, but the old rugged cross made the difference and the life changed by it still continues to shine. Recently two men stood with their mouths dropped open as the story of the "WITNESS TREE" was told to them and they both admitted that it was quite a happening by God in honor of the flag of 1933. So do trees really speak? They do in the fact that their story is told and retold throughout the ages as to what happened with them and to them. With man's help, the "CROSS" is still speaking and so is the "WITNESS TREE" and their stories will never be silenced unless we quit telling their stories to whoever will listen. □



By J. RUSSELL SULLIVAN, Overseer of Minnesota



# The Relevance of Christmas

## IN THIS DAY OF COMPLEXITIES AND STRESSES

Though the meaning of Christmas has been adulterated and considerably twisted from its main purpose across the centuries, it remains a testimony to the indisputable fact that Jesus Christ came to this world over nineteen hundred years ago. It is fruitless to enter into any discussion as to the real date of His birth, as the exact day has not been stated in any qualified historical document, as far as this writer knows. However, while the exact day may have been obscured, the event itself is evidenced by indisputable witnesses, both Christian and non-Christian. From any point of view, the birth of Christ was a significant event with which the world would ever after be concerned.

Early history reveals that the Church about A. D. 100 viewed the advent of Christ as an event of spiritual significance, and from this judgment the observance of Christmas developed. The observance then was intended to enlighten and strengthen men and women in the service of God.

Spiritually speaking, Christmas observance is very valid today for every child of God when we do so in a sense of worship and recognition of what God has done. A person infused of God's Spirit cannot but be inspired with the accounts of the birth of Christ in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The power of prophecy itself, and its fulfillment, lend a quality to the event not common to any other birth. The Prophet Isaiah, among others, told of this singular event. A capsule statement in Chapter 9, verses 6-7, spans events of the Messiah from His advent (birth) to and . . . "even for ever." Let us review the verses:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

Paul forcefully states the plan of God and its purpose in Galatians 4:4, 5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." And Peter affirms this message: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." (1 Peter 1:18-20)

It is possible that, in this day of pressures and complexities, we are made to wonder how relevant Christmas actually is to us in the 20th Century. Honesty demands an acknowledgement that gross substitutions have been made by world Christianity and Economic Enterprise for the spiritual truths and values originally exalted by the angels, as recorded in the second chapter of Luke. Although traditional folklore of the season has been very successful in the addition of other nomenclature

around Christmas, there can only be one name powerful enough to bring "Joy to the World." Only one Saviour has come, and the way the advent was originally celebrated is effective and edifying today.

Our generation may not be fortunate enough to view, as did the humble shepherds, a well-planned announcement and a spectacular choir of the Heavenly Host of the coming of Jesus. God, the Host of Heaven, and the Holy Ghost all considered this birth of such significance as to make an event of it for future generations to know about and remember. Perhaps no other generation ever needed to focus attention on the Christ of Christmas as does this one. The message delivered by the angels bears repeating here:

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

"And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Our world is full of pressures. The dictionary defines pressure as "A compelling force or influence. A state of trouble or strain." No nation, city, community, family, or individual seemingly can escape the excessive demands which tax abilities to the utmost. All of these, from the smallest individual to the nations of the world, are looking for something or someone to deliver them from these pressures. In our day, nations still turn to treaties and agreements in the hopes of relieving pressures or tension. Cities apply to federal governments for aid, and individuals seek assistance of local government to solve dilemmas.

These methods of the natural man have been unsuccessful in ages past, and will continue to be so today. With the carnal nature, man is his own greatest enemy. He needs a Saviour! As revealed by Peter, his redemption is

### All Praise to Thee

All praise to Thee, eternal Lord!  
Clothed in a garb of flesh and blood,  
Choosing a manger for Thy throne,  
While worlds on worlds are Thine alone.

A little Child, Thou art our guest,  
That weary ones in Thee may rest;  
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth,  
That we may rise to heaven from earth.

Thou comest in the darksome night  
To make us children of the light,  
To make us, in the realms divine,  
Like Thine own angels round Thee shine.

All this for us Thy love hath done;  
By this to Thee our love is won:  
For this we tune our cheerful lays,  
To Thee our thanks in ceaseless praise.  
—Martin Luther

WHITE WING MESSENGER



"... with the precious blood of Christ ... who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." Thank God that the Christ of Christmas came to deliver us from our sins. When Christ comes into our heart, and we "Cast our cares upon Him," the strains and pressures begin to dissolve and vanish away as a vapor.

If life were simpler, some feel they could or would be happier. What often is lost in this reasoning is that people were dissatisfied with the simple life and sought to build a better one. Hence the complexities of our world today. This restless tide has thrust man into a very intricate, involved, and confused state of affairs. Questions pound the mind. What about morals? Business ethics? When is it right to let someone die? When does parental discipline and responsibility end and individual responsibility begin? How much money is enough? ("Having food and raiment ... therewith be content.") With time as a premium, how does one still find time for God? One could almost ask, "When is better better, and when is better worse?" In a day when it is hard to settle, cure, or understand anything, the simplicity of the gospel is a compelling beacon of hope to be manifest to a needy world.

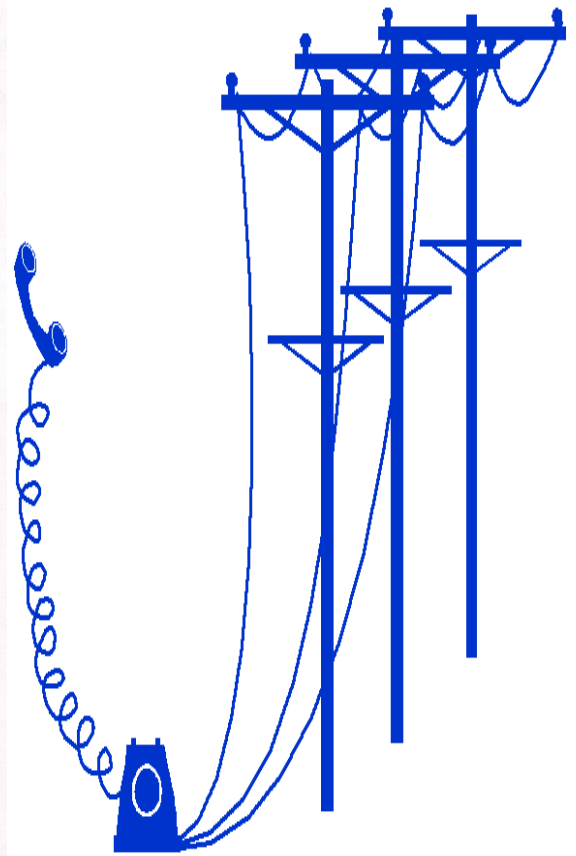
With the gift of His Son, God provided the very release needed by man. These difficulties and complexities are well understood by the Christ who, through sufferings, became High Priest for all mankind, and sits at the right hand of God interceding for our infirmities. The answer He provides is PEACE. Peace which passeth all understanding. God directed that the Heavenly Host announce "Peace on Earth." No misleading or mistake. While war and strife may abound in this world, the peace of God rules in untold multitudes of hearts which have been committed unto the Christ of Christmas. Peace is freedom from strife of any kind; quiet, calm, order and security of mind and heart. Though the world be in turmoil, the message of Christmas is still to the point—PEACE. The Christ said, in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

There is yet another blessing of Christmas observance; it is "Goodwill to Men." Goodwill is described as "a kindly or friendly feeling; cheerfulness." No place and no time does the real spirit of goodwill overshadow

mankind more than when he remembers what God has done for him. The real effect of that remembrance is a breaking down of the stiffness and pride, and a feeling of thankfulness and humility for God's love. The outcome of these good attitudes will always be goodwill toward men.

Does Christmas relate to you and me? Yes indeed, the real Christmas, the real Christ, the real message, and the real gifts coming from God, make Christmas one of the most meaningful and significant seasons of the year. Let us look forward with clear eyes, open minds, and sincere hearts to this Christmas-tide.

Of all beginnings (and every enterprise has its beginning) no other beginning stirs the heart with warmth, love, peace, joy, goodwill, and fellowship as does this beginning. The reason this is so is best stated in Matthew 1:23: "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." From the birth of the Christ Child, *Emmanuel*, we are no longer alone. He abides! "God with us" this Christmas and always. Amen! □



## Urgent Prayer Line!

- ♦ An URGENT CALL has come in for Brother Samuel Michel (Brother Dumas Michel's son of Haiti ). He has had an accident and is in grave danger of losing his leg. Please pray for him.
- ♦ Brother John Pultz is very sick and needs prayer.
- ♦ Brother Hillard Foster still needs your prayers.
- ♦ Brother Elder needs your prayers.
- ♦ Brother & Sister Wilkins have an unspoken request.
- ♦ Pray for ALL our unsaved love ones.

# APPOINTMENTS FOR THE 104<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY July 27, 2013, Dunn, NC

“The Banner of Truth” Executive Editors:	John Wilkins
Executive Secretary to the International Overseer	Cathy Jones (Elder)
Field Secretary to the International Overseer	Cathy Jones (Elder)
“The Banner of Truth” Managing Editor:	Harry Elder
Public Relations:	Elizabeth Wilkins
Bible Training Institute (BTI):	Jona Nelson
International Ladies Retreat Coordinator	Keith Murphy
International Evangelism Director	Jannece Colon
International Treasurer:	John Pultz
International Sunday School Director:	Cathy Jones (Elder)
International Victory Leaders (VLB) Director:	Polly Murphy
International Women’s Missionary (WMB) Director:	Jussella Esguerra
International Church of Prophecy Marker Association (CPMA):	Delores Esguerra
International Assembly Band Movement (ABM):	Nellie Lowe
Publishing Committee:	Brenda Fowler
	*Charles Clark, Rodger Tidwell
Publishing Department Manager:	Harry Elder
Publishing Manager Assistant:	Elizabeth Wilkins
Building Maintenance & Property Management	(New Hire Position)
International World Mission Secretary	John Pultz
	John Pultz

## REGIONAL OVERSEERS

South America:	Pending Appointment
Africa:	Pending Appointment

## NATIONAL OVERSEERS

Argentina:	Jose M. Coronel
Bahamas:	Heman Lowe
Bolivia:	Julio A. Cabrera
Brazil:	Jose M. Coronel

Chile:	Belarmino A. Carrianco	Paraguay:	Jose M. Coronel
Columbia:	Pending Appoinmtment	Peru:	Gerardo M. Nolasco
Dominican Republic:	Dumas J. Michel	Philippines:	Darwin P. Gaba
Ecuador:	Julio A. Cabrera	United States of America:	Rodger Tidwell
Haiti:	Dumas J. Michel	Uruguay:	Jose M. Coronel
Mexico:	Jose Conception	Venezuela:	Pending Appointment

*John A. Wilkins, Jr.,  
International Overseer*

## Introducing Two of Our New Assembly Appointed Staff

### ***WELCOME TO OUR INTERNATIONAL WMB (WOMEN'S MISSION BAND) DIRECTOR***



We would like to welcome our new WMB Director, Delores Esguerra, to the International Headquarters work. She is not new to the mission work although she has never worked before at the International level for missions. She is Sister Delores Esguerra from La Union, Philippines where she resides with her family. Her love for the mission work has been proven and tested for many years as she has given of her time and resources into this work. She and her husband, Antelito, have made many sacrifices for the ministry, not only in the Philippines, but in other areas of the world as well. Their home has been a spiritual oasis for many ministers, as well as laity, that have travelled through the Philippines for many years in the work of the Lord. They have two wonderful daughters, Jinky and Jussella, who are also active in the work of the Lord and doing a terrific job. Please send your correspondence to her at P.O. Box 2109, Dunn, NC 28335-2109 or you may contact her at: [desguerra@thechurchofgodofnc.com](mailto:desguerra@thechurchofgodofnc.com)

### ***WELCOME TO OUR INTERNATIONAL VLB (VICTORY LEADERS BAND) DIRECTOR***



May I introduce you to our newly appointed VLB Director to the International work, Jussella Esguerra. She is also not new to the work of our youth department. She is presently also serving her respective country of the Philippines as the Youth Leader. It has been a lot of years since I first met her in the home of Sister Esguerra, but she has followed in her mother's footsteps and become a wonderful leader in the Church. Her love for the Youth of The Church of God is quickly felt as she speaks about it and the Church all over the world. The love she has for her family and her Church family at large is readily seen in her actions and devotion to her work whether in the Philippines, South America or any other place on earth. We feel she is an asset to the Youth Department all over the world and look forward to her ministering to us in our next assembly, if at all possible. You will be hearing from her soon in your local churches by letter and our magazine, "The Banner of Truth". Please send your correspondence to her at P. O. Box 2109, Dunn, NC 28335-2109 or you may contact her at:

[jesguerra@thechurchofgodofnc.com](mailto:jesguerra@thechurchofgodofnc.com)





## Sunday School



*Our New International  
Sunday School Director  
~Polly Murphy~*

What a great help in The Church. We can reach all ages and teach them on their level, so they will get the greatest benefit from the teaching.

Psalms 25:4 *Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.* If we are not taught we will not know the way.

Psalms 25:5 *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.* We need to wait upon the Lord and He will lead us and guide us in all Truth.

Psalms 25:9 *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.* Christians are exhorted to cultivate meekness and to demonstrate it in their relations with the world and with one another.

1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

Let's be followers of all that is good. There is a chorus that goes like this:

"God has not given us a spirit of fear.  
God has not given us a spirit of fear.  
But he has given unto us  
A spirit of Power  
A spirit of Love  
And a sound mind.  
Wait on the Lord and be of good courage  
for he has given unto us a Spirit of Power,  
A spirit of Love and a sound Mind."

That power is the Holy Ghost Power. It will cause us to love our neighbors as ourselves and cause us to search out the scriptures and have a sound mind on God, His Word and the Church. We want to work together in unity until our Lord God comes back to catch us up in the air to meet Him. What a glorious time that will be. Love and prayers for your work this year. □

# Merry Christmas

## From Everyone here at Headquarters!



*We here at  
Headquarters  
wish everyone all  
around the  
World a very  
Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year!*

# Up-Dated Progress on...

## New Church in Hamilton, AL



We just wanted to share in the excitement of the members of the new church in Hamilton, Alabama. These pictures were taken several weeks ago so by now they are outdated as the work is steadily moving forward on this construction. The sheet-rock has been finished in this photo and the pastor is no doubt very proud of this progress and I am sure some words of praise have been sounded as they are walking around inside. (Top Picture)



In this picture there is a better view of the wall and we expect to be in here for service very soon. The members and friends of the local church are to be commended for the wonderful progress they have made to this stage of completion. It was a little less than one year ago that we featured this congregation in The Banner of Truth as they broke ground and although they have run into many unexpected delays and complex issues they are very close to completion. (Middle Picture)



Through this entrance will pass Pastor James Miller and his congregation very soon to dedicate this building formally to the Lord although I am sure it has been dedicated each day as the work has been going on for some months now. Our hats are off to Brother and Sister Miller and all that have been a part of this effort and we look for some new ones to join with them soon to make this a Spiritual Oasis in a dry and desert land. If you live nearby come out to see them and watch this work in progress. (Bottom Picture)

You can contact Pastor James Miller at 4456 Co. Hwy 56, Vina, AL 35593 or by phone at 205-921-3701





# New Mexico Fall Refreshing

Read this report  
on the  
following page.

## Group Picture



## Singing



## Evangelist Cathy Elder



## Worship Time



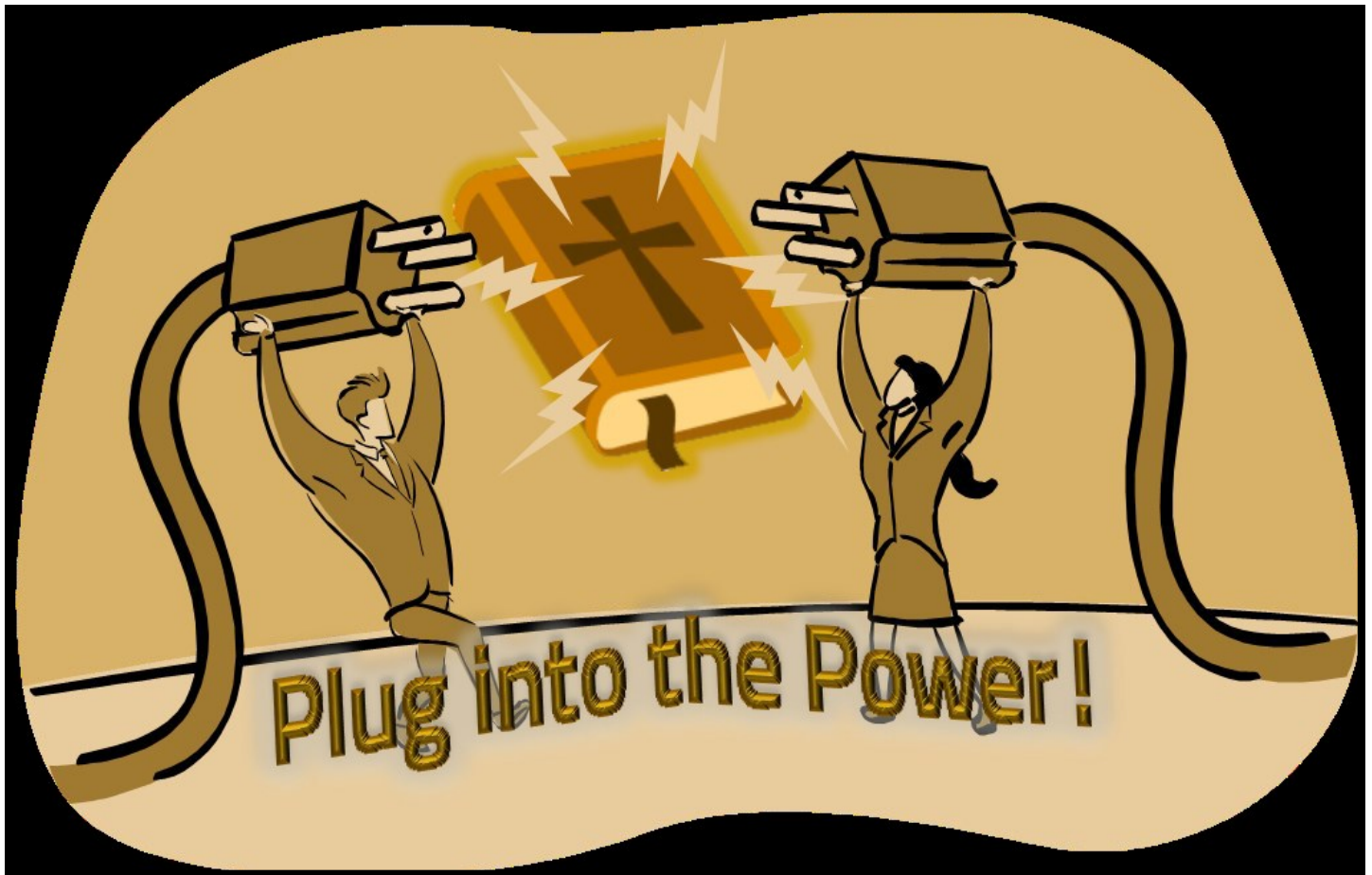
## Intercessory Prayer





# FALL REFRESHING RETREAT 2013

~Nellie Lowe Reporter~



It was a beautiful, yet chilly fall day on October 4 when 19 people gathered in the beautiful Sacramento Mountains for a glorious time of REFRESHING. Immediately, God truly started pouring out His blessings upon us. We all got settled into our rooms then trekked down the hill to the dining hall where we were abundantly fed natural food. Oh you don't know what you missed if you missed any of the meals. The cooks, furnished by the campground, were excellent and such gracious hosts to us all. We truly enjoyed getting acquainted with these wonderful people.

Then it was back up the hill to really get started in this retreat. We started off the first night with Communion and Feet Washing. Oh how the Lord did bless us all as we humbled ourselves before Him in these beautiful ordinances.

Classes for men and women were separate with teachers that obviously sought God for the lessons that would build and exhort our saints.

## For the Ladies:

Classes on Saturday started off with *Nellie Lowe* expounded on "Staying Connected to the Power Source." She expounded on Romans 12:1 & 2 and Colossians 3:1-17. She spoke of what Paul had to tell us in Colossians about becoming "holy, acceptable servants." That we must "present our bodies as living sacrifices." We cannot be "conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds." She spoke of how we cannot afford to be separated from the Lord, from His Spirit. We must stay in constant contact with the Master.

Then *Elizabeth Wilkins* spoke about "Staying Plugged Into the Power." Sis. Wilkins spoke that we must keep ourselves holy. "If we aren't striving to keep ourselves holy, then we aren't keeping the Church holy. She expounded on Matthew 24:3-13, that we "take heed that no man deceive you." The way to stay plugged into the proper power source is to stay in the Word. We must not let anything or



anyone separate us from God.

*Jannece Colon* started off her lesson with Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." This is our first priority to be an effective Christian. We must be determined to grow and to keep on going. We must have a desire to not become disconnected from the power source. We can't be hypocrites, we must be what and who we are but we are to be accountable to God for that person. We must have certain attitudes, Attitude of Commitment, Attitude of Trust, Attitude of Love, Attitude of Service, Attitude of Gratefulness, Attitude of Cheerfulness, Attitude of Obedience and an Attitude of Dependence on Leadership. We must choose the right attitude in all things. We as women have to set priorities, 1- Our relationship with the Lord, 2- Our husbands 3- Family and Home 4- Our Outside Ministries.

### **For the Men:**

*John Wilkins* spoke about going the extra mile to get in better touch with God. That in the end we are going to have to be able to discern spirits and know what is going on in and around us. And in order to do that we must get plugged into and stay plugged into the Power that only comes from God.

*Herman Lowe* spoke on staying plugged into the power through prayer. He had a demonstration using a light bulb connected to a dimmer switch. We skip our prayers sometimes and we think we are okay but as time goes on, we get dimmer and dimmer and pretty soon that power goes out. We must keep our prayer life up-to-date constantly in order to have a bright light in this world.

*Richard Colon* spoke of how sometimes the bad things in our lives, illnesses, distresses, etc., can actually be good for us because it draws us closer to the power source.

(This reporter can only report what the men told us about their classes. I can say that there were a couple of times that it sounded like they were having church. It sounded as though the Lord was really blessing them.)

On Saturday evening, *Cathy Elder* brought the evening message. She spoke to us about needing

a time of refreshing from the dry places in our lives. Our problems get worked out in the presence of the Lord. That repentance and true confession go together. You can't have one without the other. Everyone is going to know who we are by our love. We need to love as Christ has loved us. Acts 3:5-9

This man had never walked before but when he came in contact with someone who had been in contact with Jesus, he was able to do something he'd never done before. Will people be made different just by being in contact with us.

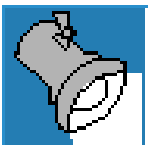
On Sunday morning *Sis. Colon* played a song "Somebody's Gonna Stand." God moved on us and helped to establish in us that we are going to have to stand upon God's Word and what God's Church is standing for. That we are going to have to continue to fight in this battle in order to see the victory.

*Bro. Wilkins* brought our message with the title "Time to Awaken." We can no longer be satisfied with mediocrity. He brought to us Isaiah 51:4-16 It's so much better for God to declare that we are His people than for us to declare it. Noah didn't know what to do if God didn't tell him, we need to get back to the point that we don't know what to do if God doesn't tell us. We must walk in His power daily. He went on to speak from Ephesians 5:14-20 and Matthew 25:1-13. We can't have the oil from God if we don't obey God. Bro. Wilkins reminded us that all virgins slumbered and slept. There are some pure and holy people who are doing nothing. They are asleep. We must awake. We must be watching and waiting and praying for the Lord's return. We must be working and ready for the Lord's return. We must get everything under the blood and get filled up with the oil.

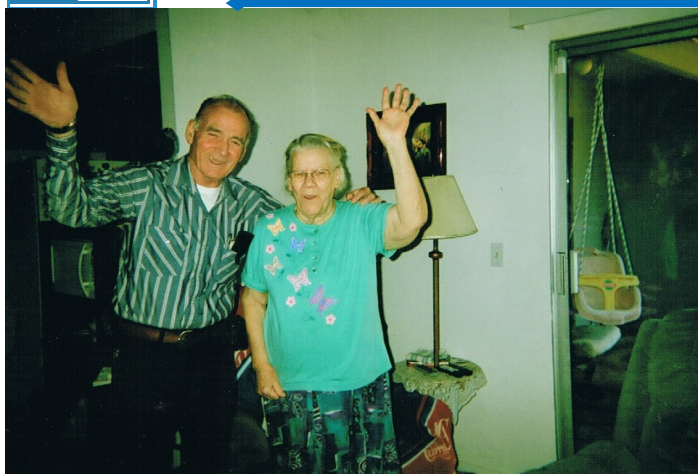
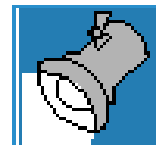
Yes fall refreshing was truly great. God truly blessed us abundantly. You have a year to get prepared for next year's fall refreshing the first week-end of October. Realizing that this is quite a distance for many of our people to attend, *Sis. Colon* is working to establish refreshings in every region. It is going to take time so we must be in prayer for this. But until refreshing can come to your area, this would be a great vacation for you and your family. These are not for adults only, but for the whole family. No one is too old or too young. Plan on next year. □

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*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*



## Shining the Spotlight on A Visit With Sister Georgie Newman and Family



Polly and I made it over the Siskiyou Mountains before the snows hit, and it was a good, but long safe trip. Once we got to Merced CA, we called Sister Newman to get directions to her home. She said, "Oh it's easy. This is a small town... it's probably the size of your State Capitol." She said, "Just find Canal Street Road." And we did; not one, not two, but three. So, when we got on the right one, it was pretty easy from there because she said you'll know my house from all the others. We spotted it way down the Street. She had the Church Flag waving from her mail box. What a sight to behold!

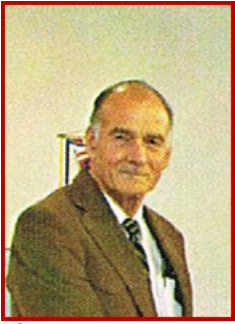
The love of God is in that home without a doubt. Sister Newman makes you feel like part of the family and just loves to talk about the Lord; and Angie - what can I say. Angie is Sister Newman's granddaughter. You would have to meet her to understand. What a wonderful spirit she has with the Lord. She has Down Syndrome, Sister Newman has taken care of her since she was five years old; she is now in her thirty's. Her favorite thing to do is listen to Christian music and worship the Lord. Although she can't speak you know she can feel the spirit. I forgot to mention Angie also LOVES root beer - lots of root beer.

Zackary is a very nice young man. He is eleven and likes to cook. There isn't much he doesn't know about animals and insects because he watches Discovery Channel and Animal Planet. I think it won't be long before he knows about the one who created all creatures, both great and small. His mother is Lisa, Sister Newman's daughter.

Sister Newman took us to Kentucky Fried Chicken for lunch. Sister Newman spoke very highly of Brother and Sister Foster, and had a lot of pictures of them. They love Brother and Sister Wilkins very much also. She says she is all alone in California, but the church is the Church and that's that. I reminded her of Elijah when he thought he was all alone, but God had in reserve seven thousand souls. What a privilege it was to finally meet them in person. They truly are precious saints.

*~Keith and Polly Murphy~  
Reporters*





## POEM

by

~Keith Murphy~

International BTI Director

There was a mean old man by  
the name of Hoot. Who lived in

a sad little town, where everyone wore a  
frown.. They were all so sad, some I  
“believe”, were even mad.

One day, there was a young lady  
that came to stay, but she was a bit  
strange, she was always so happy and gay,  
the people whispered, she will never stay!

The lady wondered why everyone  
was so angry and so mad.

Ah I think I know, so I must go.  
Help me dear Lord, to be in the right place.  
That I might find your dear grace. I lay these  
souls at your feet as she prayed right there  
in the street.

Along came Hoot: Shut up you silly  
woman or I'll give you my Boot, scoffed ole  
Hoot. But she continued to pray throughout  
the day.

Then something happened that  
can't be explained. His heart seemed to  
grow, as the tears flowed, my sins and grief  
Jesus always did know. Thank you dear la-  
dy, for helping find true peace, and a new  
life's lease. You're name dear lady I know ,  
because of you my Saviour I know.

Anny is my name and I thank the  
Lord, He took your pain away.

The peoples love did grow and Gods  
word they did sow.

The people in the town, no longer  
wore a frown. They were all so happy and  
many were made free. How can we thank  
her for what she has done, telling us of  
God's dear Son “Jesus.”

Lets have a party in honor of their  
names, we will even play some games.

That's why It's called

**HOOT N ANNY**

# E-Z

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