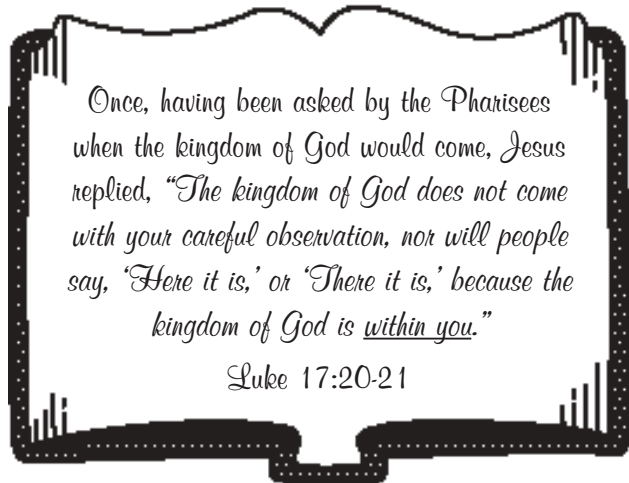


Vista 2001

A Publication of The General Council of the Christian Church of North America
Anno Domini 2001 – Volume 2, No. 3

We Believe . . .

THE Bible to be the infallible Word of God. • in One God, distinct in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. • Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Son of God, the Only Savior of mankind, through whose death atonement was made for our sins. • in a personal devil, served by demon spirits, who will be cast eternally into the Lake of Fire. • in regeneration, (new birth), through faith in Jesus Christ. • in Water Baptism by simple immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. • in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to salvation, with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. • in the Lord's Supper to be shared in regularly as a reminder of our Lord's death. • in the Apostolic regulations regarding foods and practices that injure the body and offend the holiness of God. • in the healing of the sick in response to the prayer of faith. • in the pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ. • in the bodily resurrection of the dead.



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Vista 2001

Values • Integrity • Spirituality • Teaching • Authority of the Bible

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Editorial

NOW on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.” (Luke 17:11-19)

Jesus healed ten lepers, yet only one returned to thank Him. I don’t believe the others were ungrateful or took the healing for granted. They may have been so overwhelmed that they lost site of common courtesy, or, perhaps, they were simply lazy. Whatever the reason, nine were healed and did not give thanks.

This issue of VISTA is missing something. Scan the contents in the column to the left. Can you figure out what it is? Sadly, there is no Testimony—no account of a miracle, healing, or intervention by God in the life of a CCNA believer.

I know that there are untold stories out there of fabulous acts of God as have been reported during the past year and a half of my tenure as VISTA editor. These reported testimonies have been helpful to so many of our readers in building faith. Please, if the Lord has touched you in a special way, thank Him by sharing it with others. Send your testimony to VISTA.

THE church on our front cover closed-up shop. Many mainline denominational churches are reaping what they have sown. Some doubt the authenticity of the Bible—to them it is a piece of literature. Without the Bible as a rule and guide, morality becomes relative. Doubting even the very existence of God, some congregations have changed from worship of the Creator, to political advocacy groups championing one cause or another. Many have become mere social clubs. Sermons have become “pep talks” designed to motivate the listener as one who attends a seminar held by a secular psychologist. They preach a gospel all right: *God loves everybody, so no one goes to hell, in fact, there is no such place as hell, everyone goes to heaven—and, of course, you don’t even have to be a Christian to get to heaven as God respects ALL religions.*

What America needs is a few more church closings!

Rev. Eric R Towse
EDITOR



General Overseer's Message

Prayer: The Foundation of All God's Works

by Rev. John DelTurco

REVIVAL can be defined in two words: "God came." And God's coming is in response to prayer. Our greatest need, our number one priority is spiritual renewal - a rediscovery of the place and power of prayer. A vital church is a praying church, a church that is at home in the secret place of the Most High.

Ours is a world that depends on computers, television, and cellular phones. These and other inventions have made life more enjoyable and, at least in some respects, easier. This is true until something goes wrong. Try to reason with a computer! Nothing is more frustrating than trying to have something corrected when there is no person with whom one can communicate. What happens when the power goes off? We feel isolated and at a loss. That on which we depended has proven fallible. James reminds us that our ultimate dependence is on God, not ourselves.

Prayer is the most direct way of showing our dependence on God, not ourselves.

John Alexander Dowie taught that a Christian's warfare is prayer warfare. As long as he dwelled in the secret place of the most high, he said, demons gnashed their teeth in impotent rage.

The quality of our growth in God is only in proportion to the depth of our prayer life. A battle is waged in heavenly realms, and the secret to continuous victory for a child of God, is predicated on his prayer life.

The Welsh Revival was primarily a revival of prayer. Evan Roberts prayed continually for thirteen months for the wave of revival to come. It is said of Roberts that his landlady "kicked him out" of his lodgings because she thought he was possessed, or at least mad, because of his intense and loud praying.

In 1905, the year before the Azusa outpouring, people throughout the South packed churches for prayer and confession. Stores and factories in the Mid-West closed to let employees go to services of dedication and intercession. Schools closed, and in Colorado, twelve thousand people attended prayer meetings in downtown theaters and halls.

The advice is no different for us today. If we want to see God move in His fullness, we must make a total surrender of our lives to Him. PRAY, AND BELIEVE GOD, meet regularly, and watch for Him to move.

Prayer was an essential feature of the early Church. "They devoted themselves to...the prayers." The Jerusalem Christians continued to attend the Temple for corporate and private prayer. They met in homes for prayer meetings. They prayed at regular set times, and often, we may be sure, at all times. All the great deliverance of the apostles, all the great decisions of the councils, all the great ventures of the first missionaries were carried out against a background of continuous prayer. The atmosphere

of the modern Church is startlingly different. The volume of private prayer cannot, of course, be assessed; but it would seem that there is very little corporate prayer. The prayer meeting has either disappeared altogether or, at best, is kept alive by a zealous few

Wigglesworth made prayer the key to his ministry. Someone once asked if he regularly spent long seasons of prayer. He gave his own classic answer: "I don't often spend more than a half hour in prayer at one time, but I never go more than a half hour without praying.

Unfortunately Christianity is not devoted to "prayer." Is this, then, the root cause of our ineffectiveness? Informed and sensitive Christians have long told us that this is our trouble. The whole work of the Church is crippled by lack of prayer. The real malady is not theological stagnation or social apathy.

It is prayer-paralysis. We must recapture the devotion of the first Christians to this maker of the vital church - "the prayers."

One of our problems is that we often forget who the enemy is, when we are delinquent in our prayer life. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

How are Christians to relate to one another in a church filled with division-breeding tension? You may not be able to control the tension brought on by other people, but you can control your own attitude about how you relate to those people by spending a lot of time in prayer. Prayer is the power that can control and conquer the powers of evil and wickedness.

In 2 Kings 2:1,2, we find Elisha and Elijah on their way from Gilgal just before Elijah passed his mantle to Elisha: Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

Why would Elisha not leave Elijah? He would not leave him because he knew that where Elijah was, the power of God was "happening." Elisha was hungry for the things of God and did not want to miss them. Others in the "school of prophets" knew as well as Elisha that Elijah was going to be taken from them that day, but they followed from a distance. (2-Kings 2:3,5,7 KJV). The mentality of so many Christians today is that of the "school of the prophets." THEY WANT GOD TO MOVE, BUT THEY ONLY WANT TO OBSERVE FROM A DISTANCE. Elisha represents the kind of people upon whom God pours out His Spirit: a people who are hungry enough to do whatever it takes to see God's power in action.

General Overseer's Message

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 •



District News

Northwestern District

New Brighton Christian Assembly—

The annual Women's Conference was held in March. Approximately 200 women were in attendance. June Evans was the featured guest speaker. June is a co-pastor with her husband Gene at Believers's Church, Douglasville, GA. She displayed the Holy Spirit's power and wisdom in practical and understandable ways. She used everyday situations to show how the Lord is active in our lives. June has traveled extensively preaching and teaching the Word of God. She is on the pastoral advisory board of Women of the Word, a national women's conference affiliated with Christian Believers United of Montreat, NC.

June's message was based on the life of Ruth: Follow Me, and the life of Ester, For Such a Time as This. As women of God we must grasp the concept that this is our time and this is our day. It is the time God has allotted us to flow in what the Holy Spirit desires to do in our lives.

Niagara-Mohawk District

Home Missions Rally

This is our first District Home Missions Rally

We would appreciate your prayers, participation and support.

Date: September 15th, 2001

Location: **Walnut Avenue Christian Church**

601 28th Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14301 716-285-0725

Rev. Michael Brown, Pastor

Coffee on: 8:00 AM

Fellowship: 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM

Praise and Worship: 10:00 AM

Special Music by: **LINDA** (Christian Soloist)

Speaker: 11:00 AM

Rev. John Ferguson, Director of CCNA Home Missions

Lunch: 12:45 PM

For further information please contact:

Rev. Francis M Doig, District Director, Home Missions

P.O. Box 610 Lakeville, NY 14480-0610

Phone: 716-335-6574 • E-mail: ccna@frontiernet.net

Within the next year, our district would like to plant seeds for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by establishing new works throughout our District. Do you have the vision to start a sister church?

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Matt 16:18 NKJV)

"And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15 NKJV)

"So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere." (Luke 9:6 NKJV)

Here are some things you can do to help:

1. Pray for our rally.
2. The week before the rally; please consider a special Sunday offering.
3. Please make a commitment to attend the rally yourself, or send a representative from your church.
4. Share with us your vision for new churches in your community.

New Covenant Assembly Celebrates 70 Years of Service



GENERAL OVERSEER PRESENTS REV. TREVOR AND REV. JENNY COBURN WITH A PLAQUE

New Covenant Assembly Church was founded in May 1931. It has been in the care of the Pastors Coburn since 1990.

District News

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 •



General Overseer's Report

CCINE Convention

May 24-28, 2001

Saarbrücken, Germany



REV. JOHN DELTURCO



CCINE EXECUTIVE BOARD



CCINE PRESIDENT
GAETANO NAVANTARI

France and for the first time in 49 years, our brethren will have their own building large enough to meet their needs. For this we are grateful.

Next year, in March of 2002, CCINE will celebrate its 50th anniversary. I have been asked to be the guest speaker.

The work of CCINE is progressing well and presently have over 125 churches in the various countries of northern Europe.

The CCINE is a substantial financial contributor to **NEAT**, our annual mini-Bible school held in the month of July. The **CCNIE Dorcas Society** supports NEAT as well as several of our CCNA national workers.

CCINE is grateful to Brother and Sister DeSantis for almost 45 years of spiritual leadership. They are also well-respected for their sacrifice, love, and deep concern for the work of God in Northern Europe.

Brother and Sister DeSantis are considered the spiritual parents of CCINE.

CCCINE is our closest and strongest affiliation in CCNA. The CCINE held its convention from May 24 through 28, 2001 in Saarbrücken, Germany. I was honored to be the guest speaker for the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday services.

Lydia and I arrived in Luxembourg and were greeted by **Brother and Sister DeSantis**. They took us to the convention in Saarbrücken, Germany. After greeting the brethren, we unpacked our luggage and prepared for the evening service.

The Lord was faithful and anointed every service meeting the needs of the people. It was truly a special time in the Lord.

The CCINE fellowship agreed to purchase a headquarters site in



MINISTERS OF THE CCINE

A New World—Missions Emphasis

by John DelTurco

General Overseer and Missions Director



W

E need to take foreign missions off the “back burner”, and put it where it belongs—in the forefront as a priority. I believe God is calling the CCNA at this moment in history to give everything it has to World Evangelization. Never before have the stakes been so high, or the opportunities so great.

We need to take foreign missions off the “back burner” and put it where it belongs—in the forefront as a priority!

Every missionary agency, including CCNA Missions, is reinforcing its efforts to world evangelization. There is a new emphasis to put world missions as a priority in this twenty-first century.

CCNA Missions has a goal, as well as a responsibility, to reach the unreached. We must do everything within our power and means to promote evangelism via our Missionaries and National Pastors. God has not commanded us to go into most of the world. We do not read in the Bible that in the end times every tribe and tongue and people *with a few exceptions*, will be represented. The Bible talks about *every* people - that is, every nation, tribe and tongue.

As we continue on in this twenty-first century, the whole world will be “counting down” to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The human family in its global consciousness has never faced the challenges such as we are facing today. What is the goal of CCNA Missions in this decade of information and technological countdown?

First, I have a deep desire to see every church in the Christian Church of North America become missions-minded, and shoulder its share of the responsibility for global evangelism. Beginning now we must make every effort to educate our congregations on the necessity of missions conventions, and world missions. Then throughout this decade, the entire constituency must mobilize for a tremendous effort, in cooperation with other evangelical churches, to evangelize the world.

Who is responsible to flood the entire globe with the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

It’s not the responsibility of the Muslims, even though there are over one billion of them! It’s not the responsibility of Buddhists. Nor is it the responsibility of Atheists or Humanists. According to God’s Word, every believer, every church, both home and abroad, is responsible to evangelize the whole world.

Secondly, another goal of CCNA Missions is the sending of new missionaries to the field. To be true to its Lord’s command, CCNA must be a missionary-sending agency. Unfortunately, in recent years, financial constraints have hindered us from sending many missionary candidates who have applied for missionary service. All missionary candidates who meet missionary committee qualifications have the opportunity to go to the mission field by raising their support directly from the local churches. As churches become more missionary minded and involved in supporting missionaries, they will develop a greater missions-awareness which, I believe, will spread throughout our Movement.

Other goals of CCNA missions include planting ten new churches every year, for the next ten years, in every CCNA-affiliated country and to recruit many more national pastors. Statistics tell us that in order to evangelize the whole world by the end of this decade, one million new missionaries, at a cost of 35 billion dollars will be needed. Where do we find one million new missionaries? And, if we did find them, where do we get 35 billion dollars?

I believe it’s God’s plan to provide toward the support of 100,000 nationals who are ready to sacrifice everything toward the evangelization

To be true to its Lord’s command, CCNA must be a missionary-sending agency.

of the world. Presently, CCNA is providing toward the support of over 1000 National Pastors. We need to increase that number to the size of a great army, taking God’s Word everywhere, reaching the unreached.

It is the desire of CCNA missions to:

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: Spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” (Isaiah 54:2).

World Missions

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 •



Your Health Advisory

“Diet” Sweeteners—Friend or Foe?

by Marcia Kaufman, RN, BSN

Our Theme: “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?”

RECENTLY, there has been quite a bit of controversy regarding the safety of an artificial sweetener known as Aspartame, which is marketed under the names of NutraSweet®, Equal®, ASP®, Spoonfuls®, NatraSweet®, DiabetiSweet® and Canderl®. This has become an issue of some concern and we at VISTA thought it would be worth sharing some of the opinions and evidence with you.

Let’s begin with some non-contested facts. Aspartame (l-aspartyl-l-phenylalanyl-methyl-ester) is a compound of two essential amino acids (aspartic acid and phenylalanine), which is synthetically produced by a subsidiary of the Monsanto Chemical Corporation. This substance has 200 times the sweetness of table sugar and virtually no calories.

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approved Aspartame in 1981 as a sweetener for dry uses (tabletop sweetener, cold cereal, chewing gum, gelatins, puddings, and carbonated beverages). In 1996, the FDA approved its use as a general-purpose sweetener. In the United States, consumption rose from 8.4 million pounds in 1986 to 17.5 million pounds in 1992, which is 80% of the world’s demand. Soft drinks account for 70% of this consumption, but it is estimated that it is an ingredient in up to 6,000 foods, personal care products (such as toothpaste and mouthwash), and pharmaceuticals (including children’s vitamins, cold remedies, some lipsticks, Roloids, Tums, and Metamucil). The original patent has now expired, so the package does not have to have the NutraSweet logo, and generic aspartame is now available from any manufacturer.

Opponents of Aspartame claim that it is a “deadly” substance and that the FDA approved it because of flawed and/or falsified test results, economic, and political pressure. When asked if it was true that the FDA received numerous non-drug complaints about adverse reactions to Aspartame, Mary Nash Stoddard, Founder of the Aspartame Consumer Safety Network (ACSN), stated that “it’s about 78% of **all** complaints. At one time, the figure was 85% yet this isn’t reported in the newspapers or announced through other media.”

ACSN and others say that Aspartame can cause up to 92 symptoms of disease, including death. Ms. Stoddard claims that airline pilots are in grave danger of crash-causing symptoms such as vision disorders and seizures from Aspartame, and that it “is an environmental trigger for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Alzheimer’s, Lyme’s Disease, Post Polio Syndrome, Carpel Tunnel Syndrome, Epilepsy, Anxiety/Phobia Disorders, Manic Depression, Grave’s Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Heart Disease, Eosinophilia Myalgia Syndrome, and Desert Storm Syndrome.”

Proponents of Aspartame, such as the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, American Dental Association, American Dia-

betes Association (ADA), American Medical Association’s Council on Scientific Affairs, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) disagree. The CDC (1984) stated that after a four month review of 517 complaints to the FDA, the complaints “do not provide evidence of the existence of serious, widespread, adverse health consequences attendant to the use of Aspartame. The majority of reported symptoms were mild and are common in the general populace.”

There are two negative things on which both sides agree about Aspartame:

1) People who have a genetic disorder called Phenylketonuria (PKU), which is an inability to metabolize Phenylalanine, should not ingest anything containing Aspartame.

2) Aspartame is not stable at temperatures above 85 degrees Fahrenheit. When heated, Aspartame breaks down into its component parts - the end results of which are **formic acid**, **formaldehyde**, and **methanol**. Whether these chemicals, in the amounts produced by the decomposition, are harmful to the body or not seems to depend on which way you view this issue.

The above information left me with a “bad taste in my mouth” (*pun intended*) about Aspartame in particular and artificial sweeteners in general. There are usually only two reasons to use a non-nutritive sweetener:

- 1) to lose weight by cutting calories or
- 2) because you are a diabetic and need to reduce your intake of carbohydrates.

Surprisingly, Aspartame may **not** be helpful with either of these objectives.

In regard to obesity, the ADA’s 1998 position statement declares: “Sugars suppress appetite to the same extent as other carbohydrates...There is no relationship between the per capita amount of sugar available in the food supply and the incidence of obesity in the population. Studies show an inverse relationship between sugar intake and obesity and a direct relationship between obesity and fat intake...obesity prevalence has increased substantially at the same time as the consumption of nonnutritive sweeteners has increased.” It has also been found that the use of these super-sweet substances can increase a person’s craving for even more sugar rather than satisfy it as natural sugar sources can. So, if you are saving 16 calories per spoonful of sugar by using Aspartame or another artificial sweetener, and then have your large slice of cake to celebrate - what have you really accomplished? It would be better to reduce your fat intake if you wish to lose weight.



Your Health Advisory

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 •



A New Harvest
74th ANNUAL CONVENTION
August 30 — September 2, 2001

Westfields Marriott • 14750 Conference Center Drive • Chantilly, Virginia

A Burning Fire for a New Harvest



JOHN DELTURCO
GENERAL OVERSEER

JEREMIAH was given an unenviable ministry. He predicted invasion, war, exile, plunder, rape, and death for Israel. Israel was said to have a many gods as there were cities. The sacred covenant with God had been broken. The people had forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out of broken cisterns that hold no water.

Jeremiah was beaten, put in stocks, and at one time even thrown into a prison-pit where he sank in deep slime. Of all men in the land he was the most hated, feared, and despised. Because of Jeremiah's persecution, hardship, criticism and hatred by his enemies, he said, *"I will not make mention of Him nor speak anymore in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."* (Jeremiah 20:7-9)

The weeping prophet could not be blamed if he wanted to quit. He came to a place where he was afraid for the Spirit of the Lord to come upon him. He could have become a backslidden preacher. No doubt the Tempter was insistent with seductive whisperings and appeals to the flesh. Was it necessary to suffer like this? Why to the cross, Satan suggested to Jesus, when you could have a crown?

Torn between loyalty to his ministry and pity for himself, Jeremiah was in a dangerous place. **But the fire saved him.** The Word of God was a burning fire in his bones. To Jeremiah to preach and to prophecy was not a seven-year itch but bone-fire. It was a soul furnace. Come what might come, the fire-filled preacher was going through with God.

Fire is the answer to mediocrity. Fire is the answer to reaping the harvest. If we let the Holy Ghost fire burn in our hearts, and if we but let the fire of divine love burn there, what is there that cannot be accomplished? Our shortcomings, our mediocrity, our lack of this and shortage of that, is swallowed in the miracle of the fire.

Fire is the source of Fruitfulness enabling the believer to reap a new harvest.

Jesus said that John the Baptist was *"a burning and shining light."* That was the secret—he was burning! Without fire the preacher is a machine without motion, a cloud without water, a tree without roots. On the other hand, a preacher ablaze is like the star of Bethlehem.

If we expect to reap a new harvest, then the fire of the Holy Ghost must burn brightly in our hearts. This is my prayer for CCNA.

Call 724-962-3501
for a Registration Packet

OUR SPEAKERS



Reggie Abraham



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Bishop Joseph Garlington**



Donna Rice Hughes



Rick George



John DelTurco

Convention Schedule

Thursday, August 30

7:30PM - 8:45 PM Opening Service
8:45PM - 9:30 PM Prayer
9:30 PM — Fellowship

Friday, August 31

8:30AM - 9:10 AM Prayer
9:15 AM - 12:15 PM Seminars (Bishop Garlington)
12:15PM - 1:30 PM Lunch
1:45 PM - 4:45 PM Business & Elections
7:00 PM - 7:30 PM Opening Music
7:30 PM - 9:30 PM Evening Speaker (Bishop Garlington)

Saturday, September 1

8:30 AM - 9:10 AM Prayer
9:30 - 12:30 PM Council Business (if necessary)
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM Convention Banquet
 (Donna Rice Hughes)
7:00 PM - 7:30 PM Opening Music
7:30 PM - 9:30 PM Evening Service (Bishop Garlington)
10:00 PM — Youth Aglow

Sunday, September 2

8:30 AM - 10 AM Italian Service (Carmine DiBiase)
 Spanish Service (Edmundo Garcia)
10:15 - 12:30 Communion Service (John DelTurco)
7:00 PM - 7:30 PM Closing Rally (Rick George)
10:00 PM — Youth Aglow



Contemporary Christian Music: A Matter Of The Heart

by Peter Dell'Erba, Youth Pastor
Oxford Christian Center, Harrison, ME

Of all the issues generating controversy within the church today, one of the most pervasive is that of contemporary Christian music. There is no doubt that church differs from church in matters of doctrine, worship style, methods of administration and vision. However, when it comes to the music many of our young people within the church are listening to, the battle line appears to be drawn down the center isle. For many this line is clear. To those on one side, all contemporary Christian music is ungodly and poses a dangerous threat to the church. To those on the other side, this music is God's answer to evangelism in the 21st Century. Found in the middle are those who approve of some of this music, yet disapprove of much of it as well. Finally, many within the church are not sure where they stand on the issue.

Regardless of what side of the line you are on, or who is right or wrong at this point, the disunity that this subject is generating between brothers and sisters in Christ is not good. I have witnessed some very emotional debates regarding this matter in various churches, and even among the leadership. It is a difficult topic to deal with because those who are opposed to this music refute it emphatically, but their reasons for such opposition appear to be based on mere opinion. However, those who approve of it want 'Chapter and Verse', not opinions. So the people of God wind up in grid lock over the matter.

What is needed is a scriptural basis that will enable God's people to do the following: 1) define the nature of music, 2) determine the spiritual impact a song can have on its listeners, and, 3) establish guidelines for what music is acceptable and what is not. The purpose of this article is to draw out of God's Word the truths that we need in order to see clearly on this issue of contemporary Christian music. Proverbs 2:3-5 says, *"Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."*

Contemporary Christian Music, from here on abbreviated as CCM, can be simply defined as Christian music that has a secular counterpart. In other words, the lyrics relate to the Christian faith with the intent of conveying the Gospel of Jesus Christ, yet the style of the song originates from the secular music culture of our day. Compare this to many of the hymns and praise and worship songs sung in our churches, which have no secular counterpart, and the difference can be clearly seen. Yet, CCM has be-

come widely accepted in the church and has grown dramatically in the music industry over the past two decades. CCM in all of its styles can be found in Christian bookstores around the country.

When first confronted with this issue, I asked myself, "Why is CCM such a big topic of debate in the church? How come pizza doesn't get the same press?" Pizza is devoured weekly by youth groups all over the country, and it has its roots in the world too. CCM has its various styles such as rock or pop, heavy metal or grunge. Pizza is also found in a variety of forms like pepperoni, mushroom, or chicken and bacon (my personal favorite). Yet, even with all of these similarities, I have never seen anyone raise an issue about pizza! Why is music different from pizza, or any other form of entertainment young people engage in? The



reason is that God created music for the purpose of invoking worship in those He created. **Even if listened to for entertainment, music will inherently exalt and glorify a thought, attitude, person or image within the human soul.** For this reason, music in any form can never be completely severed from its original purpose as designed by the Lord. Where there is music, there is worship to some degree. The same is true of sexuality. God created sex for the purpose of bringing physical and spiritual unity to a husband and a wife. Note well that I Corinthians 6:16 tells us that the true purpose of sex is accomplished even if it takes place outside the bounds God has established. So it is with music.

Music was created to unite us to God in worship. If music is used outside of the bounds God has established, then it succeeds in uniting the human soul with created images rather than to Christ. That is what the Bible calls idolatry. Therefore, since we have the potential to commit idolatry through the music we listen to, it is necessary that we be able to determine the nature of the music and establish guidelines that will define what music is acceptable and what music is not.

How do we establish these guidelines? How does one determine, based upon truth (rather than opinion), which music is acceptable and which is not? Secular music should clearly be out for God's people, for it exalts the images of the world. Hymns and praise and worship songs are definitely acceptable, for they clearly bring glory to God. Even though young people may not

Contemporary Christian Music
• CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 •

Featured Church

Oxford Hills Christian Church

Waterford, ME



FOUR years ago on a rainy morning in April, Oxford Hills Christian Center held its first service in the fire house of South Paris, Maine. The only CCNA church in Maine at the time, Christian Center was off to a good start in spreading the gospel to an area that has great need of learning of Christ's love.

Pastor Charles Jeffries and his wife Paula, had a desire to pioneer a church in the state of Maine. While living in Florida the Jeffries sought the Lord for direction and felt confident that Maine was to be their destination. For a short while after leaving Florida, Reverend Jeffries, an ordained minister with the CCNA, pastored a church in Massachusetts, but the desire to go to Maine would not lighten, so he resigned his church and took a job with the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad and moved to Maine.

Pastor Jeffries placed an ad in a local newspaper inviting anyone interested in helping to start a Pentecostal church to meet him and his wife for pie and coffee in a restaurant in the area. Sixteen people showed up at that meeting. A month later the first service was held with seventeen in attendance. Today the church has about 60 in regular attendance. The Pastor and the congregation knew they needed a building of their own in order to grow any further.

Four years of looking can be very discouraging, but the Lord opened the doors and the congregation is in the process of closing on a building of its own. Gifts from the New England District and another pioneer church in the district have helped to make this possible. Congregational members rallied to the cause giving money for the down payment, donating chairs, a new sound system, carpeting, and most of all, hard work and prayer.

"This area of Maine knows little of the love of God," states

Pastor Jeffries. "And the doctrinal boundaries are terribly blurred. Mixing true biblical doctrine with many false teachings. Christian Center has been placed here to heal broken lives and teach gospel truth." Pastor and Paula Jeffries are also about to embark on teaching marriage seminars in the area. Their seminars, titled, "Marriages on the Rock," deal with the day to day struggles couples face trying to cope in a world with waning morals. The Jeffries are available to do their seminars to any churches or groups interested in this much-needed area.



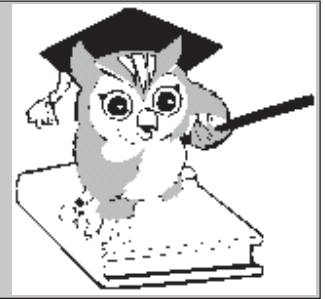
The theme for Christian Center since its beginning has been based on the scripture of Jeremiah 29:11.

**God has a plan for your life,
let us help you find it.**





CCNA
Education Department
 Rev. Lucian Gandolfo
 Executive Director



**3rd Annual CCNA National Christian
 Education Conference Hailed a Blessing
 and Great Success!**

On Saturday, June 2, 2001, Rev. Thomas Geysler and the **Living Waters Christian Church** hosted CCNA's 3rd National Christian Education Conference. Rev. Peter Lambo coordinated the conference and Living Waters provided a wonderful luncheon. Many of those in attendance expressed very positive feedback regarding the speakers and content of the topics covered.



CCNA EDUCATION CONFERENCE TEAM

(l to r) **REV. EUGENE PALMA, REV. THOMAS GEYSER, REV. VINCENT PRESTIGIACOMO, REV. PETER LAMBO, REV. CARMINE ZOTTOLI, REV. LUCIAN GANDOLFO, AND REV. PAUL CORAN**

The overall theme was "Quest for Truth." Rev. Paul Coran shared on "Thy Word is Truth"; Rev. Eugene Palma on "When Truth Prevails"; Rev. Lucian Gandolfo on "When Truth is Obscured/Abandoned"; and Rev. Carmine Zottoli on "When Truth is Restored." Much theological truth and practical application was discussed by all of the speakers. The subtopics progressed logically and flowed together so that those in attendance were able to come away with a broader perspective and a finer focus on the purpose and work of the Church in the world during these last days.

Below is the outline for one of the seminars. In "When Truth is Obscured/Abandoned," Bro. Gandolfo exposed Satan's methods in the way he attempts to replace truth with a false substitute. The substitute is often similar enough to the truth to be easily accepted by the undiscerning believer. However, the substitute is extremely dangerous in that it always leads us away from God and to death.

**When Truth is Obscured or Abandoned
 by Rev. Lucian Gandolfo**

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another. (Galatians 1:6-7a)

What seems in this verse to be a contradiction in terms is actually a very revealing truth that the Apostle Paul is trying to convey to the Church.

"Another" gospel (Greek: heteros) means: altered, of uncertain affinity, strange—of a different kind, or "unacceptable opposite." Not "another" (Greek: allos) means: more, or one other of same kind, or "acceptable alternative."

I - THE FATHER OF LIES SEEKS TO OBSCURE TRUTH

Satan, the enemy of our souls, is the great imposter, imitator, deceiver, and liar; i.e., the father (inventor, originator) of lies.

A) Satan's character — is described in Revelation: 12:9 and 20:2 describe the enemy of our souls by 4 significant terms:

- 1) "great dragon" - implies that he is **CRAFTY**
- 2) old "serpent" - implies that he is **SUBTLE**
- 3) the "Devil" - implies that he is the **ACCUSER**
- 4) "Satan" - implies that he is our **ADVERSARY**

B) Satan's Motivation — is revealed by the 5 "I wills" recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14

- 1) I will... ascend into heaven (take over God's kingdom)
- 2) I will... exalt my throne above stars of God (rule above God's other angels)
- 3) I will... sit upon the mount of the congregation (be worshiped)
- 4) I will... ascend above the heights of the clouds (be "omnipotent")
- 5) I will... be like the Most High (be equal to El Elyon)

C) Satan's Method — Satan's desire is to be exalted and worshiped. He uses deception to redirect worship to himself. Satan's agenda / modus operandi is to deceive people into redirecting their worship of God to himself. He does so by providing a comfortable, believable alternative. He...

- 1) Minimizes sin and its consequences: (Gen 3:4-5, "Ye shall not surely die")
- 2) Replaces true God with a false substitute: (Satan to Eve: I'll let you in on a better)
- 3) Redirects worship to the substitute way: (Listen to & obey me, not God.)
- 4) Uses human pride; leads to Satan worship (eyes opened, ...ye shall be as gods)

II - HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF DECEPTION

RESULTING IN THE ABANDONMENT OF TRUTH

A) Genesis 4: Cain, after having his parents' example of animal skins provided by God, indicating the requirement of shed blood to cover sins, proceeds to offer the first alternative "unbloody" sacrifice. When extended the opportunity to offer an acceptable sacrifice, Cain refused and slew Abel.

B) Genesis 10: Nimrod desired an alternative way to "reach heaven" and be a god. He pursued self-righteousness and self-deification. He began the worship of the heavenly bodies (astrology) and the concept of self-deification which plagued Israel all through its history. It is seen today in the form of the New Age movement which is nothing less than a contemporary form of Babylonianism.

C) Leviticus 10: Nadab and Abihu, legitimate Levite priests and sons of Aaron the first High Priest, offered an alternative strange fire before the LORD which he had not commanded (vv.1-2). NOTE that these were legitimate priests, using an authentic altar, offering to the true LORD. However, the incense was of their own design.

D) 1 Kings 12: Jeroboam, Israel's first king after the kingdom was split, established cult worship as an alternative to that which the people had been used to in Jerusalem. He did so to solidify his northern kingdom and prevent the people from migrating back to Judah (vv.25-33). He accomplished this by creating an "official" priesthood and initiating a new style of worship, while being careful that it did not differ a great deal from that which the people were familiar. NOTE that the "official" priesthood was illegitimate, the time and place of the worship was improper, and the object of the worship was not the LORD. However, the ordained feast was just "like unto" (vs.32) the legitimate one taking place in Judah.

E) 2 Kings 16: Ahaz, Judah's 12th king, duplicated a heathen altar and then burned traditional sacrifices on it (vv.10-16). He was careful to utilize the familiar Temple vessels which he had rearranged to his liking. NOTE that in this instance all the well-known traditional morning and evening, burnt, meat, drink and blood offerings were offered on this false altar. As in the other instances, Satan was successful in deceiving the people to alter their worship in a way designed to please self and not God. Ultimately, Satan was to get the glory.

III - THE CONTEMPORARY IDEA THAT GOD IS DOING A "NEW THING" IS OFTEN USED TO JUSTIFY NEW FORMS OF WORSHIP WHICH CAN LEAD US FROM TRUTH TO APOSTASY

A) Isaiah 43:19: *Behold, I will do a new thing... I will... make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.* The context of this passage refers to Israel's future restoration. NOTE that all references to God doing "new" things are always related to:

1) the New Covenant in Christ Jesus' blood (Mt 26:28) resulting in new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). (Also see: Jn 13:34, Mk 16:17, Heb 10:20, Eph 4:24, Col 3:10, Mark 1:27 and Acts 17:19)

2) a future new heavens and new earth (Isa 65:17 and 2 Pet 3:13) with a new Jerusalem (Rev 3:12) where we will have a new name (Rev 2:17), sing a new song (Rev 5:9), and all things will be new (Rev 21:5).

B) Ecclesiastes 1:9: *...there is no new thing under the sun.*

The Bible does not teach that God should be expected to do additional "new" things during the Church era which are outside of his revealed Word. He is not the author of confusion, but gave his eternally abiding Word for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction (1 Cor 14:33, and 2 Tim 3:16).

C) Apostasy: The Greek term "apostasia" is used only twice in the New Testament. It signifies a total turning away from and abandonment of that which is true, for that which is false.

Acts 21:21 - Paul is accused of encouraging Jews to "forsake" the Law of Moses. He was in reality trying to teach them not to believe in Jesus within the Old Testament system of Judaism.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - Paul warns that the Day of the Lord (Second Coming of Jesus Christ) will not come until there is first a "falling away." The last-day apostasy will unfold as a widespread abandonment of truth in exchange for an embrace of that which is false.

IV - A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF PROPER WORSHIP IS ONE WAY TO AVOID ERROR

A) John 4:23— *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth...*

B) Tri-part Man: Consider this thought. Man is a tri-part being: spirit, soul and body. Although it is true that our whole being responds to the presence of God, God always deals with man through his spirit and never through the soul or flesh. Satan, on the other hand, always deals with man through his soul and flesh. Consider two examples:

1) Error in worship music comes when the songs minister to the flesh (i.e., beat/volume that moves the senses).

2) Error in the exercise of the prophetic ministry comes when the message originates in the mind of man instead of his spirit. This is sometimes seen when the prophet is observed "listening" to hear a message out of the air for his recipient, even as a fortune teller might do.

All worship must be based on the truth of God's Word (John 6:63, *...words I speak are spirit and life*; John 17:17, *...thy word is truth*). Worship to God must originate and flow out from our spirit, and never be dominated by our soul or flesh. The sole purpose of worship is to praise God, to extol his attributes and to proclaim his works. It is never to be done for our pleasure, nor to stimulate our carnal senses.

CONCLUSION

Satan, our adversary and master deceiver, will look for opportunities to provide an alternative means of worship that appeals to man's flesh (his senses) and his intellect and sentimentality. If he is successful, the object of worship will shift from an offering acceptable to God to something that gratifies man and ultimately serves the intent of the Enemy.

In Galatians 1, the Apostle Paul was amazed that God's people were so easily removed from truth to an unacceptable alternative. We are to be watchmen, alert to Satan's devices and the reality of the coming end-time apostasy that will sweep the last generation to live before the return of Christ. May God grant us discernment to know the truth, and the love and strength to obey it. May God bless all of you.



It's In the Bible!

A Study in the Word with Rev. Eric R Towse

Topic: Is Your Church Matthew 25 Compliant?

IN the Fall of 1999 a general panic swelled across America and the rest of the world as everyone asked, “**What will happen when December 31 becomes January 1, 2000?**” Would the financial systems of the world collapse? Would all computers freeze-up? Would there be power outages as generating plants ground to a halt? Would airliners crash? Would there be an accidental nuclear missile launch from Russia, China, or the USA? Would communications satellites continue to function? **WOULD THERE BE T.V. IN THE MORNING?**

As the experts pondered the possibilities, many of us stocked up on candles, canned goods, bottled water, hundreds of dollars in cash, and, in this author’s case, a generator for my country home. Well, Y2K Eve came and went, and aside from a power failure at the stroke of midnight caused by my practical-joking son-in-law who tripped the circuit breakers, we all survived with barely a flicker.

Individuals and businesses spent billions of dollars in preparation for what could have been a catastrophe of mind-boggling proportions. In retrospect, computer operating systems received upgrades that were probably long overdue, goods purchased by consumers were eventually used with little going to waste, and, in all, we were notably “**Y2K Compliant.**”

The Bible is replete with warnings and admonitions about another event that may come upon us at any time—when we least expect it: The return of the Lord Jesus Christ for his Bride. Matthew 24:42 warns us to “*keep watch*” because we do not know the day or the hour when the Lord will come. Matthew 25, ironically, begins with a parable of ten virgins storing oil for their lamps in preparation for the bridegroom, and later warns of a separation between “sheep and goats” at the time of the Lord’s return. It is the criteria for pleasing the Lord: compliance with Matthew 25:31-46, that will result in either receiving the promised inheritance or eternal punishment. Let’s examine our hearts, our lives, and our churches to see how we will fare:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matthew 25:31-49 KJV

THE righteous in the above parable were commended because they fed Jesus when they found him to be hungry, gave Him drink when we was thirsty, took Him in as a stranger, clothed Him, cared for Him when he was sick, and visited Him in prison because Jesus identified Himself with “*the least of these brothers of mine.*” (v.40, NIV) Now, if we as a church assemble together as members of one body and receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve and to worship, won’t the Spirit of God lead us to comply with the Word of God? Of course. But will God’s people obey? Not necessarily. Consider the following cases:

I. There is a church that was blessed with carpenters that rebuilt their sanctuary. This craftsmanship continued throughout the church building and included a full kitchen with a large pan-

try that was filled to overflowing with boxed and canned goods for distribution to the needy. One day, a couple walked in to the church on a Sunday morning and asked the greeter for some help. They explained that they had had nothing to eat and were in dire straits. Could the church help? The couple was turned away. They were not members of that church and were unknown. In order to receive assistance they were told that they would have to come back another time and fill out an application! Was this church Matthew 25 compliant? Hardly!

II. There is a large church that has been blessed with a wonderful choir and a large ministerial staff. On several occasions, the church was contacted with an urgent request to visit a

It's in the Bible
• CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 •

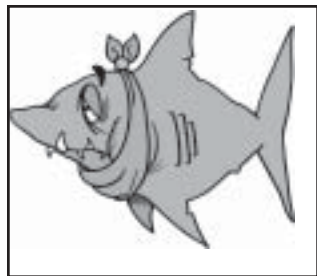
A Childrens' Story

"A Shark Goes to the Dentist"

by "Uncle Vince" Immordino



REMEMBER going to the dentist and having to sit in the waiting room until your turn came? Would you believe that **sharks** (those big monsters with *big, big* teeth in those *big, big* jaws, need to visit a shark dentist and wait in line for their turn to have their teeth cleaned?



I can just hear you say, "Who in their right mind would clean a shark's teeth?" But there are schools of fish that do just that.

Sharks are flesh eaters. They need to have their teeth and tongue cleaned or they will get sick and die! Did you know that crocodiles also need to have their teeth and



tongues cleaned? Crocodiles who are air-breathing animals require an air-breathing dentist to clean their teeth. **Crocodiles** have the **Plover birds** to do their dental work.

Sharks don't breathe air. They use their gills to take the oxygen out of the water to live. They need an under water dentist. When sharks need their teeth cleaned, the line up under water and wait for the under water dentist to come and clean out their teeth and mouth. This underwater dentist is the **shrimp**. Shrimps swim in and out of the shark's mouth to clean their teeth and tongues of bits of food and parasites. When they are finished cleaning, they just swim out of the shark's mouth. Only then do the sharks close their mouths and swim off to hunt for other fish.

How did this come about? Do you think years ago a nice friendly shark asked a shrimp to take a drift through its mouth? Get real! That could never have happened. The only logical explanation is that, In the beginning, (in six literal days), God created the heavens, the earth, and all the living things therein.

God realized that sharks would need a dentist. The loving God that he is provided for all their needs.



I am the shark's dentist. I'm really very small and grateful the sharks seem to realize that they need my help and don't eat me while I clean their teeth! With every breath I take (through my gills), I am also grateful to the moon.

Yes, the moon! While I can't breathe like you do, I need oxygen to live. Sure there is plenty of oxygen in water. Water is made up of two parts hydrogen to one part oxygen: H₂O. I can't separate water into hydrogen and oxygen, but with my gills I can remove oxygen that has dissolved into the water. Let me explain. You, of course, drink soda. What is soda? Men take carbon dioxide gas and dissolve it under pressure into flavored water and put it into a bottle. Then



you have soda. It is the carbon dioxide gas that puts the fizz—the bubbles in soda.



Who dissolves the oxygen in water for the fish to breathe? Believe it or not, it's the moon! Planet Earth has a moon that's very different from all other planets. Our moon is one-fourth the size of Earth. The gravitational pull of the moon depends upon its

size and distance from the Earth. God figured it out — just right! If it were larger (or closer) its gravitational pull on the Earth's oceans would cause great tidal waves over the Earth destroying life. If it were smaller (or farther away) it would not be able to generate the tides and waves necessary for fish to live. As the waves slap the air above, the oxygen in the air dissolves in water replacing the oxygen that we fish breathe.

Can you believe some so-called scientists tell us that the moon's relationship to the Earth is the result of a series of lucky accidents? Common sense and logic tell us that where there is a design, there must be a Designer. The perfect relationship between the moon, the Earth, and its oceans demand a creative intelligence beyond our wildest imagination:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

Uncle Vince



Bits 'n Pieces

TRANSFORMED

by **T. J. Buonomo**
Evangelical Christian Church
Rochester, New York

In my early teenage years I was the type of kid that had a difficult time accepting anything my parents said if it was in opposition to what I wanted or believed. This was a time of transition where my character was shaped by the choices I made. I now realize something about being a teenager: when you reach that certain age, a veil of innocence is lifted from your eyes and every decision you make in life has consequences, whether good or bad. I began to see the world in a different light. When I was a small child, I was oblivious to the ways of the world; my world revolved around simple and basic needs and my main concern was how to have fun. But as everyone grows up sooner or later, so did I. I began to see the world as a source of limitless possibilities and with this knowledge came the responsibility of making choices.

In the book of Genesis, God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He told them they could eat from any tree in the garden save this one. God, in His perfect love, chose not to make man slave to His will, but gave man a choice. He warned Adam and Eve not to eat from that tree because He knew that it would result in a loss of innocence and, consequently, the responsibility in knowing and choosing right from wrong. Yet, Eve chose not to heed the warning of God and instead was coerced by Satan in his serpent form to eat the fruit. Satan told her the truth, saying that her eyes would be opened and she would become like God, knowing good and evil. And so she and Adam ate, and found the weight of the knowledge of sin crashing down upon them.

Like Adam and Eve, a choice was set before me either to obey God and honor my parents or to reach for the fruits of life that seemed so appealing at first, but after eaten, take away your innocence and joy. Like a poison, this fruit begins to drain away the life from you until, on your death bed, you realize what you've done to yourself, and it's too late. I learned that nothing is gained without a price. Nevertheless, I sped drunkenly through my early teenage years past hazard signs, past the counsel of my parents who continued to pray earnestly for me, until I finally had spun out of control. I could have died or been seriously and permanently injured if I had not let go of the "wheel" and let Someone take control.

Like Adam and Eve, I allowed myself to believe that there was more to life than acting like a clean-cut Christian kid who goes to church every Sunday and grows up to be everything his

father wants him to be. I abandoned the counsel of my parents and reached for the fruit of pride. As I bit into it, I realized that it was *my* life and my parents *couldn't tell me how to live*. Next, I reached for the fruit of pleasure and my eyes and ears were opened to all the "cool" movies and music, and I started to find things in common with a certain group of "friends".

I no longer cared much about what my parents told me because, though I didn't take much notice of it then, the poison of the fruit I was eating was flowing through my heart. This poison is called deception; it is the most vile and crafty of poisons because it looks and tastes and sounds and feels so good that you want to drink it in even though you know it is bad for you. It is sweet going down but bitter in your stomach. It rots your insides yet you can only feel what it does to you in a very distant and subconscious way, as though it was a dreamlike afterthought.

As the poison flowed through me, its effects became apparent to everyone but me. I became very rebellious and stubborn, selfish and unreasonable. Resentment toward my parents and a dislike for authority grew like a cancer in me. I found myself beginning to like high energy, rebellious music and bands that sang about hate and anger. After an argument with my parents I would go into my room and turn on the radio and seethe with anger. I found I could relate to bands like the Smashing Pumpkins, Nirvana, Rage Against the Machine, Marilyn Manson, etc. I especially had resentment toward my dad which grew daily. I remember days when I couldn't wait to leave the house because every night would bring forth a new argument. I began to become physically and mentally exhausted because of stress. I lost my appetite, and sleep was precious because it meant a temporary rest from my problems. Every day that I awoke was another day I hated.

Throughout this time my parents doggedly persevered. When I look back, I see that it was a miracle that our family didn't break under the stress. It was only by god's mercy that I wasn't living in a foster home or out on the streets somewhere. My parents believed that God would carry our family through and that I could come to my senses. Although mistakes were made on both sides, my parents held to their faith, and God honored them. One night I was at a youth retreat with other teenagers from my church and everyone was worshipping God. I looked around and memories and images flashed through my mind. God, in His gentle way, was whispering to me that He could take away my pain and save me from my sins and mistakes. People call it a conscience, but it is really the Holy Spirit. God revealed that He loved me despite my sins and despite everything bad I had ever done. People have heard about how Jesus died on the cross to cleanse us from our sins and that if we accept His death and res-

urrection we will be saved. Growing up in church my whole life, I heard it all the time but it never had real, concrete meaning to me until that night.

One of the adults asked that if anyone had never asked Jesus Christ to forgive them of their sins and to save them, they should step forward. After a moment's hesitation I made the decision that I had been fighting and hating for too long. I stepped forward, knelt down, and repented. I broke down and cried. Every emotion I had walled-up inside me flooded out. I asked God to forgive me, to give me a new life, and to become my Lord and Savior. Ever since that day, my life has been changed. My relationship with my family has been restored and I no longer have resentment toward my parents. The amazing thing about God is that He healed me so completely that I cannot even remember much of what happened before that. I can only remember enough to tell people what a difference God has made in my life.

Many people go to church but do not really believe in God—in the power of Jesus Christ, because they have never experienced it. Some people do not believe in a God at all. But the Bible says that one day everyone will kneel before the throne of God and acknowledge Him as Lord. If you stop and look around at the complexity of creation and the wonder of the stars, you cannot truly say that there is no God. I know without a doubt that there is a God who love us so much that He sent His Son to die on a cross for our sins. I am humbled by Him every day. I give Him glory and honor, offering what little I have to Him because I have been transformed by Him.

This was submitted as an assignment in a high school English class.—Ed.

**ANTIQUE WHITE, AN HEIRLOOM,
AND A FAMILY**
by Shirley Jean Cuomo

"Antique white," my aunt, the pastor's wife, replied when I asked her the color of the newly painted interior of our church, the Christian Assembly in Follansbee, WV. What a perfect name for a perfect color! The word antique reminds me of heirlooms, legacies, souvenirs, and valuables, and as I stood in the sanctuary, my thoughts drifted to my rich, proud church heritage. Vivid among my childhood memories are the bilingual services with our Italian congregation fervently singing hymns in their native language. I did not know Italian, but I followed the words and joined in the singing.

In our church, originally named *Chiesa Cristiana del Nord America* (Christian Church of North America), the congregation sang from two hymnals. Entitled Nuovo Libro di Inni e Salmi Spirituali (New Book of Hymns and Spiritual Psalms), one contained the lyrics, and the other contained the music and the lyrics. These Italian hymnals captured an era.

Many years had passed since the congregation had sung the Italian hymns. Yearning to hear them again, I sat one day at my piano with the Italian hymnal, English hymnals, paper, and pencil. Equipped, I embarked on my treasure hunt in the comforts of

my home. I opened the Italian hymnal, a treasure chest of songs, each a gold nugget refined by the voices of my Italian Christian forefathers.

I scanned the first hymn for a familiar word or phrase. Then, with my limited musical skills and much determination, I played the opening measures. Striking the piano keys, I listened to each chord and note that could release the memory of a song. I explored page after page until I rediscovered many musical treasures. The melodiousness and beauty of the expressive Italian language flooded my memories as voices of the founders singing their love songs to God rang in my ears and heart.

Some of the hymns I had known in Italian long before I knew them in English, for example, "*Vincitor! Vincitor!*" ("Victory All the Time") and "*Salvati siam, Salvati siam*" ("He Took My Sins Away"). I found "*Lavami, Lavami,*" which means "Wash Me, Wash Me." This hymn, which I have heard in Italian only, is one of my favorites. Our congregation probably loved it as much as "The Old Rugged Cross." I remember when Sister Virginia handed me her mother's souvenir copy of the hymnal, she smiled and said, "*Lavami* is in there." Other favorites I uncovered were "*Sulla Croce Ei mori per me*" ("He Was Nailed to the Cross for Me"), "*Quando il Sangue io vedro*" ("When I See the Blood"), and "*Io M'arrendo Ognor*" ("I Surrender All"). This last hymn is a good example of how words are changed in the translation. *Ognor* is a poetic Italian word meaning "always." I surrender always is a beautiful change. When I hear or sing this English hymn, I'll think, "I surrender all . . . ways." I like my discovery of this change.

Each discovery of a hymn prompted thoughts. "I remember this." "Oh, I loved this one." "Wasn't it last Sunday we were all together singing this song?" Are all those years really gone? Yes, the hands of the ticking clock swept away the need for the Italian hymns, which faded from the services, but not from my golden memories. I emerged from this adventurous musical hunt with a nostalgic autumn feeling mixed with satisfaction, joy, and pride. I had identified many Italian hymns and matched many with the original English hymns. Ending my hunt was like closing a family album.

Opening the book Fiftieth Anniversary Christian Church of North America 1927-1977, I read intently the history of the hymnal. Displayed is the series of six hymnals. Also shown are copies of letters from music companies, such as Rodeheaver Company, and songwriters, such as James Black and William Kirkpatrick. These important letters granted permission for selected songs to be used in the Italian hymnal. Selections from the Rodeheaver Company included "I Walk with the King" and "Jesus Is the Friend You Need." Selections from James Black included "When the Roll Is Called up Yonder" and "I Remember Calvary."

I am grateful to these dedicated CCNA forefathers for their efforts to secure permission to use the hymns, to translate them with careful phrasing to match the notes, and to write numerous original hymns. These forefathers deserve to be honored and remembered for their inspiration, wisdom, and foresight. I thank them for creating these heirlooms.

Bits 'n Pieces

• CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE •

Heirlooms are meant to be preserved and passed on to other family members. I was told the heirs for the hymnals from my church lived in northern Italy. As brothers and sisters in Christ, they have shared in my rich heritage. Perhaps with the multicultural emphasis in our global society, they will learn English and someday, as I did, match these hymns with the English hymns. Isn't belonging to the family of God wonderful?

One Saturday in February, our church held a special service for Love Month. I seized the moment. I asked Pastor Mancano to sing in Italian the chorus of a hymn I love, "Io M'arrendo Ognor" ("I Surrender All"). What beautiful sounds we heard! Later, one of the guests, a native Italian who also speaks English, happily shared that he, too, had joined the pastor in the singing. Once again an Italian melody echoed in the sanctuary. Italian melodies will forever echo in my heart.

FEED MY SHEEP
by Samuel D. Museums

Too many pastors and so many sheep
have lack of pastures and lack of green grass.
Many ministers consider the upkeep
consult their rosters, cut Sunday School class.

Now the sheep grumble, and loudly they bleat
receive little care and manna it is not.
Now the sheep stumble, their food in not sweet
they nibble their fare, that is gone to pot.

They leave the dry fold, in search of good food,
they look for green leas, with wide open gates.
They're hungry and cold, dry bread would taste good,
they're looking for peace, to alter their fate.

Some pastors desire a whole herd of lambs;
the old sheep demand for some revealed fare.
Jaded pastors aspire for vacation camps,
and sometimes command for the sheep to care.

Some Shepherds do care, for their given charge;
they're concerned about souls, not their own wages.
With patience they bear, though the load be large,
with Godly goals through the storm rages.

Some have ambition for titles and fame;
the world will account by its shout and noise.
They have a mission, and make it a game
climbing the social mount, gain stature and poise.

Some men of the cloth think only of clothes;
they hold down a job that's easily bled.
Fluffing like a moth, they strut and they pose,
they sway like a cob, with no heart or head

Other devoted men have the call of God;
they do His bidding and the church has peace.
They make things happen, without Satan's fraud;
he takes a kidding, with a soul at ease.

Every life will end, and then the reward;
human's future life is everlasting.
Our acts will defend if they're in accord
or meet a new strife: Eternal blasting.

Let me be a bridge, Lord
Hold me by your hand
So I may reach for my brother
To show him the promised land.

Lift us higher so we can be
Beyond a promised prayer.
Give us faith so we can see
How desperately you care

Lift us by the power
Of you precious holy Name
Where peace and joy lay before us
a waiting to be claimed.

Thank you for the vision
Of peace, of love and hope
Thank you for lifting us higher,
Dear precious Holy Ghost.

Marie Elena Wilson

Eastern District

How exciting it is to share with you what the Lord is doing here at Christian Assembly Pentecostal Church (CAPC) (Assemblea Cristiana), a CCNA Church. We are located at 416 East 11th Street on the lower East side of Manhattan, New York City. We will soon have a newly built church facility. I am Rev. Edmundo L. Garcia, the Senior Pastor and I would like to tell you of the unusual way this came about.

The temple building, which has housed this Church, was originally constructed in the early 1900s and had its last renovation in 1948. It had reached a bad state of deterioration and it was becoming impossible to safely worship there. Several architects and church developers had deemed the building unsafe and in danger of ruin. I solicited estimates to bring the building up to standard. The amount was staggering, raging upward of three million dollars. Needless to say, we did not have that kind of money and because of the condition of the building, we could not get a mortgage.

In 1996 water damage had reached deep inside the building structure creating grave problems to the electrical system. The water had flowed into the parapets, and was coming through the

front façade. Each month that passed, a greater threat of danger and safety had to be faced. Also, anyone walking in or alongside the temple area was in danger. By this time both CAPC and the Eastern District had exhausted their funds trying to get the building repaired so that worship could continue. We hoped to contain all damages to the deteriorating structure. It was my thinking that if we could only contain the water damage, it would buy us some time until we could find a permanent solution.

The matter was brought before the Eastern District Presbytery. Rev. James Demola, then AGO And District Overseer, instructed me to make an appeal to the National Headquarters. After a long and sincere conversation with Rev. John DeTurco, General Overseer, CCNA, consent was given to appeal to Rev. John Ferguson, Director of Home Missions for assistance. Bro Ferguson then immediately made the situation at CAPC his Department's priority concern. He was able to raise a great portion of the necessary funds by calling on the churches of the CCNA. Together with the Eastern District, Home Missions and the Members of CAPC, we were able to control the water problems for the time being.

Old problems did not go away and new problems began to surface. The boiler was in need of repair, the bathroom facilities were constantly out of order, leaking plumbing and the sewer needed replacement. Building violation, sidewalk violations and cancellation of our insurance, brought us to the point where we had to make some unhappy decisions. WE WOULD HAVE TO COME TO THE FINAL STAGES OF WORSHIP IN THIS OLD HOUSE OF PRAYER, IN WHICH THERE WERE OUTSTANDING SERVICES OF PRAISE TO GOD. Our hearts were saddened and we called for prayer, prayer, and more prayer!

Hebrews 1:1-2 tell us that God at many times and in many ways spoke to the prophets. And that today He speaks to us through His Son Jesus. During that time of anguished prayer, God revealed to us what He was going to do and that has become "The Miracle on East 11th Street."

In the same week that I spoke to Brother Demola, a local developer contacted me with a most unusual offer. If we would turn the building over to him, he would demolish it completely and build a totally new complete place of worship, without a single dollar of cost to the church. The developer would then build a seven-story condominium complex above the church. In effect, he would build us a new church and we would give him the rights to the air space above.

The CCNA Eastern District would own the Church portion and the developer would own the residential portion. The first floor and basement would make up the church complex. The basement would house kitchen facilities, classrooms, fellowship hall and rest rooms. The street level area would make up the sanctuary. It would have skylights, a sound system, pews, carpeting, a foyer, entrance way, baptistery and a wheel chair lift—all in compliance with local building codes, and all at no cost to the Church or the Eastern District! CAPC would have a new temple. The developer has also provided a free, temporary quarters for the congregation to conduct services during construction.

The complete and revised proposal was presented to the ministerial body at the November 1999 District Council Meeting.

The developer also addressed the body with additional details of the project. Brother Demola, the developer, and the attorney for the District, answered questions regarding the plan. The project was approved by acclamation with great joy.

Once having accepted the proposal, The Eastern District Presbytery appointed Rev. Joseph Shipley (newly elected D.O., A.G.O.) and myself, together with the attorney for the District to represent the District in any and all negotiations. The negotiations with the developer and his attorneys, to secure the best terms and clear details of the project were intense. Before the papers were signed to execute the agreement, Rev. Shipley asked the developer, his attorneys and associates to gather as he led in prayer, asking the Lord to take charge of this project and that His hand would lead in this venture as it proceeded.

A special ground breaking ceremony was held on Sunday, June 25, 2000, to commemorate the actual beginning of the construction phase. Photos show my wife Bruni and I (with helmets and shovels) the contractor and developer, Mr. Donald Cappocia and the current officers and members of the Congregation. The congregation and I, their Pastor had mixed emotions about leaving their Old House of Prayer because of the rich heritage within its walls. However, They are rejoicing in seeing how God is miraculously providing a great solution to what seemed to be an insurmountable problem.

Our General Overseer, John DeTurco preached the last "Official" Service to be held in the old Sanctuary back on November 28, 1999, before the temporary relocation. The congregation of Christian Assembly is thankful for their new temporary quarters, while the New Construction is being completed. At this writing the Structure is up and is in the final stages of completion. We have been informed by the developer and contractor that we will soon be relocation to our new temple, sometime this Fall. Constantly giving praise to God, we are ready to return to claim the "Miracles on East 11th Street."

As Pastor, together with the members of Christian Assembly I ask for your support in prayers as we prepare to enter this new Temple. Yes, there is a miracle on East 11th street and the new challenge is ahead. With the new renaissance taking place in New York City, and upper class of residents moving in everyday. They are looking for churches that preach the word of God in truth and power. You can rest assured that Christian Assembly will continue to be a beacon of light drawing humankind to a safe place. The theme of the Gospel being preached will not change from that which was preached by Rev. Francesco Emman, the founder in 1913.

Manhattan, New York is a field that is "White unto the harvest" The cost is high and souls are being lost moment by moment. But God has performed this Miracle on East 11th Street and has kept Christian Assembly here to reap the harvest. Bringing the lost to a victorious life in Christ Jesus!

Christian Assembly thanks everyone who has stood by us with your prayers and encouragement and we ask that you continue to uphold us before the Lord for the work ahead.

LOOKING FORWARD TO DEDICATION DAY.

Rev. Edmundo Garcia

District News

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 •

person who lived in the neighborhood who was dying. Each time, the visitation ministry staff accepted the request, with thanks, and gave assurances of an immediate visit. On each and every occasion the person died without any help from the church. When follow-up phone calls were made to ascertain why the church ignored the request for help, a spokesperson said, "The laborers are few!" Attempts to contact the "senior" pastor of that church were to no avail as he was always either "too busy," "unavailable," or "out of town" and never returned phone calls. Perhaps, someday, he will realize that his church is flagrantly "non-compliant" with Matthew 25.

III. Still another church shut down its food pantry when it was determined that the church was not realizing any appreciable growth as a result of this outreach!

Perhaps the reader can add to this list.

I don't believe that the Lord demands every church to operate a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, and clothing ministry, etc. But I do believe that "much is expected from those to whom much has been given." The church with the beautiful hand-crafted wood cabinets would have been so much more beautiful in the Lord's eyes had they been empty of food given to the poor. The church with the world-famous choir could have given the dying they ignored CDs or tapes with music that could have soothed their soul as they were in the throes of death, and no church can realistically measure the effectiveness of its outreach ministries to the poor simply "by the numbers." Perhaps we can learn from the mistakes of others and from the simple outline of Matthew 25.

With respect to visitation, most churches do make an honest effort to visit the sick, especially when the affected person is a member of their congregation. What is too often the case, however, is that such visitation is delegated to associate ministers leaving the "very busy" senior pastor to the enormous responsibilities involved in the running of the church. Would Jesus agree with that arrangement? Remember that the Son of God HIMSELF went to minister to the needs of the sick while he was bringing the Good News of the Kingdom of God. It seems that if there is anything the shepherd of a flock should do besides preach an anointed sermon on Sunday morning is to **visit the sick!** (This is, of course, in addition to the elders visiting and anointing according to James Chapter 5.)

Many pastors tell of "incidental" witness while visiting the sick. A visit to a church member in the hospital may result in an unexpected opportunity to pray for or counsel a patient in the next bed.

The pastor that honors a request to visit and pray for a sick person who is unknown to him or to the church is truly visiting Jesus.

In the same manner, persons in prison should be visited whenever possible. Although a prison may not be nearby, prisoners may be ministered to through letter writing (men to men and women to women.) Also, any church can easily offer a Bible study course by mail through its Christian Education ministry, and for those churches that are near a correctional facility, the Lord may place such a work upon the hearts of members of the congregation. Most facilities offer training through the office of

the prison chaplain.

Nursing homes are also a place where visitation is needed. Most nursing homes welcome church participation in direct ministry to residents. These services are generally coordinated through the nursing home's volunteer office. The elderly love to receive cards and mail. Perhaps your church might consider an "Adopt a Grandparent" program through a local nursing home?

Most cities have municipal soup kitchens or shelters. If your church is not equipped to feed a hungry person that happens by, the location of immediate help should be known and assistance with transportation should be considered. Each church should prayerfully consider a food-pantry where canned goods and non-perishables can be distributed to people in need. Warm clothing and blankets should be also available. Again, the Lord is faithful: He will touch the hearts of church members to support these ministries. It need not be a responsibility that falls solely upon the pastor's shoulders.

Some may choose to view Matthew 25 in the broader sense of "do unto others" rather than as a blueprint for specific ministry mandates. Small churches or those with mainly elderly congregations may not be able to participate in many of the ministries it might like to. However, this may lead to affiliations resulting in churches of different denominations working together. Even better! Again, *to whom much is given, much is required.*

If you feel that your church is not compliant in a particular principle in Matthew 25, please pray that the Lord will place on YOUR heart the burden to start or to participate in such a ministry in your church. This will be a blessing to *"the least of these brothers of mine,"* and, thereby to the Lord.

Become a worker in the greatest missionary field: your own backyard! Let it never be said of any CCNA church,

"...the laborers are few."

Rev. Eric R Towse

(Views expressed are those of the author)

Vista . . .

would like to hear from you. (Yes, you!)

Please notify us of District happenings and local church events. Had a great meeting or a special speaker? Send a photo and the story. Let others know what the Lord is doing in your church, community, and district.

VISTA is a national publication with local roots.

like some of the older songs, there is still no question of God's acceptance of such music. What about CCM? Many have established the guidelines for acceptability based on the words of the song. Does the song merely mention God? Then it's good enough for some. Others set the standard by those who wrote the music. Is it sold in the Christian bookstore? Then it is acceptable. On the other end, I've heard folks denounce all music that contains the 'rock beat', basing their convictions toward the rhythm and tempo of the music or a particular instrument used. But what does God say? Does He have a set of standards and guidelines for us to follow? I believe He does, and they are found in His Word. Let's take a look.

Just prior to the invasion of Canaan by the nation of Israel, Moses spoke to the children of Israel in order to prepare them for what they were about to do. In Deuteronomy 12:2-5 he speaks regarding the altars of worship that the children of Israel will come across in their conquest through the pagan communities. This is what he said:

"You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things. But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go."

He again warns them in v. 30 of the same chapter,

"...take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way."

What caught my attention as I read these verses was the phrase ***'You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way'***. According to this text, idolatry is not determined by WHO one worships but HOW one worships. To God, offering sacrifices to Him on any altar other than the one in the Temple, even with sincere intentions, was just as much sin as worshipping Baal, Molech, Ashtoreth or any of the other idols in the land. The Israelites were to be careful to only worship God in the prescribed way and in the prescribed place. Notice verse 5, ***"But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses...and there you shall go."***

We know now that he was speaking of Jerusalem, the place He chose for the Temple site. Well here we are, Gentiles saved by grace, living thousands of miles from Jerusalem. Even if we could afford to go to the Holy City, the place God chose for true worship, there's no temple to be found. And even if there were a temple, we would not be able to enter. So where do we go? Jesus, speaking to the Samaritan woman in John Chapter 4, addresses this very issue:

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in

Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (Vs 21, 23-24)

Upon saying this, Jesus transfers the acceptable place of worship from the Temple in Jerusalem to a certain place within our hearts. Now all worship, no matter when or where, is accepted by the Father if it is done in Spirit and in Truth. Jesus came to bring fulfillment to the Law of Moses, and in this passage He reveals to us that worship is a matter of the heart.

We have already concluded that the music we listen to will inherently cause us to worship. We have also concluded it's not just who we worship that's the issue, it's how; worship is a matter of the heart. Therefore, how do we know that, when we listen to music, we are being led to worship in spirit and truth, and that God and the true things of God are being exalted in our hearts? Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 7:16 that, if they could not determine the true spiritual nature of something, they could look at the visible fruit that was manifested and then make a right judgement. The Apostle Paul lists for us the visible fruit that is borne out of anything that is done by the Spirit of God:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23

Here we have the visible evidence of worship that is done in spirit and truth. If these qualities are manifested in our lives, then we know we are worshipping the Father in the way that is acceptable and pleasing to Him. It's comforting to know that, even though Satan can masquerade as an angel of light, and can be found in our midst as a wolf in sheep's clothing, the one thing he cannot imitate, duplicate, or replicate is the fruit of the Spirit. ***"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another."*** (Verse 17).

Therefore we must test the music we are feeding our souls by the actions and attitudes that emanate from our lives. Most often, the spiritual impact that music has on people is immediately seen in the expressions that accompany the music. For example, joy is clearly seen upon the tear-stained face of a worshipper whose hands are lifted to God as they sing out "Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!" And how about some of the more contemporary songs? "Shout to the Lord all the earth let us sing! Power and majesty, praise to the King!..." These songs, written years later with heavy drum beats and electric guitar effects can produce the same joy and peace in a soul as the older songs, and will be clearly evidenced in the lives of those singing. Likewise, the spiritual impact of music that is inappropriate for God's people is manifested in its own expressions.

Paul calls this evidence the 'works of the flesh'. According to Galatians 5:19 ***"the works of the flesh are evident."*** Moshing is an activity that accompanies many "Christian" concerts and is invoked by certain styles of music. Young people will gather into what is called a 'mosh pit' and proceed to slam into one another uncontrollably. What words could we use to characterize this form of behavior? 'Gentleness'? 'Peace'?, 'Kindness'? How about 'Self-control'? Hardly! Moshing is diametrically opposed to these qualities and is clearly out of the will of God.

When we see moshing, we see harsh behavior, we see outbursts of violence, and we see a complete lack of self-control. Therefore churches and youth pastors should be boldly and confidently coming against this practice. The Word of God warns us that *“those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* (Galatians 5:21)

There are other evidences of the works of the flesh that can be found within the music culture, like the exaltation of band members. I've been at a Christian concert where the teenagers were pressing in to the stage to lift their hands to the singer or guitarist, screaming and jumping up and down. It was clear that it was not Christ being exalted, it was the group. *“The works of the flesh are...idolatry.”* (Verse 19-20). Because adolescence is such an emotional period in life, teens have an incredible capacity to worship. When a group spends a great deal of effort drawing attention to itself, young people will idolize.

There are other manifestations that can be associated with music that are not as evident as moshing or idolatry, but are just as damaging to God's people. For example, I've noticed an attitude in young people that seems to say “It's too hard to serve God—I keep failing Him—I'm no good.” These teens tend to walk around defeated all the time, always stumbling over the same temptations and never seeming to mature in Christ. Many of the songs I found that they listen to seemed to harp on the difficulties of the Christian life, conveying a deep condemning sorrow for their constant failures. It's all right to express sorrow for sin in music, but the purpose should be to bring repentance that results in eternal life (2 Corinthians 7:10). **Songs that wallow in the misery of our weaknesses without ever declaring the victory of the Cross or the joy that gives us strength to serve God are unhealthy!** These songs seem to foster spiritual immaturity and sap young people of the confidence that they need to live a victorious life in Christ.

Despite God's warning, Israel failed to completely rid the Promise Land of the altars of worship that were found in the villages and cities. Throughout their history until the Exile, these altars called ‘high places’ were a part of life. Daily, they would go to the high places and offer sacrifices to Jehovah God on man made altars. Why? Because it was cool, because it was contemporary, and because everyone else was doing it. No one bothered to take God's warning seriously, and everyone claimed they had good intentions. Even godly kings like King Asa, who brought spiritual reforms to Israel to turn them back to God by ridding the land of idolatry, failed to destroy the high places (1 Kings 15:14). These seemingly harmless places of worship would eventually serve as the doorway by which idolatry would enter into the lives of God's people. Gradually, more and more pagan practices would be accepted as part of their worship. Gradually, God's people would become more and more blinded to what they were doing. In time, at those same altars, God's people would end up committing such heinous acts as ritual prostitution, witchcraft and human sacrifice, resulting in the outpouring of God's wrath upon them in judgement.

The parallel is obvious. If God's people accept such practices like moshing, head banging, and the idolizing of music groups among its youth, then what's next? How about immodest dress, promiscuous behavior, rebellious attitudes, filthy language and violence? These are following in natural progression and

are already being tolerated among many youth ministries today. Unless this progression is stopped, the future of the church will rest in the hands of this present generation of young people who will have no discernment between good and evil and no ability to guard the truths of the faith. *“When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord....”* (Judges 2:10)

What must we do? Now that we see the problem, how do we address it? How do we keep certain music from developing sinful attitudes in the hearts of our young people? The answer is twofold. First we need to remember that music is a matter of the heart, and it's impossible to legislate matters of the heart. For instance, let's say I'm the father of a 14-year-old boy. My son is really into Christian heavy metal rock. When he plays his music it makes my blood boil. Perhaps it reminds me of the music culture I came out of when I came to Christ years ago, or perhaps it is just plain offensive to me. Now I can scream at him and threaten his life, but will that make him not like the music? Of course it won't. We cannot enforce people's interests anymore than we can save them. Therefore the emotional and spiritual effects that music has on a person is ultimately between that individual and God. So if you are a young person reading this article, and have had conflict with your parents or elders regarding the music you listen to, then what should you do? You should pray and ask the Lord to help you inspect the fruit that the music is producing within your soul. You can pray something like this, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* (Psalm 139:23-24) Once you have prayed, if your conscience is clear before the Lord that what you are listening to is bearing the fruit of the Spirit, then you are not to be condemned by someone else's opinion. Each one of us, young or old, must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We must all have a clear conscience before God that the music we listen to is pleasing to Him according to the principles taught in His Word. Even if your conscience is clear, understand that your responsibility does not end there. The Word of God teaches us that when we are in the presence of fellow brothers and sisters, we must display a level of sensitivity toward them in the way we behave. We now have to shift from looking inward at ourselves and focus outward to those who live among us and inspect the impact that our lives are having on them.

I Corinthians Chapter 8 deals with this very issue. Since there was so much paganism in the City of Corinth, eating meat was very closely associated with idolatry because most of the meat sold in the city had been offered to an idol in some temple. It was a touchy subject. Much like CCM is today, both prevalent in society, related to worship, and both a personal matter of the heart. To one Corinthian believer, eating meat had no negative spiritual influence. To another it was harmful to his conscience and his faith because of its connection to pagan worship. The Scriptures teach us that, if the Corinthian who ate meat ignored the effect it had on his brother, he would be sinning against his brother, *“But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 8:12).

Contemporary Christian Music

• CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE •

Paul's conclusion was that the first brother should be sensitive to, but not condemned by, the second brother's convictions. ***"Therefore if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."*** (v. 13) He also said in Romans 14:15-17, ***"..if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."***

We need to remember that the fruit of the Spirit is love, gentleness, longsuffering and kindness. Even if the music we listen to does no spiritual harm to us personally, if it is grieving those within our church family then we are not walking in the Spirit if we try to press the issue and defend our position. If there is a particular type of music that offends some within the church, then according to the Scriptures it should simply be kept out of the church and listened to exclusively by those whom it does not offend. The Apostle Paul says that to do otherwise is to risk bringing judgement upon ourselves; ***"It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves"*** Romans 14:21-22.

Now to the second part to our twofold solution. We have addressed the personal responsibility that we have, not only to inspect the fruit that music bears in our own lives, but also the fruit that it bears among our brethren; that we might not be a stumbling block to them. However, when it comes to the churches and homes of God's people, God has assigned the leadership over those institutions with a separate responsibility. The responsibility of these leaders is to develop and maintain an atmosphere that fosters spiritual growth, builds faith, and is free from hindrances. As parents in our homes and as leaders in our churches we not only have the authority but the responsibility to set standards for appropriate behavior for those under our leadership. It is here that legislation becomes effective. For instance, as a youth pastor, I cannot dictate what a young person listens to or how they talk and act when at home or school, however, I can set standards for them to follow when in youth group. Reasonable dress code, rules for behavior, and guidelines for the music we play in church are all established as part of the group environment. If we host a youth rally or convention, the same standards apply. Even though they may not agree with every standard, they respect them because they want to be a part of the group. My intent is that those guidelines, as well as my own life, will serve as an example to them of what godliness is. As they grow in the Lord it is my hope they will adopt those standards for their own lives.

The same is true in our homes. Remember my 14-year-old son who was into heavy metal? Though it's true I cannot enforce his interests, I can and should enforce what music is and is not allowed into my house. I must remember however to do it in love, lest he become discouraged (Ephesians 6:4).

One further point. Some will argue that in our efforts to 'become all things to all men' we must reach out to the world in its language by using the music it listens to. But what did Paul mean when he said, "I have become all things to all men"? He meant that he would live in such a way so that the Cross of Christ

would be the only thing in his life that would offend people, not his personal freedoms or interests. There are many things that can be used as tools for evangelism, but that does not make them holy.

In our efforts to win the lost, let us not do more harm than good. In the music we listen to, in the way we conduct ourselves at home, in church and in the world, we must follow the example of Christ—walking in His Spirit and bearing the fruit He bore. If we know the Word, we will know Him. If we know Him, we will know His character. If we know His character, we will know those things about ourselves that please Him and those things that do not. If we love Him we will change to be like Him.

I hope that this article has helped to work out some of the issues relating to contemporary Christian music and the conflicts that seem to develop from it. By applying the truth found in God's Word, we should be able to settle this matter in our own hearts, restore unity within the Body of Christ, and confidently lead the homes and churches God has placed in our care.

Peter Dell'Erba

District News

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4 •

Southern District

North Miami Christian Church Celebrates a Baptism



ous victory when another four souls decided to follow Jesus through the obedience of water baptism. Their faces were full of joy and peace, for such a salvation is so rich, full, and free. They are determined to follow the Master for life. Many spectators were also present.—**Rev. Pasquale Vozza**, Pastor

General Overseer's Message
• CONTINUED FROM P. 3 •

Elisha learned from his master Elijah that prayer was always the catalyst to the move of God. Elijah was a man who fervently prayed, and as a result, he was raptured into heaven.

Prayer is the way to a revived Church and a transformed world. The power of God is available to deal with this gone-wrong human situation in which we find ourselves. It comes in at the point of believing prayer.

Listen to the promise of God: "If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Prayer is the way. The prophet Isaiah has a dramatic passage in which he shares a vision that came to him at a time of national crisis and calamity. It was a vision of God watching the indifference and indulgence of his people. "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor...."

"IS HE WONDERING TODAY WHY HIS PEOPLE ARE NOT DEVOTED TO 'THE PRAYERS?'" Oh that God would give us a man who could call our people back to prayer, someone who could teach them how to pray. Perhaps that is our sorest need.

Billy Sunday, The evangelist, preparing for a great city-wide mission, sent to the mayor of the city requesting a list of people who were in need of special prayer. The mayor - surely a man of imagination - sent him the city directory.

We have the authority of Jesus for this: "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you"

If there is to be any substance to our prayer life, this is a practice we must cultivate seriously. Somehow or other we must take the time and find the place where we can be alone with God.

World Missions
• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7 •

It is the desire of CCNA missions to help send more mini-mission teams throughout the world, as well as short-term missionaries to various countries. It is our prayer that more pastors will challenge their young people to take advantage of every opportunity to offer their time and skills in this area. It will bless the churches as well as challenge our youth. I am appealing to our CCNA congregations and pastors to help us achieve our goals, fulfilling the Great Mandate, evangelizing our globe for Jesus.

The most deadly sin is not a flagrant sin. It is simply apathy and dullness of heart. It's the inability to believe. It is hesitancy in the time of opportunity. I believe God is expecting us to blow the trumpet that has no uncertain sound, and to be in there, involved up to the hill in everything that moves, in every kind of collaboration all across the world in every possibility that will bring this to pass. I believe God is asking us to give everything we have, to glorify His name, reaching the unreached, in this decade. There is a tendency for many churches to busy themselves with small affairs and really miss out on the destiny and ministry to which God purposed for His people! We must seek

to be more like Christ, and expend more of our energies in world evangelization.

We must pray that the Holy Spirit will fire our minds with awe and deep worship. Worthy is the Lord who will sweep across the waters of this world, until His great glory fills the libraries in every land, until the time when all people will be free, and until the knowledge of the Lord fills the minds of men and women in every place on our planet

Your Health Advisor
• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8 •

Diabetics, whether type I or II, must control their intake of carbohydrates in order to maintain a glucose level within an acceptable range. This will help toward decreasing complications and enable them to lead a healthy life-style. Again quoting from the ADA's statement: "Nutritive sweeteners do not produce greater increase in blood glucose response than complex starches. Intake as high as 60 grams of fructose or sucrose per day may not adversely affect ...persons with type II diabetes...attention should be given to the total amount of carbohydrates consumed rather than the source." If using a non-nutritive sweetener will increase your cravings for sweets, your total carbohydrate intake may be upset by a tendency to cheat on your diet.

The decision is yours to make whether or not Aspartame will be a part of your life. Personally, I am not totally convinced about either the safety of this product or of its ability to cause all of the terrible diseases some say it does. When a substance causes so much uproar, maybe it is best to just avoid it, especially since there are so many alternatives available. Natural sweeteners, such as sucrose (raw or refined table sugar and molasses) and fructose (corn syrups) provide energy and can be used safely in a balanced diet for diabetics as well as dieters. Non-nutritive sweeteners, such as Aceulfame-K (Sunlett®) and Sucralose (Splenda®) are not metabolized in the body and are excreted the same way they were ingested. These may be safer choices if you absolutely must use zero calorie products.

God has given us the capacity to reason and the freedom to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of using a controversial product such as Aspartame. Remember the Apostle Paul's advice in his first letter to the Corinthian church: "**Everything is permissible**" - **but not everything is beneficial**. "**Everything is permissible**" - **but not everything is constructive...So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.** (I Corinthians 10:23,31)

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