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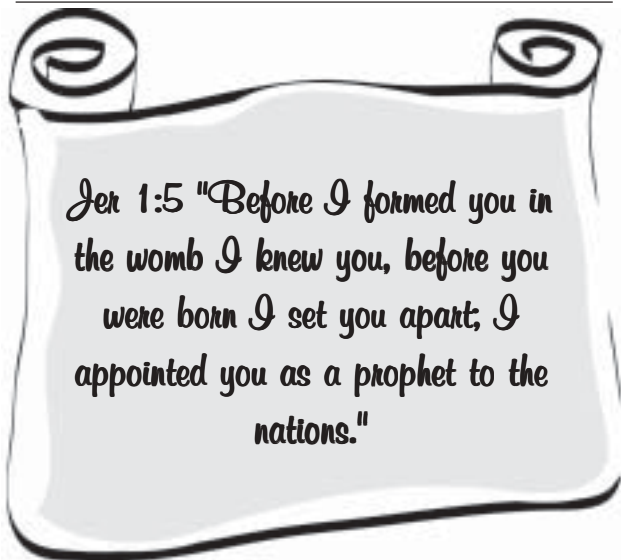
Vista

*A Publication of The General Council of the Christian Church of North America
Anno Domini 2002 – Volume 3, 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: the 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 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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Editorial

CELEBRATING THE UNBORN (Cover Photo)

As one who is passionate about protecting the lives of the unborn by educating people as to the “humanity” of a child in its mother’s womb, imagine my surprise when I was e-mailed this photograph and accompanying story. I first thought, “if only more people could see this. . .” which was shortly followed by, “coming from the Internet, is this true?”

Here’s the accompanying story that I received with our cover photo — source unknown:

It is truly amazing. A picture began circulating in November [2001]. It should be “The Picture of the Year,” or perhaps, “Picture of the Decade.” It won’t be. In fact, unless you obtained a copy of the [news]paper, you probably will never see it. The picture is that of a 21 week-old unborn baby named Samuel Alexander, who is being operated on by a surgeon named Joseph Bruner. The baby was diagnosed with *spina bifida* and would not survive if removed from his mother’s womb. Little Samuel’s mother, Julie, is an obstetrics nurse in Atlanta. She knew of Dr. Bruner’s remarkable surgical procedure. Practicing at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, he performs these special operations while the baby is still in the womb. During the procedure, the doctor removes the uterus via C-section and makes a small incision to operate on the baby. During the surgery on little Samuel, the little guy reached his tiny, but fully developed, hand through the incision and firmly grasped the Surgeon’s finger. The photograph captures this amazing event with perfect clarity. The editors titled the picture, “Hand of Hope.” The text explaining the picture begins, “The tiny hand of 21 week-old fetus Samuel Alexander emerges from the mother’s uterus to grasp the finger of Dr. Joseph Bruner as if thanking the doctor for the gift of life. Little Samuel’s mother said they ‘wept for days’ when they saw the picture. She said, “The photo reminds us my pregnancy isn’t about disability or an illness, it’s about a little person.” [*Emphasis added*]

Although such a photo would, undoubtedly, win some points in the argument about rights due the unborn, I felt that the integrity of VISTA required corroboration. I then telephoned the Public Relations office at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. The representative confirmed both the photo and the story. Praise God! Please pass this VISTA along to someone who you know needs this.

Rev. Eric R Towse,
Editor





General Overseer's Message

"Is Sin Tolerated In The Church?"

by Rev. John DeTurco



THE Bible exhibits the whole man, so much so that it is almost embarrassing at times. The Bible portrays its characters as honestly as any modern cynic ever could. While there are churches which are alive and productive, the other side of the coin reveals a deep, settled sleep in many congregations. Pastors weep over the lack of response within their congregations. They weep over tolerance of sin. Some congregations are deeply concerned over the lack of commitment their pastors have, as well as lack of depth in the Word of God. Perhaps this bumper sticker says what churches are experiencing:

THERE'S TOO MUCH APATHY IN THIS COUNTRY—BUT WHO CARES?

My immediate reaction to that message was one of amusement until I suddenly sobered to the shocking reality of what apathy creates in the life of the believer and the pastor. Apathy tolerates and condones sin.

If we look through the Scripture we see the weaknesses of God's servants. Consider Noah. He was willing to stand alone against his entire culture. No matter where we go in our world, we will not be confronted with conditions so totally adverse. Noah was literally one man against the world. But the Bible does not conceal, nor condone the fact that Noah once lay drunk and naked in his tent. Some people try to find excuses for Noah. The Bible doesn't.

The Bible is just as ruthless about the lies of Abraham, the great father of the faith. At least twice Abraham said that his wife Sarah was his sister. Sarah even tried to lie to God. We may say that she was foolish to try to hide from God the fact that she laughed behind the tent door. But don't we try to lie to God, too?

Jacob cheated his brother. He was a man of the short cut, trying to play all the angles. Aaron, the priest of God, made an idol. Then to explain its appearance, Aaron offered one of the silliest explanations to be

found anywhere in literature. "I cast in the gold," he said, "and out came this calf."

Miriam became a leper for a time because she complained against God's appointed leadership.

STRUGGLE

A strange and mysterious struggle is going on throughout our world. It affects our whole society, not for good but evil. Our nation's moral and spiritual foundations are being shaken. We are facing the greatest revolution the world has ever seen, witnessing an obvious deterioration - politically, educationally, economically, religiously, and morally.

What is happening? A struggle is going on between God and Satan, between the Holy Spirit and evil spirits, between Christ and Antichrist. The battle is for the destruction of the total man, both believer and unbeliever. The sin of sexual promiscuity is destroying both the believer and unbeliever, because this same spirit in the world has crept into the church. Consequently, sin is being tolerated, both in the pulpit and in the pew. God never tolerated sin in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, and He does not tolerate sin today.

THE QUICK LOOK

A quick look at the weaknesses of some of God's servants make us aware of a number of biblical principles. First, all men, even the best of men, need to be saved. This is not just an evangelical cliché'. Even if a man is nice and shows many evidences of being made in the image of God, he nevertheless is a sinner who needs to be saved.

Second, God reproves sin in all men, even the leaders He appoints. People tend not to do this. A man of tremendous power is rarely reprovved by his fellowmen. But the Scripture perspective is different. Men are equal in God's sight. Even if a person leads the Lord's people, God will reprove him when he sins. When Sarah said, "I did not laugh," God said sharply, "Sarah, you did laugh." Because he was angry at the inopportune moment, Moses did not enter the Promised Land. God did not overlook David's sin either. Nathan, the prophet under God's direction, confronted David:

"Thou art the man." And Paul, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, told Peter, "You are wrong" (Galatians 2:11-21).

The third biblical principle is that the leadership of biblical men did not necessarily end because they sinned. One of the strongest reservations that I have, as far as returning back to leadership, is that when a pastor or a Christian leader lives in perpetual, consistent, habitual sin, such as adultery, perversion, and homosexuality, God can forgive him, but because of a flaw in his character, and the scandal, and the disgrace he brought to the church, and to the Kingdom of God, He should not return back to the pulpit, or back to leadership in the work of God.

Apart from my reservations, we all have to agree that there are no perfect men to do God's work. In many cases, many of these men of faith repented, and their leadership continued. John wrote to all Christians, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1-John 1:9). Just as you and I should go on with each other when there has been confession, so God goes on with His people, including His leadership, after their genuine repentance. What then should be a christian leader's mentality when he finds sin in his life?

The starting place is to be humble and listen. Peter apparently listened to Paul. A person should not accept every criticism as justified. But he should take time to think and pray over every criticism, quietly before the Lord.

A Christian leader must recognize that when he does sin he will be chastened. God is neither a respecter of persons nor a taker of bribes. All His children are equal. Even if a person is working eighteen hours a day for God, God will chasten him when he sins. Being a Christian leader does not shut him off from the solution to sin described in 1-John 1:9. Like anybody else, a Christian leader can repent. But there is an added urgency.

• Continued on Page 20 •

In Memoriam
Rev. Dominick DePolo
 1914 - 2002



THE Christian Church of North America expresses our deepest condolences to our Brother Dom Depolo's family, in the passing away of their father. He went home to be with the Lord on Thursday, June 27, 2002. He died at the age of 88. Brother Dominic Depolo has been an ordained minister of CCNA for over 50 years. He will be greatly missed.

I have received many letters and many phone calls from Brother Depolo, and every time I think of him, several things come to mind: like faithfulness, encourager, and a true man of God.

The recent letter that I received from him, just prior to going into the hospital for the last time, he made this statement, and I quote him verbatim: "As you wrote once in the Vista Magazine, concerning that the old warriors of God would bring forth fruit in old age, Psalm 92:14, you were right on target. God bless you."

I have always considered Brother Depolo as one of my mentors. He always had compassion, courage, and a love for others, especially those who did not know the Lord. He was always willing to give words of strength, confidence, and concern, even when he was in despair. His faith was always an example to my wife and I. His life was a great inspiration.

Brother DePolo was always a leader and a pioneer, with a divine vision from above. He was an easy man to follow, and an easy man to

love. Brother Depolo's bright smile, and giving heart will always be with us because of what he gave.

Every letter that he wrote to me, he always concluded by saying, "Sincerely, your old brother in Christ for souls, Brother Dom Depolo."



The following is a tribute to Brother Dominick Depolo by Joyce Haslebacher:

I sat at the funeral and looked on his face,
 wondering if anyone could now fill his place.

This man of God so bold and so strong,
 with words like thunder when he came along.

Speaking the truth with discernment aglow,
 in God's great anointing wherever he'd go.

Oh how we'll miss him this man of God,
 as we walk the streets of this earthly sod.
 His letters - so loving filled with the Word,
 of God's holy counsel - the likes never heard.

His calls so endearing seasoned with prayer,
 could chase away Satan and all his despair.

His smile - such a treasure so serious and

then, a measure of wit with that kindly grin.

Small in his stature like Zacchaeus of old,
 but zealous like Paul, and perhaps more bold.

He traveled where needed by letter or phone,
 by auto, by prayer, in ways all his own.
 He served with gladness whatever the task,
 no labor too dirty for his hands to grasp.
 I pondered the life of this godly man,
 now gathered in heaven with Christ, so grand.

And tears started sliding along my cheek,
 what a saint of God so powerful, yet meek.

But tears of joy because that I knew,
 Jesus had called him, his labors were through.

From seed that he planted along life's way,
 and watered with prayer oh marvelous day!

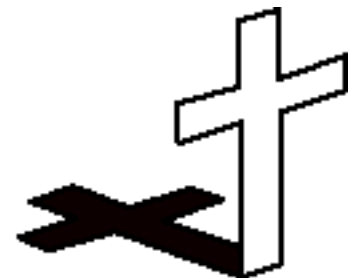
To God be the glory for this awesome saint,
 standing for truths oft though quaint. The service was over I walked near to him,
 and almost heard him say once again,
 "Keep the faith! Press on with God!"

They'll be my guide and chastening rod.
 Till someday with Jesus I'll look on his face,
 as he welcomes me too,

To God be the glory,
 to that glorious place.

I say Amen to the above tribute, for our Brother Dominick DePolo was a true warrior of God, until the day God called him home.

John DelTurco
General Overseer





World Missions

Bro. Mark Charles

Executive Director,

CCNA MISSIONARIES OFF TO GUYANA!



GUYANA is a little-known country of South America. The name means “the land of many waters.” This lush tropical paradise is divided by three major rivers—the Berbice, the Demarara, and the Essiquibo. Guyana, located on the north east corner of South America, is that continent’s only English speaking country. Until 1976, it was a colony of the British Empire. Several colonial powers have ruled Guyana, including the Dutch and Portuguese. Today there are six ethnic groups: Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese, Chinese, European, English, and Amerindians. Hidden behind the lush greenery and hospitable people, are serious challenges, including unemployment and racial tensions.

The British brought Christianity in the form of Anglicanism. There are churches and schools erected by them in every town, even in some remote areas. Other predominant religious groups are Hindu and Muslim. Evangelical Christians make up less than 10%. The capital, Georgetown, has a mixed architecture of Dutch and British. There is an old world flavor to every area. Nearly two thirds of the people live in the capital or along the coast. People shop in open markets where one can obtain any number of items both native and imported from America, Canada, England and parts of the Carribean.

Searching for a particular item is time consuming. Many products are not available. The economy of Guyana is troubled. The current exchange rate for money is \$G180 to \$US 1. Foodstuffs are expensive for the locals. Durable goods like washing machines, refrigerators, etc., are beyond the reach of the majority of people. There is electricity most of the time but blackouts are a regular experience in the capital, Georgetown. The water supply is sporadic. Unemployment is about 12 percent (as of 1992). Nearly all manufactured products are imported.



There is a great need for the Gospel, especially in the bush areas of the country. The influence of the church has been strong but so has the world’s influence. There is much more American flavor today than ten years ago—especially among the young people. Today one sees satellite dish antennas appearing in and around the cities. American Television is available almost countrywide. Cell phones are a frequent sight.

There is much drug use among the younger generation. Homosexuals are very vocal for Gay rights. AIDS is in epidemic proportions. Medical care is minimal except for the rich. The church is beginning to address these issues.

THE VISION



Brother and Sister Hallahan have been travelling to Guyana for the last ten years for short two- to three-week missions trips. Their experiences have led them to begin a long-term missions project. Brother

and Sister Hallahan are going to use their experience with the Deaf of America to reach out to the Deaf of Guyana.

After several years of prayer, the call to go has finally come. The vision for reaching the Deaf begins with training workers in Sign Language and Deaf culture. This includes offering Sign Language classes to the hearing people. As these students develop skill in using Signs, the churches will be able to offer interpreted services to the public.

The Deaf and their families will be attracted to attend services.

Currently the Guyanaese Government has schools for children with special needs. Mentally handicapped and physically handicapped (including Deaf) are grouped together in the same classes. This creates problems for the Deaf. A major problem is that Sign Language is not the primary language used by the Teacher. The Deaf are a unique cultural group in that they must be taught their own language. Sign Language enhances social and educational development. Statistics have shown that Deaf children who know Sign Language learn 80 percent more than those who know only lip reading or home signs. Additionally, the Deaf can become institutional retarded. Deaf that are grouped with mentally handicapped students are not challenged to learn up to their potential. They are held back by the limitations imposed by the group. A separate school focusing on the needs and requirements of the Deaf would better meet their social and educational needs. This school would use Sign Language as the primary teaching language.

The first stage of ministry to the Deaf of Guyana will be to begin training hearing workers in Sign Language. These will be members of the local churches. We will also offer the classes to teachers, government workers, and family of the Deaf.

• Continued on Page 20 •



Your Health Advisory

by Marcia P. Kaufman, R.N

Vitamins: Helpers to Good Health



WHEN God created Adam and Eve, He designed them to live in a perfect environment with bodies that were made to last indefinitely. In Genesis 1: 29 and 2:15-16, God told them how to maintain their bodies with pleasant work for exercise and a vegetarian diet which included the fruit of the Tree of Life. Later, after man had fallen and death came into the world, God gave His creations a changed diet,

“Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything”

Genesis 9:3

God in his wisdom has given us the liberty to eat everything but we do not always chose our foods wisely and we may leave ourselves open to disease. We at Vista would like to assist by giving you some basic information about the components of nutrition, such as vitamins and minerals. This knowledge may help you to make food choices that are more healthful for you and your family. We will begin with vitamins.

What are vitamins? By definition, vitamins are potent organic compounds that are present in food and, though only needed in small quantities, are essential for specific bodily functions of maintenance, growth, and reproduction of cells. Vitamins are classified as either fat-soluble (A, D, E, and K) which are stored in body fat and or water-soluble (B group and C) which are not stored, with the exception of Vitamin B₁₂, and are easily excreted daily. Traditionally, fat-soluble vitamins are the ones most related to problems of vitamin toxicity and are the focus of this Vista article.

Vitamin A

Functions: the “vision” vitamin - it maintains normal vision in dim light because of its effect on the cells in the retina in the eye. Vitamin A is required for building healthy tissue to line internal mucous membranes or external layers of skin. This tissue lining is the body’s first line of defense against infections caused by bacterial invasion. This vitamin is essential for normal skeletal and tooth development. Without it,

bones do not grow in length and normal strengthening processes do not take place. Lack of Vitamin A can cause gross malformations in a developing fetus.

Effects of deficiency: night blindness, xerophthalmia (dry eye), and keratinization (noticeable shrinking, hardening, and progressive degeneration of cells) which increases susceptibility to severe infections of the eye, nasal passages, sinuses, middle ear, lungs, and gastrointestinal tract.

Effects of toxicity: headache, peeling of skin enlarged spleen and liver, bone fragility, loss of hair, bone and joint pain. (All of these symptoms will disappear when Vitamin A is discontinued.)

Principle sources: fish liver oils, liver, egg yolk, butter, cream, fortified margarine, green leafy and yellow vegetables.

Vitamin D

Functions: the “sunshine” vitamin - essential in calcium and phosphorus absorption, reabsorption, mineralization, and collagen maturation of bone, reabsorption of phosphorus (without these processes, bones will not heal or form properly).

Effects of deficiency: Rickets (children with skeletal deformities, soft bones, poorly developed muscles), tetany (muscle twitching, cramps, and convulsions), malformed teeth, osteoporosis, and osteomalacia (adult rickets with bone softening, spontaneous fractures, and general weakness).

Effects of toxicity: Anorexia (loss of appetite), kidney failure, calcifications of soft tissue in heart, blood vessels, bronchi, kidneys, and stomach.

Principle sources: Fortified milk is the main dietary source, fish liver oils, butter, egg yolk, liver, ultraviolet light irradiation.

The Vitamin E Group

The Tocopherols and Tocotrienols

Functions: intracellular antioxidant (antioxidants will be discussed in detail in a later article) maintains stability of biologic membranes.

Effects of deficiency: RBC hemolysis (destruction of red blood cells), premature and low-birth-weight infants, certain forms of muscular dystrophy, and possible association with cystic fibrosis.

Effects of toxicity: Elevated serum lipids, impaired blood coagulation, and reduction of serum thyroid hormones (all rare).

Principle sources: Vegetable oil, wheat germ, leafy vegetables, egg yolk, margarine, legumes.

The Vitamin K Group

The Quinones, Vitamin K₁, and Vitamin K₂

Functions: the “clotting” vitamin - essential for prothrombin and other clotting factors by the liver formation, normal blood coagulation.

Effects of deficiency: increased tendency for hemorrhage (dietary deficiency is unlikely; there are usually other liver of gastrointestinal problems involved).

Effects of toxicity: kernicterus (a buildup of bilirubin, a product of red blood cell breakdown, that deposits in the brain tissue of infants and which can be fatal).

Principle sources: leafy vegetables, pork liver, vegetable oils. Also derived from the body’s own intestinal flora after the newborn period.

The Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) of these vitamins has been left out purposely. Our government uses them as a guideline for nutrition but all people do not have the same requirements. Amounts vary according to state of health, age, stage of development, sex, genetic makeup, and other factors. If you would like to know your own personal requirements, please speak with your physician, registered nurse, registered dietitian, or nutritionist. Our next article will discuss the water-soluble vitamins and antioxidants.

Don’t forget the most important principle of good spiritual nutrition as stated in Deuteronomy 8:2-3:

Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Christian Pentecostal Church

Staten Island, NY

Dedicates New Sanctuary

Dedication of New Sanctuary

September 14, 2002

Theme: "Look What the Lord had Done!"

In 1923, Mr. and Mrs. Pelligrino Signoriello came over on the Staten Island Ferry from Manhattan and bought a home on Staten Island. Soon after, they brought their house, they began to have services in their home.

In 1934, a member of the congregation donated a portion of land so they could build a church building on it. In 1935, they opened the Italian Christian Church on Pike Street. In 1964, again, members of the congregation donated land to build a bigger church and in 1965 we moved to our present location on Richmond Road. That is also when the name of the church changed to our present name, Christian Pentecostal Church.

In 1972 a school and gym were added. In 1999 an adjacent school building. Rev. John Carlo became senior pastor in 1987 after serving as assistant pastor for 5 years. Pastor Carlo grew up in CPC where he served as an usher, board member, youth pastor.

CPC offers many different ministries including a Spanish congregation, a food pantry, nursing home and prison ministries, coffee house, and many other activities for children, teenagers, and adults.

The Body of Christian Pentecostal Church

by Janet Samuel

We are the life that lives though Christian Pentecostal Church. We look at the heart which is Christ, who pumps blood through the veins of the believers, who love and honor Him. We look



**NEW SANCTUARY IS DEDICATED
(L to R) REV. JOHN CARLO, REV. JOSEPH SHIPLEY**

to the head who is our Pastor, as the shepherd of Christ, leading his flock as he feeds them with the truth and shares the love of Christ beyond understanding.

Then we have the arms, these are our elders, who stand by our shepherd and help carry

the hurting and share their wisdom with those who are willing to listen. The we have the hands, who are the ministers and the teachers, who teach and mould the hungry with the Word of God, which is the Sword of the Spirit. As we go down the river path, we see the legs. These are the evangelists and missionaries as onward Christians and fishers of men, who go out into the wilderness as they spread the Gospel with boldness and love.

As we continue to go down the streams of living waters, we see the feet which represent the deacons and the ushers who stand with their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, keeping order throughout the body of Christ.

As we walk up the narrow way, we see the breastplate of righteousness. This represents our saints, standing firm with the buckle of truth around their waist.

As we continue down the narrow path, we find the fingers. These are our children, for they are the future of the church whom we are to mould in preparation of the harvest-which will give much fruit.

Together we shall stand strong as soldiers for Christ with one purpose, as one body, and in one accord; to show love and compassions to the lost and the hurting. The body of Christian Pentecostal Church stands tall to make a difference as a beacon of light unto the world.





The Pit

by Rev. Nicholas Cacciatore

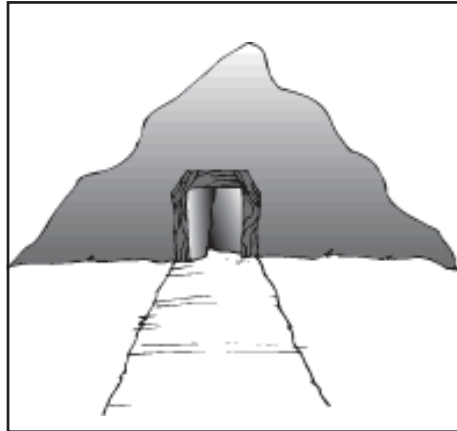


LAST summer I had a frightening experience. My family went to Put-In Bay, Ohio for a day of fun. We were spending part of our day on a Lake Erie beach and were enjoying a fun day of swimming. As my children were swimming one of my son's toys began to float out in the lake. After some pleading on his part I swan out into the lake to retrieve the toy. Unfortunately as I continued to swim the toy went out farther and farther. By the time I had the toy in hand I realized that I did not have the strength to get back to shore. It was a frightening moment, but it was just a moment. Thankfully I was able to cry out for help, float on my back, and wait for assistance. I could have died, but thank the Lord I am still living and able to raise my family.



I do not know what it is like to be in the physical depth of darkness for days on end. But there are nine Pennsylvania coal miners who do. Breaking through into an older mine, a surging flow of water was released, and the miners ran for their lives. Unable to escape the rising water, they had to go back to the original place where they had broken through into the other mine. It was the highest point. Their noses and mouths just slightly above water at times, they tied themselves together, wrote "good-bye notes", and waited for the inevitable. But as they called out to God and encouraged each other, good things started to happen. An air vent was drilled to provide fresh air. An expert team was brought in to construct a way out. And

a wonderful sense of humor lifted their hopes. One of the miners joked: "Boy, imagine the overtime pay we're going to get for this!" They were rescued after three days and our nation rejoiced.



The State Governor delivered the following statement on the triumphant rescue of the nine coal miners trapped in the Quecreek Mine: "What a beautiful ending! We're nine for nine, and we got all of our guys out. As precarious as the circumstances had become at points, we fought through it, and we were ultimately successful. It is nothing short of a miracle." In the Book of Psalms we find a similar story of hopelessness and despair.



Psalm 40:1-3, "I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD." NIV

Sometimes the pressures of life steal our song. We realize it has been awhile since our hearts have been filled with songs of praise. The Psalmist found himself in this situation. He was bogged down by problems and he lost his joy. Great distress plunged him into a horrible pit and there was no way out. In fact he was sinking deeper and deeper. Inwardly he was perplexed and grieved of spirit. Despondently he was withdrawn. Fear and doubt plunged him into a horrible depression."

But in the depth of disillusionment and despair he humbly and expectantly turned his attention to God. The Psalmist writes, "I waited patiently for the Lord". He anticipated relief from none other than the Almighty God. There was no other way out of the pit except by the hand of God. The Psalmist expected God to bring relief in due time. But relief may not always come as quickly as we like it. When our expectations and hope is on God we wait with assurance. But must also wait with patience. Our feet must stand firm upon the Rock of our Salvation. Christ is the rock on which we stand. We have no hope except for the hope of the Father through Jesus Christ the Son. We have no promise but the cross.

The Cross of Calvary sets the standard of hope and assurance. The cross was the darkest, but yet brightest moment of history. No sooner had the sentence been pronounced than the soldiers proceeded to carry it out. It was history's darkest moment. Jesus was beaten, spit on, and mocked. Carrying the heavy cross on his shoulders Jesus was led in procession through the busy streets of Jerusalem as an example of the heartlessness and cruelty of Roman justice. Weakened by His brutal handling and abuse Jesus staggered beneath the weight of the cross. Unable to carry his cross his strength failed. Tradition says that Jesus fell under the weight of the cross. Jesus was totally and completely exhausted. But the worst was yet to come.

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It was nine o'clock when they reached the place of execution. It was on a hill called Golgotha. This was the place of execution. Crucifixion was a horrible punishment. The cross was a ghastly instrument of death. Jesus was stripped of his clothing and laid out with outstretched arms. His hands and feet were hammered through with nails against the wooden cross. He was hoisted upright with his full body weight pulling and ripping against his nail driven hands and feet. Hanging in pure and horrible agony Jesus suffered a criminals execution for the sins of humanity.

It was now midday. Jesus hung on the cross for 3 hours. It was midday but darkness overspread the sky. Suddenly a cry was



heard from the master, "My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?" In this phrase we find the complete passion of Christ. Jesus Christ was fully divine but yet fully human. In this cry we come face to face with the mystery of the incarnation. We come face to face with the humanity of Jesus and in turn our relationship with God.

"His desolation was a visitation from God, and He suffered it as the bearer of sin. At the outset of His ministry Jesus had accepted as His vocation the Baptist's announcement: "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and throughout its course the burden of the world's sin had been lying on Him, but He knew that on the Cross He would feel the uttermost stress of that awful load and drain the last dregs of the bitter cup which He had accepted from the Father's hand. And, as the hour approached, the darkness had gathered about His soul. "The cords of death had compassed Him, and the pains of the grave had a hold upon Him: He had found trouble and sorrow." And now the dread hour had come." (Smith, 501, 502)

Jesus Christ entered the darkest of all places; darker than the pit in Quecreek PA, darker than the pit of 9/11, darker than any pit that anyone has ever experienced. In that pit Jesus cries out to the Father. In that pit Jesus is sustained by the presence of God.

"The end had come, and He hailed it exultantly. As His eyes closed upon the scene of His mortal anguish, the darkness which had enwrapped His soul, melted away and He beheld God's face. "Father," He cried, into thy hands I commit my spirit". (Smith, 503)

I don't why nine miners were rescued in Pennsylvania while thousands perished in the bombing of the World Trade Center. I don't know why so many babies and children in New York will never see their parents again. I don't know why God didn't prevent the entire 9/11 tragedy from happening. I don't know why God presence is so real in some situations while seemingly so absent in others. All I know is that God is



God. God's ways are not always understandable to us. The ways of God are mysterious. All I know is that in the midst of an evil world I need God. In my darkest hour when all signs of the Almighty are missing, I need God. When my heart is elated, and everything is going well, I need God. I need regular, steady, and intimate conversation with the Almighty God.

Death and sin have been conquered through the darkness and treachery of the cross. Friends, when we are in our darkest hour we don't know or understand what God is doing. But rest assured that God does not sleep nor does God slumber. Our God is there and will be there. We can trust in God. The psalmist proclaims "He has put a new song in my mouth; he has given me cause to rejoice and a heart to rejoice." We live in a different world and we have a different praise. We applaud our reliance and hope in God. For ours is a praise of promise and resurrection. We sing of new mercies and proclaim the faithfulness of God.

We are a resurrection people. We celebrate the empty tomb. Jesus did not stay in the grave but arose on the third day. Like Jesus we have been brought out of the horrible pit. Our sins have been paid in full through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the spotless and sinless Lamb of God. We are set upon the Rock of Ages. A new and glorious song has been placed into our mouths. Life is full of pits. Life is full of agony. Life is full of disappointment, frustration, heartache, and depression. But ours God knows what its like to suffer. Our God has experienced heartache and brutality. Our God know what we are going through. Whatever our situation, problem, or need we cry out to God and lean upon the Strong Tower. We set our feet upon the Rock and put a new song in our mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.

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District News



NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT



REV. TOM CICCARELLA INSTALLED AS PASTOR OF NEW BEGINNINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

New Beginnings Christian Church started with a vision, a vision to carry on the work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The foundation scripture above indicates their desire for a fresh touch of God in ministry and passion for souls. This is not just a group of people who wanted to meet, but a group who has the passion to serve the Lord and see a mighty move of His Holy Spirit.

New Beginnings Christian Church had their first meeting at Hempfield Park on May 5, 2002, with Lonnie Sullivan presenting the gospel. The church group was encouraged by the Board of Assistant General Overseers and accepted as an affiliate of the Christian Church of North America on May 7, 2002. Upon the recommendation of the CCNA Executive Board, the church requested Rev. Tom Ciccarella to consider being their pastor. On Wednesday, May 8, 2002, the church voted for Rev. Ciccarella to be the pastor of this new community of believers.

On June 23, 2002, an installation service for Pastor Tom was held at the church, with Rev. John Del Turco, General Overseer of the CCNA as special guest speaker. Rev. DelTurco provided the message for that day as well as presiding over the installation service. His message to us was to leave the past behind and go forward in God. If we do this, God will honor what we do for

Him, and will work exceedingly and abundantly in our lives.

New Beginnings Christian Church currently meets at Stony Point Grange, Delaware Township, Mercer County, PA. and averages 70 people each week, including children. Services are held Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, with services for adults, children, and youth. A nursery is also provided. On July 14th, they had their first water baptismal service where three believers made a public confession of their faith. The church board consists of Steve Eckard, Secretary and Trustee, Mario Marini, Treasurer and Trustee, Lonnie Sullivan and Mark White, Trustees.

As long as the Lord is in control of our hearts and lives, we will see the hand of God move mightily among our congregation. The past is ----- new has come and the church will go forth in the light of this "new beginning."

Steve Eckard, Secretary

NIAGARA-MOHAWK DISTRICT

AIR FORCE ACADEMY APPOINTMENT



T. J. BUONOMO

Bro. Dino DiPalma reports that T. J. Thomas Buonomo of Evangelical Christian Church, Rochester, NY was appointed to the

U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO. Bro. Buonomo wrote a VISTA article entitled, Transformed in the Summer 2001 issue. Tom is a fine young man who loves the Lord and has a passion for the lost. Pray that God uses him mightily.

HOME MISSIONS CONVENTION



The Niagara-Mohawk district held its first Home Missions Convention on August 10th hosted by Pastor Michael Brown at the Walnut Avenue Christian Church, Niagara Falls, NY. The theme was "It Takes Only One Spark to Start a Fire."

Bro. George was subsequently elected National Home Missions Director at CCNA Convention 2002.

GREAT LAKES DISTRICT

VISTA is pleased to announce the appointment of Charles and Katherine Hess as liaisons between the Great Lakes churches and VISTA. As it is our intent to make VISTA a national publication with local interests, we are looking forward to receiving timely information about church and district events. We thank District Overseer Bossio for being the first to establish this position and anxiously await other districts to do the same.

75th Annual Convention — CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF N



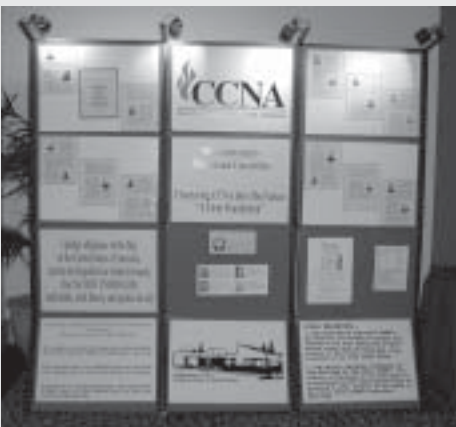
PLENARY SESSION



HAITI MISSIONS DISPLAY



**BRO. SAGINARIO AT
OPENING SERVICE**



**BRO. DELTUCO PRESENTS BRO.
SAGINARIO WITH TESTIMONIAL**



BRO. TYLER AS SEMINAR SPEAKER



NORTH AMERICA — August 29th to September 1, 2002



INDIA MISSIONS DISPLAY



**REV. DAVID FARINA
SONG LEADER**



Continued on Next Page



SISTER VILDA ROY LEADS WOMEN'S MINISTRIES



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES SUPPORTS SIS. DELTURCO'S INDIA ORPHANAGE MINISTRY



BISHOP JAMES D. LEGGETT, FEATURED SPEAKER



CCNA: OUR MISSIONARY EMPHASIS



WORSHIP IN MUSIC — BRO. DANIEL BAVARO & CO.



Featured Church

Evangelical Christian Church of Glen Cove, NY

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH in Glen Cove began in 1942. There have been several name changes of the ministry throughout these years,

Chiesa Christiana Italiana (1942-1966), then Christian Church of Glen Cove (1966-1999), and from 1999, Evangelical Christian Church. The name of the church/ministry can change many times, but praise God, Jesus in the *same yesterday, today, and forever*.

In 1992, the old structure of the church building was knocked down and rebuilt. During this time, the church body would gather at a faithful brother's home. After the service, the few faithful of the church would go to the building site and continue construction work. Thank God for the faithful men and women of Evangelical Christian Church that kept the dream alive. Their work and hard labor made it possible for many others to come through the door and worship the Lord. The Lord used these men and women along with others who no longer are with us to keep this church going.

In September 2001, I was voted-in as Pastor of the church, and I have seen the Lord move in the hearts of His people over this time. We are a church that is on the move through street evangelism and an English radio broadcast, *Shields of Faith* on WNYG 1440 AM, Saturdays at 12:30 PM. Our Italian radio broadcast, *La Buono Notizia*, is heard on the Italian Communication Network, 82.3 FM, Saturdays, at 9:45 AM. In our outreaches, clothing is given out to those in need as well as the Gospel of Jesus Church through Bibles and tracts. We live in a world that is hurt, and that is where Jesus would be ministering to those in need in the highways and byways.

The Lord has blessed us with a church building, but we must never forget that the People are the Church! We have the great commission in Mark 16:15 to go and tell the world about Jesus Christ. I look forward to the future, and, if the Lord tarries, to use this time to reach many lost souls for Jesus Christ.



The title of this broadcast stems from the ministry the Lord has entrusted my wife and I since 1990. It began as a ministry to Law Enforcement Officers. My wife, Evie, and I were police officers. The Lord spoke to our hearts to begin a ministry to law enforcers and prisoners. Shields of Faith Ministries was birthed. Along with three other officers, we would go into the neighborhoods and distribute God's Word through evangelism. We would speak to drug addicts, unlawful individuals, prostitutes, victims of physical, sexual, and mental abuse and pray for them. They would see another side of a "cop." They would see Jesus in us. We would visit juvenile correctional facilities and adult correctional facilities and minister

the Gospel through song, drama and the Word brought forth.

We witnessed many individuals come to give their lives to the Lord and be healed. Shields of Faith Ministries would be invited into churches to minister to the body of Christ. The churches would invite their local municipalities to be a part of the church services to see what Jesus can do in the hearts of everyone and invite them to receive the Lord through our ministering. We saw many of the hearts of the officers change, praise the Lord!

Every week a Bible study was held in the command I was assigned to. Many officers would respond to hear the gospel — some out of curiosity, some because of their Christianity and some who were looking for answers. Our Lord had blessed them tremendously and we were blessed as well to be used of our Father.

Before I retired, I was appointed as the first Peer Chaplain of the New York City Transit Police Department, and it gave me opportunities to speak to many police officers at roll calls before they turned-out for duty.

In 1993, I had retired from the police department and was called to full-time ministry as an Associate Pastor of a church in which I remained there until the year 2000. Shields of Faith Ministries lay dormant for seven years but not dead. When the Lord called us out of the pastorate in 2000, we were called to evangelize and went on the road testifying to the body of Christ as well as unbelievers how the Lord changed us and used us in the capacity of police officers and ministry. We had ministered in song and Word and allowed the Lord to use us to reach His people. Our Father had blessed this time tremendously, but I knew in my spirit that eventually we would be back pastoring a church again.

In September 2001, I became the pastor of Evangelical Christian Church in Glen Cove, NY. I thank the Lord for the beautiful family in the church. Some have been there for years and some have been there for a short time, but God is blessing to fulfill the destiny that our Father has for Evangelical Christian Church in Glen Cove, NY.



Pastor Bernie and Evie Knutsen



From the Pulpit

Messages from the Ministry

“JESUS CHRIST, SON OF DAVID, SON OF ABRAHAM. . .”

MATTHEW 1:1

by Rev. Eugene Palma,

Evangelical Christian Church, Rochester, NY



THE genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is most interesting and of extreme importance because it demonstrates how God injects Himself into the human race in order to deliver the children of men from the divine curse brought upon mankind by the fall of Adam, the father of humanity. No doubt Matthew did some expert research from the legal records of his day in order to preface his remarkable Gospel of the One who was prophesied over the centuries to be the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

Matthew's genealogy of Jesus Christ is most interesting for the following reasons. Of all the human beings, God selects Abraham through whose descendants He intends to fulfill His redemptive program. According to 1:17, Matthew divides the generation from Abraham to Jesus into three groups of fourteen each. In the first group there appears to be no omission of names while in the second group three names are omitted, and one name is omitted in the third group.

The fact that the names of five particular females appear in Matthew's presentation would seem to make his analysis quite unusual and significant. Matthew's genealogy does not present Jesus as the son of Joseph, but rather as the son of His mother's marriage with Joseph. Furthermore, Matthew's genealogy of Jesus Christ is of extreme importance because he declares Jesus to specifically be the son of David and the son of Abraham. How can this be explained? Both of these men were very outstanding in Hebrew history. Christ's connection to the Hebrew people make Him both royal and racial. He is de-

clared to be of the kingly line through David and His human lineage to Abraham.

If we were to compare the genealogy of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew, with that recorded in Luke's gospel, chapter three, we would apparently find a little difference in the portion from David to Jesus. Luke presents the lineal descent of Jesus as the son of David through Mary, not through Joseph. The peculiar promise of God to both David and Abraham, according to Old Testament history, was that of a son. However, the fulfillment of such a promise was not to be realized either in Solomon or in Isaac, but rather in Jesus.

As the son of David, Solomon was to promote the glory of his father's hard-acquired kingdom. He was endowed with great wisdom in order to rule a great people in his father's stead. His specific work was that of building the temple for God, which was his father's highest ambition. His reign was to be characterized by peace and prosperity. There was to be no more bloodshed and suffering through war. But we find that Solomon was a failure. David's son after the flesh was a total disappointment. His folly brought moral and spiritual decadence to the kingdom, and the vanity of his lifestyle led to bitter rivalry which divided the kingdom and eventually brought it to naught. Yet, according to the apostle Peter in Acts 2:29-36, Christ is declared to be the actual fulfillment of God's promise to David. For in Christ dwells the infinite wisdom of God. He is the head of the indestructible temple of God—His universal body of believers, and, according to Luke 1:32, 33, Jesus sits on the throne of His father David

for ever.

As the son of Abraham, Isaac was to become a great nation that would have been a blessing to all the nations of the earth. He, too, eventually turned out to be a total disappointment through the weakness of his own character, and through the failure of his sons throughout the ensuing generations. Even in this case, according to Hebrews 2:16, Christ, who in John 8:58 stated that “before Abraham was born, I am.” took on Himself the seed of Abraham, as fulfillment of God's promise to the patriarch, and by His birth, has become a great blessing to all peoples of the earth.

Thank God for the coming of Christ, the Savior of the world. His coming has always been the mystery which has been hidden from ages and generations (Colossians 1:26) and has now been revealed to be the divine fulfillment of the ancient promise God made to King David and to Father Abraham.



Eugene Palma

The Place of Prayer in the Christian Church of North America by Rev. John Lathrop



THE Christian Church of North America is an evangelical, Protestant denomination. We will examine the meaning and function of prayer in the CCNA. We shall seek to do this in two ways. First, we will examine the place of prayer from a doctrinal perspective. We will look at the CCNA Articles of Faith and see what they tell us about the CCNA's understanding of prayer. Second, we will consider the place of prayer from a practical perspective, that is, we will examine how prayer is actually practiced in the CCNA movement. In order to do this I will share from my own personal observations of the movement.

I have been a minister with the CCNA for the last eighteen years and have participated in services at the national, district and local levels. My involvement in the CCNA has allowed me to attend churches in Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Therefore, I have had the opportunity to observe firsthand the practices of the movement in a number of different settings. After considering prayer from the doctrinal and practical perspectives I will summarize our findings.

THE CCNA ARTICLES OF FAITH

are very brief (only twelve points in all.) This being the case, they are not to be taken as a comprehensive statement of all that the CCNA believes. Many biblical doctrines are not touched upon at all in the articles (divorce and remarriage, the place of women in ministry, etc.) The articles are merely a statement of certain fundamental truths that we hold in common. A quick reading of the twelve articles will reveal that there is only one article that directly mentions prayer. This is Article 10 which reads,

We believe that Jesus Christ, Himself, bore all our infirmities, and therefore we obey the following commandment: *"Is there any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."* James 5:14-15; Matthew 8:17¹

This article tells us that the CCNA believes in prayer for the physical needs of people; we believe in divine healing. The divine character of the healing is stressed in the article in the statement that, "Jesus Christ, Himself, bore all our infirmities" and in the phrase, "the Lord shall raise [the sick person] up." In this instance, prayer is seen as a means of bringing Christ's benefit to the physical needs of people. Actually, in James 5, prayer is not just a means to this end, it is a command. In this particular passage the ministry of healing is connected with the ministry of the church elders. So the doctrine of the CCNA endorses prayer for the supernatural healing of the sick. As noted earlier, this is the only article of faith that explicitly refers to prayer.

There is, however, another article of faith that does, in a veiled way, tell us something about the nature and function of prayer in the CCNA. This is Article 7 which reads:

We believe in the baptism in the Holy Ghost as an experience received subsequent to salvation, with the sign of speaking in tongues as the Holy Ghost gives utterance. Acts 2:4; 10:45-47; 19:6.²

This is the distinctive Pentecostal doctrine. It is what sets Pentecostals apart from other evangelicals. While other Christian groups may endorse a "second blessing" or "second work of grace," Pentecostals insist that this experience is accompanied by a manifest sign, and that sign is speaking in other tongues. Now the word "prayer" or "pray" is not found in this article but the concept of prayer is. This article deals with the doctrine of the

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

There has been and will continue to be much discussion regarding this doctrine (what it is, when it takes place, what if any signs accompany it, etc.) We will not at this time enter into the ongoing debate, what is important for us at this point is what "speaking in tongues" means. As the scriptural citations of Article 7 make clear, speaking in tongues was something that did occur in the early church. But what exactly was it? The

fact that it is referred to as "speaking" tells us that it was a form of audible speech, but we need to know more than that. Let us turn briefly now to a consideration of the three tests that are cited in the CCNA article of faith.

Acts 2 records the events of the first Christian Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem. It was an amazing day as many people came to the Lord. (2:41) It was also a day marked by unusual supernatural signs:

- the sound like the blowing of a violent wind (2:2),
- the appearance of tongues of fire over each of the heads of the 120 gathered in the upper room (2:3) and,
- the filling of the disciples with the Holy Spirit. (2:4)

We will concern ourselves with this last item because we are told that when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit that they "began to speak in other tongues" as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. Some in Jerusalem scorned the disciples' speech as evidence of drunkenness. (2:13) The apostle Peter announced that it was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit spoken of by the prophet Joel. (2:17-21) Though what the disciples spoke in tongues was obscure to many, (2:13) others understood them (2:8) and Luke tells us in general terms what the content of their speech was, "They were declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues." (2:11 NIV) I believe they were honoring God, glorifying or praising Him. This is one of the forms of prayer.

The second text cited in the article of faith is Acts 10:45-47. This text records some of the events that took place at the house of Cornelius. The apostle Peter preached to those who were gathered there (the Gentiles) and the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. In Luke 10:46, we learn that the way Peter and those with him knew this had happened was because they heard the Gentiles speaking in tongues and praising God. In this passage we are not told what the content of the tongues was.

• Continued on Page 19 •



Youth Ministry

Rev. Sam DeMarco

PRIORITIES: MEASURE THEM!

In the spring edition of the VISTA, The question was asked "To be or not to be?" This was based on youth and children ministry and more so to evaluate the attitude toward these essential ministries. One of the points was simply a lack of prioritizing. This is a continuation of that article.

This has been a busy several months for me as a pastor as I assume it is with every other pastor that is reading this article. At the time of this article is being submitted I along with our staff have been reevaluating ministry. It has been challenging. We have tried to be brutally honest asking questions why do we do what we do?

I begin my 4th year as the National Youth President for our movement. I am honored to be appointed again. The following items that I share come from a heart of love and concern. It also comes from a pastor's heart. I am involved in a church that has grown through time. We have grown from ministering to 100 people monthly to 700 monthly. It is time to measure our priorities. To fix something means **you want to fix them**, therefore making it priority. I have seen our churches and our district functions. I have worked with leadership in various forms. Loved ones, the general state of the union is this; we need an over all change in our mind set toward the children and youth. For those who are healthy in their thinking, let this serve as confirmation and encouragement as well as a warning not to neglect your priority. For the rest may this provoke you to change and do the right things.

Measure your Priorities:

Resources reflect priority.

Take a look at the resources you have. Where are they being used? What ministry is benefiting the most from them. Resources can be people, money, facilities, guest ministries, events and programs.

Budgets reflect priority.

How much money in your church budget is set towards children and youth? This alone will tell you where your priority is and as Jesus puts it,

"Where your heart is".

Staffing reflects priority.

Who is on your paid staff? Who is on your leadership staff? This will show you where your priority is as well.

Facilities reflect priority.

Take a look at what ministry has the most space? What ministry has the prime space? Are the facilities allowed to reflect the age? Is the children area "fun looking?" Is the youth area "cool?" Of course this needs to be in the eyes of the youth and. Some might say, "Bro. Sam we need to still look like the church?" Yes and the "look" of the church is to capture life for all ages. The church is to capture a family, a home. My 6 year old's room is not decorated in stained glass, it's got bright colors, stenciling on the walls reflecting her interests and relevant to her age. I say this because I know of mind sets in churches that don't allow walls to be painted or rooms to be altered as though they were somehow holy and sacred. Let's begin to let the atmosphere and the décor reflect the age.

Style reflects priority.

Ask yourself, "Would someone who is young or who has children want to come to my church?" Style is the way you conduct ministry. Is it filled with life, excitement, and excellence? This is what tells youth that they are loved, when love is expressed through stuff saying you matter. I have experienced conferences' where the youth had the left-overs of everything while the adults had the best. 'God forgive us'. Where is our heart? Where is our priority?

Exposure reflects priority.

How much attention is given to programs and events in your services pertaining to youth? How much emphasis is given to the needs of these ministries? Jesus said suffer the children to come to me for such is the kingdom of God. The kingdom belongs to them. Isn't it time to re-prioritize?

Jesus said in Matthew 7:11, *you who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him!* We want to give good gifts to our children so lets reevaluate what we do as a church

and as a movement to make sure we are doing the right things. Some of you might not know where to begin. Take a look at other ministries. If they are bearing fruit, glean from them. Try contacting consultants for the areas you need help in. We have used several for different areas in the past and it has been very helpful. **The first place to start is to measure your priorities.**

APEX 2003

Theme: The Decision

Place: University of Pitt Johnstown, PA

Cost: Early bird special: \$120

Ministry: Gregg Johnson, Sam DeMarco, Jill DeMarco (others to be announced.)

Worship Ministry: David Demarco and his Praise team

Activities: Madness 2K3, The All Out games, The All Out Café, B-Ball & V-Ball tournaments, swimming,

Dates: May 23-26th, 2003

National Youth Stewardship Program

A packet has been sent to every church explaining this exciting program for our youth ministries to take ownership of their youth department. If you have not received a packet or want information please contact us at 724 846-8820.

Upcoming Next Level District Conferences

Niagara Mohawk District

When: Jan 3-5, 2003

Ministry: Pastor Sam DeMarco

Activities: Skiing!

Cost \$120

Theme: Intimacy

New England District

When: November 8-10, 2002

Ministry: Greg Hubbard, Pastor Sam DeMarco

Music ministry: Chosen

Activities: surprise recreation events

Cost: \$ 100

Theme: Extreme Righteousness

However, in Luke 11:17, Peter describes the gift that the Gentiles received as “the same gift as [God] gave us.” (NIV) Since we have already said that the Acts 2 manifestation of tongues was a form of praise, it is reasonable to believe that the same is true here even though on this occasion there is no evidence that any of the tongues was understood.

The last passage cited in the article of faith is Acts 19:6. This text deals with the ministry of the apostle Paul to certain disciples in the city of Ephesus. He enquires as to their spiritual state, baptizes them and then lays hands on them. When he lays hands on them, they begin to speak in tongues and prophesy. Again, in this context, there are no specifics given as to the content of the tongues. However, since this is a recurring phenomenon in Acts, it would seem reasonable for there to be a consistency in what the experience was. New Testament scholar Gordon Fee believes that the apostle Paul’s understanding of tongues was that it was prayer and praise.³ Crain Keener also favors viewing speaking in tongues primarily as prayer.⁴

The two CCNA articles of faith that I have cited deal the most directly with the topic of prayer. If we were to take these as the sum and total of all that the CCNA believed about prayer, it would limit the CCNA to seeing prayer only as something to be offered in your own native language for the recovery of the sick and in an unknown tongue to praise God. This would be placing great limitations on prayer. While every detail of our theology of prayer is not spelled-out, it is “covered” in Article 1 of the Statement of Faith. In that article we affirm our acceptance of the whole Bible as God’s Word.⁵ Thus, we accept all the types of prayer that are enjoined in scripture, praise, and worship, confession, thanksgiving and petition.

We have thus far given our attention to the Articles of Faith of the CCNA to see what their official doctrine is concerning prayer. Our next task is to look at the actual

PRACTICE OF PRAYER IN THE CCNA.

It is one thing to state what you believe, it actually something else to practice it.

As previously mentioned, I have had the opportunity over both time and distance to

observe the practice of prayer in the CCNA movement. While no two churches or church meetings are exactly the same, I have found a remarkable consistency in the practice of prayer in the CCNA. This consistency is evident whether the gathering is a national, district, or local congregational service.

Typically, prayer is one of the first orders of business in any gathering. At or near the beginning of each service, whether is a worship service or a business session, prayer is usually offered. This prayer generally,

- acknowledges the greatness of God,
- praises or honors Him,
- asks that He be in the midst of the people gathered.

In addition to the “opening prayer” near the beginning of each gathering there is usually a worship time during which the Lord is praised in song. In between and even during the songs that are sung it is not uncommon to hear someone offer vocal praise to the Lord. Prayer is also usually offered in connection with the offering. Typical subject that may be covered in this prayer include a request that the Lord would bless this offering, the administration of it, and both those who can and cannot contribute to it. Each service also usually has a prayer time proper. Prayer requests are taken from those who are gathered and are prayed for by the pastor or other leader (though prayer is by no means restricted to the clergy.)

All meetings, whether they are business sessions or church services generally close with prayer, thanking God for what has been accomplished and asking for His continued blessing upon His people. In addition in regular church services after the sermon, it is common for an altar call to be given which provided people with an opportunity to be prayed for. So prayer is a very regular part of a CCNA service, and as we have noted, the prayer takes various forms including praise, petition and thanksgiving. The importance of prayer in the CCNA can also be seen in that some churches have prayer meetings—services devoted to prayer. The CCNA’s annual prayer conference is another sign of the importance of prayer in the CCNA movement.

All of the above mentioned prayer practices concern the public practice of the movement, but constant and committed daily prayer is also urged upon each church member. The prayers that are urged upon the people are the same types of prayer as we have mentioned, praise, petition, thanksgiving, and, of course, confession.

PRAYER FUNCTIONS IN THE CCNA TO HONOR GOD AND TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE.

Prayer is one of the pillars of the CCNA and ought to be because we promote a second experience with the Spirit. Those who receive this experience can pray with their mind and with the Spirit. (I Corinthians 14:15) We have two ways to pray.

So prayer is a major emphasis of the CCNA. What is unfortunate is that the “initial physical evidence of the Spirit” emphasis has sometimes eclipsed the prayer power emphasis.

May God help us to continue to grow in prayer, praying at all times and in all places for all people with our minds, and with the Spirit for the furtherance and expansion of His kingdom and honor.

NOTES

1. Steven Galvano, ed. *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Christian Church of North America 1927-1977* (Sharon, PA: General Council, Christian Church of North America, 1977), 24.

2. Ibid.

3. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 148.

4. Craig S. Keener, *Three Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit, Three Crucial Questions Series* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker, 1996), 121.

5. Galvano, 24.

THANKSGIVING

by Marie Elena Wilson

For all the things seen,
we thank you for O Lord.
For the beauty of a sunrise,
the mist of morning dew,
For Holy Ghost protection,
that come to us anew
For laughter, hugs and kisses,
we share from day to day.
For Godly loving friends to help,
us when things seem to go astray.
For all the unseen miracles
that you orchestrate so well.
For Angels that watch over us,
to protect us from evil spells.
Thank you for your word,
that we can stand upon,
The word that will remain forever,
when everything else is gone.

General Overseer's Message
• Continued from Page 4 •

A leader must especially hurry to repent because, if he does not, he will hurt the Lord's work. In the lives of many of the men of God, some did not repent quickly, and the Lord's work was spoiled. Saul did not repent at all, and was set aside, unworthy to be God's leader.

THE FIRST RULE FOR FOLLOWERS IS THIS: Do not idolize your Christian leaders. If you do, you will eventually find weaknesses. If we revere a person and then find weaknesses, our first tendency will be to deny any value at all in the man. We are not to minimize sin, but we can expect perfection from no one but God. When a Christian leader confesses sin, we should restore him in love. Sin is sin and the person who sins must be judged. But a repentant leader must be loved (2-Cor. 2:6-8). Love demonstrated toward this person completes the biblical balance. Sin must be judged, but as soon as the judgment is received, we become sinners if we do not confirm love to the one who has been in sin.

FINALLY, we must pray for our leaders. In our romanticism we tend to elevate leaders until they are no longer real people, but symbols. We cannot stand to think of them as sinners. And this is unfair. If a servant of God falls, then the first question I should ask is, "Have I shared his burden?" Specifically, have I treated him as a religious symbol, or have I prayed for him as a man?

John DelTurco
General Overseer

World Missions
• Continued from Page 6 •

We expect the government will want to send representatives to our classes. Any Deaf adults or children will be encouraged to attend as well. After training workers and teachers, our vision is to take the Deaf children and put them in a school that will teach them Sign Language and classes will be in Sign Language. The teachers in this school will be certified by the government of Guyana in regular subjects and by us in Sign Language.

As we provide better communication between the Deaf and their families, we will also reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Most of the time the family has not

had good communication with the Deaf member. When the church provides the signing skills to the family they will attend that church. We are estimating the Deaf population at close to ten percent. The Gospel will give the Deaf hope for the future and for eternity. They will become productive members of society and the churches as their communication skills improve.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE MISSIONARY WORK OF LAWRENCE AND MARY HALLAHAN BY SENDING DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS TO CCNA, 1294 Rutledge Road, Transfer, PA 16154-22999

OUR CCNA WORK IN HAITI
A Project of the New England District
by Vincent Prestigiacomo



The name of the mission is "Christian Church of North America-Haiti"—or in French, it is "Eglise Cretienne De LiAmerique Do Nord-Haityi" (Ecan-Haiti)

Presently we have one church in Bocoles Anlais, Haiti, which is located some 150 miles W.S.W. of Port-Au-Prince, on the South Coast of the South Western Peninsula. Boco is a village, part of the town of Les Angelais, in a very rural area. Public services, including education, are nonexistent. The economy is basically agricultural.

The land has been traditionally reserved for at least three generations for the most powerful witch doctor in the area. The Voodoo succession was broken with Pastor Rodene's conversion, next in line for the Voodoo Priesthood. Eventually his entire family was converted. Presently, Rev. Rodene is pastor of a CCNA church, Brockton Christian Assembly, and in 1998, he began the construction of a church. In November 2001, Pastor Rodene, and the members of Christian Assembly, donated the building, along with a parcel of land, adjoining the church to the CCNA church. The New England District purchased the inheritance rites for the land, from the surviving

heirs, for a total sum of \$500.00.

Our vision is to see the church develop into an Evangelistic Outreach Center, with a school through grade 12, offering also Vocational and Ministerial Training and Health Clinics. We desire to be open to opportunities to establish, or work with other similar works in other areas, as God should direct. There is presently a school, K through 4, with approximately 200 pupils.

We need to raise support for the school. We presently have six teachers and a principal, and each teacher is paid \$60.00 per month.

The school has been supported by Pastor Rodene and members of his church (Haitian Christian Assembly). However, as the work has increased, we have greater needs: on going building plans, outfitting and shipping the van to Haiti, (which was donated by the Pentecostal Church in Newtonville, MA.), legal expenses, a pastor to support, as well as the school.

This is the only CCNA affiliated work in Haiti, and the needs are great. Please place Haiti on your missionary budget.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE MISSIONARY WORK TO HAITI BY SENDING DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS TO CCNA, 1294 Rutledge Road, Transfer, PA 16154-22999

MARK CHARLES
APPOINTED EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, FOREIGN
MISSIONS



Brother Mark Charles, a former missionary to South Africa and Madagascar, has been appointed by the Executive Board and ratified by the General Council at this past convention to be our new Executive Director of Foreign Missions for CCNA. Presently his is part-time because of the lack of available undesignated funds. However, if your church can promise a monthly support for Bro. Charles for at least one year, then it will be possible for him to be full-time.