

Getting Connected

A monthly newsletter highlighting the ministry of the Churches of God in
Maryland, Delaware, Washington, D.C. and the Virginia Peninsula

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In the Old Testament the kinsman-redeemer law stated that if someone lost his possessions one of his "kin" could volunteer to repossess that which was lost (Leviticus 25:24, 25). The kinsman's "redeemer" role was fulfilled in two ways: (1) He had to acknowledge his relationship with the one who had suffered loss; and (2) he had to pay the price for the recovery of what had been lost.

We see this in action in the story of Ruth and Boaz. Boaz became both a rescuer and a restorer to Ruth.

The force of the Ruth story emerges in its dynamic picture of what Jesus Christ has done and will do for everyone who puts his or her trust in Him. Jesus is the Savior, but He is even more than that! He is more than a **Forgiver** of our sins. He is even more than our **Provider** of eternal life. He is our **Redeemer** - ready to recover and restore what the power of sin and death has taken from us.

He does it by . . .

- **ACKNOWLEDGING US AS FAMILY**
- **PAYING THE PRICE**
- **BRINGING FULL RECOVERY**

Last month I talked about the first two. Today allow me to explore the **"full recovery"** aspect of our redemption - the ongoing, continual process of recovery. The significance of this provision is clearly apparent when we assess the destructive impact of sin and failure on the human personality.

How many have suffered loss because of sin!

So many have been injured, broken, and damaged.

People are so often left as emotional, physical, and mental casualties through human failure.

The failure may not even be one's own. Damaged people are often the result of someone else's neglect, exploitation, or violation. On the other hand, the loss may be the individual's own just due, resulting from conscious rebellion or defiance toward what he or she knew to be right. Nevertheless, the wreckage wrought in any of our lives may be mended as surely as the sin may be forgiven.

The precious truth of Jesus' power as Redeemer is that He has a plan and an ability to progressively restore the broken parts of human experience and to reproduce a **whole person**. His salvation is not only an act of forgiveness, it is also a progressive action of redemption. He not only meets us at the moment of our new birth, but His saving life generates a momentum which can bring us into the fullness of restored life and joy.

There is no dearer truth in the Word of God than this: Christ is **"able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him"** (Hebrews 8:25). That simply means that in the recovery process, there is no distance too great for Him to bring us.

God said to the farmers of ancient Israel, "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25). In those words He prophesies a promise answering our present need as well. Whatever has been decayed or destroyed, He is our **Restorer - Recoverer - Redeemer!**

Whatever your loss, pain, failure, or brokenness, Jesus Christ is fully capable of bringing about change unto full restoration. Just as His resurrection power brings new life, His redemption power brings new hope. He is able, for He's more than a Savior! He's your Redeemer who promises that He will give **"beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning"** (Isaiah 61:3).

So just as you gave Him your heart and received Him as Savior, give Him your life's broken pieces - receive Him as Redeemer. Give Him time to work a full redemptive recovery in each part of your life. Let these promises be set in motion as in childlike faith you receive His commitment to restore everything sin has damaged, lost, or ruined.

Begin now to praise Him! You will discover that worshiping Him in this light leads out of the darkness of all despair over sin's effect and aftermath. Let redemptive power and life flow as you praise Jesus Christ - your Savior and your Redeemer!

- Pastor Darrell Rice



UPDATES

Regional Council

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 Hugh Bair
 Dennis Warren Foster
 Tim Shawyer
 Harold R. Bowman
 Jon Stephen Lowery
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Josè Torres

Urban Ministry & Benevolence Coordinator

Billy Humphrey

Strategic Church Planting Coordinator/Coach

Chris Lockemy

Please pray for . . .

. . . **Aaron Jones** (Waldorf, MD) had surgery on his vocal cords March 20 and is on 30 days voice rest recovering at home.
 . . . **Amber Shepard** (Lexington Park, MD) underwent surgery on her neck (fusing C4 and C5 vertebrae) on March 8 and is recovering at home.

Congratulations to . . .

. . . **Ryan Shawyer** (Laurel, MD) and his wife, **April**, on the birth of their second child - a son, Brennan Weston Shawyer - born March 7, 2018.
 . . . **Steve Hall** (Severn, MD) upon completion of his doctoral studies in "spiritual formation" and successful defense of his dissertation at Ashland Theological Seminary.
 . . . **Patricia Felton** (Brandywine, MD), **Diana Weedon** (Frederick, MD) and **Phillicia Wilson** (Severn, MD) upon their ordination in a ceremony hosted by the Regional Council on March 11, 2018 at the Regional Office.

Transitions . . .

. . . **LaJuana Caldwell** (Silver Spring, MD) accepted the appointment as interim pastor of the Viers Mill Church of God on March 4, 2018.
 . . . **Charles Levering** (North East, MD) was confirmed as pastor of the North East Church of God in a meeting of the congregation with Bishop Darrell Rice on March 11, 2018.

2 CHURCHES LAUNCH MEDIA OUTREACHES

Epic Church (Baltimore/**Pastor Chris Lockemy**) begins weekly television broadcasts on ABC/Channel 2 in Baltimore on Easter Sunday at 5:30am Pastor Chris invites those in the area to tune in or DVR the program each Sunday.

Rock Hall Church of God (**Pastor William Wheatley**) recently launched a weekly live 30-minute radio program (WCTR 102.3 and AM 1530), Sundays at 7:30am, sharing his heartbeat for the community.

PASTOR BRIAN SHEPARD RESPONDS TO SCHOOL SHOOTING

On March 20, 2018 tragedy struck Great Mills High School in southern Maryland when a teenage gunman began shooting at students resulting in injuries and 2 deaths (including the shooter). Pastor **Brian Shepard** (Life Community Church of God/Lexington Park, MD) and his youth pastor, **Josh Gangl**, responded immediately to the horror in their community: The church's licensed counselor set up emergency counseling for students to deal with emotional trauma. Pastors Shepard and Gangl arranged a special Friday night prayer service 3 days after the shooting for all children and parents.

PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY - APRIL 29, 2018 (Date Optional)

The theme for Pastor Appreciation 2018 is: "The Hands of God" (Exodus 17:12). April 29 is the suggested date for local churches to honor their pastor with expressions of appreciation (date is optional). Resources can be found at: aduldiscipleshipcoq.com.

ELEVATE CONFERENCE - MAY 5

Information is enclosed for the **Elevate** Conference set for May 5, 2018, at Heritage Community Church in Severn, MD. Please note:

- FREE if registered before April 23
- Chick Fil-A box lunch included
- Pre-Conference Pastors Round Table (space limited to 40)
- Drawings for 4 iPad minis
- Pastors who register PLUS enlist at least 3 persons from their church to register receive FREE book - *Leadership Pain: The Classroom for Growth*, by Dr. Sam Chand.

GENERAL OVERSEER TIM HILL TO HOST STEWARDSHIP TRAINING AND *CONNECT* SESSION - APRIL 12/5:00 P.M.

Dr. Tim Hill and the Int'l Executive Committee is sponsoring a live-stream event on April 12, 2018, at 5:00 p.m. The event will open with members of the Executive Committee leading a **Connect** session with pastors and denominational leaders. That interactive time will be followed by personal financial training geared just for pastors and lead by financial professionals from within the Church of God. These speakers will offer short, dynamic presentations designed to assist in managing the financial outlook for ministers and church leaders.

MAY IS WORLD MISSIONS MONTH: *SEND THE LIGHT TO GEORGETOWN, GUYANA*

A brochure is enclosed describing the need, the vision, and the plan to evangelize, plant birthing churches, provide an evangelism and training center that will reach the entire Caribbean with the gospel. Each church is asked to receive a special missions offering (weekend of your choice) during the month of May and bring it with you to the Delmarva-DC camp meeting Sunday night, June 24, 2018, for our annual world missions offering.

CAMP MEETING (June 24 - 17) . . . AND EASTERN SHORE CAMPGROUND WORK DAY (May 19)

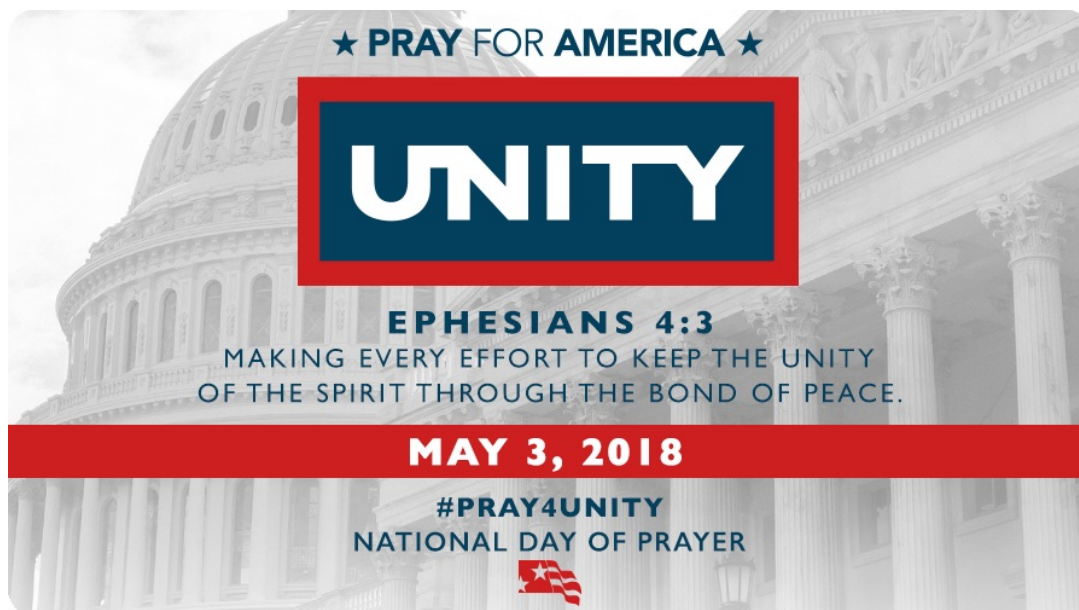
- Enclosed for all pastors is the 2018 camp meeting poster. Please display in your church and/or office.
- Mark your calendar - May 19, 2018/8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. - and plan to join in great fellowship and service helping prepare the campground for summer activities. Lunch provided for all participants.

PASTOR JAMES IZZARD AND LIFE BUILDERS CHURCH OF GOD LAUNCH WASHINGTON, D.C. CAMPUS

On March 11, 2018, Pastor James Izzard and Life Builders (Harvest Temple) Church of God in Forestville, MD commissioned their DC church family, Upon the approval of **Bishop Darrell Rice** and **District Overseer Aaron Jones**, **Pastors Mike and Pat Haskins** were appointed to expand Life Builders outreach beyond Prince George's County into the nation's capital - Washington, D.C. Also, the mother church voted to change their name from Life Builders Harvest Temple Church of God to Life Builders Church of God . . . embracing vision and a Kingdom mindset!

PASTOR MARTA NOGUERA AND LUZ A LAS NACIONES PAY OFF \$400,000 MORTGAGE IN 6 MONTHS!

In an amazing display of God's favor and the extraordinary leadership of Pastor Marta Noguera, the Luz a las Naciones Church of God, purchased the Harwood, MD property (formerly Edgewater Church of God). The regional office held the property for several years and leased it to Luz a las Naciones. In early 2017 Bishop Rice and the Regional Council offered to sell the church property to them for the pay-off - approximately \$400,000. The church raised \$260,000 as a down payment at closing on October 3, 2017, and immediately began accelerating principal payments. **On March 6, 2018 - 6 months after purchasing the property - the church paid off the remainder of the mortgage and is now DEBT-FREE!** Congratulations to Pastor Marta and congregation!



YWEA 2018 european renaissance

Sending the Light Across Europe

Recent studies show that the majority of Europe no longer believes that God exists. In a region of the world where in the 16th century much of our theology was written, the light of truth has dwindled to a weak flame. It's time to IGNITE THE LIGHT OF JESUS in Europe again!

In keeping with the YWEA Mission and Vision, The "2018 YWEA European Renaissance-Sending the Light Across Europe" will focus on the following areas for potential impact:

- ▶ **PARTNER** with "Send the Light to the Cities" to help establish Ministry Training Centers in the Cities of Paris & Amsterdam
- ▶ **HELP RESCUE & PROVIDE** for orphan boys and girls at 3 Orphanages in Ukraine
- ▶ **PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT** to "Europe's Child" as we help Gypsy Children attend Youth Camp and encounter Jesus's love
- ▶ **REMODEL AND EXPAND** the "European Theological Seminary" in Germany as well as provide resources to Train Pastors & Church Planters for Europe

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