

The Church of God

Great Lakes Mountaineer Region



Ohio



West Virginia



Michigan

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News

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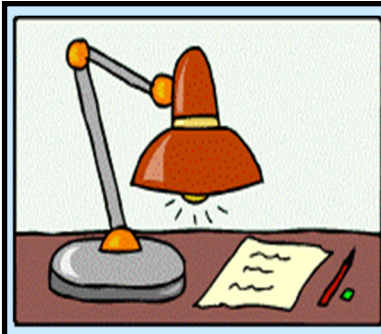
In

Michigan—Ohio—West Virginia

James T. Smith—Regional Overseer

Walter Lofton—Editor

www.tcog-glmr.org



From the desk of the Regional Overseer *James T. Smith*



Think It Not Strange

In the last issue of our regional paper we asked the question: “*What Should Our Attitude Be Towards Our Lord’s Imminent Return?*” We considered our Lord’s response to His disciples’ query in Matthew 24:3 regarding “*what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*”

The Lord responded with a litany of predictions describing what would come upon the world as a whole, and in particular what His followers would endure. He later gave the apostle John in *Revelation* a comprehensive vision regarding the last days events that would precede His return to set up His millennial kingdom.

Now for some two thousand years, men have debated just when Christ would return to RAPTURE away His Bride (the *Parousia* as it is known in Greek), especially relative to the seven years of tribulation described in Daniel and Revelation. Will His coming to rapture away His bride occur before the tribulations commence (*Pre-Tribulation*), sometime near the 3-1/2 year midpoint (*Mid-Tribulation*), just before God’s great wrath is poured out (*Pre-Wrath*), or towards the end of the seven years (*Post-Tribulation*), just in time to attend the Lord’s Marriage Supper.

Depending on which of these options best identifies when the rapture will occur, the amount and severity of (great) tribulation that we can expect to endure is greatly affected.

For example, we could consider such questions as: will the Church still be here on the earth when the Anti-Christ comes to full power and sets up his program; when the two witnesses of the Lord are here; when the Beast’s image is setup in the temple of the Lord; when everyone must choose to take the Beast’s mark or to be beheaded; etc.?

Rather than attempt to answer this question, the answer which the Lord seems to have purposely left nebulous (uncertain), we will instead consider another observation regarding what trials and tribulations we may face—one raised by the Apostle Peter:

1 Peter 4:12-13 *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: (13) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”*

Peter does not see the prospect of a Christian enduring a fiery trial as something strange, but rather sees it as something that should be expected! For Christians to be “*partakers of Christ’s sufferings*” (as we will see in the upcoming Sunday School quarterly “*From Glory To Glory*”) is a fundamental element of our Christian walk with the Lord, the result of which is that “*his glory shall be revealed,*” so that we “*may be glad also with exceeding joy.*”

The Apostle Paul also addressed this matter of a Christian suffering tests, trials, and tribulations. He opened his consideration of these experiences that a Christian may endure with a question regarding “*the love of Christ.*”

Romans 8:35-39 *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

We thus see another purpose to the trials, tests, and tribulations that we may have to endure. They certainly are used to bring God’s judgment upon a wicked world, especially during the seven-year tribulation of Revelation. But they also work to demonstrate and reveal the power of the love of Christ in us to overcome all these things. Specifically, “*in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*”

Paul in this same chapter had asked a question regarding how we should confront the things we must endure: "*If God be for us, who can be against us?*" He also made an observation regarding efforts to compare our suffering with the glory to yet be revealed in us as a result of the trials, tests, and tribulations we can expect to endure:

Romans 8:31 "*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*"

Romans 8:18 "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Our conclusion then is that regarding these things that we "*think it not strange*"!

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

Wanda Sutherland Regional ABM Coordinator

Thank the Lord for our Regional Convention where the Holy Ghost poured out his blessing upon everyone.

The Lord is so good to all of us. We need to share his goodness to everyone.

In Mark 13: 34 -37 the servants were left in charge while the Son of man went on his journey. He warns them to be ready. Not to be sleeping when He comes. We should be about His work with gladness and joy.

The ABM plays a big part in His work. Caring for souls brings reward here on earth, but it gains treasures in heaven. Remember Jesus said to lay up treasures where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and thieves cannot break through and steal.

I pray God blessed you all and I know he will reward your work for him as you labor in His work.

Ronald Robe
Regional CPMA Coordinator

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." (Isaiah 60:1)

Many years ago my Mother had some silver and a gold watch that belonged to my Great Grandfather, ever so often she would get these articles out and polish them with some sort of silver polish. I remember well the film it would leave on the silver and how a lot of buffing was required to get that film off the silver and gold, they had to be cleaned because they would tarnish just laying around. One time it alludes me who exactly did it but someone tried to get the tarnish off with Acetone. Oh, what a mess a lot more work was then required to get the silver to look good. Funny but that silver polish would adhere to the metal and had to be worked down into it. How is your silver or gold looking right now. Spiritually speaking, are there some things you need to work on so your light shines even brighter so people can see Jesus? It was hard work to polish silver or gold but harder work to get ourselves where we need to be for Jesus. Are you in full compliance with God's Word ? There is no such thing as a half-truth. Its either yea or nay!

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

Jesus is the Author and Finisher of the work. We are blessed to be part of His Church. We should love God's Church so much that we want to give our all, yet some still have problems doing so.

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;" (1 Cor. 3:12).

Question; have you ever considered that wood, hay, and stubble do not do well in a fire? Scripture tells us the new temple is made of precious stones. Let's work on getting it right.

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. (14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" (1 Cor. 3:13, 14). We did a lot of things when I was growing up, one was butchering our own meat. When I was young we hardly ever bought meat or chicken, we raised it.

One thing I did not like was getting blood all over me although it was almost impossible not to. As soon as I could, I would go wash that blood off my body, hands, arms, anywhere it was. And depending on how long it was on me it seemed to do something to my skin, it always left a weird feeling on my skin.

Jesus' Side Is Pierced. *"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it"* (Matt.27:24).

Do you think just because you don't want to except something you will get off Scot free??

"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:" (John 19:31-33).

This was Bible prophecy. That was important from a prophetic standpoint, for the scripture said, *"Not a bone of Him shall be broken."* You see, He was dying as a sacrificial Lamb of God. Now, they were not to offer a lamb that had any blemish or any spot or any broken bone. God didn't want an old sick lamb. You say, "Well, it's got a broken leg and it's going to die. Let's make a sacrifice unto God with this thing." God says, "No way, don't give me your hand-offs, or your cast-offs." And so, under the law they couldn't give a lamb that

had a spot or a blemish. They couldn't give a lamb that had broken bones. God knew the nature of man, how we're apt to just cast anything off on Him and save the best for ourselves. And God says, "Not so!"

And so, with Jesus, in order to fulfill the type of the sacrificial lamb, could not have a broken bone. And it was prophesied, *"Not a bone of Him shall be broken."* Now, had one of those soldiers just, you know, swung the sledgehammer and broke His leg anyhow, then we would have to say, "Well, we better look for another Messiah. Jesus cannot be the Messiah. His bones were broken." Oh, God was there to protect from such an accident. It takes our best for the Lord just as it took Jesus's best!

"But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34).

You might think that this was just to make sure Christ was dead, but you would be oh so wrong. This was for us to have a chance at the divine institution we are now in!

"And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced" (John 19:35-37).

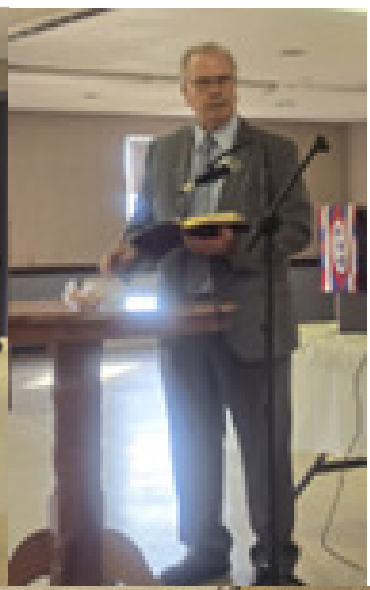
Has that blood soaked down into you? Is the Holy Ghost trying to get you to change? How about letting the Holy Ghost polish some on you!

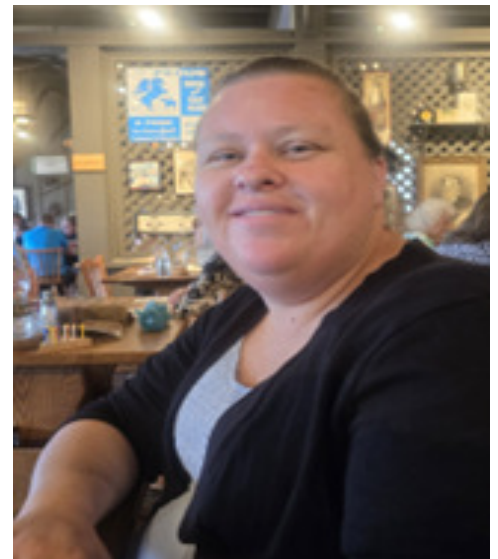
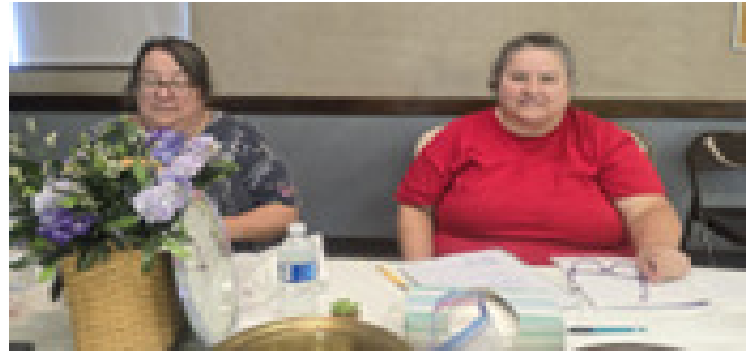
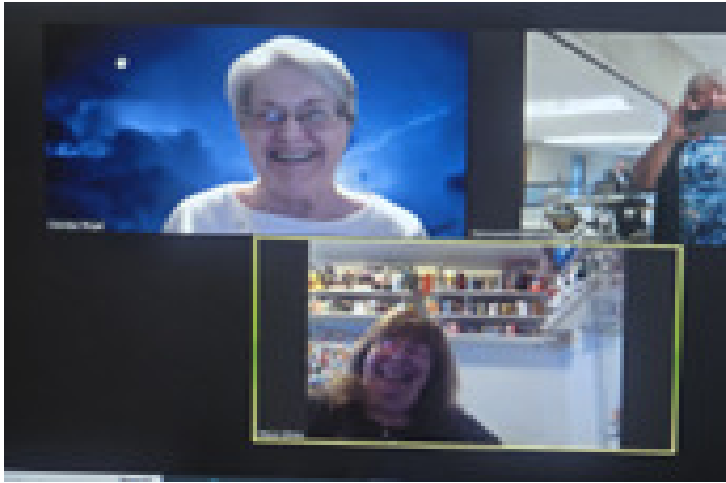
"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28).

All due respect, we can pay all our Emergency dollars CPMA, Tabernacle Dollars for others. We can sign up dogs, cats, etc, still God knows it's not true as long as one person hasn't paid although we send in the money and are 100% in funds.

Are we? We should love the Church with all our hearts, also you will receive a great blessing if you bless the Church!

Pictorial Review of Our Regional Convention





WMB BOOST—Kandy Saunders

Regional WMB Coordinator

Theme: UNSTOPPABLE

The Church of God is chosen by God to be UNSTOPPABLE in this world today. We know this because He has said so. Being unstoppable is only possible when God is leading in the work. We dare not venture out on our own. With God all things are possible, but without Him, we can do nothing. And referring to the Church, there is safety in a multitude of counselors. Jesus sent his disciples out two by two. This is His perfect example to follow.

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. (Mark 6:7 – 13).

At this moment, we may not see a lot of His delivering power, but we will if we are faithful in our walk with Him. God has not changed. But the deceiver has many different appearances and sometimes we miss it because he hides. However, when he raises his head, we recognize him for who he is.

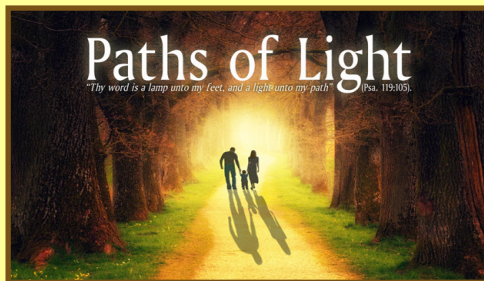
May God help us in all the battles that are just ahead. Let us remember the battle is not with flesh and blood and the victory is won with love. Truly we must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Let's be prayed up for the work ahead. Let's continue to work in our areas to win souls for the Lord. He's waiting on us and He will lead us to the fruit that is ready to come.

Emphasizing John 15:16, may these Scriptures bless you: *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no*

—Continued on next page

man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another” (John 15:1-17).

Remember October World Missions is just around the corner!



Sunday School Theme:

“Paths of Light”

Annette Oglesbee

Regional Coordinator

Why are so many people void of hope today? A survey showed in 2022 that only 30% of the world population called themselves Christian; and only about half of those believe Jesus Christ is the Savior. And only 59% of those believe in the Holy Ghost as a personal being that can be sinned against. Only 37% of so-called Christian Pastors have a biblical world view. And 62% of those have a hybrid world view. Mixing or combining different religious beliefs. More than half of evangelicals believe that God accepts the worship of all religions. Including Christianity, Judaism & Islam.

There is one true God in 3 Persons. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (John 14:6). Jesus alone is the way to the truth and to Life. (No man cometh to the Father, but by me).

“Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:13-15). (Read whole Chapter).

Rise up, dress for battle, put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11-21).

Be a warrior, an experienced fighter. Not only teach through word, but through faith, conversation, action and reaction, "Steadfastness."

Invite someone to Sunday School, Bible study anytime they can hear the real truth of Jesus Christ.

A Testimony About the Blessings of **Bible Training Institute**

By
Alyce Silvia—Paw Paw, WV

I've been associated with the Church since I was 10 years old and have learned a lot about God's Church through reading the Bible, BTI correspondence courses in the 70's, going to church every time the doors were open and through a divine revelation. I have faithfully followed Him from raising four children as a working single mother once my first husband passed away to more recently moving with my new husband to a little town in West Virginia after the children were grown. I prayed for a home Church and found **The Church of God** in Fairmont with Brother James Smith as pastor with his wife, Nancy. They have truly been a blessing to me. When I learned BTI was coming I informed my son and we both got excited to go and started making preparations.

I want to praise the Lord for opening the door for us to attend this year's Eastern Regional Bible Training Institute located in Cleveland, Tennessee. We were able to stay on Lee University campus which history goes all the way back to A. J. Tomlinson. The Spirit was present in every single service. A very uplifting morning song and worship service started off each day, followed by announcements. The Spirit came with us into the classes. We started each class with prayer. The instructors were very knowledgeable about their course of study. I could feel the Holy Ghost moving, teaching. They made sure everyone in the class understood what they were teaching, engaging with the class. I learned things I had long forgotten about the Old Testament, Church business and doctrine. I also learned more about the auxiliaries and duties of appointed offices. The experience was glorifying God for 14 days straight, praising God with other brothers and sisters while learning more about Jesus and His Church—the Church He died on the cross for. I can hardly wait for next year to go back and learn more about Him.

Tabernacle Fundraising Reminder

PRAISE THE LORD! We now have property and it is paid for and officially dedicated to God for construction of a new Assembly Tabernacle. There was an excellent turn out for the dedication and everyone seems in high spirits and are excited to see what God will do in the near future. I am getting tired of having to rent places for our Assemblies. We now have property and it is time to **RISE UP AND BUILD! [YES WE CAN!]**

Let's keep working with a holy zeal and join together with like-minded members from around the world and see what God will do this year!

THINGS WE CANNOT DO

We cannot sow bad habits and reap a good character.
We cannot sow jealousy and hatred and reap love and friendship.
We cannot sow wicked thoughts and reap a good life.
We cannot sow wrong deeds and live righteously.
We cannot sow crime and get away with it.
We cannot sow dishonesty and reap loyalty from others.
We cannot sow profane words and reap clean speech.
We cannot sow disrespect and reap respect.
We cannot sow deception and reap confidence.
We cannot sow untidiness and reap neatness.
We cannot sow intemperance and reap sobriety and temperance.
We cannot sow indifference and reap nature's rewards.
We cannot sow cruelty and reap kindness.
We cannot sow wastefulness and reap thriftiness.
We cannot sow cowardice and reap courage.
We cannot sow greed and envy and reap generosity.
We cannot sow neglect of the Bible and reap a well-guided life.
We cannot sow human thistles and reap human roses.

As we trace every branch of truth it runs us right back to the Church of God—the body of Christ. People accept the branch or teaching of repentance, or sanctification, or the baptism with the Holy Ghost evidenced by the speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, and divine healing, etc., then why not accept the body upon which each branch rests? Paul tells us that the Church of God is the pillar and ground of the truth. Then how can you accept the truth without accepting the Church? It is like purchasing a house that has no foundation or resting place. No pillars under it, no ground under it. These truths that we all love so well are attached to, and had their origination with Jesus, but when He went away they were all transferred to the Church and there they remain until this day.

—Quote from *Last Great Conflict* by A. J. Tomlinson



“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11)

Psalm 91:1-8

1. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*
- 2 *I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*
- 3 *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.*
- 4 *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*
- 5 *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;*
- 6 *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*
- 7 *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*
- 8 *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*

An Inspirational Mini Sermon

From the book, **MUSE WITH ME** by R. O. Covey

“It Is Written...”

In Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, both He and the devil referred to portions of God’s Word—*“It is written....”* The difference lay in the way each used the references. (Read Matther4:1-11).

Yes, God’s Word is written, leaving all without excuse who must have “everything written down in black and white.” It is also written for our *learning*—we who really want to know the truth. It was strength even to the Son of God (who Himself was the Word made flesh) to be able to declare in the devil’s face, *“It is written!”*

Do you know what is written? Do you care? Or would you rather neglect the reading of the Word and fight a losing battle?

The choice is yours!



Evangelism Boost

Walter Lofton
Regional Coordinator

NOTE: The following article written by Perry E. Gillum, is from the October, 1966 issue of the “Youth Life Magazine” published by the White Wing Publishing House for the youth of the Church of God of Prophecy. Perry Gillum was a former General VLB Secretary and served as manager of the Publishing House for what was then the Church at the time this article was published. We are using it here to promote Evangelism.

SEED IN STORAGE

Around the world countless thousands are perishing from malnutrition, while others are basking in the sunshine of prosperity, erecting mammoth storages for surplus commodities. There is an old missionary hymn which we often sing. “All around us souls are dying;” yes dying, hopeless without God. Can we afford to neglect our God given talent of personal evangelism?

God asked of a complacent Israel a searching question, “*Is the seed yet in the barn?*” Their efforts to build again the temple of the Lord had been slackened, and God compared that which they could have accomplished to unplanted, unwatered seed, alive only to itself. It could not possibly produce fruit.

Let this speak to us of the potential fruit there is in the “seed” of prayer, testimony, sacrifice, a surrendered life—of which it is in our power to plant.

The unprayed prayer can never move the hand of God. The unoffered sacrifice can never produce a fragrance that blesses others. The unspoken testimony can never influence a life for God. And the life saved only for itself, will at last be lost. “*It abideth alone.*”

In Mark 11:24 we read, “*..What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*” What power there is in believing prayer! But the prayer must be prayed! The promise must be trusted! If the seed of prayer is left stored in a dormant life of neglect, there can be no fruit. Jesus said, “*Ye shall be my witnesses.*” How many have been saved through someone’s simple testimony of God’s love and Word! Prompted by the Spirit, a word in due season can save a soul from death. But the testimony we fail to give can never win a soul for Christ.

A surrendered life is one that has died to self and all selfish interests. It has been planted, utterly abandoned to the whole will of God, and therein finds its chief delight. It has fallen into the ground of selflessness and died, and now it can say, *“Not I, but Christ liveth in me.”* That which at the time of planting seemed to be a sacrifice, has become a real source of joy, for it *“bringeth forth much fruit.”*

Is there yet seed stored in a depository of your life? If we fail to witness to others, we are failing to sustain our own Christian experience. God’s plan is that we cast our bread upon the waters as the Orientals plant their rice crops in the water—sowing the seed of prayer, testimony, sacrifice, and a surrendered life—and so come to the end of the way with sheaves for the Master. David, the man after God’s own heart, once wrote: *“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”* (Psalms 126:6)

If the farmer ever hopes to harvest, he must first be vitally engaged in the ground preparation for planting the seeds. Then comes the actual labor of planting the seed. Conditions may not always seem ideal for planting, but only seed sown can bear fruit. *“He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.”* But they that sow, even in tears, *“shall reap in joy.”*

Paul, a gospel seed sowing ambassador, says *“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.”* We must not relax in the sunshine of spiritual light, while even our own loved ones perish.

Your youth group is not a private club, exclusive to a select group. Rather your youth group should be a springboard for Christian service aimed at the world. Our target should be every lost soul, may they be found at school, college, office, factory or shopping area let us sow the gospel seed and watch God honor His Word.

The Bible tells us of the activity of the New Testament Church, and they went forth witnessing everywhere telling the good news. And just as the Bible promised they increased in number.

Let us be ever abounding in the work of the Lord, continually sowing the incorruptible seed in human hearts, and remembering that the *“Word of God is quick and powerful.”* That is, it is a living thing. A man may have two grains of corn. They are yellow in color, and both look exactly alike. Yet when planted in the ground, one reveals a live germ while the other is dead. God has so arranged His Word that when sown in human hearts, it brings forth a new birth. What a heavenly feeling to personally lead a lost soul to a saving grace. Yes! We too with Paul are debtors to all men. Let’s bring the gospel seed out of storage, and feed a desperate dying generation.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. (Luke 10:2)