



Announcements from the Weekly Update for the Ministry: June 30, 2011

Dear Fellow Elders,

Summer has arrived in central Texas! During the month of June we recorded 14 days with temperatures of 100 degrees or higher (the highest was 106 degrees). Of the 14 days with temperatures over 100 degrees, there was a stretch of 10 in a row from June 12 through June 21. Even more devastating than the heat has been the lack of rain. Much of Texas is experiencing one of the worst droughts in history. This has produced an estimated economic loss of \$3 billion, and that doesn't include the cost of the many wildfires that have raged around the state. We are officially one week into summer, and it is already shaping up to be a record-breaking one!

During this current week everyone was asked to take a day to pray and fast for God's direction in our reorganization. I know of no better analogy to what we are doing than that of building a house—laying the foundation, framing the structure, putting the roof on and then constructing walls, floors and trim. Psalm 127:1 tells us that “unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” The proposal for a new structure put forward to the elders two weeks ago is simply that—a new structure. It isn't the only possible structure, but those who prepared it believe that it is capable of aiding the Church in doing its work for many years to come. The key is not the structure, as much as who will be the builder. The purpose for prayer and fasting this week is to request that God be that builder and that Jesus Christ be the true head of the body (house)!



This past Sabbath I traveled to Toronto, Ontario, to assist Graemme and Lynn Marshall with their application for charity status for Church of God, a Worldwide Association – Canada. We had a small group of 15 attend services on the Sabbath (with three new people attending for the first time). We had two teens who performed special music. Mr. Marshall led songs, and I gave the sermon. I was deeply encouraged by the enthusiasm and dedication of the small group.

After the Sabbath the Marshalls and I worked late into the night and then again on Sunday, finalizing the documents that are required for a charity application in Canada. After a series of storm delays on my return flight, I finally arrived home around 4 o'clock Monday morning. It was a grueling but productive weekend!

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In addition to the small group in Toronto, we also have a group in the Calgary area of around 50 attending on a weekly basis. There are other scattered brethren in Canada for a grand total of about 75. This is a small group to begin with; but if our members in Toronto are any indication, it is an enthusiastic group!

Hopefully, the application process will be completed soon and the charity will be established in a few weeks. In the meantime, pastors from the U.S. have traveled to Canada to help out. In addition to my Toronto visit this past week, Jon Pinelli and Richard Pinelli traveled to western Canada earlier this year. We have three credentialed elders currently in Canada (Gary Poffenroth in Calgary, Graemme Marshall in Toronto, and David Smith in Newfoundland). These three men, with assistance from the U.S., are serving the members scattered throughout this large country—a big job indeed!

There are a few items of news from the past two weeks that I wish to share with all of you.

- We have now surpassed 5,500 people registering at our festival website. We expect a few more to come in, but we believe this number represents the bulk of those who are now attending with COGWA in the U.S.
- Once again, we have proven the popularity of a Florida site. As it currently stands, St. Augustine will be our largest site by a wide margin—1,450 people are registered to attend. The next largest sites have half this number.
- Dave and Linda Register have accepted relocation to Portland, Oregon, where Dave will serve as the pastor of the Portland/Salem/Eugene congregation and the Seattle/Tacoma, Washington congregation.
- Paul and Tracy Carter will relocate to southern California where Paul will become the resident pastor. The actual relocation will not take place until they are able to sell their home. After relocation, Paul will be pastoring the Los Angeles and Bakersfield congregations.
- Ken and Kathy Giese will remain in Sacramento, but Ken will become the pastor for Stockton and Redding once Dave and Linda and Paul and Tracy relocate. These congregations will be in addition to his current pastorate in Sacramento.

In the remainder of this issue, you will find updates on our websites; news from Sri Lanka, India, and Asia; camp updates; and more. By next week we should have all the ministerial Feast assignments completed. We are currently in the process of notifying those who will be traveling outside the U.S. and those who asked to transfer within the U.S. It was encouraging to see that all our sites will have adequate ministerial manpower this year.

Please pray for the governance structure proposal, the success of our camps, the scattered brethren in Canada and God's people around the world. Please enjoy the Sabbath, and for those in the U.S., enjoy your Fourth of July activities!

All the best,

Jim Franks

On behalf of the Interim Leadership Team

Announcements for July 2, 2011

Web content update. One of the most visible areas of increased content on the COGWA website is the blogs. Coordinated by Mike Bennett, blogs are being added every week in multiple categories, and a new parenting blog is in the works. Once we accumulate a few blogs on this subject, we intend to launch the new category.

In addition to the regular additions of blogs, last week we uploaded two more Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): “[Why Does God Allow Evil and Suffering?](#)” and “[How Does Jesus Christ Live in Us?](#)” Realizing that we needed reference material to support some of our blogs and provide more explanation, Mike Bennett and Steve Moody, respectively, wrote these FAQs. In upcoming weeks, we hope to add more FAQs that will likewise fill in some of the gaps in the explanations of our beliefs.

Our third booklet, *Welcome to the Church of God, a Worldwide Association*, remains in layout. While the text is fairly brief, the process has slowed as we select and request photos, which will be an important part of this booklet. In upcoming weeks we hope to obtain some photos of our young people involved in activities at COGWA Youth Camps.

Finally, several additions and edits have been made on the Feast of Tabernacles website (<http://feast.cogwa.org>). Descriptions of Feast sites in [Bulawayo, Zimbabwe](#), and [Huanchaco, Peru](#), are now online. Several housing lists for U.S. Feast sites have also been updated—primarily due to clarifications from housing properties and the addition of others. This week, for the first time, we used the Update function on our Feast website. The web page for Monterey was the first to use this function as a “[Housing Update](#)” was placed above the site description and an email was sent to all who provided an email address in conjunction with their registration to attend this site.

Submitted by David Treybig

Website updates. There have been several more improvements to the central website since my last update. A Daily Bible Verse has been incorporated into the main page with a link to a daily blog with the same name. Since the reminder about subscribing for updates via our email subscription service, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of subscribers. We have had 80 new subscribers this month and have seen the number of overall subscribers top the 2,000 mark. A “Recent Updates” page has been added, along with a brief version on the bottom of the main page. To increase the functionality of the site, we’ve added a search feature as well. You can now also access a “Read the Bible in a Year” program from the “Guidance” tab. A special page was also created for the governance proposal that was released last week.

Work on subdomain sites also continues. We currently have 13 congregational sites that are in various states of completion, and at the same time we are working on several international sites that will use the same template as local congregations to help them get websites in place quickly.

Submitted by Ken Treybig

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Camp update. Our first two camps (Forest Glen and Sequoia) were a great success last week. Both were preteen camps using new facilities. Forest Glen, near Houston, Texas, had over 55 campers who enjoyed several new activities in the camp, which is located in the Sam Houston State Park. Campers and staff alike were grateful for the shade from all the mature trees and for the brisk breeze, which helped combat the heat. Sequoia, in the mountains east of Bakersfield, California, was also in a new location—the same one that will be used by the teens next month. Paul Carter, the camp director, said some campers were calling it their best camp ever.

Next month we have three teen camps and two preteen camps. We would appreciate your prayers for God's blessing and favor at each of them as staff and campers enjoy the benefits of a godly environment that produces growth and positive change.

Submitted by Ken Treybig

Ministerial transfers and changes in church circuits. For some time now, we have known that in order to properly serve the brethren there would need to be a reallocation of manpower within the U.S. field ministry. Our desire was to wait until after the permanent governance team was in place to make these adjustments. But quite honestly, some areas of the country have developed more quickly than others and are in need of pastors right away. We want to be cautious in making these moves, but we feel some are necessary before the Feast. Here is a list of the transfers and circuit changes that were approved by the Interim Leadership Team this past week:

1. David and Linda Register will relocate as soon as possible to the Portland, Oregon, area. David will pastor the Portland/Salem/Eugene group and also the Seattle/Tacoma, Washington, congregation. We have approximately 100 attending in the Portland area and 30 or so in Seattle.
2. Paul and Tracy Carter will relocate to Southern California as soon as they are able to sell their home. Once relocated, Paul will continue as the pastor of the Los Angeles/San Diego group, as well as the Bakersfield congregation; but he will no longer be pastoring Stockton.
3. Ken Giese will take on the responsibility of pastoring Stockton (currently pastored by Paul Carter) and Redding (currently pastored by Dave Register) when the relocations are completed. These two congregations will be added to Ken's current assignment of Sacramento, California. Ken and Kathy Giese will continue serving the Sacramento brethren while adding two new congregations to their workload.

Only one of these moves involves selling a home, which can be difficult in the current housing market here in the U.S. Please pray that all goes well with these changes. We anticipate accomplishing these moves/changes by the Feast of Tabernacles (depending on the sale of the Carters' home).

Submitted by Ministerial Services

COGWA announces two Bible education weekends. The Church is pleased to announce its first two Bible education weekends, to be held this summer. The first will take place over the weekend of July 16 and 17 in the Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, area. The second will be on Aug. 13

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and 14 in Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida. David Johnson and Ralph Levy will be the instructors for both weekends, with class subjects to be announced shortly.

The Dallas/Fort Worth weekend will offer nine hours of biblical instruction, in addition to Sabbath services. Sabbath morning classes will begin at 9 a.m. in the usual location of services, the Unity Church of Dallas sanctuary, with services from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday's classes will be held in the Fort Worth Youth Orchestra auditorium, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. (exact schedule to be confirmed). Mr. Johnson's classes will be on the book of Philippians, and Dr. Levy's will be on the book of Haggai.

Coffee, soft drinks and light refreshments will be offered in the Dallas location, but participants will be on their own for lunch. Please contact Dallas pastor Doug Horchak (doug.horchak@cogwa.org) to register for this weekend. More details will be announced at later date, but it is helpful for planning purposes to have preliminary numbers for the expected attendance.

The Tampa/St. Petersburg weekend will be held in the usual St. Petersburg church location and will feature two days of classes. Please email Tampa/St. Petersburg pastor David Treybig (david.treybig@cogwa.org) to register for the weekend. Details concerning class subjects and scheduling will be forthcoming.

Submitted by Ralph Levy

International Reports

Report on the Feast and recent trip by David Baker. I recently returned from a trip visiting members and prospective members in Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar. Even though we have had our challenges in the past six months, our members and prospective members in these areas continue to be faithful to God's way of life. Each area has its unique set of challenges and blessings.

I am often asked by members, "What can we do to help the members in your area?" One of the greatest ways to help our scattered members is to pray for them on a regular basis. Also, please consider joining our brethren for the Feast of Tabernacles. Some of our members are only able to fellowship with other members of the Church during the Feast. With small numbers of members in India and Sri Lanka, think of the impact you can make in their lives during the Feast! In addition to providing encouraging fellowship, you will develop friendships that will last a lifetime.

During my visit to India and Sri Lanka, I was able to finalize arrangements for the Feast. Here is a brief overview of the sites.

India. India is the seventh-largest country by geographical area, the second-most-populous country and the largest democracy in the world. It has a long history of important trade routes and vast kingdoms. The climate is pleasant, the people are wonderful and hospitable, and the food is delicious.

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The location of the Feast site is The Central Court Hotel, Lakdi ka pul, Hyderabad. The weather in October will be warm and tropical. Services will be in English, and the expected attendance is approximately 20 people.

India has many wonderful sites for tourism and excursions that you can visit before or after the Feast of Tabernacles. Tours can be arranged without much difficulty.

The room rates are 3600 rupees (approximately \$88) per night for a single room and 4500 rupees (approximately \$110) per night for a double room. These rates are for room and full board, which includes buffet meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Full details can be found at <http://feast.cogwa.org/sites/hyderabad-india>.

Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is a small island of diversity off the southern coast of India. The climate is tropical, the people are wonderful and hospitable, and the food is delicious.

The location of the Feast will be the Goldi Sands Hotel located in Negombo. The room rates are \$110 per night for a single room and \$130 per night for a double room. These rates are for room and full board, which includes buffet meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The Goldi Sands Hotel is located on the beach, where Feastgoers can enjoy beautiful sunsets over the Indian Ocean, swimming in the ocean and strolling along the miles of fine sand beaches. The weather will be tropical with sunny skies tempered by the cooling effects of tropical rains.

Services will be in English, and the expected attendance is approximately 25 people. One of the highlights of the Feast will be the talent show. Take advantage of a wonderful opportunity to develop lasting friendships with our Sri Lankan brethren and experience their unforgettable culture.

Short excursions can also be arranged during the Feast, and longer excursions to the hill country (tea-producing area) can be arranged before or after the Feast. Full details can be found at <http://feast.cogwa.org/sites/sri-lanka>.

Australia. Each Sabbath morning (Friday night in the U.S.) we conduct a Sabbath service via Skype. Our numbers continue to increase. This past Friday we started with 15 connections. We had 26 members from Australia, four from the U.S., two from Tonga and one from the Philippines, for a total of 33. We are very grateful for the men in the U.S. who have volunteered to help conduct these services. Being able to connect for the services and fellowship afterward is a wonderful blessing for our members in Australia.

Scattered over the eastern coast of a huge continent, our members are looking forward to gathering together for the Feast of Tabernacles. We would love to have members join us from other parts of the world. We have selected a beautiful site in Coffs Harbour for the location of the Feast. Coffs Harbour is a coastal city, located where the mountains meet the sea, some 540 kilometers (340 miles) north of Sydney and about 440 kilometers (275 miles) south of Brisbane.

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The Coffs Harbour Regional Airport is regularly serviced by Qantas, Virgin Australia and Brindabella Airlines, with multiple flights each day to and from Sydney and Brisbane. Bus and train transportation are also available from both Sydney and Brisbane.

In October the average high temperature is 23.6 degrees Celsius (74.5 Fahrenheit), and the average low is 13.8 degrees Celsius (56.8 Fahrenheit).

Coffs Harbour and the surrounding area have a wide range of accommodation options available, including luxury apartments, houses, hotels, resorts, budget motels, bed-and-breakfasts, country retreats and more.

The area offers a range of experiences, from pristine golden beaches, spectacular river valley landscape, the Solitary Islands Marine Park (which is home to over 500 species of fish), rain forests and the Mountain Plateau of Dorrigo, with its incredible skywalk over the rain forest.

For the thrill seekers, there are jet skis, white-water rafting, skydiving and camel rides along the beach. Reef and game fishing tours are also available.

Just 10 minutes south of Coffs Harbour, is the Bonville Golf Resort. Golfers can enjoy the par-72 championship course, which has been voted by *The Golf Course Guide* as “the most beautiful golf course in mainland Australia” for a 10th successive year. Full details can be found at <http://feast.cogwa.org/sites/coffs-harbour-australia>.

Attending the Feast at one of these small sites would be a wonderful experience for those who can join us, and it would also be a great blessing for our scattered members who would love to meet their brethren from other parts of the world.

Submitted by David Baker