

# The World Ahead

A ministerial publication of the  
*Living Church of God*

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## **THE MISSION**

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish *His work*.” -- John 4:34

Greetings from Charlotte,

The Charlotte Family Weekend 2017 is now history, and reports are overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic. The theme of the Friday night Bible Study, Sabbath sermonette and sermon became evident: know why we have these activities and do not become distracted from that purpose. Everything from services, seminars, special music, dances, and sports activities kept this theme in mind as we also remembered that this was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Global/Living Church of God. Sports Day began with novelty Olympics involving more than 200 members of God’s family, of all ages and sizes except the very young, and each played a significant part in a team’s success. Many spectators who failed to sign up and came in late wanted to get in on the fun, but there is always next year! Basketball and volleyball took up the afternoon and even though the time was shortened, there was plenty of play time, with sufficient rest between games. Reports indicate there was a greater spirit of unity and outgoing concern than has always been the case. Even the outside professional referees had a great time! Going forward, we always want to remember why we have these activities, not get distracted from that purpose, and conduct ourselves as one great family! Three LYP camps are currently underway in Africa (see reports below). As mentioned earlier, Mr. Jonathan McNair will be moving to Charlotte to coordinate our educational programs for the ministry, for members, and for the next generation. Adam West will return from the United Kingdom and will replace Mr. McNair as Northeast Regional Pastor. Mr. Peter Nathan will be moving to the United Kingdom to replace Mr. West; and Mr. Bobby Jacques, our newest hire, should be in Kansas City within a week or two. Meanwhile let us not forget our family members in the Philippines where deadly typhoons and tropical storms have battered the islands. The largest fire on record in California has destroyed over 1,000 structures and disrupted far more lives. Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands still struggle to recover from earlier hurricanes. Let us remember these and other members of the family in our prayers.—*Gerald Weston*

## CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

### Tropical Storm Vinta

A deadly tropical storm swept through Mindanao, the second-largest island in the Philippines, last Friday. The reports we have received so far indicate that all our brethren in Mindanao are safe,

although a few have suffered property damage. Mr. Felipe Casing reports on the situation of our brethren in Eastern Mindanao: “A member’s farm, which was newly planted with palay (rice), was swept entirely clean by the flood waters, which means it needs to be plowed and replanted. Some corn fields of the brethren in Comval Province were laid low to the ground when a heavy downpour and strong winds roared through, blowing the corn over, and even uprooting it.” Mr. Freddie Benitez reports that in Central and Western Mindanao, “five towns in Zamboanga del Norte were declared to be in a state of calamity—70 persons died and 40 are missing... In Lanao del Norte, 91 are dead and hundreds more are missing... as we travelled by car to Maranding from Sindangan, we saw rice fields along the highway looking like an ocean filled with water, and all the establishments around the towns were also filled with fresh mud and debris.” Several Church families took shelter in the Church’s building in Maranding, which was used as an evacuation center. Please remember our brethren in Mindanao and in the southern Philippines in your prayers, as another strong storm could form and affect the region early next week.

### **Passover 2018—Repeat Announcement**

**Important Notice to All Pastors:** In 2018, the Passover Service will be observed on Thursday evening, March 29. Please let us know as soon as possible if any of the congregations you serve will need additional **Passover Service supplies** (bread trays and/or wine trays or glasses) or a copy of the Passover Service recording and letter instructions (available in English, French and Spanish). The Passover Service recording in English is the one made by Mr. Peter Nathan in 2017. To ensure timely delivery and to save on shipping costs, we need this information before January 29 for international congregations, and by February 20 for U.S. congregations.

Also, please let us know of any **scattered members** who are unable to keep the Passover with a congregation and who need to receive the Passover Service recording and letter instructions for observing it at home. Please direct your requests to the Church Administration Department at [cad@lcg.org](mailto:cad@lcg.org) as soon as possible. International requests should be received before January 29 and U.S. requests before February 20.

### **Northeast Spring Holy Days Family Weekend March 29-April 1—Repeat Announcement**

Every year, members of the Living Church of God from congregations throughout the Northeast Region gather to fellowship during the Spring Holy Days. This year, we will travel to the Frost Valley YMCA, in the heart of the Catskills. This facility provides an ideal location to focus on the lessons we learn during the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. We will eat together, worship together, sing hymns together and fellowship together. The focus for these three days will be on building bonds of brotherhood, learning more about God’s way, and worshiping God. If you would like to be part of this gathering, just go to [www.nelcg.org](http://www.nelcg.org) (not an official Church website) and click on “Spring Family Weekend” under the “Activities” tab. There you can learn more about the program, facility, and cost for the weekend, and view lots of pictures from previous years. We are looking forward to hosting you at the Feast of Unleavened Bread!—*Jonathan McNair*

## FEAST OF TABERNACLES

### United States Feast Sites in 2018—Repeat Announcement

We are pleased to announce the 2018 Feast sites for the United States and their coordinators:

*California*, La Quinta (Rodger Bardo: [rbardo@lcg.org](mailto:rbardo@lcg.org); 602-910-1086)  
*Colorado*, Snowmass (Stephen Elliott: [selliott@lcg.org](mailto:selliott@lcg.org); 949-293-9086)  
*Florida*, Panama City (Eddie Breaux: [ebreaux@lcg.org](mailto:ebreaux@lcg.org); 601-649-1911)  
*Hawaii* (Brandon Fall: [bfall@lcg.org](mailto:bfall@lcg.org); 253-292-0698)  
*Northern Kentucky* (Phil Sena: [psena@lcg.org](mailto:psena@lcg.org); 512-535-6771)  
*Missouri*, Osage Beach (Richard Franz: [rfranz@lcg.org](mailto:rfranz@lcg.org); 314-775-3192)  
*Oregon*, Seaside (Jonathan Bueno: [jbueno@lcg.org](mailto:jbueno@lcg.org); 361-331-1099)  
*South Carolina*, Hilton Head (Mike DeSimone: [mdesimone@lcg.org](mailto:mdesimone@lcg.org); 704-844-1970)  
*Texas*, Marble Falls (Gary Stein: [gstein@lcg.org](mailto:gstein@lcg.org); 940-395-9984)  
*Vermont*, Mt. Snow (Jonathan McNair: [jmcnair@lcg.org](mailto:jmcnair@lcg.org); 516-724-4452)  
*Wisconsin*, Lake Geneva (Phil West: [pwest@lcg.org](mailto:pwest@lcg.org); 262-314-4313)

The international list is not yet complete—more information will be forthcoming as plans are firmed up. Please stay tuned to *The World Ahead* for more information about the Feast of Tabernacles 2018!

## LIVING YOUTH PROGRAM

### Friday Evening Online Teen Bible Study

The online Teen Bible Study on Friday evening, January 5, will be on “The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ,” and will begin at Matthew 1:1. The Bible Study runs from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time, and the chat room will be open for a half hour before and after the study. To join the study, go to [www.livingyouth.org](http://www.livingyouth.org). For those who are unable to make it to the study, archives of previous Living Youth Bible Studies, including the two-part “Introduction to the Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ,” can also be found on the [Living Youth website](http://Living Youth website).—*Sheldon Monson*

### Living Youth Camps in Africa

**Kenya:** This year’s youth camp was really exciting for 46 of our young people, ages 12 to 25. Pastor Abok opened the camp by outlining the Church history in Kenya, and giving his personal experience of how things have been. Pastor Mijondo closed the camp with a discussion of how Jesus never did away with the commandments. During camp, the elders and a deacon covered topics about the Sabbath, tithing, hygiene and other issues related to the youth. Meals were well prepared by ladies from the Kendu Bay congregation and were enjoyed by all.—*Jackson Agik*

**Togo:** The three-day camp in Togo was full of enthusiasm and left campers with a desire for a longer camp next year. The 16 campers used a local school, where they slept on straw “nats” under

mosquito nets. Christian living classes were held in the dining hall. Local brethren joined the campers for Sabbath services. Activities on Sunday and Monday included football, softball, kinball, speedminton and Ultimate Frisbee. We encouraged the campers to study the Bible to build a relationship with God, and we stressed “It is better to find God when you are young than to search for Him when you are old.”—*Rees Ellis*

**South Africa:** The 2017 LYP Teen Camp started off on a high note for 47 campers and staff at the Jubaweni Camp facilities in Tuinplaas in the Limpopo Province. The days were filled with sports and activities that helped the campers build on the theme of camp this year: the Seven Laws of Success. Each day’s activities focused on one of these laws. At Evening Reflection, campers commented on how they are learning important lessons in life while they also have a good time God’s way. Memories were made and relationships were forged this year as these young people prepared for a bright future.—*Lawdi Ferreira*

## LIVING UNIVERSITY

### ***Final Semester Registration***

There is only a week and a half remaining to register for spring semester Living University classes! Classes begin on Wednesday, January 10. This will be the last semester of LU operation, and your last opportunity to experience the in-depth LU learning experience. As the Church transitions its educational efforts, beginning in the fall of 2018 we plan to provide a “limited release” of courses to the general Church membership—with a few classes being added each semester or year. These courses will provide exciting content and have the potential to increase one’s biblical understanding; however, they will be significantly different from the current format.

You may register for the spring semester (fall in the Southern Hemisphere) anytime between now and January 9. Those who have never taken a Living University course will need to enroll in the University first, and then register for your selected course(s). Those age 65 and over are eligible to audit one course with tuition waived (you will be responsible for textbooks and a technology fee). High school students may dual-enroll at a significantly reduced rate. If you reside in a developing nation, you may qualify for reduced tuition. A complete list of spring semester courses can be viewed on the [Living University website](#) under the link “Spring 2018 Class Schedule.” To make application to Living University, to register for courses, and to find out more, please visit the [www.livinguniv.com](http://www.livinguniv.com) website. For additional information or questions, please contact Mrs. Michelle Broussard at 704-708-2294 or [mbroussard@livinguniv.com](mailto:mbroussard@livinguniv.com).

## COMMENTS

**Sobering Signs of the Times:** As this calendar year draws to a close, it is hard to ignore the connection between world events and end-time prophecies. We see the winds of war blowing stronger around the globe, record-breaking weather-related disasters, increasing selfishness and brutality toward other human beings, and a deliberate rejection of God and His ways (Matthew 24; 2 Timothy 3:1-5). Another increasingly visible trend is the growing acceptance and active promotion of morally-depraved behaviors—sexual exploitation, open homosexuality, same-sex marriages and more. The world has forgotten that God destroyed the pre-flood world and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of these wicked sins (Genesis 6:5-12; Genesis 18-19; Jeremiah 23:14). An important lesson for us today is that Lot and his family became *tolerant* of what was going on around them and were *reluctant* to leave that perverted society. Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt because she *looked back longingly* at what she was leaving behind (Genesis 19:26). As we see our modern societies going the way of Sodom again, we need to remember these Old Testament examples (1 Corinthians 10:1-13), and come out of this world and its ungodly ways (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)—because God’s judgment is coming on our modern, increasingly godless societies. We also need to recognize the *prophetic significance* of what is happening around us and earnestly pray, “Thy Kingdom come.”

Have a profitable Sabbath,  
Douglas S. Winnail

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**Russian Orthodox Leader Predicts the End of History:** In recent statements, “the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church said... the world is on the brink of slipping into ‘the abyss of the end of history’” ([Newsweek](#), November 21, 2017). He continued by warning his congregants that the coming end of the age—the apocalypse—is currently “visible to the naked eye.” However, this Russian cleric is not alone in his dire predictions. Recently, 15,000 world scientists gave a very similar warning in their “Letter to Humanity” ([The Independent](#), November 13, 2017). Twenty-five years ago, this group issued the same type of warning, but today they say it is “far, far worse than it was in 1992.” They predict that “If the world doesn’t act soon, there [will] be catastrophic biodiversity loss and untold amounts of human misery.” What few realize today is that, regardless of the accuracy of these scientists’ specific predictions, an “end of history” echoes exactly what Bible prophecies have long foretold.

When Jesus Christ was on the earth, He actually listed observable “signs” that would mark the approaching “end of the age,” including wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, severe famines, pestilences or diseases, earthquakes in various places—all of which are *just the start* of more difficult times ahead (Matthew 24:3-8). Jesus admonished His followers to “watch” world events so they will not be surprised when these events begin to happen (vv. 42-44). While terrible events have occurred down through history, students of the Bible can learn to recognize *the specific signs* that will precede the return of Christ—an event that will forever change the course of history. For a more detailed list of prophesied events to watch for, be sure to read or listen to [Fourteen Signs Announcing Christ’s Return](#).

**The Power of Congregational Singing!** Researchers at the University of East Anglia have discovered something important that many churchgoers already know: Singing in a group is not only enjoyable, but also improves one’s mental health ([BBC](#), December 21, 2017)! “Researchers from UEA’s Norwich Medical School said a study of 20 members of the group over six months found singing and mixing socially had helped those who had had serious mental health issues to function better in day-to-day life... because it gave participants a feeling of belonging and wellbeing.” The researchers studied a casual singing group that accepted everyone and did not have the pressures of rehearsals and performances. It simply allowed people to show up, sing as a group and fellowship together.

This modern research reinforces what the Bible has promoted for nearly 2,000 years. The Apostle Paul instructed Christians to use opportunities to gather together and encourage each other (Hebrews 10:24-25). He also instructed Church members to speak to each other “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). Paul also urged believers to spend time “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). At God’s weekly commanded Sabbath services (Exodus 20:8-11), His people come together not only to worship and hear His inspired word explained, but also to sing together in praise to Him and fellowship with each other (Psalm 100:2). This *tradition* of the Church is also a command by God—a command that has inherent mental health benefits! To learn more about the biblical instructions for worshiping God, read or listen to [Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?](#)—*Scott Winnail, Richard Bourne, Peter Nathan, and Chris Sookdeo*