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National Overseer's Address to the National Ministers' Convention 2019

Philip C. Bennett

Introduction

As we have started another Assembly year, we are here to discuss and formulate plans to advance The Church of God in the nation of England. Today in my address, there are two areas I would like to bring to our attention.

The Dangers of Complacency

Many have become complacent in the House of God, but the Bible warns us about complacency. We see it in church attendance, we see it in prayer meetings, we see it in time keeping and in other areas: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!" (Amos 6:1)

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He met three would be disciples: "And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (St. Luke 9:57-62)

Sometimes we allow the devil and the world to side track us and instead of being busy doing the work of God we become busy with our own work. That was what happened to the children of Israel after they returned from Babylonian captivity. God had to send the prophets Haggai and Zachariah to stir them up and reprove them: "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts;

Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit." (Haggai 1:1-10)

This Assembly year, I would like the Evangelism and VLB departments to work together in consultation with the Pastors on evangelistic initiatives. This will be to promote and build The Church of God in the nation. Brother Justin Clarke has spoken to me about what has been laid on his heart, so I would like him to work hand in hand with both of these departments. Please pray and ask God to lead you and where possible funds will be made available when needed.

Year after year we attend the General Assembly and when we hear of what God is doing worldwide we get stirred; but not long after returning home we return to our slumber. We need to stir up the gifts that God has given to all of us. Every one of us has talents or abilities that we need to be using to build The Church of God.

I also want us to revive our District Meetings which have fallen by the way side. I will be scheduling the next District Meeting for Wednesday 11th December 2019. After that we will have them every three months (March 2020 in Handsworth, June 2020 in Druids Heath and September 2020 in London).

The Necessity of the Holy Ghost

"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." (St. John 15:4-5)

We need God working with us to accomplish anything worthwhile, but apart from that we need the Holy Ghost and all His accompanying power. Before Jesus ascended back to heaven He gave His disciples the great commission: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: them to observe all things Teaching whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (St. Matthew 28:18-20)

This commission was not just to the then disciples but to all who would follow. Jesus knew that they would not have been able to fulfil the great commission by themselves, so He promised them divine assistance: "And, assembled together being with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:4-8)

The disciples did not know exactly what this would entail or how the Holy Ghost would come upon them, but they were obedient to Jesus' command: "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen." (St. Luke 24:52-53) They prayed and sought the promise daily (every day) for ten days. They did not give up or allow themselves to become discouraged and God honoured their persistence: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

indwelling, Church After this the demonstrated great power. No longer were they afraid and hidden away, they preached the Word of God boldly. After one message by Peter, 3,000 members were added to the Church: "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:46-47)

Many more miraculous works were done such as the healing of the lame man at the gate called Beautiful, the saving of the Ethiopian Eunuch, the conversion of Saul and the gospel being preached to the Gentiles, to name but a few works.

Today, many are satisfied with a sub-standard Christianity because they do not know any better. **If we are going to be effective, we need the Holy Ghost and fire.**

When I got saved we had revival services almost every month and those who needed the Holy Ghost were always at the altar seeking. Many times we would be on fasting before the service because we were hungry for the spiritual blessing. It took some people literally years to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but they did not give up. Today, we live in a very fast paced world where everything must happen now. We have fast cars. We have fast food but when it comes to the Holy Ghost we have to learn to tarry (wait). We did not just wait for revivals and Conventions; we sought the experience during our ordinary services and prayer meetings.

Some seem to have given up on receiving the experience and sit in their seats during altar calls. We have become too proud and sophisticated. We want the glory of God to be amongst us but we do not want to expend any energy. We want the Holy Ghost to fill us in a very dignified way. I have seen people fall and roll on the ground like a snake, some with snot running from their nose but they were not concerned; they knew they needed the Holy Ghost. Those of you who still do not have the Holy Ghost; you do not know what you are missing. It is a glorious experience that you will never forget.

The promise of the Holy Ghost was to everyone who believes

Not everyone who was once filled is still filled, but we can seek God for a refilling as the disciples experienced after being threatened: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." (Acts 3:31)

When was the last time you had a move of the Holy Ghost in your services and more personally when was the last time you moved in the Holy Ghost? We need the convincing evidence of His presence with us.

Sometimes I see people who need the Holy Ghost praying with others at the altar instead of seeking the experience for themselves. It is time for us to surrender all and to start to seek the Holy Ghost again.

Brethren we need the Holy Ghost and fire. \square

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From the Overseer's Desk

A lot of activities have taken place since our last edition of *The Chronicle*. It seems like such a long time since our National Convention in July 2019 where we were blessed to have our General World Mission Co-ordinator, Bishop Robert Hawkins, Jnr. with us. As usual he was a great blessing to us.

A couple of days after our Convention, I was privileged to travel to Nigeria and participate in their National Convention. From there we travelled to Gabon where we organised The Church of God in the country.

After just a few days back in the UK, I was off to the USA to attend International Youth Camp and the General Assembly. As has been the case over the past few years, a number of delegates were able to attend from the nation of England. We were kept very busy on various programmes.

Our National Ministers' Convention in October 2019 was also a blessing to all in attendance as the National Co-ordinators outlined their themes and programmes for the year.

A couple of days after this I was off again; this time to the countries of Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia. On this trip we organised The Church of God in Thailand with 27 members and in Cambodia with 33 members.

What a privilege it was as we witnessed the water baptism of the six candidates from Handsworth Church! The Spirit of God is doing His work in convicting souls and bringing all the sheep into the One Fold.

We have a number of upcoming events on our domestic agenda. Please pray for each event that God's presence will be with us to help and bless us, for without His help we can do nothing:

"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." (St. John 15:5)

Upcoming Events:

- National Family Camp
- National WMB Prayer & Fasting National Youth Convention -
- National Youth Convention
- National Bible Quiz National Ladies Retreat
- Vacation Bible School Concert -
- National Convention

- Monday 17th to Friday 21st February 2020
- Saturday 14th March 2020
- Saturday 11th April 2020
- Friday 15th May 2020
- Friday 29th to Sunday 31st May 2020
 - Saturday 27th June 2020
- Friday 17th July to Sunday 19th July 2020

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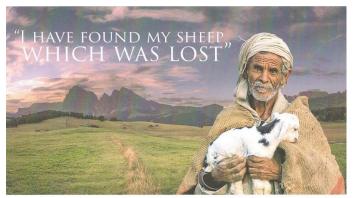


ABM BOOST

Cynthia Opoku - National Assembly Band Movement Co-ordinator

The new general Assembly Band Movement theme for the assembly year 2019-2020 is: **'I have found my sheep which was lost'**

Greetings to all in the name of Jesus Christ, our soon coming King.



A B M THEME 2019-20

The general ABM theme this Assembly year is about the lost sheep that was found and the joy of the shepherd. This shows a great relationship between the shepherd and the sheep.

We all are the Lord's sheep and need to have good relationship with Him. We can accomplish this if we know Him personally and cultivate a bond with our Lord. Let us not be as goats who are

stubborn but be like sheep. Sheep are meek in nature and receive nurture from their shepherd. Jesus is our Shepherd, and desires to lead and direct us into His truth.

The Bible admonishes us in Philippians 2:12 to: "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

I HAVE FOUND MY SHEEP WHICH WAS LOST is the general ABM theme. We need to work out our own salvation, but also help to seek for the lost ones and lead them to Christ.



EVANGELISM BOOST

Claudine Brown - National Evangelism Co-ordinator

The new general Evangelism theme for the assembly year 2019-2020 is: **'Compassionate First Responders'** (St. Luke 20:33-34)



Where are the people...?

Greetings to all of our Chronicle readers in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I can join with the song writer who says there is *something* about that name!

The inspiration for this article today stems from a question that my Nan, the late Evangelist Frances Prince shared with me in a testimony. She had asked the Lord this question during a prayer when she was first sent by Him to a new field in Druids Heath, Birmingham back in 1985. She had

followed His leading, but wanted to know 'Where are the people...?' The Lord certainly answered her, when He led her to a newspaper article which mentioned members of a family who had been saved from a house fire in the Druids Heath area. Nan visited that family and today, some 35 years later, a dear sister, saved from that fire is still a member of the Church and is indeed the Assistant Editor of this very magazine. All glory and praise be to God!

So recently, I found myself asking God the same question. Where are the people? I believe with all my heart that there are still souls to be saved right here in England and all around the world in 2019. I believe that there are still people around who will be receptive to the gospel message of Jesus Christ and who will live holy lives for Him until He returns. But *where are they*?

As I pondered over this question during a recent prayer, the answer I received was very different to the one my Nan did. Instead, my mind filled with the image of the message preached by Peter after the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2). This was a momentous event – none other had occurred like it in history. The resurrected Jesus had previously instructed the disciples to: *"…tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high"* (St. Luke 24:49). Jesus, being God in the flesh, is all-knowing – He knew the hearts of those who would be there in Jerusalem at the time; there are no coincidences when it comes to Almighty God.

Acts 2:5-6 tells us that *"there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."* So – a multitude had gathered. The news of what was going on had spread and a multitude had gathered. What did they find upon their arrival to the scene? The blessed Holy Ghost was giving the utterance to tongues in *multiple* native languages which could be understood by the crowd, telling them of the wonderful works of God! (Acts 2:11). No wonder they were amazed, in doubt, and asking what it all meant!

So, what do we have here? Obedient disciples, filled with the Holy Ghost, and situated by a crowd that had *come to them*. Of course, there were mockers present too – but they had zero impact on what God was getting ready to do. Peter preached. I do not read anywhere that Peter had gone around hunting for the people, or begging people to come and hear what he had to say. The 'stage had been set' so to speak, by the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:40 tells us that Peter testified and exhorted to them, telling them to *"Save* [them]*selves from this untoward generation."* And then came the results. Verse 41 of Acts 2 contains results that I would love to see in my lifetime:

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

'Where are the people?' is a question I do not need to worry or stress about. God knows exactly where they are. From the above account, I am satisfied to know that through obedience, being filled (and staying filled) with the Holy Ghost and being led of the Lord in all evangelistic efforts, the people will come. In St. John 10:27 Jesus says *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* Peter preached a message right where he stood and people were saved right there in front of the mockers. Right where you stand today, you too can preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. God may have prepared the heart of someone who is standing right beside you, ready for you to obey and share. God knows where the people are, and until He returns, let us continue to be His hands, His feet, His voice, in helping someone to be saved. God bless you all.

Please look out for:

Our General Evangelism Co-ordinator's article in December's Evening Light on page 5, encouraging us to remember the poor. In future Chronicle articles and in my local visits to the Churches, God willing we will be exploring this further.

Dates for your diary:



17th January 2020 – All night prayer meeting and tarrying service 9:00 pm start at Long Lane Church.

26-28th April 2020 – National Crusade – times and details to be confirmed.



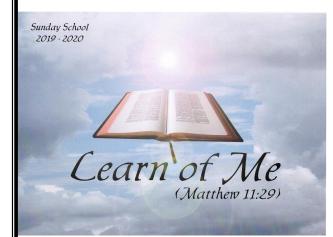
The Church of God

SUNDAY SCHOOL BOOST

Jennifer Thompson - National Sunday School Co-ordinator

The new general Sunday School theme for the assembly year 2019-2020 is:

'Learn of Me' (St. Matthew 11:29)



Greetings to our Sunday School scholars. It is a great honour to be enrolled in the highest school on earth. We have the Bible as our text book and the Holy Ghost as our Teacher. Amen!

I would like to share with you Hosea 4:6:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..."

Destroyed for lack of knowledge

My people, God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge – not the worldly knowledge **but** spiritual knowledge. Knowledge is knowing. Let us not lack knowing the Word. It is sad to say some of God's people are being destroyed for lack of knowledge when it is available and accessible to us. We promise to accept the Bible as the Word of God and walk in the light to the best of our knowledge and ability.

As the Holy Ghost reveals to us, let us walk in the light and not reject knowledge, otherwise God said: "...*I will also reject thee...*" (Hosea 4:6)

Please remember to study your Sunday School lessons and invite someone to Sunday School.



WMB BOOST

Beverley Anderson - National Women's Missionary Band Co-ordinator

The new general Women's Missionary Band theme for the assembly year 2019-2020 is: 'Mission Assignment, Operation Deployment'

'Deployment' is moving military service members from a duty station to a specific destination (for a particular mission). It refers to assigning individuals to serve in various locations (the soldiers and military personnel).

During wartime, deployment is necessary in the military as the conflict is not in one place. These soldiers contracted with the government must pack up and go wherever they are sent. They are required to leave their families and homes - sometimes with some men even missing the birth of their children as they serve where there are sent.

They are willing to serve because they have made a commitment of service to their nation. These soldiers are not asked "who will go?" but they are sent wherever they are assigned.

The question was asked in Isaiah 6:8: "... Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" – God is asking the question as we have committed to serve Him.

Sometimes we feel that been sent means to another country – but it also means at home. When I was sent to Handsworth, it meant taking off the comfort covering of the membership in Northfield and going to the forefront of the fight.

You may ask "what's the military service got to do with serving God?" We are in a spiritual war and as missionaries God, our Commander needs us to be deployed into the world (another country) our country, our cities and our neighbourhoods.

This Assembly year, the mission theme challenges us to commit to our calling. The love we have for God and His Church must be steadfast and unmoveable - just like the literal soldiers in the military. The love we have for God should allow us to go wherever He sends us and wherever there is a need. We are all called to work in the vineyard, and this can be anywhere. God wants our strength, talents, worship and commitment. He wants us to work for Him. Jesus declared: *"I must work…"* (St. John 9:4)

There were no ifs, no buts, no doubts, but *"I must."*

We have a duty to work, spreading the gospel on Christ's behalf to those who are lost, for without a preacher how will they hear? (c.f. Romans 10:14)

Jesus deployed His disciples in St. Mark 6:7: "And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;" The time had come when the Church then had to practice operation deployment for the spreading of the gospel.

Some may say that is for the Evangelism team to do - no. Jesus called the twelve. <u>The whole Church</u> was present then and Jesus expects the same today. We are all called to this assignment.

In the Church, we have some talented WMB's but there are so many more talented would be WMB's still out there waiting for us to come. The question is asked **who will go?**

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole <u>duty</u> of man." Duty - is responsibility, what you have to do. "For God shall bring every work into <u>judgment</u>, ... whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

Judgment - punishable decisions. If we decide not to work, then we have failed in our duty. In the military years ago, if one failed in their duty then this was punishable with the death sentence. Today, this has been commuted to imprisonment. St. Matthew 28:19-20: "<u>Go ye</u> therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: <u>Teaching them</u> to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:"

<u>"Go ye"</u> is a command. This year's mission work is an **'operation deployment'** that means some sacrifice has to be made in our efforts to go.

Remember deployment is 'serving in various locations' – we are all in different locations. It is not just down to the Pastor but for all of us to operate in our areas. The 'go ye' command was given to the Church.

Let us get into our locations and begin to work in God's deployment - we are assigned to do so. God bless.

Diary dates and announcements:



National Ladies Retreat 2020 – Ramada Park Hotel and Spa, Wolverhampton. Telephone No: 01902 349510 Friday 29th to Sunday 31st May 2019

WMB National Fasting – Handsworth Church Saturday 14th March 2020 at 10:30 am

CALLING ALL DORCAS CLUBS – Please think of items to make for our Dorcas table that will be displayed at all National events, under the supervision of Sister Beverley Wilson.

National Ministers' Convention The Church of God (England) 19th October 2019

The Church of God, England met at Long Lane, Halesowen for the annual National Ministers' Convention. The Convention theme: Isaiah 6:8: **'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'** was introduced by Bishop Philip Bennett as he welcomed the congregation to the day's programme. The day was filled with uplifting worship and exhortations and we listened to the National Auxiliary Co-ordinators outline their plans for the 2019-2020 Assembly year. The messages of the day were delivered by our National Overseer – Bishop Bennett and our Evangelist – Sister Claudine Brown.

National Overseer's Address:

Bishop Bennett's address had two main themes: the *Danger of Complacency* and the *Necessity of the Holy Ghost*. Brother Bennett stated that we have a tendency to become complacent, leaving the work of God undone. Haggai 1:1-10: the children of Israel left the work of the Lord with the house of the Lord causing it to '...lie waste...'. These questions were posed - how much time do we spend on own business? How much time do we give to God? Brother Bennett declared God has a way of blessing us when we put His business first. God is asking us to '...consider your ways'.

Finally, Brother Bennett said, "We need the Holy Ghost to be able to accomplish anything worthwhile. Jesus gave His disciples the great commission (St. Matthew 28:18-20); the commission was to all who would. Jesus knew they would not be able to fulfil the great commission themselves, so He promised them divine assistance (Acts 1:4-8). We need that power!" Also, in closing Bishop said "If you were once filled with the Holy Ghost, it does not mean you still have the Holy Ghost." He asked the question, "When was the last time the Holy Ghost moved in you or in your services? It may be that we have to ask God to refill us – we need the Holy Ghost and fire again!"

Evangelism Message: 'Oh God, strengthen my hands' (Nehemiah 6:9)

Sister Claudine Brown asked the congregation: "How spiritually strong are we to do the work of God? How spiritually strong are our hands for the work of God?" All of us have spiritual hands to do the work of God. We may have the mind to work, but without the supernatural power which comes from God by the Holy Ghost, we cannot complete the evangelistic work. We need God to strengthen us and then we will see the results. Nehemiah prayed 'O God, strengthen my hands'. Jerusalem was left in ruins after the captivity of the Jews by Babylonians, but Nehemiah wanted to rebuild the walls.

He encountered discouragement, mockery, and the stirring up of fear from his adversaries. Nothing stopped the rebuilding of the wall because the people had a mind to work. The enemy desires to debilitate us through fear but as Nehemiah, we too can ask God to strengthen our hands!

We were also blessed to witness the right hand of fellowship given to the newly baptised VLB's of Handsworth Church. Special singing of the day came from the Wilson Sisters, Rebekah Wilson, Lydia Wilson and Hannah Wilson – as they sang *'I'll just say yes'* and from the National Choir, who sang *'Hear the Sound'* and *'The Lord is my Light and my Salvation.'* We thank God for His presence and His Word. Let us continue to pray for our auxiliary co-ordinators and that we may all support the work this year. To God be the glory.

Sister Beverley Wilson - National Reporter

General Auxiliary Themes and Plans 2019-2020

Assembly Band Movement General Theme: 'I have found my sheep which was lost' National band meetings, dates to be confirmed Band Leaders meetings

Bible Training Institute General Theme: 'Digging deep, building strong' St. Luke 6:48 BTI Second Term, to be arranged

Church of Prophecy Marker Association General Theme: **'2020 Vision'** January 2020 - CPMA Presentation – 'What Happened?'

Evangelism

General Theme: **'Compassionate First Responders'** All night tarrying service, 17th January 2020

National Crusade, 26th - 28th April 2020 Outdoor events, dates to be confirmed

Sunday School

General Theme: **'Learn of Me'** St. Matthew 11:29 National Bible Quiz - 15th May 2020 Vacation Bible School Concert - 27th June 2020 Victory Leaders Band General Theme: 'Generation Breakers' 1 and 2 Kings Quarterly Bible Studies National Youth Convention - 11th April 2020 Youth rallies and fellowship, dates to be confirmed

Women's Missionary Band General Theme: 'Mission Assignment, Operation Deployment' National Fasting Service - 14th March 2020 National Ladies Retreat - 29th - 31st May 2020

World Missions General Theme: 'Ye are the salt of the earth' St. Matthew 5:13

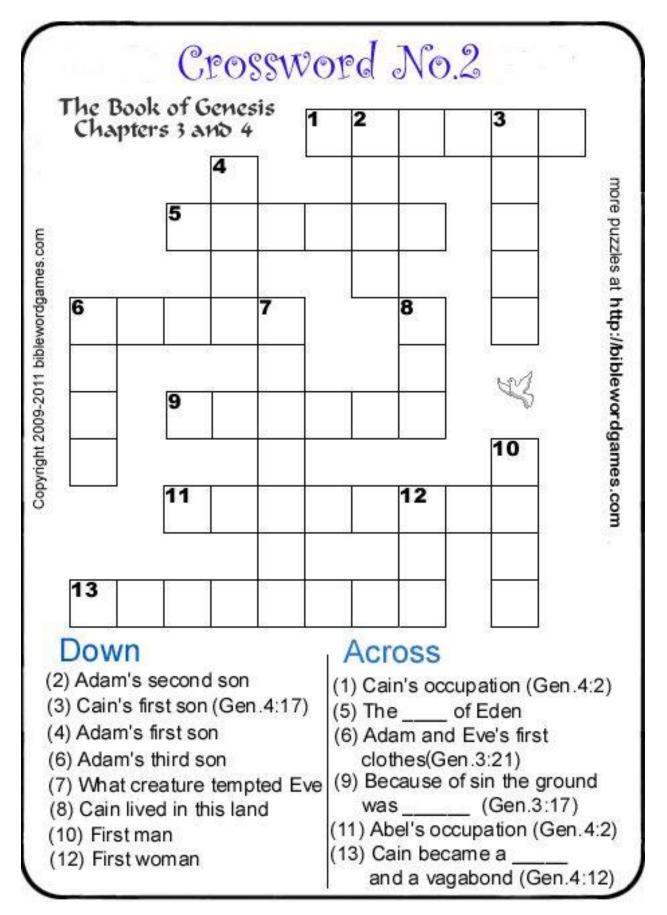
District Meetings

11th December 2019 – Long Lane Church March 2020 – Handsworth Church June 2020 – Druids Heath September 2020 – London Church

> National Family Camp 2020 17th - 21st February 2020

National Men's Retreat 2020 - August 2020

Gleaners Corner



Gleaners Corner – New Testament Books Word Search

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Please number the books in their proper Bible order (1-27).



Special Note:

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