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Greetings brethren!

Certainly, as members of the Church of God's Faithful, we can all say that we are very well fed spiritually. Both those of us who are able to regularly attend with God's faithful people as well as those who live too far away from a congregation, or who are unable to be there because of ill-health, ...we're all able to listen to a complete Sabbath Service every week.

Moreover, those of us who have Internet access are also able to listen to various other sermons, which are regularly updated, at the click of a button. We're also able to read Christian Living articles on demand, as well as be daily updated with the news that matters via *WorldWatch*. Then we have the James516 website that provides us with a unique way of communicating with one another, make prayer requests, and even enjoy looking at each others' latest photos.

As we are very aware that there is a number of members that certainly includes many of our beloved elderly brethren, who are unable to take advantage of some of these opportunities, we are taking another step forward to ensure that we may all benefit even more from the spiritual abundance with which God continues to shower us. There is no doubt that we have entered a dangerous yet a most exciting hour in the Day of the Lord. In fact, we could very well be counting the 1335 days that would lead to a Pentecost 2012 Resurrection. As Mr. Ardis stated last Sabbath, this very real possibility necessitates that we redeem the time... and the purpose of this Newsletter is to help us do just that.

This Newsletter, which will be published and mailed to you as often as possible, will include Christian Living articles and timely prayer requests, as well as sermon and sermonette transcriptions as available.

Of course, if you have any other ideas of how we may improve this service for you, we will be delighted to have your much-valued input.

Meanwhile, let's keep strong and be of good courage as we stay ever closer to God. And let's also get ready to be able to teach the scattered brethren now very soon to be brought to us by Jesus Christ, by increasing our efforts to internalize each one of the new truths that our Head has been restituting since Trumpets 1997. We must remember that this very truth is what so clearly sets us apart as the Body of Jesus Christ... as the Philadelphia Candlestick at this time.

So, enjoy!

With much love, in Christ's service

Daniel Frendo

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## Pray without ceasing!

by Frank Borg

As a child growing up in a predominantly Roman Catholic society, I vividly remember people from the older generation “praying”. My grandmother, a devout Roman Catholic, was an example of someone that I recall praying incessantly; she would say the rosary about three times a day, and it would take her a number of hours each time she would say it!

In addition to this, she would carry around a stack of prayer cards - each one with a prayer printed on one side and a unique image on the reverse. She would use these prayer cards multiple times a day.

Whenever she had a quiet moment, I would catch her mumbling to herself in yet another prayer. Now, the Bible condemns the memorizing of certain prayers and repeating them over and over (Matthew 6:7)!

Still, this memory of mine brings to mind a certain scripture in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, where it emphatically states: ‘Pray without ceasing’!

So, what does God mean by that? Surely we’re not to use every waking moment to pray! What, then, does this scripture really mean? To answer these questions, we must allow the Bible to interpret itself.

Ephesians 6:18 states: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit....” Again, this scripture supports 1 Thessalonians 5:17 by showing us that we must keep ourselves in a constant spirit of prayer! In other words, we must develop such a close relationship with God that we can pray to Him whenever we can, or whenever an urgent need arises, and wherever we are, knowing in full confidence that our prayers are reaching Him! We must be able to feel close enough to God to offer quick, instantaneous prayers of thanks or petitions for help and should feel comfortable enough with God to do this as often as we can throughout the day and as we go about our business!

In the earlier verses of Ephesians 6, Paul tells the Christians to put on the whole armor of God, and then he then tells them “to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.” Paul is essentially saying that besides equipping ourselves with the armor of God, we need to use prayer as an indispensable tool along with that armor. No matter how complete our armor is, no matter how skilled or courageous we are,

God alone can and will give the victory. We are to depend on God. He wants us to depend on Him constantly by being in a continual spirit of prayer.

The word *prayer* used in Ephesians 6:18 refers to “the state of the spirit as well as to the act” of praying.” If we are in a constant spirit of prayer, always ready to give instant and urgent prayer - this shows God that we are dependent on Him. It shows him an attitude of ‘praying without ceasing’.

“Pray without ceasing” also means that we must be persistent in our prayer. *Pray* in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 means “to supplicate, beg, or beseech God,” and obviously, “without ceasing” means to “never give up”! So this scripture denotes that we must persevere and be persistent as we pray and beseech God.

The principle of persistence is made clear in Luke 18:3-6. These verses say: “And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.”

These verses show that because of the widow’s perseverance, she obtained from the unjust man what she otherwise wouldn’t have obtained! How much more would God, who is good, do justice to them that apply Him? The only reason why this unjust man helped the widow was because she was persistent, and he didn’t want her troubling him any more so he decided it would be best if he helped her! This is talking about a carnal man! And we are told to apply the lesson in these verses! Again, verse 6 states: “And the Lord said: hear what the unjust judge says”!

The story continues in verse 7: “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bears long with them?” How much more will God want to help His very elect that cry out to God, day and night? We must be persistent! God tells us to ask, seek and knock (Luke 11:9)! He challenges us! He requests that we persevere in our prayers, and that we even advance in our efforts and urgency till our prayer is answered.

God doesn’t want to see us surrender or give in; God doesn’t quit! Similarly, He wants to see that our

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patience never wavers. He wants us to demonstrate patience, knowing in full faith, that He will answer our prayers in His own good time. If we are asking for something good, God wants that we are persistent in prayer, demonstrating hope and faith that will never let go. He doesn't want us to give up! God may possibly want to be impressed and moved by our prayer. For this, God requires continual and persistent prayer!

In the October 1957 Good News, Mr. Armstrong writes: "You must go to a private place, alone with God, and have long talks with Him — yes, every day! Unburden your heart to Him. Take all your problems, your interests, your plans, your troubles to Him. Talk over everything with Him, continually. Then, even when going about your work — when walking down the street — when driving your car, or wherever you are or whatever you do, talk with God as you work or as you drive or walk along. Go to a private place, and kneel in prayer (on both knees) as often as you can, and at least once every day. But talk with God as often in between. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!" We need to enter into "long talks" with God, in private every day.

By establishing this close relationship with Him, we can also draw on Him in spontaneous prayer and receive instant answers! Mr. Armstrong makes reference to a biblical example of this in chapter 22 (vol. 1) of his autobiography. He wrote, "I read of Elijah's prayer, in presence of all the priests of Baal, when God answered and the fire came down from heaven. I timed that prayer. It was very short — only about 20 seconds. But the awe-inspiring answer came crashing from heaven instantly! Elijah did not need to talk God into it by a long prayer, or by repeated prayers. But I knew that Elijah at that moment was close to God — that he had previously been spending hours in long prayers to be in contact and close communion with His Maker! And he naturally knew His Maker would answer!"

We need to pour out continual and persistent prayer — not in a pharisaic way as we read at the beginning of this article. We should not pray with vain repetitions, but as God demonstrates in scripture, with godly continuity and godly persistence.

Let us pray without ceasing!

## How faithful is our faith?

by *Rodrigo Matabaran*

God's people are familiar with the question asked by Christ in Luke 18:8, "when the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?"

I have talked with one of the PCG members who said that she can not accept the point presented in the CGF booklet saying that Christ had already come secretly. When asked, is it not written in the bible that the Day of the Lord and Christ coming would be just like a "thief in the night?" (Mat. 24:43-44, 2 Pet. 3:10, 1 Thess. 5:2, Rev. 16:15) and as such are we expected not to know that He had already come? She responded that she just can not accept that Christ have already come because there is no proof that He does.

I really understand her predicament. That's because in the past, I myself have read the booklet "The Day of the Lord" by Mr. Ardis and did not believe and just laughed. As I look closely now why, and what is the basic reason that despite of some verses in the bible indicating that Christ is to come secretly as a thief in the night, God's elect will not believe.

With preconceived ideas and understanding resulting from years of religious teachings we received, our mind is most often closed to new understanding. New understanding that can not be absorbed by our "locked" minds even if there is biblical proof refuting what we believed then. What we don't fully understand is that the holy bible is the living word of God. That there are still lots of things we don't understand yet. That there is first a secret coming of Christ (Mat. 24:43-44, 1 Thess. 5:2, Rev. 16:15) to closely discern who among those whom God called and chosen have the faith to stand for Him in the end time worthy to be protected when the Great Tribulation comes, and latter a glorious visible second coming of the Son of God to finally rule the nations of this world (Rev 1:7)

That there are always hidden truths in the bible that God wants us to learn according to His purpose, time and place. That there is dynamism in God's word. That our understanding is always limited according to what God wants us to understand depending on His plan for us in certain situations.

As human we tend to ask for evidence, for proof especially when these new understanding run contrary to our existing belief system. When something new intrude our comfort zones and alters religious norms.

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Some of us are already tired of moving from one church group to another. Hence, some of God's people tend to avoid, and to certain extent stop proving because doing so would only confused their mind. But does God really expect this line of thinking among His people? Is it not that God admonish us to keep on growing in understanding and knowledge, not to stop proving, especially when we detect something is no longer going right in His church, or in the way His servants lead His people in the church? Is it okay for God that His people will just follow the human leaders in His church even if these leaders already deny His name and usurp His authority? Or when His ordained ministers no longer teaches His chosen ones according to what is written in His words - the holy bible – but according to whims, caprices and human reasoning?

Few days after I left the PCG, I was accused by one of the PCG brethren that I read much to find fault in the church. I'm very much saddened of this observation and realized the dangerous mind set of some of the brethren in the PCG. Until the time that I did not deeply understand some abominable acts done by the PCG ministry I did not take a move to prove certain issues. If I am fond of finding "human" fault in the ministry I could have not stayed too long then in the PCG with a number of offenses and human shortcomings that I have observed among the brethren and even by the ministers. Although as I see now that if only I was open minded, maybe I could have seen what the others have seen as abominable acts, much earlier. Or maybe, God has His own reasons of having me seen what is going on in the PCG just in this very end time. Is it not that God works in very mysterious ways? He calls, draws and uses us according to His purpose, in His time and place?

Does somebody who already understands the abominable condition of the church still can stay in that group? Does God understand us if we tolerate the abominations committed by His ministers? Compromising God's truth and justifying their acts through human reasoning? Of course not! He wants us to be vigilant. To be willing to take a stand for Him!

This is the dilemma of some of the brethren. They decided to remain in the PCG, despite what they observe and knows to be no longer right, for other reasons than following Christ and God the Father. Is it not that the Great God in heaven is a jealous God? And He always emphasized this? If we don't believe what He said in the Holy bible and instead believe human leaders in the church who already veer away

from His word, can we expect God to be happy of us? Or, will He be furious?

Does not Christ appreciate God's people who stand firmly by God's word and follow Him as He leave the church for reason that the human ministry leading the church already deny God name and usurp His authority? Doing abominable claims, rulings and pronouncements? Is it not that being God's very elect, we should know whether the ministry is still following God obediently, or is already following another god leading blindly God's people away from Him? There are those who have seen the abominable acts of the PCG ministry and said that they will just wait and pray that Mr. Flurry and his ministers will repent, so they will just stay in the PCG while waiting. Is this the right action that Christ and God the Father expected from His people – from His chosen ones?

It is one thing to submit humbly to authority and respect God's ministry. But it is another thing to condone sin by following ministers who have already gone astray from the righteous ways of the great God of the universe. Can God's faithful people continue to stay in the PCG while waiting that Mr. Flurry repents?

What if Mr. Flurry will not repent? Do we think Christ and God the Father will force him to repent? I personally hope and pray that Mr. Flurry and the rest of the PCG ministers who are making abominable rulings and pronouncements will repent. But I did not wait for them because I know that the longer I will stay with the PCG, the more callous and blind I will be just like those WCG members who loss courage to make any decisions despite the flurry of doctrinal changes made starting in the late 80's. And most importantly, I know that God the Father and Christ will not be happy of such a decision.

Basically, God the Father will not force His people to repent because He wants us to develop His character in us. He wants for us to sincerely realize that we are wrong, and honestly accept that in front of Him in all humility. If we suffer as a consequence of our decisions, those are just normal tradeoffs of our wrong thinking, wrong choices.

Most of us do not fully understand what faith is really all about. As Mr. Armstrong had often said, "we really do not get it." As humans, we are always looking for evidence and proof - tangible physical evidence - when in fact faith is everything except this thing. Let us have a review of God's word on this. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things

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not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Now, is it not clear that if we do have faith in God’s word, that faith is our evidence that God’s word is true? Why look for hard proof? Can we ask ourselves, “All these years what is it that we have been hoping for?” Is it not the return of Jesus Christ?

Then, if God’s word says He will return in time we did not expect Him as a thief in the night, why can not we believe His word and still look for hard evidence that he does? So when He said He will come as a thief in the night, i.e. secretly - are we expected then to know the time He comes in to God’s temple? Now that He had already come in secretly as a thief, His faithful people were made aware that He already did! Because He opens their mind as He discerns their hearts, as they loved His truths. But this knowledge is basically anchored on our faith to God and His words – the Holy Bible.

When I join the PCG in 1994, I did not look for hard evidence. In early 1994 we can not see really the effects of apostasy in Southern Philippines. But I have discerned that something is already wrong in the WCG after reading the booklet “God Is...”. Then few months later I received Malachi’s Message. It was then that I began to reread available materials side by side with the bible. Through God’s spirit and His knock in me, I came to understand that He is no longer in the WCG and leave that church after careful bible study.

When God’s elect lacks faith, this will alter his behaviour. In certain cases, behavioural changes will result on wrong decisions and actions. Such as the lack of patience is a manifestation of a lack of faith. When Mr. Flurry decided to print and distribute Mystery of the Ages despite the knowledge that he will violate the copyright law as well as God’s 8th commandment on stealing, he reasoned that God will understand because his intentions is good, to make available to the world God’s plan of salvation for humanity. Now I realized that this is plain human reasoning. Instead of negotiating with the WCG, or praying for God’s intervention and help to allow him to distribute MOA in whatever rightful way in the sight of God and human authorities, he tried to reasoned out that God will understand and support him even if he violates the law of the land and God because what he is doing is according to God’s will as he believes. Even though it is not, since Mr. Armstrong have already done and completed that task in his time.

The question is - does God really allow His people to transgress His law and the law of the land in order to

accomplish something He wants done? Does God think like humans, that “the end justifies the means?” Is there any biblical evidence that can support this concept? If God does, David could have just killed King Saul justifying that the king is worthy to die for his evil deeds to save Israel from his misguided leadership. The point is God does not make short cuts as humans do. He is not impatient as we are. God wants us to develop in us His godly patience so we will be worthy to enter His kingdom.

Sometime in the year 2000 or 2001, I can no longer remember the exact year, a minister made a ruling that it is just okay for children of God’s people who will take board exam during Saturdays because as he reasoned out, Mr. Armstrong allowed it in his time. So he allowed his son to take an exam on a Sabbath. Others followed. This had caused much confusion to other members resulting for one minister in Southern Philippines to verify it to the PCG headquarters only to know it was never allowed in Mr. Armstrong’s time. The concerned minister accepted his mistakes after some adverse consequences of the abominable ruling.

But the issue is, had God’s people able to discern and understand the depth of such offense? Why a minister had to drag the name of a dead person (HWA) just to justify his ruling to get around with God’s law? Is this not self-righteousness and gross display of a lack of faith? My children broke the Sabbath by attending exams and classes during Saturdays. And that is their decision. But I made it clear to them that they are breaking God’s law. And we have to ask God forgiveness of our sins! If we try to make excuses in front of men sometimes using other men’s word to justify our sins, it is a gross display of lack of faith in the redemptive role of Christ and the grace and mercy of God the Father. And God would be angry of such an act of giving importance to what men will say instead of fearing God! For God that is plain hypocrisy!

The ruling to impose a “must” baptismal counselling for 25-year old children growing up in the church is a plain display of lack of patience and faith at the very least. At worst, it is a usurpation of authority to the Great Almighty God of the universe! The action denies God His divine authority and prerogative of calling people whom He needs the time He needs them. It is a complete denial of His name and His authority! That is why I am very much alarmed when the PCG ministry tinkered on this very sensitive matter that even Christ did not put His hand into!

When the Israelites were left to themselves, as Moses went up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments, they became restless. As they lost faith, they started looking for an alternative in the physical realm to direct their devotion. They moulded an animal figure and start kneeling and worshipping it. As Mr. Flurry started losing faith to God, he tried to find tangible physical things that can link him to Mr. Armstrong and to God such as HWA's prayer stone, his books and booklets, the furniture, the candelabra, the stone of destiny, etc. In an effort to display spiritual fruits, he embarked on an aggressive building program, Jerusalem diggings and other physical and worldly endeavors. As he lost connection to the Almighty God in heaven, he was deprived by the Holy Spirit of the new truths and revelation fitting for the end times, the more valuable spiritual fruits that is vitally needed by God's people to prepare themselves of the turbulent times just ahead.

How pitiful it is for God's man to loss his connection to the Ultimate Source of Power of the whole universe. And the only reason this will happen to us is when we lose faith. We lose our focus to God the Father and Christ as we follow blindly His human leaders that have gone astray. God wants us to stand for Him and not for any fallible human just like us. It is along this context that we should continually be building faith by deeply studying God's word. By accepting what it plainly says. By not reasoning around from His laws, His truths and statues, just to justify our own understanding and "legalize" our motives.

What we should deeply understand is that our faithfulness should not be towards the human leaders in God's church. We should be faithful only toward God the Father, His son Jesus Christ and nothing else. Hence, we should pay close attention on the Holy Bible and what it says. Especially when human leaders in God's church will deviate from God's laws, statutes and doctrines. As well as when there is new understanding that comes to our way. Individually, it is our responsibility to continually and consistently study and prove all things.

As said earlier, Christ is discerning now who among us God's chosen people, including our families – husbands / wives/ children - is worthy to be protected, worthy to become strong pillars and lively stones in His temple. This is the reason Christ secretly comes to God's temple as a thief in the night. If we asked ourselves honestly and bluntly, are we worthy to be protected in the place of safety by God? Considering

our imperfections, considering the attitudes and values of our husband, wife and children, are they worthy to be in the place of safety? Or do we have the faith or does our family members have the faith to follow God's instruction when the right time comes? These are questions that are basically anchored on the degree of faith that each person have! These are the questions that we should honestly answer to ourselves. And these are the questions that Christ wants to discern in our individual hearts and minds.

That is why I leave to my grown up children their decision about this spiritual thing especially in the light of what is going in the church right now. Because even I myself is not sure of what will be the verdict of God in me considering my personal sins and shortcomings when the right time comes. I myself is also building faith to be worthy for God's mercy.

But to build and strengthen our faith requires patience and diligence to search and carefully study God's word. God's truth is not something that just comes to our mind through our human reasoning or diligent study. This has to be sought and proven, that as we go through the process God will open our mind as He wills. And that God's truth, when fully embedded in our mind, continually builds up our faith. That by then our daily actions, our works will then fully be anchored on the faith that is in us through God's Holy Spirit.

We should come to realize that in this end time God is not interested on material things, for us to prioritize acquisition of properties and other tangible assets. It would be a bonus if He will continue to shower us more material blessings as he promised. But He is not looking for the physical blessings that we possess and enjoy in this world – buildings, equipments, books, magazines, etc. What He only wants to find in each one of us is Faith – nothing more, nothing less. Faith anchored on God's truths. That is what Christ wants to see in our inner self as He discerns and pick out the pillars for God's temple. As He set apart those who boldly stand for God, joyfully love and respect His authority.

Hence after all, everything boils down to the question - "when the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?"

## Prayer Requests

### Health

**Mr. Robert Ardis.** Please pray constantly for Mr. Ardis' health, that God intervenes at this time and that he be restored to enable him to lead His Work in these exciting times.

**Mrs. Joyce Bench** suffers from Lupus. She has now returned home and although unable to move, a recliner is being brought in to enable her to sit up during the day. She cannot write to anyone and is quite isolated; however she does love receiving phone calls from the brethren.

**Mrs. Yvonne Cachia** is still suffering from arthritis and her hands are often quite numb and uncomfortable.

**Mr. Armando Di Palma** suffers from prostate cancer and has his good days and his bad days! Mr. Di Palma would like to thank everyone who is in contact with him and looks forward to hearing from you all. Please do not hesitate to write to him as his letters can be translated from English to Italian by either Mrs. Lombardi or Mrs. Frendo.

**Mr. Vic and Mrs. Mary Lavender.** Mr. Lavender is recovering from throat cancer and Mrs. Lavender has had a hip replacement.

**Mrs. Fawn Montgomery.** Although Fawn's health is improving, she still needs our fervent prayers.

**Mr. Michael Pereira** suffers from diabetes and sometimes his sugar levels are quite high.

**Mrs. Meta Streuli** is a frail elderly lady and also the mother of Mr. Herbert Schmid, one of our members living in Spain. Mrs. Streuli also has problems with her walking and is very isolated because she not only is our lone member living in Switzerland but she only speaks German. Please write to her as she has a daughter who lives with her who will be very happy to translate any cards or letters received into English.

**Mr. Oliver Villanueva** is suffering from pinched nerves in his back and is in great pain.

*Please inform us if there is any change to your health situation. Further updates will be given in the next issue.*

### Employment

**Mr. Frank Borg,** who is the minister responsible for the Spanish-speaking areas, and who was employed by the PCG is still looking for work.

### Safety

**Mr. Sampie Odendaal.** Please pray for Mr. Odendaal, whose very life could be under threat! The shop stewards informed their members that town councillors would not be paying staff for overtime work anymore. The plumbers and electrical staff decided not to do any over-time; however, the councillors went to the black community and lied to them saying that the employees do not want to work. This resulted in the community wanting to burn down employees' homes (this includes Mr. Odendaal's home) and Mr. Odendaal was forced by about 20 of the staff to co-operate and leave his works vehicle at work or else be shot! Please remember to pray for Mr. Odendaal's safety and that of his family.

Prayers are requested for all of our **Zimbabwean brethren and prospective members** there. Apart from their safety being always at risk and the fact that they have an acute lack of food and a collapsed economy, there is the added factor that over three hundred people have been diagnosed with cholera and being physically weakened. Remember to also pray for all of our **Kenyan brethren and prospective members** as they too, face many hardships.

### Travel

**Mr. Paul Knapen** shall be travelling to Thailand this week, together with his wife and son to visit his wife's family who live in a fairly remote area. Please pray for their safety and that Paul will be able to find reliable Internet cafes in order to be able to keep in touch with God's Church and listen to services in these exceedingly dangerous but exciting times.