

## Special Five Year Anniversary

January 2011

Greetings to all,

In this special newsletter, I'm breaking from the model we usually present to share with you news from our very exciting and spirit filled trip to Trinidad / Tobago. We were invited to spend this special event with the brethren celebrating their five year anniversary with the Church of God, Ministries International.

Like many of the Churches of God scattered around the globe, the Trinidad group has also had their share of ups and disappointments. Of the 50, or so present, most of those attending are veterans of the parent church, the WCG; and like so many others, they too found themselves struggling to find direction after leaving the parent church.

Following a couple of changes, during the 2005-2006 year, the Trinidad brethren were again facing choices as to what to do, when one of the brethren discovered the COGMI via the web site. After sharing the sermons with other brethren, and the others viewing the sermon messages, they began writing us and receiving materials. Within a few short months, the Trinidad group chose to be a member congregation of the COGMI, and as the saying goes, the rest is history.

When we arrived we rented a car so as not to have to put the brethren out for the entire four days we would be there. However, the brethren didn't want us to drive the first day. They wanted to take us around to give us time to get acclimated to the community, and the driving. Let me say, driving in Trinidad is not for the weak of heart. They have the need for speed, in very tight quarters. I believe I could have put my chin out the window and had a shave from the oncoming cars. By the way, if you decide to go to Trinidad, they drive on the wrong side of the road.

The weekend began with a tour of the countries capitol, the Port of Spain. Like most countries facing financial difficulties, Trinidad is no exception. On our tour into downtown we were caught up in heavy traffic due to the shopping season, and because of walking protest by unions demanding higher wages.

We also saw the parliament building, that was destroyed, and dozens were killed due to a Muslim uprising in the early 1990's. (They are very aware of the rise of the Muslim religion)

Friday afternoon was set aside to counsel those who were looking to be baptized. Following the counseling ses-

sions we went over to a Seventh Day Adventist Church who were gracious enough to allow us to use their baptism pool for the baptisms. Seven of the brethren choose to make that very important decision. What a blessing! Following the baptism's we went back to the church building for food and fellowship.

Saturday began with services at ten o'clock. During the service we ordained Mr. Newton "Paisley" James to the office of Deacon. We were also given special music by the new Trinidad Youth Choir. It was their very first time singing and they did an excellent job. I delivered a revised sermon delivered at the Feast entitled "Confidence in Your calling." We taped it with hopes of sharing it with all of the mailing list. Following services we were treated to a potluck of the foods of the Trinidad people. I must tell you, it was all new to me, even the way the bread was prepared was new to me. (Hopefully in the future some of the ladies who prepared the food can write and tell you what we had-I can tell you this, it was clean foods and it was very good.) I enjoyed sampling the varieties of different foods I had never heard of before. If you want the names, I'll need to get them to let you know.

Speaking of different, I would be remiss if I didn't tell you about the flower setting before the podium. The tropical flowers were so bright and colorful, that they didn't look real, but they were; they were cut out of the back yard of one of the brethren and placed in a beautiful setting. I took a couple of pictures that I hope to bring out in the quarterly when I have more space and time.

The afternoon was set aside for two special sessions. I used the first session to bring an update of the work. I talked about things that are happening in the states, and things that are on the drawing boards that we hope will come to pass in the future. We took a brief break and then went into a question and answer session. Many of the questions were sent to me in advance. However, all of the research and printed materials got lost. I still haven't found all the materials I prepared,

they might have gotten pulled out going through security and customs and not returned. We carried a lot of equipment, wires, cameras, etc; it was like a magnet for security, they really liked going through our things.

The question and answer sessions was particularly important to explain how the church functions, it's governance, our policies, and our doc-



trines. We covered many of the questions, but 5:00 came and we had to leave. I hope to answer more of the questions via sermons this year. I remember Mr. Armstrong did that on occasion and the brethren found those sermons / question times very beneficial. Actually some of the questions continued later that night at the fellowship with some of the brethren.

Saturday evening was spent at one of the brethren's home being entertained, given more of the culture of the country, and being fed again. Later that night we found ourselves in a round table discussion focusing on ideas and possibilities of how they can proceed and grow the church. Before leaving around 11:00 or 11:30, Newton took a few moments to show me one of his PowerPoint messages he is preparing. More and more of God's people are going into that form of delivery.

Sunday we took an early 20 minute flight to the sister island Tobago. It is more of a resort community for tourism. One of the first things we saw was where the brethren kept the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a tropical resort motel, in the center of the island, not on the water. But you wouldn't know it from the way it was built. They are hoping to keep the Feast again this year on the island of Tobago. It isn't decided yet if they will use the same place or find another location. We also took a boat out to see one of their reefs, and later, we were able to visit a couple of the forts of the Island.

The Trinidad congregation reminds me of those in the Bible like the Bereans, "for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (Acts 17:11) The brethren are very educated and deeply founded in the scriptures. In addition they are dedicated to following God's way, not just talking about it.

We were treated with great warmth and respect. It always amazes and delights me to meet with new brethren that have never laid eyes on one another before and feel like you have



known each other for years, then to spend such a short time together, and hate to say good by. When we left, I was told by one of the brethren, "I understand now, what it must have felt like for Paul and the brethren to depart not knowing if they would ever see each other again."

Please keep them all in your prayers. Their economy parallels ours. When things get tough here, it gets tough for them also. They too have been witnessing some rough roads over the past few years.

One last thing, I was asked to please invite all of you to keep the Feast with them next year. If you would like to visit them next year, you won't be disappointed.

In Jesus name,

*Tom*  
Tom Kerry

## COMING IN 2011

Beginning this year we will be bringing you sermons that will deal with the specifics of Doctrine and strengthening the church. The Bible tells us the things we are to watch for "within the church."

We often focus on events that is happening around the globe, but we seldom look at conditions with the churches of God. Yet the Bible spends a great deal of time preparing us to be aware of what will take place "within the churches of God." When you take the time to examine all of the scriptures of the warnings within the church, it become alarming. During the year we will focus on those warnings. This month the focus is on "The Tongues Question."



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