

Annual National Convention – July 8th to 10th 2011

It was with great anticipation of good things that the delegates of the 57th Annual Convention of the Church of God in England gathered at the Long Lane Church of God. After a congregational prayer dedicating the Convention into the hand of God, our National Overseer, Philip C. Bennett welcomed all in attendance including our General Headquarters Representative, Bishop Ray Dupre . He then declared the Convention opened. The evening's scripture was read from St. Matthew 24:32 – 42. Pastor Frances Prince preached a sobering message taken from St. Matthew 25:10, "...and the door was shut." She made reference to the days of Noah and how the door of the ark, a type of the Church was shut on those who rejected the message. We had a number of visitors with us including Pastor Spencer from Calvary Church of God in Christ, who was given the opportunity to greet the Convention. Sister Wilhelmina Brown did a great job moderating the Assembly Band Movement programme. She preached on the general theme, '*No One Left Behind*' and again made reference to the days of Noah, comparing it to our days. Following the message, an invitation to the altar was given.

Saturday again began with prayer after which the morning's scripture was read from 1 Corinthians 15:50 – 58 followed by the Bible and Flag pledges. The Women's Missionary Band [WMB] programme was well presented by Sister Claudia Prince. The women looked beautiful as they marched around the building in their regalia's. Sister Claudia Prince preached on the WMB theme, '*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us,*' encouraging us to make ourselves available to God. Bishop Dupre preached an outstanding message during which he encouraged us to check our birth certificates to see if we were truly sons of God. After the message one visitor was heard remarking "*Man... that man can preach.*"

After a good lunch we again gathered for worship. Brother Stuart Brown led the Church of Prophecy Marker Association and Bible Training Institute programmes. During this programme he showed clips of members from various countries sending their greetings to the members in England. During the business session which followed we had various reports presented. A motion was moved to disband the National Finance and Appropriation Committee as its duties were replicated by those of the National Trustees who would comprise the new committee.

Pastor Beverley Anderson preached a message entitled, '*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*' She spoke of those who were busy planning for their lives far into the future with little regard to the soon return of our Lord. Brother Jason Prince conducted the healing service where those needing healing passed through two lines of Ministers while being anointed with oil. This included one local lady who was on her way to the shops to purchase meals for her family but felt compelled to come inside. She stayed for a few hours so there may well have been some very hungry people waiting for her when she eventually got home.

Pastor Angela Clarke preached an anointed message entitled '*But as the days of Noe were.*' She spoke about the many evils in the world today and compared them to how things were in Noah's days. The last programme for the day was that of the Victory Leaders Band moderated by the National Secretary, Sister Claudine Brown. There was an excitement in the air as the young people marched around the building with their banners. Sister Claudine

encouraged us to be *'Lovers of the Truth.'* After the message the alter was filled with young people dedicating themselves to the Lord and His service. The reports are that two individuals were sanctified.

The scripture on Sunday morning was read from 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18 after which was the Sunday school programme was directed by Brother Ray Prince. The Sunday school scholars looked grand in their uniforms as they marched around the building. Scholars from the different churches displayed their talents which included singing, playing the clarinet and playing the violin. A special recognition was made to Pastor Frances Prince for her years of service in the Sunday school department. The team from the Church at Long Lane was also announced as the winners of the Sunday school Challenge that was held in June. Brother Prince preached a good message showing the virtues of bringing up our children in the fear of God and the benefits of going to Sunday school.

Our Overseer in his annual address encouraged us to be good time keepers and to be faithful in our Church duties. He warned us about the spirit of worldliness and encouraged us to be ready for the Lord's return. He said we should be careful about how we read the signs of the time. Scriptures used included St. Matthew 24: 40 -42, 45 -51; St. Matthew 17:10 -13 and 1 Corinthians 4:2. The congregation was given the opportunity to greet our General Headquarters Representative and later, the National Overseer.

The final message of the Convention was preached by Bishop Dupre using the topic *'Therefore be ye also ready.'* This message was a great blessing which is still being discussed by members today. Bishop Dupre opened up our understanding of the two women being the Church [the one taken] and the apostate church [the one left behind].

All too soon it was time for appreciations, announcements and appointments as the Convention was brought to a close by our Overseer. We thank God for His presence with us and look forward to a year of great things.

The total attendance for the Convention was 132, exactly the same number as last year.

To God be the glory.