

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 8

A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be

Sept-Oct 1996

Why Does Our Father Let Us Believe Error?

Does our Father let us believe error? The reaction of many might be "No, the spirit guides us into all truth!" (John 16:13). That is true, but the process takes time and is not complete in any of us! Have you learned any major new Biblical truth or prophetic understanding in the past 10 years? We hope so! Does that mean that you believed some error before you learned the new truth? Yes, it does. Were you therefore unconverted before you learned the new truth?

Have you been rebaptized and had hands laid on you again after you learned this truth? In most cases, "No!" So why did the Eternal let you, a converted person believe error for all of that time?

Before we begin answering these questions, we would like to take them one step further: Do you have any friends who you believe were converted, but passed away without learning the new truths that you have recently learned? Many of us know loving,

commandment-keeping, peaceful individuals who died firmly believing what we now consider to be doctrinal error. Will they be eternally condemned for this?

We can take this even a step further: If you were to write down a summary of essential doctrines that you believe (or maybe just open a copy of your favorite organization's doctrinal statement), could you historically show that there have been people hold-

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Feast '96: Non-Aligned The Concept Does Work!

It is wonderful that so many brethren kept the Feast of Tabernacles this year! We hope each and every one of them had an inspiring and educational Feast wherever they went. We could not possibly cover all of the sites that we listed in our previous issue—you can read about them in the publication of their sponsoring organization. We will therefore present reports from nearly all of the non-aligned sites. The most important lesson we feel we have learned this year is that the non-aligned concept works—if the Biblical principles are followed.

A Non-Aligned Feast is one that is not aligned with any human organization—in contrast with other sites that are sponsored by and for a specific "Church" group. The principles of a non-aligned feast are as follows:

1) Individuals or small groups ask their Father to show them where they should sponsor a Non-Aligned site, make the physical arrangements, **(Continued on page 18)**

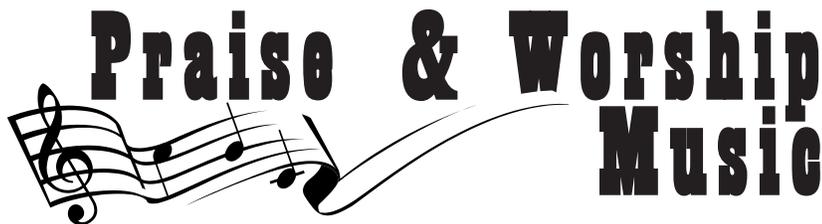
Festival '96 Reports:

Gatlinburg, TN:

Wanted to share a few of the blessings we received (according to my perception) at the Feast in Gatlinburg:

- A peaceful spirit of cooperation even though there was a lot of diversity.
- A total lack of "in your face" doctrinal differences.
- Abundant, inspiring special music.
- A youth choir performance which left most of us in tears.
- Hymns which focused on and reminded us of what God, through Jesus Christ, is doing in our personal lives—hallelujah!!!
- A number of Christ centered messages.
- Reminders that: God has placed His name in each of us; the spoken word is powerful and that confession of our faith is important (Rom. 10:10); that we learn about the symbolism of the Holy Days through their observance; we must learn discernment; we don't need any- **(Continued on page 19)**

Praise & Worship Music



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At the Grand Lake of the Cherokees, Oklahoma Feast this year, we tried to provide a variety of music from a variety of sources, hoping to meet the needs of as many as possible for inspiring congregational singing. At the end of the feast, several in attendance requested that we do an article on a type of music we introduced that was unfamiliar to many in attendance. Although this type of music didn't appeal to everyone, a significant number of those at the feast expressed enthusiasm and a desire to become more familiar with it.

If you are looking for a new source of inspirational music for your services, perhaps you may find this material of use also.

Have you ever wondered how Paul and Silas were able to sing in prison in the middle of the night... without their hymnals?! (Acts 16:25) Many of us would be hard pressed to do that. Look around at the faces in a congregation during song services some time. It is common for almost every head to be buried in a hymnal, apparently "reading" songs, even though those songs may be ones sung hundreds of times before. We don't need a song book to sing along with popular music in our cars, but for some reason we have a hard time remembering the words to hymns. There are times in our lives when it might be very encouraging or comforting to be able to sing a hymn outside of a church setting, just as it was for Paul and Silas. If the need arose, would you be able?

Yet how many folks can remember the chorus to such standards as "How Great Thou Art," even though they have not sung it for many years? Almost everyone!

That is the principle to the style of congregational music known as "Praise and Worship Music" or "Praise and Worship Choruses." In the past 20 years or so, this style of congregational singing has been adopted by a wide variety of groups. Although not originating in the Sabbatarian community, many within that community have begun using this music in their services, including congregations of the Church of God Seventh Day, and independent Assembly of Yahweh groups (who simply substitute Yah for "God" and Yeshua for "Jesus" in the appropriate places.)

Praise and Worship choruses are just what the name implies: short passages set to music, about the length of a standard hymn chorus. Many of them use words adapted **directly from scripture**, so their doctrine is not a problem. They are set to a variety of styles of music, from lively and enthusiastic, to soft and gentle, to solemn and majestic. When they are sung, they are usually repeated two or three times over, setting the words and melody in the singers mind. Variety and interest can be maintained by arranging in medleys which have a natural flow, usually from the more lively at the beginning of a worship service to more serious at the end.

This flow has a specific purpose. When the congregation first comes together, the minds of most are still partly on the things of this world... getting to services on time, dealing with noisy children in the car, and wondering what to do after services. Thus one of the purposes of the song service is to refocus the minds and hearts of the individuals in the congregation toward the things of the Eternal, and thus prepare them to be open to the sharing and teaching of His word.

The first choruses are usually songs of "Thanksgiving." These begin the focus off the world by offering thanks for the blessings we have received. The next step is choruses of "Praise," offering praise not just for what has been done for us, but for the great works of the Almighty throughout time. The third step in the music is beyond what the Eternal has done, to His actual nature, expressed in choruses of "Worship." The concept of worship in the Bible is one of "acknowledging the

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Servants' News is published monthly except for combined March/April and September/October issues. Subscriptions are free to people interested in obeying their Creator as described in the Bible. We believe His law is the basis for living a life pleasing to Him and living at peace with our neighbors. We believe the holy spirit gives us the power to live such a life as long as we continually repent of our sins, accept the salvation provided through our Savior and strive to live "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Deut 8:3).

We believe the gospel should be given freely—you may copy this newsletter and give it to others. *Servants' News* has no financial ties with other organizations, but is financed by gifts and donations to our ministry. We have not received IRS tax exempt status, but the IRS allows some charitable deductions without such status (see IRS Publication 557, p. 16, col. 1).

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Crescent, Gilmore, ACT 2905

Most scripture quotations are from the New

Local Congregations



The Friends of the Sabbath Connecticut Chapter.

[We realize that this announcement will arrive too late for brethren to attend, but tapes will be available.]

We are pleased to announce the formation of a Connecticut chapter of the Friends of the Sabbath, an organization dedicated to Seventh-day Christians. Our chief purpose is to sponsor seminars, conferences and the like of interest to all Sabbatharians, for whom there is a rich heritage in New England.

On the weekend of October 25-27 we will be sponsoring a conference in the Hartford area on the subject of the Sabbath. We have been given a rare opportunity to hear some very qualified people come together and discuss God's day from several perspectives. It should be well worth attending, whether you are new to the Sabbath or have been keeping it for many years.

If you're from outside New England, it is a great time of the year to come visit us. The location will be the Windsor Locks High School in Windsor Locks Connecticut (right next to the Bradley International Airport).

The speakers include: **Dr. Samuel Bacchiocchi**, Seventh-Day Adventist scholar and writer of several books on the Sabbath; **Ronald Dart**, author, lecture and President of the Christian Education Ministries; **Jerry Johnson**, Pastor of The Pine Street Gospel Chapel (Seventh Day Baptist); **Rabbi Paul Saal**, Congregation Shuvah Yisrael (Messianic); **Dr. Donald Ward**, United Church of God Board member and now President of the International Biblical Learning Center.

Tapes of the conference will be available in a few weeks. For information contact:

Friends of the Sabbath
P.O. Box 14
Weatogue, CT 06089

Phone (860) 651-7690
(413) 787-2546

—Rodger Sandsmark

GCG at a Crossroads

The Global Church of God has continued to press forward with an aggressive television program. Among many other stations, they have recently landed a half-hour time-slot on television superstation WGN, Sundays at 6 AM Eastern Time. The first two programs each received over 400 responses.

This progress has not come without its cost, however. The Global Church of God has recently borrowed 1.2 million dollars in order to pay current bills and to continue on their TV stations. This is substantial when one considers that the annual domestic intake of the organization is only about 7 million dollars. The economic basis of the loan is to reach out to stay-at-home and other Sabbath keepers in the hope that they will join Global and help to finance their work.

Like most organizations that sprang from the Worldwide Church of God eventually do, Global has begun to reach a plateau in growth. Feast of Tabernacles attendance was up about 5% this year from last year and donations increased by not too much more. Some employees are being laid off in an effort to keep spending in line.

Within a year, it will be evident whether this 1.2 million dollar loan was a good idea. If the Eternal is going to use Global to do a large work similar to the WCG, then this all-out effort to put their program before so many people will be money well spent. But if growth remains slow or reverses, then Global will find itself in a much worse financial situation than if they had never taken out the loan.

We pray that all of the Eternal's people will seek and be granted a clearer understanding of His will for them.

—Norman S. Edwards

UCG at a Crossroads

The United Church of God's constitution gives certain specific powers to the general council—which is composed of all "ordained" elders in the church. (See *Servants' News*, December 1995 for details.) If 25% of the elders request that an item be put on the agenda for the annual meeting, it must be put on and put to a vote.

At present, some elders are attempting to include an agenda item that would not allow an officer of the corporation to also be a council member. If placed on the agenda and passed at the April meeting, David Hulme would no longer be able to be both the president and a council member. The idea behind

We Are Still Behind on Our Mail . . .

We still are behind on responding to longer letters and articles. We hope our readers will be patient with us. George and Pam Dewey have proven to be a great help in the office, but it seems there is always more to do. The *Servants' News* circulation is now about 1650.

We believe we have shipped all literature requests except for the *Modern Church* booklet. We are still waiting to receive a new version.

More than one other family is considering moving to Charlotte to help us. We ask you to join us in praying for understanding of what is most important for us to do, and who can best do each job.

—NSE

this proposal is to limit the power of any single individual. At present, 8 of the 12 council members must agree to vote in a new president.

This proposal does not cover any doctrine, but simply the governing of the UCG. If this proposal is put on the meeting agenda and ratified, it will be a strong message that the UCG elders can and will make a difference in how their organization is run. If it is not on the agenda or is not approved by vote, then it is likely that the UCG will continue to be run largely by its headquarters. Voting took place during the first UCG general conference, but all votes (except for the election of council members) were simply approvals. (e.g. the budget was either approved or disapproved; there were no choices to make).

About 300 of the 400 voting elders in the United Church of God are "unpaid"—they do not have to be concerned about losing their job if they support proposals contrary to the desires of their headquarters. Many people have expressed opinions to *Servants' News* about the "real nature" of the UCG government. Some say it is truly trying to draw from the collective wisdom of all of the elders, others say it is a hierarchy in "democratic" clothing. Many people are waiting to see the results of this proposal. We realize the Eternal can work through many or through few. We hope that He will be served in whatever decision is made.

—Norman S. Edwards

Sabbatarians Learn Together

I was recently asked to address a group of independent Adventists. This past Sabbath I addressed them. There were only about 24 present, including 3 from the United Church of God and 1 from the Independent Church of God. These independent Seventh Day Adventist's are not very happy with the watering-down of their doctrines in their Church.

Anyway, they wanted to know about what happened to the Worldwide Church of God and were interested in the rise of Germany. So my talk was split into 2 parts:

1. The rise and fall of the WCG
2. The rise and rise of Germany

I spoke for over 2 hours and had a break half way through with questions

during the session. I was grateful for this opportunity as I (and most men) have never had any opportunities in the Church over the years.

This is the third talk this year:

1. I spoke to a group of WCGers for over 2 hours early this year disproving Tkach's tape on the real history of WCG;

2. Then spoke at a SDA church in August promoting the Friends of the Sabbath Association—only about 8 minutes.

They are shocked about what has happened to WCG. They seemed convinced at the Assyria=Germany connection. So I hope we can learn from each other.

With all the research I have done on the origins of the nations, this is the first time ever that I have had the opportunity to speak on the subject. Several afterwards asked me to talk me on the subject again.

So we might organise a trial seminar over a weekend with participants from various Sabbath-observing groups. I will need to prepare visual aids for that occasion. I will give 1 or 2 talks and we may not even have a theme as there are so many with different areas of expertise. But it will be a good training ground for Christians to assist in doing the work.

I shall continue to encourage laymembers to get involved. I hope to forward a submission to the Council of Elders soon on putting in place a system to ensure member participation and equal opportunity in non-ordained positions.

All the best and any feedback would be welcomed,

—Craig Martin White

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We hope that our readers can learn from Craig White's example. We do not need an "ordination" or even the blessing of a big organization to speak to other groups of Sabbath Keepers. We need a worthwhile message (some knowledge), and the desire and willingness for the Eternal to use us to present it. Many of us have studied for years and are prepared to teach, but have never looked for opportunities. Your opportunities will probably not be the same as Mr. White's, but we can all

ask our Father to open the right doors for us and then help us walk through them.

—NSE

Need Sermon Tapes?

The following organizations will send weekly sermon tapes to home groups. *Servants' News* does not endorse everything taught by these groups, but we believe the majority of the messages will be beneficial. Some of these groups may encourage you to fellowship only with them. The groups in **boldface** recognize that the Eternal is working with people in many places and will not try to "get you to join them." We know that this is not a complete list and that there are other good tape ministries which we may not have included.

We encourage people to get on tape lists only when they really listen to most of the tapes. The mailing of thousands of never-heard tapes is a waste of resources committed to the Eternal's work.

Associated Churches, Inc. (Ken Westby), 4449 S. Star Lake Rd., Auburn WA 98001. (206) 859-1017.

Christian Biblical Church of God (Fred Coulter), PO Box 612440, San Jose CA 95161.

Christian Educational Ministries (Ron Dart), PO Box 560, Whitehouse TX 75791. (903) 509-2999.

Church of the Great God (John Ritenbaugh), PO Box 471846, Charlotte NC 28247-1846. (800) 878-8220.

Cornerstone Ministries (Jim Rector), 3802 Olive St., Texarkana TX 75503. (903) 792-1352.

Fellowship Church of God, 10316 NE 17th St., Oklahoma City OK 73141. (405) 769-4738

New Mexico Region Church of God (Lon Lacey), PO Box 20457, Albuquerque NM 87111.

Talents Ministries (Ted Phillips), 5065 Lakeview Circle, Suisau CA 94585. (707) 864-2250.

The Churches of God (tapes from 7 ministers available), PO Box 114, Hawkins TX 75765. (800) 611-8080.

Triumph Prophetic Ministries (Bill Dankenbring) PO Box 292, Altadena CA 91003.

United Church of God, Birmingham (Ray Wooten), PO Box 36134, Birmingham AL 35236-1334. (205) 444-5052, Fax 444-5049. ☐

You Can Contact Scattered Brethren!

Brethren often ask if there are others on our mailing list with which they could correspond, fellowship, or study. Many cannot find a local congregation where they can comfortably fellowship. We have responded to some of their requests, but it is difficult for us to know exactly who is within visiting distance of whom. For the second time, we offer a way for *Servants' News* subscribers to find others near themselves. All you need are some postcards and maybe a map to look up small towns!

This list gives the number of *Servants' News* subscribers that live in each country, state (or province) and city. We do not give out subscriber addresses, but you may send us letters or postcards for people in the cities of your choice and we will forward them. For example, if you live in Dallas and would like to contact others in Dallas, Ft. Worth and Denton, send us ten letters or postcards: 5 for the 6 subscribers in Dallas (you don't need to write to yourself), 3 for Ft. Worth and 2 for Denton.

Please make sure you include the following on each letter or postcard (see example below):

1. Your return address.
2. First class postage.
3. The words "Scattered Brethren Contact" near the top of the address area.
4. The city name and state near the bottom of the address area. Leave room for us to write the name and address between "Scattered Brethren Contact" and the "city/state" line.

We will not send items that do not correspond to the above guidelines, that are solicitations or that are from people not on our mailing list—we are not responsible for returning them.

Brethren using this service need to realize that *Servants' News* readers have a great variety of backgrounds. They attend a variety of organizations and hold a variety of doctrines. Some people on our list may not be interested in responding at all. We recommend that your cards or letters contain a brief description of your interests and beliefs. If you receive a response, then you can say more. We hope both writers and readers of this mail will keep in mind the principles of Romans 14. This is an opportunity to befriend, encourage, and share knowledge, not a chance to force your ideas or your organization on others. 

YOUR NAME
YOUR ADDRESS

Place postage here:
.20 - postcards
.32 - USA letters
.60 - International

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(Leave room for Servants' News to put the name and address here.)
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2411 Pangasinan	1

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Gilmore 1	Australia - Tasmania	De Bolt 1	Canada - Manitoba
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SERVANTS' NEWS

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Portage	1	Odenton	1	Walled Lake	1	Marchfield	1	Hackettstown	1
Remington	1	Silver Spring	1	Waterford	1	Morrisville	1	Linden	1
Terre Haute	1	Westminster	1	Webberville	1	Mountain View	1	Manville	1
Warsaw	1	U.S.A. - Massachusetts	Williamston	1	Neck City	1	Milltown	1	
U.S.A. - Iowa	Bridgewater	1	U.S.A. - Minnesota	Oak Grove	1	Morristown	1		
Council Bluffs	1	East Freetown	1	Aurora	2	Plattsburg	1	Mt Laurel	1
Elk Horn	1	Framingham	1	Baudette	1	Republic	1	Nutley	1
Fort Dodge	1	Holyoke	1	Bloomington	1	Rodgerville	1	Teaneck	1
LeMars	1	Lakeville	1	Buckfield	1	Rolla	1	Tuckerton	1
U.S.A. - Kansas	Merrimac	1	Dilworth	1	Rueter	1	U.S.A. - New Mexico		
Andover	1	Milton	1	Duluth	2	Salem	1	Alamogordo	1
Arlington	1	Natick	1	Foley	1	Schell City	1	Albuquerque	6
Benton	1	Quincy	1	Hoyt Lakes	1	Scott City	1	Belen	1
Caldwell	1	Somerset	1	Minneapolis	2	Shell Knob	1	Chaparral	2
Colwich	1	Somerville	1	New Brighton	1	Smithville	2	Edgewood	2
Derby	1	South Dartmouth	1	North Oaks	1	Spickard	1	Hatch	1
Hutchinson	1	Stoughton	1	Roseville	3	Springfield	3	Las Cruces	2
Manhattan	1	U.S.A. - Michigan	St Paul	3	St Charles	2	Las Vegas	1	
McPherson	1	Algonac	1	Wrenshall	1	St Clair	1	Lincoln	1
Meade	1	Au Gres	2	Zimmerman	1	St Peters	1	Moriarty	1
Mulvane	1	Belleville	1	U.S.A. - Mississippi	Stockton	3	Portales	1	
Shawnee Mission	2	Buchanan	1	Carrollton	1	Windsor	1	Rio Rancho	2
Wichita	11	Byron	1	Carson	1	U.S.A. - Montana	Rogers	2	
U.S.A. - Kentucky	Caro	1	Collins	1	Big Fork	1	Roswell	3	
Dayton	1	Charlotte	2	Collinsville	1	Dillon	1	U.S.A. - New York	
East View	1	Clawson	1	Columbia	3	Dixon	1	Bronx	1
Hodgenville	1	Clio	1	Hattiesburg	3	Kalispell	1	Buffalo	2
Lexington	1	De Witt	1	Jackson	1	Paradise	1	Clifton Park	1
Midway	1	Detroit	1	Laurel	2	Silverbow	1	Clifton Spg	1
Morehead	1	Dowagaic	1	Lumberton	2	St Ignatius	1	Corona	1
Nicholasville	2	East Lansing	1	Petal	2	Stevensville	1	East Patchogue	1
Owensboro	1	Fairgrove	1	Pickens	1	U.S.A. - Nebraska	Elmont	1	
Pewpee Valley	1	Farmington Hills	1	Prairie	1	Bassett	1	Endwell	1
Saldee	1	Flint	2	Quitman	2	Dannebrog	1	Flushing	1
Woodburn	2	Fowlerville	2	Silver Creek	1	Fairbury	1	Francher	1
U.S.A. - Louisiana	Freeland	1	Smithville	1	Gering	1	Fulton	1	
Ama	1	Fremont	1	Waynesboro	1	Mitchell	1	Hempstead	1
Baton Rouge	3	Gobles	1	West Point	1	Nehawka	1	Inwood	1
Glenmora	1	Grand Rapids	2	U.S.A. - Missouri	Omaha	4	Kendall	1	
Hornbeck	1	Harper Woods	1	Aurora	1	U.S.A. - Nevada	Lindenhurst	2	
Houma	1	Holt	1	Ava	1	Las Vegas	1	Little Genessee	1
Metairie	1	Howell	1	Blue Eye	3	North Las Vegas	1	Manchester	1
Winnsboro	1	Jackson	3	Blue Springs	3	Reno	4	Montauk	1
U.S.A. - Maine	Kalamazoo	1	Branson	1	Sparks	2	Preble	1	
Alfred	1	Kentwood	1	Brumley	1	U.S.A. - New Hampshire	Rochester	2	
Berwick	2	Lapeer	1	Bruner	1	Chester	1	Sayville	1
Caribou	1	Linwood	1	California	1	Concord	1	South Wales	1
Palmyra	1	Macomb	1	Camdenton	2	Contoocook	1	Spfld Gardens	1
Portland	1	Madison Heights	1	Cole Camp	1	Derry	1	Williamson	1
U.S.A. - Maryland	Mason	1	Columbia	1	Goffstown	1	U.S.A. - North Carolina		
Baltimore	1	Mr Morris	1	Crocker	1	Hampton Falls	1	Andrews	1
Clear Spring	1	Mulliken	1	Curryville	1	Penacock	1	Apex	2
Edgewood	1	Old Park	1	Eagle Rock	1	Salem	1	Ashboro	1
Elkton	1	Owosso	2	Eldon	3	Somersworth	1	Cary	2
Frederick	2	Perry	2	Frankford	1	U.S.A. - New Jersey	Charlotte	1	

SERVANTS' NEWS

Durham	2	Sciotoville	1	Coopersburg	2	Benton	1	Flint	2
Flat Rock	1	Scott	1	Danboro	1	Burns	1	Floresville	1
Franklinton	1	Sebring	1	Easton	1	Clarksville	1	Fort Worth	1
Gastonia	1	Somerset	1	Elwood City	1	Clinton	1	Frankston	2
Gates	1	South Solon	1	Erie	2	Columbia	1	Ft Davis	1
Greenville	1	Streetsboro	1	Fayetteville	1	Culleoka	1	Ft Worth	3
Kenly	1	Stubenville	1	Germansville	1	Decatur	2	Garland	3
Kings Mountain	1	Troy	1	Harleysville	1	Decaturville	1	Gatesville	1
Knightdale	1	Uniontown	1	Huntingdon Valley	1	Dickson	1	Giddings	1
Lenoir	1	Warren	1	Levittown	1	Ducktown	1	Gilmer	2
Murphy	1	Washington C.H.	2	Mattawana	1	Dunlap	2	Gladewater	4
New Bern	1	West Chester	1	Mifflinburg	1	Goodlettsville	1	Grand Prairie	1
Raleigh	2	Youngstown	1	Millersville	1	Hendersonville	2	Groesbeck	1
Thomasville	1	U.S.A. - Oklahoma		Mt Bethel	1	Hermitage	2	Hawkins	5
Waxhaw	1	Anadarko	1	Nazareth	1	Humbolt	1	Highland Villiage	1
U.S.A. - North Dakota		Blackwell	1	New Bloomfield	1	Jackson	1	Highlands	1
Fargo	1	Broken Arrow	3	New Park	1	Joelton	1	Hillsboro	1
Grand Forks	1	Checotah	1	Newtown	1	Kingsport	1	Hooks	1
Lincoln	1	Chelsea	1	Philadelphia	1	Kingston Springs	1	Houston	16
Valley City	1	Duncan	1	Pipersville	1	Knoxville	5	Humble	2
U.S.A. - Ohio		Elmwood	1	Pittsburg	1	Lake City	1	Huntsville	2
Akron	1	Enid	1	Quakertown	1	Lawrenceburg	1	Hurst	1
Bexley	1	Grove	1	Rochester	1	Lenoir City	1	Irving	2
Brooklyn	1	Locust Grove	1	Saegertown	1	Lexington	1	Justin	1
Brookville	1	McAlister	1	Scottsdale	1	Madison	3	Katy	3
Brunswick	1	Midwest City	1	Shelocta	2	Maryville	1	Kaufman	1
Burton	1	Rose	1	Stewartstown	1	Memphis	2	Kilgore	1
Canton	1	Shawnee	1	Titusville	1	Murfreesboro	1	LaRue	1
Chillicothe	2	Stillwater	1	Towanda	1	Nashville	4	Linden	1
Cincinnati	2	Tahlequah	1	Tyrone	1	Oak Ridge	1	Longview	1
Cleveland	3	Tulsa	7	Uniontown	1	Reagan	1	Lorena	1
Columbus	3	U.S.A. - Oregon		U.S.A. - Rhode Island		Soddy-Daisy	1	Lubbock	1
Conway	1	Azalea	1	Providence	1	White Bluff	1	Mabank	1
Cortland	1	Central Point	1	U.S.A. - South Carolina		U.S.A. - Texas		Malakoff	1
Dayton	2	Condon	1	Aiken	1	Alvin	1	Manor	1
Elyria	1	Golden Hill	1	Cassatt	1	Amarillo	1	Marion	1
Freeport	2	Grants Pass	1	Chappells	1	Arlington	3	McKinney	1
Friendship	1	Huntington	1	Columbia	1	Atlanta	1	Mesquite	1
Hamilton	3	Keizer	1	Greenville	1	Austin	3	Midland	1
Hartville	1	McMinnville	1	Greenwood	1	Avery	1	Newcamey	1
Kent	2	Medford	1	Kingston	1	Big Sandy	16	Pflugerville	1
Killbuck	1	Milton-Freewater	1	Lake City	1	Bruceville	1	Plano	2
Lakewood	2	Myrtle Point	1	Laurens	1	Bryan	2	Pollok	1
Lebanon	1	Newport	1	Manning	1	Carrollton	1	Queen City	1
Lockbourne	1	North Bend	1	Pickens	1	Cedar Creek	1	Refugio	1
Louisville	2	Ontario	1	Rock Hill	1	Celina	1	Richardson	1
Loveland	1	Pendleton	1	Smoaks	2	Center Point	1	Richmond	1
Marietta	1	Portland	3	Summerton	1	Chandler	1	Rockwall	1
Martis Ferry	1	Rogue River	2	Sumter	1	Coldspring	1	Rosharon	2
Mason	1	Roseburg	1	Tega Cay	1	College Station	1	Round Rock	1
Massillon	2	Salem	3	U.S.A. - South Dakota		Conroe	1	San Angelo	1
McArthur	1	Talent	1	Brandon	2	Coppell	1	San Antonio	7
Medina	1	Turner	1	Brookings	2	Corpus Christi	2	Shiro	1
Miamisburg	1	Waldport	1	Freeman	1	Curero	1	Singleton	1
Mineral City	1	U.S.A. - Pennsylvania		Letcher	2	Dallas	6	Spearman	1
Mount Orab	1	Allentown	4	Menno	1	De Kalb	1	Spring	3
North Lawrence	1	Avis	1	Miller	1	De Soto	1	Spring Branch	1
North Ridgeville	1	Barnesboro	1	Mt Vernon	1	Deepport	1	Sprint	2
Pataskala	1	Beaver Falls	1	Rapid City	1	Denison	1	Stanton	2
Perrysville	1	Bethlehem	1	Sioux Falls	7	Denton	2	Stephenville	1
Portsmouth	1	Blossburg	1	Viborg	1	El Paso	7	Strawn	2
Powell	1	Broomall	1	U.S.A. - Tennessee		Euless	1	Continued on	
Rising Sun	1	Connellsville	1	Antioch	2	Farmersville	1	page 10	

Living Room Church of God Directory

Over 1,700 Brethren at ten (10) independent Feast sites throughout the U.S. received copies of the First Edition of the LRCOG Directory, which were distributed during the Fall 1996 Feast of Tabernacles. The LRCOG Directory is a service project for Brethren undertaken by the Greater Seattle LRCOG. "LRCOG" is an abbreviation for Living Room Church of God.

The LRCOG concept includes independent Brethren who may meet more formally in halls as well as meeting less formally in homes. While most Brethren in the LRCOG's and in other independent fellowships do not consider themselves part of any large corporate organization, Brethren who regularly attend corporate fellowships are welcomed and invited to fellowship with LRCOG Brethren who list their groups in the LRCOG Directory.

One major purpose of the LRCOG Directory is to validate the identity and the existence of these independent forms of COG organization. Robert Bodkin, project manager, estimates that there are more than 5,000 Brethren in the USA alone who regularly attend and participate in Sabbath and Holy Day keeping fellowships in some form of independent groups including LRCOG groups.

Now that many of these Brethren will have access to the LRCOG Directory, Bodkin believes that many more will be encouraged to participate both within and between the independent groups. Furthermore, he stated that more Brethren, regardless of past or present COG affiliations, are likely to want to participate and/or to visit this growing and personally interactive form of worship and fellowship. The LRCOG groups can be of particular service to individuals who were offended by larger groups and have stopped attending completely.

The LRCOG Directory First Edition contains 25 listings of LRCOG's and independent groups covering 17 states plus the province of Ontario. Since the First Edition was published, the following additional geographical listings have been received:

California: Riverside, Escondido, Ventura, Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo, Bakersfield, San Jose,

Cupertino, Berkeley, San Ramon
Florida: Ft. Pierce, Melbourne, Titusville

Missouri: Eldon, Columbia, Jefferson City

Mississippi: Biloxi, Laurel, Hattiesburg

New York: Syracuse area

Oregon: Coos Bay, Lakeside, Florence

Pennsylvania: Lehigh Valley, Kunkletown (NE Penna / NW N.J. areas)

Texas: Houston area, Lufkin, Pollok area

The Second Edition is planned for publication at the end of this calendar year for mailing/publication in January. Over 100 listings total from groups in nearly every state are expected.

Most of the listings in the Directory at the present are from groups of brethren numbering between 6 and 20 who assemble on the Sabbath typically in the homes of Brethren for worship services. These worship services

usually consist of prayer, interactive Bible Study, singing, listening to a taped message, and lots of fellowship. The effort is to recapture the vitality and power of this 1st Century traditional form of Church organization.

Brethren who would like to receive a copy of the LRCOG Directory Second Edition are requested to send a business letter sized envelope, self-addressed and with \$1 postage pre-stamped to the address below.

For those wishing to list their LRCOG and/or independent group, please supply the information shown in the box, below. Also, Directory Listing Request forms can also be obtained from the Directory Project address below. Fellowships as small as 2-3 Brethren are welcome to list in the LRCOG Directory.

The address for the LRCOG Directory Project is:

c/o Robert Bodkin
11913 - 93rd Lane N.E. #203
Kirkland, WA 98034.
E-mail: RBODKIN4@aol.com

List Your Congregation

c/o Bodkin, 11913 - 93rd Lane N.E. #203, Kirkland, WA 98034.

1. Name:
 - a. ___Do / ___do not use any formal name.
 - b. Name used, if any:
2. Geography:

Attendees come from the following geographical areas:
3. When/Where to meet:

When:

Where - Living Room / Hall ? Church Building, etc:
4. Contact Person(s):

Name & E-mail Address:

Telephone:

Mailing Address:

Fax Phone:
5. Other helpful information:

relationship" between us and our Creator, acknowledging our utter dependence on him. The word "worship" in the King James New Testament is even translated at times from a term which denotes "licking," as when a dog licks his master's hand.

Many folks who have begun singing these kinds of choruses have found that they begin to get down into their heart in a way that "wordy" hymns never seemed to be able to, and they find themselves "singing and making melody in their hearts" throughout their daily lives in a way that escaped them before.

If you think this type of music may be something you would like to look into, the first place to start is at a local Bible/book store that carries religious tapes and CD's. Almost all such stores carry this type of music now. Just ask where "Praise and Worship" recordings are located. There will usually be a large display of this music from a variety of recording companies. Most stores even have sample copies of the recordings and equipment that you may use to listen and select what you might like.

The major company that started this particular style of recording is called "Hosanna." Many of their recordings contain choruses in a somewhat

"Messianic Jewish" style (which are usually in a minor key and a more rhythmic style than the average). The other primary company that produces such music is "Word, Inc." Their particular line of Praise and Worship tapes are called "Maranatha." Larger stores will probably have large displays for both of these companies.

If you find that this music will meet your needs, the printed music section of the same Bible/book store will probably also have song books with the words and music for a large collection of such choruses. One such book that we have found very helpful is the "Maranatha Music Praise Chorus Book" published by Word. Its current Third Edition includes over 300 of the most common of the Praise and Worship choruses. It is

spiral bound for easy use at a keyboard, and includes words, music, and accompaniment chords to the choruses. A small companion volume is available with just the words. For those familiar with this type of music, you may be interested to note that this volume contains such standards as "El Shaddai," "Awesome God," "Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet," and "Majesty."

Like any music, you will have to do some picking and choosing. A few songs will support the Trinity or other doctrines that you may not want to sing about. You can easily change the words to some, and easily skip over the others that you do not want. We hope this will help some of our readers in their worship services.

—Pam Dewey and Norm Edwards

Music Update

In last issue's music article, we asked if any of our readers wrote music that would be suitable for congregational singing that they were willing to give away to other congregations. We have had two responses of good quality music. We hope to make some books and tapes available during the next few months.

Also, we mentioned that we have a limited supply of used, hardcover Dwight Armstrong hymnals available. We shipped only one request. If anyone else really needs them, please let us know.

"Brethren" from page 8	U.S.A. - Virginia	Fircrest	1	Ellenboro	1	Pulaski	1
Sugar Land	Alexandria	Freeland	1	Morgantown	2	Rhineland	1
Sulphur Springs	Arlington	Gig Harbor	2	Nitro	1	Sheboygan	1
Tempe	Cedar Bluff	Gold Bar	1	Ripley	1	Superior	1
Texarkana	Chesapeake	Kennewick	2	S Charleston	1	Watertown	1
The Woodlands	Disputanta	Kent	1	Sandyville	1	Wis Dells	1
Trinity	Forset	Kettle Falls	1	Sutton	1	U.S.A. - Wyoming	
Tyler	Fredericksburg	Kirkland	2	Triadelphia	1	Gillette	1
Uvalde	Gloucester	Northport	1	Wheeling	1	Jackson	1
Waco	Lynchburg	Omak	1	U.S.A. - Wisconsin		Sundance	1
Waxahachie	Reston	Port Angeles	1	Algoma	1	United Kingdom	
Winnsboro	Salem	Redmond	1	Appleton	1	Aylesbury, Bucks	1
Yorktown	Vienna	Seattle	4	Ashland	1	Berkshire	1
U.S.A. - Utah	Virginia Beach	Sedro Wooley	1	Athelstane	1	Birminham	1
Bathel	U.S.A. - Washington	Sequim	1	Burlington	1	Brighton	1
East Carbon	Auburn	Spokane	4	Cadott	1	Carlisle	1
Murray	Bellevue	Sumas	1	Cecil	1	DagenHam	1
Ogden	Blaine	Sumner	2	Gleason	1	Gwent	1
Salt Lake City	Bonney Lake	Tacoma	7	Hixton	1	Gwynedd	1
Sandy	Bothell	Tonasket	2	Hudson	1	Ipswich	1
Scipio	Burlington	Tukwila	1	Little Chute	1	Leicester	1
Tooele	Camas	Vancouver	1	Madison	1	London	5
West Jordan	Colville	Verdale	1	Marshall	1	Merseyside	1
U.S.A. - Vermont	Edmonds	Westport	1	Milan	1	Northants	1
N Montpelier	Enumclaw	U.S.A. - West Virginia		Milwaukee	2	Northumberland	1
U.S.A. - Virgin Islands	Everett	Charleston	2	Neskoro	1	St Albans, Herts.	1
St Thomas	Federal Way	Chester	1	New Berlin	1	Wales	1
	Fife	Cross Lanes	1	Oostburg	1	West Sussex	1

“Error?” from page 1

ing to all of those doctrines since the first century? Probably not. This author has never found a 2000-year continued existence of any set of doctrines for any church. Yet, our Savior said he would build a congregation that would endure through the ages (Matt 16:18).

The “letters to the seven churches” in Revelation 2 and 3 tell us that there was error in some of the very early congregations. These letters do not say that only one is a “true church” and the rest are “false churches.” They were all part of the “true church” though some were in danger if they did not repent.

But these “seven churches” are not just isolated cases of doctrinal misunderstanding. The entire Bible was written so that it was hard to understand:

For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, To whom He said, “This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,” And, “This is the refreshing”; Yet they would not hear. But the word of the LORD was to them, “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little,” That they might go and fall backward, and be broken and snared and caught. (Isaiah 28:11-13.)

Even the righteous Daniel (Ezk 14:14) was not allowed to understand the prophecies he wrote down (Dan 12:8-9). Other prophecies were written in most difficult to understand manners—skipping many years between clauses with no warning at all. For example, Isaiah 61 is a prophecy of the Messiah, but gives no indication at all that Messiah will come twice, fulfilling parts of the prophecy with each coming. Yet we can be certain that is exactly what it means because our Messiah said he was fulfilling it in Luke 4:16-21. Yet he stopped in the middle of a sentence and closed the scroll because he did not proclaim the day of vengeance until late in his ministry (Luke 21:22). Many other parts of Isaiah 61 were not fulfilled at all during his first coming. Yet none of the Messiah’s listeners seemed to understand it. Years later, the leaders were still asking Him about His Messiahship and authority (John 10:24, Mark 11:28).

The difficulty in understanding scripture was also prophesied in a not-so-obvious prophecy in Isaiah 6:9-10. Our Savior expounded this scripture in Matthew 13:10-17:

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

“Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”

“But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

But did the Messiah’s followers still have error? Yes. They often misunderstood the Scriptures and the words of our Savior—even though he was available to ask. It started with His human parents: “...‘Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them” (Luke 2:49-50).

Even though the Messiah had taught on the subject several times, the disciples still erroneously believed that a literal Kingdom was about to appear (Luke 19:11). They asked about it again after his resurrection, but he had to tell them “...It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority” (Acts 1:6-7).

Our Savior predicted his own death, “but they [the disciples] **did not** understand this saying, and it was hidden

from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying” (Luke 9:45). After He died, Peter planned to go fishing (John 21:3). The Messiah’s statement about destroying the temple and raising it up in three days was so misleading that it was used as evidence against him at his trial (Matt 26:61). It was not understood by anyone until later (John 2:19-22). Furthermore, the apostles did not grasp the meaning of the foot-washing when it happened, nor the meaning of the last words to Judas (John 13:7, 27-29).

For years, the apostles read several scriptures and remembered the words of the Messiah, strongly indicating that the Gospel would eventually go to the Gentiles (Ex 12:38, Isaiah 56, Zech 8:20-23, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8). Yet, a remarkable miracle was needed, as well as a lot of convincing, before the apostles understood this truth and began to act on it (Acts 10, 11:1-19).

One of the greatest areas of misunderstanding was the timing of our Savior’s return. “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matt 16:28). His statement led the apostles to believe that the second coming would occur in their lifetime. This belief is reflected in the wording of the early writings of the apostles (Jms 5:7-9, 1Cor 10:11, 15:51-54, 1Thes 4:14-17). Paul went so far as recommending that single people not marry! (1Cor 7:25-38.) It would be interesting to know how many singles who could have had families never married based on that advice. Yet the apostles’ later writings show they expected a much-later second coming and that they would die a human death (2Pet 1:13-15, 3:3-4, 8-9; 2Tim 4:6-8). The ending of the gospel of John directly addresses the issue of our Savior’s words being misunderstood:

Peter, seeing him [John], said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain [stay alive] till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.” Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?” (John 21:22-24).

John shows us that we must not make what we feel are obvious inferences from our Savior's words—we must listen to what he says. When He said “there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom” (Mat 16:28), he was referring to the apostles who saw the vision of the kingdom as described in the very next verses. We must be careful to note that he said “see” **not** “be with.”

Finally, probably just to show us our human weakness, the Eternal allowed John's correction of one error to be followed by an error of his own creation: “And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen” (John 21:25). If a one-cubic-foot scroll were written for each and every second of His life (He lived about 1 billion seconds), all of the scrolls would fit in a building 40 feet high and 1 mile square. John's supposition was wrong. The lesson for us: Even when the holy spirit is powerfully in someone, everything they write is not necessarily correct. John was certainly used to record the sayings and actions of the Messiah, but he was not a mathematician.

There are other New Testament examples of significant error among the brethren and how that error was corrected. Some of that error was caused completely by human sin and laxness, but others were caused by intentionally difficult scriptures or words from our Messiah—the meaning of which was not revealed.

Why Does He Let It Happen?

First of all, we must understand that everyone is not supposed to understand all of the teachings of scripture. “And He said, ‘To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that “Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand” ’” (Luke 8:10). People who see truth are more responsible than those who are blind: “Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, “We see.” Therefore your sin remains.” ’” (John 9:41). While this scripture was to the unconverted, the same principle applies to the converted:

Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.... And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:43,47-48).

Our loving Father is not going to give us more truth than we can handle. He had to measure out the truth that he gave to His apostles: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). Even the apostle Paul realized he still had much to learn: “But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.... For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known (1Cor 13:10,12).

Sometimes truth must be withheld from us because it is too hard for us to believe that it is truth. After our Savior told people: “...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you... many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, ‘This is a hard saying; who can understand it?’ From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more” (John 6:53,60,66). There are truths that He cannot tell us now, because we would probably leave Him if He did. Paul also speaks for a man who heard words (truth) so wonderful that it was not lawful for a man to say it (2Cor 12:3-4). That truth never made it into the Bible and it is possible that no one living understands it today.

Our Father also withholds truth from us because **humans become vain about what they know.** The entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 tells us that simple love is more important than all knowledge and great spiritual gifts. Yet Paul had to contend with men who thought they were the “most eminent apostles” (2Cor 12:11). In our own age this author has observed people who have been given understanding of significant Biblical truth. These people

usually teach that truth, but too many of them go on to proclaim great things about themselves—without any such command from the Bible or the Eternal. The results are contention and division among the brethren—with much of the power and effect of the truth being lost. **If we could accept it humbly, He could teach us much more truth.**

Can a Loving Father Really Allow Us To Be Deceived?

But someone will certainly say: “If God deliberately lets us accept error as truth, then He is either lying to us or at least tempting us, both of which the scriptures say He does not do” (Tit 1:2, Jms 1:13). That is not true. While the Eternal does not lie or tempt us, he has never promised to prevent Satan from lying or tempting us—He has let him deceive the world (Rev 12:9). At times, the Eternal uses the deception of Satan and his demons to accomplish his own purposes:

Then Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. And the LORD said, ‘Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, ‘I will persuade him.’ The LORD said to him, ‘In what way?’ So he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And the LORD said, ‘You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.’ Therefore look! **The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours,** and the LORD has declared disaster against you” (1Kngs 22:19-23).

Also, the Eternal has never promised to speak clearly to us. Indeed, He usually speaks in visions, dreams, and “dark speeches” (Num 12:6,8). Daniel had to fast 21 days to receive his vision (Dan 10:1-3). Our Messiah said his followers would fast, as Daniel did (Matt 9:15). If we want to understand truth, we must seek him with our whole heart (Jer 29:13, Acts 8:37).

We can more easily understand this

concept by comparing how our Heavenly Father works with His children to the way a good human father might work with a child. A human father cannot teach everything to a child at once—lessons must be taught as the child is ready, in a way that will preserve his life. For example, a human father might spank a toddler for trying to insert objects into an electrical outlet. The child is too young to understand the dangers of electricity, so the father must resort to a more direct means. After a couple of punishments from attempting to fiddle with outlets, the child will probably quit trying. Is it because the child has learned truth from his father and now respects electricity? No! The child probably believes that electrical outlets produce spankings! Is that harmful? No. When the child is old enough to learn about the proper use of outlets, he or she may still be a little scared to plug something in, but will soon get over this problem and forget their protective understanding.

We could also think of many other examples where parents deliberately withhold information from their children until they are ready. Some eight year-old boys are physically capable of driving a car—at least in an empty parking lot. They can see out and still reach the pedals. But if such a boy asks his father if he can drive a car by himself, Father will probably say “No, you cannot.” If the child assumes “cannot” means that he is physically incapable of driving, he is being making a false assumption—because he can drive it. However, if the child is the adventurous type, is it not safer for him if he believes he is physically incapable of driving? As long as he believes that, he will not be tempted to try to drive without his parents permission. Do you think a parent would be wise to make a great point of explaining to his eight year-old that he is really physically capable of most driving functions, but he is just not trustworthy enough to let him try?

We can think of many other areas such as the use of hunting equipment, power tools, alcohol, sex, etc., where parents may allow children to believe assumptions that are not completely true—because those assumptions protect the children. Children, not being doctrinal purists, usually have little difficulty when they realize their assumptions were wrong—in general, they just

accept the newly understood truth. Today, unfortunately, many church organizations claim that they have nearly all of “the truth.” It is very difficult for people from this mentality to recognize that they made a false assumption, even though the false assumption did not hurt them very much.

Some people will hold to their beliefs because they **know** that the Eternal has blessed them and their congregation while they held those beliefs. Imagine a toddler being asked to pick up and put away his children’s encyclopedias for the first time. He stacks them all in a messy pile sideways on the shelf and announces to his parent that “he did it.” The parent gives the child a hug and says “good job!” Should the parent have given the child stern correction for not neatly stacking and alphabetizing the books? Is the parent deceiving the child by letting him think his messy stack was a “good job”? No. If the parent made the job so hard that the child could not do it, the child might hate to stack books and never learn to do it right. But later, the child will learn to live up to a higher standard—that what was “good” before is no longer sufficient.

Both physical and spiritual children must realize that their father cannot tell them all of the truth about everything all of the time. Telling part of the truth is not lying, because the hearer can always ask for the rest of the truth if and when they want it. Some things must be learned as a series of steps over a period of time. Since neither physical nor spiritual children ever obtain all knowledge, they will always be operating on some incomplete and probably incorrect assumptions. The Eternal deals with us on our present level of understanding. **We are judged by how well we obey what we know to do:** “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (Jms 4:17).

How Much Error Will Our Father Allow His People To Believe?

If we look back throughout history, we have to say that the Eternal has allowed a lot of error to be believed by the masses—even his own people. Numerous times, the Kings and priests of Israel led the people into idolatry and other sin. We must remember that these people did not have a Bible at home allowing them to know the truth

apart from their leaders. During Josiah’s reign, the people clearly had no knowledge at all of the Scriptures until the “book of the law” was found (2Kng 22:8-23:3). How will the Eternal judge a person who strove to live righteously, but died shortly before the book was found? The person may have never had access to the truth.

In the nearly 2000 years since our Savior died, access to truth has not been much better. Most people could not own copies of Scriptures. The churches that kept and copied the Scriptures usually read only certain portions publicly—often read in Latin or Greek. After the reading, an on-the-spot translation may have been made, but it probably contained a heavy dose of interpretation. An average person had even less access to accurate history and meanings of ancient languages. If people were told that it was proper to translate the Greek *pascha* (Passover), as “Easter,” how could they prove otherwise? If they were told that history gives us a formula for when to celebrate that day, how could they deny it? If the only Bible they saw contained the full text of 1Jn 5:7-8, how could they know the middle of these two verses were not in most Greek manuscripts.

Without ever having a chance to read through the Bible, how could a person know what is in the Bible and what is not? If corrupt teachers taught that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday, how could the common people have proved that it was not? None of the Bible helps that we take for granted were available to them.

Even today, some people have striven to repent, be baptized, and obey their Creator, but have had no good way to sort out the last 2000 years of entangled theological mess. Their search for a group of believers may be primarily based on the sign their Savior gave: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). Others may know to look for the Sabbath sign (Ex 31:13). Some people may look for both. But what happens if they cannot find a congregation that has both love and the Seventh Day Sabbath?

I have attended Seventh-Day congregations where people would see very little love among the brethren. People came to services a few minutes before the beginning, listened, and left

afterward. Yet, I believe there were converted people there.

On the other hand, I have attended Sunday congregations where there was obviously much love among the brethren, but they thought the Sabbath had been changed to Sunday. Could there be converted people there also? **It is hard for some people to accept that a person could be converted, yet be breaking one of the ten commandments every week.** But how many of us go through a whole week without breaking one of the commandments? (Consider the expanded understanding given in Matthew 5-7.) How many of us covet? How many of us have **idolized** human "ministers" and organizations to the point where we would accept their word as truth even though the Bible clearly said something else?

"Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later (1Tim. 5:24). Because the sins of some are evident to us, does that give us the right to say they are unconverted—or "less converted" than someone whose sins are hidden from us? How can we know how much another person has truly repented, been baptized, and is now seeking to follow His Truth with all their heart? We cannot know. Because of this difficulty, all judgment has been committed to our Elder Brother and Savior (John 5:22). We are told to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts" (1Co 4:5).

If we know the Eternal's will and we do not do it, it will certainly be counted as sin for us. If we believe He is good, we want to do everything that He asks of us. For example, the Eternal may not choose to reveal the Sabbath right away to some believers. **However, if a person knows the truth of the matter, there is not an option—one day is not as good as another.**

This is **not** saying that everyone who calls themselves "Christian" has the holy spirit and the Eternal is ignoring all of their error. Many professing "Christians" essentially attend a "social club" and do not even know about the basics of repentance, baptism, faith, etc.—nor do they believe they should "live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). Believers

probably cannot regularly fellowship with people who meet on a different day of the week and eat food they know is unclean. However, we all should avoid "judging people before the time"—declaring them all to be unconverted when we do not really know. Also, it is much easier to teach truth to people if we regard them as "possibly brethren that need a lot of help," rather than labeling them "Pagans."

Does It Matter What We Believe and Do?

If it is possible that the holy spirit and salvation are offered to people who understand only a small portion of the Bible, then why should we obey it in detail? Furthermore, why did so many Sabbath-keepers have to lose jobs, lose friends, drive many hours to services and festivals, and suffer all manner of other things when possibly could have attended their corner Baptist Church and been saved? If a person does not feel that they have been spiritually blessed from obeying the scriptures as they understand them, they should take a serious look at their relationship with the Eternal. The apostles had the faith to rejoice during one of their first big trials: "...and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:40-41). "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed" (1Pet 3:14).

Also, consider the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1-15). All of the laborers received the amount they agreed to work for (symbolizing salvation), even though some had to work much longer and harder than others. But since each had

an agreement—a covenant—they had to do the work agreed to, or the owner would not have to pay them. If we do not act on the truth which has been revealed to us individually, we are breaking our covenant relationship. But we should not fear to do His will. Our Savior said His burden was light! (Matt 11:30.) He came that our "joy might be full" (John 15:11).

Our efforts and success in this life will be our basis for reward in the future (Luke 19:12-27). Each person's work will be tried (1Cor 3). Those who know much truth, can accomplish a lot more than those who know less.

This understanding that the Eternal allows His people to believe error should **motivate us to study and pray for understanding a lot more.** We may have a lot more truth to learn than we thought! Lastly, it should make us less judgmental and jealous of other errors of other religious groups—even if the group seems to be prospering much more than our own. We can look at these other groups and "rejoice that Christ is preached" (Phil 1:15-18).

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, **"I will never leave you nor forsake you."** So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Heb 13:5-6).

—Norman S. Edwards

1996 Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups—Now Available

This latest issue is just off the press. It contains dozens more groups than the 1995 issue. Nearly all major non-Jewish Sabbath-keeping groups are included along with many single-location congregations. It is a nice companion to the Living Room Church of God (LRCOG) directory which contains only living room-size groups—the two have very little overlap.

This year's edition includes a new listing ordered by country, state, and city. You can use it to find groups that are near you.

To obtain a copy, send \$15 to Bible Sabbath Association, HC 60 Box 8, Fairview, OK 73737 or call 1-888-687-5191 (Visa, Mastercard, AmEx accepted).

Shalom—Reconciliation is Our Preparation

A theme has arisen in the Body of Messiah. The movement of spirit loosed within the fall Festivals of the Eternal One—our Source and our Destiny—is reconciliation. We have been revealed in all of our need, and we have been bathed in the Grace of His Love.

Preparation has been shown to us, as never before, as the deepest, widest, highest need of the Body of Messiah; and preparation as we have never yet confronted it. The time is at hand for us to move ahead in to full form and function as Messiah's Body. The evidences of vast need of a very specific sort have been shown in this time of beginning, for that End which Messiah now brings to us—to be fully re-cast in His image.

At Snowshoe, West Virginia, on a veritable mountain-top island in the autumn sky, we have witnessed evidences that our very need—our binding spiritual pain—is known by our Father in Heaven. He has heard our cry, and our Help comes, even now.

In the past we have held silent vigil at the altar of praise for the God of Eternity. Stilled lips have struggled with praises which even the rocks would sing out to Heaven's Gate, were they enabled.

Our hands and arms, which God has meant to be raised upward in great surrender of glory and honor to Him, have instead hung limply at our sides, or been clasped behind our backs in the fearful grasp of our own doubt and confusion.

Feet and legs like-wise, meant to move their owners in the gracious swirl of His Love, have been leaden and slow to respond to the Life Feast. In addition to our standard reporting of Feast sites this year, we have also included Gary DuBois' report of his impressions of the growth and learning that has occurred at this Feast. Everyone may not appreciate the style of this writing, but we would be interested in hearing from those who

do. —NSE

which He Is. And our eyes—eyes which have seen only words—are now challenged to see Truth, alive and vital, and living in all the Strength of Life in all the created souls of our Maker and King. In this vision we come oh Lord, with eyes wide open, with hands uplifted, and feet prepared to dance, to sing Your glorious praises with our lips now cleansed by the Beauty of Your Presence.

What does all this mean? It has begun. We are challenged to come alive in the Strength and the life of Yahweh Elohim, the Holy, Uncreated, Self-Existent Eternal Almighty One. We are Called to become truly and fully alive in all of the Strength of His never-ending Life in Messiah Yehshouwa—Jesus Christ—even now! As He has said, “Most assuredly, I say unto you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to My Father,” and “Whoever drinks of the Water that I shall give him will never thirst, but the Water that I give him will become in him a fountain of Water springing up into everlasting life.”

The aching spiritual—and physical—pains of our very real binding, have begun to be healed. The healing of our paralysis, out of fear and imposed delusion, has begun, and the River of Life flows. Now we must seek to understand, and learn how to avail ourselves of this Holy Rain which seeks to fall to us and through us all. This is our Preparation, and it has begun.

The balance of this report on the Feast at Snowshoe, is made up of a series of short and very subjective impressions upon this writer while attending the Feast. The contents of the reports are spiritually objective, yet the reports themselves are the subjective impressions which the Feast activities—sermons, gatherings, workshops, conversations, etc.—left upon me.

All of the speakers and workshop leaders; all of the interactive participants in discussion and activity; all of the quiet listeners, praying and hoping, being seemingly dead in spirit, and living again, more and more, are here. In all of the balance of this report, we are, are seen to have been, and seek to know again and again, to Eternity, our Oneness in our Soon Coming Lord and King, Yahshouwa ha Mashiach—Jesus the Christ. His Name, in Eternity and in Power, shall be Named upon us. This report is available in its entirety from Servants' News. The specific short topics covered are:

- 1) Freedom—life, liberty, and property responsibility
- 2) Responsibility for our brother's problems
- 3) Chastisement, correction, conviction and Life
- 4) Leaders, emotional reactions and stimulous
- 5) Personal relationship with God
- 6) Worship, spiritual dynamics, and relationship
- 7) Oneness of God's Spirit and Law
- 8) Divorce, pain, awakening, and standing on the two feet of Law and Spirit
- 9) Movement into Life
- 10) The giving of Life
- 11) Form, function, completion, and suicide
- 12) God's appointment of us all
- 13) Fulfillment of God's Word by God and by us
- 14) Rivers of Living Water
- 15) Purpose of our righteousness
- 16) Our attention

These topics are not easily digestable. Then again, we are no longer babes.

If you are interested in receiving the entire 6-page report, please write the author in care of *Servants' News*.

—Gary DuBois
% *Servants' News*
PO Box 220

Charlotte, Michigan 48813-0220

This letter is in response to Jim and Barbara Damiano's letter published in your August '96 issue of your publication. The article is titled, "Encouragement For the 'Stay-at-Home' Church of God" (SAHCOG).

My wife and I have been SAHCOG members since Passover of '95. Since that time we have had many correspondences with brethren who are also members of SAHCOG. Their stories and experiences in the COG have many similarities and tragedies. We have come to believe that God's people are being persecuted from their own brethren for their beliefs and will continue to be scattered.

Many have been put out or suspended because of their spiritual gifts, revelations, or theories. Some had submitted research papers to their minister explaining some new understandings they had found only to be told not to discuss it with anyone until headquarters (HQ) approved it. So the stories go, HQ was always too busy and any kind of acknowledgment about the paper was absent. It is very disrespectful of an organization to blatantly disregard these brethren's heart-felt research. One person had waited over a year patiently for word from HQ about his 21-page paper. In the end he was told by the local elder to forget everything. Not once did any explanation come from HQ. It was as if this person had never submitted a paper in the first place.

I correspond with many people who have all different understandings on issues like prophecy, church government, and the Holy Days. I do not try to convert them to my understandings, nor do I stop fellowshiping with them because of their different points of view. I have received much insight from someone else's viewpoint just by listening. Even though I still may not agree with them in the end, I did see another dimension to the same subject that gave me more understanding. The only time I will distance myself from brethren is when they have fallen away from God's commandments or when they fall into the category of Gal 5:19-21, but never from a difference on prophecy because no man knows the complete fate for mankind.

There is a reason why God created human beings with a mind that is capable of self-reasoning. If God created us to all think alike, without ever having a different point of view, we would still have the very truth given to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Even though that would be nice to some, it is not God's will. If He did not want us to worship Him with a free will of our own, He would have created clones. Maybe the heads of mainstream COGs

Response to the Famous "Stay-at-Home Church of God" Letter

desire this from their followers, but not our heavenly Father!

Jim and Barbara seem to be waiting on God to show them what to do next. I think that's great! I agree that joining a group for the sake of assembling on the Sabbath is wrong. To join a particular group is to commit, support, or agree with the established form of government of men. I also wait for clear instructions from our heavenly Father.

These mainstream COGs teach top-down-government. They use many Old Testament scriptures to show that they are in the same office as Moses; that the only mediator between God and man is through Christ and themselves. They teach that only they will escape the tribulation. HWA taught the same thing, one true church (translation—one true organization). I believed this same teaching for years. However, God is not limited. How can one limit the Father to just one organization when his people are scattered? Ancient Israel wanted a man to instruct them. They had the chance for God to lead them at Mt. Sinai but instead had chosen Moses. They had the chance to be free men under judges, but instead chose a king like the other nations around them. When they were led by David, a man after god's own heart, they chose Absalom, a handsome flatterer, instead. In the New Testament and today, Christ sent his comforter to lead and teach us in all understanding and once again God's people have chosen a man to lead them to salvation, the very salvation that only comes from Christ. Why do God's people continue to reject their Creator?

The final work to be done in the latter days is the work of the two witnesses, not a work of an organization. These ministers deceive many into believing their form of church government is the same government in heaven. The real truth is Christ is bringing that form of government with him when he returns. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that when Christ returns He will take over an existing church or church organization. Truly, God's church "government" today can only be found in the hearts of his elect.

There are many valuable lessons to learn being a member of a SAHCOG. There

is a complete reliance on God to direct your every day life, more time to study the Bible, the chance to read "dissident" materials that are prohibited in the main stream COG (which the elders read anyway), and the freedom to study the controversial subjects that the main stream COG will not touch. Dissident materials can not deceive the elect (Matt. 24:24 & Mark 13:22) but challenge the spirit. Brethren who are working out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12) are more likely be serious about their salvation, knowing that there is no one to take the blame but themselves. The concept of safety in numbers has many fooled. For that, many will perish. They still are looking to a human being to lead them instead of God.

In conclusion, I believe every person's calling is an educational process in the word of God. The WCG had a great purpose in the growth of a newborn in Christ. After all, the church is represented in the Bible as a woman. One needs teachers and a spiritual family to help them overcome the ways of the world. What better environment than a large, caring group. But after years in this group, after a year of no longer getting any meat from the sermons, I realized that I was no longer growing spiritually. I thought for a long time that there was something wrong with me. When I went from the WCG to the PCG I experienced a great deal of spiritual education. However, after a year in the PCG my education was once again stunted. There was a deep lesson God was revealing to me. My spiritual education was no longer growing through these main stream "Churches of God." I had come to a stopping point. It had become obvious to me that the ministers were only going to teach me what they wanted me to know or what their headquarters wanted us to know. They would not want their members knowing more than themselves. It is clear, after so many trials, these organizations would no longer provide me with spiritual meat. I would now have to rely on the comforter, Heb. 5:12-14. That is what the New Testament is all about, Christ dwelling in you.

—Lawrence Maayah
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We appreciate this personal story and conviction. Our relationship with our Creator is more important than attending the "right" service. But as soon as we are ready, there is a great benefit in fellowshiping with others of like mind—even if only two or three gathered in a home. —NSE

Book Review: *The Celtic Church in Britain*

by Leslie Hardinge (New York: TEACH Services, 1995)

Before the coming of Augustine to England in A.D. 597, the Christian Church in the British Isles was profoundly Celtic, rather than Roman. The beliefs and practices of the Celtic Christian Church were much closer to that of the first century Church than the Church of Rome. Seventh-day Adventist Leslie Hardinge has compiled a most fascinating, well-documented book on the Celtic Church.

Foremost in the Celtic belief was an insistence on a literal interpretation of the Bible, with a tendency to reject the writings of the "Church Fathers," and a disdain for the authority of Church Councils (Council of Elders). The Celtic Church did not have a central governmental leader. Leslie Hardinge notes on page 48, "But while the Celtic theologian was keenly interested in the whole of the Scriptures, his preoccupation with the Ten Commandments was even deeper. The earliest [Celtic] Christian service included a recitation of the Decalogue." In short, "no differences were made between the ethics and morality, the legal system and theology, of the Old and New Testaments," (page 202).

Many Celtic believers were Arians (anti-Trinitarian). They kept the Sabbath, believing that the day begins at sundown. They were known to be Quartodecimans, observers of the annual Lord's Supper, or Christian Passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month in spring. They eschewed unclean meats. Their ministry had to be recognized, even by outsiders, to be honest and above reproach, and celibacy was not practiced until later times.

The legendary Patrick (ca. 387-463) was born a Briton, and evangelized Ireland. He was said to have founded over 300 churches and baptized more than 120,000 converts, earning him the title of patron saint of Ireland. However, Christianity existed in Ireland long before his time.

Wherever Patrick went and established a church, he left an old Celtic law book, *Liber ex Legge Moysi* (**Book of the Law of Moses**), along with the books of the Gospel. The *Liber* begins with the Decalogue, and continues with selections from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Citing Exodus 23:1-19, Part 4 of the *Liber* emphasizes that the Sabbath is to be kept, along with three annual feasts. Part 5, referring to Exodus 31:13, notes that the Sabbath is a sign of God's people, and must be kept. Patrick practiced laying on of hands after bap-

tism for the receipt of the Holy Spirit. While "St. Patrick" is revered as a Roman Catholic saint, his writings appear to place him squarely in the Sabbath-keeping Messianic tradition.

Hardinge indicates that the Celtic British Isles had a long history of Sabbath-keeping. Professor James C. Moffatt, DD, in his 1882 book, *The Church in Scotland*, p. 140, states, "It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of early times, in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labour. They obeyed the fourth commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week."

However, attacks on these Sabbath-keeping Celts was eventually launched from Rome itself. Emperor Justinian, who in A.D. 538 had attacked "heretics" in Europe, utilized the papacy to unify his empire. Gregory I (?-604), the first real "pope" in the sense of wielding considerable political power, was a champion of Sunday observance. But around A.D. 600, there were still so many Sabbath-keepers that even Pope Gregory the Great had to walk a narrow line, in his letter to the Roman people: "It has come to my ears that certain men of perverse spirit have sown among you some things that are wrong and opposed to the holy faith, so as to forbid any work being done on the Sabbath day. What else can I call these but preachers of Antichrist, who, when he comes, will cause the Sabbath day as well as the Lord's day to be kept free from all work," (Hardinge, page 85).

When Gregory learned of the Sabbath-keeping Celts in the British Isles, he became incensed. In 597, Gregory sent Augustine and a band of Benedictine monks to convert England to the Roman Catholic faith. By force and persuasion, Augustine proved to be successful. In 601, Gregory made Augustine (?-604) the first Archbishop of Canterbury. (This Augustine is not to be confused with St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, 354-430.)

Italian forces in Britain eventually

won out, and changed the Celtic Church practices to match those of Rome. Southern Ireland succumbed in 632, Northern Ireland by 695, most of Scotland by 717, and South and North Wales in 768 and 777 respectively. Pockets of resistance in remote areas held out, but the die was cast: the Celtic Church with its apostolic traditions gave way to Sunday and other tenets of Rome.

Besides Patrick, other prominent Celtic preachers were Columba (ca. 521-597), who founded a colony on the Island of Iona and converted parts of Scotland, and Columban (543-615), an Irish preacher who went to France and was convicted by a synod of French bishops for keeping Easter according to the Celtic usage. He was forced to leave for Switzerland, and later Italy, where at Bobbio, he founded a monastery in Waldensian country.

Hardinge notes that a key issue of conflict between the Roman and Celtic churches was the date of Easter. "When they [the Celts] eventually relinquished their adherence to this point in favour of Rome, they surrendered their independence on all points and soon became fused with Roman Christianity," page 96.

Another surprising conclusion has much relevance for us today. To its detriment, the Celtic Church was not unified. Hardinge notes, "Each group seems to have been dependent upon the founder and his tribe, but independent of all others.... No church leader among the Celts was held to be the spokesman of all.... There was little unity of purpose. Had they presented a united front, the Celtic Church might have lasted for centuries, but they were absorbed into Roman Christianity piece by piece, and the remnants which withstood, weakened and alone, finally disappeared," page 207. *[On the other hand, if they relied on strong central human leaders, is it possible that one of them would have become corrupt and caused the entire group of them to go astray much sooner? Something to think about! —SN Editor]*

There is nothing inherently wrong with local church leadership. But, when there is a common enemy, the

"Celtic Church" from page 17

Almighty's people must rally together, and work together. Today, we face a similar attack against the Sabbath and the fundamentals of our belief. Are we going to give in to the enemy one by one? Or instead, will we co-operate with one another? Will we work together, or will we become a relic of history?

Joseph Tkach, Jr., leader of the Worldwide Church of God, believes that Sabbath-keepers today have a short lin-

age. He says Sabbath-keeping churches can trace their history only as far back as seventeenth century British Separatists and Puritans. *The Celtic Church in Britain* destroys this theory. For six hundred years and more, the Celtic Church in the British Isles generally observed the seventh day Sabbath, kept a quaterdeciman Passover, eschewed unclean meats, and avoided a hierarchical government like that of Rome. That makes them our spiritual ancestors in deed.

Leslie Hardinge's book paints an interesting picture of the beliefs and practices of Celtic believers. His extensive footnotes and bibliography indicate much research. For those who cherish the history of Sabbath-keepers, *The Celtic Church in Britain* is a real treasure house. It is available from the **Bible Sabbath Association, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718**. Or call toll Free: **888-687-5191**.

—Richard Nickels

"Non-Aligned" from page 1

and then publicize it via *Servants' News*, *In Transition*, the Internet and other means.

2) The sponsors are responsible for the smooth running of the site, but they recognize that no-one has all the truth and that every one has something to contribute. Anyone may ask in advance to give a message. If the sponsors recognize that the message may be beneficial to the congregation, they schedule a time for it—even though they may not agree with it

3) Questions and comments are allowed at the end of each message. This gives everyone an incentive to listen and see if the message is correct according to the scriptures. If it is not, there is a chance to do something. If the holy spirit inspires someone—there is a chance for it to be expressed (1Cor 14:30).

After talking with or reading the reports from someone in nearly every site, we must conclude that **this concept works!** Many people said that they paid greater attention and learned more than in any previous feast. The great focus was on the services and the studies; the recreational activities were there, but definitely secondary. Yet we would not be honest if we said the concept is without difficulty. Some speakers spoke too authoritatively. (Where did they learn that?) Others spoke on subjects that were probably not edifying to everyone. But, everyone learned.

After speaking with several Non-Aligned Feast sponsors, we feel that the following principles should be used next year:

1) Messages during the daily services should be edifying to all (1Cor 14:5,12,26). Speakers should have a clear love for those listening, not a desire to prove themselves right. Topics

that would interest only a few people or highly controversial topics that cannot possibly be covered in a short time should be covered in Bible studies instead. This was a problem only in a few cases at a few sites this year, but it is certainly something to plan to avoid next year.

2) Plan the location of the sites earlier in the year. Ask for speakers and subjects around January, and produce a list of speakers and possibly subjects by the Spring Holy Days. The Feast planning booklets should give a one or two paragraph summary of each speaker's message or else explain his background. Some speakers believe they should not plan the subject of their message far in advance but pray that the Eternal will give them the message that the people need that day. This is acceptable for well-known speakers, but it is probably better if newer speakers announce a specific subject. (This is not a restrictive, controlling system. Everyone still has a chance to speak. The first year or two they will need to produce a summary. If they establish themselves as a teacher of good, edifying material, then people will be less concerned about knowing their exact subject in future years.)

3) Feast sites should be a "family reunion" of a spiritual family. It is best to find a location where everyone can find lodging at or very close to the site—sharing as much time together as possible. Joint activities in which all can participate bring the body closer together. Some of the most memorable events from the Feast are encouraging conversations with others: over meals, laundry, hall clean-up or other such working functions.

4) Speakers should probably **not** travel among distant sites. Ray Wooten and Norman Edwards planned to

exchange speaking assignments. However, numerous difficulties occurred every step along the way, and due to someone else's traffic accident, Ray Wooten missed his flight to Oklahoma. Norman Edwards was away from his site for about 32 hours and spent only 2 hours speaking at the Gatlinburg site and 3 hours talking to brethren. If it is our Father in Heaven that is inspiring messages, there are plenty of people through which He can work at each site. He does not need to work through only a few people that travel around—reducing their time spent at the Feast and creating additional expense.

5) Singing a variety of styles of music is a good thing to continue. About half of the people liked all of it, and most everyone found something that they liked. It would be best if the music books and a tape could be distributed to each family **before** the Feast so that they could be better able to participate.

The Non-Aligned Feast is a concept that works. We believe it is one part of the training that our Father is giving us now to make us ready to take the Gospel to others in the power of His spirit. There are certainly many other people that have learned much at Feasts that were run with a different plan. We know that our loving Father is working with many people in a way so detailed that we will never be able to understand it until we are spirit like Him.

We recorded the messages from the Grand Lake of the Cherokees, Oklahoma site and we hope to make tapes available. We do not yet have our tape editing and duplication facilities in place, so please do not ask for tapes until we know exactly what we have and what we will offer.

—Norman S. Edwards

“Feast Reports” from page 1

one’s permission to live as Christians; seeking the Kingdom is an active thing—we don’t sit on our backsides and wait for it to get here...and too many other things to mention!

—Opportunities to build friendships, old and new, and to be with our families.

—A beautiful prayer session with the elders who were present for those of us requesting anointing near the beginning of the Feast. Any elder present who wished to pray did so, decently and in order, and each brought a special and meaningful perspective to our requests. Very appropriate, I felt, since James says to call for the elder~~s~~, plural.

Even though Gatlinburg is a very busy place on the weekends, it is a beautiful site with lots for the kids to do. Anyone choosing to stay higher up in the mountains around Gatlinburg should make sure their transmissions are in good shape. But if it should give out on you during the Feast, you may find all sorts of brethren willing to offer you rides, even the use of their car until repairs can be completed!! (Thanks to all who offered!!)

Hope you all had many Feast blessings as well. —Carol Boyer

Snowshoe, WV:

The independent Feast held in Snowshoe, WV was a remarkable combination of natural beauty, rewarding fellowship and some of the most challenging growth opportunities ever faced by most of the 300 scattered brethren attending. In many ways, Snowshoe was an experimental Feast site, in that it was a totally open gathering of God’s people, free from the restraints of the past. It was a refreshing change, to say the least, but certainly not without its difficulties. Because of the widely varied mix of brethren present, different backgrounds, different doctrinal perspectives, and different attitudes were prevalent. This sort of combination provided a truly golden chance for everyone to utilize their God-given talents, abilities, gifts, and especially their powers of spiritual discernment and decision-making.

The area of Snowshoe, WV is strikingly beautiful. Secluded at the top of a mile-high mountain in a remote part of the state, Snowshoe provided an area very conducive to holding a serious Feast of Tabernacles. Free from the distractions of high population centers, the brethren were able to focus more intently upon God, Christ and each other. The closeness and camaraderie were enhanced by the fact that everyone stayed together in one separate

area, opening up the opportunity for much deeper and more spontaneous fellowship.

The Feast began Friday evening with an orientation service. Over the course of the 8 day gathering, 16 speakers participated in either workshops (held in the mornings prior to services) or in delivering messages to the brethren. Separate Sabbath schools were held for children and teenagers.

Speakers included Dale Stogner, Paul Haney, John Kilough, Rick Stanczak, Todd Drawbaugh, Myron Martin, Helm Hobrath, Jim Rector and others. The messages were challenging and, at times, controversial, but this only added to the impact of the Feast. Snowshoe was, to say the least, a thinking Christian’s Festival.

The open concept of this Feast site provided some marvelous growth experiences impossible under any other conditions, and also some difficult situations that had to be faced by everyone involved. To say that this Feast ran smoothly would be untrue. It had a number of dips and curves, a few hills to climb, and even a detour or two. But out of the experience emerged a congregation of brethren drawn closer than ever before to God and to each other, who shared an intense learning session together, and who are the stronger spiritually for their time together. In a number of ways, Snowshoe set a pattern for the Feasts of the future.

Openness and freedom are realities that God desires for all His people. This does not mean that He countenances chaos, disorder or inappropriate behavior. We all learned much, through the messages, the open forums, the interactive workshops, and the remarkable private studies and discussions that ran until the wee morning hours. We will now go forward and build upon what we learned at Snowshoe, putting into practice those valuable lessons as we live our lives in God’s service and plan for next year’s Feast.

—Jim Rector

White Rock, BC:

The non-aligned FOT held in White Rock, B.C., was enjoyed by a total of 40 men, women and children from California, Illinois, Washington, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. The unity of the spirit as seen in the bond of peace was evident throughout the Feast, but better yet, the outpouring of love between the brothers and sisters of Christ made the occasion most memorable.

The opening evening was spent in fellowship and in getting acquainted with old and new friends. Four speakers shared

the formal messages with subjects related to the meaning of the Feast and with time provided for questions and discussion afterward. One service was an open format where the subjects and discussion proved to be both enjoyable and edifying

Don Miller who resides in White Rock hosted a tour of Vancouver and area, topped off with a sumptuous evening meal at the Salmon House perched on a mountainside overlooking the city.

—Fred McGovarin

Panama City, FL:

On September 27 the Indian Springs 7th Day Church of God (Chattanooga, Tennessee) headed for surf, sand and sun in Panama City, Florida. This was the second attempt for the Chattanooga Church to host the Feast of Tabernacles in this location, and luckily the hurricanes stayed away so that we were able to have a very pleasant and enjoyable Feast. The services were held at the Boardwalk Beach Resort in the Parrots Cove meeting room from September 28 through October 5. There were over seventy people that met with us during the Feast, and these people represented over six different church groups from Florida, Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, Illinois and Texas just to mention a few.

Their were a few people that this was their very first Feast and others it was their thirtieth plus Feast. The sermonettes and sermons were very inspiring and uplifting, and the special music was “Fantastic.” The sermonettes, sermons and special music were given by various people from different church areas. The Chattanooga Church wanted everyone attending to participate in what was going on—be it the church services, or the fun show or anything else that was going on. Many people commented that this was their Best Feast Ever!

—Russ Camp at russ@bledsoe.net.

Cisco, TX:

Near-perfect weather and good attendance blessed the Feast at Cisco, Texas, held September 29 to October 6. More than 190 people, the most ever here, rejoiced before Yahweh with worship, study, fellowship and music. Visitors from coast to coast contributed love and energy, making it truly a time of refreshment.

Worship began every morning at ten with rousing music followed by readings from the Psalms and Proverbs, awesome prayers, inspiring special music, and compelling sermons. Sabbaths and High Days had two services. Other afternoons offered a chance to strengthen brotherly affection

through activities like volley ball, sports competitions, a youth meal, auction and roller skating.

Evenings were full. Ladies gave a bridal shower for Miss Leah Mastropaolo of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Hot dog roasting over a campfire filled another. Twice, youngsters went hayriding. Most nights, however, were reserved for informal music or Bible study. After snacks, followed perhaps by the camaraderie of cleanup, everyone headed off to sleep serenaded by the distant yipping of coyotes.

Three baptisms were a special blessing: Mike and Alice McCann of Augusta, Georgia, and Gary Hutchens of Wichita Falls, Texas.

A weekly Sabbath preceding the Feast allowed an extra measure of fellowship, but farewells still came too quickly.

—Ruth York

Ft. Payne, AL:

Thirty-seven brethren, representing 9 states, joined in the non-aligned Feast site in Fort Payne, Alabama.

They feasted on inspiring sermons and sermonettes, and enjoyed music, cookouts, and tours of the sights of Chattanooga, Tennessee and beautiful Lookout Mountain.

Don Miller of Summersville, Missouri was ordained during the Feast.

Sunriver, OR:

The Sunriver Feast of Tabernacles was held in the Thousand Trails Resort Lodge located approximately 15 miles south of Bend, Oregon. During the 8-day period, as many as 162 people assembled to worship God and hear inspiring messages and Bible studies from 10 different speakers, including Al Murrey, Jeff Henderson, Wayne Atchison, Bill Rolans, Dean Wheelock, Jonathan Sjoldal, Gary Porter, John Difley, Richard Agee, and Lee Lisman. The subjects ranged from "Why are We Here?" to Spiritual Gifts to the Wedding Feast. God also sent many talented people who presented special music offerings. Special praise music was sung, and some girls and women participated in messianic Jewish-type dancing.

The weather was splendid the entire 8 days with high temperatures generally in the low 80's, lots of radiant sunshine and one evening with a light rain shower. The lunar eclipse was spectacular! Some people camped and others stayed in nice rental homes and condominiums in the Sunriver Resort area.

Brethren from the San Francisco area planned numerous social activities includ-

ing sundae social, family day, whitewater rafting, teen dance, family night, senior bingo, teen hike, and children's games. Great fun and fellowship was had by all who attended the many activities. There was even a Bible quiz given to test our knowledge with a prize of the Ten Commandments in granite awarded to the winner.

Many were heard to say it really was their best Feast ever! It was a wonderful spiritual time with many conversations about God's Word. Though many came from different church backgrounds and states, including Kentucky, Iowa, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Arizona, Nevada and California, and British Columbia, Canada, all were unified through God's Holy Spirit. Many brethren plan to return again next year.

A special thanks goes to *Servants' News* and *In Transition* for announcing this Feast Site.

—Al Murrey

Grand Lake of the Cherokees, OK:

Those of us at the Feast site at Grand Lake of the Cherokees sponsored by Servants' News were pleased to have an opportunity to fellowship with brethren at a nearby Feast site sponsored by "The Churches of God." In addition to some visiting back and forth for services by some families, the two groups shared a joint outing on a riverboat cruise on Sunday afternoon.

The hallmark of the Grand Lake Feast site this year was probably "diversity"! Those in attendance were from a wide variety of church backgrounds. Divergent tastes in everything from musical styles for hymns to interests in doctrinal subjects for study made "flexibility" a must.

Average attendance was about 90. Services started daily with an opening song, followed by the reading of several chapters from the book of Deuteronomy. Volunteers took turns each day reading, pausing after each chapter to moderate comments and questions from the congregation. These discussion periods were enthusiastic and lively.

The readings were followed by an extended session of congregational singing and special music. Selected traditional hymns, Dwight Armstrong hymns, modern praise & worship music, and Messianic Jewish music all were used. The orchestration varied from an a cappella singer to the use of the piano, guitar, bass, drums, trumpet, mellophone, flute,

violin, viola, cello, and accordion.

A main message was presented, usually in an interactive style that allowed for comments and questions either during or after the presentation. Such interaction does tend to extend the time necessary for services. But early on it was decided by consensus of the congregation that the Deuteronomy readings were so valuable that they were willing to extend the time for services to two and one half hours. Activities were provided for the children before and during the services.

A community kitchen was stocked with a variety of finger food so people could stay a while after services. They did. Even though services ended near the scheduled 1:00 PM, several people were usually still talking in the hall until 5:00 or 6:00 P.M.

Other presentations were available some evenings for those who were interested in more extensive Bible study on the topics under consideration. A family fun show and singalong night rounded out the activities for the week.

Tapes of some of the Grand Lake of the Cherokees Feast messages will be available at a later date. A list of the tapes, including the speakers and the subjects will be provided at that time.

—Pam Dewey

Lake Tahoe, NV:

This year Jeanne and I decided to keep the Feast of Tabernacles at a *non-aligned* Feast site organized and hosted by Norman Brumm and Jack Lane, and located at Incline Village, Nevada, on the northern shore of Lake Tahoe. In a way, this Feast could be considered an experiment.

There were three remarkable distinguishing features to this Feast celebration. The first one is that three different overlapping calendrical holy day reckonings were going to be observed side-by-side, resulting in a ten day Feast. The *first* first day of the Feast began on Thursday evening, September 26th. Then, at the other end, the overlapping Feasts ended the same way, with the *last* of the Last Great Days beginning on Saturday evening, October 5th.

We were curious to see how the three different groups, with their three different ways of determining when the holy days occur, would get along. I was expecting that it would be either wonderful and beautiful, or utterly disastrous, depending on the attitudes of the participants. Thankfully (and I really mean, "Thanks, glory, honor, and praise be to God!"), I can

honestly report that the spirit of Jesus Christ was well in evidence there, and that an atmosphere of love, unity, respect and harmony dominated.

Typical attendance was about seventy-five people, including children.

The second remarkable feature was that each sermon was to be followed by a question and comment session open to participation by all present. The opportunity for all to participate was a key ingredient in making this Feast a special success. Brethren who for years had sat in services being talked at by a leader and being told what to think and do were now finding themselves welcome participants in what God was doing at the Feast. That their participation was encouraged and respectfully welcomed was an acknowledgment by the others present that God, through His spirit, could have something to contribute through them too!

The value and power of this phenomenon of a collective awareness and appreciation of God's spirit working in each of the individual members of Christ's body **must not be understated!** I believe it is the single, most outstanding feature of this Feast and is what made it special for those attending the Incline Village non-aligned Feast site.

Early on in the Feast, one of the speakers expounded on the difference between "political oneness" and "true Godly unity by God's spirit," (Psalm 133) emphasizing the emptiness of the former and the essential desirability of the latter. It was this latter, true unity by God's spirit, which was predominant throughout the Feast at Incline Village, despite differences in various nuances of understanding and belief.

One service was dedicated to allowing the three calendar points of view to be presented and discussed. Equal time was made available to spokesmen for the three different reckonings, with time also allocated for comments and questions from the congregation. I am not aware if any minds were changed that day by the free and open exchange of information and ideas, but the very fact that the discussion could take place at all, and without anyone "losing their cool" and trying to turn the calendar into a salvational issue was a delight to us.

The brethren there were able to appreciate the difference between "gnats and camels," and between questions concerning issues such as tithing on "mint and anise and cummin," and "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:" (Matthew 23:23-24) The brethren were able to keep a Godly perspective on

their differences. Consequently, peace and unity prevailed.

On several occasions our Incline Village attendees joined brethren from Church of God, International's nearby Feast site participating in several social events. The brethren enjoyed this very much and extend many heartfelt thanks to CGI for their openness in inviting us.

Service and participation at this non-aligned Feast were on a voluntary basis. Rather than conduct a traditional, formal taking-up of an offering, a box was provided at the back of the room for donations. There was no begging or exhorting for donations. By the end of the Feast, donations had well exceeded expenses, with some of the excess being used to subsidize some of the Feast outings. The remaining funds are earmarked for production of Feast tapes.

The *third* remarkable distinguishing feature of this Feast at Incline Village involved something that was conspicuously *missing* during the first seven days of the celebration. I am referring to the *absence* of traditional, corporately ordained people at the Feast. Everything was done by "lay" brethren. Even in the cases where anointing and/or laying-on of hands was called for, these matters were attended to by non-ordained, *de jure* elders—those whose physical and spiritual longevity placed them in the category of elder. In some cases, there was group prayer and laying-on of hands by the assembled brethren. These things were done in love and in faith, and quite evidently to good effect.

Attendees at this Feast site, however, seemed to have an awareness that God has not limited Himself to the corporate format in accomplishing His purpose in this age, and that Jesus Christ is not unwilling to live and work effectively in individuals and in smaller groups. The brethren at Incline Village did not evince any fearfulness that their salvation and reward might somehow be dependent on their support of a corporate leader or organization.

At the beginning of this report, I remarked on the experimental nature of this Feast site. As an experimental prototype, it was an unequivocal success. That the Feast proceeded as smoothly as it did, with everyone participating being so green and so new at what was being done, indicates to me that, with the benefits of experience and of God's continued blessing, this festival format has a solid future in the years to come.

Throughout the year, as part of my daily prayers, I ask our Father to guide me

in "where, when, how, and with whom to keep the holy days."

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for answering my prayers by leading me and my family to Incline Village this year. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Amen.
—John Paul Ireland.

Sis-Q-Meadows, OR:

The mountains of southwestern Oregon provided a most beautiful setting for the festival of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) at Sis-Q Meadows. Compared to most Church of God festivals, this gathering of Believers celebrated the Feast in what could be considered both traditional and non-traditional ways. The Sis-Q festival is planned and sponsored by a local home congregation who call themselves the Omega Praise Fellowship.

One difference between Sis-Q and most Feast sites, was that the vast majority of attendees stayed on the grounds at the camp. This allowed for a full range of activities to be held, both day and evening. It was possible to really get to know one another because not only did everyone share activities, but also dined together in the camp dining hall. Fellowship was an integral part of the festival. It was not necessary to try and find someone to invite out after services since one could just sit down with that person at the dining table. The problem was not finding things to do or people with whom to fellowship, the problem was to find a few minutes for some private quiet time. However, most of us have all year to do quiet time at home, while this was a season to rejoice with our brethren.

The day before the festival, a Sukkah (temporary dwelling) was erected between the meeting hall and the dining hall. It was decorated with various harvest products and became a place for people to sit quietly and think on the meanings of the Feast or to have fellowship with friends both old and new.

Singing songs of worship and praise to God was an integral part of the Sis-Q experience. Every session, morning, afternoon and evening, was begun with singing. The music was varied and included styles of worship music to fit almost everyone's musical palate. If one did not like a particular style of song, they needed only to wait a few minutes because the next one would probably be different. The congregation sang old hymns, traditional and contemporary

Continued on page 27



We print a representative sampling of our mail—both positive and negative. We do not include names unless we are fairly sure that the writer would not object. To avoid any difficulty, writers should specify how much of their name and address they would like us to print. We include our response to each letter in this type-style. We have selected a title for each letter for easy reference. If writers supply their own title, we will be happy to use it.

MS-Word Bible Available

LETTER: September 16, 1996

I have recently finished putting the King James Bible on disk and am willing to offer it free to any *Servants' News* readers who want a copy. I use Microsoft Word version 6 on a PC (the default "save" was to just plain Word, which someone at work says should work on any version and on either Mac's or PC's, but I don't know enough about computers to promise that it will).

Anyone interested can contact me:

—Will Benedetti

2557 Bexley Park Road
Columbus, Ohio 43209

wbenedet@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu

RESPONSE: Thanks for your offer to serve. I believe your MS-Word Bible will be usable by both IBM and Mac users. You may have to select an option to create an IBM-format floppy disk, as most IBM users cannot use Mac disks. Most word-processors updated within the last year or two will read MS-Word 6.0 files.

—NSE

Brethren in Malaysia

LETTER: September 10, 1996

Dear Norman:

Recently Myron Martin of Patriots of the Kingdom sent me parts of the June issue of *Servants' News* which I find informative. Earlier on, I've come across a feature story of you and *Servants' News* in *In Transition* as well.

I was disfellowshipped by Malaysian WCG pastor Yong Chin Gee in August 1992 for questioning church authority and

spreading CGI and PCG literature to a few members. He was allowing his wife's close friend in the church to sell vitamins openly on the Sabbaths then!?!
After I decided not to attend their so called God chosen feast site in Phuket, Thailand, my wife and I were put out of the church. So my family kept the '92 feast alone by ourselves in Malaysia, after almost 20 years as faithful WCG members?

Anyway, the purpose of my e-mail is to ask for a subscription of your *Servants' News* magazine. Presently, I'm receiving the Philadelphia Trumpet, Prophecy Flash, World Ahead, Good News & the Pure Truth magazines and would like to add *Servants' News* to the list. Lah! [Malaysian: Wow!]

Thanking you in advance and may Yahveh continue to bless you and your family for being His faithful servant in the end-time!
With Christian love.

—Bob Lim Pang Ooi, Malaysia

RESPONSE: We will gladly send you *Servants' News*. We appreciate Myron Martin's work in alerting Sabbath-keepers to the diversity of information available to them. We pray that you will be able to use your knowledge and communications skills to help other Malaysian brethren through the difficult times. We do not mean for you to set yourself up as "their new spiritual leader," but simply to provide information about what other Sabbath-keepers are doing and studying, and to encourage them to read their Bibles and let the holy spirit teach them. —NSE

—NSE

Enjoyed Oklahoma Feast

LETTER: October 13, 1996

Hi Norman,

I hope all went well on your return trip from the feast and I hope the tapes of the readings and sermons are clear and useable. Tommye and I just wanted to say thank you for your hard work in organizing and coordinating everything at the Feast. It was a very enjoyable Feast and it was a challenging feast. After hearing the subjects expounded we have plenty of study ahead of us to either reinforce what we have believed or to consider where we might have been holding on to wrong concepts. In either case we have been challenged to know whereof we speak and to prove all things. I consider this feast a success.

—Gene Phelan, Texas

RESPONSE: We had a very enjoyable return trip. Thanks for all of your help with

the sound system and in other areas.

—NSE

Likes Speedy Response

LETTER: September 10, 1996

Mr. Edwards;

Thank you for your rapid response to my request for the issues of *Servants' News*. My wife called me at work today to tell me that they arrived already. The listing of Feasts sites will be very helpful. Again Thank You Very Much!

Regards

—Jack Connors

RESPONSE: We are happy that your response was so quick, but it does not happen to everyone. We usually send out literature twice each week. If your letter arrives on one of the days that we are mailing literature, your response is likely to be faster. Also, it depends on how busy your and my post offices are. The less-expensive rate we use may go as fast as first class if they are not busy—but it can take two or three weeks at a busy time. —NSE

Praising Jesus in Music and Spring Missouri Doctrinal Meeting

LETTER: October 12, 1996

Dear Norm and Marleen,

Thank you so much for all the work you put into the Feast. Everyone I talked to said this was the best Feast they've had in years. Whereas in years past we went away from the Feast feeling spiritually hungry, this year we came away feeling spiritually stuffed. We're very excited about all there is to study in the next year.

I just wanted to make a couple of observations. It is a falsehood that unity means we have to all speak the same thing. I think everyone present at Martin's Landing [place of Oklahoma Feast site] believed a little differently from everyone else. Yet we assembled in unity and respected each other's different beliefs. Had one person risen and demanded that all believe a certain way, disunity would have resulted. Although we all disagreed to some degree with each of the presentations, most of us were very glad to hear and consider what was said. On the other hand if any one of the presenters had demanded we all conform to his teaching, I think most of us would have walked out. But since we were all on equal footings, we didn't fear, have reason to distrust, or feel compelled to be defensive towards any of the speakers. We

wanted others to believe as God led them, but we wanted to be left alone to believe as God led us. Lastly, I wanted to mention the music. I realize there were some murmurings in both camps. Personally, the reason Debbie and I did not sing certain songs was that they overly praised "Jesus, Jesus" to the exclusion of God. Debbie and I felt this was a reflection back to the Protestant misconception of the Messiah, Christ. We could not in good conscience sing them. It did not offend us if others sang these songs, but by the same token, it should not offend those others if we chose not to sing them. To ask us to all sing them for the sake of unity would be like asking all the vegetarians in a group to eat meat or all the meat eaters to be vegetarians for the sake of unity. It would be better to say if it offends you to eat meat, then you better not eat it, and if you do eat meat, then don't make it a stumbling block to your brother.

RESPONSE: I understand your decision not to sing some of the hymns if you do not think they are appropriate. I had trouble singing some of them because they do remind me of some congregations I attended years ago where "sweet Jesus" was someone who would make everything better without any learning or changing on the part of the individual. However, the hymns we used did not have any incorrect Biblical message as far as I know.

You are right in that almost all praise in the scriptures is directed toward the Father, yet there are specific verses that direct praise toward His Son: (Rev 5:12, Phil 2:9-11, Luke 19:38-40). In our Feast song book, the older traditional hymns praised the following entities: God/Father-8, Jesus/Christ-23, Lord-5, none-3. Of the modern "praise and worship" music in our book, God/Father-8, Jesus/Christ-5, Lord-15, none-2. Where "Lord" is praised, it is often difficult to tell who the author had in mind, since this term is commonly used in the King James New Testament for both Father and Son. The modern lyrics, which were more often simply words from Scripture, praise "God" more than "Jesus". None of the 8 Dwight Armstrong songs (with words from the Psalms) refer to the name Jesus. Our different appreciations show why it is good to use a variety of music and not worry about who sings what.

LETTER (CONTINUED): We're very excited about what's happening among God's people. **Several of us, including you, have mentioned getting together during the Passover Festival, possibly here in Missouri.** Let's have a seminar over one of the weekends during the Feast and advertise in "The Servants'

News," "In Transition," "The Sabbath Sentinel," and "Friends of the Sabbath." Rather than having representatives of the various organizations speak, let's do the opposite. Let's invite all, but emphasize that no organization will be represented. Then, let's ask the attendees in advance what issues they want to have presented. We'll do our best to have at least two knowledgeable presenters give differing views on each issue. One could speak for 30 minutes, then the other for 40 minutes, then the first speaker for 10 minutes. Afterwards the audience could question the speakers and give comments. Look at all the issues that God's people are currently discussing and trying to resolve: tithing, Passover, Pentecost, typology of the fall Feast, calendar, government, who Christ was, 100 year period, covenants, music, gospel, eschatology—this is only a partial list as you know. The goal in all this would be to provide a forum whereby God's people can be exposed to the scholarship on both sides of currently debated issues to help individual Christians in growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord.

I think a lot of people want to hear these issues discussed in an open forum. United buries them in committees and Global buries whoever brings them up. The Friends of the Sabbath has a different agenda, that of showing what Sabbath keepers have in common. Many of the issues that face Christians from the WCG are not addressed in open forum. I think the interest in such a forum would surprise all of us. People could use their Festival funds which would allow more to attend. The various negative considerations dealing with organizations would be eliminated because no organization would be represented. There are several of us here in Missouri who would be willing to do a lot of work to make this a success.

Let us know what you think of the idea, what support you could give us, and what ideas you have to improve it. I think the time is ripe and opportunity is knocking. We hope all is going well for you and your family. Please say hi to the Dewey's for us.

—John & Deb Sash
RT 3 Box 327-1
Eldon, Missouri 65026
573-392-1673

RESPONSE: I would be very interested in helping to promote such a meeting and might be able to come. Missouri is a good centrally-located place where many people could drive to. Your suggestion for the format is good. Some complex doctrines, like the nature of God, and the

counting of Pentecost may need several sessions, with each one focusing on a particular aspect. I encourage anyone who would be interested in presenting a topic to write directly to you. Most people going to listen will want to know what the topics will be before they make plans to go.

We will pray that the Eternal makes this conference possible if it will be good for the brethren. **We encourage everyone to contact the Sash's with topics they would like to hear or present.**

—NSE

Many Have Sacred Cows!

LETTER: September 9, 1996
Religious people have many sacred cows in their lives. Sometimes they are recognized as such and sometimes they continue to worship them with their time and efforts. If the cow is sacred to them they will probably take offense very easily. However, Jesus just spoke the truth because they needed to hear it, even though those religious Jews became offended. Keep it coming!!!

Your friend in Christ, —Jerry Laws

RESPONSE: Thank you for your continued encouragement. Our Saviour acted as a shepherd, guiding and sometimes pushing His sheep where they ought to be. When they were drifting into danger, he had to push hard. —NSE

Sacred Names, Calendar Issues

LETTER: July, 1996
Greetings Mr. Edwards,

I want to thank you for sending me the *Servants' News* and thank you, Mr. Brumm, for calling my attention to it.

I am very encouraged by the overall tone of tolerance and acceptance that is conveyed by your publication. After leaving WCG, I began worshipping in the Names and have been condemned by those in many Church of God fellowships for that practice. Your update of open and non-aligned feast sites included three sites with which I have had contact where they do worship in the Names and that pleased me very much.

It is obvious that you are promoting unity, but the right kind of unity. Unity where we can all support one another because of our common beliefs, not unity which is forced upon us by having to all follow a creed outlined by a single man in a position of authority. Yahshua said that was the way of the gentiles, their leaders liked to "lord" over them. We on the other hand are to be

led by Yahweh's Spirit as individuals.

Are you interested in receiving articles for publication? I have researched the "calendar" since 1974. Since that is an area of major interest for me, I would gladly prepare an article for publication, but only if you are interested. I know that this subject can also cause division and can understand why you might opt not to publish anything pertaining to it. Let me know.

Thanks again,

—Thomas J. Bailey

RESPONSE: We are interested in publishing information about sacred names and about the calendar. Unfortunately, we have similar problems with both of these issues: most articles we receive tend to support one particular view and then go on to condemn everyone who is not worshipping in that way. We have received long papers supporting over a half dozen pronouncements for the names of the Father and His Son, and maybe a dozen different calendar systems. Most of the articles support their view from scripture and history, but they usually do not explain how all of the other views are wrong. Actually, it is evident that most of the writers have not heard of some of the other views. Also, some of the articles leave some important questions unanswered—that does not mean the article is wrong; there may be a good answer—but it does make the article difficult to publish.

We do not think it would be helpful to our readers to publish all of the papers we have and let them sort it out for themselves—it would be expensive to send out all 500 pages or so and not many would have time to read it. At some point, we hope to read through all of the papers, throw out the obvious error, summarize the important points and present the results to our readers. We may come to a definite conclusion or we may not.

We would be interested in publishing an article on these or other subjects if it contains solid, provable information that would help our readers gain understanding without condemnation. Our 10-page Biblical Calendar Basics article is an example of one way to do this.

Please let us know the nature of the article that you intend to write before you spend a lot of time writing it for us.

Thank you for your interest in teaching others.

—NSE

Starting a New Congregation

LETTER:

August 20, 1996

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Mr. Edwards,

I don't know if you remember me when we met [location withheld]. The minister here has decided to join another organization and we have decided to go independent. However, we have some problems that we are dealing with. I hope that you can give me quick answers to the following questions to help us on our way.

- 1) Should women serve on the Church board?
- 2) Should the board be selected by lots? Or is that a process with which the Eternal will help us only as a matter of last resort when we are unable to agree otherwise?
- 3) Should women be able to vote?
- 4) We are looking to make certain we don't have the top down government problems that have plagued the churches in the past. But how do we decide who should take on a leadership role with regards to ministry or pastoring?

I recognize that all of the members have the gifts of the Spirit and in our congregation we have a number of individuals who can give sermons. Whoever ends up in a leadership role with this regard will likely work in a very collaborative fashion, but someone has to act in a role of leadership. How do we decide?

Your answers to these questions as soon as possible, would be helpful as we are trying to decide these things on the upcoming Sabbath.

Thanks,

Your brother in the Messiah,

(name withheld)

RESPONSE: As soon as it is ready, we will send you our new piece of literature, entitled *Starting a Sabbath Service*. This should cover many of the questions that you are asking. We will E-mail you the incomplete version that we have now—it should be of some help.

I think your decision to become independent in your situation was wise. It is not good when a local congregation is "tossed from group to group"—especially if this is done without the members request or knowledge. The purpose of local congregations is for fellowship, learning, and to help teach others—not to direct funds to a specific organization. If some people in a local congregation push to join a specific organization, it often ends up splitting the group again—the ones who are not ready to join, leave. By being independent, you can solidify your local congregation and then decide to work with other groups as it makes sense to do so.

I will address each of your questions,

but I think you are probably trying to start your group too fast. I will insert one of the early sections of my new paper here:

START IT SIMPLE

Start with the essentials of a location, a time to meet, songs to sing, scripture to read and messages to give. Let the spending of money and the development of more complex plans and policies wait until the need arises. Do not start your group by collecting money, writing a "doctrinal statement," printing stationery, instituting various programs or by designating people for various "offices." If the heart and core of your service is not group worship, praise and study, no amount of organization or documents will make the service any better.

You do not need to name, register or incorporate a group in order to begin meeting. (Some countries may absolutely require some form of registration before any public meetings take place, but they are in the minority.) Again, starting with these physical questions detracts from the forming of a spiritual congregation—which should be your purpose. If you start by setting up a board, offices, and an organizational structure, you may create something that will be hard to undo. Let everyone get to know each other and recognize each other's gifts before they decide who they want to do what.

You can start a service simply by having a meeting with most of the people and deciding where and when services will be and who will speak. If you are worried that someone may try to "take over" the first meeting, then invite a member from a nearby congregation to come and chair the meeting.

As meetings continue, many physical and organizational questions will be raised and they can be dealt with as necessary. Problems that never come up do not need to be solved. We can use the meeting place as an example: Before searching for a hall and all that entails, try meeting in a home. If that becomes unworkable, then look for another place, if the home continues to be adequate, you have saved a lot of time and money.

(END OF QUOTE FROM PAPER)

I think the above is very important. You need to realize that the "Church" are those people with the holy spirit, and you do not need to have some kind of documentation or structure for the people to meet. Nevertheless, I will answer your questions:

1) I would prefer to use the term "elders," or "council" rather than "board" which is not in the Bible. I think you should create a group like this only if your congregation is too large for everyone to

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meet together to decide issues. If there are 12 adults in your congregation and you create a governing body of 7, that means essentially means that 5 are shut out from decision making. On the other hand, if there are 30 adults, then a smaller group seems to make sense.

The whole emphasis in leadership is to find people who have the gifts of administration and service. The democratic idea that every little interest group should have a voice in governing is not in the Bible. If your congregation has several left-handed people, you do not necessarily need at least one left-handed council member. If you have racial or ethnic groups present, you do not necessarily have to have one of each of them on the council. Though historically most groups of elders were men, there is no specific forbidding of women to be present. However, the same advice should be taken as for other special groups: do not try to put one on the council just so you can have one. If a left-hander, Ice-lander, woman, or man is the best person to do a specific job, then they should do it. If people complain "we need more women on this board," I think it is a mistake. If they say "Theodore is not fulfilling his job well and we think Brenda would do much better," then they may have a point.

2) When lots were used in Acts 1, the apostles had already done a lot of selecting on their own. It did not seem to be a matter of disagreeing, but more a matter of no one knew who was the right man for the job. If everyone is simply trying to get the job done and there is no spirit of control or contention in your group, it may work to simply sit down and decide who will take care of what. The choices may be obvious. If there are several people who might be similarly qualified, they may agree to take turns at a job or they may wish to cast lots. However, if there is a spirit of contention in your group—disagreement about who should have what job, people who are afraid someone else will get a certain job, then you may want to avoid the contention and cast lots for leaders. This must be done with an attitude of humility, asking the Eternal to solve a problem that the group cannot.

3) The purpose of governing is not to get your share of power, but to get the necessary work done. All people with the spirit of God should take part in the voting—though people who are not regular members or not familiar with the issues should abstain from voting. The American practice of encouraging others to vote for you does not belong in a congregation. Again, the purpose is not to gain power of the "elect-ed" but to find the best person for the job.

4) It is fortunate that you have a num-

ber of people who can speak. Any one of you could make a speaking schedule. Many of the responsibilities that are traditionally assigned to a pastor can and probably should also be shared:

baptizing: Any of the elders (older, experienced men) can do it.

anointing the sick: Any elder can do it.

counseling: Let people choose their own counselor—the decision is theirs.

disfellowshipping: This should be done by the congregation (Matt 18:16-18).

marrying: Can you find any scripture where a minister, elder, or anyone "married" people?

funerals: This is essentially another speaking assignment.

There is still a need for someone to coordinate all of the other functions of people serving, but it is indeed more like a shepherd—occasionally guiding—than the captain of an army. I suggest you share the responsibility until there is either a clear need for one person or until it is obvious that the Eternal would like a certain person to do it. I know of local groups that have operated for years with no one man in charge—our High Priest is in charge.

Let me know how it all works out.

—NSE

Many Questions About Sabbath Services, Including Role of Women

LETTER: September 5, 1996
Norm:

I have been giving this subject [How the Eternal Governs] thought for years. I must say that you have done a very good job of covering it.

Here of late I have been thinking that we need to get more in touch with the way the "Jews" did things. It is because we do not really understand the way the synagogues work, why the Jews do (or don't do) certain things that we miss things in the scriptures. One of the things I feel is causing us problems is the old WCG standard church format. Children feel excluded from church, and are put out of the church before they can even join. I have mentioned this within the Global organization and while it has not fallen completely on deaf ears, I just don't think they get it.

RESPONSE: You are quite right. The role of most children and teens in services is being quiet and maybe putting money in the basket on holy days. All of the other activities a group may organize are nice, but what do we hope to teach our children? Join the XXX Church of God because it has a good

baseball league and picnics? Usually, once a year groups will have a "youth day" and let them take part in services—proving that they can contribute—but then deny them the opportunity most of the year. There seems to be far too little interest in letting children contribute to services.

LETTER (CONTINUED): I must also admit that I am not comfortable with leaving GCG and the camaraderie offered. But, I am not in favor of things that are done by many of the individuals.

RESPONSE: "For whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). I think most people are better off attending and serving somewhere rather than nowhere. If you are learning, growing, and serving somewhere, then continue to attend. If you are not, then ask the Eternal to show you something new.

LETTER: I have been thinking long and hard about things and I am not comfortable with many things. One of which was how long I stayed in WCG before I finally said enough! I should have exploded long before I did, and today would. I have felt for a long time that we as individuals must take ownership of this way of life, not have some one tell us how to live it. I guess I am saying that we must become responsible for our lives (an interesting thought considering that God says "Work out your own salvation..."). Yet it was so hard to do with people telling us that we had to follow a governmental structure.

RESPONSE: I have often asked myself, "Why did I simply go along with the crowd for so many years?" The answer is that the WCG did teach a lot of truth and did do a lot of good. The "do it our way even if you cannot see it in the Bible" mentality crept into the WCG over a long period of time, not suddenly. Most of us were busy serving or busy with our own concerns and not really studying independently and asking for the inspiration of the holy spirit.

LETTER: At any rate, after reading your article/paper, I have some questions I must ask:

Speaking in tongues leaves me troubled. I know that there are some who "speak in tongues" and I know that when they are recorded, what is played back at a slower speed is not very pleasant to listen to. So, what I can't come to grips with is why God would say that He is not the author of confusion, yet have people speak in tongues such that there is no one in the audience that speaks that language. I believe you can see the problem that my logic points to. Lack of understanding makes it difficult sometimes to see the logic of something, so I am asking you to assist me with this one. You have obviously given much thought to this, and so I would like your input.

RESPONSE: It seems many who claim to have the "gift of tongues" do not—they have a counterfeit. I have heard of cases where this speaking has been recorded and played back at faster, slower or backwards and words praising Satan are completely distinguishable. If we follow Paul's admonition to always have someone interpret when another speaks in tongues, we will not have difficulty (1Cor 14:5-13, 27). If this person has a genuine spiritual gift, the words of the interpreter should reflect the words of the Eternal. The congregation can "judge" this, just like they would judge the speaking of prophets (1Co 14:29).

LETTER: In the area of Prophecy, I realize that there are prophecies in the OT about people of various ages prophesying in the end times. What good are prophecies, particularly of private interpretation? What kind of prophecies would one expect? Why would God do this?

RESPONSE: The Eternal has always helped his servants through difficult times (Amos 3:7). Prophecies in the New Testament were sometimes very local: a warning of a famine so people could prepare (Acts 11:28-30) or the future of a person's life so he could be ready for it (Acts 21:11). We will certainly have many trying times ahead of us and it is nice for our loving father to reach down and tell us what we should be doing.

LETTER: How can we bring changes to organizations gently? I notice that you did leave GCG. I think I am starting to understand why, and I can't say that you were wrong. But, how can we as individuals, bring changes about simply? While doing this, since there is a prophecy about the power of the Holy people being destroyed, scattered, etc. in the end days, how can we do a powerful work if we do not combine forces (as it were)?

RESPONSE: While I was in GCG I tried to bring changes to it gently, but found that "evangelists of 40 years" were, in general, not open to ideas that did not fit in with their years of experience. Since I stopped working for Global, I have written them several letters hoping they would change at least in a few areas, but again, they cited Herbert Armstrong's methods as the "proven way to do a big work." Why they cannot see the connection between HWA's methods and the way his work ended is uncertain.

If we believe that the Eternal can manage only one human organization at a time, then we should all band together in one. But we find Paul seemingly unconcerned that people were "preaching Christ" for reasons different than his own (Phil 1:15-18). This is in great contrast to the GCG,

UCG and other hierarchical groups which are largely commanding local congregations to stop local preaching of the Gospel unless "headquarters approves it." Whether or not more people have begun keeping the Sabbath by local evangelism than by central media efforts seems to be a question they do not want answered.

I believe that the Eternal used Herbert Armstrong to teach much truth to people who had never heard of the Sabbath or many other Biblical truths. Through writing and broadcasting, one man was able to reach a great many. But Herbert Armstrong departed from the truth that he understood about government in 1939 and began to make great claims about himself—claims that John the Baptist or the apostles never made about themselves. Because of this, he died estranged from everyone in his family and nearly everyone in the WCG. Slowly, over a period of time, the Eternal took apart the hierarchical system that Armstrong created—giving the "little ones" time to realize the error of those ways and to change.

I doubt that the prophecy to "scatter" (KJV) or "shatter" (NKJV) "the power of the holy people" is being fulfilled now. I think more people will be reached now by local congregations with the power of the holy spirit than have ever been reached before by electronic media. The prophecies in Matthew 10:23, 23:34 indicate that the gospel will be preached, and we will receive persecution on a city to city basis. As you well know, it is fairly easy for the Federal government to shut down a large single corporation by obtaining "temporary" court injunctions against it while "investigating" it. The corporation can be found innocent in the end, but its inability to operate during the "investigation" can destroy it. However, spirit-filled preaching by a lot of local groups will be much harder to stop—especially if they are unincorporated. It will have to be done on a city-by-city basis.

LETTER: I joined Global because I felt that United did not have its priorities correct. Global was doing a work, and I avoided Global at first because of Dr. Meredith's reputation (some of which I had first hand knowledge of).

Now the use of the Internet is going to allow some of us to do some very interesting things (writing articles, doing papers on some interesting subjects, etc.), but, can we really do a work?

RESPONSE: While some people are learning Bible truth from the Internet, most Americans still do not have access to it, so any "work" cannot focus on the Internet alone. The one thing that internet has greatly changed is the ability of organizations to

"hush up" problems. Years ago, when a person resigned from an organization, people within were told that he had "lost his love for the truth and was bitter against 'the work.'" Today, resignation letters often make it on to the internet and are printed and shared with people in the congregations. Sometimes we read the letter of a man who is "bitter," but often we find a person who has been lied about and had good reasons for resigning.

LETTER: I have some serious confusion over the directive to not be involved with vain repetitions and group prayer. I have also wondered greatly just what was meant by "My house shall be a house of prayer" (or some similar translation). The writing of prayers by the Jews and putting them between the stones of the Wailing Wall seemed to me to be an absolute waste in light of the "repetitions", but, after attending church with the SDAs, I am a bit lost here. What further light can you shed on this?

RESPONSE: The wording in Matthew 6:7 says avoid "vain repetitions"—repeating something so often that you are not thinking about it. I think this refers to practices such as some Catholics have—saying 100 "hail Mary's" one after another, counting them on rosary beads. In Matthew 26:44 we find that our Saviour repeated the same words, but meaning them. Acts 4:24-30 records a group prayer that included scripture, but other words as well. Many of the Psalms that we sing that have been set to music are called prayers in their titles. Is there anything wrong with singing them many times throughout the years (Mat 26:30). Would it suddenly become a sin if we just said the words rather than sung them? I cannot see how memorized songs or prayers can be called vain repetition if used only once a week or less.

LETTER: Because I am not a Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic scholar, I do not understand some things. I find your statements about women in church to be very refreshing, and they tend to fit the understanding I have of us being neither male or female in the kingdom. However, are not women prohibited from speaking (teaching) in "church"? If this is correct, then how can they do scripture reading and a few other things along those lines? On the other hand, could the translations be that far off on this scripture? I personally would like to think so, but, I do have problems with this, and it just may be because I refuse to change unless/until I am thoroughly convicted that the "new understanding" is correct (guess you could say once burned, twice shy).

RESPONSE: There is a big difference between speaking and teaching in services. It is clear that women can pray and prophe-

cy in services (1Cor 11). The several King James "silence" verses refer to a "quiet crowd" or "non-noisiness." There was not to be unrelated chatter in the service—a problem that often needs addressing today. (Ask women who have attended services with a full "mother's room"—chatter often makes it tough to hear the service.)

The admonition against women teaching is in 1 Timothy 2:12: "And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." I need to study this more, but it is possible this was a decision for that culture and time. Paul was taught directly by the Messiah and conveyed much of that knowledge to us. Yet there are times that he renders judgments that he says are not specifically from the Eternal: "Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord:... But to the rest I, not the Lord, say:..." (1Cor 7:10,12). If Paul's writings are indeed inspired, then should we not pay attention to what he says is "from the Lord" and which is his own opinion—a judgement for his time? When speaking of women teaching in 1 Timothy, Paul specifically says "I do not permit...". This appears to be another one of his judgments rather than a command of the Messiah. When he switches to another topic in 1 Timothy 3:1, he reestablishes authority for what follows: "The saying is sure:..." (NRSV). Women in Paul's time were not given near as much education as men in the scriptures and it was not nearly as acceptable in that society for a woman to tell a man anything publicly. Was Paul's judgment largely for his time?

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Christian, and Hebrew songs. Some were quiet and reverential, others were songs of praise and a few were of the thigh slapping variety.

Many (if not most) of the people attending the Sis-Q festival have never been associated with any of the Churches of God. This allowed for a real mix of ideas and opinions and the need for the festival participants be tolerant of others' points of view. However, despite differences of understanding on certain issues, all were united in their desire to worship our Father in heaven through our Saviour Jesus Christ (Yeshua the Messiah) at the festival known as "The Season of Our Joy." Differences of opinion were discussed openly and freely without hostility.

Several members from a local congregation, Illinois Valley Home Ministry Fellowship in Cave Junction, attended along with their congregational leader, Beverly Clapp. While they contributed to

While it may be hard to accept that some scriptures are "inspired for a time" and others "eternally inspired," we do find that in some places. In Acts 14:29 people are told to avoid meat offered to idols, but Paul later says it is all right as long as it does not offend others (1Cor 8). If we look at the verses right before the teaching prohibition, we find a list of other things that very few of us do:

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing (1Tim 2:8-10).

It is a lot easier to be dogmatic about Biblical statements we have practiced, than those we have not. How many men always pray with their hands lifted up? Some do, but even our Savior did not always; once He "fell on His face, and prayed,..." (Matt 26:39). I have never seen anyone walk out of a service because they saw a woman with braided hair, pearls or a gold wedding ring, but I know several people who would walk out of a service if they saw a woman teaching. In Ezekiel 16, the Eternal compares Jerusalem to a nicely-adorned woman—with expensive apparel including gold (v 9-14). Paul was probably referring to practices of his day which were seen as immodest by his society. Is the practice of women teaching another one that was unacceptable in his day, but might be acceptable today? **I like to go very slowly and do a lot of study**

the success of the festival in many ways, probably their greatest contribution was the teaching of worship through Davidic dance. Lyle Timmons, a brother from New Mexico, had done some scriptural research before coming to the Feast and discovered that God's people are commanded to chagag (hah-gahg) before the LORD three times each year (Ex. 12:14; Ex. 23:14; Deut. 16:15). The word chagag means to "to move in a circle, to be giddy, celebrate, dance, reel to and fro." In other words, to circle dance. It was a most touching time to see almost all of the people dancing on the last night of the festival, not with partners, but as a large group in a circle, with their thoughts directed totally towards our great God in heaven.

Other activities included the welcoming of the Sabbath (first Holyday) with traditional candle lighting, and saying goodbye to the last Sabbath (last Holyday) after sundown at the end of the festival with a traditional Havdalah service. In addition to teaching sessions, other after-

before I conclude that a section of scripture is not applicable to us. I think there are some scriptures (1Cor 16:2, 7:32-35, verses about slaves, etc.) that many people agree do not directly apply to our day.

LETTER: 6) Your idea on elders I have heard before, and I accepted the arguments of WCG that this is not a valid translation of the Greek. However, it would seem to ultimately be blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (albeit unwittingly). So, how do you explain this in light of James 5:14? We (you and I) had traditionally viewed this as being a person of "elder" rank or beyond. Yet v16 would suggest that this is not the case. Could you address this?

Sincerely,

—Mr. T., California

RESPONSE: The term "elder" seems to be used consistently throughout the Bible—older wiser men who were entrusted with leadership—whether they followed the Eternal or not (Matt 26:59). An elder was not a "rank" that men were "ordained to." It can be used in the feminine form for women (Tit 2:3). The WCG often sent only one man to anoint a person (though the Greek is plural), and usually ignored the part in verse 16 about confessing faults one to another. I have heard of cases where people have asked "non-ordained" older men (elders) to pray for people with terminal sicknesses and they have been miraculously healed. It would be difficult to convince these healed brethren that they were blaspheming the holy spirit or even violating scripture.

Thanks for the letter, —NSE 

noon activities included learning Davidic dance, making festival banners, and a seminar on health and nutritional healing. Wednesday was a free day and many took a tour of the nearby Oregon Caves while others spent the day enjoying the beautiful Oregon coast. One evening was spent around a campfire listening to an authentic cowboy read cowboy poetry followed by singing and storytelling.

The speakers came from many different backgrounds. The main speakers included Lionel Nightingale, Dean Wheelock, Stan Payne, Bob Salmon, Bev Clapp, Sam Beattie, John Beattie, and Jim Sorenson. However, many people shared information and testimonies as all were encouraged to participate.

Many people devoted vast amounts of time to make the Sis-Q Meadows festival a success. Their efforts are truly appreciated by all who were privileged to attend the 1996 Sis-Q Meadows Festival of Sukkot.

—Dean & Susan Wheelock 

Our goal is to bring worthwhile information to as many people who want it at the lowest practical cost. This loose-leaf format is inexpensive and allows this non-copyrighted publication to be easily copied. You might wish to bind it with a 3-ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip.

Literature List

All items are free. New items are highlighted with shading. All back issues of *Servants' News* are available upon request.

Mature Literature

- The Apple of God's Eye** by Jim Rector, 13 pages. God's love for us is far greater than we imagine, and we often take it for granted.
- Assembling on the Sabbath** by Norman S. Edwards, 16 pages. An exposition of the scriptures regarding our need to fellowship on the Sabbath and how to do it.
- A Call to Arms** by Jim Rector, 16 pages. Lessons for today from Revelation 2-3 including the oppressive doctrine of the Nicolaitans and the doctrine of Balaam.
- Basic Bible Study Tools** by Richard Nickels. 36 pages. An excellent summary of available Bible study aids and how to use them. Samples of many study aids included.
- Biblical Calendar Basics** by Norman S. Edwards, 10 pages. Introduction to the issues about the Biblical and Hebrew calendars (beginning of months, years, postponements etc.)
- By What Authority?** by John A. Diffeley, 16 pages. A brief overview of authority and its structure in the New Testament churches.
- Does the New Covenant Do Away with the Letter of the Law?** by Eric V. Snow. 42 pages—revised Jan. 1996. A "must read" for those who feel it does.
- Did Christ Reorganize the Church?** by Herbert W. Armstrong in 1939, 8 pages. Very different than his later approach: Christ never set up a hierarchical government.
- The Heart of the Matter** by Jim Rector, 31 pages. Our calling is to spiritual growth, not just attendance, socializing, politeness or legalism.
- How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?** by Norman S. Edwards, 34 pages. How the KJV translators altered Scriptures about government to please King James and an analysis of what the Bible says about how we should govern in today's congregations.
- Just What Does the New Covenant Do?** by Joseph Chunko, 18 pages. Explanation of the difference between the law, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.
- The Letter to the Galatians, a Paraphrase with Built-in Commentary** by John McCauley. 18 pages. Lively vernacular paraphrase with some notes on book of Galatians.
- Where Is the True Church Today?** by Jack M. Lane, 18 pages. How can there be so many similar groups, yet one true church? What is required of members? Read and see.
- The Worldwide Church of God Splits: Their Triumphs**

and Troubles by Alan Ruth, 56 pages. Facts and analysis of the last 20 years of church history.

Basic Literature

- The Bible Sabbath: Seventh Day or First Day?** (From the Bible Sabbath Association) 2 pages. Basic Sabbath tract.
- Christian Educational Ministries Correspondence Course** by Ron Dart. First lesson from SN. Others free from CEM.
- God's Purpose for Your Life** by Fred McGovarin, 40 pages, half-size booklet. A "first booklet" for people just becoming interested in the Truth. It introduces Hebrew names (Yahweh and Yashua) for God and Jesus.
- The Key to the Book of Revelation** edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 12-page 9"x4" booklet.
- Lazarus and the Rich Man** edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 16-page 9"x4" booklet.
- The Resurrection of Christ—Is It a Fact?** by Don Hudgel. 2 page tract for those skeptical of the Bible & resurrection.
- Why Do You Observe Sunday?** edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 16-page 9"x4" booklet.

Study Resources and Information

- Barnabas Ministries Mission Statement** by Alan Ruth. 2 pages.
- The Christian Beacon** Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter "for the shared ministry of the Royal Priesthood."
- A Church of God Ministry Order Form** by Lon Lacey & friends. 1 page. Free literature on nature of God & Satan, Biblical law, prophecy, history, church government, etc.
- The Fellowship Commentator** by F. Paul Haney. Sample 8 page issue of free quarterly newsletter.
- Giving and Sharing Order Form** by Richard Nickels. 3 pages. Has many excellent free items, low prices on hard-to-find religious books, and fine literature on floppy disk.
- Hebrew Roots** Sample 24-page issue of free newsletter with emphasis on the Hebrew roots of "Christian" belief.
- History Research Projects Order Form** by Craig White. 6 pages. Hard-to-find books on the origins of nations.
- The Modern Church, Divine Institution or Counterfeit?** by Peter Kershaw. 24 page booklet. We do not agree with all of it, but it has good legal info on unincorporated churches.
- In Transition** One free sample issue of 16 page newspaper. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups.
- The Sabbath Sentinel** One free sample issue of 16 page glossy magazine—doctrinal & human interest articles. With Bible Sabbath Association order form: Sabbath books & tracts.
- Servants' News & Norman Edwards Statement of Receipts and Expenses**, 2 pages. (Always sent to contributors.)
- The WAY** Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter of doctrinal articles relating to the Biblical way of life.

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