

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 5, No. 1

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

Jan/Feb 1999

The WCG Experience: Facing the Past and Putting It to Work for the Future

In the Worldwide Church of God, nearly everyone believed that the Bible was the source of doctrine. The ministers and brethren studied and prayed and diligently tried to do what the Bible said. **In that environment, the Eternal could work.** When differences about doctrine or administration arose, people often turned to the ministry (or the hierarchy managing the ministry) for the answers. As long as people believed that the Eternal would give His answer through the hierarchy, there was peace—whether the hierarchy was right or not.

The hierarchical system would continue to work peacefully as long as one of two things happened:

1. The hierarchy made biblical, godly decisions.

or

2. The people were ignorant of the hierarchy's bad decisions.

Obviously, the first point is the best way for an organization to function. Even though the Eternal did not want Israel to have a king—a hierarchy (1Sam 8), he said that things would go well with them if the people obeyed Him (1Sam 12). However, an organization can still have peace and unity **if** the second point continually happens. Of course, a group can have peace on a combination of the two points.

In the RCG and WCG, the first point probably happened more at the beginning, and the second point more at the end. When leaders begin to say things like “God backs me even if I’m wrong”, then an organization is running mostly on point 2. The Radio Church of God required a 2/3 vote of a congregation to

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Spiritual Meat In Shelter in the Word

The last few *Servants' News* issues have been mostly about “Church of God” problems. It is difficult for most of us to switch *from* the old mentality of “**I’m in the group with the truth**”, to the new mentality of “**I’ve been in a group with some things right and some wrong—now I realize that I am personally responsible for what I do and believe.**” In order to provide concrete examples to our readers, we write about the doctrines and practices of specific people and organizations.

But there is also a time to leave people and organizations aside and learn timeless spiritual truth directly from the Eternal’s Word. We are attempting to put more and more of this kind of teaching in *Shelter in the Word*. This magazine is not “just for new people”. The article on **prayer** in the accompanying issue contains many points about prayer from the Bible which were not commonly taught in the “Church of God” groups. We believe that prayer—personal communication with the Eternal—can provide many of the missing answers during these difficult times. —NSE

Former WCG Members: Who are You?

I believe this is the most important question for most WCG members today. For years, we believed that we were the one true church preaching the true doctrines. In reality, we preached many true doctrines, but were dead wrong about being “the one true church”.

Today, nearly all of us would like to serve the Eternal in some way. If all of our years of Bible study and diligent obedience do not qualify us to help teach others, then who is qualified?

It seems that there are two basic ways that we can reach out to the world: **1)** as former WCG members—with our incredibly complex history, or **2)** As independent, Sabbath-keeping members of the body of Christ! —NSE

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Trucker's Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo., #10 -19



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The Trucker's Bible Study is conducted weekly at the Texaco truck stop on I-70, Oak Grove, Missouri by Arlo Gieselman, often assisted by Lenny Cacchio, the writer of this series.

These studies are reported in the hope that others will use them as practical experience in conducting their own ministry. Obviously, not everyone will minister to truckers—many of us have backgrounds and gifts that will enable us to reach others. But nearly every ministry experiences the same basic challenges: too much to do at some times, discouragement from too little to do at other times; people who are disinterested to people who seem to take over the study; great spiritual highs to demonic attacks. We must realize that we never know exactly how the Eternal will work and that prayer can “turn lemons into lemonade”.

(Note: We number these studies simply for convenience—we do not report on every week as some weeks do not have a particularly outstanding lesson that was different than a previous week.) —NSE

January 24, 1999 (#10): No one came until about 9:45 when a reluctant trucker stuck his head in the door to see if the television was on, but didn't seem to have much of an interest. Arlo engaged him in a friendly conversation. I was interested in his comment about the strange weather around the country lately. The distress of our times is beginning to catch people's attention, which means they would be more open to the preaching of the Gospel. Many people really do worry about divine retribution for the sins of the nation.

This encounter, which initially seemed to be brief, ended up as a 30-minute chat. Here was a man who understands there is a God and that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, but is beset with doubts. It is one thing to know intellectually that there is a God and another altogether to know God's presence and reality in one's day to day life, and to know it down to the core of one's being.

I told him that even John the Baptist doubted Jesus at one point, and as for whether the Bible is really just a book written by men (in other words, a giant hoax), people don't die for what they know is a hoax. The apostles were martyred for their beliefs, as were many people who walked with Jesus. If what they wrote was not true, they surely would not have been willing to die for it.

January 31, 1999 (#11): This study consisted of a repeat customer, two helpful guests, and a man with some unusual beliefs.

A man arrived early to talk, whom Arlo recognized from a couple of weeks ago. He is new to the study of the scriptures (since October), although he has been a nominal Christian his entire life. He feels a call to the ministry and has decided to leave trucking and study towards the ministry. He is a single man and has few material wants and is willing to go wherever he is led. He appears very sincere and humble. I explained that the King James does a terrible job in translating the word for “minister”, and what that job is really about is “service”. Intuitively he knew this, as he seems to automatically use the words “ministering” and “serving” interchangeably.

We pointed out in Acts 8 how the people were scattered and spread the word wherever they found themselves, so his ministering does not need to be as an ordained minister. He can “minister” and preach the word wherever regardless of his circumstances. Paul, in fact, made tents and then went and preached on the Sabbath in the synagogues.

We were joined by a couple who are friends from the Church of God Seventh Day. They were able to share some insights in the sacrifice that a minister must make, given from the experiences of a relative.

We were then joined by a Pentecostal type who had some strange ideas

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Servants' News is a ministry to help others understand the Creator's will, obey Him, and teach others. We believe that the Bible contains the foundation of knowledge about our Creator and that He is actively working through people today. Our focus is to help the Sabbath-keeping brethren who believe Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah, but we realize that the Eternal works with many groups and individuals.

We believe the gospel should be given freely—you may copy this newsletter and give it to others. Servants' News has nothing to sell and has no financial ties with other organizations, but is supported by those who personally decide to help this ministry. We do not have IRS tax exempt status, but some charitable deductions do not need this status (see IRS Publ. 557, p. 16, col. 1).

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News from Local Congregations



This column includes information sent to us from a variety of groups. Servants' News does not necessarily agree with the teachings or practices of these groups. Please ask about them before attending their functions.

Clinton, NC Pentecost Weekend

The church here in Clinton, N.C. invites everyone to observe a special **Pentecost Weekend**, May 22-23, 1999. **Tom and Thelma Justus**, of Springdale, Arkansas, will be visiting and Tom will be speaking in services. Other speakers include William H. Hillebrenner and Ronald W. Mitchell, Sr. Services are 1:00 PM each day, with a potluck meal afterward on Pentecost (the 23rd).

The meeting location is American Legion Post #22, at the intersection of Pugh Road and Hwy 403 N. For more info contact: **John C. Strouth, Sr.; 910-592-2009**; bibletruth@intrstar.net

Sabbath Campers Fellowship

You are invited to the Sabbath Campers Fellowship at Gateway Park Campground in **Hillsdale, Michigan, on June 18-20 and August 27-29**. This is the same facility that has been used for the past two summers. It has a nice meeting hall, a swimming beach, playground and a swimming pool.

These weekends will feature lots of fellowship, group singing and a Sabbath interactive Bible study. The subjects for the June weekend will include "**what has God done in your life?**" and "**joy and humor from the Bible**". Your insights in these areas will be welcome. (Those who only want to come and listen are equally welcome!)

Camping prices per site for each night are: Full Hookup: \$19. Primitive: \$18. "Pull thru": \$21. Cabins/trailers \$40 & up, One-day visitor's pass: \$2.

You may make reservations for either campout at this time by contacting: Norm Wilcox, Gateway Park Campground manager, at 517-437-7005, 4111 W Hallet, Hillsdale, MI 49242. Be sure to mention you are with the Sabbath Campers Fellowship. If you prefer motel accommodations,

there are several within a few minutes drive. For further information, contact Richard Fox 1-800-228-2473.

Charleston W.Va. Picnic

All brethren regardless of church affiliation are invited to a "family reunion" at Ernie Turley Lions Park on Coal River Road in Charleston, West Virginia. Bring musical instruments if you play. For more information, contact George Hampton; PO Box 4472; Charleston, W. Va. 25304; 888-293-2242; e-mail: cogsowv@aol.com.

Singles 4th of July Weekend

Over the July Fourth weekend, the Detroit UCG church is planning to host a singles event that includes a concert and fireworks show in Greenfield Village, Dearborn on July 3rd (Saturday night), and a dinner and dance in Roseville on July 4th (Sunday). Singles of any age (18+) and any COG affiliation or non-affiliation are invited to come. On Saturday, there would be services at the Georgian Inn of Roseville from noon to 2 PM, followed by a picnic at Metro beach. (There's a \$3 charge per car to enter the park).

The concert is being performed by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra Saturday night, 8:30 to 10 PM, followed by fireworks. There's a \$19.50 charge for this if the tickets are bought individually, but if 20 people send in their money to Gae D'Alessandro (check or money order, payable to her) she can get them for \$14 each at a special group rate. To see if sufficient interest exists in this event overall, please send the \$14 by May 24th to: Gae D'Alessandro, 25183 Mackinac, Roseville, MI 48066. The dinner and dance on Sunday will go 5 PM to 10 PM and cost \$22, and will be held at the Georgian Inn of Roseville, where the Sabbath services would have

been held. For those looking for a place to stay, at the Georgian Inn a block of rooms has been reserved at a 10% discount from the list price, but they're only reserved for us until June 2 or the rooms can't be guaranteed. If you want more details, please call Gae at 810-447-4826.

Rhodes & Lewis to Australia

Steven Collins cannot make it to Australia for medical reasons (See Dec 1999 *Servants' News*). However, **David Lewis, PhD**, who has lectured for 30 years and deeply studied British Israelism, will be coming instead! Dr. Lewis is a member of UCG and an outstanding speaker. His degrees are in history. He will deliver lectures on four subjects: **1)** the call, purpose and history of Israel up to the captivity; **2)** the migrations of Israel from captivity to northwestern Europe; **3)** the promises to the patriarchs and how they are the key to the rise and fall of the Arabs, Spain, France and, finally, the United States and British Commonwealth (this lecture identifies where the twelve tribes are); **4)** "Jacob's Trouble" will look at the past century and give particular attention to WWII as a partial fulfillment of Bible prophecy—also covers current affairs such as the division in the US.

Melvin Rhodes will give a prophecy lecture series: **1)** Daniel 7—an Overview of World History; **2)** The Multitude of Nations—The Free World's First Line of Defense; **3)** Decolonization and Its Consequences; **4)** European Unity—Past and Present.

The Combined Schedule for the free lecture series is:

Brisbane:

June 26 (Saturday) at 1:00 PM; Auditorium, Queensland Cultural Centre, Southbank, South Brisbane.

July 12th and 13th, (Monday and Tuesday) both at 7:30 PM; Springfield

Community Centre, cnr Vanessa Blvd and Cinderella Drive, Springwood. For more info, telephone (07) 3807 6087.

Sydney:

July 3 (Saturday) at 2:00 PM, July 4 (Sunday) at 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM; Auditorium, Burwood RSL, Shaftesbury Road, Burwood. For more info, telephone (02) 9528 5049.

Melbourne:

July 10 (Saturday) at 7:30 PM; Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Station & Combarton Streets, Box Hill

July 11 (Sunday) at 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM; Windsor Room, Elizabethan Lodge, 604 Middleborough Rd, North Blackburn. For more info, telephone (03) 9436 1359 or (03) 9808 8826.

Your continued prayers for the full recovery of Steven Collins will be appreciated and for the success of the lecture tour by Melvin Rhodes and Dr. Lewis.

The Netzarim '99 Conference

The Netzarim '99 Messianic conference will be held in Dallas/Ft. Worth Texas on **June 4th-6th**. James Trimm (of SANJ <http://www.nazarene.net>) and Yeshayahu (Steve) Heilicz of ATOM (<http://www.teshivah.com>) will be among the nine speakers currently planned. Topics include: The Deity of Messiah, A Jewish Perspective; The Dead Sea Scrolls, What do They Mean to Messianic Judaism; The Pharisaic School of Hillel and Messianic Judaism; Addressing the Anti-Yeshua movement; Jewish Hermeneutics; Messianic Jewish Halachah; The Kosher Laws and Messianic Jews; The Semitic Origin of the New Testament; And more! For more information write: SANJ; PO Box 471; Hurst, TX 76053; e-mail: sanj@nazarene.net

Registration fee of \$60.00 (\$100.00 for couples) due by March 15th. The Netzarim '99 conference is sponsored by SANJ (<http://www.nazarene.net>) and the International Nazarene Beit Din (<http://www.nazarene.net/beitdin>).

—James Trimm

New Services in Canton, Ohio

We are pleased to announce a new group that meets for Sabbath and Holy Day Services in Canton, Ohio. The address is: The Canton Hilton; 320

Market Ave. South; Canton, Ohio 44702; Tel: 330-454-5000. Sabbath Services begin at 10:30 a.m. Holy Day Services begin at 2:00 p.m.

An optional Video Bible Study presentation from United Christian Ministries by founder, Ray Wooten follows shortly after services. For further information please contact by e-mail: Sunburst@neo.lrun.com or United Christian Ministries; PO Box 361725; Hoover, AL 35236-1725.

—Rita Hazen

Free Northeastern Churches of God Newsletter

This newsletter is about 14 pages in length and comes out every two months. It focuses on events of the Northeast USA and personal growth articles. It is edited by Rick Beltz. Write to: *Northeastern Churches of God Newsletter*; PO Box 674; Middletown, CT 06457-0674. E-mail: rbeltz@snet.net.

Free Texas Newsletter

Green Pastures Gazette is available to anyone near Texas. It is about 6 pages in length and comes out monthly. It covers many Sabbatarian fellowships and events in Texas. It also contains short articles. Write *Green Pastures Gazette*; PO Box 11243; Fort Worth, Texas 76110; e-mail: greenpastures1@juno.com.

Free E-mail Newsletters

Michael Turner produces two email newsletters which might interest some of our readers: the *Weekly Old World Order Watch and Opinion* (WOWOWO) and the Balkan Bungle Briefing. The first one covers news of Germany and the Catholic Church. The second covers the Balkan war. I believe Michael Turner relies too heavily on Herbert Armstrong's prophetic interpretations, but **the news aspect is very good**, and his analysis seems better "thought out" than most. You can e-mail him at mykelturner@airmail.net.

Dial-In Sabbath Service Available

The Association for Christian

Development (ACD) invites you to join a weekly telephone Sabbath Service at 11:00 am Pacific time (12:00 pm MT, 1:00 pm CT, 2:00 pm ET). All you need to do is pick up the phone and dial **918-222-7158** a few minutes before the start of the service. You will hear a brief welcome message, then be asked to enter a four digit code followed by the pound (#) key which will then bring you into our live Sabbath service. Enter: 0566#. This is not just listening in to a local church service, it is a "telephone connected congregation". You can actually talk as well as listen. Services will run approximately 60 minutes.

Your only costs will be your own call at whatever your long distance rates are. For most of you it will be 10 cents per minute or less. (Some carriers are offering 7.9 cents per minute and a few even offer free weekend calling. You should never pay more than 10 cents a minute—even AT&T offers that.) Your costs for an hour service would be about \$4 to \$6 dollars. There are, of course, additional costs to the ACD for the conferencing services and for having our own exclusive conference number.

A speaker telephone will let your hand and ear rest, allow you to take notes and allow everyone in a room to hear. A good quality unit can be purchased for about \$30-40 dollars. Home churches may find this service a valuable addition to their regular program or as an occasional replacement. You can, of course, just listen alone with your hand set.

Our conference lines are fully interactive which means that should the speaker solicit comments or questions from the telephone congregation, anyone could participate and all would be able to hear the question and answer. One caution: For interactivity to be effective, listeners on speaker phones need to keep a quiet room. (The guy who likes to mumble along with the preacher will need to use the "mute" button on his phone so we all don't have to hear his running commentary.)

I will be speaking sometimes, but also scheduling a number of outstanding speakers representing various biblical specialties. We will hear from prophecy specialists, NT scholars, OT scholars, Hebrew roots teachers, personal development leaders, and solid biblical expositors. Not all services will be in a preach-

ing format, some will be discussion panels, some in seminar format.

I should state that this program is not intended to compete with the local church congregation. It is always preferable to attend face-to-face with local Christians of like mind when that opportunity is available.

I am now preparing a message for one of our early services on new evidence of post-flood humans. As you know from the biblical record, men and women continued to live a lot longer after the flood (Gen 11). People living 200 to 400 years were common (Abraham lived to 175 and Sarah was knockout beauty queen at 75!), but gradually the human life span shortened to the modern 70-80 range. Many of the bones and skulls of these early post-flood people have been unearthed and analyzed, however, evolutionary scientists have not dealt honestly with the evidence. Let's just say the evidence didn't fit their model. There has now been a major breakthrough that properly places "Neanderthal Man" where he belongs—proving that ancient, post-flood man was much less degenerate than we moderns. He matured more slowly, had a stronger immune system and was incredibly powerful. It has also been proven that evolutionists falsified evidence to hide the facts that didn't fit their naturalistic worldview. It's a bombshell! It makes the Bible come alive. Don't miss this one.

Please note our new mailing address:

—Kenneth Westby

Association for Christian Development
PO Box 4748; Federal Way, WA 98063

Phone: 253-852-3269

Email: acd@godward.org

WebPage: www.godward.org

Sabbath Observance on TV News

On Saturday, January 2nd, much of North America was being covered by a blizzard. A Lansing, Michigan, local TV news program was advising everyone to stay home as much as possible. The announcer said that many area churches had cancelled their Sunday services, but their pastors were advising people to **observe the Sabbath at home**—to spend time with their families—talking, listening and learning. While they obviously meant "Sunday" when they said "Sabbath", this is the

first time that this writer has ever heard the term "observe the Sabbath" used in connection with mainstream, popular religion. "Go to church on Sunday" used to be the prevailing expression.

This incident shows that pastors and members alike must be reading their Bibles more. Those of us with years of Sabbatarian experience may find that there are many Bible students who would like to hear how we have observed the Sabbath. We need to search for ways to be together and talk about these things without condemning each other for what we believe.

—NSE

Sabbatarian Produces Tape/CD

Robin Todd has written, sung, and produced two musical albums. One is a tape, *Every Knee Shall Bow*, and the other a CD, *Our Everything*. Five songs are common to the two, the rest are all different. All songs are based on Scriptures, covering themes common to "Church of God" groups, without mentioning any specific groups or leaders. Robin Todd is also available for special music for services and holy days. Contact Robin Todd; 6413 Stephan Ct SE; Lacey, WA 98503; e-mail: RobinSyngs@aol.com.

CGI Program Airs on Odyssey

Starting April 4, 1999, the *Odyssey Network* will be airing the *Armor of God* program each Sunday at 5:30 AM Eastern Time. They will run the program a second time for the Pacific time zone. (It will air at 5:30 AM Eastern and Pacific Time, 4:30 AM Central and 3:30 AM Mountain Time).

Odyssey is a nationwide system reaching 30 million homes via cable (check your local guide). In addition, *Odyssey* is available through the *PrimeStar* satellite service.

Odyssey is free and unscrambled for C-Band and home-owned satellite dishes. The coordinates are SatCom C3 Transponder 5.

While the time is quite early in the center of the nation, it's the best slot we've ever had in the west. Perhaps we'll get a better time slot later. The advantage of being able to show *Armor of God* nationwide in spite of the time slot is the overriding consideration.

Most everyone has a VCR and can record the program and view it later.

—Eric Morris, 903-825-2525

Church of God International

Groups Share UB Feast Services

On the Last Day of Unleavened Bread on April 7, 1999 four churches met together for a joyous celebration of the Last Day of Unleavened Bread in Danville, Illinois. The Churches were UCG Terre Haute, IN, Lafayette, IN, Bloomington, IL, and the Biblical Church of God of Danville, Illinois. The attendance was 105 with about 24 from the Biblical Church of God. Offeratory message was given by Gary Pifer, sermons by Guy Swenson speaking about "What is a Christian" in the morning and Victor Kubik about the Kosovo crisis and its impact on Christians in the afternoon. Instead of an afternoon sermonette, four inspiring musical numbers were presented and participated in by all congregations. This was a most encouraging day to all of us!

—Vic Kubik's web site: www.kubik.org

If church organizations treated others as equals on a regular basis, it would be possible for new people to perceive them all as Christian. New people, eager to learn, often want to listen to more than one group. They should not witness a war, but hear the Bible preached and love for each other.

—NSE

UCG Allows Conference Reporters

The council of elders of the United Church of God, an International Association, met March 2 to consider The Journal's request for publisher Dixon Cartwright to be allowed to attend this year's general conference, which is scheduled for March 8-9.

Council members agreed to The Journal's request and voted to invite publisher Cartwright to this year's meetings and in fact are officially opening this and future conferences to all who are interested in attending, be they reporters, church members or the general public.

The vote of 11 council members who were on the line for the teleconference was unanimous (Jim Franks of Houston did not participate in the meeting). Council member Roy Holladay of Hawkins, Texas, noted during the meeting that The Journal would be present

anyway, whether allowed in the actual meeting hall or not, therefore a policy should be implemented that would allow reporters to attend.

Council member and church president Les McCullough of Cincinnati agreed and noted that continuing to prohibit attendance by reporters could pose a problem if, for example, the local Cincinnati newspaper wanted to attend a meeting. "Are we prepared to say, 'No, we don't want you around'? What kind of potential problems would that generate? We ought to have one standard for everybody."

Other council members, including Chairman Bob Dick of Washington state and Joel Meeker of St. Louis, concurred. "It should be all or nothing: either open to everybody or closed to everybody," said Mr. Meeker. Mr. Cartwright commended council members for their decision and said he looks forward to covering this year's get-together.

—The Journal web-site:
www.thejournal.org

This is another bright spot among the Church organizations. If church leaders are using Biblical principles to make decisions that affect brethren all over the world, one would think that they would want others to see their decision-making process as a "light to the world". Unfortunately, stories like the one below still continue: —NSE

UCG Suspends Elder Over Study

In blatant violation of UCG Constitution section "4.5 Expulsion, termination or suspension of membership" UCG employees Larry Greider and Tom Damour "defrocked" a fellow UCG elder. The Council of Elders has sole authority to "expel, terminate, or suspend" membership [elders] in the General Conference (i.e. revocation of UCG ministerial credentials).

Garry D. Pifer, a "UCG-IA elder" received a call from Tom Damour informing him that Larry Greider and Tom Damour had "decided to revoke Garry's ministerial credentials because he was causing disruption in the church". When confronted with the illegality (and unethical nature) of their actions as spelled out by the UCG constitution, immediate backpedalling was the result. Tom Damour called Garry, saying, "I may have said revoked, but I

meant suspended." Unfortunately, he and Larry Greider seem to be unclear on what their own constitution delineates (suspension of membership is the jurisdiction of the UCG Council).

On January 9, 1999, Garry presented a study on the subject of tithing. He clearly specified that it was a presentation of what he's found upon studying the scriptures and that it is everyone's responsibility to prove for themselves, not to take his word or anyone else's. Tapes of this presentation have circulated widely, but very few people have contacted Garry with comments, and only one person has approached Garry with his disagreements about parts of his presentation.

Without discussing any concerns with Garry, Tom Damour and Larry Greider judged the matter, obviously protecting the "interests" of the corporation, not answering the questions regarding what the scriptures stated. Garry's CCMail account was immediately suspended and his suspension was announced to the congregation. The UCG-IA reason given for this suspension was "blatant heresy" on the part of Garry Pifer. However, the UCG-IA constitution gives the General Conference of Elders the right to vote to approve doctrine, and the only tithing-related doctrine that they have ever voted on was article 2.1.18 in their fundamentals of belief statement:

We believe in tithing as a way of honoring God with our substance and as a means of serving Him in the preaching of the gospel, the care of the Church, attending the festivals and helping the needy.

Garry's study was not opposed to the above statement as it says tithing is **a way** to accomplish certain things—it does not say it is **the** biblically required way."

Nevertheless, months had elapsed between Pifer's study and the suspension. There was plenty of time, yet neither the UCG-IA Council of Elders nor the ministry came to talk to Garry. This does not make a promising track record for UCG-IA's commitment. The sad fact is that too many people are willing to simply give their loyalty to the perceived "best interests" of this organization.

—Darryl Pifer

The Restored Church of God

David Pack, former Minister in the

Global Church of God, has formed a new church organization, The Restored Church of God (not to be confused with the Restoration Church of God, founded by John Allen). He claims about 1000 members. Dave Pack left citing many problems with the Global Church of God and lack of belief in very specific doctrines. Rex Sexton, a GCG minister, wrote a letter explaining the situation. Here is a part:

Many of the charges Dave makes against others do not hold water when examined. In my experience with Dave I have seen that he has a long history of hearing bits and pieces of things, then making them into grand accusations. In front of the council last week he loudly accused me of not believing that HWA was in the role of Elijah. I told him that was poppycock since I had given a sermon that he was just three weeks ago. When asked where he came up with such nonsense, he said he had heard one statement I made in a sermon on the two witnesses that one of them would have a similar role as Elijah since he would call down fire and announce a 3 1/2 year drought. So Dave heard one small sentence and it grew in his mind into a great accusation against a fellow minister. When I have checked out Dave's accusations against Bill Swanson and other ministers they have all fallen into the same category.

We have no reason for doubting Mr. Sexton's statements about Mr. Pack. During the four years of *Servants' News* ministry, we have heard far more ministerial abuse complaints about Dave Pack than any other former-WCG minister. Only a few weeks ago, someone brought this statement to our attention from the June 1985 *Ambassador Report*: "For a number of years now, no WCG minister's name has appeared more often in letters written to the Report complaining of ministerial abuse."

Notice that Mr. Sexton's letters said that Dave Pack has a "long history" of making distorted accusations against people. In other words, the GCG knew about his problems for a long time. While this writer worked for the GCG, several complaints against Dave Pack were received—but the GCG kept Mr. Pack as a minister because he was so loyal and so diligent about

bringing in new members and money. Is it not amazing to see how an organization will publicly detail the problems of a minister when he does something against the organization, but will rarely ever publicly correct a minister for acts against the brethren (see 1Tim 5:19-20). If church organizations regard themselves as shepherds, it seems that they are much more interested in protecting their fellow shepherds than they are protecting the sheep.

One other quote from Mr. Sexton's letter which seems very relevant:

Now as a note of personal observation only: This point is my opinion, not fact: I noticed a change in Dave beginning two years ago after he inherited over a million dollars, two health-food stores, and became a "corporation president." His sermons since then that I have heard are laced with self-complimentary observations and references to all of the great accomplishments of his family and ancestors. In conversations he refers often to his "running a corporation" status. Every converted Christian knows that God only can use a man who is "small in his own eyes.."

Did not Herbert Armstrong continually talk about the size of his work and how it grew 30% a year for 30 years? Didn't he talk about being *the one* through whom Christ restored truth for the last 1800 years? Didn't he talk about being chancellor of this, being founder of that? Is the problem with Dave Pack that he is imitating Herbert Armstrong too well?

Mr. Sexton's letter also stated that Dave Pack had a \$200,000 per year budget for salaries and that he was attempting to hire ministers. (This is opposite from most start-up churches who hope to find ministers with enough congregation to support both the minister and part of the headquarters.) Probably some ministers in need of a job will accept Mr. Pack's offer.

This writer hopes that everyone realizes that Dave Pack's separation is probably in the best interests of everyone. No church organization has effectively disciplined him in the past. His work will now have to stand on its own merit—he will be seen for what he is. If he treats a member unfairly, he will not be able to pretend to do it "at the request of headquarters"—it will clearly be his responsibility. His past strengths have been

commanding and coercing church members. Will he be able to feed his flock? Will he be able to "preach the Gospel"? Will he be able to do this well enough to convince his members that his tiny group is the work of God?

May the Eternal help everyone to be closer to Him, and to see organizations for what they are! —NSE

Sabbatarian Group Plans to Flee

Tom Asperen, a Sabbatarian Bible teacher plans to flee with as many as 100 people to the country of Belize in Central America. From there, he believes he will eventually flee to Egypt and then the Middle East. Some of the people involved are former Worldwide Church of God members. You can read the entire story by subscribing to *The Journal, News of the Churches of God*, \$12 for six monthly issues or \$22 for a full year. Ask to start with the April 30, 1999 issue. See the article, below, for why it is important for all Sabbatarians to be concerned about these happenings.

Philadelphia Church of God?

The Philadelphia Church of God, founded in 1988, has long considered itself the true heir to Herbert Armstrong's work. Internal workings of this organization are kept secret from outsiders as much as possible. The organization regularly suspends or dis-fellowships members who question its leadership or who are disloyal in some way. One of the main methods used to encourage members to stay faithful is the promise of a "place of safety" in Petra before the tribulation.

Herbert Armstrong taught this doctrine, but it nearly always remained something that God would have to miraculously perform. A very few times Mr. Armstrong mentioned that he might talk to King Hussein of Jordan about the Church staying there, but no plans of any kind were ever made. The WCG never set aside any money to flee.

Former members of the PCG tell us that the PCG has far more advanced plans. They have determined the costs of transportation and lodging for their membership to go to Jordan. Apparently, they have been accumulating a separate fund of several millions to pay for it—but that money has now somehow disap-

peared and nobody seems to know where. Because of this, several major PCG donors have stopped contributing. **We have been unable to confirm this story**, but the PCG has dropped many of its TV stations and its normally-punctual Philadelphia Trumpet magazine is now weeks late.

If you know what is happening in the PCG, please share it with us. We need to do all we can to protect people in these cult-like groups, and to prevent a bad name from coming upon Sabbatarian religion. One of the best ways to do this is to publicize this among Sabbatarians so that people who know those in the affected groups can talk to them and hopefully help them to see whether they are following the Eternal or a mixed-up human leader. Also, it is easy for the leaders of such groups to think they are doing the work of God when they announce their plans to their applauding, cheering congregations, but they may reconsider when they see their plans logically examined and exposed in a Sabbatarian publication that they know some of their members read.

If you can help, please do. This writer knows of family breakups, divorces, and even death-threats that have been linked to this organization's possible plans to flee. —NSE

GCG: A Very Expensive Work

A recent tape from the Global Church of God (GCG) gave some interesting facts, from which we can draw some interesting conclusions. Please realize that the the GCG split at the end of 1998, with most of its members going into Rod Meredith's Living Church of God (LCG)—these facts currently apply more to that organization's operations, as the GCG cannot afford any evangelistic programs right now. Before the split, the GCG yearly income was about 8 million dollars per year. It had poured over one million each year into mass evangelism. Since its beginning in 1993, about 605 people had been baptized, 560 of which were either relatives or friends of members. Only 45 people have truly been "new" converts. This amounts to an evangelism cost of over \$100,000 per "new baptism". Yes, GCG evangelism probably accomplished other good beside the 45 baptisms. Some members were fed by it, and it may also have led

to baptisms not in the GCG. (This writer knows of individuals who were attracted to GCG evangelism, but after briefly attending GCG services switched to independent congregations where their questions were better answered and where they were eventually baptized.)

Nevertheless, the best measure of effectiveness of corporate evangelism is the number of new members baptized. Many corporations stake their reason for existence on doing a "big work" and "reaching the world". Nevertheless, the 560 baptisms of relatives and friends show that the GCG was more effective in its "local works" (congregations) than it is in its "big work". Home fellowships often tend to be even more effective in keeping children and attracting friends. The average corporate member probably does not contribute \$100,000 in their lifetime—they will not give enough to cause one new member to be baptized. Whereas I know several people who have personally taught five or ten others about the Bible and helped bring them to the point where they personally decided to be baptized.

Some people might say, "these figures make it obvious that we should abandon GCG/LCG-style evangelism and concentrate on local and personal evangelism." That is true, if you really do it. But this writer has seen many individuals leave big groups, stop contributing, talk about the great freedom they have, and not try to accomplish anything. They are not fooling the Eternal. They would have been better off spending their life tithing to an organization to reach and teach "half a new convert", than they would sitting back and accomplishing nothing. Christ teaches his people that they are called now to accomplish his purpose, and he promises to give the spiritual gifts to do that. But are those brethren who know to do this actually doing it?

—NSE

Rare Sabbath History Books

Over the past two years I have been busy scanning some out-of-print books and making them available on the Internet. This has been a labor of love. As one who has benefited greatly from the freely distributed literature of the Churches of God here is my chance to share, with gratitude, a little in return.

They are all full versions with graphics (except *Seventh Day Baptists*

in Europe and America Vol 1, which is only its first 140 pages or so.) and range from books of 100 to 400 pages. (They will be only about half that many pages on modern paper). The web-site is:

<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~davhill>
The following are online:

Abram Herbert Lewis: *A Critical History of the Sabbath and the Sunday in the Christian Church* (Parts 1 & 2), *Paganism Surviving in Christianity* and *Spiritual Sabbathism*.

Ahva John Clarence Bond: *Sabbath History*.

Unknown author: *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America Vol 1*.

—David Hill

Missing Plain Truth Lost/Found

For many years, there were no commonly known surviving copies of these issues of *The Plain Truth*: March 1934, April 1934, January 1938, June 1939, May 1940, and December 1944. Also, only partial editions survived of these issues: May 1934, August 1934, and March 1940. Recently, some of the missing pages were found: August 1934, pages 1 & 2; January 1938, page 1; and March 1940, pages 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, & 9. If you have any of the missing issues, or are are interested in obtaining copies of the missing pages, contact Don Tiger, 1163 E Ogden No 705-261, Naperville Illinois, 60563. Web-site:

www.herbertwarmstrong.org/cdlist.html

Harold Wells Dies at 79

Harold Wells passed away March 10th at his home in Pasadena, California due to cancer. He had been a Pasadena church member since the 1950's. Harold was well known in the Church. He was a hard-working man all his life and wrote the book *You Can Survive*, a guide to outdoor survival. While not as well organized as some books, it contains many points not found in most other survival books. I personally spent quite a bit of time talking with Harold Wells when I was in my 20's and consider him a valuable positive influence in my life!

Harold Wells is survived by his wife Doris (115 Hurlbut Apt 22; Pasadena, California 91105), son, Collyer (132 W. Strassburg Rd.; Front Royal, VA 22630), and at least two grandsons.

—NSE

WCG Congregations Forcing Sunday

Last November, the WCG conducted a survey and received a response from 15,440 adult members. It covered many questions about the day of worship and holy day observance. The majority still favored Sabbath and Holy Day observance, yet 59% "desired to have a service during the Christmas season". Only 37% were interested in a large summer worship conference. (Could this replace the Feast of Tabernacles some day?)

The final question asked members if they were satisfied with the Worldwide Church of God as a denomination: 69% said "yes", 9% said "no", and 22% had mixed feelings. WCG members were more in agreement on this final question than they were on any of the previous questions. Apparently, the main characteristic of a current WCG members is that he or she wants to continue be a WCG member. For some, it may be an unwillingness to admit that the church organization they have supported is wrong. Others may simply not want to leave family and long-time friends. We must remember that Christ said:

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life (Matt19:29).

Recently, the WCG administration seems to be helping those who are having trouble making up their mind. Even though the WCG official policy is still to support any worship day, we have continually receive reports of congregations that are discontinuing their Sabbath services. Some WCG ministers have given entire sermons explaining why Sunday is the best worship day—even using the Sunday resurrection argument.

While some WCG congregations have voted for a Sunday service, others have simply been told that is what they will have—those who disagreed were asked to see the pastor one at a time and not to cause division by discussing it among the brethren. (That way, only the pastor knows who and how many still want to worship on the Sabbath.) In one case, a majority who still wanted to meet on the Sabbath were asked to leave.

We would encourage believers everywhere to welcome those who may

be leaving the Worldwide Church of God to meet elsewhere on the Sabbath. All of us have had to face the questions: Should I wait for the Eternal to intervene? Should I stay where I can help my friends? Should I follow my understanding of the Bible no matter what? How much is too much? Because someone else has not answered these questions in the same way or time as we have does not mean that one is more righteous than the other. —NSE

Lawsuit Over SDA Name

The Eternal Gospel Church of Seventh-day Adventist is being sued by the General Conference Seventh-day Adventist. This ministry along with pastor Perez is committed to the practice and the proclamation of the third Angel's message. Because of this, Pastor Perez, speaker of this ministry, must appear in a Court of Law to answer whatever charges leveled against the ministry [using the name "Seventh-day Adventist"].

Church members from all over the world (South America, North America, Europe, and the Caribbean) have [been] demonstrating full support by praying and fasting unceasingly for divine intervention, words of encouragement, and financial contributions to a "defense funds". Knowing then, that each self-supporting ministry understands the gospel commission of Isaiah 58:1 and the cause we are called on to defend, and that all of us will meet our test at some time or another. We appeal to each ministry to be beside Pastor Perez shoulder to shoulder forming one front with full physical and personal representation, even with your attorneys, making this single case a class action suit. Thus, send a message once and for all to the [SDA] General Conference that unity in Christ can exist. Let's stand by Pastor Perez, so the apostle Paul's trying experience in 2 Tim. 4:16 might not be his. Let's publicize the matter and let everyone know that we need a lot of prayers and financial support:

Eternal Gospel Church of Seventh-day Adventist Defense Funds; PO Box 15138; West Palm Beach, Fl. 33416

—Pastor Chick McGill

There are some important lessons for "Church of God" members in this news item. The Eternal Gospel Church

of Seventh-day Adventist is one of the many off-shoots of the main body of Seventh-day Adventists (around 20 million members). They are fighting for the right to use the "Seventh-day Adventist" name, and even more generally, fighting for freedom from any interference from the "big denomination". A "Church of God" approach to this might be "So what, who needs the 'Adventist' name?" But what would the many groups you know do if they were sued to stop using any form of the name "Church of God"?

The many SDA-offshoot groups today see themselves as diligently carrying on the spiritual truth that has been taught for 150 years of history using that name. They are the main group that preached both the "advent" (second coming of Christ) and the "Sabbath". To many of them, that is proof that they are the main group God is using. Similarly, many Church of

God members have their set of doctrines which they believe make them the main group that God is using.

At the beginning of the article, the ministry said it proclaimed "the third Angel's message." What is that about? Doesn't the third angel proclaim "the third angel's message"? (Rev 14:9.) But we might ask church of God groups: "Didn't Ezekiel proclaim 'the Ezekiel warning'?" Now CoG groups have long explanations why Ezekiel could not preach his warning and why it must be done today. Similarly, the SDAs have long explanations why they have to preach "the third angel's message".

Without discussing whether or not God has given these messages to these groups to preach, it is important to realize how we look to other Bible students when we base the validity of our group on a long explanation of a few verses. —NSE

Kosovo War From European Perspective

When the U.S. started bombing Kosovo, I asked Guy and Mireille Hodiament, the Belgian couple that distributes Servants' News in Europe, if they had any particular wisdom on what was happening from their European perspective. —NSE

The Europeans, from the top down, are quite angry, mad, bitter at the Americans for still trying to make the decisions in a newly born Europe. More so, because now Europe wants to take her own decisions, have her own power. The Americans have acted as if Europe had not changed since last World War. The Europeans want to be counted apart from the Americans, especially in their own territory.

What they do not like is the attitude of self-contention the Americans show. "You need us and we are superior in strength and efficacy"—that's exactly what the Europeans do not want to hear now the Kosovo war was just declared. NATO is not popular here!

"Why", say the people, "don't they go and kill Milosewicz? They should never attack the civilians." They sit with a criminal one day to try to peacefully come to a conclusion, they say. But the next day, they kill the people and let this criminal run.

Everybody here speaks about last World War. We just are thinking: "Is

this it again?" **But this time, the American are not seen as "saviors" anymore.**

Personally, we do not like to see America getting so very much more unpopular every day, and Russia becoming nervous.

Every war is a religious war. Yugoslavia has occasioned the religious war that has put the world on fire already once, even twice.

For the first time since last World War, Germany has been allowed to participate, to let their army go out of their country. Nationalism is quite present in Germany again and they are fully ready.

This is worsened by the crisis that has brought the European Community government (President and Deputies) to fall apart. The new president has just been elected: he is Italian! As prime minister, he has restored the economy of Italy. That is why he's been chosen—to set up Europe economically! All the countries have given him faith economically speaking, because the economics are so diverse and in such poor condition.

Do I have wisdom in those things? I do not know—but what we see around us is ripe wheat and Revelation being fulfilled.

—Guy & Mireille Hodiament

More 1999 Feast Sites

These sites are in addition to the many in our last issue. **Please let Feast sponsors know now where you are planning to attend!** It is very difficult to plan a Feast when the number of people attending is unknown. Time and money are wasted if estimates are too high. Facilities are too crowded if estimates are too low. **Not sure yet?** It is still better to let them know now and change your mind later if necessary.

- Unless otherwise noted, dates of the Feast are the evening of September 24 through October 2, 1999.
- Please send info on other sites to *Servants' News* (see contact information on page 2 or back cover).

Big Sandy, Texas; Destin, Florida 1999 FoT Celebration & Hebraic Roots of Christianity Conference

The United Church of God, Big Sandy (an independent congregation) is sponsoring two sites this year: Big Sandy, Texas, where some of the speakers will be Dave Havir, Wayne Cole, John Kilough, Ed Mitchell, and Terry Post; and Destin, Florida where some of the speakers will be Dave Havir, Dennis Benson, Wayne Cole, Mark Gully, Anthony Kimmons and Garry Pifer.

For more information, call 800-946-5545 or e-mail: agpros@comcast.net.

New England Feast

We are pleased to host a traditional Feast of Tabernacles site in beautiful Mystic, Connecticut. Mystic is a majestically restored seaport and village, in the southeast corner of Connecticut. It is right on I-95, about one hour from Providence airport, and also the Hartford-Springfield airport, Bradley International. AMTRAK has a station in Mystic, and with the many operating shuttles, those without automobiles can enjoy the area.

The Residence Inn by Marriott will be our primary host (860-536-5150). They have many facilities, and are offering attractive rates on their suites, which are really complete apartments. The Comfort Inn next door offers regular rooms with breakfast (860-572-8531). Ask for the "Northeast Church of God rates" when you make reservations.

We will have a full schedule of services, with live speakers, and familiar music, with **some sampling from the new Mark Graham hymnal**. As this site will be relatively small, those with talents are encouraged to participate. The Residence Inn includes several meals in the room rate, so we will have ample opportunity to spend time together as the Body of Christ should.

For more info: Rodger Sandsmark; Northeast Church of God; PO Box 14; Weatogue, CT 06089; tel: 860-651-7690; e-mail: lr3sands@gte.net.

Plan **now** to attend at Ocean Shores, Washington. Experience the **joy** of celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles while hearing some of the **best** teachers of the Hebraic Roots of Christianity. Speakers include: **Dr Brad Young**, Gospel Research Foundation; **Randy Fenton**, Potter's Clay Ministries; **Dr John D. Garr**, Restoration Foundation; **Ken & Lenore Mullican**, HaKeshet Ministries; **Doug & George Dolly**, Messianic Congregation Leaders; **Dean Wheelock**, Hebrew Roots Ministries; **Eddie Chumney**, Hebraic Heritage Ministries Int'l; **Robert Somerville**, Awareness Ministries; **Steven Berkowitz**, Hineni Ministries Int'l; **Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi**, Hebrew Language Instructor.

Our target for 1999 is 500 attendees. This Feast is a non-denominational, non-sectarian event sponsored by Christian Renewal Ministries International (CRMI). Attendance is open to all. There is no conference registration fee and no fee to attend workshops and seminars during the festival celebration. It is paid for entirely by tax-deductible donations to CRMI. (All our staff is completely volunteer.)

More information about the 1999 Feast of Tabernacles at Ocean Shores, Washington is available at:

www.Shalom-CRMI.org/html/ftos.htm
E-mail: Rick@shalom-crmi.org
Phone: 800-333-5208

—Gregory Richardson
CRMI; PO Box 111; Auburn, WA 97071

Multi-Group in Rye, England

This Festival site is affiliated with the Intercontinental Church of God (Garner Ted Armstrong). However, it is supported by people who receive taped sermons from many others: Ron Dart, Don Deakins, Fred Coulter, etc. As in previous years Mr. Frank Scherich and his wife Pat (of the Intercontinental

Church of God) from Texas will be joining us as the Festival elders.

Services will be held at the Rye Treasury (of musical Instruments); 20 Cinqport Street; Rye, Sussex; England TN31 7AD. This is a museum, the meeting will be held in a room above the museum. Rye has several first class hotels housed in ancient buildings. There are also many excellent Bed & Breakfast establishments and self-catering properties. We would like people to book their own accommodation. An official Guide for Rye can be requested from Rye Tourist Information Centre; The Heritage Centre; Strand Quay; Rye, Sussex; England TN31 7AY. Tel 1797-226-696.

—**Anthony & Margaretha Miles**; Linderudveien 57; 1353 Baerums Verk; Norway. Telephone: 47-6756-2275.

[Servants' News has previously carried articles explaining why we believe that Garner Ted Armstrong does not meet the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, but since international sites are few, this site may still be the best choice for some brethren to keep the Feast and fellowship with other believers.] 

Remember *Servants' News* Site, Butler State Park, Kentucky

Butler State Park is located a few miles off of I-71, between Cincinnati, Ohio and Louisville, Kentucky. A variety of accommodations are available, both at the State Park and in motels 1 to 3 miles away. Prices include tax:

The State Park offers lodge rooms at \$58.54 (double), and cottages with kitchens starting at \$80 per night. Camping, including RV hookups, is \$12 per night. Mention that you are with the "Feast of Tabernacles" when calling **800-325-0078**.

Five motels are less than three miles away. Cost per night:
Port William Motel single: \$24.02
502-732-5985 double: \$29.48
Days' Inn, 502-732-9301 \$53.50
Super 8 Motel, 502-732-0252 \$53.50
Holiday Inn, 502-732-6661 \$57.87
Hampton Inn, 502-732-0700 \$60.00

See page 1 of Sept/Oct 1998 *Servants' News* for the goals for this Feast. If interested, contact us at 517-543-5544, 75260.1603@compuserve.com.

—NSE

Royalty-Free Hymnal Available!

by Mark Graham

The hymnal I have been working on for two years is finished! It contains 88 hymns, each one of them a winner. 47 are taken directly from the Psalms. Many of the rest are directly based on other scriptures, and about 30 of them are based on New Testament scriptures or teachings. It is a very "Church of God" oriented, forward-looking collection. Many of the hymns are about Christ returning to establish his kingdom, and other parts of what we know as the plan of God, including His Sabbath and keeping His commandments.

Some melodies are by the old masters—Mozart, Haydn, Tallis. Others are based on melodies from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Finland, Spain, China, Peru, Holland, Israel, the Ukraine, and Greece. There are two African-American spirituals, and one from the Kentucky Harmony collection. Many are ancient or from older psalters. Some, though still quite melodic and easy to sing, push the envelope of rhythmic structure. It is definitely a modern hymnal, yet it relies heavily on the beauty and majesty of old hymns. I think it stands on its own as a work with a distinctive flavor, and if one were to read the lyrics from beginning to end, it even preaches the gospel.

I wrote about a dozen of the hymns, and contributed to the lyrics or harmonies of a few more. My work is copyrighted, but available free for any non-profit use. **There are so many advantages to having a royalty-free hymnal that I felt it was worth forfeiting the use of other beautiful hymns that are copyrighted.** As a result, there are no Dwight Armstrong hymns, but I was able to find many old hymns which are just as good, often using exactly the same lyrics Mr. Armstrong did. **This hymnal can be photocopied by anyone in its entirety or in part, or can be posted on a website for downloading.** There are plans to produce a CD of MIDI files of all of the hymns, soon. (I will record them myself now that I know the final contents of the hymnal.) Also, because there are no royalties, the cost of the hymnals will be quite low.

In addition to the regular index, the hymns are grouped by meter as well.

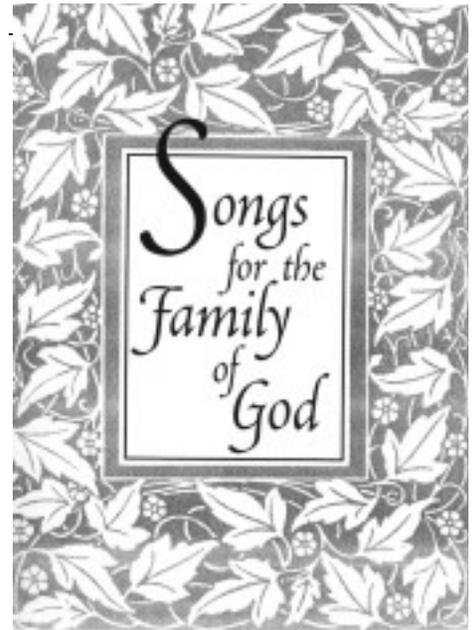
This means that the words of any hymn in a group may be sung to the tune of any other hymn in that group, producing literally hundreds of combinations of music and lyrics.

Jim Hopkins has done a great job of figuring out paper stock, binding style, and size. The finished hymnal will be roughly the size of the current UCG hymnal or the old WCG gray hymnal, but with a sewn and glued binding that is very durable (I think it's called perfect binding). Christy Hooper of Cleveland designed a beautiful cover and title page. Jim is planning to print this hymnal as Servants' News is going to press.

Up to this point, we have done everything for free. All the editing, typesetting, artwork and layout, and printing preliminaries have been donated by the people involved. Just for comparison, the WCG and UCG hymnals cost tens of thousands of dollars to produce. The major costs of printing and postage are too much for any one individual to bear. Thanks to many people who either loaned us money, or bought advanced copies, we were able to make the initial payment for printing. We intend to sell the hymnal at a price sufficient to recover our costs.

One hymnal, post-paid, will cost \$6.00. We will send 2 through 20 hymnals for \$5.00 each. (Ohio residents have the added privilege of paying 7% sales tax unless you furnish us with a tax exempt certificate.) For large orders, you can call or write me and I will figure out what additional discount I can give.

You may have the practical question: "How can I make such a decision without seeing the book?" You can see the smaller copies of the cover, above, and the first song, at right. A complete list of songs appears on the next page. A preview booklet showing the cover and 10 of the hymns is available upon request. Also, you



can view or even hear some at Jim Ross' excellent web page of church of God music:

<http://www.cgmusic.com>

For orders or information contact:

Mark Graham

PO Box 770261

Lakewood, OH 44107-0019

216-529-1380 magraham@bw.edu

This is the best "traditional" hymnal we know about for Church of God groups. It contains many songs recognizable to much of Christianity without any "doctrinal problem" songs. Some groups may wish to use it as their main hymnal, others may want to use it with a modern praise and worship book. You can always buy or photocopy as many extra copies as you may need, no matter what happens to your church group in the months ahead. —NSE

All People That On Earth Do Dwell 1
Psalm 100 Thomas Tallis

1. All peo - ple that on earth do dwell,
2. And know the Lord is God in - deed,
3. Oh, en - ter then His gates with praise,
4. For God the Lord is ever good.

Sing to the Lord with cheer - ful voice,
Wor - ship our Lord and be glad as you make;
Ap - preach His courts with glad - ness, too;
His mer - cy is for - ev - er sure.

Songs for the Family of God

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- 50 By the Rivers of Babylon (Ps 137)
- 51 Lord, Thou Hast Searched Me (Ps 139)
- 52 When Morning Lights the Eastern Skies (Ps 143)
- 53 O Sing Ye Hallelujah! (Ps 147)
- 54 Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens, Adore Him (Ps 148)
- 55 Praise Ye the Lord! (Ps 150, Finnish tune)
- 56 The People That in Darkness Sat (Is 9)
- 57 Wake, My Heart (adapted from Ps 108 and Isaiah 35, by Mark Graham)
- 58 The Mountain of the Lord (Micah 4)
- 60 Great God Who Made the Universe (about God's creation, by Mark Graham)
- 62 By Law from Sinai's Clouded Steep (a hymn about the Sabbath)
- 63 On the Sabbath Day (Ukrainian Jewish melody, words about the Sabbath)
- 64 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
- 65 We Gather Together
- 66 In Days of Old (by Mark Graham, about the prophesied coming of the Messiah)
- 67 Salt of the Earth (Matthew 5)
- 68 Consider the Lilies (Matthew 6)
- 69 It Fell Upon a Summer Day (Welsh hymn about Christ blessing the children)
- 70 Hosanna, Loud Hosanna (Jesus' entry into Jerusalem)
- 71 All Glory, Laud, and Honor
- 72 God Speaks to Us
- 73 Were You There
- 74 In Joseph's Lovely Garden
- 75 Rejoice, the Lord Is King
- 76 We've a Story to Tell to the Nations
- 77 God, Who Made the Earth
- 78 In Christ There Is No East or West
- 79 Lord, I Want to Be a Christian
- 80 Song In The Night (by Mark Graham, about the Gospel being preached in the end time)
- 82 In that Day (Hawaiian Melody)
- 84 The Church's One Foundation
- 85 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers
- 86 There Is Joy in My Heart
- 87 Golden Breaks the Dawn (Ps 19, Chinese melody)
- 88 All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name
- 89 Come, Lord, and Tarry Not
- 90 From the Highest Heaven (Rev 19, Zech 14, Peruvian melody)
- 91 God Is Calling Children (Mark Graham)
- 92 When Christ Shall Come (Rev 19-20)
- 93 The New Jerusalem (Rev 21- 22)
- 94 Now Let Us Go (about preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Londonderry Air)
- 96 God Will See Us Through

—Mark Graham

Bible Hymnal Borrowed

I have a National Comprehensive Family Bible dated July 1851 which contains a section entitled "The Psalms of David in Metre". Many of the Psalms are word for word the same as those attributed to Dwight Armstrong in the WCG hymnal. Others vary only slightly.

I quote from this section in this Bible: "Translated and diligently compared with the original text and former translations. More plain, smooth and agreeable to the text than any heretofore. Allowed by the authority of the General Assembly of the Kirk [church] of Scotland and appointed to be sung in congregations and families."

Here are two examples from the National Comprehensive Family Bible:

"How excellent in all the earth
Lord our Lord is thy name
Who hast thy glory far advanced
Above the starry frame."

[continues same as WCG page 7]

"When Isr'el out of Egypt went
and did his dwelling change
When Jacob's house went out from those
That were of language strange,
[continues same as WCG page 86]

Sound familiar?

—Ron Whiteman

It is always amazing to hear former WCG members say, "I'm not going to sing Protestant hymns written by Sunday-keepers!" They do not realize that Dwight Armstrong was never a member of the WCG or a Sabbath keeper. The message of his music was good because it came directly from Scripture. But even today, many other Sunday-keepers are writing new hymns with the message taken directly from Scripture.

—NSE

Did God Intend for the Holy Days to Be Fund Raising Occasions?

by Tom Justus, minister, "Church of God, Sabbath Day", Springdale, Arkansas

The building is packed, it is a Holy Day. The minister comes to the podium and starts his plea for the offering. He explains how he is going to sacrifice and give all for the "work". He even goes further and asks the audience to give extra by putting in all their loose change. Then a large group of men come forward with their collection baskets. As soon as they have taken up the collection, they head for a back room. In this room a group with adding machines start counting the money. Remember, this is a Holy Day, and a service is going on in the adjoining room. Do you think this is pleasing to God? Let's look into the Bible and see what God has to say about the Holy Day offerings! All scripture used will be from the NIV.

Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me. Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in that month you came out of Egypt. No one is to appear before me empty-handed. Celebrate the Feast of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field. Celebrate the Feast of In-gathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field. Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign Lord (Ex 23:14-17).

Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose; at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the Lord empty-handed; each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you (Deut 16:17).

We know from reading other scriptures such as Leviticus 23 that these three times or three seasons include the seven Holy Days. Where do we get the scriptural authority for taking up an offering on each Holy Day? Perhaps we think that this comes from Leviticus 23. I suggest that you read this chapter thoroughly. Remember when you read the following scriptures about each Holy Day, that offerings made by fire cannot be made today. We do not have a

Levitical Priesthood. Verse 7: (Days of Unleavened Bread) "On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days present an offering made to the Lord by fire. Verse 15: (Feast of Weeks) From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord". Verses 17-22 continues to explain about the burnt offerings to be made on that day. Verse 23: (Trumpets) "The Lord said to Moses, Say to the Israelites; On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the Lord, by fire. Verse 27: (Atonement) The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves; and present an offering made by fire. Verses 33-36: (Feast of Tabernacles) The Lord said to Moses, Say to the Israelites: On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord's Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days, The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present offerings made to the Lord by fire. and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to the Lord by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work".

We can and should give offerings in these three seasons showing God we are thankful for our blessings. Does this mean that we should use these days as fund raisers for a corporation? Let's read **Deuteronomy 14, verses 22 through 27** (these verses seem to imply that this is the Feast of Tabernacles):

Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always. But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the Lord your God and cannot carry your tithe

(because the place where the Lord will choose to put his Name is so far away), then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the Lord your God will choose. Use the silver to buy whatever you like; cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice. And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own.

There has been nothing in the scriptures to give any indications that these Holy Days were to be used to raise large sums of money. **They were for us to come before God and rejoice!**

We have no Levites now. Those who try to claim that the Ministers are Levites know better. Ministers own homes, and in many cases, better than average church members. We still have the widows and fatherless among us. It takes money to operate a FOT, but where does this give us authority to make a fund raising occasion out of God's Holy Days? The extra money brought in by Holy Days could be best used in helping the poor, widows and fatherless instead of making a few leaders and their organizations wealthy.

How did this idea of having a collection on each Holy Day and putting pressure on the membership to give large amounts of money on these days start? It started well over a half century ago by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and the Radio Church of God. Over forty years ago in Pasadena, California, I was with a group of men when Mr. Armstrong was asked about taking up a Holy Day offering on each Holy Day instead of the three times. **Nothing was said about the meaning of the Hebrew or what other scriptures might be relevant.** His answer was simply that it was convenient and **more money** would be collected that way. I have worked closely with WCG and CGI for more than forty years, having been festival director for both organizations. The Holy Days were looked forward to as times to raise large sums of money. Ministers tried to see who could raise the most money at Feast sites. They were truly fund raising occasions! It still goes on today. Even further, I understand some organizations are selling their wares, such as sermon and lecture tapes, at these meetings. This year, let us simply rejoice before God! 

Dealing With Reality:

A Non-WCG Member's Experience With WCG Tradition

by David Harrell

Our church, the independent Active Bible Church of God in Chicago, was blessed with a few newcomers last year. One of them was a lady named Chuckie, who had a Seventh-Day Adventist background.

One Sabbath, shortly after she had been baptized, an elder giving a sermonette made an off-hand remark about Garner Ted Armstrong. Chuckie looked around to those sitting next to her and whispered: “Who’s Garner Ted Armstrong?”

Question: Does she really need to know?

She didn’t come to church to hear about or discuss Garner Ted Armstrong. She came to learn about the Eternal and his way.

Another newcomer, Thurman, was formerly with the Church of God (Seventh Day). He rides to and from church with me sometimes, and since meeting last year the two of us have visited several Sabbath-keeping churches, including other CGI splinters, UCG, and non-COG groups such as the Adventists, the True Jesus Church and the Israel of God—an African-American church in Chicago. While visiting a CGI splinter group, we discovered the “Living Church of Rod” meets separately, in the very same hall, at the same time! So we stopped by LCG and commiserated with some of the latest “Church War” victims.

The more Thurman sees of the Church of God scene, the more he bemoans the divisions between groups. He also complains that he’s tired of hearing “Armstrong this, Armstrong that” and that we seem to think the Church began with Herbert Armstrong.

Probably, many of you reading this article can recall similar situations. Which is why I think it’s time more of us started asking two very important questions:

- 1) How should we remember Herbert W. Armstrong (and, if applicable, Garner Ted Armstrong)?

- 2) Considering what we know, is it wise to expose visitors and new converts to the Armstrong name and organizational legacy **at all**?

Personally, I began to make my own decisions in these questions years ago. I was led to the Plain Truth magazine and to watching HWA on “The World Tomorrow” in 1984, at a young age. But not long afterward, I also discovered his son’s program. Eventually, I began receiving tapes and literature from GTA, who himself was quick to point out some of his father’s errors, especially those related to one-man, top-down church government. Thus, I was inoculated against worshiping one or the other Armstrong or adopting either corporation as the “one true church”.

In 1992, at the age of 18, I attended one WCG evangelistic meeting but started to become concerned about the watering down of doctrine and tone that had begun in the Plain Truth. I began attending CGI and was baptized. About a year later, someone lent me some copies of Ambassador Report, which opened my eyes to GTA’s long history of “indiscretions” and more of HWA’s problems as well. The newsletter also introduced me to the work of other Church of God ministers: Ken Westby, Jim Rector, John Ritenbaugh and others, who helped me to see the “bigger picture” beyond the Armstrongs.

So when “Tedgate” broke loose in ‘95, I wasn’t shocked or disillusioned. After the CGI split in 1996, I kept learning through tapes from Jim Rector, Likeminds and other Web sites, and books such as “Herbert Armstrong’s Tangled Web” by David Robinson. (The main focus of my research was not muckraking but spiritual growth, which I felt was **not** emphasized much in my years in the CGI.)

The more I learned about the Armstrongs, the more it troubled me. Whatever good they may have done—including being used to bring me to the Eternal—almost appeared, in some cases, to be obscured by the many bad

things they had done or permitted. Certainly, that is true in the area of their public reputations and in the cases of many who were hurt (some even died) due to HWA’s mistakes. These things are still live ammunition that can be used against us—in fact, they already have been used against us.

Unfortunately, many in the Church of God world are oblivious to the danger. Even in our little independent fellowship, a few folks would like to remember HWA in unrealistically rosy terms. One very sweet but stubborn lady (who had not been through CGI like most of us, as she came straight from the WCG) recently insisted to me that HWA was indeed the “apostle of God!”

In another clique, there are people with a lot of gossip and old “war stories” about the WCG, GTA, etc. (mainly not in the messages, but in the conversations after church and especially at restaurants and potlucks where drinks are being drunk). One way or another, the Armstrong name always comes up.

Now, I realize folks are always going to reminisce about the past. The problem is, if I am inviting new people into such a situation, I feel I either have to:

- 1) Spend a lot of time “shielding” them from the truth about the Armstrongs (nearly impossible);
- 2) Spend a lot of time explaining and doing “damage control”;
- 3) Ask the people who are talking about the Armstrongs to stop; or
- 4) Start a whole new group where we can focus on the Eternal, not the prominent personages of the past.

What is the answer? What should we do?

To me, it seems that if any *significant* evangelism is going to happen in the future, it will only happen outside the shadow of “Armstrongism”—apart from the Armstrong name, the Armstrongist organizations, even

“independents” who still cannot seem to get out of the past. It may even take starting totally new fellowships from scratch—which some are doing.

Not to say those within “Armstrongism” are bad people. However, I doubt they will be able to have much effect upon the world in the future. They live in a house whose closets are full of skeletons. The wisest solution, in my opinion, would be to move to a new address.

We Are Now One of Many Groups

Even though it was not true, years ago it was easy for the WCG to point to its big media campaign and convince new believers that they were the only one doing it and therefore the “only true Church”. Today, the WCG splits are a collection of little groups no bigger than **many** other Sabbatarian groups.

The December 1998 *Servants' News* was a good starting point to study some of these groups. Since I live near a big city (Chicago) where many of these groups are present, I have met members from several of them. Just recently, I checked out the web site of the *The House of God, The Holy Church of the Living God, The Pillar & Ground of the Truth, The House of Prayer for all People, inc.* I realized they have two churches within a 20-minute drive of my home—in fact, I have driven or ridden the bus past their buildings many times, having no idea they were Sabbath-keepers! (See box about Marvin Gaye at right.)

Visited Groups Previously in SN

Last year, a friend and I paid a visit to the Chicago congregation of the the True Jesus Church (<http://www.tjc.org/>). The meeting was held in a house, and there were perhaps 60 in attendance. They were mostly Chinese, and some did not speak English and required an interpreter.

Coincidentally, the girl doing the interpreting, a student at the University of Chicago, happened to have been a student of **our** pastor, Michael Linacre, who is a professor there! Neither of them knew the other was a Sabbath-keeper.

I found the members to be wonderfully zealous and dedicated. (At the time, they happened to be holding a special weekend-long “Spiritual Convocation”).

However, they hold the unbiblical practice of glossolalia (they believe it is **the** “sign” that one has the Holy Spirit), which can be very spooky to see and hear in person. Also, the church structure is definitely hierarchical, and the American church, I believe, is run out of California.

That same day, we went to visit a Seventh-Day Adventist Church. After the service we spoke with a couple of the deacons. Upon learning that we observed the Holy Days, one of them said, “You know, I have been very interested in the Holy Days. I’ll have to do some more study into that.” Apparently, he had heard of Dr. Bacchiocchi’s works on the Feasts, but had not studied them in depth. I hope we helped encourage them to do so.

Seven Groups Not in Previous SN

Here are seven other Sabbatarian groups I know that were not covered in the December 1998 *Servants' News*.

1) The Israel of God. This one is based in Chicago but they have branches in Atlanta, Dallas, Memphis and Buffalo, NY. Their TV show runs in many areas—apparently on free cable access channels. In a nutshell, IOG is like an African-American mirror image of the WCG: It’s led by a charismatic man who is the unquestioned leader. They are quite legalistic about the OT laws (including circumcision), especially since they believe they, as Africans, are the lineal descendants of Israel—not America, Britain, and Northwestern Europeans. Having said that, they seem to be very active in outreach to their community and their worship services are lively with uplifting music. It is a popular haven for black ex-Worldwidiers, especially those who were repelled by racism in the Armstrongist movement. I know several people who attend and have visited a couple of times. (www.theisraelofgod.com/).

2) The Twelve Tribes or Messianic Communities ([www.twelvetribes.com](http://www.twelvetribes.com;); P. O. Box 449; Island Pond, VT 05846; 802-723-9708). Three years ago, I ran into some young men from this group “by chance” as they were evangelizing at my school, Columbia College in Chicago. They didn’t tell me what group they were with—they only let on that they were “disciples of Yahshua” and “a band of traveling pilgrims” or

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Singer Marvin Gaye has Sabbatarian Roots

The following biographical information about the popular singer, Marvin Gaye, comes from the web-site: <http://afgen.com/marvin.html>.

The private and professional lives of Marvin Gaye—the forces which led to his undertaking a work of this nature—were dramatic. He was not a happy man. His childhood had been difficult. He learned the Bible and the joys of sanctified music in a storefront church in which his father, a scholarly but violent man, presided as a charismatic preacher. The Christian sect with which the Gays (Marvin added the “e” later) were affiliated was as eccentric as its name, a combination of quotes from the Old and New Testaments, Isaiah and First Timothy, The House of God, the Holy Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth, the House of Prayer for All People. The church was a bizarre mixture of orthodox Judaism and Pentecostal Christianity.

“We follow Biblical instructions,” Bishop Simon Peter Rawlings told me [the biographer] in the early eighties when I was researching a book on Marvin’s life. “And the Bible does not ask us to celebrate Jesus’ birth or the Crucifixion. Christmas and Easter are holidays that some might even view as pagan, and we feel obligated to ignore them.” At the church’s central sanctuary in Lexington, Kentucky, I noticed that the pulpit was adorned with a large Star of David; I heard how the congregants follow Old Testament dietary laws, celebrate the Jewish Day of Atonement by remaining in prayer for twenty-four hours and eat unleavened bread on Passover.

Along similar lines, the famous piano player, Little Richard, was interviewed by Tom Snyder on *The Late Late Show*. He mentioned that he grew up in a seventh-day-Sabbath-keeping home, and he appeared to still hold the Sabbath in high esteem—but didn’t quite come out and say that he is a Seventh Day Adventist. 

some such, and that they lived in the country on a Christian commune. They also said they had no permanent address or telephone number by which I could contact them, so we lost contact.

Last year, after some detective work on the Internet (thank God for the 'Net!) I located a web-site of a group which fit their description: the Twelve Tribes.

I wrote to the web-master, and he did indeed confirm that he knew of the young men I had met, but "wouldn't know of any way to reach them". I believe this stems from the group's practice of cutting their members off from the outside world.

Apparently, the Communities are an outgrowth of the hippie and "Jesus People" movements of the '60s and '70s. For the most part, they live very simply and primitively, making their living through farming and cottage industries. Everything is shared, as in the early church in Jerusalem. Apparently, they send their young men out on extensive missionary journeys to college campuses, evangelistic crusades, rock concerts, etc.

On his web-site, the "cult-watcher" and "deprogrammer" Rick Ross put some bad stuff about the tribes—allegations of deviant doctrines, mind control, child abuse, etc.—which may be true to one degree or another. (<http://www.rick-ross.com/groups/tribes.html>). Their chief "apostle," Yoneq, keeps a low profile, and the missionaries do not mention him—but within the group, he apparently wields absolute power, a la Herbert Armstrong.

I would not recommend that anyone join the group. However, they have some interesting articles arguing that Christians ought to live together in communities, surrender their possessions, etc., just like in the early days. While you could call their viewpoint dogmatic and absolutist, it is still thought-provoking. They question the idea that Christians are supposed to strive to appear "normal" and fit into society, and they have a lot to say about what it means to truly "come out of the world."

3) Overcomer Ministries (Brother Stair): www.overcomerministry.com. They are a communal, Pentecostal-ish, "Oneness"/holiness group following Ralph G. Stair as "the end-time prophet of God." Whatever you may think of

Bro. Stair's calling or his ego, he is preaching the Gospel and his ministry is huge. His radio time totals over 100 hours a day, across many stations. I first heard Bro. Stair several years ago, before I even joined the Church of God.

4) Sabbath-keeping Mennonites: I met one such lady last year at the Feast (Ozarks). I don't know how many of these are around, but according to Richard Nickel's information, they can be contacted at: PO Box 1061; Lacombe LA 70445; 504-882-7080.

5) The German Seventh-day Baptists: I don't believe they are associated with the regular SBDs or even listed on the SDB web-sites. German Seventh Day Baptists; RR 1 Box 14B; New Enterprise, PA16664; 814-766-3378. Also, Snow Hill Society of German Seventh Day Baptists; 9400 Anthony Hwy; Waynesboro, PA 17268; 314-766-3583.

6) The Body of Christ, a small, local house church in Chicago, about 15-25 members (at least, last time I visited, a couple of years ago); mostly black and Hispanic. They adhere to the Sabbath and Holy Days, Sacred Names, and food laws, as well as some other doctrinal peculiarities. All I know about their history is that the first members were formerly Baptists. Body of Christ; 1528 N. Talman Ave.; Chicago, IL 60622. Asst Pastor: Victor M. Ramirez Jr., 773-486-1274

7) Many, many Sacred Names groups, such as the Assemblies of Yahweh based in Bethel, PA (<http://www.assembliesofyahweh.com/>) You have probably covered them in previous issues, however.

The Eternal Calling Many Out

One might tend to view these groups as a bunch of weird people with a weird history that probably think they know everything. Welcome to the club! Many of them may view **us** that same way! I'm not saying that because all groups have some truth and some error that "one group is as good as another". However, it is very easy to view **our** problems as "things we are working out which outsiders should be able to overlook", but view **other** group's problems as reasons to totally dismiss those groups.

I would encourage all readers to keep in touch with various Sabbath-keepers, to be "bridge-builders". If you

visited another group, would you like to be treated like a "fellow believer" or "another heathen"? How do you regard people from a "strange" group who might visit yours? New brethren who are really seeking Bible truth often listen to several groups. Will they think we are Christians if we don't know anything about other groups—or if we seem to hate them?

I believe the Eternal is giving more light to, or alternatively, calling His people out of, **all** groups where they have been in bondage to men and to human traditions. I believe He is rebuilding a pure church to which the man-made church organizations were only stepping-stones. And, by the way, one of the instruments I believe He is using is *Servants News*. I wish to thank them for this invaluable ministry!

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Correction to Article on 26 Church Groups

The group under the heading "Queensland Australia" on page 44 of the December 1998 issue is called the **International Christian Embassy (Jerusalem)**. These people are members of the pentecostal Assemblies of God. They journeyed over to Israel to convert the Jews to Christianity. Instead, they themselves became convinced that they should start observing the Sabbath and Holy Days. They now sponsor a Christian Feast of Tabernacles each year in Jerusalem.

There is no ICEJ group in Canberra where I live, though their base of operations is in Queensland under a man by the name of Bruce Garbutt. One of their leading spokeswomen is a lady by the name of Jesme O'Hara (email: joh@squirrel.com.au). I have met her and heard her speak and she is right on the money with her advocacy of the Torah—though a good bit 'out in front' of other members of her church. We recently got a phone call from a local woman who I believe is connected to this group. I hope to get more information about their activities in future.

—Dale Heslin

Speak What God Gives You!

by Norman Edwards

I believe this matter is very important to independent “CoG” believers. I hope you will take the time to **read this article from beginning to end before judging its content.** On January 13, 1999, I received the following e-mail from an unfamiliar name. Since it was not an urgent request, it sat in my inbox for a while, but I eventually read it:

Dear Norm,

I wanted to thank you for the last *Servants' News* (November issue). Though I was already aware that Herbert Armstrong had plagiarized some of his works, I know that many people weren't. I get so tired of hearing of the people who still worship Herbert Armstrong as if he had been a god. Yes, we learned some truth from him, but he was not always right, and it definitely damages his reputation, in my opinion, that information he claimed was revealed to him by God actually came from other men.

In light of that, I would like to ask you a question. I'm sure it was not entirely easy to print information like that, knowing that many people would probably be offended. However, Mr. Armstrong is dead, and can't defend himself. Would you print information similar to that, and equally as damaging, in my opinion, about someone who is still alive, and who has just recently plagiarized a book? I was very interested to read the exact definition of plagiarism in the article you printed about Herbert Armstrong, because I see that it fits this other case exactly. This person has a lot of followers, and he is quite well liked. He appears at many of the same conferences you do (as a speaker), and may even be a friend of yours. Would you have the courage to expose such a person? I know beyond question that many people look up to this man so much that they will not listen to anything bad about him, yet he is deceiving people by making it appear that the material he is presenting is his own, rather than coming from a Protestant minister.

Please let me know whether or not you would be interested in such information. I have documented it, and anyone else who was interested could do the same, if they happened to come across

the book like I did (quite unexpectedly).

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Mindy Diller

What would you do if you received such a letter? Would you take the approach that independent believers are the “good guys” and therefore this letter must be an attack of Satan? Would you just ignore this letter?

I had to answer those questions. I am not anyone's judge, but I do have to decide what I will and will not print. I remember working for hierarchical organizations that did both of the above—either ignored complaints or called them an “attack of Satan” before they knew the facts. **If we have left unjust hierarchical organizations only to make biased judgments in favor of ourselves, then we are worse than those we left.** Many of those in big organizations do not seem to know better. But I hope we know better:

He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God? (Mic 6:8)

As time was available, I responded to Mindy on February 25, 1999.

Mindy,

Thank you for your letter. Yes, there is a great difference with how one deals with a problem such as plagiarism that is passed off as personal research or revelation from the Eternal. This is offensive and Matthew 18:15-17 gives the formula for how to deal with such offenses. When a person is dead, it is not possible to go to them. If the deceased person's error is not affecting anyone, there is little point in trying to condemn him. But if people are still being adversely affected by a deceased person's teachings, then the error needs to be exposed.

I did not know about most of Herbert Armstrong's plagiarism when he was alive. Others did, and those who tried to bring it to his attention were put out of the WCG. The reasoning was that they were hurting the work. Unfortunately, most corporate church leaders seem to feel that nearly all biblical principles of

truth and justice can be ignored when someone is doing something that will “hurt the work.” This practice continues till this day in many groups. These people could not take witnesses to Herbert Armstrong, he would no longer hear them. Their only recourse was to write their own literature explaining the problem, and take it to “the Church” in that way. (Unfortunately, neither I nor most others would dare be caught reading any of that “dissident literature”.)

In your case, you should go to the person who is doing the plagiarizing and ask him to be honest with his readers on the source of his information. It would be best if the man would set things right himself. As the scripture says, you have gained your brother. If the man will not correct his mistake, take some witnesses with you. In this case, find someone else who has read (or will read) the original work and this man's work. Then, all of you either write, or talk to this man. If he will not hear that, then take it to “the Church”. Normally, that would be a local congregation. But in these days of scattered brethren, the brethren of this teacher are probably those on his “mailing list”. I would hope that he would publish a letter about this offense (keep it short) in his publication if he has one. But if he will not, then I believe *Servants' News* or the *Journal* would be an appropriate place. After I have seen that you have done your part, and no resolution was forthcoming, I would certainly print a letter about the problem in *Servants' News*.

If you are not willing to talk to the person about it, I do not think you should accuse him to others. I am glad that you did not mention his name, but simply asked your question.

May the Eternal help all of us to learn to correct each other when necessary **in his love.**

—Norman S. Edwards

As it turned out, Mindy understood the Matthew 18 process and had already gone directly to this Bible teacher about the problem. She tried to go to the second step and take other witnesses (people who listened to this man's tapes), but they did not seem interested. I received this e-mail on March 2—I have **boldfaced** a few parts for emphasis:

Dear Norm,

Thank you for responding to my let-

ter. I guess I should have told you that I wrote to the person in question before I wrote to you or anyone else. It was not until after I had his response that I wrote to you. This man admitted that he did indeed "utilize" the book that I believe he plagiarized. **He will not, however, admit that he actually plagiarized the book**, and he made the excuse that he was just trying to give everyone some messages they needed (in his tape series), but that if he had indicated the source, it would not have been as well received.

After writing to you, I again contacted this man with more questions, and after his second response, I decided not to accuse him publicly. **I still knew he was guilty of wrongdoing, but I don't know for sure what his motives were.** Normally one plagiarizes someone because it makes himself look good, since it looks like he is the one who came up with these ideas. However, this man insists that was not the case.

Right now I have a dilemma, and maybe you have an opinion to offer about it. **I would personally want to know if someone were using another person's material (in some instances taking whole paragraphs, and 2/3 of several chapters, and only changing slight wording here and there)** but not giving them credit. To me, it ruined this man's credibility. On one of his tapes, he proclaimed "I have never, in my thirty-some years in the church and in the faith, I don't think I have ever been more taken with a particular subject than this wilderness theme or wilderness analogy that is in the Bible.... I frankly don't recall ever hearing (or reading) anyone put the kind of emphasis that I feel led to at least place on it in my experience. That may be, but I'm not aware of it if there are." **How can he stand up there and say that he has never read anything giving this kind of emphasis to the subject, when he then turns around and steals huge portions of the book, which is giving EXACTLY that emphasis to the subject?**

For that reason, I felt that people should know about this man whom many so highly respect. However, I did tell a couple of personal friends (who also listen to this man's tapes) about this incident, hoping that they would look into it themselves and go to him with their questions. The response I

got from one person was basically denial and an accusation that I was committing *lashon hara* [Hebrew for "evil speech"]. The other response was that he was sure this man did not mean to plagiarize anything, but that he was glad I did not commit *lashon hara* and went to the guilty man first.

My dilemma is this: Judging from the response I received, I would like to just drop the whole thing because people apparently don't want the boat rocked. They don't want to have to investigate something (nobody asked for evidence, or wanted to check it out for themselves) and maybe find out that someone they respect has once again let them down. **God's church is full of teachers who are wolves in sheep's clothing, it seems, but people don't seem to care.** Also, I am not out to smear this man or deliberately ruin his reputation. Perhaps if I just drop it, God will take care of the whole matter some other way. However, there is one thing that still really bothers me about just keeping my mouth shut about this man's actions. In an article by Dean Wheelock about *lashon hara* (see Hebrew Roots, Issue 98-1), he said, "Another case in which it is permissible to speak *lashon hara* is when someone causes another person physical or psychological pain, steals from someone, embarrasses another person, or damages someone's property. If the offending person does not rectify the problem, it is permissible to speak *lashon hara* about him in order to warn others of possible danger from him.... If he agrees to make restitution you must not speak *lashon hara* about him." In the Winter 1999 issue of the Hatikva newsletter, Dean Wheelock also adds, "*Lashon hara* is only permitted in cases where it serves a truly constructive purpose; i.e. where concealing the matter has the potential of bringing about harm."

The man I have been referring to has stolen from another, and he has no intention of rectifying the problem, unless he changed his mind after our last communication. **I suggested to him at that time that the only honorable way to act would be to publicly acknowledge what he had done, and if he was truly not concerned about gathering a following, it wouldn't matter if he lost a few people because he decided to be honest.** He never admitted that what he did was

really wrong, but rather made excuses for his actions. Would concealing this matter bring about harm to others? That I do not know, and that is the main reason I would still possibly consider having this information made public knowledge. Personally, we have moved on from him, and rarely listen to his tapes anymore, and we bear him no hard feelings. In fact, we pray that he will repent of his actions before God.

I would rather you not publish any of the correspondence regarding this situation unless we both agree that my evidence should be published. I had already done everything you thought I should do, but I am just not sure whether or not it would be best for this to become public knowledge. **After all, most people seem to be comfortable just hiding their heads in the sand.** The character of the leaders does not seem to matter anymore, even in the church. I do NOT just want to smear someone and print something that is not necessary to print.

I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on this dilemma, and whether or not you think it should just be dropped.

Sincerely,
Mindy Diller

To me, these were the words of an honest and sincere person—not all that easy to find these days. There are too many lies being told in big church organizations. There are too many lies being told by people who run governments. They all think they have to lie to protect themselves which protects their governments and organizations which protects the people. Right? Wrong!

The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end? (Jer 5:31).

At this point, I still was not completely sure who Mindy was talking about. But if she was telling the truth, I wanted to help her. If she was telling a lie, I wanted to know. We do not have room to print all of the letters, but in summary, I asked her for the name of the man and the name of the book.

The Investigation

She said, "Jim Rector". Jim Rector? We distributed his literature almost from

the very start of Servants' News. He had given me good advice several times. We shared the Feast with Him in 1995. We sent form letters recommending his tape ministry. But I was still faced with the same questions. Would I be a respecter of persons and expose Herbert Armstrong's plagiarism, but not that of my own friends? Do not church organizations justify all sorts of things because they "keep people in their group" which "keeps them close to God"?

I ordered a copy of *Victory in the Wilderness: Growing Stronger in Dry Times* by John P. Bevere copyright 1992 (ISBN 0-9633176-0-1). When it arrived, I gave it to Pam Dewey along with two Jim Rector "Wilderness" tapes. She is skillful at scanning and reading things, and felt that she would be able to figure out if there was any plagiarism involved. She was back in ten minutes:

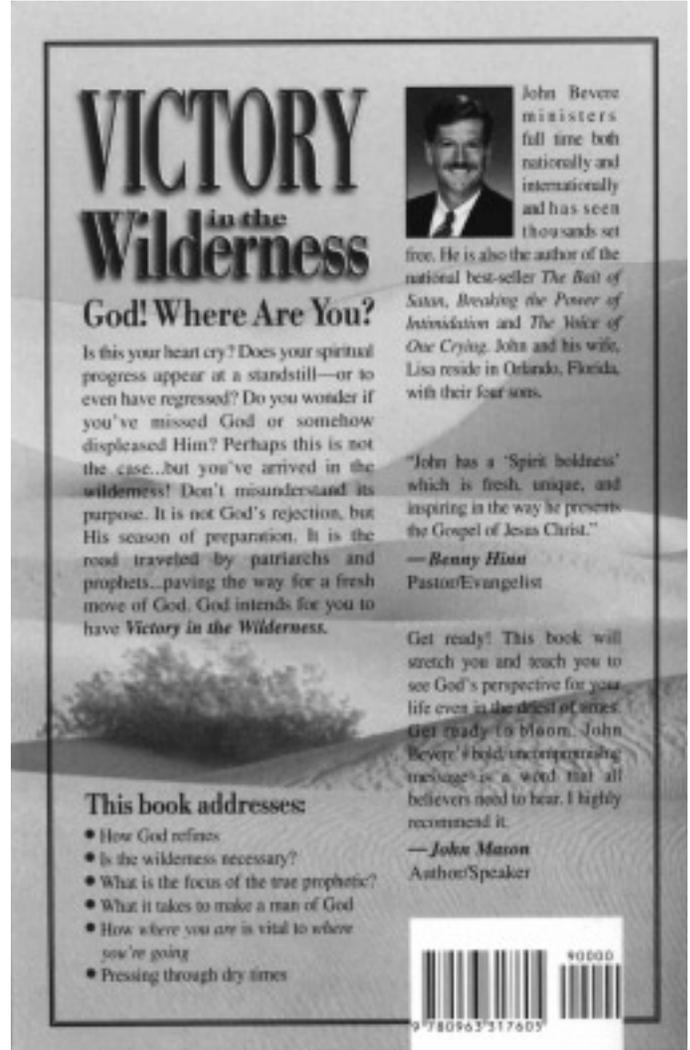
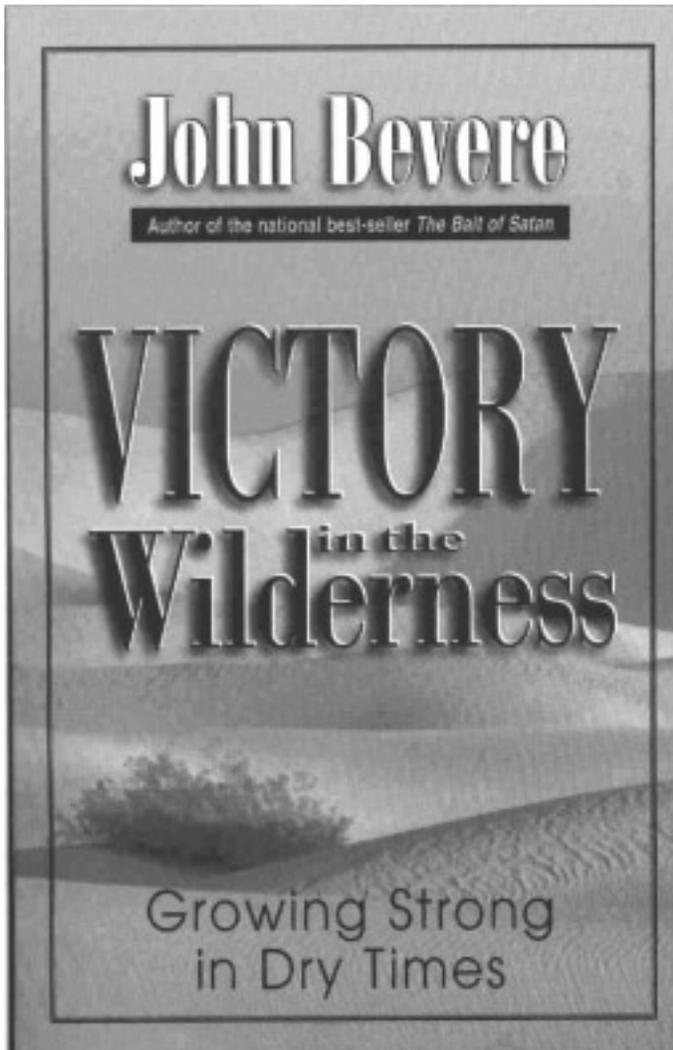
Jim Rector was simply reading the book into the tape, changing a word here and there, pausing to add commentary at times. Later research showed that Jim Rector read most of the book throughout his tape series (see box at left).

The first thoughts that came to mind were: **Why do it this way?** If a book shows understanding from the Bible, a teacher can read the book and preach the same message from the Bible (not from the book). **If the message in the book is from God, then why not give credit to the man whom God gave the**

message to? If the message is not from God, then why copy it? **Can't we speak what God gives to us?**

People have a right to know whose message they are listening to! On the right middle of the back cover, the wilderness book is recommended by Benny Hinn. In fact, John Bevere was an assistant pastor to Benny Hinn. When you hear someone say we need more of the Holy Spirit in our lives, you probably think of righteous character and ability to do what God wants. But if you watch one of Benny Hinn's television specials, you will find a person that is "full of the Holy Spirit" uncontrollably falls over backwards. This is standard practice for his televised appearances. Some people are injured by their fall. Is that the way that you want to be "full of the Holy Spirit"? John Bevere has not left this movement, he is cur-

Wilderness Book Chapters Used in Rector Tape Series		
Date	Name of Tape	Chapter in Bevere's Book
5/9/98	<i>Triumph in the Wilderness</i>	Introduction & 1-8
5/23/98	<i>A Cry in the Wilderness</i>	Part of 6, most is original
6/27/98	<i>Judgment in the Wilderness!</i>	9 & 10
7/11/98	<i>Preparation in the Wilderness</i>	11 & 12
7/25/98	<i>New Life in the Wilderness</i>	13, 14 & 15
8/8/98	<i>Water in the Wilderness</i>	16 & 17



rently a key speaker at the "Rivers of Fire" conference in the UK.

There is much more that could be said—both good and bad—about John Bevere's book. It may have many valid points of encouragement, on the other hand it sets the reader up for some "great move of God", while providing very little of the practical instruction from the Eternal. One statement I did agree with was directed to Bible teachers and found on pages 116-117:

Preacher, don't do something just because someone else did and it was successful. Don't copy another's ministry....See and hear what the Lord is doing and saying.

This message is biblically sound—and **Jim Rector read it nearly word-for-word onto his July 11th tape.** But there were other parts of the book that I disagreed with. The real issue is that **we all need to know who is teaching what so we can know what he means and what his agenda is.**

My Own Matthew 18 Process

Before I even read any significant amount of Bevere's book, I realized my own Matthew 18 process must begin. I was offended that Jim was doing this—offended that I had recommended his tapes and sent his literature for so long and did not even know about it. I sent Jim this e-mail on March 23rd:

Jim,

I received a letter from an SN subscriber commending me on my "exposing" of the plagiarism of Herbert Armstrong. They felt it was wrong for someone to represent their teaching as their own understanding from the Eternal when it came from another writer. The writer went on to ask if I would "expose" a modern-day teacher who was doing the same thing. I explained the process of Matthew 18 to the subscriber, saying that the right thing to do was to go to the person first and give them a chance to fix the problem if there was one. If that failed then, they should take other witnesses, and then finally expose it.

For whatever reasons, the person did not want to go through all of these steps, but they told me enough that I thought I should personally pursue it. I purchased a copy of John Bevere's "Victory in the Wilderness" and found that your 5/9/98 tape matches chapter 1

of the book and your 6/27/98 tape matches chapter 9. Though you certainly added your own thoughts, you read word for word from this book in many places. Yet, you seem to be characterizing this teaching as your own understanding.

I think Bevere has many good points in this book that would help our former "Church of God" brethren. I am not against him or it. I can see how you would think that they might not accept the teaching if they knew it was coming from a "Charismatic" teacher. But the "CoG" teachers are losing credibility and dying off. It is a much more urgent need that brethren learn to learn from teachers that might not understand the Sabbath or other truth, but understand some things about a relationship with the Eternal.

Today, with electronic communications, it is only a matter of time until people will find out the source of your tape series. When they do, you will probably lose a lot of credibility and bring a bad name to the independent Sabbatarian movement. I think you should be the first one to tell your mailing list the source you used in your teachings. You should probably explain why you did not give the source to begin with, but then explain that it was a mistake and that they need to know that there are non-CoG people that they can learn from. Also, it would be good if you would give them some pointers in how to sort out the good from the bad in "Charismatic" literature.

If I am missing something here, please let me know. If we have faith in the Eternal, we never have to fear doing what is right. Servants' News lost some subscribers when I wrote about taking bread and wine more than once a year. More are discontinuing as a result of our writings about Herbert Armstrong. If it turns out that I need to look for something else to do to support my family other than Servants' News, I will do it—because that is what the Eternal wants me to do. But at least I know that I told the truth about what I understood.

May the Eternal guide you in what you decide to do about this.

—Norman S. Edwards

Matthew 18 Continued—Witnesses

I received an apology and statement of repentance from Jim on March 28th, but he gave no specific plan of how he would inform those on his mailing list. I informed four of Jim's friends and sup-

porters of the problem and they went to him privately. I do not have records of all of their letters and phone calls, but everyone contacted him. **In this process, some mentioned that they thought others of Jim's works might be plagiarized.** I searched on the internet and found a summary of plagiarism law. I found that I could also become legally liable if I continued to distribute literature (even if its free) that I knew might be plagiarized. When I realized this, **I discontinued sending Jim's literature and I asked Jim for a list of his works that he knew were not plagiarized.** I am still waiting for that list.

After much coaxing by his friends and supporters, Jim sent this to his mailing list on April 11:

Dear Brethren,

Greetings to everyone. I realize that it has been a while since the last tape, but we have been so busy with traveling and speaking, that it has just been impossible to keep up the regular schedule. I do not feel, however, that it is necessary or incumbent upon me to always make a tape every week, as though someone's life depended on it. In fact, it is very dangerous to fall victim to depending upon one man to supply spiritual food. That being said, I am indeed thankful to be able to send out this current tape to you, with hopes that it will be of value.

I also want to make a public confession and apology. Although most of you would never know about this incident, it has been brought to my attention that I neglected to give proper credit to someone whose material I utilized in some of the **wilderness** tapes of recent months. His name is John Bevere and the title of his book is **Victory in the Wilderness**. It was never my intention to palm off the truth as that of my own. I believe that truth comes from God, and that the main task is to get it out to others. Although I expanded greatly on things that I read and gleaned, in doing so, I should have made mention of Mr. Bevere's work and given him the credit he deserves. What I did was wrong, and I take full responsibility for the mistake. I ask forgiveness from any who might be offended by this omission, as indeed I have taken the matter before God and truly repented.

Some of God's people are afraid to delve into the work of non-Sabbatarian writers, but if one is diligently seeking the

truth and not the promoting of his own work or self, and if one is carefully guided by the Spirit, it is altogether possible to glean very true and useful information from sources other than those with a WCG background. I do urge anyone so inclined to be cautious, yet open to the reception of truth, but always ready and willing to immediately discard error. And don't make the mistake I did—give credit where it is due.

I would like to devote the remainder of this two-page letter to this year's Feast of Tabernacles....

—Jim Rector

While humble in nature, this statement did not begin to tell the truth. Unless those on his mailing list bought *Victory in the Wilderness*, they would have no idea that Jim read most of the book on his tapes. It said nothing about possible other plagiarized works. It was not until his friends and supporters spent hours telling him it was not enough, and until Pam Dewey wrote him and told him that if he would not tell the whole story that others would, that Jim finally sent this to his mailing list on April 20, 1999:

Dear Brethren,

This is a difficult, but necessary, letter to write. As you will recall from our previous correspondence, I made a public confession of utilizing outside material in making some of the wilderness tapes without giving due credit. I must tell you candidly that what I did went far beyond mere reliance. I often read directly from the source, word-for-word. This can only be described as a form of deception on my part, and I will be contacting the publisher and author of the book with regard to this incident.

I cannot blame anyone for concluding that my motive was for selfish purposes. I suppose that none of us really knows his or her heart at every moment in time. I have searched my own heart in this matter and am forced to conclude that the constant pressure to keep putting out tapes, combined with personal faults and weaknesses, especially the desire to be perceived by others as more than I really am—more spiritual, more knowledgeable—have resulted in allowing people to have an elevated opinion of me. I was dead wrong in what I did, and I am absolutely resolved that it never happen again.

I hope that this incident will be a

learning experience, not only for me, but for anyone who embarks upon a public ministry. Do not do as I did, and always remember that God is the originator, possessor, and distributor of truth. Seek it out therefore, wherever it may be found, but make certain not to elevate or worship the human source.

This episode has been a bitter pill to swallow, but I have to learn my own hard lessons just like everyone else. I realize that my integrity has been damaged. Accordingly, therefore, I am going to step back for an indeterminate period of time to give myself the space to focus upon drawing closer to God, coming to the deepest possible repentance, and seeking further His will in my life. That means that there will be no more new tapes going out until further notice. I regret so much the disappointment that I may have caused, but I know that God is merciful, forgiving, and fully able to continue the molding process. I ask for your forgiveness and your prayers.

As for the Feast of Tabernacles, we will go ahead with our plans to hold it in Branson, MO at the Pointe Royale Resort. You should already have the letter with all the details. I cannot thank God enough for the privilege of being involved in this outreach effort for the last 8 years. There is good and bad in such undertakings. Even at their best, tape ministries are subject to some of the same problems that occur quite frequently in the corporate churches, and indeed at some point, all public ministries must give way to the movement of God's Spirit in the individual believer, a day whose coming I pray is near! Please remember that your salvation does not in any way depend upon me or any man. Always seek God and His will for you personally. You must keep pressing on, growing up to the full stature of Christ. In whatever way we can help or be of service under the present circumstances, we stand ready to do so. Thank you so much for your devotion to God and the freedom He has achieved through our Lord and Savior. Hold fast!

Sincerely,
Jim Rector

This statement was much more truthful. It is probably best that he step back from his ministry over this issue.

Just One Time or a Habit?

But I continued to wonder why Jim

Rector, a man with a successful ministry for years, would suddenly decide to read someone's book and pretend that it was his own. He had produced enough material on his own in the past. Neither I nor his friends could get a satisfactory answer. Again, I asked for a list of Jim's works which he knew were not plagiarized. Meanwhile, my wife began to read some of Jim's publications. She felt that his first Cornerstone issue, *The Heart of the Matter*, went back and forth between two different writers. Pam Dewey asked the Eternal to show her if this writing was somehow plagiarized. She vaguely recognized a story in it that compared the Holy Spirit to a tea bag in a teacup (a Christian). By searching these words on the internet, she found Jim Rector's *Heart of the Matter* and an excerpt from *Spiritual Burnout: When Doing All You Can Isn't Enough* by Malcolm Smith (ISBN 0-89274-517-7, copyright 1988).

We found several editions of the book available with different copyright dates, but most were identical. When they arrived, it was soon clear that *The Heart of the Matter* was largely taken from this book. Words are changed, sections are added and of course, much is left out. But there are a number of places that are word for word the same. The following list consists of *The Heart of the Matter* page numbers, followed by the corresponding *Spiritual Burnout* page numbers: (7:27, 8:28, 11:35-36, 19:67, 22:72, 23:92) There are more smaller sections that correspond.

On April 29, I sent this e-mail:

Jim,

How are you doing? I hope you have a grasp of where God wants you to be going. I hope you received my last e-mail.

Have you come up with a list of your books and tapes that you are sure are not copied from somewhere else? Recently, other people have come to me with concerns that some of your other works might have been partially copied. I have not had time to check this all out. I am not sending any of your things out until I get a list from you of what you are sure is your own material. Even if your ministry ends permanently, it would be good to have such a list as others may still copy your tapes and literature for quite a while. That way, anybody who was concerned about copying plagiarized material would have a way to know which is O.K.

I have a few days before the next SN goes to press. Is there a plan for the feast you were organizing? Is someone else going to run it?

May the Eternal strengthen you in this time of needed recovery.

—Norman S. Edwards

On May 4, I received this response:

Dear Norm,

I trust that things are going well for you and your family. Thanks so much for your recent post, to which I shall briefly respond in this letter.

First of all, from my best recollection, the articles that you have from me should be fine for distribution, with the exception of "The Heart of the Matter." I still need to look into it to determine if it can be sent out intact as is. I don't know if you ever sent out any tapes. If so, I am not aware of it. If so, please do not continue until we have searched them out for any problems they might contain. [Feast info followed]

—Jim Rector

I responded on May 7 with this letter:

Jim,

The reason I asked for a list of your articles and tapes that are **not** copied from something is because I am becoming more and more convinced that many, maybe most, of your articles and tapes are taken from some other book or sermon. Several others have come to me

with things that you have clearly copied. Is your plan to "repent" of each one as someone points it out?—And forget about the ones where nobody can find the original source material?

Jim, have you repented of all copying of others works, or just the ones that people have found out about?

Do you really expect me to believe that you typed numerous paragraphs from a book and put it into an article and now no longer remember doing it? Do you expect me to believe that you read large portions of a book into a tape recorder and no longer remember from what book you read from?

How can you honestly let people continue to duplicate Jim Rector tapes and literature knowing that they are not really Jim Rector? How can people make an honest decision on whether to continue listening to you or not when they don't know what is Jim Rector and what is some other Christian author?

—Norman S. Edwards

As of May 19th, Jim had not responded to this letter. Meanwhile, my wife was reading over other Jim Rector notes. We had hoped to report on his informative presentation at the December 1998 "In The Footsteps of the Messiah" seminar in Wagoner, Oklahoma. Jim's message, *A Radical Departure*, showed the many practices and traditions of the modern Christian churches are not from Scripture but from Catholic tradition and ultimately Pagan religion. These things included pastors, pulpits, pews, sermons, choir robes, seminaries, etc. At the end of the message, Jim said, "But these are 10 or 11 things that just came to my mind that indicate that we all need a radical departure from what we have been accustomed". He further elaborated that we all need to totally rely on God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit to "move forward to where the church used to be".

This presentation was taped and distributed to hundreds of people. Jim's

Read the Books Yourself

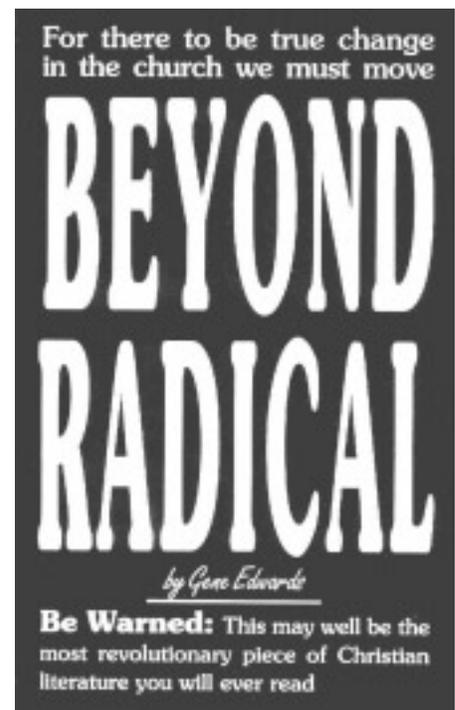
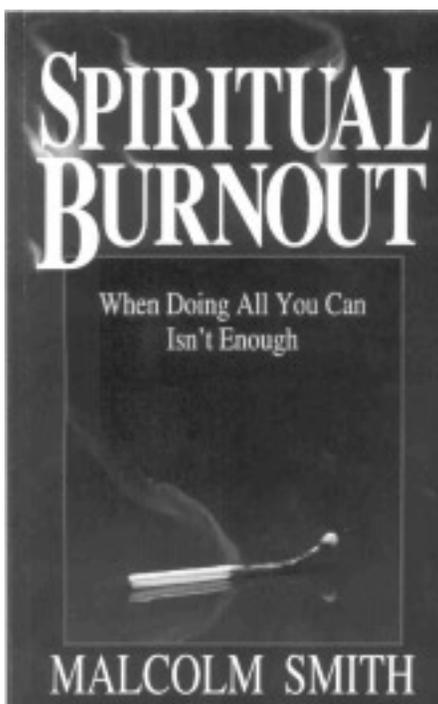
Victory in the Wilderness and *Spiritual Burnout* are available from most local Christian bookstores or from national stores like Barnes & Noble; 800-843-2665; web-site: bn.com. *Beyond Radical* is available for \$5.95 from: The Seed Sowers, Box 285, Sargent, GA 30275, 800-645-2342.

statements lead us to believe that Jim came up with the message on his own. However, in the book, *Beyond Radical* by Gene Edwards, we read the very same message, with **much identical wording taken from pages 9 through 19**. Jim never mentioned any sources—especially Gene Edwards, a popular Christian writer with many books to his name.

Matthew 18: To the Church

I and the others who went to Jim Rector tried to show him that his whole concept is terribly wrong. The end does not justify the means. It is not all right to steal another man's teaching just because the teaching will do others some good. It is not OK to pretend you do not know where your material came from when you do. (It is not right to call yourself a Bible teacher if you have no idea where your material came from.) Jim would admit the things that we proved to him, but he would never reveal any other plagiarism on his own. Hence, we have "taken it to the church."

We recommend that no one duplicate Jim's material until he does produce a list of his material that is not plagiarized. We will not reveal other plagiarized items we know of until he does. The scriptures show that there is a need for Bible teachers. If you find a good book, tell others about it. But if you believe that the Eternal is leading you to teach, do not copy somebody else, but **speak what God gives you!** 



Sifting the “Wheat” from the “Chaff”

We print the following article, **not because we agree with it**, but as an **exercise** in helping our readers analyze Bible teachings and **find error**. Richard Scott, the author of this article, imitates many of the methods used by Herbert Armstrong and his followers (Scotts’ magazine is called *The Pure Truth*). The article starts by putting down the readers and threatening them with eternal death if they do not understand the Bible the way that Richard Scott understands it. The article also denounces people’s Sabbath-keeping as “prideful and self-serving” when most people who do keep the Sabbath are doing it in the way they believe to be biblical. These things sometimes stir up fear in readers and often prevent the reader from thinking logically. There are clear and obvious biblical answers to this article. Can you figure them out on your own? —Norman Edwards

Counting the Scriptural Sabbath ...When IS It?

The trouble with most supposed "sabbath-keepers" today is that they have evidently forgotten how to count to seven; and therefore they actually violate the sabbath commandment, even as they try the hardest to obey it!
by Richard Scott

Are you a “sabbath keeper” who actually **breaks** the sabbath commandment? Do you **really** know when the sabbath is commanded to be kept?!? Don’t be too sure that you can answer these questions before you’ve considered the following evidence, as set forth in this article, or else you could be counted among the deceived and the outcasts on Judgment Day who thought they had it made, salvation wise, who’ll learn to their sorrow just how wrong they were!

There are many prideful, self-serving religious beliefs, and none are more so than those that purport to teach the revealed scriptural sabbaths. How much faith should we put into any of these attempts to explain the sabbath commandment in the guise of the modern week, and in the light of popular religious dogma and traditions of the past and present? What does **scripture alone** teach us?

A Historical Perspective

Putting aside for now the question about whether or not the annual Feast sabbaths are still commanded to be observed today, let’s simply put ourselves back in time to the very moment when the Ten Commandments were first given to the children of Abraham, as they assembled together before the smoking, cloud-enshrouded Mount Horeb. Let’s imagine ourselves standing there in their midst, on that frighteningly glorious day, and let’s try to understand the fourth commandment as they had to understand it, in the light of the yearly Feast sabbaths.

For the sake of argument let’s even assume that the modern week, with its pagan planetary and false idol names for the seven days, actually existed then, and furthermore let’s assume that we are keep-

ing a specific sabbath some time following the giving of the Ten Commandments, and that this sabbath also happens to fall on the day we call “Saturday” today. Finally, let’s also assume that the next day is the Feast sabbath known as Pentecost (since the Feast sabbaths **were** commanded to be observed then, see: Exodus 12, 34:18, 22-23; Leviticus 23), which for the sake of our assumptions would put this Feast sabbath on a “Sunday.”

Based on these given assumptions, can you determine when the very **next** sabbath should be kept, based on the sabbath commandment alone? If you are to remain true to that commandment, could the next regular sabbath possibly be, as everyone automatically assumes today, the next Saturday, six days following the Feast sabbath? Is the next Saturday the **seventh** day, according to the sabbath commandment?

Defining the Sabbath

The word “sabbath” means “to rest,” or “desist from exertion,” or “stop working or playing” in plain English (see: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Hebrew Dictionary listings #7673, 7676 & 7677). The sabbath, or **rest** day, was a certain identifiable day, a specific time period when this ceasing from work and play was commanded to be observed. This includes the annual Feast sabbaths, which are also commanded sabbath periods of rest or repose (see: Leviticus 23:4-39; esp. verse 32).

When does the sabbath commandment specifically tell us the next sabbath following Pentecost must be observed? Notice: “the **seventh** day is a sabbath” (Exodus 20:10; Deuteronomy 5:14). This regular sabbath recalls the seventh (Strong’s

Hebrew listing #7637) day of creation (see: Genesis 2:2), when our Creator **rested** from all of His creative work (Exodus 31:17).

But is that ALL there is to this commandment? Or is there something else—some vital **missing** key—that has been lost and must be restored, which helps us define and pinpoint exactly which day the next true sabbath is, without which we **cannot** know or discover the regular sabbaths?!?

What **else** does the sabbath commandment say? Notice: “**six days** you shall labor and do all your work” (Exodus 20:9; Deuteronomy 5:13). Let’s look at this part of the sabbath commandment a little closer, and examine it to see exactly what it really means.

Counting the Sabbath

First, it should be obvious to anyone who knows how to count to seven that without six work days there can be no seventh day of rest. **Six** days of **work** are the required foundation or prerequisite for every regular **seventh-day sabbath**. You simply **cannot** have one without the other!

Now starting from our assumed Feast sabbath of Pentecost (a yearly sabbath day, commanded to be kept or observed on the same annual date every year, regardless of which day of the modern week this happens to be), that falls the day after our assumed Saturday sabbath, exactly when would the next sabbath be? Can it possibly be the very next Saturday? In other words, does the week as we know it today go all the way back to creation, in an unbroken chain of seven-day sabbath weeks, so that the very first sabbath (when the Creator rested from all His creative work) was provably a Saturday?

Let’s see. Since Pentecost is a Feast sabbath when no work is allowed (Leviticus 23:16, 21), it therefore cannot possibly at the same time be called a “work day” at all! So since Saturday, in our example, follows this Feast sabbath only six days later, how can it possibly be the “seventh” day following “six work days,” as commanded?!?

Remember, without the foundation (six commanded days of work) by which the

sabbaths are set apart and defined, it is impossible to call the **sixth** day, in this case, "the sabbath," **without violating or breaking the sabbath commandment!**

The Seventh Day or Not?

Calling the **sixth** day (or any day **other** than the **seventh** day) a "sabbath" is ludicrous, and totally violates the sabbath commandment. But for the sake of those who are too dazed to get the significance or truth of this assertion, let's be the Saturday-keepers' advocate, and ask: Why isn't the following Saturday a sabbath in this case? Isn't it the "seventh day" following the prior sabbath?

However, the answer must be: No, not at all! Since one of the intervening days is a sabbath day (a special yearly Feast rest day sabbath), that same day therefore simply **cannot** also be counted as one of the six commanded work days, attempting to determine or prove when the next regular sabbath must be observed! And why not?

Simply because work days and rest days are complete opposites, are totally incompatible concepts, and therefore cannot ever be confused, if we truly desire to learn the **real pure truth** about this matter. If you are still confused about all this, try asking any child of reasonable intelligence to explain to you whether a rest day can also be a "work day" at the same time, in order to correctly determine when the next sabbath day must be kept.

The answer should be obvious to you (unless you reject what the scriptures say, and are determined to interpret away the meaning, in order to follow a preconceived but false doctrinal stand learned from a deceived and equally false faith). The **next** regular sabbath after a yearly Feast sabbath (Sunday, in our example) must be seven days later (Sunday again), and **not** the following Saturday (only six days later, in this case)!

There absolutely **must** be six consecutive days of **work** observed (see: Exodus 23:12, 31:15), before there can be another **seventh day** sabbath **rest!!!** There is no possible way to get around this iron-clad scriptural fact, no matter how you try to slice it. Anything less than the **seventh** day is keeping a **false** day! That's the way it was in ancient Yasrael, and that is also exactly the way the sabbaths are still commanded to be kept today. Are you **breaking** the Sabbath Commandment?

So then, if the next sabbath really is seven days after an intervening Feast sabbath, as per our example, why doesn't this "break" the

sabbath week? If the sabbath week must always be from one Saturday to the next, this is just what it does. However, where **IN scripture** can you find even one verse, one word, or one syllable that tells us **anything** about **saturday** having **ever** been the sabbath?

Where does **scripture** ever tell us that the seventh day of the scriptural week is Saturday?!? Admit it. Haven't you just always **assumed** that this was true, perhaps because somebody else told you this? But exactly how did they **prove** this to you? Did they prove it with scripture alone? Or did they instead point to some religious **tradition** to support what is in fact an **UNscriptural** teaching and belief (or some historical reference to the same thing), as some sort of supposed "proof" of their claim?

But what if that religious tradition is **false** and cannot be proved scripturally? What should you believe; unprovable religious tradition, or **scriptural fact!** Does it somehow "violate" or "break" the sabbath commandment **not** to observe Saturday as the regular sabbath (or Sunday, for that matter), or does it only violate some false religion's **unproven, unscriptural suppositions?**

The Annual Sabbaths Are the Key!

If you throw out the yearly calendar revealed by the annual sabbaths, or refuse to keep and observe the yearly Feast sabbaths, then you no longer have **any** basis for proving and knowing when to keep the true scriptural seventh-day sabbaths either. If one is to be kept then, by necessity, so must the other; for the regular sabbaths cannot exist or even be known without the yearly Feast sabbaths.

This is precisely why no **prior** sabbath is indicated in the sabbath commandment, before the six commanded days of work, though the commandment presupposes that the prior day must also be a sabbath. The question of whether this can be an annual Feast sabbath is answered by this unacknowledged supposition, by virtue of these also being commanded sabbaths of rest.

In fact, this is the only legitimate, scripturally provable way to determine when the regular sabbaths must be kept, since the annual Feast sabbaths are the **only** rest days specifically pinpointed by date in the sacred calendar that is revealed in the pages of scripture. Once we know the **correct** dates for the annual sabbaths (of which the first day of the year must, be necessity, be one; cf. Exodus 12:1; 1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:4, 8:13, 31:3; Ezra 3:5; Nehemiah 10:33; Isaiah

1:13-14; Ezekiel 45:17, 46:3; Hosea 2:11), then and **only** then can all the regular sabbaths thereby also be discovered, known and observed on the correct days.

Here's another vital missing key: So-called "new moons" are a blatant mistranslation and incorrect traditional supposition! The Hebrew merely says: "new" or "new cycle" (Strong's Hebrew listing #2320; a word totally unrelated to the Hebrew word for "moon," cf. listing #3391) in reference to these days, and so the moon cannot be proven by scripture alone to have ever had anything whatever to do with determining the beginnings of monthly cycles in the inspired sacred calendar revealed in scripture!

Furthermore, in the only places in scripture where lunations are specifically mentioned by name, they are obviously something entirely different from the **new cycle months** which are always numbered and never named in the context of the same verses of scripture where both are mentioned together (cf. 1 Kings 6:37, 38, 8:2). The scriptural new-cycle months began on a specifically commanded day, such as the spring and fall equinoxes (Hebrew: tequphah, Strong's Hebrew listing #8622; cf. Exodus 12:2, 34:22). Why did Moses have to be told when the first day of the new year must be? Simply because he would not have known it otherwise! **The Pure Truth!**

Here's a shocking conclusion that we must draw from these facts, if we are to accept only what scripture reveals to us as the pure truth on this subject: The **true** sabbaths were **lost** centuries ago, and have **not** been accurately kept by **anyone** in all those years, simply because false religious traditions have led us all astray from the simple, provable, incontrovertible **pure truth** revealed in scripture!

This is exactly what the Old Testaments prophets foretold would happen (see: Isaiah 1:13; Lamentations 2:6; Ezekiel 20:13, 16, 21, 24, 22:8, 26, 23:38; Hosea 2:11)! Yet if you believe those who claim that the sabbaths go all the way back to creation, in an unbroken chain of "Saturdays," then all of these scriptures must by necessity be wrong, and the prophets who wrote them must also therefore have all been **false**-prophets.

But **were** they? Or are all those who teach "Saturday sabbaths" false teachers instead?!? The Savior Himself prophesied that a time would come, just before His second coming in the last days or end time, when **all** things would need to be **restored**, and ancient scriptural truths would seem

different or “wrong” compared to the popular but **false** religious teachings of the day (see: Matthew 17:11; Mark 9:12; cf. Malachi 4:6; Luke 1:16-17).

We are living in that very time, right now **today!** It is a time when we must look back to and remember the decrees and laws given to Moses at Mount Horeb; **the Ten Commandments** (Malachi 4:4). It is an age that has completely forgotten the primary duty of humanity is to **fear** their Creator and to **keep His commandments** (Ecclesiastes 12:13)! Nowhere is this fact more evident than in the glut of false religions that for centuries have choked off all true knowledge of those commandments, even while laying claim to upholding and obeying them perfectly, by substituting wicked false teachings in place of **The Pure Truth!**

A Call to TRUE Repentance!

Isn't it high time you stopped in your

COMMENT ON ABOVE ARTICLE: It is easy to see why the author chose Pentecost for his example of counting the Sabbath from each Holy Day. What would happen if he chose the First Day of Unleavened Bread—the 15th of the first month? There are not six work days to the next “Sabbath”, but there are only five (16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th) and then the next Holy Day is the 21st of the month! (Ex 12:18, Lev 23:8.) The fall Holy Days do not fit his theory either: Holy Days fall on the **1st, 10th, and 15 of the month!** If someone worked six days after the first of the month, they would keep the Sabbath on the 8th of the month. But they could only work one day (the 9th), before the Day of Atonement on the 10th. Then, they could only work four days before the 15th of the month.

If the Eternal requires six days of work between every Sabbath (weekly or annual), then He require us to “break the Sabbath commandment”. By this reasoning, anyone who is sick, injured or out of a job would also be breaking the Sabbath commandment by not working those six days. This is obviously faulty thinking. The rest of the Sabbath commandment, talks specifically about who should rest on the Sabbath. The scripture lists only punishments for failing to observe the Sabbath, not for failing to work on the other six days. The importance of the Sabbath commandment is that there are six days between Sabbaths, not that everyone must work

tracks, and carefully considered the direction you have been going spiritually? Isn't it time you gave up all the vain, unprovable, false beliefs you have followed all your life, and made up your mind to find **real** salvation while it is still available? There remains only a brief window of time, before great tribulation and terrible judgment finally strikes this earth, in just retribution against all who utterly **refuse** to give up their criminal anti-commandment religious pursuits, in violation of the sacred commandments of Creator **Yahveh!!**

Shouldn't you be following only the **true** Creator of heaven and earth, instead of **false** “ministers” who refuse to hear or to learn about the mighty truths they simply cannot successfully gainsay, refute or disprove? If it isn't yet clear to you, it soon will be; all those who **take away this pure truth** from scripture by **adding to it** their own peculiar, false, unprovable teachings, are

six days. If you get sick or injured or if a Holy Day occurs, you do not have to restart your “Sabbath” counting.

It is also important to realize that the Sabbath was introduced at creation, before the Holy days. The Bible leaves no specific record of the Holy Days before the time of Moses. When the Sabbath was miraculously introduced to Israel by the coming of manna six days per week, there is no mention of starting to number the Sabbath from a Holy Day (Ex 16). All of the Holy Days were not explained till later in Exodus 23.

The scripture does not even support the idea that the annual Holy Days are observed the same as the weekly Sabbath. The scripture says to do “no work” on the weekly Sabbath (Ex 20:10); the Israelites were instructed to cook for the Sabbath on the previous day (Ex 16:23). Whereas the preparing of food was permitted on Holy days: “On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you” (Ex 12:16).

Also, Jesus had numerous confrontations with Jewish leaders about whether He would heal or do other things they considered work on the Sabbath day. There never was any question of **when** the Sabbath day was. Can we be sure that Christ observed the same seven-day cycle as we observe today? **Yes!** The

under a mighty **curse** for having done so (see: Revelation 22:18-19)!!

Will you follow these accursed individuals and religions, and receive all the **plagues** that they will eventually receive, simply because you closed your eyes and stopped your ears, to prevent yourself from seeing or hearing the **real** truth, in order to follow some unscriptural **heresey** instead? Why should you continue carrying on the cursed practices and teachings of the ancient rebellious Ysraelites, who always refused to obey, observe and keep sacred the **real** sacred sabbaths that Creator Yahveh commands you to keep and observe today?!!

Yahveh help you to see the **pure truth** about the sabbath commandment, and to follow only **his** revealed will on this, and all the rest of His sacred commandments; all of which are still in force and effect today (Matt 5:19-20)! [see comment below] 

Babylonians and Romans also used a seven day week. Jewish communities exist in many places around the world that have continuously existed since their exile by Babylon. There is no disagreement among all of these diverse peoples as to which day is the seventh! About half of the world's languages use a word for the seventh day which is a variant of “Sabbath” (Sabbado, Sabaton, etc.).

The writer even claims that this truth has not been known by anyone for hundreds of years, and also says your salvation is in doubt if you do not know it. How does that fit with Christ's statement that “the gates of hell would not prevail against [his church]”? (Matt 16:18). The Bible says that people are polluting His Sabbaths; but you can look at the beaches of Israel or the malls of most other countries to see that most people do not keep the weekly Sabbath. The true way is narrow—only a small percentage of people keep the Sabbath. Because Richard Scott invents an even *more* narrow way does not mean that it is *more true*. This doctrine is actually very destructive because those who believe it will be keeping a “Sabbath” day other than Saturday most of the time. They will have much less fellowship with other believers. It is wonderful that people are willing to sacrifice this much to obey God—but it is sad that they are sacrificing to obey a man's idea.

For proof of 7-day cycles in creation, ask for our free article *The Mysterious 7-Day Cycle* (see back page). —NSE

Letters & Responses

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.

HWA Prophecy Article Correction

LETTER: March 26, 1999
Dear Servants' News,

I commend *Servants' News* for the fine job of exposing the ridiculously poor track record of one Herbert W. Armstrong in the areas of date-settings, misuse of biblical authority, mental-emotional-spiritual extortion (co-worker letters!), excessive personal lifestyle, etc.

I do want to point out that this same Herbert W. Armstrong **did** set dates prominently **after** "1975 in Prophecy." Please correct this error as stated on your page 31 of the December 1998 SN.

See the following (from my upcoming article on MYSTERY OF THE AGES):

Also on pages 297-298, Mr. Armstrong claims that one of the reasons for the revelations expounded to Nebuchadnezzar was "to reveal—preserved in writing for us TODAY—what is to happen 'in the latter days'—actually within the next two decades—THIS LAST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY!"

Those events (including Christ's Return, Daniel 2:44), therefore, must come to pass by December 31, 2000 A.D. This is another example of Mr. Armstrong setting dates.

Page 301: "Now here (Daniel 2) we have described FOUR universal world empires—the *only* four that ever existed!"

This is gross historical inaccuracy! This time he says "universal world" empires. This is even stronger than his previous simple "universal" empires he wrote about in 1978 (when he also set a date for the end-time events).

The reference to his setting a date in 1978 is, of course, found in his book, *The Incredible Human Potential*, on page 191.

So, even up to a few months before his death in January 1986, Herbert W. Armstrong published in his so-called "magnum opus" a date for the end-time events (which culminate in the return of Christ) by

the end of year 2000 at the very latest.

He never did learn! Nor have some thousands of the brethren who seems oblivious to this and many other obvious errors in the legacy of this man.

Deuteronomy 18:22 has excellent application here!

—Bruce Lyon, California

RESPONSE: Thank you for the correction. Herbert Armstrong certainly "set dates" less often after 1972, but you have obviously shown that he still did. Certainly Mr. Armstrong did not stop Gerald Waterhouse and other WCG preachers from setting dates. We need the faith to believe that the Eternal will take care of us, not that we can follow the man who runs the group that has "the understanding" of prophecy.

—NSE

New Name for *Servants' News*?

LETTER: March 22, 1999
Dear Norm,

I got an idea for a new and more appropriate name you can give the *Servants' News*. How about the *Let's Rip Herbert W. Armstrong Apart News*?

—DC, New York

RESPONSE: We could also change Matthew 23 to the *Let's Rip the Scribes and Pharisees Apart Gospel*. While *Servants' News* is **not the Bible**, we see nothing wrong with using the Bible principle of a balance of spiritual teaching, and pointing out the errors of teachers who are leading others astray. We did not try to attack Herbert Armstrong, but we printed his own writings for the purpose of "proving all things". For years, I and many other WCG members considered Mr. Armstrong "God's apostle", and we would not even begin to look at anything negative about him—even if it was true. Similarly, in Jesus time, the scribes and Pharisees were considered righteous by many people, so Jesus had to show their error in order to teach His truth.

—NSE

Liked the HWA Articles

LETTER: January 5, 1999
Dear Norman,

I've read your *Servants' News* with relief and joy that someone has the courage to tell the truth about HWA. Seems the same thing happened to him as did Solomon. Sad! We should stick to the truths he taught and discard the errors, which are many. Keep up the good work.

I read your November '98 issue of the

SN and was surprised at the comment on page 29, talking about the strength of HWA's arm. It compares to Zachariah 11:16 about idle shepherds. I think GTA has the same problems. When will people learn this is God we are dealing with?

[Literature request omitted].

—Martha Schimmel, Arizona

RESPONSE: In a society that tends to paint most people as either "good guys" or "bad guys", it is often difficult for us to recognize that significant people have done a mixture of both good and bad. Yet the Bible is very consistent in revealing the mistakes of mostly "good" people, and the occasional good things that mostly "bad" people do. Solomon is probably the ultimate example of someone who did both. He built the Temple, wrote songs and proverbs, rendered righteous judgments and many other good things. Yet he also multiplied horses and wives for himself and eventually turned after idols—all of which the Eternal said kings should not do.

—NSE

Was Herbert Armstrong Elijah?

LETTER: January 14, 1999:
Norm,

I am inclined to think not, but the following comments may put the issue into somewhat different perspective. Though I am not an HWA worshipper, nor was I ever a member of WCG, I think the underlying motivation behind this thinking has some merit. Consider that since as far back as the 2nd century A.D. (maybe even the 1st century!) what Christian figure has there been who has dispensed so much truth about scripture? Luther and Calvin, for example, even though they were towering religious figures, were unable to see the truth of the Sabbath and the 'Holy Trinity'. There is no other Christian teacher I have ever heard of since the earliest days of Christianity who has taught the foundational truths he did. This may not make HWA Elijah, but in correcting 2000 years of doctrinal error he certainly has a very special status among God's servants.

I do not think HWA was a prophet—good, bad or indifferent. I am not aware that he ever claimed to be speaking the word of the Lord as he heard it directly from God. The many false predictions he made based on his understanding of scripture do not in my view make him a false prophet.

—Dale Heslin, Canberra, Australia
dale@pcug.org.au

RESPONSE: Herbert Armstrong certainly preached a lot of truth to a lot of people who had never heard it before. However,

there were some doctrines where Mr. Armstrong's teaching "went backwards" from the truth taught by most Protestants. His most obvious error was in the area of government where, toward the end of his life, he taught the "primacy of Peter" doctrine, something long held by the Roman Catholic Church, but rejected by most of the groups that left it and reformed. Elijah was supposed to come and restore "all things", which Herbert Armstrong did not do.

It was the fact that Herbert Armstrong combined these true doctrines with the mass media and the false doctrine of hierarchical government that makes him appear unique in the field of evangelism. The articles current **Servants' News** issues show that many other people have understood many similar truths. But since they did not create a big church organization or followers loyal to themselves, there is no way to count how many people they reached. These groups taught people, who taught other people; they did not feel that they needed to keep track of them all or try to make all of them loyal to a human headquarters.

Even Herbert Armstrong wrote that most of the history of the "true church" was written by its enemies and that the "true church" was rarely ever one centralized human organization. What he did not freely acknowledge is that the church was still that way during his time. There were many others with similar doctrinal understanding whom he knew about or could have known about, but he never mentioned them to the WCG membership. Ellen G. White's work (Seventh Day Adventist) taught far more people to keep the Sabbath than Herbert Armstrong did. When the WCG mentioned Ellen White, it was usually about her prophetic or doctrinal error.

Christ knows His Body—he knows how many people have His Spirit. Of all the truly converted believers during the last 50 years, we have no way of knowing what percentage were in the WCG. For most of his life, Herbert Armstrong taught that all converted people had to be in his group. Up to a few years ago, I would have thought that the majority in Christ's body were also WCG members. But after continually researching other groups with similar teachings, after meeting many people who have come to an understanding on their own, and after seeing the many different things that WCG members believe now, I cannot make any broad conclusion about where all the members the true Church really are. But Christ knows every one of them!

I agree that Herbert Armstrong never claimed to be a prophet or to hear directly from God. However, he frequently claimed

that he, as the head of the one True Church, had been given Biblical understanding by God. He told people that they needed to sacrifice for the work because "time was short"—only a few years. Most of this proved to be untrue.

—NSE

Did HWA Believe There Were Converted People in other Groups?

LETTER: December 30, 1998:
Dear *Servants' News*,

I read your *News* regularly. Today I was reading your take on HWA's teaching (starts on the front page, top) and found that you have once again taken his words and twisted them. Then you continue for 2 more pages making your point, based on taking his words out of context, ALL of which you printed. You were around him a lot more than I. In fact, I am relatively new to the church, but I still think that you know as well as I that HWA believed there were other of God's people around besides WCG. Why lambaste him as though he didn't believe so? And spend 2 pages doing it? What is the reason to so skew what you quoted on page 33?

Each place that HWA states (in your quote) that WCG is the only true body he adds a phrase about the work it is doing. Basically he is saying that WCG is the only Church of God carrying out the work at this time. Now we all know that he is speaking of the work of warning the world and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Whether or not that is the work of God at this time or not, is not relevant to what I am writing about. Much argument has gone on, over the last 5 years especially, as to whether there is a work to do, what the work is, who is doing it, even what is the Gospel. None of those things am I addressing. What I want to know is why you insist on portraying HWA as such an elitist person that he didn't even accept any others as Christians or even as God's church when you know that is not true? HWA often spoke of the Sardis era of God's church as being here in the present. He also knew of folks in South America and some over in Ireland or was it Scotland. In the words you quoted, he is referring to being the only church doing the work of God, and again we all know what HE meant by "the work".

Now one might argue that he was not the only one doing that work, but from my own perspective he was. I grew up in the Congregational Church. When I was 16 I was baptized into a non-denominational Full Gospel church. I graduated in 1971

from Wheaton College, Billy Graham's Alma Mater, with a degree in Christian Education. At Wheaton we had to attend "Chapel" every day. And every day there was another speaker, most from Evangelical Christian groups and services, missionaries, just all kinds of "Christian" fellowships. Within 2 years I became a member of a very interesting group which has no name. Some call them the "no-Namers" others call them the "Black Stockings". They trace themselves back the same way we do, to the Mt's of Switzerland and beyond and do not consider themselves Protestant. I was a member of that group for 12 years. You would like how that group does things, you really would. I even like it, still. They aren't Sabbath keepers, but had a great manner of operation (government as some wd. call it)...well, no time for that. They were 150,000 strong back in the mid '80's and were in almost every country of the world and had been for years. I want to tell you that with all that exposure and training I never once was taught about the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and what it meant, including the warning of how it is to come about, until I read Herbert W. Armstrong in 1985! Seems to me he **was** the only one doing that work at that time, at least in a way many, many could hear.

I think that with the correct understanding of the quote on page 33, that is, reading all of his words and not taking one phrase out of context, one would have to conclude that HWA was right.

Thanks for your time,

—Diana W. Roach, Albuquerque, NM

RESPONSE: I think we represented Mr. Armstrong's approach to other believers very fairly. I have heard from old time church members that he did allow members to fellowship with the Church of God 7th Day in the 1940's, but that seems to have disappeared completely by the 1960's. I spent some time looking for <any> quotation from Herbert Armstrong's writings where he acknowledges that there are brethren outside his organization. All I found was a report by Al Portune dated July 1960 about a group of congregations in the Philippines (called the Salem Church of God) that they said were from "the Sardis era". The group joined the WCG. I could not find any other groups that did not join the WCG acknowledged as being the Church of God. If you can find any, let us know and we will print them.

Lesson 53 of the old correspondence course leads a reader to believe that the Church of God 7th Day (which it calls the Sardis Era) ended in 1933. We quote a paragraph under the subheading: "End of

the Sardis Era" of that correspondence course: "The reorganization by men in 1933 was never to be a success. In just a few years that Church had permanently disintegrated into several ineffective fragments, neglecting much of God's truth."

The reality has been that there are several branches of the Church of God 7th Day that have continuously published literature since that time. Leaders within the Church of God 7th day have given me estimates of the combined size of their groups: between 100,000 and 200,000, most of which are outside the USA. It is possible that combined membership of these Church of God 7th Day groups has always been larger than Armstrong's groups (though the income was certainly smaller) The Bible Advocate has been published continually since 1867, and has been offered free since the 1950's. I have attended several different Church of God 7th day congregations and found some "dead" but others very much alive.

In many of his writings, Herbert Armstrong specifically declares his organization to be "the one and only true church". These claims are made in the context of doctrine, as well as the context of "his work". Armstrong taught that the only way for people who left his work to be saved was for them to rejoin it. Notice the special edition of the Worldwide News, June 24, 1985, written by Herbert Armstrong shortly before his death:

We who remain in the one and only true Church grieve over the loss of those who are so far failing in their final exams....

Now one final reminder to the Church and all loyal ministers. If any who have gone out from this wonderful fellowship that we have in God's one and only true Church, profess repentance and wish to come back, they must now, as John the Baptist said, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance" or prove their repentance by performance over an adequate period of time. I personally do, and hope all of our loyal members will, pray for their repentance and ultimate return.

The Church is the embryo of the coming Kingdom of God, which is the family of God. There will be no divisions in that Kingdom. There must be none in the Church."

Notice that Mr. Armstrong's last statement is very different from 1 Corinthians 11:18-19: "For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you."

It is not surprising that you attended a

very serious religious group for 12 years, and they never come upon various truths of the Bible. You indicated that you had many good experiences there, just as many did in Mr Armstrong's organizations. Yet, if you were to go back to that organization and talk about the Sabbath and Holy Days with them, people would begin to shun you or you might be asked to leave if you made yourself a nuisance. But under Mr. Armstrong, you would probably be asked to leave as soon as you let it be known that you have a doctrine different than his.

The current issues of Servants' News show that there have been many who taught most of the truths that Herbert Armstrong taught, without teaching his error of hierarchical government. If the group you were a member of had 150,000 members and most people never heard of it, it should not be surprising to find many thousands of Sabbatarians that "nobody has ever heard of". The church groups that most people know about are either those that are extremely large, or those that are hierarchical and direct a large amount of money to a central place for a big media outreach. Those teachers who simply taught other brethren and taught them to teach others often never make a big name for themselves, but they may well be serving Christ as He directs.

—NSE

Wanted: A little More Dogmatism

LETTER: February 1, 1999
Hi Norm,

After reading the last issue of The Servants' News I could not help but notice there seems to be a problem of strength in what is said.

No absolutes, no affirmations, just many suppositions, "probables", "I thinks", or "maybes". This is definitely a problem for Christian people seeking a firm foundation of what is preached.

It's very popular to not know anything for sure and patting everybody on the back as there is very little responsibility in that.

But to Know something for sure is what Christ teaches as a strong foundation. (Those are the things Christians are hated for.)

Another thing I noticed is you are preaching around people like Jim Rector. A man that teaches Christ is going to return and rule with a Shepherds crook and hug this world? I'm afraid your Servants new is become a lot rice pudding.

Regretfully yours,

—Eugene Crawford, Pennsylvania

RESPONSE: I authoritatively say that

mankind has sinned, does not measure up to the righteous standard of the Eternal, needs to repent, and needs a Savior. I say that all men will be judged for what they have done in this life. I say that the vast majority of judgment scriptures talk about how we treat our neighbors, not about what doctrines we believe or practice.

I do not make authoritative statements about prophecies or other doctrines where the scripture is not clear and where we have no revelation from the Eternal. Furthermore, I am now encouraging people to be careful about the authoritative statements of "church leaders" when they have obviously spoken many untruths in the name of the Eternal.

There is no doubt that Christ will return and rule some with a "rod of Iron". There are always some who think they know better than He does, and will only respond to a "rod of iron." On the other hand, the Bible speaks of God's rule in terms of His "bride" and caring for lambs. Most people who are successful at being a husband or a shepherd have learned that "hugs" are much more effective than beatings—especially if one intends to live forever without crying.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! (Matt 23:37.)

Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young (Is 40:10-11).

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Rev 21:2-4).

We could debate that exact time that these prophecies are going to be fulfilled, but the reality is that our Father and His Son want to deal with compassion and love toward us. There are hundreds of other scriptures like these.

—NSE

Toleration in 1st Century Church

LETTER:

November 2, 1996:

Norman,

I hope y'all had a rewarding FOT. We certainly did.

Just before the FOT we received the Aug 1996 issue of Servant's News. In it you wrote an article on Toleration. I sincerely believe you mis-used a scripture in justifying your stance. That scripture is Titus 1:10. You seemed to use it to justify tolerating some fairly serious differences of doctrine. If you will read Titus 1:5-13, I think you will see the context is not one of tolerating these people that were in error (according to Paul) but what was at issue was for Titus to **1)** set in order the things that were in error (v5), **2)** stopping the mouths of those who were subverting whole houses by teaching error and **3)** rebuking them sharply so they might be sound in the faith. Quite a difference!

Paul told Titus not to tolerate these people but to correct them. I believe this is completely different from the picture of tolerance you were trying to paint with this scripture.

One thing I have become very sensitized to is the mis-use of scripture. Some of it I believe is done innocently, but that doesn't excuse it and correction should be made when it is noted. Other times mis-use occurs to support a pet theory or through complete lack of caring for the proper use of God's Word. This is a dangerous attitude to have. I hope it was an innocent error on your part and I would appreciate your feed back on this issue.

Sincerely,

—Jim Alexander, San Angelo, Texas

RESPONSE: Jim, I know this is over 2 years old, but it became lost in my e-mail:

I used Titus 1:10 on page 10 of that issue to show that there were still people "of the circumcision" even though the apostles wrote years ago (in Acts 15) that it was not necessary to be circumcised for salvation. Paul clearly believed this to be an error—both in Acts and when he wrote to Timothy. Nevertheless, he writes to Timothy and tells him to give **correction** to those "of the circumcision". They were still considered to be "in the church". Whereas in most "Church of God groups, anyone who openly believed a significantly different doctrine would receive **rejection**—they would be told that they are no longer welcome in that church group.

An even better example of Christ himself allowing those with doctrinal error to remain in the fellowship is found in Revelation 2 and 3. These seven churches

really existed at that time. They were within 100 miles of each other—brethren traveling between cities would have visited each other's congregations. Yet, several of the congregations held different doctrines from each other, and in some cases individuals within one congregation also held different doctrines (Rev 2:24, 3:4). Christ makes no command for the righteous people to leave or reject the unrighteous people, but commands each individual to repent, to overcome and to listen all of the messages to all of the churches.

I am constantly amazed at how many teachers and groups discover a new doctrine, and then insist that anyone who does not believe that doctrine is not part of the true church. Yet, they did not believe that doctrine themselves only a few years ago—and they were not "rebaptized" when they came into a knowledge of that doctrine. In other words, they did not consider themselves "unconverted" for the 10, 20 or 30 years in which they did not understand that doctrine. But why do they not realize that Christ may take 10, 20 or more years to reveal the doctrine to others? Christ runs His work, not the man who knows (or thinks he knows) the most truth!

—NSE

Comments on Using Sacred Names

LETTER:

January 30, 1999

Hi everyone at *Servants' News*,

I in no way want anyone to feel judged or offended by my following comments: it's just something I felt compelled to say after reading several letters in *Servants' News*

From personal experience: I have prayed to God; Our Father; the Eternal; Almighty; Most High and my prayers have been answered. I still pray as such, sometimes adding YHWH, etc. and many times all the above. God is still showing me that He is involved in my daily life.

I also personally feel, from what I have read in scripture, that everything will be new; the old will have passed away (Isa 65:17, NKJ).

Also: "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1Cor 2:9, NKJ).

God, the Eternal, YHWH, places us in the body as it pleases Him (1Cor 12:18, NKJ). He has a job/purpose for each of us (1Cor 12:4-6,11, NKJ) regardless of our understandings. We must yield to Him.

May all find the peace that transcends understanding.

—DB, Michigan

RESPONSE: Thank you for your kind

words. There are many thousands of people through the ages who sought to obey God and never had any way to even get an idea of how the Eternal's name may have been pronounced in Hebrew.

—NSE

Is Germany Judah?

LETTER:

February 8, 1999

Greetings Norm,

I am writing in search of material that might help me in one of my studies, in the area of prophecy. Years ago, someone suggested to me the idea that Germany equals Judah. But I have lacked sufficient material to really get into the subject. It seems like a worthwhile effort, however, since The Thirteenth Tribe (Arthur Koestler, 1976) makes an apparently convincing case that the modern Israelis are not Judah. If true, it reverses the current interpretation of some major end time prophecies. It will leave those, taught by HWA that Germany equals Assyria, shamed and embarrassed if the major bad guy turns out to be a good guy!

Have any of your readers submitted papers on the subject of Germany equals Judah? If so, can you share copies with me?

—CS, Texas

The New Testament makes clear that Jesus was a Jew, and that he "came to his own and his own received him not". The writings of Josephus and Philo as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls make it very clear that the Jews responsible for Talmudic Judaism are the clear descendants of the Jews that were alive at the time of Christ. A person who "converts" to Judaism is treated as a Jew no matter what he believes, so there may be many people from many other backgrounds now mixed in among the Jews. A branch of these Jews may have moved to Germany, but to say that those who claim to be Jews today are not is a mistake. There are Jews who were cut off from mainstream Judaism for hundreds of years that have essentially the same beliefs.

—NSE

Only Farmers Tithe for Feasts?

LETTER:

September 26, 1998:

The Eternal did seem to command tithe for the farmer to go to the Feast, but I guess all the non-farmers were not required to go to the Feast since they were not required to tithe. I see absolutely no scriptures to indicate the festival portion of the single tithe to be allocated to non-strangers, non-widow, non-fatherless or to anyone else. The Eternal said to the farmer alone that he was

to satisfy his heart's desires with, not foot the bill for everyone else. So history gives us a clear and straightforward command from the Eternal to keep the Feast only if you are a farmer. I'm not a farmer so I don't have to keep the Feasts.

—Colin Bourne

I'm sorry to take so long to reply. I had over 5000 e-mail messages in my in-basket a month ago and many things got lost. I am now down to about 300. I do not believe you are a Servants' News subscriber. If you would like to be, please send us your address, and we will send it to you.

If you will feel comfortable in the judgment explaining to Christ that the Bible teaches that Feasts are only for farmers, then you should not keep the Feasts (Rom 14:23).

However, I think you should consider Leviticus 23 and the other scriptures which command the keeping of the Feasts without any mention of tithes. Certainly the tithe from the land God gave had specific uses, one of which was the Feasts. But there is no scripture that says those without tithes need not keep the feasts. Indeed, those who did not keep the Passover were commanded to be "cut off" from their people (Num 9:13). There is much evidence that all Israel sometimes kept the Feast (1Kngs 8:2,65; 2Kngs 23:21; 2Chr 5:3; 7:8; 30:1,5,18). In the New Testament, Christ and his apostles were not farmers, but we have records of Feasts that they kept. The scripture certainly says that one can buy whatever food they desire at the feast (Deut 14:26). But the idea of extravagance is not in the Bible—it may have come from the poor KJV translation of this verse ("whatsoever thy soul lusteth after"), or simple human greed. Most Israelites dwelt in booths or tents, not expensive Jerusalem hotels during the Feasts. You can attend a feast without second tithe—by planning for its cost just like you plan for your food, shelter, transportation and other necessities.

—NSE

Seeks Understanding on Global

LETTER: February 10, 1999
Dear Mr. Norman Edwards,

I have to say at this time I have been so upset with what has been taking place in the churches, now for me in the past two and three years, starting with the Worldwide and now with Global. I was so impressed with your letters and what I have read. I have been asking for sometime now, what was the real reason for the split in Global, I felt I knew, which was really no more than a power struggle, but they never did say just what the problem was or why.

And what bothered me most was these

people who were servants and shepherds of God, supposedly having understanding and walking in the spirit of God, would carry on in a carnal mind. These men break up the church and they preach to the brethren, asking the brethren to walk in the spirit, putting the load on their shoulders, asking the brethren to understand and support them as leaders of God.

I am so upset and feel so let down because I think we need to keep things in perspective (in love for God and His Word). People who are supporting His church have to be living proof of loving and walking in the spirit of Christ, our Lord and Savior.

And speaking of the spirit of God, I don't know how anyone can grieve or could grieve the Holy Spirit more than these people who claim to be leaders have. The shepherds are having less respect and love for God and His way of life, than the sheep.

I am so grateful for what I have seen and read about the Global Church and also of Mr. Armstrong in your writings. I have been with the Worldwide and a member since the early 80's and would not want to have missed out on anything. I have worked for and fought for understanding. But again you have explained it. Thank you so much.

—RF, Maine

RESPONSE: The basic problem is quite simple. These leaders see their church organization as "the Work of God". Therefore, they think that anything they do to help their organization is approved of God and anyone who opposes their organization is evil and their is no reason to deal with them in a Christian manner. The Bible, of course, says nothing about church organizations. I hope that these men soon realize that they will be judged for how they treat everyone, not for how they perpetuate their own organization.

—NSE

Open Letter to Both the Global & Living Churches of God

LETTER: January 3, 1999

I've read all the Letters (the garbage) from both sides, and I'm really not impressed. Neither seems to have a Christian attitude, it's just "he said- she said". Like a bunch of little kids. Where's the Humility that one would expect from the very ones that we are looking to for Spiritual guidance?? Anybody with a ounce of brains can see the **politics** involved in this whole thing.

I see what I feel is a problem that real-

ly needs to be addressed, and the sooner the better (my opinion). That of the understanding of the word "**work**". I think the real problem here is not totally one of Government, but one of which direction the Church should be headed! By this I mean, do we "Try" to preach the Gospel to the world (a sick and dying world, one that God does "not" care about at this time) or prepare the Church to be acceptable as the Bride of Christ??

Most (even some ministers) still think of the word "Work", in the way that it was pounded into us under Mr. Armstrong, to Preach the Gospel in all the World to the end. Where in scripture does it say this? This is not possible!! Maybe we really need to look into what Truly constitutes the Work—what the "Work" is at this time, the END Time—what the Church should be doing at this time—where we are in time!

Mr. Armstrong ushered in the Philadelphia Era. The Philadelphia Era was given an open door according to Rev.3:7. In 1981, I think the March issue of the W.W.N. Mr. Armstrong stated something like—I think when I die, the work that God called me to do will be finished. God gave Mr. Armstrong an "Open Door" to go to (in) the World and Preach, Proclaim, and Publish, the Gospel, Rev. 3:8. In verse 7, it states "he (God) that opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens". Obviously showing that there will be a time when "He" (God) will open a Door which no one (man or otherwise) can shut, (this was the time while under Mr. Armstrong's leadership) the other side of the coin is that God (can) will close that Door and no "man" can reopen it. At Mr. Armstrong's death that Door was closed, and man, no matter how much he tries, will **not** reopen it. That door "is" closed! The Fruits produced by the Church since his death is proof enough. 13 yrs, multiple millions of dollars spent on radio and T.V., with what as a result? 45 or so people called, that had no previous contact with God's Church! How many have been lost? At Mr. Armstrong's death the Church (body of Christ) was approximately 135,000+- strong, now 13 yrs later, the body (in all the off-shoots) may be as high as 30,000+-, this is a loss of over 100,000 people. Does this sound like an open Door? Does this sound like God is blessing the Church? Does this look like it is bearing fruit? I think not!

The Philadelphian "Church"?, during the Laodicean Era, has a different "work" to do! I think some of the Churches, splinter groups, right now are just spinning their wheels trying to reopen that Door. Trying to

regain the membership they once had instead of moving on with job at hand. Which should be preparing the Church to be the Bride of Christ.

Now the way most seem to read the statement in Matthew 24:14 is "to Preach the Gospel to the whole World". I've heard this time and time again, even from H.Q., but that's not what it says,—it says "in" all the World!! (KJV) There is no way possible, to preach the Gospel "to" the whole World, it can't physically be done. And scripture backs this up.

First you have a scripture that states— a famine of the word, Amos 8:11, how can you have famine of the word if the gospel is preached till Christ returns? Then you have the Two Witnesses, they too, will be doing a end time work, "not" the Church. Matt 24:14 will not even be completed by the two witnesses, as it won't be complete until after the 7th Trump! Scripture goes on to say (Rev. 10:11) that an Angel will prophesy again before, peoples, nations, and kings. Showing that an Angel at the very end will also be doing the "Work", again "not" the Church. God will not allow the Church to do something (work) He (God) has scheduled for an Angel, the two witnesses or anyone else. With this in mind how is it possible for the Church to be doing the "Work" like it was being done by Mr. Armstrong, to the very return of Jesus Christ?? Matt 24:14—states (really reads) "and this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached "in" all the world (not "to" all the world) for a witness in all nations!"—end of thought—then it goes on to say,—"after" some period (possibly years) of time !, "then the end will come".

It's very obvious that the 50 some odd years that God used Mr. Armstrong to preach in the World, was through this open Door, and then it was closed, at his death! And no matter how hard Man (or who-ever) tries, it will not be reopened. There's no reason to reopen it, the Gospel was taken (by Mr. Armstrong) around the world (for the first time). That's all Matt 24:14 says: Preached "in" all the World, not "to" all the World, which again, is a physical impossibility. How about all of those who died before Christ, and all the 3rd World nations now in our time, that will never hear the Truth, or the Gospel?? There's no way that Matt 24:14 can mean that the Church will preach the Gospel to the whole World, or till Christ returns!!

Now this is not to say that the Church shouldn't be doing a Work, it should be warning the Ezekiel warning, and "most" importantly, "feeding the flock"!! I feel the Church (the Body of Christ) at this time

should be getting itself **ready** to be the **Bride of Christ**!! This is the "work" the Philadelphians should be doing at this time! Mr. Armstrong told us many times—"I laid the foundation, now you build on it", he also said that we should be getting the **spots** and **wrinkles** out, out of what?? You only get **spots** and **wrinkles** in clothing,—if we are told we are to be the **bride of Christ**, it then is very obvious that the Spots and Wrinkles are in the Wedding Gown. We the Church (the Body of Christ) need to be getting these Spots and Wrinkles out!

Did Christ babysit the people or did He tell it like it was?? The people of His day either accepted what He had to say or walked away. If the Ministry keeps showing (telling) the people what to do, and when to do it, leading them by the hand so to speak, they will never be able to see what's really going on. There are still people in Gods Church, both in Living and Global, that don't know why they left W.W, they're just following **men**. Let the chips fall where they may. When is the Church (Ministry) going to quite treating us like a bunch of Babies. "Where's the beef?"—we need meat, not milk! For example we go to the Feast every year and spend 2/3 days being told why we are there. Then Christian living Sermons. Then they Lie to us about the conditions of the Churches so as not to offend the \$\$'s. Aren't we adults? Do we need to be treated with kid gloves? I think not! If there are people in the Church that can't handle the Truth, or what's going on, "so be it", then they better grow up or move on. If they don't know why they are here, they don't belong here! There are "NO" corporations in God's eyes, only those who have His Holy spirit and are part of the spiritual body of Christ!

The solid "Bible based" people who (are becoming fewer and fewer) do read the scriptures and discern the Truth and can easily see the error in what the Shepherds are trying to do in both the Global and the Living, and the other COGs.

These Churches, GCG, LCG, are (through their childish antics) losing those who are not well grounded in the real understanding of God's Truth. This "is" the fault of those Shepherds, those who are too busy playing Politics, "I want to lead, No, I want to", from both sides, the Brethren are the ones who are getting the short end of the stick!

Wake up people before it's to late!! You people need to make a decision as to where "you are" not which group to belong too! It's time you stand up for yourselves.

'Nuff said!

—JDP, Washington

RESPONSE: We completely agree with your observations on the lack of success of the various COG's. The same statistic has been reported to us: the Global Church of God baptized only 45 people in over 5 years who were not friends or relatives of already existing members—even though they have spent many millions on TV and magazines. However, they have baptized over 500 relatives and friends of members. Most of these people would have been baptized whether or not their local congregation was affiliated with a big organization and whether or not it had a big-dollar "work".

We would hope that most "Church of God" brethren would realize that the Eternal is not blessing any "big work" efforts, but is, in some places, drawing people to congregations where they have friends and relatives. The worst thing about many of these local congregations is that there are so many sermons and so much debate about "loyalty" and "government", that people actually leave because there is no spiritual food for either the long-time member the new believer.

We disagree with your interpretation of Revelation 3, claiming that Herbert Armstrong's organizations were the "church in Philadelphia". It is characterized by "brotherly love" and having a "little strength". Mr. Armstrong probably had more money and media power concentrated in one place than any other Sabbatarian group we know about. From the 1950's onward, the organization was not characterized by brotherly love, but by the false concept that Mr. Armstrong was head of the "government of God" on earth and anyone who disagreed with his decision was disagreeing with God and should be put out of "the church" and was forever lost if they did not "repent" and come back.

Nevertheless, we agree that Mr. Armstrong's mission has not fallen to any successor. Mr. Tkach, whom he named, reversed many of Mr. Armstrong's doctrines and none of the other groups is growing anywhere near the way the WCG did. None of the others who claim to be his successor are doing a similar work. **We believe that no one should try to repeat Armstrong's work.** His prophetic mistakes, and his non-biblical badgering of co-workers for more money are mistakes that all of us should know to avoid.

We hope those in the Church of God groups will read your letter and learn. We have talked to dozens of people who decided to drop out of both when the GCG/LCG split.

—NSE ☐

“Trucker’s Study” from page 2
 about a number of things, including visions he claims to have had and how the scriptures take second place to his visions. We got into quite a discussion with this fellow, as you can well imagine. He had a **spirit of condemnation** about him going beyond a spirit of self-righteousness. Seemed to think he had the ability to bring curses on others and condemn them to eternal hellfire. He believes that some can be saved by the covenant of grace and others by the covenant of righteousness, which amounts to earning one’s salvation. In the minds of many people, his demeanor and attitude probably gives Christianity a bad name. It became evident that arguing was not going to get anywhere. My carnal nature enjoyed giving him things to think about, although I doubt that he will. He finally admitted that he rejects much of Paul’s writings and other parts of scripture because they do not agree with some of the communications he is getting from the “spirit”.

The couple from COG Seventh Day had to leave, but before doing so, the gentleman got out of his chair and walked up to our Pentecostal friend and said something to this effect: “I have been a Christian for a long time, and there is one thing that I have come to see. I am responsible for my own salvation and not everyone else’s. Judgement is in God’s hands and not mine, and the only person’s salvation that I can do anything about is my own.” He then shook the man’s hand, said it was nice to meet him, and left.

The meeting broke up at this point, and the Pentecostal left. Our other guest, who is new to Bible study said, “He finally revealed himself.” It was a reference to the man putting the communication from this spirit ahead of scripture.

Jesus and the Apostles continually ran into people who thought they were spiritually superior. We have to learn to deal with this type of person and often make sense to the new believer at the same time. Wisdom from the Eternal and practice help us to do this. —NSE

February 7, 1999 (#12):

Several from our congregation and from the Church of God Seventh Day attended a seminar on evangelism, and I went to that in lieu of attending the Bible study. Arlo tells me he had a unique experience last week, as it was the first

time that he had a trucker with whom he was in complete agreement.

The trucker had gotten there early and had picked up and read a booklet that we had left behind previously on the nature of the Holy Spirit, and the man asked for another copy that he could give to his brother. He told Arlo that a while back he told God, “I want to be led by Your spirit.” He wanted to make sure that he learned what the Bible says, and not just what people say about the Bible.

He seemed to have some basic understanding of the second resurrection, and that there is a plan for those who never had a chance in this life. Arlo, of course, shared some information on the Sabbath with him.

It is heartening to know that God is sending people our way who are truly “searching the scriptures daily whether these things are so”.

February 14, 1999 (#13): Nobody came. These are disappointments that we must accept and overcome.

February 21, 1999 (#14): We had one trucker who wanted to talk mostly about **coping with the death of friends and relatives**. He had the age-old question of “why does God allow such things?” We reassured him that they did not die because God was punishing them, but that it is appointed unto all men to die once, and after that the resurrection. God doesn’t tell us why some things happen, but He does assure us that all shall live again, and that we are assured of a resurrection because Jesus Christ, our elder brother, conquered death through His own resurrection.

It was a good opportunity to plant a few seeds of the gospel, the Good News that all will have a chance, and that God will wipe away all tears and death will be destroyed. We referred to some of the classic scriptures in 1 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation to give hope and comfort that indeed we will see our loved ones again, and all will have the opportunity for eternal life.

He took a couple of Bibles with him and some literature pertinent to the subject at hand. We were able to plant a few seeds and hopefully they will take root, but just as important, we were able to convey hope and encouragement. That is what it is all about, isn’t it?

If nothing else, the man will probably

remember that someone representing Christianity tried to help him with his current problems rather than try to get him to accept a set of doctrines or attend a certain church. Jesus and the Apostles helped a great many people who never became believers. —NSE

March 7, 1999 (#15): What is true religion? That was a major part of our subject today.

The truck driver today just happened to be in the lounge watching the tube, and decided to stay to talk religion with us. He says he has no faith in religion, but he does believe in God. Says he has a lot of questions, but doesn’t have the answers.

Interesting talking to him because he seems to be like so many today. Many know there is a God, but see the hypocrisy and politics in various religious organizations, so they get their “religion” from reading the Bible and personal prayer, and then try to live it by helping others in need. It reminded me of a scripture (which we read to him) in James 1:26-27 that says in part that pure and undefiled religion is to visit orphans and widows and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. We also read James 2:14-17, which expounds on the principle even more. I believe we frame the question incorrectly when we talk in terms of grace and works. Instead, James talks about faith and works, which puts a whole new spin on the role of works in the Christian life.

He took a Bible with him (he only had a New Testament previously), as well as some literature and tapes. It was encouraging to hear him say that he usually drives only on the East Coast, and he couldn’t figure out why all of a sudden he got a route to the Midwest, except maybe it was because it was meant for him to meet with us.

No one can prove that this man’s visit to the study was directly planned by God—nor can we prove that it was not. Many people who teach the Bible report events like this far more often than one would expect from mere chance. If we think that we must have a TV program in every household to reach people whom God wants us to, we are mistaken. He knows who they are, and if we are willing to teach, He can bring them to us. —NSE

March 21, 1999 (#15): I was not able to attend this study, but Arlo

Gieselman said that it was “the best one ever”. After you hear the story, you might be inclined to agree.

He had four truckers, two of whom were very serious Bible students. One had been studying for five years and had a well-marked Bible to show for it. Marked Bibles are somewhat of a rarity, by the way. He has a six-year-old who wanted to be baptized, and they allowed it because Jesus said “let the children come”, and at worst the child would just be getting wet and could be rebaptized later.

Also, one of the workers at the truck stop (a teenager) came in to listen. A couple of months ago one of the women who works there approached me about getting a Bible for a “young fellow worker” who was seeking spiritual guidance. Some of his fellow workers wanted to help him along these paths. I gave the lady a Bible to pass along, and this was the young man who was the recipient.

But the thing that got Arlo excited relates to the other truck driver who is deep in the Word. Arlo has made it a habit to mention in passing the Sabbath in every study just to put it out there and see what happens. It so happens that this one trucker had been thinking about this very subject and wanted to know more. In fact he wanted to talk more than what Arlo had time for, and the man asked for a phone number and address where he could attend services in Kansas City if he happened to be in the area on the Sabbath. The man said that this was “the most fantastic” Bible study he had ever attended.

Our job is to plant seeds and not necessarily convince folks of the truth of what we know. We have planted a lot of seeds over the 18 months that we have done these studies. Yet we know that there is more to spreading the word than just planting seeds. Some plant, some water, and some harvest, but of course it is God who gives the increase. It was encouraging that yesterday God sent someone in whom the seed had already been planted and who was seeking to have that seed watered. I hope you can see why yesterday was an encouragement.

We have heard of many independent Bible believers seeking places to study and fellowship. Most are not opposed to meeting on the Sabbath and a few have discovered it on their own. However, many specifically are opposed to joining

a “church organization”. It is a good thing that you have an independent fellowship where people can come to attend. It is also good that you do not reject someone for practicing “child baptism”, but understand it is their attempt to follow the Bible. The scripture says nothing specific about an “age for baptism”, so one must put several scriptures together—different believers may put them together different ways. This item does not need to be a “condition of fellowship”, but something that can be discussed later. —NSE

March 28, 1999 (#16): John Curry and I met with three truckers today, one of whom was a repeat customer from several months ago. You may recall from a previous post a man who claimed to have just learned about having a terminal illness. This was the man who joined us for a second time.

Today seemed like the right time to read the scripture that says, “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us”, and to relate how the lamb in Exodus 12 represented the Messiah and His sacrifice, and I related specific items showing how the Passover was a type of the death of Jesus Christ. This did not seem to strike much of a chord.

One of the gentlemen had a very good grasp of the millennium and the rule of Jesus Christ on this earth, which seems to be a doctrine that is becoming more popular in the evangelical community. He had an obvious knowledge of the Bible, which was good to see. The other truckers did not understand that Christ will reign on the earth.

I hesitate to relate some observations about the trucker who attended for the second time, but perhaps my impressions will be helpful. For various reasons I am not sure that he was being totally straight with us about his terminal illness. The story he told in the autumn didn't quite match up with the story he told me today. (One does not go in for triple bypass surgery if he has a terminal illness). And when there is a not so subtle hint for money, suspicions become aroused.

So today's study was not so exciting, but having some weeks better than others is to be expected.

We want to help the needy, but it is wrong to help those who are pretending to be needy in order to get money. Giving money to them only encourages

them to repeat the false practice. If no one ever gave to such people, they would be more likely to find a real job. We can pray for the gift of discernment of spirits (1Cor 12:10). Even so, there still may be times when we are not sure whether someone's needs are genuine. The Eternal knows. We can always diligently pray that He will punish the person if they are being deceptive, help them if they really need it, and specifically show us if we are to help them. —NSE

April 11, 1999 (#17): We had record attendance today: six truckers, two employees of the truck stop, Arlo and me.

General impressions:

1. Three of the truckers are serious Bible students, and the other three would like to be. One truck driver, an African-American lady, has a deep comprehension of Biblical truth and a gift for explaining it. She took the approach early in her spiritual journey that she would study the Bible for what it said rather than what churches tell her, and it was evident that she has been true to this.

2. Another driver, a young man whose grandfather was a preacher, no longer attends church. His reason for no longer attending? Churches are too much into tradition and sugar-coating the Bible rather than in preaching the truth. I was of the impression that he meant that many churches these days do not condemn sin as they should.

3. I was impressed today that those who open the Bible and study it for what it says all tend to have an understanding that Jesus will return and that there will be a millennium on the earth. Understanding of whether there will be a rapture and of other end time issues may differ, but many more than what we might think understand the basics. We were able to discuss the fullness of the Gospel as discussed in Isaiah 61, which not only speaks to salvation, but also to the Good News of the second coming and the peace that Jesus Christ will bring to the earth.

4. Speaking of tradition vs. Biblical truth, Arlo used that opportunity to state that Sunday-keeping is a tradition, and if one takes the Bible and the Bible alone as one's authority, one would have to conclude that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week.

5. Evidently, many are troubled (or

have doubts about) the traditional notions of hellfire, and this led to a discussion of Revelation 20-21, Matthew 11:20-24 and Ezekiel 37. Some are willing to consider this, and some are not. Interesting again how the two individuals mentioned in paragraphs 1 & 2 (above) had enough understanding from just reading the Bible that they could see the possibility.

The study went two hours today, and I couldn't possibly relate everything to you in this short summary. **I do think it is important to listen to people and not try to "evangelize" those who are already convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and that the Bible is God's written word.** In such cases it is better to walk alongside them and study the Bible together as fellow students.

The lady mentioned in paragraph #1 wants God to lead her wherever His will directs. She hopes to leave trucking and enter the ministry. Perhaps His will is something else, but I must tell you that her meekness before God, her faith to follow God's leading, and her intelligence, insight, and ability to explain the scriptures could lead her in a direction she can't imagine right now. Please pray for her and any others God might call.

It is wonderful to see how much people learn simply from reading the Bible. The Eternal reveals truth to those who seek Him. Our WCG past was full of arrogance and had its share of error. We must not continue that arrogance, but realize that it is possible that another Bible Student has some truth that we do not have. That does not mean that we forget all of the truth that we have learned—but we must be sure that we can explain it from the Bible, and then teach it in humility. —NSE

April 25, 1999 (#18): What is happening to this nation?

We had two truckers today. I read to them a story of one girl in Littleton, Colorado. The gunman had demanded of her whether she believed in Jesus. She, with a rifle barrel pointed at her chest, hesitated, then said yes, whereupon the gunman pulled the trigger.

I wondered aloud what would I do if faced with such a question. Would I be willing to die for my witness? This led naturally to a discussion on prophecy and also to a discussion on the power of the Holy Spirit. (God will give us the

strength we need when we need it.) It is certainly an open question on where the events of the past few weeks will lead (i.e., the war and the school shootings), but there is an awareness that there is something terribly wrong. Perhaps America will finally wake up.

People of faith, including today's drivers, are looking forward to the return of Christ as much as we are. They know that ultimately it is God who must bring the solutions to this world's evils. There may be disagreement on whether Jesus returns to rapture His people away or whether His people must go through a tribulation (or, in our tradition, whether there is a place of safety), but the looking forward to Jesus' return is something we share with more people than what we might think.

One of the fellows today said that his preacher believes in the rapture, but that he isn't sure and prefers to study into it himself.

It is in times such as these that people need both a warning and a message of hope. The prophets are filled with both, and after discussing the need for more of God's spirit in the church today (to be manifested in the willingness and courage to stand for what we know is right), we looked at Isaiah 61, which summarizes the gospel and the good news of the Kingdom of God on the earth.

For some reason the discussion in these studies always seems to swing toward Revelation 20 and the resurrections. Today was no exception. While I don't think they accept just yet the truth of Revelation 20, they now have something to think about.

All in all, a good day, and one where we were able to walk together in the study of the Word.

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One teaching of Herbert Armstrong that very few others taught was the truth of multiple resurrections and the falsity of the traditional concept of hell. That is a doctrine full of hope that is well worth our continued teaching.

It will be very important for the difficult times ahead—many "innocent people" will die in wars and from disease, with no apparent warning. We are at war in Europe—with many tensions and conditions very similar to the ones that

started the previous World Wars. Many people (both now and then) simply want peace and cannot be bothered to think about the reality of the bad news. This time, however, the USA is not so far from the war. Up to a dozen nations have nuclear weapons and may have a way to deliver them here. Secondly, it is hard to know whether our current government administration is for us or against us.

Our president claims love for the country, but his actions seem to support his own agenda. He allowed millions of dollars to be wasted investigating his sexual misconduct when he knew he did it and could have confessed to it much sooner. His continual sponsoring of gun control laws as a way of "protecting our children" is an obvious lie and simply an attempt to disarm the people. The Littleton example proves this. Students have long been forbidden from bringing guns to school, but Clinton's recent law made it a crime for anyone to have a gun at school. So in Littleton, the students with guns were able to shoot whomever they wanted knowing that no teachers would have guns.

*Did the police with guns go rushing in to protect children who were being shot? No! They stayed outside to protect themselves until they could assess the situation! They even refused to help evacuate a dying teacher who could have been saved. They did nothing to apprehend the villains—two apparently shot themselves and a third got away. Their reason for not moving in was that they were "following standard procedure". O.K. **We are now on notice that the standard procedure is to let unarmed people die while officers with guns assess the situation.** Yet our president's solution to this problem will be to pass laws making it even more difficult for law-abiding people to have guns—laws that will not prevent mass murders, because most guns used in such crimes are obtained illegally anyway.*

I personally do not own any guns and trust God for deliverance. But the disarming of American and European citizens is an ominous sign that war or martial law is soon to come. It happened before World War II. Those of us who have been spiritually "given much" must realize that "much is required" of us. If people are asking questions, we should be there with Bible answers. We must "work while it is day" (John 9:4). —NSE 

“WCG Experience” from page 1 disfellowship a member. In the WCG, it was common for one or two ministers to disfellowship a member—and all other members were commanded to have no contact with the disfellowshipped member. These practices were important for point 2: if a member was unjustly disfellowshipped, the other members had to be kept ignorant of the situation.

While an increasingly authoritarian hierarchy is probably the main reason for the switch from “point 1” unity to “point 2” unity, another reason is, **personal Bible study**. In the early years of a church organization with mostly very new members, a lot of the questions are very simple—easy to answer from the Bible. New members are quite likely to accept what they have been taught. After many members are added and after some have studied for many years, the members begin to ask Bible questions that the leader of the organization has never studied. If the leader is busy with evangelizing or administrative matters, he may never have time to study some of these questions.

For the last 20 years of Herbert Armstrong’s life, there was essentially no way for a WCG member to reach him with a new doctrinal understanding. Even if a local minister would listen, the ministry felt there was almost no chance to bring a doctrine to headquarters, and headquarters felt there was almost no chance to bring it to Mr. Armstrong.

While Mr. Armstrong and the ministry claimed that God was guiding them directly, it would have been hard to prove that to an outsider. The leaders did not perform great public miracles as did Christ and His Apostles. Miracles and healings were often claimed, but they were in situations where it was hard for an individual to verify them. Most people continued to believe that they were in the “one true Church” organization because they knew of no other group that was anywhere close in size, media outreach and doctrine. Most had few Bible questions that were unanswered, and they were treated reasonably by the ministry.

Those who were victims of ministerial abuse, who challenged a doctrine that the ministry could not prove from the Bible, or who caught an “important” minister in a serious sin, found themselves disfellowshipped. They were cut off from all of their friends, and in many

cases believed that they were cut off from the Body of Christ! **It was terribly traumatic for most of these people.** Usually, none of their old friends would help them in this time of difficulty. But since these people were removed from the WCG way of life, they had little effect on it. If anything, it strengthened the resolve of the people in the WCG to “stay in the one true Church” when they saw some of their friends leave.

The Big Break-up

When Herbert Armstrong was near death in January 1986, he named Joseph Tkach as his successor. (Some claim that Tkach “stole” the office, but we have yet to hear a first-hand account of this—if someone has, we would like to know). Nevertheless, the Eternal clearly allowed Joseph Tkach to gain control of the WCG corporate assets and the loyalty of most of the WCG members.

Joseph Tkach was never a writer. He had almost nothing published in WCG literature before 1986. He had not been a noted speaker either, giving only a few sermons at the headquarters congregation—none on technical doctrinal subjects. But when he became Pastor General, a “Personal” column appeared under his name in several church publications, and he began to speak more often. For somewhat over a year, Robin Webber was the “ghost writer” for the Personals. He tended to imitate Herbert Armstrong’s style. But then Joe Tkach, Jr. moved back to Pasadena to become head of the ministry. (This was amazing, since he had never been a church pastor and only a few months before was not even attending services regularly.) However, only a few months after his arrival, Joe and his childhood chum, Mike Feazell, became the driving force behind the WCG. These two, along with Bernie Schnippert and Greg Albrecht, were responsible for the WCG doctrinal changes to become essentially another Protestant denomination.

Their plan to change doctrines slowly was indeed masterful. They started with doctrines which were considered less important and **with doctrines where there was scriptural support for their changes.** If their doctrines were not accepted right away, they retreated for a while and brought them back in different packaging. They avoided challenging Mr. Armstrong

directly for several years—they did not reprint his old writings with refutations. They called their changes “new truth” and said that he would have made them himself. As they progressed to doctrines where the scriptures did clearly support Mr. Armstrong’s teaching, they began to get into trouble. People brought out their old booklets and realized that Tkach and Feazell were not answering the questions raised by Armstrong. Members began to ask hard questions—and began to leave to join the many other groups that were forming.

The WCG stopped officially claiming that it was the “one true Church”. How could they claim such a thing when they were accepting doctrines believed by most of the Protestant world? **However, they did little to change the authoritarian rule in place.** Ministers who loudly opposed the changes quickly found themselves with little or nothing to do. Ministers were clearly on notice that if their congregation drifted away, they would probably be out of a job—so there was little “quiet opposition” to the doctrinal changes. Many field ministers continued to tell their members that this was the Church “God called them into” and they could be in deep spiritual trouble if they left it.

Yet all the while, many of the ministers had serious doubts. But what could they do about them? If they expressed them to headquarters, they might be out of a job. If they expressed them to their members, they might be “turned in” to headquarters. The idea of an “independent congregation” was too scary. How does a minister make members obey if his congregation is no longer a part of a big organization claiming to be the “Work of God”? In this distress the ministers carefully sought out friends and planned to start new organizations. Some ministers literally gave sermons one month about loyalty to the WCG, and the next month about why members need to join a new organization.

Impact on the Members

This process often devastated the Bible-studying member. They could see the massive doctrinal changes in headquarters literature, but often heard little about them in services—often only in statements read from headquarters. In larger congregations, one minister might enthusiastically teach the new doctrines,

while another might say little. In the era of e-mail and cheap long-distance, members who asked distant friends questions, experienced the great diversity in what was actually being taught from one WCG congregation to another. The ministers were supposed to be shepherds, but members were fearful to ask questions about such a sensitive topic, and even when they did, answers were often not very satisfactory. There have been several suicides and lots of family break-ups attributed to these very issues.

To summarize what happened, members who did not want Tkach changing *anything* that Armstrong wrote joined the Philadelphia Church of God. Those who did not care for the PCG's radicalism, but wanted to "do a Work" similar to the WCG, joined the Global Church of God. Most of the people in the above groups made these decisions on their own—they did not leave because their local minister did. Later, the largest splinter group began as many ministers with their congregations formed the United Church of God. Other brethren left the WCG for the Church of God International, Christian Biblical Church of God and other long-standing WCG offshoots. Independent local congregations formed also.

But where did the largest group of people who left the WCG go? The answer is "none of the above". About 50,000 people no longer attend any of the above groups. The very idea that "the one true Church" could begin to teach error and break up into groups of similar but competing churches seemed like nonsense. Many people became permanently bitter at religion—they poured their life into a group that they thought was the one and only. **People who they thought represented God turned out to be representing mostly themselves.** Others were not bitter, but they rejected all WCG religious teaching and started over from "square one".

Even many of those who did join various WCG splinter-groups are not happy there. Each group claims to be continuing the work of the WCG, but only a very few new believers have begun to attend. The absolute trust that the Eternal is directing the organization from the top is **forever gone!** If Tkach could change most of the doctrines without the Eternal stopping him, then certainly a leader in the split-off groups could do unrighteous things. **Members**

of these groups are watching their leaders—and not always liking what they see. Small independent groups have leadership problems as well.

Nearly everyone in these WCG split-off groups has relatives and friends in other groups. They are trying to solve the problem of "how much cooperation among groups is permissible?" Will an elder be allowed to continue speaking if he attends the Feast with relatives in another group? Can members of different local groups work together to sing songs in nursing homes? If someone in the nursing home asks for literature, which group's literature will they give them? The whole thing seems somewhat unbelievable and unchristian, but such is life among splinter groups

The Answer

The cause of this problem is very simple:

People have had too much of a relationship with their church organization and its leaders, and not enough of a relationship with the Eternal and our Savior!

The proof is everywhere. Does anyone believe that "God is dead" or that He doesn't know what to do about all of these "Church problems"? Probably not. Yet they have been so devastating to so many brethren. **That is because we have placed far too much value on membership in some organization**—or in following some "inspirational leader". Even those in non-hierarchical, independent groups have severe trouble when they lose their leader for some reason.

We cannot stop our friends from leaving us because a church organization tells them to do so. But we can trust the Eternal to provide us with new friends and to take care of our needs. David was greatly persecuted in his early life—even betrayed by friends, but look at what he wrote:

I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day, Nor of the pestilence that walks in

darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you (Psalm 91:2-7).

Developing this kind of faith and reliance upon the Eternal does not come instantly. It takes time, prayer and study. **But it is the only solution to our present problem—and the difficult times that lie head.** Herbert Armstrong and many who claim to be his successors promised their followers that they would be taken "to a place of safety" before the Great Tribulation began. Almost none of them have prophesied anything about the year 2000 (Y2K) computer problems—yet this disaster is completely possible to predict from publicly available sources. Are these groups making plans to help their members and others through this disaster! **No, some are even discouraging their members from preparing to help themselves!** How much worse would this disaster have been on the WCG if it had continued, thinking it was the one true church and no trouble would come upon it? The Eternal has been merciful by showing that church organizations are run by imperfect men that often make self-seeking decisions. He has broken up the organizations and slowly taught us to learn to trust Him.

Facing the Past

When we at Servants' News were planning to write a "Herbert Armstrong" issue, we thought we could put the necessary information into only one issue and then go on to other important Bible lessons. But the more we studied it, the more we realized how much effect Herbert Armstrong and the WCG had on so much of what we think and do. HWA taught a lot of Biblical truth. But for most of us, he was our **only** source of such teaching. Separating the Biblical truth from his ideas or personal preferences is not always that easy. Finding which of Herbert Armstrong's teachings were borrowed from elsewhere is also not that easy. We had years of "check up" homework to do. **When we thought Herbert Armstrong was God's representative on earth, we did not check up on him—who needs to check up on what "God is doing"?**

Hopefully, you have been able to read the articles and letters in these three

issues of Servants' News. If you need more information, please write for the extra articles on the back page. **We need to know what was wrong with our past, but we need to keep that which was good.** We should not think that a scattering of believers is either from Satan or a punishment from the Eternal. In the first few chapters of Acts, the Church at Jerusalem seemed wonderful: it was growing and everyone was getting along well together (Acts 2:41-47). But God allowed persecution to come upon it, and it was scattered everywhere (Acts 8:1-4). **The scattering resulted in much additional preaching of the gospel.**

The Eternal may be doing a similar thing today. He may want people with knowledge of the Bible, Sabbath, Holy Days and other truths to be scattered among others who will learn these truths from them—outside of “organized religion”. Being dispersed from our group was traumatic; it was also traumatic for first century believers to be cast in prison for their beliefs.

If the Eternal is “sending us on a new mission”, what do we do with the old one? What do we keep and what do we throw away? There are a surprising number of good things worth keeping—both from our distant past and from our recent past.

Good Things From WCG Past

We cannot begin to cover every specific doctrine taught in the past. We will cover important characteristics and habits that were developed during the Radio Church of God and Worldwide Church of God years.

1. We believe truth comes from the Bible. While many other groups claim this, the WCG tended to go to the Scripture more than many of the others. Compared to other groups, far more WCG members have exhaustive concordances and other technical Bible helps.

2. We have experience explaining many sound Bible doctrines that most other groups do not. These include the Sabbath, Holy Days, no eternal punishment, the avoidance of pagan days, avoiding unclean meats, etc.

3. We are willing to go against society or “traditional Christian” practice. Many WCG members have had to change jobs or schools in order to keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days. They have been considered “weird” at

social occasions for not eating pork hot dogs or other unclean things. The list goes on. But the important part is that WCG members have had to take a public stand for what they believed (or at least for what their church believed—more on this later).

4. We have experience keeping the Sabbath in a non-Sabbatarian world. This is related to the above point, but is the practical side of things. How does one deal with institutions and businesses about the Sabbath without needlessly upsetting them?

5. We have country-wide and world-wide contacts. Many local churches are concerned primarily with themselves and their communities. WCG members have long lived with a concept of preaching the Gospel to the world and many have friends throughout the world.

6. We understand the value of media: TV, radio, magazines and literature. Many ministries are limited primarily to sermons and tapes thereof. With electronic and print media, one teacher can reach many more people.

7. We value dynamic but not overly emotional speakers. Many typical preachers are either sanctimonious, wildly emotional, or boring. The ideal WCG speaker was to be interesting, business-like, yet heartfelt and sincere.

8. We know how to conduct services with rented halls. To most of the Christian world, a church *is* a building—a base around which religious activities revolve. WCG members realize that they can meet almost anywhere. They are experienced and highly organized at setting up chairs, songbooks, sound systems and other things necessary for a service. We realize we don't need extra religious stuff like: robes, alters, kneeling benches, crosses, etc.

9. We know how to plan and organize Feasts. The WCG has probably been the largest modern organizer of Feast of Tabernacles sites.

10. We are used to budgeting a substantial portion of our resources for the Eternal's work. In most church groups, people give what is left over.

Good from Post-WCG Past

Beside all that we learned from our years in the WCG, most of us have also learned much more of value in just the last few years.

1. We know the failure of hierarchical government. We have seen that the Eternal does not always correct the “man at the top”. We have also seen that the “man at the top” does not always correct those underneath him. The world is full of other church groups with members who are looking to human leaders far too much. We should be able to help them.

2. We should have patience to work with other people who are stuck in cult-like systems. We should be able to understand that people can be “stuck” on a partly-erroneous teacher, yet still have a relationship with the Eternal. We should even be able to understand that another group that claims to be the “only true Church”, is not the “only true Church”, but may have converted members.

3. We should have learned that people can be seriously wrong on a significant doctrine and still have the spirit of God. Our understanding of the Bible teaching on church government and worship services is probably much different now than it was 10 or 20 years ago, but almost none of us have been rebaptized because of that.

There are many other points that probably could be added to this list. **The main point is that we have a lot to give to others.** “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 12:48). We should not let the above good points die with us, but let the Eternal use this experience in us to do His will.

Things We Can Learn From Others

Now that former WCG members are scattered across the country, and as transportation becomes more and more difficult (the Y2K-related oil shortages will see to this), we will have to learn to work with others who are not from our background. There are millions of people who are dissatisfied with organized religion and want to simply live by the Bible. They may not have all of the understanding that we do, but they may have some understanding that we do not.

It is important that we learn at least some of the terminology and practice of people from other Christian backgrounds. Herbert Armstrong and nearly every other leader who started a reli-

gious movement could speak the language of the day to religious people. We need to understand their beliefs so we can talk about what they believe that is right and what they need to change.

These are some other specific things that we might be able to learn from other Bible-believing groups:

1) Rely on the Eternal, not money to do His work. In Christian literature, one can read verifiable stories of people who believed that God sent them somewhere to accomplish a certain mission. They went with enough money for transportation and maybe a few days food. They found a place to work or someone took them in, and they began physically serving and spiritually teaching those around them. Church of God groups have a tendency to want to collect money first and then decide what to do. This does not mean that we start projects without thinking, but that we pray for the Eternal to show us and then trust Him to supply the details. See the article on prayer in the attached issue of *Shelter in the Word*.

2) Walk in daily faith. Many WCG members have never learned to trust the Eternal to be with them on a daily basis—in normal every-day work. WCG members have a tendency to believe that the Eternal guides those who are doing a “big work”, but not people who are only facing a daily struggle to “make ends meet”.

3) Get personally involved doing good to others. Christ and the Apostles healed a great many people who never became disciples. They often did their good works first, and then preached later. We may not have miraculous gifts today, but we do have the physical means to do a lot of needed good for other people. Rather than just give to other “good works” programs, we need to learn to do our own so our teaching can go along with our works.

4) Get involved in your own community. So much of WCG evangelism was via national TV and magazines—most WCG members were never encouraged to have a positive religious effect in their own community.

5) Learn not to fear “getting dirty”—serving among people that we and/or the rest of the world would classify “trash” or “sinners”. Our Savior was criticized for serving “sinners”, but He did it anyway.

6) Learn to work with others who

do not have the same doctrinal understanding that you do. This does not mean accept heresy, but there are many cases where certain doctrinal differences may not be important. Peter did not understand that Gentiles could have salvation until several years into his ministry (Acts 10-11). Yet there are several fairly clear passages in the Prophets that indicate this will happen. If you were alive in the first century, and the Eternal gave you understanding that Salvation is available to Gentiles, would you have refuse to recognize or work with Peter? If you were teaching Gentiles, then Peter probably would have refused to work with you. But if you were a Jew working among Jews, you should not let this doctrinal difference keep you from working with Peter.

7) Learn to talk about the Bible to others in a normal conversational manner without sounding like “we know more than you.” “...Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1Pet 3:15). The WCG preachers often tried to follow the example of Christ who “spoke with authority”. Christ had the very words and mind of the Eternal—we do not.

8) Realize that we do not have to have perfect knowledge to talk to others about the scripture. Many WCG members know more about the Bible than many trained pastors of churches. But so many would decline to teach others because they want to “study more” first. Also, WCG members have too often tended to answer another’s question with a booklet or article. We need to learn to answer at several levels: **a.** if we know how, show the answer from the scriptures; **b.** explain the answer that we believe is in the Bible then find the scriptures later (by using Bible helps or asking someone); **c.** when we are uncertain about what the Bible teaches, look for an answer with the person who is asking. Use a concordance together, or read a section of scripture that deals with it. Pray together and ask the Eternal to show the answer; or **d.** be willing to admit that we do not know the answer.

Problems to “Watch Out For”

1) Avoid Doctrinal Absolutism: “I have this doctrinal truth that you do

not—you must either accept my doctrine or disprove it from the scripture. If you don’t, then you are not converted.”

2) Avoid authoritarianism. When new believers become interested in your teaching, do not try to give them an answer to everything and tell them exactly what the Bible says. Help them learn to read it themselves, even if their understanding does not agree perfectly with yours.

3) Avoid exclusivism. While a believer should never relegate is Christian life to “finding someone else’s program to participate in”, we should not go to the opposite extreme of thinking that no project is worthy of our efforts unless we or our group originated it. Be willing to serve the Eternal in whatever way He leads you.

4) Do not wait for the “great” work or leader to come along. When the first century Apostles went out to preach the Gospel, they did not have choirs of angels singing, haloes around their heads or even bands playing to see them off. They looked like regular guys carrying their luggage aboard small, salt-crusted ships. You will always be able to find some fault with other believers and with groups you assemble with. We have heard cases of people who will not attend a certain fellowship because they do not like the way one of the leaders talks or sings. That leader may need to change in some way, but this problem does not disqualify the person as a leader (1Tim 3, Titus 1) nor is it a Biblical reason not to fellowship. Before the Eternal grants us great spiritual gifts, He probably wants to see what we will do in our present environment.

Conclusion

This article has not addressed specifics of what former-WCG members could or should be doing now. Christ has something in mind for each one of us and we must individually find out what that is. But there is much in the scripture to guide us. Whenever I think about the WCG, I cannot help but think how much I learned in it, and how much I learned getting out of it. The parable of the talents then rings in my head (Math 25:15-30). It seems like we are the people who have been given five talents. We ought to be asking the Eternal to show us how to earn five more!

—Norman S. Edwards

Why I Will No Longer Affiliate with Hierarchical Church Organizations

by Will Blair, Akron, Ohio

Jesus Christ said, “you will know them by their fruits” (Mat. 7:15-16). Since the WCG splits, I have seen jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambition, dissension, heresies, and envy (Gal.5:19-21). I have seen hierarchical church organizations crop up not to support the brethren, but to support a ministry (John10:11-13). I have seen a satanic system (hierarchical church organizations) turn men into corrupt, self-seeking, self-righteous, deceitful, arrogant, control freaks. The system drives men to be lords over the brethren.

This is contrary to what the Bible teaches. Jesus explained to His disciples that it is wrong to be lords over or exercise authority over the brethren (Matt 20:25-28; Mark 9:35, 10:42-45; Luke 22:25-27). He taught leaders to become their servant or “slave”.

Jesus brings up authority again in His letter to the church of Pergamos where He hates the doctrine of Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:15). If we were to break down Nicolaitan into two separate Greek words “Nikao” which means to prevail over or overcome and “Laos” which means the people, we would have the phrase “those who prevail over the people” or “those who overcome the people”. This seems to be consistent with what Jesus was teaching His disciples about authority.

Does Jesus Christ give His disciples an example of servant authority? Yes! We read in John 13:3-5 how Jesus in the foot washing example demonstrates love and humility to His disciples—two traits many of us seem to lack. In verses 13-15 Jesus states that if He, being their Lord and Master, wash their feet, they also should wash one another’s feet. He said He was an example of how to serve the brethren. He did not say, “I give you an example of how to prevail over or overcome the brethren.”

God has given man a choice of blessing and cursing, and He tells us to choose blessing, because blessings will lead to eternal life (Deu. 30:19). God has imparted to us in our creation a free will to make choices and decisions. I, for one, choose to make my own deci-

sions, and choices and not let some hierarchical system make them for me—especially when it comes to my own salvation (Phil 2:12). I am free in Christ Jesus (Gal. 5:1).

The hierarchical system is a system that primarily takes. It serves the people to some degree, but it mostly takes from the brethren to serve those who are in power (Ez.34:4). Similar to our own government, we pay taxes but who benefits? A small amount is returned to the people with great publicity, but those who are in power and the very rich get most of the benefit. So it is with the religious hierarchical system.

They attempt to control where your tithes are sent, your doctrine, your spiritual growth, the Feast you can attend and with whom you may associate. Breaking one of these controls may result in disfellowshipment. What does Paul have to say about men who would make themselves out to be something they’re not? (Gal. 2:6.)

What type of authority did Jesus give His disciples? We read in Luke 9:1-2 and Mark 6:7, 12-13 that Jesus gave His disciples authority over demons, diseases and to preach the kingdom of God. Jesus did not give His disciples authority to make personal or doctrinal decisions for the brethren—especially if it contradicts what He taught.

The system is what corrupts men, turning them into egotistical, greedy power-hungry, self-righteous men who seek to rule and not to serve. I look at it this way: **I have attended the GCG as well as the UCG-IA and I could find no differences in their doctrine and very little differences in how they are governed.** Why are they separate?

Let’s take it to the next level, UCG-IA had some internal problems and their ex-president started the Church of God an International Community. The GCG had internal problems and split into the Living Church of God. There were a couple of splits in the Church of God International. Why are these organizations separate from each other? Is Christ divided (1Cor.1:13)? Is it because they want to serve the brethren, or does the hierarchical system prevent

them from loving and working with each other? Do they seek power of their own or are they carrying out the will of God (2Cor.10:12-18)?

Who has absolute authority in the Church and in heaven and on earth according to the Bible? The answer you can read from your own Bible (Matt 28:18; 16:18; Eph 5:23; Col 1:18; Phil 2:10-11). The Bible obviously teaches that Jesus is the head over the Church—it is called the Body of Christ (Col.1:24; 1Cor.12:27; Ep.1:20-23) and not the “Body of Global” or “United” or “Living” or “Philadelphia” or whatever.

Paul said to “follow me as I follow Christ”. Does it look like any of these hierarchical churches follow Christ? Paul also taught us not to get wrapped up in following after men and saying “I am of GCG” or “I am of UCG” or “I am of LCG”, etc (1Cor.1:12-13).

The Bible teaches that those who follow a man or men will be cursed (Jer.17:5). Unfortunately, too many of God’s people “love to have it so” (Jer.5:30-31). Is this what is happening today? Do we align ourselves with hierarchical organizations because one claims to have more truth than the other? Do we believe being in the right hierarchical church will determine our salvation? Do we allow these hierarchical churches to do our thinking for us?

Hierarchical churches have become a barrier to the body of Christ separating us from one another. God places members into the body of Christ, not hierarchical churches (1Cor.12:18). The church is made of individuals God calls (John 6:44). The church is not GCG, UCG, PCG, LCG or any other hierarchical organization. The church is people who have God’s spirit (1Jn 3:24, 4:13).

It is time we become like the Bereans and not accept everything at face value. Let us search the scripture to find out what is true (Rom.12:2; Acts 17:11). Let’s be led by the Spirit of God and not by men who seek their own power (Rom.8:14).

When will the madness end, and when do we start acting like Christians toward one another? When will we follow the example of Jesus Christ to live our lives in love and humility esteeming one another? John 13:35 has been mentioned in a lot of sermons and articles lately. When are we going to take it to heart? 

Partial Literature List

All items are free upon request. All back issues of *Servants' News* are available as well as a **Complete Literature List**.

Our goal is to bring worthwhile information to as many as want it at the lowest practical cost. The loose-leaf format used by *Servants' News* and most of the literature below is inexpensive and makes copying easy (most literature is public domain). You might wish to hold the pages together with a 3-ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip.

Last issue, we listed several new literature items related to the History of the Worldwide Church of God. Over 50 people asked for various items, but that was less than we expected. Even though many of our readers may be tired of reading about old church issues, we think that this information is important. It is easy to want to hide from the mess—I did for some length of time.

However, as we face the future, I believe it is necessary for each of us to have a firm grip on our past. The issue is too complicated to say that it was either "all good" or "all bad". It is a mixture of both. For

years, the WCG and its split-off groups published its own history in glowing terms.

The *Critiques of Other's Writings* offered below provide accurate historical information about our history. Even if you do not have time to read them now, they are worth having as a reference if others should bring up questions in the future.

We hope that everyone had an inspiring and significant Pentecost day. We expect shorter *Servants' News* issues in the future so we can get back on schedule. The Y2K article in *Shelter in the Word* is very important. Please try to read it. —Norman Edwards.

New Items That We Hope You Will Ask For:

Basic Literature:

CEM Correspondence Course by Ron Dart, 62 pages. We now have the whole 9-lesson correspondence course.

How Not To Be Caught in Cults by Charles V. Dorothy, 32 pages. Easy to read, illustrated booklet explaining the characteristics of controlling cults. Does not discuss doctrine.

The Mysterious 7-Day Cycle by Kenneth Westby, 22 pages. Plants, animals and man have biological 7-day cycles—the 7-day week is an organic function, not a man-made creation.

Shelter in the Word Literature List 10 pages. Complete list of *Shelter in the Word* articles and basic literature for new people.

Study Resources and Information:

The New Millennium edited by Ken Westby, 48 pages. Sample of free magazine of the Associated Churches of God, an over 20-year-old non-hierarchical organization.

Passover in Perspective by Norm Edwards, 4 pages. Notes from Bible study given in Orange County—useful, but not complete.

Sanctuary of Silence Book Promotion and Order Form by Peter Kershaw, 2 pages. Information about the difficulties with church incorporation and 501(c)3 status.

Y2K News Magazine by Wilson Publications, 48 pages. Sample issue of magazine devoted to Year 2000 computer problems and how they will affect nearly everyone.

Critiques of Other's Writings:

May 2, 1974 Member Letter about Church Government by Herbert Armstrong, 26 pages. With scriptural analysis by Norman Edwards.

Church of God 7th Day Old Documents About Herbert Armstrong, 20 pages. Shows Herbert Armstrong served as a Church of God Seventh Day minister from 1934 to 1938, and that he plagiarized their booklet, "Has Time Been Lost?"

Herbert Armstrong Co-Worker Letter Reprints, 110 pages. Complete text of co-worker letters demanding money referenced in SN December 1998 page 24 article.

Highly Recommended Items Listed Every Issue:

Mature Literature

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.

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.)

Did Christ Reorganize the Church? by Herbert Armstrong in 1939, 8 pages. Very different than his later approach: Christ never set up a hierarchical government.

How Do We Give to the Eternal? by Rich-

ard Tafoya & Norman Edwards, 36 pages. Biblical study of giving and tithing.

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.

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 of God" history.

Study Resources and Information
Freedom Biblical Information Center

Catalog by Wayne Schatzle, 12 pages. Free, mostly Sabbatarian literature & tapes sources.

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.

The Journal: News of the Churches of God edited by Dixon Cartwright. One free sample issue. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups. 16 pages.

Servants' News Statement of Receipts and Expenses, 2 pages.

Servants' News Complete Literature List & Index, 36 pages.