Servants' NEWS

Vol. 6, No. 6 *A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be* **Nov/Dec 2000**

Feast 2001: Chadron State Park

We have reserved Chadron State Park, near Chadron, Nebraska, to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in 2001. We hope to create a family environment in which we can feast together, praise God and learn from each other. As Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelt in tents, looking forward to a "city whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:8-10), so we can use this time to realize that our bodies are like tabernacles—sheds? We have been given these bodies for a short time to learn, grow and overcome.

The sun, moon and stars declare to us daily that God is capable of making things last for billions of years. But our bodies—our temporary dwellings—are lucky to last 100 years. So if our life in this body is so short on the cosmic scale of things, why doesn't God just "skip it"? There are good answers to this question. We will talk about some of them at this feast.

Continued on page 8

Where Do Women Fit in the Church?

By Linda Hardy White

On a bitterly cold day in January, a middle-aged teacher, her daughter and son-in-law made their way through the snowdrifts to a church in New Hampshire. The teacher had already attended several Sunday services with the congregation.

But she had also been a dedicated Sabbatarian for seven years. On this particular day, she was determined to share her conviction about the Sabbath and to challenge the members of the group to study the question with open minds.

So forceful and compelling was her presentation that within one week a few of the leading men of the congregation resolved to keep the Sabbath. And thus Rachel Oakes brought the Sabbath to the Adventists in January 1844, creating a chain reaction that separated the movement from its Sunday-

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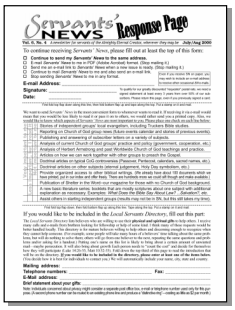
Last Call for Response Pages

Over 1100 Response Pages have been returned. If we did not receive one from you, we included another with this issue. We have not automatically dropped subscribers for almost three years. **However, this will be *the last issue* for about 800 subscribers unless we receive their Response Page or some other request to continue.**

Our previous instructions to fold and tape the page were not good. We received several fragmented ones, torn by postal machines. This time we have included an envelope. **So even if you already mailed the first one, please return the Response Page if it is included in this issue.**


Servants' NEWS Response Page

Vol. 6, No. 6 Combined Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb 2001 issue Address Flag May 31 July/Aug 2000

To continue receiving *Servants' News*, please fill out at least the top of this form:

☐ **Continue to send my *Servants' News* to the same address.**
☐ Send me an e-mail link to *Servants' News* when a new issue is ready. (Stop mailing it.)
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☐ Stop sending *Servants' News* to me and (also) send an e-mail link. (Don't put boxes 5A or paper you want to keep in the envelope. Everyone else should put boxes and other trash in the envelope.)

E-mail Address: _____
Signature: _____ To qualify for our greatly discounted "requester" postal rate, we need to receive a request from you at least every 3 years. Please sign and date your letters. Please note that any paper used as a postscript signed or used
Date: _____

* How fast may we have slung the line, then fast before the up and was slung the line. Put a stamp on and we mail.

We need to send Account / Acres to the most cost-effective form of reference which must mail it. If mailing in a mail would mean that you would be less likely to read it or pass it on to others, we would rather send you a printed copy. Also, we would like to know if you have access to the Internet and would be willing to receive *Servants' News* via the Internet.

☐ ☐	Stories of independent groups: local evangelism, including Truckers Bible studies
☐ ☐	Reporting on Church of God group news (future events calendar and stories of previous events)
☐ ☐	Publishing and answering of subscriber letters on a variety of subjects
☐ ☐	Analyses of current Church of God groups' practice and policy (government, cooperation, etc.)
☐ ☐	Analyses of Church of God history, including origins of various groups and practices
☐ ☐	Articles on how we can work together with other groups to preach the Gospel
☐ ☐	Doctrinal articles on typical CoG controversies (Passover, Pentecost, calendars, sacred names, etc.)
☐ ☐	Doctrinal articles on other subjects (eternal judgement, Holy Day symbolism, etc.)
☐ ☐	Provide organized access to other biblical writings. (We already have about 150 documents which we have written or that we feel are helpful. Would you like to see a table of contents for these documents?)
☐ ☐	Publication of Brother in the Word—our magazine for those with no Church of God background
☐ ☐	A new basic literature series, booklets that are mostly scriptures about one subject with additional explanation as necessary. Examples: *What Does the Bible Say About Law?*, *Salvation?*, etc.
☐ ☐	Assist others in starting independent groups (results may not be in 5%, but this will takes my time)

* Put first box here: how much time we may be for "how many to say" or not to say

If you would like to be included in the *Local Servants Directory*, fill out this part:

[illegible] Local Servants Directory is to be a way for brethren to find others in their area for fellowship, Bible study, and prayer. It will be published in the next issue of *Servants' News* and will be distributed to all subscribers who have been baptized locally. The directory is for mature believers willing to help others and discerning enough to recognize others who are not. Please list only those you have met personally and who you feel are sincere. Because of the nature of this form, many will be unwilling to write them; others will go there but forget to write to me; expecting the same questions and problems and/or asking for it baseball / fishing can't serve as the first to likely to bring about a similar amount of concerned and helpful responses. Please list only those you have met personally and who you feel are sincere. Because of the nature of this form, many will be unwilling to write them; others will go there but forget to write to me; expecting the same questions and problems and/or asking for it baseball / fishing can't serve as the first to likely to bring about a similar amount of concerned and helpful responses. Please list only those you have met personally and who you feel are sincere. Because of the nature of this form, many will participate (Luke 16:10-11; Titus 1:5-11). I will then list the last third of the page to wait for introductions that will be on the directory. **If you would like to be included in the directory, please enter at least one of the three letters.**

Name: _____ (Please print or type. If I will need to contact you, I'll be unfortunately include your name, city, state and country.)
Mailing address: _____
Telephone numbers: _____ **Fax:** _____
E-Mail address: _____
Brief statement about your gifts: _____
(Please list your spiritual gifts and abilities. You might consider a separate post office box, e-mail a telephone number used only for this purpose. Or someone please write her can be used for an existing phone line and produce a "telephone log" — costing as little as $2 per month.)

Over 250 people asked to be placed in the Local Servants' Directory. The preliminary version of this directory has been produced. It should be very helpful to brethren looking for friends, fellowship, or Bible study information. A variety of spiritual and physical gifts were listed by people from 10 countries and 40 USA states. I hope more international brethren will participate. **We will send the complete directory to all subscribers and place it on the Internet.**

Over 900 filled out the survey portion of the form. Initial results indicate that subscribers are most interested in Bible study articles (over 75%). The most diversity of opinion occurs in regard to HWA analysis articles with a third in favor, a third against, and a third neutral or not answering. More statistics will be published later.

If you have not returned your Response Page, please do so right away! — NSE

Truckers Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo.
#62-67

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

November 5, 2000

A few weeks ago I mentioned how a regular attendee of our studies left in the middle of a session and did not return, and I was concerned that he might have been offended. Good news—he was back this week. We had a very cordial and friendly discussion as he caught me up on what has been going with his life.

We were joined by a husband and wife driving team from Texas, Carl (the Baptist preacher from the community), and Rex Jamerson, a fellow Church of God member.

This week's study was a little below par. We did cover several topics related to not being overcome by the world (as in Lot and his family becoming like the people of Sodom).

The Presidential election and the state of the nation's culture is heavy on people's minds these days, and there seems to be a general cynicism regarding politics. As one man said today, in any election the people are the losers. I find concern about the so-called New World Order to be quite pervasive and the feeling among many that something just isn't right.

The lady from Texas mentioned a couple of things that I think are worth relating. She mentioned how on the CB this week someone got on and said that people needed to get out and vote because if the wrong people win then our children will be forced to carry Bibles around with them. To her surprise, the other truckers vocally and loudly gave that person an earful. More than one trucker has told me that talking religion on that channel almost always elicits comments to get off and go elsewhere, but not this time. This time the truckers said that they would rather have their children carrying Bibles than being burdened with a lot of the other garbage that they are being forced to bear today.

Secondly, she mentioned how the churches in her community all

Continued on page 24

E-mail subscriptions now available!

In addition to the normal printed copy edition which can be received in the normal post, you can also subscribe to *Servants' News* by e-mail in Portable Document Format (PDF), which can be read using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader (www.adobe.com), which looks the same as the printed copy.

You can also receive an e-mail notification for when the latest issue is available on the website (www.servantsnews.com). Thus the 4 options are: **1.** snail mail only; **2.** snail mail and link to website by e-mail; **3.** link to website sent by e-mail; **4.** PDF file sent by e-mail.

Please contact info@servantsnews.com if you wish to change your subscription option.

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 6, No. 6 **Nov/Dec 2000**

Servants' News is **one of many** ministries of the spiritual Church of God. 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 and teach 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 groups, but is supported by those who personally decide to help this ministry. We do not have IRS tax exempt status, but church groups are exempt without this status (see IRS Publ. 557, p. 16, col. 1).

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Notice: *The people listed above do not necessarily endorse every article in this newsletter.*

Servants' News accepts articles for publication. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope for items that you want returned. We are happy to print corrections for any significant errors. Address articles, letters, and subscription, literature or change of address requests to:

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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.

West Tenn. Fifth Sabbath

All Brethren are invited to our Sabbath service on **March 31st** at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in **Jackson, Tennessee**, located at 212 McClellan Rd. Please come to worship God and meet new friends in Christ.

Speakers will be Ray Bankston (Last Ages Church of God), Dwayne Hopper (independent) and Ray Wooten (United Christian Ministries). A potluck supper will follow. Let us honor God by meeting together and putting aside our differences on this Sabbath day. For more information contact: Ray Bankston, 901-549-9643; Bill Shults, 901-427-8099; Joe Shafer, 901-427-1255

Services Anywhere

You can listen to United Christian Ministries services anywhere in the USA by calling 1-918-222-7424 at 2 PM Eastern, 1 PM Central, 12 Noon Mountain or 11 AM Pacific Time. Enter the code 3325 to be connected.

Another Groundbreaking Women's Conference: June 8-10, 2001

The IBLC will sponsor another Women's Conference during 2001 to provide women with an opportunity to relax, gain new insights on Christian living, and make new friends. This year the conference will take place at a larger facility and will also include a full series of seminars and activities designed for girls aged 10-17. Women are encouraged to make the event a special mother-daughter outing.

During Women's Conference 2000, attendees focused on the valuable role they have held within the Sabbatarian community and their responsibility to teach the younger women of the church. The theme for Women's Conference 2001 will be Grace under Pressure: Meeting the Challenges of an Imperfect World.

The purpose of Women's Conference 2001 will be to share experiences and receive practical advice on how to meet life's challenges and still retain a sense of balance, equanimity, and spiritual well-being.

The conference will kick off at 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening with a reception, get-acquainted activities, and special Sabbath music presentation. Seminars will begin at 10 a.m. on Sabbath morning, lasting until 5 p.m. After dinner on Saturday evening, attendees will enjoy a social with door prizes. On Sunday morning, the conference will include open forum discussions on dealing with problems such as physical and mental illness, aging parents, divorce, and alcoholism. This will provide an opportunity for the attendees to share their own learning experiences.

The conference will be held **June 8–10 at the elegant Omni Hotel, Park West**, 1590 LBJ Fwy. **Dallas, TX.** The beautifully appointed hotel features amenities such as spacious rooms with refrigerators, jogging trail, outdoor heated pool, on-site exercise room, and the state-of-the-art Texas Learning Center, where the seminars are scheduled to be held. The Texas Learning Center, which seats 300, is one of only two such specially equipped conference centers in the Dallas area.

Conference fees for women 18 and over will be $65; for girls 10-17 the fee will be $50. This fee covers admission to conference seminars, all activities, conference materials, a gift bag, and snacks; breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Sabbath, June 9th, and breakfast on Sunday, June 10th. After April 30, all conference fees will increase by $20 per person, so register early!

This year, hotel reservations must be made separately. To reserve a room, call the Omni Hotel—Park West at 972/869-4300 and ask for the *IBLC Women's Conference 2001* event rate. Cost is a discounted rate of $69 (plus tax) per room per night for 1-4 occupants. This rate must be guaranteed by a credit card or advance payment and is in effect only until May 28, 2001. The Omni has a 48-hour cancellation notice.

Once again, IBLC encourages local congregations to financially sponsor deserving women who would otherwise not be able to attend the conference. Already congregations in various states are lining up their resources.

For more information or a registration form, call IBLC toll-free at 877/444-IBLC or 972/492-3305; or e-mail info@iblc.org.

Send Us Your News!

Believe it or not, publication editors are not people who automatically "know what's going on". The only way we know about significant events is by somebody telling us, by reading a publication or by asking various groups what they are planning. We simply do not have time to contact numerous groups before each issue to get their current news. We receive a lot of publications, but cannot read all of them. Many groups do not have a publication.

The most effective way for us to provide timely news is for you to send an announcement 2 to 3 months before a special event takes place, or send a report a week or so after it occurs. Thank you very much for your help. ⊠

Equal to Serve Conference for Women and Men

Equal to Serve, a dynamic conference for Christian Women is scheduled for **Friday through Sunday, May 25, 26, 27, 2001**, Pentecost/Memorial Day weekend, in **Atlanta, Georgia.** Pastor John H. Currier describes the purpose of the conference as seeking to empower and encourage Christian women to use all the spiritual gifts that God has given them. He explained:

> For hundreds of years the misunderstanding of Paul's words has limited Christian women. Are women allowed to give Bible studies, teach, preach, anoint, prophesy, exhort, comfort, and use any and all Spiritual Gifts that God may give? Are there examples in the Bible of women doing any of these things? Did Christ preach and teach against women participating? Does God consider women "second class" Christians? In Matthew 28:19-20, does it say that only men are to follow Christ's instructions? Come and hear what Christ really has in mind for women!

Dianne McDonnell, pastor of The Church of God, Dallas-Fort Worth, adds that the conference will be:

- Biblically based, and dedicated to helping each woman discover and develop her full potential!
- A time to learn to serve enthusiastically and well, in whatever role Jesus Christ has called you.
- Featuring guest speakers who will cut through the prejudiced traditions that have bound women and prevented them from growing into the full calling that Christ has given them.

The conference will be sponsored by the Church of God, Dallas-Fort Worth and the Douglasville Community Church in the Atlanta area, and will be held at the Ramada Inn Six Flags at Atlanta, call 404-691-4100 for reservations, and mention the "Equal to Serve" Conference. Both men and women are welcome. There will be a registration fee of $20.00 per person. To register, or for further information contact The Church of God, Dallas-Fort Worth, P. O. Box 152544, Arlington, TX 76015, or call 972-601-9032 ext 3777 or 770-947-9080. Information is on the church web site: www.ChurchofGodDFW.com

—John Currier & Dianne McDonnell

Unlicensed Church Conference in Milwaukee

Persecution of Christians around the world is at an historic and all-time high. While there is great cause for concern for their plight, one thing we can be quite confident of is that the Christian religion will live on. Christianity has outlived every tyrannical regime, stretching from the Roman Empire, to the Soviet Union. It will also outlive the murderous Islamic regime of Sudan, and the totalitarian Communist oligarchy of China.

History has repeatedly shown that brutally attacking the Christian, whether through imprisonment, torture, or execution, has never served to undermine faith. Persecution only serves to strengthen the Christian faith.

Every time in history, and in every culture, when Christianity has been assailed, the faith of its victims is bolstered, and the gospel then spreads like a wild fire. A contemporary example of this is China, where perhaps the greatest expansion of the gospel in history is taking place, under the constant harassment of a brutal Communist regime.

Modern enemies of the church are not altogether ignorant of this phenomena, and at least some have recognized that much more effective means are available for curtailing the expansion of Christ's kingdom.

In his seminal treatise on the political doctrine of the separation of government powers, *The Spirit Of the Laws* (1748), Montesquieu notes:

> Therefore, one does not succeed in detaching the soul from religion by filling it with this great object, by bringing it closer to the moment when it should find religion of greater importance. A more certain way to attack religion is by favor, by the comforts of life, by the hope of wealth; not by what reminds one of it, but by what makes one forget it; not by what makes one indignant, but by what makes men lukewarm, when other passions act on our souls, and those which religion inspires are silent. In the matter of changing religion, State favors are stronger than penalties.

This is precisely the formula that has been followed by our own government, in recent years, as it grows ever more hostile toward Christian values. Rather than attack Christianity through various "penalties", the modern method is to render the church "lukewarm" by doling out "State favors". The most prominent of "favors" today is the tax-exempt license. But in reality, the granting of a tax exemption to the church is a monumental con job.

Churches are not merely "exempt" from taxation because they make application to the IRS for that legal "privilege", **they are non-taxable because of the First Amendment.** It's a matter of jurisdiction. The government may only tax that which it has jurisdiction over.

Interestingly enough, even the IRS acknowledges that churches are tax-exempt and tax-deductible without ever applying for that status. In their words, it's "automatic" (Pub. 557 and IRC Sec. 508). Furthermore, contributions to churches are also "automatically" tax deductible (Pub. 526). Why then do churches subordinate themselves to the IRS, and thereby waive many important constitutionally guaranteed rights? Why do they agree to the numerous restrictions imposed on them by the 501c3 status? Certainly not because they were well informed. It only happens out of ignorance.

> "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos 4:6).

Many a preacher is getting fed up with having their tax-exempt status held over their head, and used as a mechanism for restricting their speech. The 501c3 is a huge liability to all but the most politically correct of churches.

Churches generally organize as 501c3 at the advice of their attorney; but those who did so only got one side of the story. Just wait until you hear "the rest of the story."

Looking for some real freedom to speak to the vital issues of the day? Then you definitely won't want to miss the **National Unlicensed Church Conference, April 16-17 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.** For more information on the conference, call 262-675-2804, or on the internet, go to: www.mercyseat.net

For materials on **how to unlicense your church,** or to organize a "free-church", call 417-337-7533, ext. 1, or

on the internet, go to: www.hushmoney.org.

You may also request to have a conference brochure e-mailed to you by e-mailing: info@hushmoney.org

— Peter Kershaw

Conference topics include: Unlicensed Clergy: America's True *Founding Fathers; Is Christ or Caesar Sovereign Over the Church?; Tax-exempt or Non-taxable?; Corporate Limited Liability: A Misguided Idea for Churches; Organizing a Free-Church or a Free-Ministry, Dissolving the Corporation; Terminating the 501c3; Dumping the Tax ID Number; Banking w/o an EIN or SSN; Holding Church Assets, Ministers or "Employees"?; Are Marriage Licenses Biblical?; Marriage w/o the State License; Zoning/Building Code Issues; Preaching w/o a License, Social Security: Contrary to God's Way; Occupying for Righteousness; Question and Answer Session.*

Many attending the conference may believe in Sunday-keeping, church hierarchy, and other doctrines not held by Servants' News *readers. But this is the best source of information that I know of about operating congregations and ministries like the first century church did. Brochures are also available from* Servants' News. *— NSE*

Proclaiming The Sabbath More Fully Conference

The theme of this Sabbath Conference is ***The Hebraic Roots of the Advent Faith.*** It will be held at **Andrews University,** Berrien Springs, Michigan, **May 25-27, 2001.** Many doctrines thought to be distinct to Adventism actually have their roots in Hebraic teaching and traditions. Foremost among these distinctive truths that resonate uniquely with Biblical Hebrew concepts are the Sabbath and Sanctuary truths. The unfolding of these areas of truth have led many Adventists to a greater appreciation of the Hebrew roots of our faith. The inculcating of Biblically Jewish celebration of the Sabbath and the festivals have enriched our understanding of our faith and the plan of salvation.

Many are discovering that the ante-Nicean church maintained a substantially Hebraic approach in worship and doctrine that has since been buried under the anti-Judaism of post Nicean Christianity. This has resulted in a distinctly anti-Judaic bias that is most visibly symbolized by the church's abrogation of Sabbath holiness for Sunday sacredness.

This Sabbath conference is convened to celebrate the Hebrew roots of our teachings and the restoration of the primitive faith and practice of the apostolic church which is prerequisite to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these last days. When properly understood and practiced these elements will provide a powerful witness to the proclaiming of the Sabbath more fully.

This conference will coincide with the date of what many believe to be the Biblical Day of Pentecost.

The program for this conference is still in the planning stages. Andrews University will provide a web presence for this conference as well as arrange for the registration of participants. We hope to have the programming details finalized very soon, but we wanted to release this notice to enable those interested to mark your calendars and to plan accordingly.

In His Service,

— Dr. Sidney L. Davis, Jr.
proclaiming the Sabbath more fully
www.sabbathmorefully.org
847-785-0315

[I believe the main value of these conferences is two-fold: They help those attending to realize that there is not just one group in the world with all truth, but that truth has been learned and preserved by a variety of groups, and the Eternal works with whom He will. One of the greatest impediments to learning is being a member of a group that "has a doctrinal explanation for all of the necessary truth of the Bible". Secondly, conferences are a great place to meet and learn from other believers. —NSE]

Music at Biblestudy.Org

The biblestudy.org web site has added a music page (go there directly: www.biblestudy.org/music). It contains old Christian standards, modern Christian music (some by Sabbatarians) and classical standards. Sheet music is available for some selections. These are all available for download—there are no copyright problems. There are links to other music sites.

New Book Reaches Out

The Western World is divided between two opposing worldviews: that of the relativistic M'n-M culture (the culture of materialism and meaningless) and that deriving from the divine narrative preserved by the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. A personal journey in living, this book contrasts these two ways of thinking, shows the way out of the human dilemmas common today, and encourages us to take up the challenge to *Walk a Straight Path in a Crooked World*, the path leading to happiness and a hope that lasts longer than a lifetime.

The above was taken from the back page of *Walk a Straight Path in a Crooked World*, subtitled *Discover House Rules for Humanity,* by Isaac and Rebecca Stewart. These are pen names for **Jeff and Carolanne Patton,** long time Church of God members. Jeff worked in the French Department of the WCG and then edited *The World Ahead* magazine for the Global Church of God. My family got to know their family very well during those years.

The book speaks to today's issues in today's language, but from a Biblical perspective—containing over 500 scripture quotations and references. It is designed to be read by a person with no background in the Bible, but contains wisdom, insight and many personal stories that would help the long-time Bible student.

This is an ideal book to give to someone, young or old, who is searching for truth, but is not interested in traditional "church religion". It deals with life's problems and the biblical solutions; it is not a "doctrine" book. It flows well as a whole, but a person could read just the chapter(s) that pertain to their immediate situation.

The table of contents: 1) The Real Nature of Things—something beyond meaninglessness; 2) The Day of the Gypsy—ideas have consequences; 3) Pursuing Happiness?—discover hope; 4) Falling Prey to Demons?—violence begins in the mind; 5) Kick that Black Dog—overcome depression; 6) A Good Marriage—your loving

oasis; 7) Tame that Cheatin' Heart!—infidelity or intimacy?; 8) Someone to Share your Dreams [about finding a mate]; 9) Bring Back Daddy—Who is the Father to the Fatherless?; 10) It's a Woman's Choice!—become a woman of valor; 11) The Girls are in Pain—trashed by a cultural whirlwind; 12) Childhood Denied!—we've forgotten its true value; 13) Beginnings and Endings [dealing with birth and death]; 14) Righting the Wrongs—finding straight paths for life's walk.

Walk A Straight Path in A Crooked World by Isaac and Rebecca Stewart (ISBN 1-55212-510-6) is illustrated by Mavis Stucci, 355 pages; paperback; $22.00 US (approx. $33.85 Canadian) published by Trafford Publishing, Suite 6E, 2333 Government Street, Victoria, B.C. V8T 4P4, Canada; Tel. for Canada & US: 888-232-4444.

The book can be purchased from the above, from amazon.com, or from www.trafford.com/robots/00-0175.html. The latter web site has pictures and sample excerpts. You may contact the authors at: House Rules for Humanity, PO Box 775, Sooke, BC V0S 1N0 Canada or e-mail: scythianpatton@home.com.

—Norman Edwards

Evangelistic Association of the Churches of God

Are you interested in helping to preach the Gospel in a non-denominational way? The founding documents of the Evangelistic Association of the Churches of God show a well thought out and promising start. While many "Church of God" constitutions start by talking about how Christ began "the Church" and then go on to refer to their own organization as "the Church", this Evangelistic Association clearly recognizes it is **not** "the Church". After summarizing several clear truths from the Bible, their constitution says:

> Recognizing that the forgoing truths are fully substantiated by both Scripture and History and that THEIR IMPORTANCE IS WHOLLY INDEPENDENT OF ALL ORGANIZATIONAL, SECTARIAN AND DENOMINATIONAL TENETS; and…

This document continues with more general organizational information, then states the groups specific objectives:

> a. To increase and to **SHARE** our knowledge of the Kingdom of God, its origin, purpose and value;
>
> b. To encourage a similar study and sharing of the Kingdom of God truth among all mankind throughout the world;
>
> c. To promote a spirit of cooperation among all believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God on earth for the sole purpose of spreading hope beyond this present world;
>
> d. To teach and foster observance of the Commandments of Exodus 20 as amplified by Jesus Christ;
>
> e. To devise ways and means for accomplishing these ends through the **EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD,** representing the total membership;
>
> f. To establish and maintain such Association so that it shall be non-sectarian and inter-denominational and, therefore, inherently **SHALL NOT CONSTITUTE A CHURCH OR DENOMINATION,** but an association of Christians who espouse the principles contained therein.

The Association is a volunteer effort—members and officers are not permitted to be compensated for their services (though expenses can be reimbursed). Anyone can become a voting member by paying the $25 per year individual dues. For more information or to become a member write the Evangelistic Association of the Churches of God, PO Box 691499, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74169.

CGOM Now 5 Years Old

It's hard to believe that our association, *The Churches of God Outreach Ministries* will be five years old in February 2001. Wow! How time flies. As some of you may remember, CGOM was formed on a Sunday afternoon, February 26, 1996 in Tyler Texas. It was further organized in our ministerial/steward Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma on the week-end of April 12-14, 1996. It started as *The Churches of God* and at our 1997 Spring Conference we decided to change our name to *The Churches of God Outreach Ministries*, or CGOM for short.

In writing this letter I began to reflect on our association's history and the reason it was formed. I went back through some of our earlier Newsletters. The first issue was dated March, 1996, and I was reminded of the enthusiasm, commitment to form this association; an association with a fresh concept: a non-hierarchical structure (no headquarters to "report" to), an unpaid ministry and all local churches remaining autonomous and independent, yet interdependent in pooling our resources and efforts together for preaching the Gospel and providing love, encouragement and support to our scattered brethren around the world.

The focus of our attention and commitment is not towards an organization but to the Head of the church, our Saviour Jesus Christ. The centrality of Jesus Christ has remained our focus throughout these years; what a beautiful and Biblically oriented concept. What a unique opportunity God has given to work together in such an association as CGOM.

We have not been without our growing pains, but much has been accomplished during these almost five years of existence. For example, we have the CGOM web-site, distribute a variety of literature including New Horizons, Fountain of Life, Bible Basics, several booklets, T.O.D.A.Y. for our youth, and recently we mailed out over 4,200 copies of a new Bible Course made available by the Church of God, Sabbath Day of Springdale, Arkansas [PO Box 1645, Springdale, AR 72765]. We have sponsored Feast of Tabernacles sites in the USA, Canada, England and Australia. We have also sponsored several outreach special projects such as the *USA Today* ads and the Y2K postcard distribution.

By the close of 2000 we mailed out over 45,000 pieces of literature and other mailings free of charge. This compares with the previous year when we mailed out a little over 29,000 pieces. Besides the United States and Canada we have regular mailings to: Australia, Bermuda, Central America, Colombia, Denmark, East Africa (Kenya), England, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, New Guinea, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, South America, Spain, Vietnam, Wales, West Indies and Yugoslavia.

All of this was done with limited finances and lots of volunteer hours.

However, much more needs to be done. We need to continue to grow, continue to raise the bar of activity as we advance our mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ through our Outreach Ministries. This makes our next conference scheduled for March 9-11 in Tulsa Oklahoma a very important one.

Please pray for the success of this Conference.

— Julian Cruz

Church of God, San Antonio, Texas

210-333-7229, jcruz@ix.netcom.com

To find out more about *The Churches of God Outreach Ministries* or to receive their publication, *New Horizons*, write CGOM, PO Box 54621, Tulsa, OK 74155-0621; tel: 800-611-8080, e-mail: rgawith@ionet.net.

Bible Software to Analyze Greek, Hebrew

What used to require volumes of large books can now be done with a few CD-ROMs and a computer. When searching the scriptures to find out exactly what the Eternal said on a particular point, it is often perplexing to find several Bible translations that vary considerably in the rendering of a specific verse. This problem is usually caused by variations among the original language manuscripts or by translators using their own doctrinal bias to write what they think the original author meant.

The solution to these kinds of problems is usually for us to look at the original language manuscripts ourselves and, with our limited knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, use study aids to help us determine what the original text meant. This can be done to a limited degree by using a concordance or interlinear to find the "Strong's numbers" of the Greek and Hebrew words, and then looking up their meanings in a dictionary. But much information may be passed over in this process. Words can be singular or plural; masculine or feminine; subjects or objects; past, present or future; etc. These things can make a great difference in the meaning.

But the average Bible student does not have years to spend mastering every portion of the ancient Hebrew and Greek languages. He or she wants to understand the meaning of the few Greek or Hebrew words in the verses they are studying right now. Computer databases now exist to help the English-speaking person do that.

I have used Hermeneutika's *Bibleworks* for five years (800-742-4253, www.bibleworks.com). It is used by professional Bible translators and others in the academic world.

Another producer of Hebrew and Greek study software is Gramcord. They have a variety of programs that will work on Apple, IBM-compatible and even hand-held computers (877-853-8963).

The prices of these software items are in the $100 to $300 range. Obviously, they are a wise purchase only if you use them. But I cannot help but think about what other Bible students throughout history will say in the resurrection: "What? You could have that in your own home for only a few day's pay? We had to go to the university library." And even Bible translators of most eras will say: "We never had anything that good."

—Norman S Edwards

Nova Program Gold Mine

The PBS web site has transcripts of **all** of the **Nova** shows from Jan. 1997 to the present. A list can be seen at:

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts

This includes the "Mysterious Mummies of China" 1998 show that described the discovery in the Takla Makan Desert of central Asia of mummies dated to at least 1000 BC, with blond and red hair, European features, buried with fine woolen material in colorful tartan patterns. That program and a few pictures are located at:

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2502chinamum.html

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/chinamum/taklamakan.html

The transcript collection also includes last year's story on the "Lemba", a tribe of Black Africans whose DNA shows a link to the Levitical priesthood of Israel:

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2706israel.html

For an interview with the author:

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/israel/parfitt.html

—Pam Dewey

Old WCG Sermons Kept

A new church history section was added to the Bible study web site:

www.biblestudy.org

[If you do not personally have access to the Internet, a local library or a friend can easily find this site for you—just copy the name as is.]

Bible studies and sermons given in the 1950s by Herbert Armstrong, Richard David Armstrong and Herman Hoeh are now available! These messages, accessible on the Internet in RealAudio format, pre-date the current oldest copies of commonly available church of God audio material by 25 years!

While visiting Dixon Cartwright in Big Sandy, Texas in early December, I was contacted by Ed and Cindy Burson of The Faithful Word. A friend lent them around 100 reel-to-reel tapes of Bible studies and Holy Day messages given in the 1950s and 60s by the then Radio Church of God. They tried playing the reel-to-reel tapes but were unable to hear a clear voice. Upon request they graciously offered me a few of these reels to see if someone else could retrieve a good audio signal. I was confident one of my best friends, Mike Summers (editor of Your Choice magazine who knows **a lot** about audio/video) could help recover the audio. And he did!

Mike set up and taught me the basics of how to retrieve the audio using his special equipment. After feeding the audio into the computer and digitally cleaning it up a little bit (which was a P-A-I-N due to voice fluctuations, background noise and other issues with the reels) the messages were almost ready for distribution. After some historical detective work to pin down dates for the messages and David Williams creating opening/closing tags for the audio files, the historical materials were ready to go!

You can find these rare sermons and studies in the new church history section at:

www.biblestudy.org/history/main.html.

Materials of historical significance to the church of God and aids to understanding church history in the world

Continued on page 28

Feast 2001: Chadron State Park
from page 1

We plan to have a large variety of messages and activities designed to honor the Eternal and strengthen each person participating.

The Park has a number of facilities that will help make an enjoyable Feast site. The meeting room will accommodate 120 people seated at tables. A complete kitchen adjoins it, where we will prepare breakfasts, lunches and some dinners. The park is a beautiful wooded location with hiking trails, volley-ball courts, tennis courts, horseshoes, an athletic field, playground equipment and, if all goes well, basketball and paddle boats.

There are 22 finished, two-bedroom, heated cabins at the park. Each has beds for four, a bathroom (shower, no tub) and a kitchenette. A smaller cabin with two double beds costs $54 per night (10 are available). Larger cabin with two double beds cost $64.80 per night (6 available). These are located about half a mile from the meeting/dining hall—a few minutes walk or a one minute drive. Right next to the meeting hall, there are three duplexes (6 units) with one queen bed and two single beds for $60 per night. If you have more than four people, you can add one extra in the $54 units or 2 extra in the $64.80 units by bringing your own crib, sleeping bag, etc.—or by paying for roll-away beds for $5.40 per night per person. There is a per vehicle park entrance fee $2.50 per day with a maximum of $14 per year.

The rooms will be reserved for Feast-goers only until sometime in April. The larger rooms will probably be "taken" well before that. **Please make your reservations with Chadron State Park by calling 308-432-6167 as soon as practical.** A payment for two nights will be expected as a deposit to hold your site. Make sure you mention you are attending the Feast of Tabernacles sponsored by *Servants' News*. (If there is anyone who would like to share a cabin, Servants' News staff will attempt to match you up with others in the same situation—call 517-625-7480.)

The park has tent sites and 70 RV sites. Per night costs are $7 for tents, $8 for RV's without electricity and $11.00 for RV's with electricity. Water and a dump-station are conveniently located. Reservations are not accepted for tent/RV sites, but Park personnel have said that some sites are virtually always available during October.

Meals may be purchased per person on an 8-day basis. All 8 breakfasts are $25, all 8 lunches are $30, and all 6 dinners (Wednesday and Thursday excluded) are $25. Prices for children 3 to 12 years old are $15, $20 and $15 respectively. The price for all meals is $80 per adult and $50 per child. (Those who can only attend part of the Feast, but who would like to participate in the meal plan should make special arrangements.) These meals are so inexpensive because we are planning for you to volunteer a few times to help prepare them. Breakfast will consist of a variety of eggs, pancakes, sausage, toast, cereal, fruit and beverages. Lunch will offer diverse sandwiches, soups, salads and hot dishes—some will be outdoor picnics if the weather is warm. The six dinners will be pot roast, spaghetti & garlic bread, turkey with dressing, baked chicken, pizza, and steak with baked potatoes—each main dish accompanied by appropriate vegetables, salad, bread, beverages and dessert.

For those who would like to stay at a motel and eat in restaurants, the city of Chadron is less then 10 minutes away. We will have more information in future issues, but a favorite motel is likely to be the West Hills Inn (Best Western) with standard rooms for $53, mini-suites for $59-$63 and Jacuzzi suites for $78. These prices do not include tax, but are for two adults with children free. The motel has a free continental breakfast, hot tub and indoor heated pool. A Country Kitchen restaurant is located next door. For West Hills Inn information and reservations call 877-432-8305.

Two *airports* are about a 90-minute drive from Chadron Nebraska. Rapid City (South Dakota) Regional Airport ("RAP") is larger with connections through Minneapolis via Northwest, Denver via United Express and Salt Lake City via Skywest/Delta. The Western Nebraska Regional Airport near Scottsbluff has connections only through Denver via United Express and Westward Airways.

Schedule of Events:

Breakfast will be served from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., lunch from 12:30 to 1:00 p.m. and dinner from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. (see below for Wednesday and Thursday dinner). Hymn, praise and worship singing will be held each morning (except Thursday) from 9:00 to 9:45a.m. Daily Services are from 10:00 a.m. to 12 Noon. Topics of the main messages are given below. Those interested in giving shorter messages or helping to fill the few open slots should contact Norman Edwards at 517-625-7480 or info@servantsnews.com.

Mon Oct 1 (night before—no meals included)

6:00-8:00 p.m.	Drop in to get acquainted. Snacks available.
8:00-8:45 p.m.	**Opening service.**

Tue Oct 2 — First Day of the Feast

10:00-12:00 Noon	**Service.** Message: *What does the Bible say about the Feast of Tabernacles?* (Norman Edwards)
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Bible Quiz Bowl.
7:30-9:30 p.m.	Planning meeting, game night.

Wed Oct 3

10:00-12:00 Noon	**Service.** Message: *How Did You Come to Know God?* Those present will be encouraged to give a *three-minute or less* summary of how they personally came to a knowledge of God.
2:00-5:00 p.m.	Hike on park trails, sports events.
5:00-6:00 p.m.	Hay rack rides.
6:00-8:00 p.m.	Buffalo Stew Cookout, prepared by park personnel with Norm Martin, a long-time area entertainer whose songs and stories relate to fur trade and cowboy history of the area. Adults $7 and $5 for children 2 to 12.

Thur Oct 4 – Black Hills Tour.

8:15 a.m. Caravan Tour to the Black Hills departs.

Possible options include: Mammoth archeological site ($5 adults, $3 children 6-12), swimming in Evan's Plunge hot springs water park ($8.50 adults, $5.50 children 1-12), Wind Cave Tour ($6 adults, $3 children 6-16), Mt. Rushmore ($8 per car) and Custer State Park ($10 per car). Sack lunches will be included with the meal plan (whether you take the tour or not). One dinner possibility is a roast beef and chicken buffet in the White Buffalo room of Custer State Park lodge ($15 per adult and $9 per child 3-9). Several weeks before the Feast, the tour schedule(s) will be finalized based on the interest of those attending.

Fri Oct 5

10:00-12:00 Noon	**Service.** Message: *True Religion* (Leo Bredehoft)
2:00-3:00 p.m.	Sports events.
3:00-5:00 p.m.	Practice for Variety Show
6:45-7:00 p.m.	Kiddush (for those interested).
7:00-8:30 p.m.	Bible study. Subject to be announced.
8:30-8:45 p.m.	Ice cream desert

Sat Oct 6

10:00-12:00 Noon	**Service.** *Topic to be Announced* (Craig Christner-Covenant Community Church, McCook, Nebraska.)
2:00-4:00 p.m.	"Be ready to give an answer" (see note below).
7:30-11:00 p.m.	Variety Show, Karaoke Night.

Sun Oct 7

10:00-12:00 Noon	**Service.** Message: *What does God expect from us now?* (Norman Edwards)
2:00-5:00 p.m.	Field Day—organized competition for both the serious & fun-loving.
7:30-9:00 p.m.	Campfire sing-along?

Mon Oct 8

10:00-12:00 Noon	**Service.** Message: *Topic to be Announced* (Jerry Laws).
2:00-4:30 p.m.	Swimming party at the Best Western
7:00-8:30 p.m.	Bible study. Subject to be announced.
8:30-8:45 p.m.	Surprise dessert

Tue Oct 9

10:00-12:00 Noon	**Service.** Meaning of the "Eighth Day" (Norman Edwards).

"Be ready to give an answer" is a hands-on educational workshop. While we are frequently flooded with information about God through Bibles, literature, tapes, etc, many of us have only rare opportunities to explain what we believe to others. The goal of this session, like most other education, is to provide a little practice so we can better handle "the real thing". We will break up into small groups and (for those want to participate) the new believers or young people will ask the mature believers to explain why they believe what they believe. Bring your Bible or any other literature that you would like. If the new people do not have enough questions, a list of common questions will be supplied.

We expect this feast to be attended by a variety of people, 30-year Feast-keepers and first-time feast keepers. Some will travel far to get there, others in the area will enjoy their first Feast where they did not have to travel overnight. If you believe it is the Eternal's will for you to be there, we hope you will make plans to come. 🕮

Where Do Women Fit in the Church? from page 1

keeping roots and led to the Church of God.

Ironically, the pivotal role of this woman in Sabbatarianism has been largely ignored and perhaps even suppressed by the Church of God organizations with preconceived notions of church eras. Most of the organizations tend to look at the Seventh Day Baptists as their spiritual progenitor. Yet the Sabbath was not brought to the Adventists as a result of the efforts of that Baptist denomination, whose candlestick was then supposedly extinguished, but through the personal evangelism of Rachel Oaks.

Since the 1970s, a great deal of scholarship has been dedicated to determining how women fit into the primitive church. It's time to put our traditional view of women to the test and to see if our practices rest on a solid understanding of the Scriptures.

The Role of Women in First Century Judaism

After the Babylonian captivity, Jews began to thank God that they had not been born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman, praying: "Blessed are You, O Lord, King of the Universe, who have not made me a heathen. Blessed are You who have not made me a bondsman. Blessed are You who have not made me a woman." Women were forbidden to have their own fellowship groups, with their religious role increasingly confined to family life only.

First-century Jews had a highly stratified and even racist society, with freeborn Jewish women ranking only slightly better than Gentile slaves. Women in upper class priestly families usually lived in seclusion, much like the Arab women of today, and veiled themselves in public. Women of the lower classes, in contrast, often worked in the fields side by side with men, but they too would have generally been scandalized to be alone with an unrelated male. The fact that there were eunuchs tells us that wealthy men often had harems or multiple wives who lived in separate quarters.

Jesus must have been quite shocking to rabbis and priests in Galilee and Jerusalem. For example, Martha no doubt was acting like a proper Jewish woman attending to the needs of the menfolk. The sages had spelled out in great detail all the many menial duties incumbent upon women. But her sister Mary was not behaving according to custom. She sat with Jesus so that she could hear His words. Jesus did not

order Mary to get back in the kitchen where she belonged. On the contrary He gently let Martha know that by encumbering herself with these duties, she was missing out on important spiritual knowledge.

So, what did Jesus do that was considered revolutionary in His social environment?

1. He obviously disagreed with the Rabbis that association with women led to lust. This logic resulted in the segregation of the sexes within rabbinic Judaism and other cultures (Luke 7:37-48-10:49-32).

2. Jesus showed that a woman could divorce her husband for sexual immorality, while the rabbis said only a man could initiate divorce, and he could do so for any reason (Matt 19:3-9; 1Cor 7:13-15).

3. Jesus touched "unclean women" such as the woman with the flow of blood; neither rabbis nor priests would do so lest they make themselves ritually impure (Mark 5:25-34).

4. Jesus not only spoke freely with women, healed them, and allowed them to bring their children to see him, but he also allowed them to serve him. His behavior would not have been unusual in a family setting, but it was unusual for rabbis, since they strongly disapproved of women even serving them at tables and shunned speaking to women in public (Aboth 1:5)

5. Jesus conversed at length with the Samaritan woman, surprising even his disciples (John 4:6-30). Rabbis would never do so since they considered Samaritan women "perpetual menstruants" (Niddah 4.1).

6. While women were witnesses to the resurrection accounts, they were not allowed to serve as witnesses under rabbinic or Roman law (Matt 28:1-10).

The famous scholar Raymond Brown summarizes this contrast well: "In the Talmud, Rabbi Eliezer declared, 'There is no wisdom in a woman except with the distaff.' One version adds, 'It is better that the words of the Law should be burned, than that they should be given to a women.' In the Mishnah the same rabbi made a similarly strong statement when he said 'If a man gives his daughter a knowledge of the Law it is as though he taught her lasciviousness.' " Jesus broke with rabbinical tradition when he taught women and included them among his followers.

The Role of Women in the New Testament Church

In 1 Timothy 2, Paul preserves male leadership, headship, and governing authority in the church. We accept the traditional role of only male elders and rulers over the assembly. Yet as many NT scholars point out, women praying and prophesying in church, described in 1 Corinthians 11, do not involve the speaker in assuming functions of pastoral leadership or governing authority. First, the scholars point out that the requirement for women to have an appropriate head covering as a matter of decorum is only an issue if she is in a public setting. The noted conservative scholar F.F. Bruce, now deceased, wrote in his commentary on First Corinthians:

> That there was liberty in the church (for it is church order, not private or domestic devotion, that is in view here) for women to pray or prophesy is necessarily implied by Paul's argument: he does not suggest that there is anything undesirable about their doing so (whatever the injunction of 14.34 means, it cannot be understood thus), but requires them to do so with their heads covered.

Scholars also point out that prayer in ancient times was not silent as it is today, but vocalized. Thus many are convinced that women exercised those two functions in NT times because they did not involve usurping the responsibilities of the elder or overseer of the church or the principle of male headship. While neither Jewish nor Greek women spoke at a public *ekklesia* (Greek word used for "assembly" or "church"), in the private *ekklesia* of Corinthian Christians, women prayed and prophesied under male leadership.

Although no women are elders or overseers, Paul does refers to Phoebe as a *diakonos* (Rom. 16:1), which is actually the masculine form of the word, since there is no feminine form used in the Greek New Testament. *Diakonos* is translated as minister or servant, and is used of Jesus, Paul, and Timothy in other passages.

Since Paul did indeed refer to Phoebe as a *diakonos*, this may help to

More to Come

We have received many other articles and letters about Biblical roles for men and women. We printed Tommy Willis' perspective in the Sept/Oct *Shelter in the Word* and the article this issue has particularly interesting historical facts. As is usually the case with doctrinal controversies, there are "difficult" scriptures that clearly say one thing to one group of people, while other scriptures clearly say something else to another group of people. Frequently, writers do not deal with the scriptures that seem to disagree with their view. We will attempt to provide one or more articles that cover most of these scriptures in the future.

While I am sure that I have more to learn regarding the Eternal's will on this subject, there are two points that I hope are clear to everyone:

1. While the Bible primarily discusses the deeds of men, both men and women have the same spiritual potential. Heb 11 mentions both men and women as "the faithful". Acts 1:14 shows women were present when the Church began; Acts 22:4 shows that they went to prison for what they believed; and Math 24:40-42 shows that women and men will meet Christ together when He returns.

2. The idea that there should be no difference between the roles of men and women within the family, society and Church is clearly unbiblical and against nature. Both scripture and modern science show significant differences in the physical and mental capabilities of men and women.

3. We **should not** think of this subject as "men vs. women". The Eternal wants everyone to learn to work together in peace to serve Him, not to fight over power, positions and authority. However, we should all want to do this in the way His word teaches us.

—NSE

explain 1Timothy 3:8-12, where in a passage on the qualifications of an elder, Paul also drops in a whole verse on women's qualifications. The Churches of God have traditionally interpreted this section to mean that women did have some type of religious office, although they followed an ancient practice in transliterating *diakonos* to deacon and deaconess, which splits the word away from its true meaning of servant.

When Paul wrote his epistle to Titus, he discussed some aspects of proper teaching to several classes of people: older men (2:2), older women (2:3), younger women (2:4-5), younger men (2:6-8) and slaves (2:9-10). But not only Titus was to be involved in teaching these groups.

Paul does not instruct Titus to exhort the younger women in any fashion; rather, Paul bids the older women teach—coming from a Greek root meaning encourage or urge—the younger women. There are two underlying premises in this passage: First, male leaders should avoid caring for younger women. Such direction is likely given in order to avoid temptations or inappropriate personal attachments. Second, women are better able to teach other women how to be mature Christian women.

We need to remember that in the first century, Jewish and Greek women in upper class families often lived in virtual seclusion in women's quarters. In parts of ancient Greece, they could not so much as talk to a non-related male without bringing shame and dishonor to the husband. If they left the home, these Jewish and Greek women veiled their faces. Generally, they sent their slaves to any public setting such as the market, forum, etc. In this cultural setting, the older women of the church had the responsibility of making sure that women converts were properly instructed in the Gospel.

Did women converts also gain knowledge from elders in the assembly, perhaps on the Sabbath day? Maybe they did, but given the culture of that time, there were undoubtedly circumstances where they were not at liberty to leave their household. Think of Moslem women of today. Another woman can visit them in their quarters, but no man outside of the family can do so. And certainly they cannot go to a mixed assembly without a veil and their male relatives as escorts. What would a woman of the first century have done if she were part of such a household and she had no male relatives who were God-fearers? While she could not attend a private ekklesia of men and women, she could freely mix with other women. It was common in ancient times for women to meet for religious purposes as long as no men were present.

Notice that Titus 2:3-5 places no restrictions or limitations on where women are to teach younger women, how frequently the instruction is to take place, or on which days. Especially today, there is sound wisdom in having the older women teach the younger and thereby avoiding the inappropriate male/female relationships that sadly can and have taken place in the church.

We need to remember that in the first century, Jewish and Greek women in upper class families often lived in virtual seclusion in women's quarters. In parts of ancient Greece, they could not so much as talk to a non-related male without bringing shame and dishonor to the husband

Now let's look at what women specifically did to assist with the Gospel. Women functioned as patrons of Jesus' ministry, just as women had been patrons of Elijah and Elisha. Luke 8:1-3 describes how Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and many others were helping to support Jesus and the apostles out of their own means. Obviously, these women had a measure of financial independence.

After Paul saw a man in a vision saying "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:10), he and his preaching companions immediately sailed to Philippi. On the Sabbath day, they went out of the city to the riverside to a place where prayer was customarily made—but by whom? On that day a group of women had assembled. Again, it was not customary to have silent prayer at that time and a group of women gathering for religious purposes without men present was both acceptable and common.

Who was the first to respond to the Macedonian call? It was a woman named Lydia who worshipped God before she met Paul. The inference is that she was one of the pagans who accepted the ethical monotheism of Judaism and attended the synagogue, but who did not obligate themselves to keep the burdensome Jewish rituals so common during that era. Since churches were basically households at that time, scholars believe that Lydia thus established a church in Philippi. What is significant about this home fellowship group? It is considered the very first Church in Europe.

Wherever Christianity spread, some of the women set up house churches. Mary, the mother of John Mark, sponsored a house church of Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem. It was on her door that the astonished Peter knocked to announce to the Christians assembled there that he had been liberated from prison by an angel (Acts 12:12-17). Apphia worked with two others to sponsor a house church in Colossae (Philem. 2). Nymphas had a group in Laodicea, and Phoebe at Cenchrea sponsored the congregations that met in their homes (Col. 4:15; Rom. 16:1). Phoebe was not only a benefactor of the church in Cenchrea (Rom. 16), but commentators believe that she personally carried Paul's letter to the Romans. These women seem to have been Romanized in that they moved about and talked with men freely. Rome was much more liberal about including women in social and public functions—a few notable women even served as public officials.

The apostle John addresses his second epistle to the "elect lady". There are many interpretations as to whether this greeting was symbolic of the church or refers to an actual woman. If it was indeed a woman, then John is giving her instructions about how the local church meeting in her home should deal with false teachers.

Paul's ministry in Thessalonica results in the conversion of "not a few prominent women" (17.4). His ministry in Berea results in the conversion

of "a number of prominent Greek women" (17.12). Paul at different times lists women whom he calls his "fellow-laborers", and he asks churches to assist them in their tasks. Along with Lydia, Paul references Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:1-3), Tryphena and Tryphosa as fellow laborers.

Priscilla and Aquilla, who also had a church in their home, and Junias and Andronicus worked as a type of husband and wife teaching teams to carry the faith to others. There is no indication from Scripture that either Priscilla or Junias were preachers with public ministries, but they were nonetheless active in helping promote and teach the Gospel. And while Priscilla's name is first, in ancient times, this was more likely to indicate that she had a higher social status than her husband rather than a higher religious status.

Did Paul mention women's names in his epistles just to be nice, or because they were actively helping to promote the Gospel? When he said that there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free in Christ (Gal 3:28), is it possible that he was denying the validity of the Jewish prayer I mentioned earlier? The reader can draw his or her own conclusion.

Women in the Emerging Catholic Church

After the fall of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Apostolic church, Gentile women began to eagerly embrace Christianity. The early appeal of Christianity to women has been well attested because they were afforded a higher status within the community of believers than they had in their surrounding culture.

In an inscription in Egypt dated from 66-86 AD we find a reference to a Christian woman named Paniskanes who is a *presbytera*. We also know that the earliest references by Romans around 100 A.D. to Christians described women as *ministrae*—but it is very uncertain as to what the writer exactly meant. *Ministrae* is the Latin translation of *diakonos*. These inscriptions do not, however, tell us what duties that title might have included.

About 100 years after Paul, Clement of Alexandria described the work of New Testament women as follows: "The apostles, giving themselves without respite to the work of evangelism, as befitted their ministry, took with them women, not as wives, but as sisters, to share in their ministry to women living at home: by their agency the teaching of the Lord reached the women's quarters without arousing suspicion" (Stromata Bk. 3, 6, 53).

In the second-third century there is a memorial to Amonnian the *presbytera* set up by a bishop named Diogenes. In the third to fifth centuries there are isolated writings referring to women as both *presbytera* and *episcopa*. The fourth-century Pricilla Catacomb in Rome shows women breaking bread at an agape meal.

We learn of the activities of women serving as *diakonos* in the eastern churches from several sources (especially *Didascalia apostolorum*). Here are some of the services they provided when modesty was a concern:

- assisted male bishops in the baptism and anointing of women.

Let's make the church whole by encouraging women to accept and exercise their biblically defined roles

- assisted women who were in need or who were ill.
- served as an intermediary between women and the male clergy.
- bore messages and traveled about on congregational business.
- gave instructions to new converts when necessary.

In western Catholicism, there was considerable reluctance to accept women *diakonos* as a recognized institution. The Council of Nicea decreed that deaconesses were to be accounted as lay persons and not to be ordained in the same way deacons were. The Council of Orange in 411 (can. 26) forbade the ordaining of deaconesses altogether. One source comments that when baptism by immersion was abandoned, there was really no further need for deaconesses, and thus the eastern church also began to drift away from having them.

Yet the issue of women in church leadership positions did not truly get settled until the beginning of the Dark Ages. In 494, Pope Gelasius I wrote in a letter to bishops in Sicily and southern Italy: "Stop ordaining women priests." According to Catholic scholars, the language of this letter reveals that a few women took the duties (preaching, teaching, and directing) of a duly-ordained priest. Interestingly, the 15 Catholic communities that offered testimony of women priests were not considered heretical, but were in full communion with Rome.

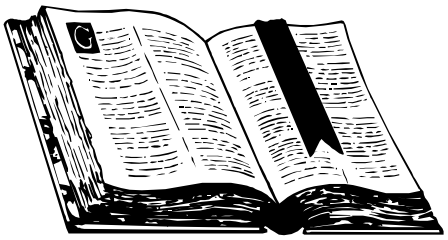
What can we conclude from this evidence relating to the Catholic church? Despite anti-women invective from a number of church fathers, the role of Catholic women was not rigidly defined. The duties of deaconesses described above were likely a reflection of New Testament practices. The few women who became priests represented a later development in the evolution of Catholicism.

My conclusion is that the role of women in the NT church was less restrictive than we have traditionally interpreted it. Women were working side by side with the apostles, sponsoring home fellowships, providing financial support, carrying messages to other congregations, even teaching men individually once in a while to help them better understand the Gospel (Acts 18:24-26). A few of them, like Philip's four daughters and unnamed Corinthian women, had the gift of prophecy.

And in an era in which men and women did not mingle freely, women were much more likely to have performed some religious services for other women. I believe that they actively taught other women as commanded by Paul in a teaching role that continued to be exercised for several hundred years afterwards and that we should still follow today. As one writer put it, "Suffice it to say that the pastor who fails to draw on the Biblical resource of qualified older women in the congregation to fulfill the church's ministry to younger women is not only risking the effectiveness of his ministry but also operating in clear contradiction to the instruction of Titus 2:4-5."

Let's make the church whole by encouraging women to accept and exercise their biblically-defined roles. 🕮

How *The Holy Scriptures* Bible Version Came to Be



By Rabon Vincent

I first began thinking about a new version of the Bible as a child when my dad pointed out several errors in the King James Version. I asked him "Why doesn't someone just fix the mistakes?" He replied "Because no two people can agree as to what the mistakes are." This simple answer was probably the beginning of my religious understanding.

My dad preferred the KJV but would never allow himself to be constricted by believing that all other translations or versions were less than adequate in every verse. Therefore, although my first Bible (at the age of five) was the King James Version, one of my most cherished Bibles was my second. When I was nine years old my dad gave me a Revised Standard Version Bible. I was astonished at how easy it was to read from this Bible. While I will always be a fan of the Elizabethan English of Shakespeare and the KJV, it cannot be denied that an easy to read, easy to understand Bible is a treasure indeed.

As I grew older, I began to realize that many people who were instructors for thousands knew little of the Bible. Little, that is, of what it really says. I became aware that part of the reason for this is the ability to extract a meaning from a part of the Bible that was easy to understand in several different contexts without the ability to combine it with more difficult areas of the Bible. The modern diversity of the English language seemed to be getting in the way of understanding the most wide-spread English language translation. Because of this, I believed that we needed a translation which was easy to read and understand, had continuity and was as free of secular errors as possible.

These were the same reasons that men like William Tyndale began translating the Bible into English. The only reward ever offered him was death, like so many others. I sought no reward. I always planned to offer a new version as a free translation not seeking royalties or profit of any kind. I did not want my name to be on the Bible. This is not to say that I would not be proud of the work. I simply don't feel that my name needs to be on a Bible.

So, for nearly twenty years I had wanted to produce a Bible that could easily be read from cover to cover and more honestly arouse some of the emotions that the original Hebrew and Greek intended. I am not a linguist. For this reason I had been deterred from even attempting to do this by the sheer fact that most theologians would scoff at a version that was produced by someone who only speaks one language. However, I came to realize that this is exactly the kind of person who might produce a useful, contemporary English Bible. For example, if a writer were to write the following line in chapter one of a book:

John lived in a beautiful, spacious home with an empty bed.

the meaning becomes one of two (or more) things depending on whether a line in chapter two reads:

Neither John nor his wife could find any cure for their insomnia.

or:

John had finally found the bride for which he had so long sought.

Since the majority of translations were translated by more than one individual, it becomes quite obvious that it is not easy for the flow of the Bible to be maintained. A single translator **struggling** through the entire Bible can (theoretically) more easily see the errors of translation he is introducing and, hopefully, correct them. That is not to say that a translator who cannot read the original languages is better than one who can. I am simply stating that in this age of computers, great linguistic skill is not absolutely required.

How did I, or how does anyone approach translating when they can't read the original language(s)? Fortunately, we live in an age which allows the use of many tools that have never before been available. By using computerized lexicons, dictionaries, commentaries, etc., I was able to access an immediate database of information and make a decision based on the needs of a particular passage as I was translating. By using this method, I was not hindered by preconceived notions about how a passage should look or what it should say. I did it line by line, often not knowing whether or not an entire passage was 'fitting together' as it should.

An example of this was the book of Romans. Paul was so intelligent that his writing is very difficult to translate. After working my way through this epistle, I was almost ready to give up on translating because I felt that I had utterly failed to maintain the flow through even a small portion of the New Testament written by just one man! However, for the first time, I decided to go back and read the epistle I had just finished. I was uplifted by this version of Romans (as I always had been with other translations of this epistle) and realized that maybe I wasn't doing such a bad job.

It would be very difficult to explain every step of the process that I used in producing this version without giving an example. Therefore, I have decided to show, step by step, exactly how the third epistle of John was produced for *The Holy Scriptures*.

The KJV reads:

[1]The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. [2]Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper

The Holy Scriptures Bible Version Should Be Helpful

Which Bible translation is best? That question is frequently debated, but rarely can every Bible-believer in a room agree on an answer. That is because it is simply impossible to make a perfect translation from one language to another. A translator must decide between trying to be as literal as possible— word for word translating—or trying to convey the meaning of words.

Consider this statement:

*The charity program lecturer said: "Please give the man with his **hand out** the **handout** on when to give a **handout**."*

The words "hand out" are used three different times with three different meanings. We could also say: "...give the man with his **hand extended** the **papers** on when to give people **money or food."** But the repetition of the original "hand out" is lost. Someone trying to translate this sentence into another language would have the same trouble. **There is no one word in the other language that means all three of those things.** So the translator must choose between using a different word to replace each use of "handout" or use the same foreign word and realize that his readers probably will not understand the meaning. It is far more complex with 2000-year old languages and no dictionaries from those times. As a real example, the Greek *cheirotoneo* literally means "to select by stretching out the hand". Some writings of the B.C. era show that it meant "select by a hand vote", while later writings claim it meant to "select by laying on hands". What did the Bible writers mean?

Invariably, any Bible translation will be partly a reflection of *what its translators think the Bible means*. When there is a passage that could possibly be understood more than one way, there is a great tendency for a translator to write what matches his belief.

I have spent several days helping Rabon Vincent with his version of the Bible, *The Holy Scriptures*, and I think it will be a very useful *version* for general Bible reading. (It is a *version* of the KJV, not a new *translation* from the Hebrew and Greek.) I think it would be especially good for first-time Bible readers. He did not try to go and put his doctrinal views into the Bible, but concentrated on fixing the places where the King James translators put their views into it.

The Holy Scriptures is **not** a study Bible—it does not contain any notes or possible alternate readings. Anyone doing a detailed study on the specific meaning of a passage should consult multiple translations and Bible helps.

While this version is good, it is also intended to be an ongoing work. If anyone would like to make clear suggestions for improvements, they may be sent to Rabon Vincent or *Servants' News.*

How You Can Get One

We will be making *The Holy Scriptures* available in several ways. As this issue is being mailed, the Bible will be going to the publisher. *Servants' News* will begin taking orders immediately for hardbound copies. We will mail them as soon as they are available. Computer versions will be available on mini-CD directly from Rabon Vincent and from our web site, www.servantsnews.com.

These will be distributed free of charge—Rabon is bearing the cost of printing and *Servants' News* the cost of mailing. Contact *Servants' News* at the address on page 2. Rabon Vincent may be reached at PO Box 756, Avilla, Indiana 46710; e-mail: rabon.vincent@gepex.ge.com — *Norm Edwards*

and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 4I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 5Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: 7Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth. 9I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church. 11Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. 12Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true. 13I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 14But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Step one was modernizing the Elizabethan language into modern English (i.e. *thy* to *your*, *thee* to *you*, *hath* to *has*, etc.). This was done by computer using the find and replace feature of Microsoft Word and produced 30 differences between the two versions.

Reading after step one:

1The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2Beloved, I wish above all things that **you may** prosper and be in health, even as **your** soul **prospers**. 3For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in **you**, even as **you walk** in the truth. 4I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 5Beloved, **you do** faithfully whatsoever **you do** to the brethren, and to strangers; 6Which have borne witness of **your** charity before the church: whom if **you** bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, **you shall** do well: 7Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth. 9I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who **loves** to have the preeminence among them, **receives** us not. 10Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he **does**, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither **does** he himself receive the brethren, and **forbids** them that would, and **casts** *them* out of the church. 11Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that **does** good is of God: but he that **does** evil **has** not seen God. 12Demetrius **has** good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: **yes**, and we *also* bear record; and **you** know that our record is true. 13I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto **you**: 14But I trust I shall shortly see **you**, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* to **you**. *Our* friends salute **you**. Greet the friends by name.

Step two involved reading line by line and arranging the structure of the sentences into a structure that is more con-

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Port Austin Bible Center

Non-denominational Bible Teaching

Working To Teach the "…Ways of God"—God's laws for life

By Warwick Potts, edited by Norman Edwards

Port Austin Bible Center's facilities are located in one of the country's most idyllic settings, just 1½ miles from the shores of beautiful Lake Huron. Port Austin Bible Center is the perfect place to come to study the Word of God.

With instruction and subject content coming together in an environment that encourages the student to have a mature and well-balanced comprehension of natural and spiritual matters. The Center is focused on helping to equip those who are wanting to allow the Holy Spirit to "…lead them into all Truth" and to then in turn share with and teach others.

This is an opportunity for anyone who would like to participate. Courses have been structured in such a manner as to allow for people, (individuals, families, or groups) to attend any and/or all of the thirty hour, modular courses being made available this year. Each course runs one week, each will be repeated three times. The courses offered this year are described below:

The Law of the Second Coming 101

Stephen Jones (30 hours)
April 9–13, June 4–8, Aug. 6–10

Stephen Jones will be teaching for the first time, from his latest book of the same name. A detailed and in-depth study of the Feast Days, established by God, along with all of their requirements and expectations, introduce the student to one of the most important 'templates' of timing to be found in the Scriptures.

For millennia men have been looking for an identifiable advent of intervention from the heavenlies with many and varied interpretations and understandings of prophetic Scripture being published and promoted. This study may show that in fact the keys to understanding this much sought event has been spoken of and it's plan laid out for generations within the timing of festival days given by God to Moses.

Course Overview:

Israel's Prophetic Spring Feasts
- Jesus Crucified at Passover; the eclipses of that day
- The Wave-Sheaf Offering; how did Jesus fulfill the Wave-Sheaf Offering?
- The Feast of Pentecost ("Weeks")
- The importance of Timing and Historic fulfillment

The Feast of Trumpets
- The Two Resurrections
- Not all Christians are raised at the First Resurrection
- Christians will be held accountable; God's Servants Scourged; The Parable of the Talents
- The Resurrection of the Righteous; The Purpose of Bodily Resurrection
- The Earths Baptism of Fire

The Day of Atonement and Jubilee
- The Fiftieth Jubilee from Adam
- Israel's inheritance in Canaan; The Ten Spies' Evil Report
- The Power of Forgiveness

Jacob's Feast Day Pattern
- Jacob at Bethel; Why was Jacob financially 'broke'?
- Jacob in Haran; Jacob at Mahanaim
- Jacob at Peniel; Jacob at Succoth (Booths)

The Feast Days in the Book of Joel
- Blowing the Trumpet; The Call to Repentance
- The Former and the Latter Rains
- Pouring out His Spirit

The Feast Days in Elijah's Story
- The Famine in the Land
- Elijah's Passover and Pentecost Patterns
- Elijah's Feast of Trumpets Pattern; Elijah's Day of Atonement Pattern
- Elijah's Feast of Tabernacles Pattern

The Feast of Tabernacles
- The Purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles
- Solomon Celebrates the Feast of Tabernacles
- A Short Chronological History under Ezra
- Ezra Celebrates the Feast of Tabernacles
- The 490-Year Link with the Apostle Paul
- Waving the Palm Branches at Tabernacles
- Jesus observes Tabernacles; In the Midst of the Feast
- The Eighth Day of Tabernacles
- Prophetic Temple Ceremonies at Tabernacles
- The Eight Signs in the Gospel of John

The Law of the Second Coming 102

Stephen Jones (30 hours)
May 7–11, July 9–13 Sept. 3-7

Course Overview:

Presenting the Firstborn
- The Law of the Eighth Day Circumcision
- The Firstborn of Unclean Animals
- Ishmael the Wild Donkey

Do I believe all this stuff is true?

by Norman Edwards

No. I disagree with a few of the things in these course outlines—but that is the nature of non-denominational study. There is no requirement to agree with everything being taught in order to attend or teach. ("Required belief" is something one expects from denominations and cults.) Teachers will accept well-supported disagreement in class discussions.

To me, the issue is this: Is the spiritual value of the courses worth the cost in time and money to take them? I am convinced my course will be. I cannot speak as confidently for the other courses because I have not taken them yet, but I think they will be worth the effort as well. Even if I should end up disagreeing with much of the teaching, I believe the time spent pouring over the scriptures with others will be well spent. The effort of any study should not be to "find a teacher to follow", but to learn from God and His Word.

The other teachers use many parts of the Old Testament that the Church of God groups spent little time with. They teach both literal and symbolic use of many laws. Christ continually spoke in symbolic language, confusing his disciples. We should not be surprised that other parts of the scripture also have symbolic meanings.

I appreciate the opportunity to teach the very practical lessons from the laws of God that individuals can use in their lives, families and governments. ❖

The Glory Manifests on the Eighth Day
Offering Strange Fire

God's Face is God's Presence
The Face of Moses
The Angel of His Presence
Paul's Commentary on God's Face
The Three Veils in the Temple
Faith and Positive Thinking
Paul's Commentary on Gideon's Army
Paul's commentary on the Two Tents
The Ministry of Reconciliation
The Earth Full of His Glory

The Two Works of Christ
The Cleansing of Lepers (Leviticus 14)
Ceremonial Washings were Baptisms
Three Baptisms and Three Feast Days
Jesus' Baptism and Wilderness Testing
The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)
Two Doves and Two Goats Compared
Jesus' Baptism on the Day of Atonement

Christ Comes of Judah and Joseph
Samson's Riddle: The Dead Lion Brings Honey
Joseph: The Sonship Message
Judah, Joseph, and Benjamin
The House of Joseph in Prophecy
How Israel Became Lost
Benoni-Benjamin and Bethlehem-Ephratah
Caleb and Joshua

The Sign of Jonah
Jonah's First Call to Preach
Jonah's Second Call to Preach
Reconciling All Nations
Deliver Us From Evil
Putting Christ's Second Coming into Perspective

The Real Rapture
The First Law of Christ's Coming
Patterns in Exodus 19 of Christ's Coming
Patterns in Exodus 24 of Christ's Coming
How Do We Meet the Lord?
The Catching Away (Harpazo)
The Meaning of Peter's Harpazo
The Meaning of Phillip's Harpazo
The Meaning of the Manchild's Harpazo
Meeting the Lord in the Air and in the Clouds
Where Will We Ever Be With the Lord?
Who Will Be Taken, and Who Will Be Left?
When Will Every Eye See Him?
The Unveiling and the New Covenant

The Law of the Manchild
The Image of God
Begotten From Above
The Feast Days Manifest the Pregnancy
The Marriage of our Soul to God
The Law of Deuteronomy 25:5-10
The Story of Ruth
Raising up Seed in Christ's Image
Conclusion

The Laws of Redemption & Restoration - 101

Warwick Potts (30 hours)
April 16-20, June 11-15, Aug. 13-17

The overall purpose of this course is to deliver to the student the recognition and the understanding of the Sovereignty of God. Through careful study of God's Law the student will begin to see the 'Plan' of God as it has unfolded throughout history from a Biblical perspective, and with an investigation of the impact of Biblical Laws in the affairs of men, we can begin to comprehend the will and plan of God for mankind today.

The student will be introduced to a study that clearly shows that everything is orderly; nothing happens by accident; men do not determine history; God does.

Nations rise and fall according to His decrees, no monarch or other ruler of people stands above the Law of God, nor can they withstand the irreversible judgment of God when the day of his visitation has arrived.

Course Overview:

The Law of Jubilee (Restoration)
Has any part of the Law been "put away"?
Paul, and being "under the Law"
The Law of Redemption
The Law of Jubilee; Understanding forgiveness
Lawful time periods
God's Lawful obligation to and requirement to forgive
Forgiveness in history
The Overcomer, forgiveness and keeping the Jubilee

Basic Bible chronology
120 Jubilees and the Holy Spirit
The two floods; Solomon's Temple
The Day of Pentecost—Acts chapter 2
Moses' prophetic life
The Law's requirement regarding Noah's flood
The Cleansing Laws of childbirth

'Cursed' time
For the Earth and Canaan
For Egypt; For Amalek and Saul

'Judged' time
For Israel; Looking for the Jubilee

The cleansing of Jerusalem
Babylon conquered
The Law of Cleansing
The Enemies of the Sanctuary
Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
The cleansing of the Priesthood

The Laws of Redemption & Restoration - 102

Warwick Potts (30 hours)
May 14-18, July 16-20, Sept. 10-14

This course continues with the study of history and the effect of God's lawful timing where the affairs of men are concerned. Detailing the ancient historic events that occurred by Divine intention and direction, this study shows how these events give clues to the understanding of God's dealings with mankind in the context of contemporary history.

By studying the Biblical Laws and their impact in history the student will learn to see the events of modern history and those of the present day, no longer in the light of happenstance, probability or chance but rather as the outworking of the Divine Plan effected by the very laws established by the Creator from the beginning.

The Birth of Jesus
When was Jesus born?
Roman History: The context of Jesus' Birth
Jesus and Moses: A Prophetic Parallel
John's Ministry Begins
When Did Jesus begin His Ministry?
Daniel's 70 weeks ended in 33AD

Cursed Time for Babylon and Mystery Babylon
Israel "Sold" to Babylon for eight years
God's Requirements: The Fruits of the Kingdom
Babylon's Liability in Long-term prophecy
The Feet of Iron and Clay

Prophecies fulfilled by the Israeli State
Chosen Status
Jacob and Esau
The Cursed Fig Tree
The Law of Fruit-bearing Trees

Three 40-year Trial Periods
Judah and Jerusalem
The Trial of the Church
The Trial of the Overcomers

Tribulation and the Time of Jacob's Trouble
Jeremiah's Prophecy
Under Laban
Jacob's first and second time of trouble
Israel's first and second time of trouble
Separation from Judah
The 14th Jubilee
The Remnant Shall Return

Jacob's Trouble Fulfilled in the Modern Nations
Britain and America

The Songs of Degrees
Jubilee Savings time
Why Britain and America
The 'Lost Sheep' found
Judaism or Christianity
True Jews and True Israelites

Other World events in Bible Prophecy
1492
World War II
The Ten Years after the Jubilees

The Great Babylonian Captivity in the 20th Century
The 2,520-year Cycle
The 76-year Cycle
Esau receives dominion
The rebuilding of Herod's Temple
The Debt-Note Given to the Overcomers
What is an Overcomer?

The Law of the Spirit of Life (the Tabernacle) - 101

Rudy Jones (30 hours)
April 23-27, June 18-22, Aug. 20-24

A course designed to introduce the student to the ageless secrets of the Tabernacle of God and to help them to discover the personal identity that they have with the "dwelling place of God".

The purpose of this course is not to look at the Tabernacle in particular, or the Bible in general for a lesson in history; our purpose is to find in the Scriptures the application for today and every day, and for every event and circumstance in life.

This is a study of the Tabernacle and all of the accompanying Lawful elements that God gave mankind with it.

It is, the most amazing drama ever presented, the most elaborate stage setting ever built, the most complex parable ever recorded in the Bible, the most important physical structure ever built on the earth. It is a structure in heaven seen by Moses (Heb 8:5) and by John (Rev 15:5)—a portrait of the Messiah Jesus –a revelation of the spiritual you.

Course Overview:

Introduction
A journey to our Father's House
The Tabernacle – Credits
Different names for the Tabernacle

The offerings
The fourteen categories of offerings
God's Covenant presence throughout history

The Encampment of the tribes
The Gate of the Court
The Sanctuary
The Court and Posts, Sockets, Hooks, etc.
The three levels of salvation

The Altar
Introduction—the Ephod and Breastplate
The Brass Altar
The Priest, the Altar and the stars
Summary and practical applications

The Laver
The mystery of "dying to live"

The Law of the Spirit of Life (the Tabernacle) - 102

Rudy Jones (30 hours)
April 23-27, June 18-22, Aug. 20-24

This course of study will commence from where the previous course concluded. With the same objectives as The Law of the Spirit of Life 101, this course will continue with the theme of, "The Tabernacle, the dwelling place of God".

The lecturer is not attempting to present an exclusively historical study of the Tabernacle and it's operation within the Old Testament record and context, but identifies the Laws of the Tabernacle and the Priesthood in a manner that is personal to the student and applicable to the world in the twenty-first century.

Course Overview:

Introduction
Review
The Age of Aquarius
The Anointing (Christ)
The Candlestick

The three levels of spiritual maturity
The Table of Shewbread
The secret language of the Bible
The Hebrew alphabet & numeric system
Thoughts and intents of the heart

The Golden Altar
The Veil was rent
Key Perspectives and Viewpoints
The Secret of the Tabernacle
Conclusion

Laws for Living - 101

Norman Edwards (30 hours)
Apr 30-May 4, June 25-29, Aug 27-31

Course Overview:

Why Study Biblical law when we have Jesus?

a) The Laws in Our Hearts. Most Christians believe they are under the "new covenant" in which God promises to "put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (Jer 31:33; Rom 2:15; Heb 8:10; 10:16). We are to keep "the spirit" and not "the letter" of the law (Rom 2:29; 7:6; 2Cor 3:6). But it is the same laws that were once written on stone that are to be written on our hearts. They can be written through life-lessons guided by the Holy Spirit or they can be written through study of God's word, guided by the holy spirit.

b) Physical governance still needed. The purpose of the Church was to teach spiritual truth, not to establish a physical kingdom. Yet there is still a need for physical governance in families and states. In the U.S.A. and some other nations, the people are ultimately responsible for government and would benefit greatly by using Biblical principles for civil government—whether they are Christian or not.

Laws for Crime Prevention. The U.S.A. spends far more money for prisons, police, courts and lawyers than any other nation in history, yet still has a huge prison population and a

Continued on page 23

Port Austin Bible Center Fee Schedule

Attendees	1 week	2 consecutive weeks	3 consecutive weeks	4 consecutive weeks
Single	$350.00	$650.00	$950.00	$1250.00
Couple	$650.00	$1,200.00	$1,750.00	$2,300.00
Non-class teens & adults	each $100.00	each $ 175.00	each $ 250.00	each $ 325.00
1-3 children (6-12 yrs.)	each $50.00	each $85.00	each $120.00	each $155.00

Children 5 years and under are free.
Fourth child and more of the same immediate family are free.

Small Groups and Evangelism

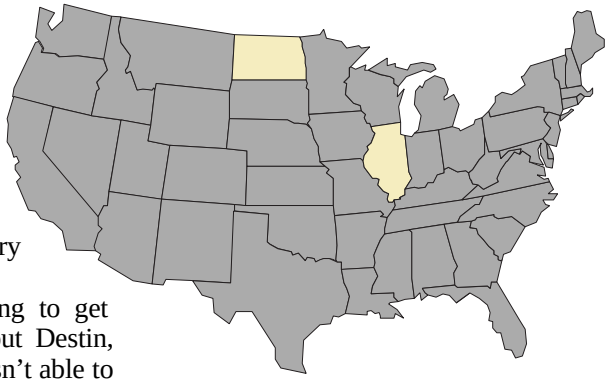
COG Downers Grove Oak Brook, Illinois

This is a small Church of God fellowship that meets about 35 miles west of downtown Chicago. The average attendance is about ten. The group consists mainly of former CGI members who tried a large COG organization when Garner Ted Armstrong's problems surfaced in late 1995. For various reasons, about three years ago they decided to form their own fellowship.

The group is led by Ken Svehla, who was an Elder in the CGI. They are fortunate to have a piano-playing member, so songs are part of their service, which starts with one hour of interactive bible study. This is followed by a sermon. Ken mentions that they strongly encourage members to be interactive, all should have an opportunity to speak their mind openly. Although this policy has some negative aspects, this fellowship feels it is much more preferable than the strict government controls and suppression of the congregation so many of us have experienced in the past.

The group has had many guest speakers, including Wayne Cole, Garry Pifer, Dave Havir, and Tom Justus. They cooperate closely with the Active Bible COG in downtown Chicago (see the last issue of *Servants' News*). For the past four years they have been a co-sponsor of the Chicago area Christian Renewal Conferences organized by Christian Educational Ministries. Michael Linacre, who pastors the Active Bible COG, is a frequent visitor and speaker.

Ken, and his wife, Trisha, are very much involved in the community's Battered Wives programs. Other church members will often help Ken and Trisha as they carry out some aspect of helping those unfortunate victims and their children.



When COG Downers Grove first started their own web site, they included various articles. Then they noticed there are many other sites that, combined, provide vast numbers of very good articles.

A member recalled trying to get some web information about Destin, Florida, Feast sites. She wasn't able to find the information she wanted. Her experience prompted the Downers Grove church to change their web site to something different. For more than a year they have been offering a web site where any Sabbath-keeping fellowship group or congregation can list themselves.

Laureen Blissard, who heads up the web site project, says they would like to become one place where people can go to find a Sabbath group near their home or near their travel itinerary; or to find information about various Feast sites. The site is off to a good start. Several US and a Canadian fellowship groups are listed, and more fellowships, no matter where in the world they are located, are urged to make themselves known.

Laureen can be reached at 630-416-7115. The church's web address is www.wherecog.org. Laureen's e-mail address is Blissard@wherecog.org. One of their objectives is to have a very user-friendly site. A local fellowship can even arrange to have a sub-directory listing from the major site. Laureen is presently trying to work out a link with Mapquest so people accessing a listed fellowship can also receive a map and directions.

The COG Downers Grove meets at 1:00 p.m. at the Oak Brook Park District Building. The address is 1300 Forest Gate Road, Oak Brook, IL. It is west of I-294 and east of Hwy 83, just north of 31st Street, a map is on the web site. Prospective visitors should call first, however, because one Sabbath a month they use as an opportunity to visit other groups. Ken's number is (630) 968-6153. Or, you can reach Laureen as noted above.

— "Onethird Century in-COGs"

Getting started in Bismark, ND

[Sometimes, new congregations are born out of old struggles. The Sept/Oct 2000 issue, page 28, contained a letter about the difficulties Darwin and Laura Lee experienced with the UCG-IA. I wrote to UCG-IA on their behalf and never received a response. This article, by Laura, explains what they have done to begin a Sabbath study. —NSE]

We are an interdependent Church of God group, which simply means we are willing to work with others as they will allow us or as we are able to.

We did not break away from an already existing Church of God group in order to specifically start our own church group. Neither Darwin or myself would make really good public speakers. We have a tendency to shake, and turn red at the thought. Public speaking is definitely not our talent.

I, Laura, was suspended from the United Church of God an International Association on November 17, 1999. Darwin got honorable mention in that letter also, but not by name. On October 26, 2000, Darwin and I were both disfellowshipped from the United Church of God an International Association. After our experience with UCG-IA, we lost any interest we may have had in the past for joining any corporate church. We find it to be a

disgusting thing, when a church group throws people out for personality. The Bible does clearly say someone can be put out for major sin, but we feel that if that is the case, that corporate group (or any other group) should be able to clearly state the sin, which warranted them to throw that person out. If you cannot state the major sin which warrants you to throw someone out of your church group, then you do not have authority from God to do so, as written in His Word the Bible.

Because we were no longer allowed to attend with UCG-IA since November 17, 1999, we visited other groups in the area. We found that some people were disfellowshipped (or suspended) from all Church of God groups in the area and were not allowed to attend any of them. We found many people who were not attending, because they didn't want to join any other corporate-type church groups. We found many people who felt God's people should be allowed to speak to each other about the Bible openly. We found that many stated there is a lack of love in the corporate churches in this area. To put it simply, we saw a need to provide a service which just wasn't here, and we had the ability to provide it.

We had our first Bible study here on June 30, 2000, and our first church service. on December 16, 2000. We do not collect tithes here; however, we do have a list of places from which we get on going help. We may, at times, ask for donations for something we need for Bible studies or Church services.

We have found that Ray Wooten's group has a phone hook up for all Holy Day Services including the Feast of Tabernacles. We are still in need of a person who would be overseer for traditional Passover services.

[There is no scriptural requirement for an "overseer", "elder", or "minister" to be present at a Passover service or to "officiate" over bread and wine. The Bible teaches: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1Cor 11:28). There is no stated function that a "church official" must do. The Roman Catholic and other Orthodox Churches made sacraments out of bread and wine and required one of their priests to administer them. The Protestants largely followed. Many fellowships take turns reading the relevant scriptures, washing feet, breaking bread, etc. — NSE]

Darwin, I and others have found by the "school of hard knocks" that most of the corporate Church of God groups do not encourage visitors. We feel this is sad, and we definitely know that this is not what God wants for us. God is building a family, and He is including everyone who wants to be in that family. Why is it so hard for so many people who profess to be **Christians**, to understand this concept? We encourage all visiting. We do not care where you have chosen to attend on a regular or irregular basis. Working out your salvation is between you and God, not between us and you. We even invite people who are not interested in our Bible studies or Church services to come and join us for fellowship and visiting. We have open fellowship and a potluck meal (bring food), before our Bible studies.

We also have open fellowship after our Bible studies, and before and after Church services. We will not be offended if you come for fellowship and visiting and leave at the times our Bible studies or services start. Our back door will be unlocked at 6:30 p.m. before Bible Studies and at 12:00 noon before services and will remain that way until all have left. Again, we have nothing to join, and we don't expect loyalty to us only. You are free to come and go at any point you want to. **The door is not locked**.

Darwin has spent many hours in the last several weeks working on our sound system. As he started working on this, we found we do not have to confine ourselves to all sitting downstairs or upstairs for services if it gets too crowded you can go upstairs or down. Darwin has mounted 2 speakers in our living room, 2 speakers in our dining room, and you can control the volume upstairs separately, with the volume control on the stereo in the dining room. Downstairs, Darwin has added an additional speaker near the furnace area to hopefully help us all hear better when the furnace kicks in. We can run our speaker phone through the entire system, upstairs and downstairs, so everyone can hear.

We can also use the system for live speakers. Even though Darwin and I are not public speakers, we would certainly welcome those who are. Besides welcoming live speakers any week, we also welcome cassette tapes or video tapes. It would be great if we know far enough in advance to put these special speakers or tapes and videos into our invitations which we send out. If you don't know until a few days before that you want to speak, that is fine to, we are flexible. Darwin has our sound system all set up so he can put a video in downstairs in the VCR and run the sound and picture both upstairs and downstairs.

[This is a good example of using one's talents instead of simply asking people to donate money to buy or rent buildings and equipment. — NSE]

On the subject of music, Ray Wooten's group has sent us one Church of God International song book, this is what they use for services, so if you have this song book, please bring it with you when you come to services here for that phone hook up. Dave Havir's group uses the last WCG song book, and the UCG-IA song book. If anyone out there has a UCG-IA songbook that they can donate to us as a group, that would be great, because we plan to sing with joy.

[The UCG-IA songbook is the same as the CGI songbook. — NSE]

Also, the old WCG song books also have some of the same songs in them. For the future, we have already contacted Mark Graham for song books and CDs, so we can also have song services when we have live speakers, tapes or videos. Darwin also hooked a CD player into our sound system.

When we do phone hook up with Ray Wooten's group and Dave Havir's group, both groups use different speakers, and both group's provide regular church services, complete with song services. Ken Westby does not provide song services.

Continued on page 27

We print a representative sampling of our mail—both positive and negative. We do not include names unless we are fairly sure that the writer would not object. To avoid any difficulty, writers should specify how much of their name and address they would like us to print.

Not by Might, Nor by Power, but by God's Spirit...

LETTER: December 26, 2000

There are many who claim that the preaching of the "gospel of the kingdom" before "the end", to fulfill Matthew 24:14, was accomplished by the WCG and Herbert Armstrong. Others believe that one or more of the splits of that organization will fulfill Matthew 24:14 by pouring financial resources into television, radio and other media as God makes them available.

We are overdue for some honest reconsideration of these claims. There are six ***billion*** people on our planet. ***Most*** of them have nothing to do with Christianity in any form, and know nothing about the kingdom of God, and likely do not care about it. Even of the minority that claim some allegiance to Christianity, very few have any real knowledge of the promise of the kingdom of God. In ***reality,*** this world is still ***clueless*** about the things that will soon take place. If you believe the gospel of the kingdom has been preached to all the world, and that the world understands what will soon take place, then try asking the public for information about it. Even right here in the "Christian" western world you will find very few who have either heard or paid attention to the gospel of the kingdom of God. This is especially true among the younger generation. If we can be ***honest*** with ourselves we have to admit that if the end-time gospel has really been preached, it has been done poorly at best.

Would God the Father and Jesus Christ accept such poor work, and bring judgment and the kingdom on a world that has not been fairly forewarned? We know better than that. So then, ***how will*** the gospel be preached to all the world before the end comes? ***How will*** a witness be provided? ***Quite simply, it will not be by our might, nor by our power, but by God's spirit*** **(ref. Zech 4:6).** Let me explain.

Consider for a moment the few years of Jesus' preaching. What was it that drew "multitudes" and "great multitudes" to Him? Was it the parables that few could understand? Or was it the insightful comments on the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees? No, it was neither. To be sure, it was the miracles: "And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased" (John 6:2). The blind received their sight. The lame walked and jumped, praising God. The dead were raised to life. The astonished crowds strained to see it for themselves. ***The miracles drew the people's attention, and while He had their attention Jesus preached to them the good news of the kingdom of God.***

It was the same for the apostles. Acts 3:6-11 records what happened after God used Peter and John to heal the lame man at the temple gate:

And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

Immediately Peter and John had an attentive audience. The miracle caught the attention of the people; the people came and ***listened.***

Surely such instant, compelling miracles would draw great attention today as they did in the past. Even one person, given the power of instant miracles, would draw a ***frenzy*** of media attention. The world would look in wonder, and ***listen to the message***—the witness—delivered to them. The coverage would be news, free of charge, at no expense to God's people. No church organization would be required to support it.

But is there any evidence—***Bible scripture***—indicating this is what will happen? Is this more than wishful thinking or vain imagination? Acts 2:17-20 does mention God pouring His spirit in the last days. But there is another scripture we should focus on, one which has not been understood fully. Let's look again at Revelation 3:8, part of Jesus' message to the Philadelphia church:

I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Clearly Jesus is promising the Philadelphians an open door, an opportunity to preach. Haven't we usually assumed the open door was access to media such as print, television and radio? But wait... Jesus promised a door that ***no man can shut.*** The media are controlled by men. Men can—and will some day—close the media to the preaching of the gospel. But if God's people were given the power of miracles, ***could men stop that***? ***Of course not!*** No one can stop God or Jesus Christ. Given the power of miracles, God's elect could preach the gospel of the kingdom powerfully to the world, "as a witness to all nations", before the end comes. Those same miracle workers could also be given the gift of tongues, so as to be able to communicate directly to all peoples.

Is there more evidence that the Philadelphians are given the power of miracles? Consider the next verse, Revelation 3:9:

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

The world's false churches—"the synagogue of Satan"—will somehow be convicted of their error. This is not to say that they repent. But they will have undeniable evidence that they are incorrect in their beliefs. And they will know that Jesus Christ loves and is working through another people. And what will convict them? Could it be the power of miracles given to God's elect? Could anything short of miracles from God convict the synagogue of Satan of their error?

Miracles add convicting credibility to preaching. They add the power of God to the preaching of men. Nonetheless it is very human not to appreciate proof of one's error. As was true in the days of Jesus and the apostles, hate can begin where repentance fails and learning ends. As Jesus said in Matthew 24:9, "ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake".

Today, are the churches of God really hated? They may be regarded as different and odd, true, but they are not generally hated. But adding the power of instant and compelling miracles would change the tone, the attitudes, dramatically. Miracle-working power would single out God's elect for special

attention, and ultimately special hatred. The result is revealed in Revelation 6:9-11:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Clearly we see another martyrdom occurring just before the sixth seal with its great signs and wonders, the sun and moon being darkened, etc. Could it be that this martyrdom befalls the miracle workers of the Philadelphia church, as they preach the gospel of the kingdom of God just before the end comes?

God does not need and is not waiting for a church organization with the "right" form of government to preach the gospel in the end time. God will use servants who ***believe*** and allow Him to use them personally. Will we be ready to walk through that door when Jesus opens it? Will we trust Jesus Christ, the head of the church, to provide the power needed to preach the gospel to all the world? Or will we remain fearful and unbelieving, and trust the church organizations of men instead?

George Burdick, Sterling, MA, USA
Rev21v4@att.net

RESPONSE: Well said! When church organizations argue that they are the "main work" because they have more magazines and megawatts then the next group, I understand why the Eternal is not giving them great miracle-working power. I wrote about this in the March 1996 *Servants' News.* At that time, I wondered, "are the independent believers now ready to receive the power to do miracles?"

Five years later, I can see that myself and many others have learned a lot in that time. We were not ready then and I am not at all sure that we are ready now. As Solomon said, there is a time for everything. I simply pray for the ability to live each day in the way that Christ would have me live. That may mean primarily being a good father to my family and helping the few thousand people that read my writing. It may mean being used of God to heal and preach to millions. It may mean dying at the hands of unjust men.

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Heb 13:5, NIV).

—NSE

Enjoyed Port Austin Feast

LETTER: October 21, 2000

A great feast, Norm!

Duane and I really enjoyed the location, the fellowship, and especially the "new" people among us. We just felt we were getting some new information, and something new to chew on. I know, some of "our" people were less than pleased, and you will probably get email, but before that happens, we want you to know how refreshing we found the feast this year. Warwick's admonition to be mature and responsible is so true. We should be able to see truth, and be able to tell the difference! I just wish we could hear more. If you ever have more tapes let me know.

The music, singing and the whole atmosphere was just great. We talked quite a bit with [name withheld] and her mom, and they were so friendly. (and the little doggies were a nice treat!) You and your family did such a wonderful job, it is a major undertaking to put together everything needed for such a group. And, by the way, we did not leave early because of any dissatisfaction. We had planned to come home on Friday, so we would be home for the Sabbath, but Duane developed a bad head cold on Wed night, so we left Thurs morning. We want to assure you that was the only reason we left early. We really missed being there the last days.

I had planned to talk to Warwick [Potts] and the others and let them know how much we appreciated their input, but was not able to. Do you have any email addresses for them, or any way to contact them?

Get some rest, and know that your labors were a blessing to many.

— Nancy, Goshen, Indiana

RESPONSE: I am glad that you enjoyed the Feast. My family enjoyed it very much, also. You can reach Warwick Potts at 517-738-5000 or:

warwick@potsnet.com

—NSE

Charismatic Fellowships

LETTER: September, 2000

Dear Norman,

My husband and I have recently been attending a Messianic congregation. There seem to be several God-led brethren attending there but of late we have discovered that the leadership is teaching people to seek after manifestations that are clearly not to be sought after, such as tongues and slain in the spirit. They seem to have bought into the notion that God wants all of us to seek after spiritual gifts rather than bearing the fruits of the spirit. We have been researching the scriptures and have written a couple of articles and given them to the pastor and assistant pastor. We had hoped to get a better response than what we did get. We realize that these teachings are very sacred to those who practice them. We would like to ask for prayers on our and their behalf. God is moving us in such a way that we never thought possible. Our initial reaction to these teachings made us want to flee but God led us to try to correct these brethren. Several of them have received it quite eagerly but others are of course not willing to search these things out.

I thank you for all your time and dedication to the *SN* and *SW*. If you like and are able to, feel free to send these via e-mail to save on paper and postage. We could really use them ASAP to share as time is of the essence.

Thank you again. Shalom,

— Martine Mancini, Minnesota

RESPONSE: Thanks for sharing your experience in dealing with "charismatic problems". I and others I know have found the same thing. Some people with a charismatic background seem to be continually seeking manifestations or signs of supernatural presence (whether good or bad), rather than seeking the fruits of the spirit and the ability to do the work that Christ said to do. All of the miracles of the Bible were clearly a part of doing the Eternal's work—they were not simply for those involved to "feel spiritual".

I have also found that some charismatic teachers and brethren are very open to suggestions for change, while others resist them. For years, many of my friends and I thought, "As long as I am in the group that has the truth, God is with me and I will probably be in the first resurrection." It is easy for charismatics to think, "As long as I have manifestations of the Spirit, God is with me and I will probably be in the first resurrection." Daily living a Christ-like life is much more difficult for all of us.

Years ago, I probably would have encouraged you to "get out of that group because they won't hear you and because you don't want any trouble from demonic manifestations". But if we look at the methods of the Apostles and other

brethren in the New Testament, we see that they often went to synagogues and Gentile meetings where there was both great interest and strong opposition to their message. The comfortable group that they had with everyone sharing things in common (Acts 2:44) was broken up by persecution (Acts 8:1-4). So, today, some of us may not be called to form a nice group of all like-minded believers, but to be among different groups from time to time so that we may teach some people what the Eternal wants them to learn.

May the Eternal bless you in your ministry.

—NSE

Important Prophecy Issues

LETTER: November 30,2000

Hi Norm

I notice that you placed this man's [Wes Gordon's] email in your last newsletter and I don't think that his theology will be an asset to the already confused people of the churches. By the time I got to this exchange I knew that I was not communicating with the man anymore-okay? As you will see below. [Long exchange on the timing of the Millennium, Tribulation, etc, removed.]

Thanks,

— Mary [via the Internet]

RESPONSE: I do not think that all of Wes Gordon's prophetic beliefs are right, but then I do not think all of yours are right either.

I do not think that prophetic interpretation is any kind of test of whether one is a believer or not—Paul made that clear in 1 Corinthians 13. Other scriptures show that prophecy is a gift.

I do not know of any current prophetic interpreters who have anywhere near a 100% track record with specific prophecies. By specific prophecies, I mean prophecies that an unbiased observer would clearly say are either fulfilled or not fulfilled. These usually involve dates or someone's lifetime. For example, if a person is identified as "the beast", but then dies never having publicly fulfilled some of the things prophesied for him to do, then that prophecy was wrong.

For example, HWA said, from his understanding of Bible prophecy, that Germany would reunite. He was right. But he also said that Europe would unite to form a ten-nation group. It is far away from ten nations, and most of the leaders that HWA thought would be a part of the "beast" system are now dead. While there still could be ten nations in Europe in the future, a good portion of the people who heard HWA preach that Message have and will die never seeing a ten-nation Europe.

HWA frequently talked about two, maybe three, 19-year time cycles of his work (1934 to 1953 to 1972 to 1991). Now, we are well into a 4th cycle, of which he never spoke. Even in his last days, he said these things would come to pass before the century was out.

Every other prophetic interpreter I know about is either part right & part wrong like the above, or else they are so vague that it is difficult to show that they have been correct anywhere. If someone's prophetic interpretation contains no definite time frames or specific events, one cannot really use it to plan one's life, nor will any skeptic be convinced the prophecy had to be from God.

Furthermore, if we look at the important events of church history, we rarely see a history of people determining what to do by interpreting Bible prophecy. We do not find the early church writings saying that they needed to flee the mainstream religion and go into the wilderness for 1260 years to be nourished (Rev 12:6). Nor do we see people starting to translate the Bible, rebel against the Catholic Church, found a nation based on religious freedom, or any other things simply because they have determined that they had arrived at the prophetic time to do such a thing. To the contrary, we find nearly every generation believing that Christ was prophesied to return in their lifetime.

We do find, however, believers of all generations doing important things because they believed that Christ has personally shown them what to do. Certainly, not everyone who claims present inspiration from God is really being led by Him—there are tares among the wheat. Nevertheless, if we read the history of past events, especially personal letters, we can see that there were people who believed that God had personally shown them that they should translate the Bible into English, migrate to another land, found a mission, declare independence from England, etc. **There are simply more promises in the New Testament of direct guidance from Christ and the Holy Spirit than there are admonitions to figure out the world's future from combining all prophecies.**

If anyone can send me someone's writings and show how they have accurately predicted world events by interpreting Bible prophecy (without lots of mistakes), I would be most happy to publish them.

I do believe in studying prophecy, I do believe it teaches us general trends for the future, and I do believe it specifically predicts some history—though we do not usually realize it until after the fact. I believe that people pray and receive understanding for specific bits of prophecy that they are to apply to their lives or nations—we see this example in the New Testament. But at this time, I do not believe that I have an understanding of exactly how the majority of Bible prophecies will be fulfilled, and I do not know of anyone who does. Nevertheless, I do have confidence that the Eternal will take care of me and show me what I need to understand to take care of myself, family and others.

I know some people will think that I am ignorant for saying this. They believe they have most of prophecy figured out. But I would rather tell the truth, than pretend to know something that I do not.

Even though I think some of Wes' prophetic views are probably wrong (it is much easier to show a prophetic view to be wrong than it is to be right), I have never known him to not get along with people who have different views, and have always found him and his family to be kind, sincere, helpful and eager to study and live by the scriptures. We cannot judge who really is a believer and who is not. All we need to do is judge whether or not a person is spiritually dangerous to the brethren. I see much more trouble with people refusing to fellowship with each other because of prophetic views than I do with people having non-traditional prophetic views.

As the Church of God groups continue to break up, and as Sabbath/Holy day keepers from a variety of backgrounds continue to learn to work with each other, I hope that prophetic interpretation is something that they will not get in the way. We need to learn to work together on the important issues of how to love and worship God and how to love our neighbor. We can do that today, even if some of us are right and some

(or all) of us are wrong about what we think is going to happen tomorrow. Thanks for writing. —NSE

Finding Ways to Help

LETTER: August 10, 2000

The little church of God at Hawkins, Texas has done something that is quite noteworthy and could be done by other groups throughout the world.

There is a member named Luther Waller who lives at New Boston, Texas. There is a Texas correctional prison next door to him where we took our half-day training for going into Texas prisons to visit the inmates. He has been a member in the church for a number of years and is confined to a wheelchair and has not been out of the house for nearly three years. This weighed heavily upon the hearts of the church members. Jamie and Gary Strickland found a wheel chair van in Tyler for $1200 and bought it for Luther. The church took it to Luther's on the first day of Unleavened Bread.

—Leo W. DuBry, Texas

RESPONSE: There is so much that most people today could do to help and teach others. It is often simply a matter of making these things a priority over other pursuits.

—NSE

Questions on David J Smith

LETTER: December 19, 2000

Servants' News,

I ran across an article of yours stating that David J. Smith's church was a cult-like organization. Could you elaborate?

Thanks for the effort. You all put in some very good articles. Really found useful "Working With Other Groups—How Do We Do It" in the July/Aug 2000 issue. God bless.

—PB, Texas

RESPONSE: David J. Smth teaches he is "the one group" that is doing God's work. He does not encourage his followers to listen to any teachers outside his group. He taught that the Great Tribulation would begin in 1997 and that Texas would be the "place of safety". I know several people who sold their homes and moved to Texas, only to move back after the prediction failed.

I think David J. Smith does teach a lot of truth and some of his writings cover a lot of news items that one would not find in the traditional press—though I have not made the effort to determine if they are "all true".

I hope that Mr. Smith and leaders of Christian groups everywhere will work as the apostles in the New Testament—not going to great lengths to talk about the importance of their position, but to simply go and serve as the Eternal opens the way. We don't need anyone else to fulfill the roll of Theudas:

"For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing" (Acts 5:36). —NSE 🕮

Port Austin Bible Center from page 17

lot of crime. There are reasons for it and ways to prevent it.

Laws for a Robust Economy. Governments continually debate the virtues of capitalism vs. socialism, the best method for taxation, methods for determining liability, etc. If those responsible for governing knew what God said about these matters, billions of people would be much better off.

Laws for Stable Marriages. More information about sex and marriage is available to the average person than in any previous generation, yet divorces and failed marriages still outnumber successful ones. God, who made marriage, tells us how to avoid those problems.

Laws for Caring Congregations. Today, Christianity is divided into hundreds of denominations, which do not get along with each other and frequently do not recognize each other as believers. Jesus and the Apostles gave clear laws to believers that would prevent these problems. Some of the Bible verses are frequently mistranslated, adding to the difficulty, but most of the laws have been clear in the Bible—just not sufficiently studied and applied.

Summary. This is a practical, non-prophetic class to help young and old to study, learn and apply the valuable Laws for Living that our Heavenly Father has given us.

Taking Classes

As this is our first year of operation, we only have *a limited number of vacancies*; we will be making more opportunities available throughout the year. As an introduction, these courses are being offered at very attractive rates and you are invited to **reserve your booking immediately** as *placement opportunities are limited*.

***Course module fees for one week include*:**

Accommodations
Cafeteria Meals
Textbooks
One 30-hour course

See the course descriptions, above, for the dates that each course is offered. In general, courses are offered Monday through Friday, but you may make arrangements to leave a day earlier or stay a day later if necessary. Obviously, the 101 courses should be taken before the 201 (second half) courses. See the fee schedule on page 17 for costs. A discount is given for staying for 2 or more consecutive weeks.

Non-class attending children, teens and adults will have use of the recreational facilities. Please contact Port Austin Bible Center to discuss opportunities for care programs for your non-class attending family members.

Comfortable dormitory accommodation is provided, along with access to the campus' recreational facilities, which include: Gymnasium (with basketball court, racquetball court, weights & exercise room, game room) Volleyball (in gym & outdoors), Outdoor heated swimming pool, Children's playground, Bowling alley, Tennis courts, Baseball field.

Lake Huron, boating, canoeing, horse-riding, roller skating and other attractions are only 1-8 miles away.

This is a wonderful opportunity for your entire family to come aside from the circumstances of everyday life and experience re-creation, restoration and renewal in body, soul and spirit. We invite you to contact us and make your reservation today. Registration forms and further information about Port Austin Bible Center courses and facilities are available from:

Telephone:

Business hours	517-738-5000
After hours	517-738-5152
Fax (24 hours)	517-738-5004

Mail: Port Austin Bible Center, P.O. Box 444. Port Austin, MI 48467-0444
E-mail: pabc@pottsnet.com 🕮

"Truckers Study" from page 2

cooperate regardless of denominational affiliation, and that once per year all of them come together, Catholics and Protestants alike, and essentially the whole town gets together for a special worship service.

All in all, though, I was disappointed by today, not at all with our guests but by the fact that it ended in a decidedly negative tone due to the prophetic overtones without the focus on the return of Christ. These people need to see our Bible study as a time to be encouraged rather than discouraged, and in hindsight there is nothing wrong with talking about the truth of prophecy if it includes and emphasizes the return of Christ and the Kingdom that he will bring. We didn't do that today, and hence I fear that we were not the sanctuary that we are supposed to be. Live and learn!

[When the world seems depressing and difficult, one can look at the scriptures to see the positive promises of Christ's return—and one can see the positive promises of eternal judgement. Christ said: "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward" (Matt 10:42). Each helpful act has an ultimate reward—even if it goes unrewarded in this life. These "little acts" may be helping someone in need, say an encouraging word, defending the Bible on the CB, voting for a candidate that appears to be a little more righteous than another, or any number of things.

God does not hold each of us responsible for understanding all prophecies, exposing all conspiracies or knowing the solution to all world problems. (You might be suspicious of a religious teacher who claims to.) But of those things that we can do, by His grace and through His power, no matter how small or how large, we should do! — NSE.]

November 26, 2000

Today, we had three truckers, one of whom had to leave early and get back on the road. I spent most of today listening. I told the men that I had a study planned, but I would rather talk about whatever they wanted to talk about, which we did.

After the opening prayer we began to talk and it was obvious that two of our truckers were relatively new to the Bible and in their Christian walk. Both grew up in Christian homes (one a Roman Catholic and the other in a black southern Protestant denomination—grandfather was a preacher), but neither felt a compelling need for God until recently. Both were convinced that they could feel God calling them and working with them, including reports of miracles that I have no reason to doubt.

The gentleman whose grandfather was a preacher told the story of his being healed at his grandfather's hands, and he told of a horrible wreck last winter when he hit a patch of ice, twisted his rig in a dozen directions and set it afire, yet he escaped without a scratch. He said God got his attention through this last miracle.

I was encouraged to hear him say that a person should look only to the Bible and not to men. People can lead you astray, but the Bible will not.

The other trucker talked about how things are now going better for him since going back to church. For example, God found him a job.

I was impressed once again by their statements that life on the road can be lonely, especially if there is no one to fellowship with.

We touched on a few scriptures about "true religion" as defined by James and the problem of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18. The Pharisee thought he was a pretty good guy, but he failed in the most important aspects of his life—he was not humble.

The two men who are relatively new enthusiastically took Bibles with them. What better literature could there possibly be?

December 3, 2000

Six truckers today (five men and one woman), and we had a good time talking.

I began by asking them if there were any topics that they wanted to discuss. One of the truckers has been reading Tim LaHaye's fictional series on the tribulation. He said he never before heard that people would come to God after the rapture—he had always thought that the rapture was the cut-off point, and he didn't know that people would get a second chance later.

This opened many potential lines of discussion. First, we explored the scripture that talks about the innumerable multitude appearing before God with palms in their hands, and the Bible shows that they had gone through the Great Tribulation. (Revelation 7). To me, this clearly shows that some people will repent during that period of time.

I then opened up the larger question of the rapture. I first told them that it is clear from scripture that the world will need to go through some terrible tribulation before the return of Christ and the setting up of his kingdom. However, I am not to the point that I can accept the rapture, since I have not been able to find it in scripture. I am open to it, and I would like to see what scriptures they know of that explain it. They were unable to show me any. I have asked the question before in other studies, and have had similar responses. The thing is, I really do want to know where that doctrine comes from, but have been unable to nail down the scriptural reasoning behind it.

I pointed out to them that there are many theories about the events leading up to the return of Christ, and we probably won't know how it will pan out in reality until it does happen, but there is one thing we do know: In the days of John the Baptist, people thought that the Messiah was soon to appear and that the day of wrath was coming. They asked John, "What then shall we do?" John's answer to them was to bring forth fruits fit for repentance, to help the poor, be honest in your dealings with others, and be a good, loyal employee, among other things (Luke 3:7-14). They asked the correct question: what should we do in preparation for the coming of the Messiah as opposed to trying to piece together the jigsaw puzzle of prophecy in an attempt to get all the dates right. Matthew 25 and the separation of the sheep from the goats tells a similar story—those who went to the right hand and entered the kingdom were those who were engaged in a lifetime of service to God and man. Having perfect knowledge and understanding

was not a part of the mix.

This led to a lively discussion of predestination: does God have everything worked out in advance? I posited that God doesn't know everything (he had to go down to Sodom to check it out for himself; he tested Abraham in the matter of the sacrifice of Isaac, saying, "**Now** I know…", as if he didn't know before). Not everyone agreed, but it was thought-provoking for both sides of the issue. Again we came back to the things that are important to God.

The lady mentioned a private Christian school in Nebraska, operating for poor families at no tuition. It operates totally on faith, trusting God that the funds will be there. They have operated for years on this basis. This was an object lesson in faith and an example of "What then shall we do?"

The truckers were all fascinating people today, but one of the men in particular caught my attention. He said that he has been "saved" for about 7 months, and he has been so very happy and fulfilled since making his commitment. It was his brother who got him back to God. I will attempt to relate the story. Although the entire story was not totally clear, the man's passion and conviction were obvious.

He grew up going to Catholic schools and knew there was a God, but had backslid for fifty years. While he always knew that there is a God, it just didn't sink in. He married a charismatic woman, and to get on her good side, he hired a drunk for cash and whiskey to go to one of their meetings and fake a conversion, which he did. The idea was to convince his wife that he had brought somebody to the Lord, and gain some points. His wife was not amused.

He and his bother (I gather that they are from Costa Rica) had been involved for years with the Contras, with the Mafia, and with drug running. His brother had no problem at all with executing people with a bullet at close range. This was a rough crowd.

Through various trials and circumstances, his brother has become a preacher, and has convinced the driver of the truth of the Bible. The driver says that he feels like the prodigal son who has come home, and what a loving God we have who can accept him back. In spite of all that he once had, none of it satisfied. None of it was worthwhile. The change in his life and his outlook has been monumental, and he regrets now how his prior lifestyle held back his wife's spiritual growth.

I came away from today highly encouraged. The people were upbeat and excited, a far cry from some of the gloom that can come when a discussion of prophecy is the focus. Near the end of the meeting, I checked my watch and was surprised that two hours had passed.

[There is an important lesson to be learned here. People who study the "behind the scenes" reasons for government and business actions often become frustrated and pessimistic. Politicians and business leaders often seem to make key decisions based on secret deals, threats and payoffs—not in the best interests of those they govern. Some of the military, spy agencies, police forces and judges often seem to be advancing their own agendas and actually hold hostage those who pay their salaries. It is often difficult to figure who is actually in control of what and whom!

The dividing line between government, business and organized crime is often a complete blur. It seems impossible to gain an understanding of the mess, and even more difficult to explain it to somebody else or to improve it from the outside.

Maybe we should be praying that the Eternal will call someone from inside the mess who will expose it for what it is and to teach the truth. This is how He worked with the apostle Paul. —NSE]

December 10, 2000

We had one trucker whom I think had some valuable lessons for us regarding healing the breach.

It has been said with some justification that the most segregated time in American society is Sunday morning. Blacks and whites work together, play together, and even live in the same neighborhoods together. But when it comes time to worship, we go to different buildings. We are faced with the spectacle of two groups of people who use the same Book and worship the same God, but who do so in different places.

Far be it from me to condemn the constitutional right to freedom of association. We all have the right to associate with whomever we choose, but I do think our choices illustrate that our problem is a problem of the heart. Often at the truck stop we have an interracial group. You might not be able to tell that from the summaries, and that is intentional, for I do agree with Martin Luther King, Jr. that people should be judged not by the color of their skin, but the content of their character. It should be no surprise that Bible-believing white Christians and Bible-believing black Christians have more commonalities than distinctives. Yet rarely do we meet anyone who belongs to a truly racially diverse congregation.

This week's Bible study was different because this white guy from Alabama is a member of an integrated church — and in the "Deep South", no less. You know about the "Deep South", land of Jim Crow and the KKK? Say what you will about southerners, but from what I have seen they have learned to live together regardless of skin color in ways that should put to shame many a northern white liberal.

This trucker has different decals on his truck indicating his Christian faith, and whenever anyone acknowledges it, he says, "Glad to meet ya, 'cause I always like seein' my kinfolk." He'll say that to the black drivers as well, which sometimes startles them, but they always appreciate it when he says, "My Bible says we all have the same daddy, so you're my kinfolk."

He mentioned how at a Promise Keepers conference there was one black preacher in the place — just one. So the organizers sat him in a place of prominence in the front and proceeded to wash his feet as an ordinance of humility and as an apology for past wrongs perpetrated on his race.

I have a friend here in Kansas City who is fairly well to do. He came to this country from Wales and is a big fan of rugby. He and his wife are also dedicated Christians (okay, so they meet on the wrong day of the week, but they sure know how James defines true religion). Charles has started a charity that has partnered his wealthy suburban church with the poor inner city churches in Kansas City. The pastors of these churches are actively

involved. They take boys who are disadvantaged in ways beyond financial disadvantage and work with them. Rugby is the tool, but they teach these boys important character and spiritual lessons, mentor them, give them role models. And if they perform, college scholarships are there for the asking.

They are rescuing kids one kid at a time and repairing the breach that divides us. Politics divides. The Bible and the God of the Bible unite. If we are to heal our nation, it must be through our common Father, not through the great white father in Washington. The Republicans are not the healing force. Nor are the Democrats. Surely Jesse Jackson is not. Nor is Pat Robertson.

To heal this nation, we must all do what my friend Charles is doing. We must do what my trucker friend is doing. White, black, whatever color we are—we need to forget politics as the key to national salvation. The breach will be healed one on one. One person at a time. One community at a time. And who better to heal the breach than those who are in the same Book?

[If we understand Bible truth, we ought to do it—not use it to judge others. If another person who claims to be a believer wants to work with us, we ought to be willing to work with them as long as we do not have to compromise our beliefs. If our light is shining, they might see it. If they reject us because of our truth, the judgment will be upon them. But if we reject them because of their error, the judgement may be upon us. Might Christ someday say this to us? "I wanted to teach them through you, but you were either too fearful or too self-righteous to work with them." — NSE]

December 17, 2000

The study went for almost three hours this morning. We had four truckers, including a couple whom I had not seen in quite some time from Ohio. I was flattered that they came looking specifically for our study. They have visited us at least four times previously, and they come back because we hit it off well. Another trucker is fairly new to being serious about finding God (although raised as a Christian) and his enthusiasm shows.

In a three-hour study, you can guess that we covered a lot of ground, and it would be hard to relate everything that was discussed. I will point out that the couple is extremely conservative politically, and in our discussion on the need for healing in this nation, they are inclined to give no quarter to political opponents.

My position is that politics are not the solution to the national problems, and they would tend to disagree to a point. I would state that unity comes through God and the Bible, whereas they believe that the religious on the left do not teach law and obedience, but a cheap tolerance of sinful behavior. They believe in speaking the truth as prophets, and I agree, but I also pointed out that the Bible talks about "speaking the truth in love."

This was an active, lively discussion, but may I add that it was a discussion among friends. We do not totally agree on how to heal the land, but it was evident that we have much in common. They are deeply committed to the need for obedience to God and his law, and are quite knowledgeable of the Old Testament.

It is uncommon to meet strict Bible believers these days who reject the rapture theory. Not only does this couple reject that theory, they also reject the pre-millennial return of Christ. They believe that Jesus will come only after the world is at peace. The wife pointed to Psalm 72 as an example, saying that this psalm sure makes it look like the world will be at peace when it welcomes Christ as its king.

I pointed out that one can just as easily read this psalm from a pre-millennialist viewpoint—the world will be this way only after Jesus returns. Again, this was an engaging rather than confrontational discussion.

The operative issue at hand became this: how one views prophecy and the circumstances surrounding the return of Christ can often influence what we do. The important question was raised in Luke 3 of John the Baptist: "What then shall we do?" If one believes that Christ will return only after the world is at peace, then one will have a strong motivation to get the gospel to all and get them all to be Christians. It also explains this couple's strong interest in political involvement.

If on the other hand one holds to a pre-millennial return of Christ, it can lead to a "save your own skin" religion. Such a one is more likely to have a siege mentality. Preaching the gospel could easily take second place to building a bomb shelter in Idaho or waiting to be raptured off. The old saying about ideas having consequences is indeed true! It should at least stand as a warning to us regarding the negative tendencies that can arise when we obsess about end time things. Indeed, Paul battled such consequences among the Thessalonians!

I gave away a stack of Bibles today, both to the couple and the other truckers. They like to find people who don't own a Bible and give them one, which is exactly why we use Bibles as giveaways. People appreciate that more than tracts and other literature that we might have available. Audio tapes are also a popular item, but giving someone his first Bible is most rewarding.

[Even though the Hebrew Scriptures were extensively read and taught in the first century, it seems that neither the Jewish leaders nor Jesus' disciples nor even John the Baptist had a clear understanding or even a basic time line of the first coming of Christ. Even after Jesus' death and resurrection and the promise of the Holy Spirit, His apostles still asked about a physical kingdom: " 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority' " (Acts 1:6-7). If the very apostles had this little understanding then, why do so many hundreds of Bible prophecy teachers today speak like they know so much. (And why can't you find two who don't work for each other who exactly agree?)

Today, we are surrounded by Bibles and Bible helps because many people gave their lives to translate Bibles into common language against the will of tyrannical churches and governments. Today, we live in countries with some freedom of religion, because people gave their lives to rebel against countries with state churches. Yet how many religious people, benefiting from these sacri-

fices, will scoff at individuals today who work to try to preserve or extend these freedoms?

This is not to say that the mission of every believer is to improve this world through existing political systems. The apostles simply preached the word—at times they were helped, even rescued by civil governments, at other times they were persecuted and killed by them. Even if we believe that the Eternal has shown us individually not to become involved in improving existing governments, we must realize that He may be using others for this purpose. —NSE]

December 24, 2000

Normally on Christmas weekend there isn't much business, but today turned out all right. We had two men today, one of which was a trucker and I gather the other was a hitchhiker that the trucker had picked up. I don't probe personal circumstances but let them volunteer whatever they wish to volunteer, which in this case wasn't too much, but it was obvious that the trucker was mentoring the hitchhiker on scriptural issues.

The trucker was what we might loosely refer to as an expressive. One of the first things out of his mouth was this question, "Ever look at Jeremiah 10?" I told him I had been there long ago. Then he asked me which day is the Sabbath and at what time of day did it begin. He must have thought that these would be tough questions or something. So I asked him how many wise men there were, and he of course said three. We went to Matthew 2, which of course does not name a specific number, and he said he accepted what the scriptures indicated.

Right then I knew today was going to be an interesting day. He had learned about the Sabbath from the Seventh Day Adventists, but he was also Pentecostal. However, he is non-trinitarian, holding to an understanding of God and Jesus Christ very much like traditional Church of God doctrine. Unlike SDA and COG beliefs, he holds to immortal soul doctrines, going to heaven, and an ever-burning hell. I think he considers himself a Seventh Day Adventist, but he readily admits that he has profound disagreements with much of their doctrine with issues not just related to Ellen G. White. At least he thinks for himself.

You can imagine that we got into a bit of a "sword drill" on a few issues, and neither one of us were too successful in convincing the other. It does go to show, however, that we all have proof texts that in other contexts might be difficult to answer. I pointed out that the "soul that sins, it shall die", and he pointed out Revelation 22 and that outside the Holy City would be dogs, sorcerers, sexually, immoral, etc. "See?" he said, "these people are still around, but they aren't in heaven, so they must be in hell." I pointed out that the Holy City is on the earth.

So if nothing else, I'm learning other people's perspectives on certain passages of scripture.

My instincts tell me that there might have been more going on today than someone who has an eclectic mixture of doctrinal understanding. He might very well have known where we stand on certain issues and just came to jerk my chain a bit. One never knows for sure. One thing was a bit suspicious. At one point we discussed various Bible translations, and all three of us prefer the King James, although in my case I can readily tolerate a number of modern translations. We buy KJVs and NIVs by the case, and we encourage the truckers to take them. The trucker dislikes the NIV, but asked if he could have some extra Bibles to give away. As I was packing up to leave, I noticed that he took all my NIVs and left the KJVs alone. That was curious for a man who is a KJV only type. Only hope he doesn't trash them.

[If the man promised to give the Bibles away, he will have to answer in the Judgment if he threw them away. Once people get the idea that it is all right to lie and break other commandments in order to "do God's work", they lose the whole concept that the Eternal's way of life is about (John 16:2). If this man feels it is his job to sabotage ministries he doctrinally disagrees with, then he indeed needs to change.

But I also agree that we just cannot always tell whether somebody is causing trouble or simply trying to get answers to difficult questions. Knowing how other people explain various doctrines helps us to be better teachers. Furthermore, we must realize that many other Bible-believers will view us as people who have "an eclectic mixture of doctrinal understanding".

I have far more respect for individuals who believe a set of doctrines that they themselves can explain from the Bible than I have for people who simply ascribe to an organization's doctrines, but cannot explain them. One thing is certain. The small Bible study method of teaching produces far more growth in both the students and the teachers than the more common one-way sermons, tapes, and TV programs. May the Eternal help more of us to get involved in these kinds of studies! —NSE]

— Lenny Cacchio
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Small Groups and Evangelism from page 19

If you know of any other places that provide phone hook up Sabbath or Holy Days services, please contact Darwin or Laura at 701-258-7172 (leave a message).

We have a table downstairs , where we put study papers and tapes that are free for the taking. We will also be taping all services through our sound system starting with the week of December 30, 2000. We will not dub any tapes on the Sabbath, but will have it ready for you by the next Sabbath or we can mail it to you.

We are providing a service. We want contact with us to be a pleasant experience. If you keep the Sabbath, we want that to be a joy. We welcome all visitors.

Contact Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502, tel: 701-258-7172. Please call for directions. Leave a message—we will return your phone call. 🕮

News from page 7

will be added as time permits. Garner Ted Armstrong's first message (dated August 5, 1978) explaining the events surrounding his expulsion from the Worldwide Church of God in 1978 will be added to the site this weekend. Ronald Dart's first message (dated Sept. 23, 1978), given after voluntarily leaving the WCG, will be added as well. In the future a CD of these study aids will be created.

Here are the audio messages (all given at Big Sandy, Texas) currently available on the Internet from the Bible Study Web Site:

Audio messages by **Richard David Armstrong:** (Richard David Armstrong, son of Herbert Armstrong and brother of Garner Ted Armstrong, died in July, 1958 due to injuries sustained in a car accident while on a baptizing tour. He was almost 30 years old when he died and had been married for only thirteen months. Audio messages from Richard David have **never before** been circulated.)

Daniel's Prophecy, June 4, 1954 (Friday Night Bible Study) Pentecost Weekend.

Why Trials?, June 5, 1954 (Saturday) Pentecost Weekend.

Child Rearing, Oct. 13, 1957 (Sunday) during Feast of Tabernacles (One of the last Holy Day messages given by Richard David).

Audio Messages by **Herbert W. Armstrong:**

Offertory Message and Status of "The Work", Oct. 1, 1955 (Saturday) First Day of Feast of Tabernacles. (HWA started broadcasting on TV in the summer of 1955. In this message leading up to the Holy Day offering, he discusses the move to TV and the new program's ratings compared to others. He also states that from June 1954 to June 1955, it cost $394,328.66 to operate Ambassador College and $630,323 to operate the church.)

The Plan of God, Oct. 1957 during Feast of Tabernacles.

Audio Message by **Herman Hoeh:**

Why Keep the Holy Days? Given Oct. 1, 1955 (Saturday), First Day of Feast of Tabernacles

—Alan Ruth, Barnabas Ministries
PO Box 3393, Farmington Hills,
MI. 48333, USA www.biblestudy.org

HWA-WCG Library, Forum

The HWA & Church of God Library (Australasia) USA site: www.coglinks.org/resource/servingthecog

Other HWA library sites are being established and will be linked together.

Everyone is invited to participate in a forum to discuss and promote the old doctrines of WCG (Original WCG Theological Apologetics—pro-HWA Forum). As there are so many anti-HWA and anti-old WCG forums and lists around (as well as individuals in CoGs), **anti-HWA and anti-old WCG statements will not be allowed on this forum.** Please follow protocol and if you are anti-HWA, do not post here.

Here are some ideas for papers or comments:

- •Man's destiny is to be in the God Family.
- •We are born again in the resurrection.
- •Salvation and conversion are processes in 3 stages.
- •What will happen in the Millennium?
- •The race question.
- •There are 7 church eras.
- •There will be a physical place of safety.
- •Christian living without true doctrine is a form of protestantism.
- •Typology.
- •Laws of God sometimes forgotten (eg land sabbath, mixed fabrics etc).
- •We should try and understand Laws such as Jubilee, Year of Release etc).
- •Table of Nations (Genesis 10) is important to understanding world events.
- •Germany is Assur in prophecy.
- •The Turks descend from Edom.
- •Judah is the Scots and Jews; Ephraim is the English; Manasseh is the Anglo-Americans.
- •Other tribes of Israel can be specified.
- •Who and what is the Beast.
- •the NWO [New World Order], New Age ideas, etc are not the Beast or the Babylonian religion, but the old Holy Roman Empire is.
- •USA & UK are Israel and the NWO is an attempt by them to bring democracy and capitalism to the world.
- •Social conservative views on abortion, euthanasia, surrogacy, same-sex marriages, homosexuality/lesbianism, male-female roles, no women ministers etc.
- •Should CoGs honor HWA or ignore him? And if they ignore him, what is the real motive behind that?
- •The fruits of HWA.
- •What HWA said about a host of issues which we have forgotten.
- •Should doctrinal changes be announced like HWA used to do, or just quietly dropped without any discussion?

For more information on this Internet forum, contact:

—Craig White, surfer1@tpg.com.au

[Most of these issues are worth discussing, but the requirement that they be discussed without saying anything against HWA or the old WCG greatly reduces the chance of arriving at the truth. How much shorter would our Bible be if the writers were not allowed to say anything bad about the kings, prophets or disciples that God used? How much less truthful would it be?

There are publications that print virtually nothing positive about HWA and the old WCG, but creating an opposite forum where nothing bad can be said about them is not likely to improve the situation. All forums need to encourage factual truth to be stated, to allow those with other views to bring forth their evidence and to let people make a decision based on the facts. If there are separate "pro" and "con" forums/publications, it is too easy for people to just read the one that they like and ignore the evidence that they disagree with. Even though I believe that HWA taught significant error, I am willing to help provide access to pro-HWA sites because I believe my views are based upon truth, not based on keeping selected facts away from my readers.

"The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him" (Prov 18:17).

*The WCG suffered greatly by preventing "his neighbor coming and examining him"—neither brethren nor outsiders were permitted to openly express opposing points of view. "Papers sent to headquarters" were often ignored for years—sometimes forever. Brethren did not develop the skills of finding truth between opposing points of view, but were taught to accept truth "from the top down". They did not grasp the many Bible examples of **error** coming "from the top down"—from kings, false prophets and false apostles. It is no surprise that the WCG broke into so many pieces. I hope everyone will learn from these mistakes, not repeat them. — NSE]* 🕮

How The Holy Scriptures Bible Version Came to Be from page 14

temporary as well as attempting to provide correct punctuation. In order to accomplish this I had to utilize simultaneous lexical aids so that I could modernize more complex words that cannot be universally changed by the find and replace technique. For example: wellbeloved is the KJV translation of the Greek word αγαπετοσ, or *agapetos* in its anglicised spelling. This word means beloved, dear, favorite, etc. and can legitimately be translated as beloved instead of wellbeloved. I called this step three even though it was combined with step two.

For the Third Epistle of John this produced 32 differences between the two versions.

Reading after steps two and three:

1The elder, **to** the **beloved** Gaius, whom I love in the truth. **2**Beloved, I **pray always** that you may prosper and be in health, even as your **heart** prospers.

3For I rejoiced greatly, when the **brothers** came and testified of the truth that is in you, even as you walk in the truth. **4**I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. **5**Beloved, you do faithfully, **whatever** you do **for** the **brothers**, and for strangers; **6**Which **have testified** of your **brotherly love in front of** the church: whom if you bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, you **will** do well: **7**Because that for his name's sake they went **out**, taking nothing **from the heathen**. **8Therefore we** ought to receive such, that we might be **fellow helpers** to the truth.

9I wrote to the church: but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, **did not receive us**. **10Therefore**, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he does, **falsely accusing** us with malicious words: and not content **with that**, neither does he himself receive the **brothers**, and **hinders** those who would, and casts *them* out of the church. **11**Beloved, **do not follow** that which is evil, but that which is good. He **who** does good is of God: but he **who** does evil has not seen God.

12Demetrius has good **reputation** with all *men*, and of the truth itself: yes, and we *also* **testify**; and you know that our **testimony** is true. **13**I had many things to write, but I will not **write to you with ink and pen**: **14**But I trust I **will see you soon**, and we **will** speak face to face. Peace *be* to you. *Our* friends **greet** you. Greet the friends by name.

Step four involved the adding or deleting of italicized words. These are words which are not in the original language and were added only for clarity. The only change was the removal of the *be* in the last verse. It is not necessary in modern English.

Step five involved three members of my family individually reading the version and checking for clarity as well as spelling and grammatical errors. This was followed by a repeat of steps two, three and four if necessary.

Step six involved the help of additional proofreaders. The manuscripts were sent out in groups, read and then returned by the proofreaders with correction marks. This again meant that steps two, three and four might need to be repeated. In this case it did not.

As you can see, this single small book of the Bible has 64 differences that distinguish it from the KJV. I do not believe that they destroy the meaning of the book. I do believe that the book flows a little better but I'll let the reader be the judge of that. As to the rest of The Holy Scriptures, I have calculated that there are between 175,000 and 250,000 of these differences, hopefully all of which will make the inspired writings an even greater pleasure to read.

I hope that this has helped some readers to understand that my intentions were not to cloud or shade the meaning of the Bible but, on the contrary, if God has been willing, to clarify its meaning. 🕮

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Partial Literature List

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

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 ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip.

Items New This Issue:

Basic Literature

The Holy Scriptures, 400 pages, adapted by Rabon Vincent. The KJV Bible with Old English removed and some translation errors fixed. See the article on page 13.

Think on These Things **Sheet Music,** 33 pages, by Barri Armitage. See article, below:

What Should I Do About the Sins of Others? by Norman Edwards, 2 page tract. The Bible gives widely varrying solutions depending upon the situation.

Study Resources and Information:

Feast Site Evaluation Worksheet by Norman Edwards, 2 pages. For evaluating facilities for the Feast of Tabernacles.

501(c)3 Religion: Reemergence of the Divine Right of Kings by Peter Kershaw, 8 pages. How freedom from state-controlled religion began in the USA and how it is being lost.

Unlicensed Church Materials Order Form by Peter Kershaw, 2 pages. Info on how to run a congregation or a ministry without incorporation or tax exempt status.

Praise God With New Music

Long-time church member, Barri Armitage, has produced ***Think on These Things,*** a collection of 16 songs based on the Scripture and set to the folk melodies of the British isles. There is a tradition that some of these ancient tunes may have originated in King David's court and later were carried by Jeremiah to Ireland. This music is suitable for congregational singing or "special music."

The title song is adapted from Phil 4:8 and set to "Londonderry Air", better known as "Danny Boy". Barri wrote the second song, "Joy Will Come in the Morning" to help a friend going through a severe trial. It is set to the upbeat melody of "Loch Lomond". "Rejoice in All Things" and "Fear Not, Little Flock" give further comfort.

Some songs, such as "Healed By His Stripes", "Bought With a Price" and "Song of Moses", focus on the Spring Holy Days. "Praise the Lord Forever" and "Thank Offering" are based on Psalms 113 and 116, part of the Hallel Psalms traditionally connected with that season. The last song, "full of Grace, Seasoned with Salt" (Col 4:6) ends with the words, "like an offering to God's praise. "That is my goal", Barri said.

Sheet music complete with words, piano music and chords is available *free* from *Servants' News*--see the address below. (Those familiar with English folk melodies already know the tunes—just read the new words.)

The pieces are also available on CD, performed in solo, duet and quartet. The vocalists and instrumentalists heard on the album are professionals and life-time musicians with past performances at carnegie Hall, the Kennedy center, Grand old Opry, TV, etc. Barri taught poetry workshops to English classes at Ambassador College and was the poetry editor of the WCG's Youth Magazine for several years. A special collection of Barri's poems, *Double Helix*, won the 1992 Washington Writer's Publishing House contest and was published by them in 1993.

Think On These Things is available for $15.50 (CD) and $11.50 (cassette) from **Barri Armitage, 13904 North Gate Dr, Silver Spring, MD 20906;** e-mail: barri@dovesongs.com. Maryland residents should add 5% sales tax (.68 per CD, .50 per cassette). International orders please add extra for postage ($2.00 per CD, $1.50 per cassette). Samples of each song may be heard at www.dovesongs.com.

Again, sheet music is free from *Servants' News.*

Highly Recommended Items Listed Every Issue:

Mature Literature

Assembling on the Sabbath by Norman 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 Edwards, 10 pages. Introduction to the Biblical and Hebrew calendars (beginning of months, years, postponements etc.)

How Do We Give to the Eternal? by Richard 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.

What Does the Bible Say About Eternal Judgment? by Norman Edwards, 83 pages. What happens to people after they die? What about "bad" people? "Good" people? Unbelievers? Diligent believers? Lax believers? Read the many scriptures that answer these questions.

Study Resources and Information

Freedom Biblical Information Center Catalog by Wayne Schatzle, 12 pages. Free sources of literature and tapes.

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. 24 pages.

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

Servants' News **Literature List,** 24 pages.

Servants' News **Literature Subject Index,** 51 pages. All articles & literature by subject.

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