Servants' NEWS

Vol. 7, No. 1 *A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be* **Jan/Feb 2001**

Tethered to Christ

by Toli Bohonik

We are tethered to Christ. The Holy Spirit is a tether that literally binds us to Jesus. It keeps us continually in contact and communion with Him. Through the Holy Spirit we have fellowship with Jesus, and He is always close to us.

It is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus leads and directs each and every one us. It is how Jesus comforts us in trials. It is how Jesus teaches us when we're ignorant of something we need to know. It is how Jesus quietly speaks to us.

We are bound to Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Did you ever wonder why the Holy Spirit filled the disciples **only** after Jesus was resurrected? It is because Jesus was involved in sending it, and today it is no different.

> "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear." (Acts 2:33)

The Holy Spirit was sent at Jesus's request, and it is the means by which He comes and abides with each of us, **one on one**. When we are converted we belong to Jesus. We are His, and as Christians, He then speaks to us, teaches us, and comforts through the Holy Spirit. That is how He comes to us and abides with us.

Without the Holy Spirit we would literally be orphans.

> "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also." (John 14:16–19)

Without the Holy Spirit we are **orphans**. We would be without Christ and without hope. The reality is that many of us still live as if we are orphans because we haven't learned to listen to Jesus speak to us through the Holy Spirit. Too often we listen to other voices out of habit. Instead, we need to listen to Jesus as He abides with us and leads us through the Holy Spirit.

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REMINDERS:

Please send information about non-aligned Feast sites. We will be running an article on them for our next issue.

This is your last chance to be in the first Local Servants Directory. It will be sent with the next issue. If you did not fill out the bottom section of our Response Page, but would like to, you may obtain another one from us by mail or from www.servantsnews.com.

Many in the Church of God groups would describe their lives as "devastated". Fifteen years ago they attended services with hundreds and Feasts with thousands. They felt like they had a mission and were succeeding at it. Today, many are in small groups that seem to be getting smaller and more diverse.

We should not be worried. The Jerusalem Church in the first century probably had services with hundreds, Feasts with thousands, a clear mission and apparent success. Yet God allowed those people to be scattered everywhere (Acts 8:1, 4). While the scattering must have seemed terrible at the time, it was a blessing to be gone as God knew Jerusalem and the physical temple would be destroyed in 70 A.D.

Is the Eternal helping His people today by taking them out of hierarchical church groups before He puts an end to these groups? I do not know exactly what He is doing, but I do know it is for our good (Rom 8:28). He is definitely teaching us to be "Tethered to Christ". I hope you find this short article at left as helpful as I did.

— Norman Edwards

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Truckers Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo.
#68-70

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

January 14, 2001

Early on in the study, when there were only two of us, the trucker impressed me once again that the lives these truckers lead can be both lonely and filled with temptation. He gets home only about once every three weeks, and he says he has to keep himself "filled with the Lord" in order to fight the temptations of the road. He drives because it provides him and his family with a decent income, although he is fairly new to driving. His intent is to get the family finances in order, then do something closer to home.

Bottom line that I want to relay is his request for prayer, that he can get out of this type of work and also to stay strong. He misses his home church and his family, as I am sure any of us would. There is no doubt in my mind about his dedication to the truth he knows.

[Church of God groups have, in the past, belittled the conservative Christian groups that have legally fought against pornography, prostitution, etc. The view was that true Christians had the power to resist such temptations, the morals of the English-speaking nations were so bad that they were soon to suffer the Great Tribulation, and that there was therefore no reason to try to change anything. That thinking was reasonable if most people were either faith-filled believers or evil-seeking perverts.

But it overlooks what I believe is the majority of people (believers and unbelievers) who would like to live good lives, but either lack the knowledge of what to do or lack the spiritual strength to resist temptation. — NSE]

We were joined by three additional drivers today, including a woman who has been driving for 17 years and who cannot imagine doing anything else. Life has improved greatly for women truckers during that period. These days, truck stops have women's restrooms. Imagine the hardship she faced in trying to find some of the simple

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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. 7, No. 1 **Jan/Feb 2001**

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.

KC Special Sabbaths

The Church of God Kansas City announces the following guest speakers. Everyone is invited.

May 26 & 27 (Pentecost weekend)—Guest speaker David Antion, Ph.D. Services will be at 2 p.m. on both days. Services on the 26th will be followed by a potluck meal. We meet at the Community of Christ Church (formerly Reorganized Latter Day Saints Church) at 31st and Crysler in Independence, Missouri.

Sunday, July 15—Ron Dart visits Kansas City for a "Meet the Teacher" presentation at the Adam's Mark Hotel (I-70 and Blue Ridge Cutoff) at 1:30 p.m.

— Lenny Cacchio, 816-524-2442
e-mail: L_cacchio@yahoo.com

Ron Dart Local Visits

Ronald L Dart will be speaking at these "Meet the Teacher" session:

May 12: Little Rock, Arkansas at the Holiday Inn Select (West Little Rock), located at 201 S. Shackleford (take the Shackleford exit off I-430N). For more information, please call John Beasley at 501-224-1883.

June 16: Cincinnati, Ohio at Christ, The Prince of Peace United Methodist Church, 10509 Colerain Ave. For more information, please contact Lee and Judy Creech at J777CLC@aol.com or call 513-385-6076.

Wall Street Journal on WCG vs PCG Suit

The February 21st *Wall Street Journal* carried a front page article about the legal implications of the Worldwide Church of God's suit seeking to stop the Philadelphia Church of God from republishing Herbert Armstrong's now out-of-print book, *Mystery of the Ages.* An appeals court reversed the original decision and, unless the Supreme court intervenes, the PCG must pay damages to the WCG for tithes and offerings they received as a result of members joining the PCG from reading the book. The *WSJ* article carried a rather lengthy background of the WCG and some information about its offshoots. This is probably the single most influential paper in the world.

The entire article was reprinted in *The Journal, News of the Churches of God* (p 1) along with four other articles commenting upon it by Bill Stough, Richard Nickels, Dave Havir and Norman Edwards (pp 1, 3, 11). I think this February issue of *The Journal, News of the Churches of God* is well worth reading (the other issues are, too). Subscriptions are available from PO Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755. Cost for six monthly issues: $12 USA, $14 international; twelve issues: $22 USA, $24 international.

— Norman Edwards

Biblical Holy Day Info

For several years, my wife has used a 600-page large book to help teach our children about Holy Days. *A Family Guide to the Biblical Holidays* by Robin Scarlata Sampson is from Heart of Wisdom Publishing, 13503 Minion Street, Woodbridge VA 22192. They are not a Church of God group. The book costs $44.85 postage included in the USA. It comes with a lifetime money-back guarantee. We know of several others who have purchased it—and none have returned it.

You can also obtain it by calling 800-266-5564 or by ordering online: www.biblicalholidays.com. The website contains many things of interest to Sabbath and Holy Day keepers.

— Norman Edwards

Children's Bible Teaching

An internet mailing list has been set up for people interested in exchanging ideas for teaching Biblical principles to children. The information shared includes Bible studies and activities that can be taught in a group setting, or in teaching kids at home. To join, go to:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Bible_Activities

Click on the option on the right hand side of the page that says *Join This Group*. If you have any questions, please e-mail Janine Krueger at janinekrueger@cs.com

New Free Newsletter

Our free newsletter will be mailed the first week in March. If anyone who is not on our mailing list is interested in receiving it, please e-mail or snail mail your request to be put on our mailing list. Our address is: Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, North Dakota 58502 and e-mail is Darwin-Laura@juno.com

— Darwin & Laura Lee

Did Make a Difference

Yesterday, I sent notice of a change of e-mail address from "yahoo.com" to "aol.com" because of news reports that Yahoo had decided to enter the pornography market. Two of my addressees responded that **Yahoo has rescinded and backed away from porn because of the overwhelming negative response from their customers.** I

have since read one of the news items to that effect so evidently it is true.

Shame on them for even considering it! But I am thankful that they have backed away, at least, and I will stay with Yahoo for now.

I wish I would have seen the news update before sending all of my address changes. However, this experience **does demonstrate the change we have the power to bring about in our world if we will just do it!**

— Arlean Kelley

50th National Day of Prayer in USA

Thursday, May 3rd "One Nation Under God"

The National Day of Prayer began in 1952 with a joint resolution by Congress, signed by President Harry Truman. The law was amended in 1988 and signed by President Ronald Reagan, declaring the first Thursday of May to be the National Day of Prayer. The State of Michigan and the mayor of Perry have also proclaimed this to be a Day of Prayer.

What purpose does the National Day of Prayer serve now?

"At this crucial time in history, with the 'politics of division' creating widespread discord and strife, we encourage all people of faith to set aside their differences and publicly seek God's wisdom and direction for their homes, communities and country." These are the words of Shirley Dobson, Chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, and wife of James Dobson, founder of the Focus on the Family ministry.

People of all different religious background continually meet together for business, political, sports, entertainment and other purposes. Such meetings can be informative and encouraging. The National Day of Prayer is for people who are serious about seeking God and encouraging others to do the same.

The Perry pastoral group is sponsoring three separate non-denominational events on May 3rd. Everyone is invited to attend any or all of them.

The above paragraphs are going to be in a newspaper ad and a handout to be distributed at the major grocery store in Perry, Michigan, my "home town". This literature went on to give details of prayer breakfasts at the local schools, a noon half-hour prayer and song session and the City Hall, and an evening prayer and song service. I will be delivering a brief message at the evening service on how our nation was founded as a Christian nation, but without any state-sponsored church denomination—something that was common in Europe at the time.

I have been amazed at how the group of local pastors and I have worked together even though I have told them that we are a Sabbath-keeping group, that our group does not have a "pastor" or any "ordained" person, that we will not participate in their joint "Good Friday" service because we keep Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, etc.

This is not part of an "ecumenical" movement. We do not get together for the purpose of merging doctrines or organizations, but to do the work that we can all agree upon.

The book of Acts and some of the Epistles show that the first century Church sometimes met in the temple and synagogues with Jews who did not accept Jesus (a significant doctrinal error). Nevertheless, these Jews did know the scriptures and praised and prayed to the same God. The believers were not afraid to meet among them and even listen to them in order that some might learn the truth that they had to share.

I believe that today is little different. We can best establish a relationship whereby people might listen to our teaching by working with others and recognizing that which they have right. The past Church of God approach too often was like: "we have all the truth and you have almost none and if we are to work together you must join us." Preaching the truth usually stirs up enough religious animosity without us creating more by ourselves.

Is it possible that a person meeting with those that have some different beliefs could be negatively affected by it? Yes, it is possible. So the answer is found in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted." Nobody should ever go to another group if they are not well enough grounded to maintain the truth that they understand.

It is quite possible that at some point I will be unwelcome because of what I believe, but that happened in the first century, too (John 16:2).

— Norman Edwards

Interest in Holy Days

My daughter, Mona, has been doing many fascinating interviews in her position as Religion Correspondent and general feature writer for the county paper. This week she discovered the evidence of an amazing trend among Sunday keepers here locally while arranging some interviews for upcoming articles in her paper. I was aware that this is cropping up around the country, but was surprised to find it even in Allegan, Michigan.

The local Catholic church is having a Passover Seder meal on "Maundy Thursday" evening. That would be, of course, when they thought Jesus's last supper was. It wasn't clear how long they have been doing this, but it isn't the first year. Then, while Mona was talking to the secretary at the Catholic church about this, another man happened by. Hearing the discussion, he mentioned that he personally, in his own home, has been celebrating Passover with a seder in his own extended family for many years. This man is Wesleyan. He noted that he had looked into it years ago, decided it was very meaningful especially for teaching the children, and has been doing it ever since. He, on the other hand, is having his on the Friday night before Easter.

I am guessing that he has made his own decision on when it would be logical to do it. Both he and the Catholics have obviously not clued in to the Jewish Calendar. They are trying to make sense of the timing via Good Friday/Easter Sunday. Thus if Jesus was the Passover Lamb, and the Jews were killing their lambs for the Seder at the same time, then the man has decided they must have been going to eat the seder that night. So I think he does it every year at the end of Good Friday.

So Mona has decided to create an article about the fascination among many Christian groups and ministries for learning about the Jewish roots of

the Faith. She can include interviews with the Catholics, the Wesleyan fellow… and the Deweys.

She can also give a bibliography for folks interested in knowing more. Back in 1982 I found a book called "Celebrate the Feasts of Israel in Your Own Home and Church", written by a Protestant minister's wife, and another called "Christ in the Passover" written by the founders of Jews For Jesus. At the time, these were about the only resources for such information. They are still available at Amazon.com, but are now joined by quite a number of other books with the same theme. It seems like the initial interest is in Passover, but there is growing interest in **all** the Holy Days also. For instance, the Christ in the Passover book has a chart that shows the historical, christological and prophetic significance of all of the Holy Days. And it includes New Testament scriptural citations for each of the days. **It differs in very little from what the WCG would have taught, except for the significance of the Last Great Day.**

It is interesting that there is this almost sudden rush of interest in the topic **after** the WCG has fallen apart and its offshoots so unknown. Thus the idea of celebrating the Holy Days does not immediately have to be tied up to cult-like religion.

— Pam Dewey

Seeking Feast Information

Coordinators and others assisting for the upcoming 2001 Feast of Tabernacles are encouraged to send announcements for various Feast sites that you are coordinating or know of in or out of your area to *The Churches of God Newsletter.* This newsletter is an independent publication not affiliated with any church organization. These announcements will be printed in the newsletter, starting with the May/June issue, and continuing through the summer months.

Thank you in advance.

In Christian Love,

— Rick & Eileen Beltz, Co-Editors of *The Churches of God Newsletter,* P.O. Box 30272, Winston-Salem, NC 27130-0272, USA; e-mail: rbeltz@mindspring.com or remj4@juno.com

[While you have that announcement ready, please send a copy to Servants' News, *PO Box 107, Perry Michigan 48872 or* info@ServantsNews.com*]*

New HWA History WebSite

I have been asked on forums and in private emails many, many times in the past five years to provide documentation about a number of aspects of the history of the ministry of Herbert Armstrong. The same questions seem to arise again and again over time, as new people begin to doubt some of their old assumptions about the role of HWA.

I have kept archival email files of some of my responses to such inquiries in the past. But I have found that I have been frequently unable to find just the right quote quickly and easily, even to questions I have answered a number of times.

So in recent days I have decided to pull together some of the most oft-requested documentation into a simple website. That way it will be permanently available to those who might find it helpful, whether to answer their own questions or provide documentation to share with a friend or relative who has begun questioning what I have come to call the Myth of HWA.

This site is **not** the place to find the salacious details of some of the seamier history of the Armstrongs. There are plenty of websites out there already with such info. What I have wanted to do is let HWA "speak for himself" from old letters and articles about some matters which have confused many of his "apologists". Some such folks came along into the COG movement so late, perhaps even after HWA's death, that they have no real historical perspective on the progress and nature of his ministry at all. Others who have been around much longer may still have allowed their own illusions to build up a fog around what the man actually said and did in the earlier years of his ministry.

I will no doubt be adding more material to this website as time goes on. But it already includes enough material to keep most readers busy walking down memory lane with HWA for an hour or two. *Servants' News* will make printed copies available at some point in the future.

Welcome to "The Myth and The Man: Questions About the Myth—Answers from the Man".

http://www.youall.com/hwamyth

— Pam Dewey

Need WCG Lit. for Library

Many years ago I started a project to collect all of the WCG's major literature. Much of this was accomplished back in 1986/87, and I have been filling in the gaps ever since. I have the CDs with much of this, but would like to complete my collection of hard copies.

Also, in the late 1980s I was in communication with someone who had all of the WNs on microfiche. Hopefully they have been placed on CD ROM by now. Is anyone aware of this at all? I lost contact with that person.

If anyone can assist or direct me to someone who can, that would be much appreciated. I can mail or e-mail a list of what I am missing.

Thanks,

— Craig White, craig1@primus.com.au
GPO Box 864, Sydney, NSW 2001

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.

Books That Convey Truth

By Duane Sholly

Books can be one of our greatest sources of truth. The Bible is of course our first and foremost source of truth.

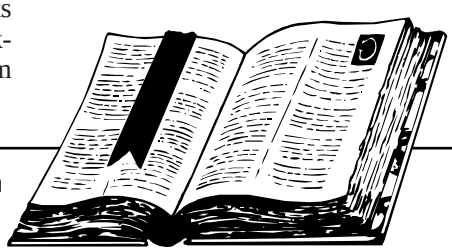
Christian bookstores are shunned by the brethren out of the belief that looking for a good source of truth there is a waste of time. This speaks volumes about the churches of God. In fact, how many books do you have on your bookshelves at home that were authored by someone in one of God's true churches. Such books should be great sources of truth. Perhaps you can count them on your hands—or even one hand. Would anyone in the secular or Protestant world come across a good source of truth about God's law, about the Sabbath, or about the Holy Days in a Christian bookstore? I think we all know the answer to that one.

True, the world can be exposed to the truth on the radio if they are within range of a station that carries a truth-bearing program or on the Internet if they have a computer. They may happen to come upon a copy of *the Good News* or some other Church of God publication that is available in some doctor's office or airport. But, would you agree that there is a dearth of books available to the general public conveying the truth as we know it?

There have been some real good publications of truth-conveying books authored by men in the churches of God. One such book is *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel… Found!*, published in 1992 and authored by Steven M Collins. But you are not likely find this book on the shelves of your nearby Christian bookstore. My wife and I were fortunate to have a friend who secured a copy for us from the author, himself. Then there is the book, *Truth Triumphant* which is a wonderful history of the Church in the Wilderness by B.G. Wilkinson, PhD. It is a printed documentary dealing with the history of Sabbatarian churches and a truly inspiring book.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church has given rise to several books dealing with the Sabbath and also the Holy Days authored by Dr Samuel Bacchiochi. They are small paperback books which include, among others, *The Sabbath Under Crossfire*—a Biblical analysis of recent Sabbath/Sunday developments, *The Sabbath in the New Testament*, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*, *The Time of the Crucifixion*, and *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness*. But these books can only be obtained from the bookstore at Andrews University or from the author.

Anyone who was in the WCG years ago may remember Dr Ernest L Martin. He authored the book, *The Star That Astonished The World*—an ASK publication in 1996 that is available through Amazon.com. Herein Dr Martin presents the conclusions to his research as to the truth of when Jesus Christ was really born. Not everyone



Why are so few books written by Sabbatarians found in Christian Book Stores? Is it because publishers and store owners will not sell anything they disagree with? That is not the case, because it would only take a few minutes in any Christian bookstore to find books that completely disagree with each other on such fundamental things as the purpose of mankind, the requirements for salvation, the nature of God, the nature of the Devil, etc. These are important doctrines, but nearly every Christian Bookstore will carry books with very different opinions.

Are Sabbatarian authors rejected simply because the owners are against the Sabbath, Holy Days, clean meats, non-Trinitarianism, etc.? No! Many Christian bookstores will carry Jewish and Messianic Jewish books that teach all of these doctrines.

Publishers and store owners can accept authors that disagree with other authors on certain points. They cannot accept authors that disagree with all other authors on ***all*** points. Unfortunately, the most visible Christian Sabbatarian groups (Seventh Day Adventists and Worldwide Church of God) taught that they were the one True Church and that all others were false. **These groups taught believers to listen only to their own teaching and not to others.** How can a publisher or store owner recommend a book that declares essentially all of his other books to be "not worth reading"?

If there were only one true church organization with all truth, then one should reject all of the other groups. **But history and present day reality show that nearly all Bible doctrines are taught by a variety of groups.** The only people who do not understand this are people who refuse to spend the time to look at what other groups teach.

Now that the larger Sabbatarian organizations are breaking up, it is interesting to see that there are many other Christian groups beginning to teach the Sabbath and Holy Days. An Internet search on these terms will reveal a number groups—mostly independent—that have no ties to the Seventh Day Adventists or the Church of God groups.

A second reason why Sabbatarian books are not well accepted in stores is that some of them are **dogmatic, but erroneous**. Many Sabbatarian leaders believe so strongly that God is working mainly through them that they will not listen to those who disagree with their teaching—either within or without their organization. A good example of

in the churches of God accept his findings as valid.

Fred R Coulter (CBCG) has authored a large volume on *The Christian Passover*. In this 450-page book Mr Coulter delves into the meaning of the Passover and when it should be observed. It is also full of basic truth on a wide range of spiritual issues. He is coming out with a book of similar size dealing with *The Days of Unleavened Bread*—now near completion. Also is his plans is a book dealing with the Sabbath. But, again, these books are available to the CBCG readership or other brethren that request them. [CBCG, PO Box 1442, Hollister, CA 95024-1442, tel 408-637-1875. You may request the short rebuttal to the 1993 version of this book, *The Passover Controversy* by Sanford Beattie from *Servants' News*—see address on page 2. — NSE]

Mention should be made to Herbert Armstrong's own book, *Mystery of the Ages*, which some brethren may have a copy of in their homes. It is a very large volume that presents the doctrines that Herbert Armstrong and the WCG taught and it was published prior to HWA's death. One can have access to that book on the Internet. [This book claims it might be the most important book written in 1900 years and that God led Mr. Armstrong to write it, but, like most other books, is a mixture of truth and error (see article on it in *Servants' News*, May/June 2000, page 6) — NSE]

Now we return to the assumption of most of the brethren stated in the second paragraph of this article—that to go to a Christian bookstore is a waste of time. Let me state quickly that most of what one finds in such a store is truly lacking in truth as we know it in the churches of God. Great care must be exercised in choosing what to buy in an outlet that caters to the Sunday church going throngs. Yet in the rest of this article I will endeavor to point out several books that do convey a great deal of truth—good Biblical material that will inspire you and enhance your spiritual growth in Christ Jesus.

Some time ago members of the CBCG were encouraged to acquire the book, *Satan's Ten Most Believable Lies*, by Dave Breese and published by the Moody Press. This 144-page paperback book on Christian living describes the ten of the enemy's false doctrines. Each chapter defines a satanic lie and compares it to the truth found in Scripture. The author's goal is to strengthen your faith and to help you resist the pervading influence of false doctrines advocated by Satan. This is truly a truth-conveying book and can be found in a Christian bookstore.

Another highly respected author is Alfred Edersheim who has authored books about the Temple. One is *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services* copy written in 1994 and is published by the Hendrickson Publishers in Peabody, Massachusetts. By August 1996 it had gone through its third printing which shows how much demand there has been for it. God's feasts and Sabbaths are referred to throughout the book.

A book that should intrigue, inform, and inspire most of you is Howard Blum's book, *The Gold of Exodus*. It purports, in its preface, to reveal the discovery of the true Mount Sinai. "In this true story award winning journalist and author Howard Blum tells the enthralling account of two modern-day adventurers. Larry Williams, a self-made millionaire and his friend Bob Cornuke, a retired policeman and a former SWAT team member. Lured by the prospect of finding the fabled fortune in gold that the ancient Hebrews took with them when they fled Egypt, the two men set out to find the true site of Mount Sinai—with only the Old Testament as their guide. In this documented story is the dramatic revelation of how they sneak into Saudi Arabia and of their astonishing discovery at the mountain known as Jabal Al Lauz." This is a 1998 publication of Simon and Schuster.

High on the reading list for all Christians should be the book, *How Now Shall We Live?* by Charles Colsen and his co-author Nancy Pearcey. According to the authors, "This book was written to help Christians make sense of the competing worldviews that clamor for their attention and allegiance in a pluralistic society." The authors assert that only the Christian worldview provides a rationally sustainable way to understand the universe and that only the Christian worldview fits the real world and can be lived out consistently in every area of life.

The book is divided into five parts with the following titles:

(1) Worldview: Why It Matters

(2) Creation: Where Did We Come From, and Who Are We?

(3) The Fall: What Has Gone Wrong With The World?

(4) Redemption: What We Do to Fix It

(5) Restoration: How Shall We Live?

Just citing these section titles hardly

this is *The Christian Passover* by Fred R Coulter. This book is extremely dogmatic and very long, and many who finish it are convinced that they have heard the final word on the Passover and need not ask any more questions. Duane Sholly recommends the book in the attached article and many others have recommended it to me. I found a number of mistakes in the 1993 version and we now offer a paper that clearly explains some of them: *The Passover Controversy* by Sanford Beattie (see the address on page 2).

We must realize that there is a certain amount of error in most books—probably in all of the books mentioned in this article. That is why we must expect the Holy Spirit to show us truth (John 16:13). We do not have to fear that we might unknowingly accept some error because God does not hold us guilty of sin *if we are truly blind to it* (John 9:41). What is important is that we do not reject truth because it is different than what we used to believe, or because it will be inconvenient to do so (maybe to the point of losing our friends and jobs). It is my hope that those who have learned important truths in the Church of God groups will let their "iron sharpen iron" by continuing to learn from others, and then let the Eternal work through them to teach these truths to other serious non-sectarian believers. If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom 8:31). — Norman Edwards

does it justice!

The fact that women have authored some books to be highly recommended to you will disturb many in the churches of God where women are not accepted in leadership or teaching roles. However it would be hard to prove that God did not have any part inspiring some women who have authored books that definitely convey a great deal of truth. Dr Laura Schlessinger authored her book, *The Ten Commandments* and *How Could You Do That?* among others.

And there is Kay Arthur who wrote *Our Covenant God, As Silver Refined*

and *Israel, My Beloved*. The latter is a Christian novel that deals with the history of Israel just prior to, during, and after the Babylonian Captivity. *Our Covenant God* proves that God has dealt with mankind according to His covenants. Each chapter includes many quoted Scriptures. This can be a valuable Bible study.

My wife has come to enjoy reading the book, *Really Bad Girls in the Bible*, by Liz Curtiss Higgs.

It is one of a series. The first one was *Bad Girls in the Bible*. These books bring to the reader lessons from "less than perfect women".

A true aid in helping to provide real good reading on Sabbaths and that certainly help to reveal the greatness of our all powerful Creator God and the wonders of His creation are the series of Readers Digest books, *The Earth, Its Wonders, Its Secrets* which include: *Strange Worlds, Fantastic Places*; *Nature's Masterpieces*; *Intelligence in Animals*; *Secrets of The Seas* and *Natural Disasters*. If one can read past the references to evolution or scientific speculation one will find these books to very informative.

As I read through these books I refer to our copy of *DK's World Atlas* to find places being referred to. The atlas is a treasure trove in itself—a 165-page book packed with pictures, graphs, reading material, as well as gorgeous maps all at a reasonable price when purchased through Amazon.com.

Families with young children would do well to acquire the beautiful book, *The Art of God—The Heavens and the Earth* by Ric Ergenbright. This book is a photographic celebration of God's creation, and is a call for us to recognize and praise Him for it and faithfully obey His mandate to care for it. It is complete with Scripture in its 160 pages.

Its last page features a photograph of clouds, and superimposed on that picture is Romans 11:33–36. "Oh the depths of riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen." 🕮

Discount Sources of Christian Books:

Christian Book Distributors, PO Box 7000, Peabody MA 01961-7000; 978-977-5005; www.christianbook.com. You may write or all for a free catalog.
Barnes and Noble carries many Christian books and, has numerous local stores, accepts phone orders at 800-THE-BOOK (800-843-2665) and internet orders at www.bn.com

It Has Disabled the Spiritual Lives of Many...

Nicolaitanism is often defined as any teaching or doctrine that "destroys the people", from the Greek *nike*—"to overcome or destroy", and *laos*—"the people". In general terms, any doctrine, belief or perception that *separates people from God*, destroying them spiritually, could be labeled as Nicolaitan in nature.

Church of God members easily recognize Nicolaitanism in that other religion, in which the people confess their sins to a priest, who then petitions God for forgiveness on their behalf. Those people are taught to relate to God through their priest; thus they are separated from God. They are discouraged from establishing a direct relationship from themselves to God.

But there is another form of Nicolaitanism that is not so easily recognized among the Churches of God. It is not a misperception of how we should relate up to God. Rather, it is a misperception of how God and Jesus Christ relate back down to—and work through—each of us. It could be thought of as the other "edge" of the two-edged sword of Nicolaitanism.

What I am getting at is this: lay members of churches—especially those with hierarchical organization—commonly have a perception that whenever God works through His Church, He'll always do it from the "top" down, using apostles first, then evangelists, then ministers, then elders, then deacons, and then as a last resort the regular members. I have had this "trickle down" perception myself, and I've heard it expressed by numerous others in the Churches of God.

We "cop out", thinking that God would use someone else—someone "higher" in the church and "closer to God"—before He would use us. We forfeit or lose faith that God would, for example, give us one of the "gifts of the Spirit" without first giving that

Continued on page 10

Buy the Truth, and Do Not Sell It

By John Eastman

What did King Solomon mean when he wrote, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it…" (Proverbs 23:23)?

The Bible clearly shows that God's righteousness and His Word is more valuable than gold or silver. David states, "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver" (Ps 119:72).

Jesus told his disciples, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth or rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven… for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:19–21).

From these verses, Christians are told not to pursue personal wealth above seeking God's righteousness. This article will show that we cannot buy the truth of God with physical wealth, but rather with the spiritual wealth of God's righteousness within us. God loves us and is concerned for our physical well being, but He wants us to seek His Kingdom and righteousness first, and then He will provide everything physical we need (Matt 6:33).

There are many parables in the Bible that show having God's righteousness is worth more than all our wealth combined. In Matt 13:46, Christ talks about a merchant of pearls who sells everything he has for "one pearl of great price", which Christ says is likened to the Kingdom of Heaven. Another parable speaks of a man who discovers a "hidden treasure in a field" and who goes and sells everything he has to buy that field (Matt 13:44). These parables are demonstrating that the value of God's righteousness is far greater than any physical wealth.

If the value of God's righteousness is greater than all our physical wealth, then how do we "buy the truth"? The answer is partially revealed in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1–13), which is a story of five wise and five foolish bridesmaids who take their oil lamps to wait for the groom to come to a wedding. In this parable, the five wise virgins bought enough oil to last until the groom arrived, but the five foolish virgins didn't buy enough oil and ran out of light.

I believe that spiritually the oil represents God's righteousness, which produces a kind of spiritual light in those who have it. Remember that Christ told His disciples, "you are the light of the world", and, "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven" (Matt 5:14–16). In Revelation 19:7–8, the Bible says that "white is the righteousness of the saints". In the Greek Dictionary #3022, *white* also means "light". *Pulling these verses together, the five foolish virgins had no light because Christ's righteousness was no longer being created in them*. They were running out of oil before the groom would arrive and should have bought more oil like the wise virgins.

In Ephesians 5:15–16, Paul warns us, "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools [like the foolish virgins], but as wise [like the wise virgins], redeeming the time because the days are evil." Redeeming the time means using the time wisely to grow in God's righteousness. God allows us, with Christ dwelling in us, the time to grow and bring forth the fruits of His righteousness, which makes us the true spiritual "lights of the world".

These verses show that we are to be buying the truth from God. Christ tells us in Rev 3:18, "I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in fire". Christ makes this possible by giving us the "buying power" by dwelling in us and creating God's righteousness in us. You see, it is God's Spirit that gives us

the spiritual knowledge and wisdom to know truth and to value it—above all earthly wealth.

The parable about the talents (Matt 25:14–29) demonstrates that God gives us the ability to grow in His righteousness. According to the parable, God gives you the talents according to your ability to invest them, and it is your responsibility to do the investing. God puts the highest value on His righteousness and will help form it in us all the way. When Christ lives in us and removes sin from us, He creates the fruits of God's righteousness in us, and we will have the spiritual wealth to buy the truth.

All true Christians have the ability to purchase God's truth, but in most cases God will reveal the truth through some more than others. This is because there are different parts of the Body of Christ performing differing functions (1Cor 12:12–30), and the members of the body are given different gifts (1Cor 12:4–11), "some of healing, working of miracles, prophesying, and ministering". Some who write or preach may even receive more truth than others because that is their function in the body.

Why are we told not to *sell* the truth? Even though we can purchase the truth through God's righteousness in us, we are not to sell it or trade it because Christ's grace is freely given to all mankind. To explain, we are joint heirs with Christ and partakers of His

resurrection, all of which we have received freely. We who have experienced God's grace for free are to give others the knowledge of Christ's grace so they too can grow in that grace (freely). Christians are told to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2Pet 3:18). When we freely give the truth to others about Christ's grace, we should not be charging or selling this truth, because it is a part of the process that is freely given by Jesus Christ. Since Christ dwells in us, we should have the same attitude of giving the truth that Christ has towards all mankind. There is one word of caution that Christ gives us when we give the truth to others, that is, "Do not give what is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces" (Matt 7:6).

Sometimes you may receive truth from those who are not God's ministers because they received it from someone else. They don't have God's Spirit or Christ living in them, so they can't buy the truth of God. It is possible that a false minister could have some truth from someone else who was able to purchase it, and may use it to gain a following. Undiscerning people will listen to this false minister because he is using the Word of God, which is like the voice of Christ, and Christ says "My sheep will hear my voice" (John 10:27). Christians can therefore be deceived and should heed the warning, "Beware of a wolf in

sheep's clothing" (Matt 7:15–16). Sometimes Satan will use a little of the truth to take someone away from God. **"And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works"** (2Cor 11:14–15).

They can have a form of righteousness, but deny the power of God (2Tim 3:5). These are deceitful workers that are doing the work of Satan. We must never take anyone for face value without searching the Scriptures like the Bereans (Acts 17:10–12) in order not to be deceived. Like Christ said, you can always know someone by his fruits. Of course, there are some ministers who have God's Spirit and righteousness, who also have the truth from someone who purchased it. Their only desire is to bring one to Christ and feed the flock because they really do love God.

In conclusion, we are blessed to buy the truth by Christ's righteousness within us. And, we are not to sell the truth because we have received Christ's grace freely. We should be like Him and give the truth freely to others, so they too can share in His grace, because the whole Bible in one way or another points to God's salvation through Jesus Christ and He freely gives it to all mankind. 🕮

Is Giving Truth Away Bad?

I have spoken with some people who seem to be afraid to share truth with others lest they accidentally "cast there pearls before swine"—share truth with somebody who is not worthy of it. I think this is an unfounded fear.

People who are not seeking God simply reject truth from those who are serving God. Obviously, we should teach or not teach according to any specific command we received from God (through dreams, visions, a voice or some clear answered prayer). But lacking such a command, teaching whoever is **willing to listen** appears to be the biblical guide (Matt 10:12–14, Acts 13:50–51). — NSE

Disabled the Spiritual Lives...* *from page 8

gift to someone "higher" in the church.

With this perception in place, many have internalized a passive faith, feeling uninvolved and unempowered in the "work" except for putting their tithes in the mailbox. I submit that we must put this perception away and change to an actively involved, dynamic, living faith—believing God will use each of us personally—if we are to attain "apostolic Christianity". We must put aside hierarchical thinking: Christ is the head of the Church and we are equal brethren in His sight. Yes, there are different gifts, but we are not of different value to God (Matthew 20:25–28).

I am not saying anyone in any organization *intends* to install themselves between the laity and God; God will be the judge of that. But I believe **the insidious perception that "God will work down through the hierarchy in a church before working through each member" has been debilitating and disenfranchising** to many Church of God members. *It has disabled the spiritual lives of many.*

Here are a few questions that we each might ask ourselves:

Do I believe that God is a respecter of persons?

Have I accepted a perception that God would work with someone else before He would work with me?

Do I believe God could or would be willing to work with or through me as much as with anyone else?

Could God work with me if I do not *believe* He would?

Would I feel comfortable standing before the judgment seat of Christ saying "I thought you intended for the other guy—'higher' in the church—to do that…"?

Did the apostle Paul *ever* say that the gifts of the spirit were handed out according to a pecking order in the church? (1Cor 12)

At the first Pentecost, did the flames of the Spirit fall only on Peter and John, and the other Apostles? Or did they fall on *everyone* assembled?

— *George Burdick*, ev21v4@att.net

Counting Pentecost in 2001

By Sanford Beattie

Nearly all Christian groups—Sabbatarian or not—recognize the day of Pentecost. However, there has long been a debate as to when it should be. The name means "fiftieth", meaning the fiftieth day from the Wave Sheaf (or omer) offering. But when was the Wave Sheaf to be offered? Some believe it is the day after the First Day of Unleavened Bread, others the day after the Last Day and others the day after a weekly Sabbath at the time of Unleavened Bread. Still others believe the Wave Sheaf should be offered whenever the grain is ripe. Then too, depending upon one's understanding of Hebrew expressions, some will number the Wave Sheaf day as "day 1" and others will start counting the day after.

Finally, there are many different opinions as to when the Holy Days should occur as some people use the fixed Hebrew Calendar and others attempt to determine the rules of the calendar from the scriptures.

This article will not attempt to clear up any of the above problems, but will assume that the counting is to begin on a Sunday (the day after a weekly Sabbath), using the fixed Hebrew Calendar. This year, 2001, is particularly difficult because the weekly Sabbath falls on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. (This also occurred in 1994, 1981, 1977, 1974, 1954, 1950, 1930, 1927 and other previous years, and will occur again in 2005 and 2008.) Usually, the weekly Sabbath, and the day of the Wave Sheaf which follows it, both occur during the days of Unleavened Bread. But with this calendar arrangement, if one begins counting after the Sabbath that is in the days of Unleavened Bread, then the "day after" (Sunday) will not be in the Days of Unleavened Bread. Or, if one counts from the Sunday that is within the Days of Unleavened Bread (the first day of Unleavened Bread), then one is counting after a Sabbath that is before the Days of Unleavened Bread (the Passover).

What does the Bible indicate that we should do?

To make our article clear, we will use the following terms:

early method: counting from the Sunday that **is** the First Day of Unleavened Bread

late method: counting from the Sunday after the Last Day of Unleavened Bread.

Many have put forth explanations for both the ***early*** and the ***late*** methods, but this article will answer those arguments for the ***late*** method put forth by ***a Bible study given by John Ritenbaugh on August 26, 2000*** (similar material was covered in his article in the December 2000 *Forerunner* magazine, published by the Church of the Great God, PO Box 471846; 800-878-8220 / 803-802-7075; www.cgg.org). In this study he explained his belief that in 2001 the majority of the Church of God will be keeping Pentecost one week too early.

Mr Ritenbaugh referred to the changes that the Worldwide Church of God made in 1974 on the counting of Pentecost. While he agrees with the WCG change from Monday to Sunday, he feels that the change from the ***late*** to the ***early*** method of counting Pentecost in these unusual years was wrong. He even speculates that this later change was made without Herbert Armstrong's knowledge and approval. Whether or not he was aware of the change, Herbert Armstrong and the WCG (including Mr Ritenbaugh) kept Pentecost using the ***early*** method in 1974, 1977 and 1981. Mr Ritenbaugh changed back to the ***late*** method in 1994.

This places Mr Ritenbaugh in sync with the Roman Catholics for counting Pentecost, and at odds with the majority of Church of God groups which use the ***early*** method. I will be the first to state that the majority is not always right, and majority opinion constitutes no proof whatsoever. But in this case, I will say that the weight of Scriptural evidence shows that the ***early*** method is correct.

This article does not represent exhaustive research on this aspect of Pentecost. We have not even read all of the papers that we have received. Nevertheless, we believe it does bring up many valid points in determining how to count Pentecost this year.
— Norman Edwards

The question at hand involves an interpretation of Leviticus 23:

> "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.
>
> And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD'" (Lev 23:10–16).

Please note in the above verses that there is no overt statement about which Sabbath is meant. We are all assuming it is related somehow to the days of Unleavened Bread. It is a conclusion which can only be reached by inference, context, symbolism or

other Scriptures. These scriptures do not define which weekly Sabbath is meant, except in the indication that it was to be at the beginning of the harvest, before any of the new crop was consumed, and in the connection with their entry into the land. The scriptures in question occur immediately following a description of the days of Unleavened Bread, so there could be a relationship. But they nowhere state that the weekly Sabbath must occur during the Feast. John Ritenbaugh states that it must be the Sabbath during the Feast as though that is clearly given in the Scriptures. It becomes for him an inviolable rule, which he cites repeatedly. Yet he offers no proof, other than to state that this is clearly given in Leviticus 23:11, 15.

What he fails to take into account—in fact, what he dismisses as irrelevant—is the symbolism involved. The focus in Leviticus 23:9–14 is on the day of the wave offering, not the day which precedes it. The wave offering is to be offered on the first day of the week (a Sunday). Which Sunday? It is apparent that this wave offering pictures the resurrected Jesus Christ, the first of the firstfruits. We know that Jesus was resurrected at sundown at the end of the Sabbath, three days following His crucifixion. Christ was symbolically accepted as the firstfruits offering on the first day of the week, in fulfillment of the Wave Sheaf. The Feast not only pictures our need to live a sinless life, it also pictures Christ, the unleavened bread, living His life in us. Nearly all offerings represent some form of Christ's sacrifice, and the Wave Sheaf was no exception. The only real connection we can make between the Wave Sheaf offering and the days of Unleavened Bread is the symbolism of this unleavened first of the firstfruits being offered during the Feast. The seven days also carry with them a reference to the seven thousand year plan of God, and Christ, the unleavened Wave Sheaf, was offered during that seven thousand years, not after.

Leviticus 23:11, 15 are not describing anything which occurs **on a Sabbath**. They are describing what is to occur on "the day after the Sabbath", on the first day of the week, the day we call Sunday. That is the day of the Wave Sheaf. That is the day we begin the count. That is the day when Christ fulfilled the Wave Sheaf's symbolism. That is the day which carries a relationship to the seven days of Unleavened Bread.

Using the ***late*** counting method, the Wave Sheaf would in these years be offered after the days of Unleavened Bread, not during Unleavened Bread. Leviticus does not say it is the Sabbath day that must occur during the Feast. Technically, it doesn't say that the Wave Sheaf day must occur during the Feast either. But because of the command to do this "when they entered the land", and because of the symbolism of that day, we more appropriately arrive at the ***early*** method: **the Wave Sheaf was to be offered on the day after the Sabbath (on the Sunday) that occurs during the days of Unleavened Bread**. The "day after the Sabbath" is a coherent phrase intended to describe the day of the Wave Sheaf—the offering of which did occur in its ultimate fulfillment on the Sunday *during* the days of Unleavened Bread. Hence we begin the count, and the offering was made, on the first day of the Feast when the Feast begins on the first day of the week—the day after the weekly Sabbath. It is the day of the wave offering, not the Sabbath day, we are concerned with here.

There is a passage in the book of Joshua which helps to clarify this further. Whether conclusive or not, it seems to point to a Wave Sheaf being offered on the first day of the Feast. The Scriptures in question are these:

"So the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. And they **ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover**, unleavened bread and parched grain on the very same day. Now the **manna ceased** on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate **the food of the land of Canaan** that year (Josh 5:10–12).

These Scriptures state that the Israelites kept the Passover on the 14th. The following day they ate of the produce of the land, including "parched grain". Leviticus 23:14 states that *when they entered the Promised Land* (v. 10) they were forbidden to eat "parched grain" until they had brought the wave offering. Finally, the day after they ate "parched grain" and "the produce of the land", the Israelites received no manna. They ate of the produce of Canaan from then on. This would indicate, then, that the Wave Sheaf was offered on the first day of Unleavened Bread (the 15th) that year and that the 14th was a Sabbath day. This would establish the day after the weekly Sabbath (rather than the day after the annual Sabbath) as the day for starting the Pentecost count. It also makes this a year when the first day of the Feast occurred on a Sunday, since any other day would have delayed the Wave Sheaf until later in the Feast. And, interestingly enough, it puts an extremely literal fulfillment to the instructions in Leviticus 23:10–11, which says that when they entered the Promised Land and wanted to harvest its produce, they were to offer a sheaf of the firstfruits on the day after the Sabbath. The 15th that year would have been the day after the first Sabbath following their entry into the land on the 10th day of the month (Josh 4:19).

In his defense of the ***late*** method of counting John Ritenbaugh claims that the Wave Sheaf could not possibly have been offered when Joshua entered the promised land and that the Bible mention of the first eating of the produce of the land is of little value for counting Pentecost. He claims to have given seven reasons why no Wave Sheaf could have been offered. It was not clear exactly which points his count included, but here are the seven that I think he meant along with the reasons why I believe each one of them is invalid:

1. RITENBAUGH: Joshua 5:11, 12 should say that they ate of the old grain, not the new produce. That is how the KJV and many older translations render it. Strong's lexicon claims that the word used (*abuwr*, #5669), only refers to stored grain.

BEATTIE: Strong frequently derived his definitions from the way the King James Version translated the Hebrew and Greek words. He did not always attempt to find the words in other Hebrew writings to help derive their

Nisan / Abib

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Provisions readied for use within 3 days (Josh 1:11)	9	10 entry into the land & circumcisions (Josh 4:9-5:5)	11	12	13	14 Passover sacrifice
			Healing from circumcisions			
15 wave sheaf offering	16 no manna	17	18	19	20	21 Walls fell down, victory
			Days of Unleavened Bread—Israelites marched around Jericho 7 days			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

meaning. Other lexicons (eg. Gesenius), do not make the claim that stored grain is meant. And most modern translations use a phrase such as "produce of the land" indicating that the concept of "old grain" may be erroneous. Without further exhaustive research, I find this argument inconclusive. In any case, verse 11 still carries with it the statement that they ate "parched grain" (#7033 or #7039), and Leviticus 23:14 specifically forbade them from eating "parched grain" before the sheaf was waved. The fields around Gilgal would have contained ripening grain. It is doubtful that the remnant of the previous year's crops would have been left in storage bins outside of the cities when the inhabitants were faced with what looked like an imminent siege. Verse 12 says they ate of that year's produce, and there is no reason to imagine they would wait any longer than necessary to do so. They were tired of eating manna (Num 11:5-6; Deut 8:3-4).

Leviticus 23:10 said that when they came into the land and wanted to reap its harvest, they were to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits to the priest before they ate any of it (v.14). There is no indication that they ate any of the local crop the first five days in the land, and the manna was still being provided. It appears they were waiting for something. If it was **not** the offering of the Wave Sheaf on the day after the very first Sabbath following their entry into the land, then what were they waiting for?

2. RITENBAUGH: The Israelites were not able to do any harvesting because of healing circumcisions. There may have been over a million men who required circumcision. It would have taken several days to do it and they would have been too sore to harvest grain from the fields.

BEATTIE: This argument seems more like an invention than a proof in that it is erroneous in several ways. **First**, we are not talking about bringing in and preserving the entire crop, but simply enough to eat on one particular day. **Second**, the men from 40 to 60 years of age (about half of the adult men) had already been circumcised before leaving Egypt (Josh 5:5). They could have gathered grain. So could the women. **Third**, circumcision need not take a long time. Many men could have been circumcised at once. I don't think anyone seriously thinks Joshua did it all by himself. At one point Mr Ritenbaugh infers that the Levites had to do it, but that is not required in the Scriptures. Perhaps the 300,000 or so circumcised men over the age of 40 did it. That would be only 3 or 4 per person by his count. The entire nation could have been circumcised in less than an hour this way. Consider Genesis 17:23–27 where Abraham circumcised his entire household (consisting of hundreds of men as stated in Genesis 14:14) in one day. At Gilgal, if each household leader took responsibility for his own household, the circumcision could easily have been completed in one day. **Fourth**, the manna was still coming daily (Joshua 5:12), so if

More on Joshua 5 and Pentecost

Other claims not covered in the accompanying article have also been put forth, attempting to prove that the Days of Unleavened Bread were not Sunday to Sabbath in Joshua 5. These arguments also appear to have little substance:

Claim #1: Israel ate produce of the land before they crossed the Jordan, so there was no need for a wave sheaf for them to begin eating it. Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess' " (Josh 1:10–11).

Answer: The Bible does not say enough about these provisions that they prepared to conclude that they would be a violation of the Lev 23 wave sheaf command. There are three reasons why: 1) They had not officially "entered the land" yet. They were given manna to eat regularly while wandering but were not generally forbidden to eat food which they may have found or bought from other lands. 2) These provisions could have been stored grain, which could be eaten before the wave sheaf. 3) The provisions could have been manna. While manna normally did not last more than one day (two on Friday/Sabbath), if God commanded them to use it He could change it.

Claim #2: The First Day of Unleavened Bread Could not be on a Sunday

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Israel had nobody able to go out and gather some grain, who was going out each day to gather the manna?

3. RITENBAUGH: The day in question was a Holy Day and no harvesting could be done on a Holy Day.

BEATTIE: The Scriptures do not say the Israelites engaged in a grain harvest. It says they ate some (Josh 5:11). So did Christ's disciples in Mark 2:23–28 on the weekly Sabbath day. Exodus 12:16 speaks of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: "On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat; that only may be prepared by you." Obtaining grain from the fields was permitted on this Holy Day if needed for food. So was gathering the manna, which they clearly did on the morning of that Holy Day, since the manna did not cease until the following day. It was only the weekly Sabbath on which no manna was provided, not annual Sabbaths, and only the weekly Sabbath which had restrictions on food preparation. And regarding the wave offering itself: the priests regularly worked on the weekly Sabbath (offering *twice* as much as on other days of the week), and were expected to do even more work on the annual Holy Days (cf. Matt 12:1–8; Num 28–29). Obtaining a small amount of grain on a holy day for a required offering was certainly not prohibited.

4. RITENBAUGH: The Israelites did not actually keep the Passover. This claim is based on a recognition that the phrase "on the fourteenth day of the month at even" (Josh 5:10, KJV) refers to the end of the day, not the beginning.

BEATTIE: Indeed, that phrase in Joshua 5:10 is identical in the Hebrew with the one in Exodus 12:18, which defines when the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins. I will not here discuss whether the Passover was kept that year. Suffice it to say the Scripture says they kept the Passover. I find Mr Ritenbaugh's assertion that the original text of Joshua 5 was changed by Ezra or one of his accomplices to be disconcerting at best. The implication that God would allow this in His Word, and at the same time be forced to leave us clues so we would not be deceived, borders on blasphemy. I have addressed this subject in detail in another paper ("The Passover Controversy" at www.cgsf.org) and will not go into it further here. But regardless of whether or not Joshua 5:10 is referring to the "Passover" at the end of the 14th, the real question here is this: what is being referred to in Joshua 5:11 as "the morrow after the Passover" (KJV) (or whatever was observed at the end of the 14th)? Mr Ritenbaugh would like "the morrow" to be the 16th, or second day of the Feast. But the Hebrew word *mochorath* ("morrow" in the KJV), is consistently used elsewhere to refer to the next morning (cf. Gen 19:34; Jdg 6:38; Num 11:32; 1Sam 5:3; Jonah 4:7). The Hebrew words then permit, and even require, that "the morrow" on which they ate unleavened cakes and parched grain was the 15th.

5. RITENBAUGH: The Israelites were not permitted to use the grain of the Canaanites for the Wave Sheaf. It had to be from what they had labored and sown themselves. Exodus 23:16 says: "and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field."

BEATTIE: Exodus 23:16 is talking about Pentecost and Tabernacles, not the Wave Sheaf. Leviticus 23 does not require that the Israelites sow the grain themselves. It says they were to offer a sheaf of the firstfruits when they came into the land and reaped its produce. Indeed, even the symbolism of Christ being given to us as an offering is contained in this concept—we did not "sow" Him with our hands—but we are involved in God's later harvests.

RITENBAUGH: A foreigner's grain was inherently profane due to Leviticus 22:25: "Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their

More on Joshua 5 and Pentecost
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because the command to "prepare provisions" Joshua 1:11 would have come on a Sabbath.

Answer: If the First Day of Unleavened Bread (the 15th) were on Sunday, then the day they entered the land (10th) would be a Tuesday. Three days before, would be the 7th, which would be a Sabbath. However, Joshua 1:11 does not say "after three days" or "in three days", but "within three days". Even though Green's interlinear does not assign a Strong's number to the word, there is a word in the Hebrew which means "within" (b'ud). The exact same expression appears in Genesis 40:19–20: " 'Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you.' Now it came to pass on the third day [literally 'day three'], which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants." This is clearly an inclusive type of counting and the most likely day for Joshua 1:11 is Sunday (a good day to start working) with the third day being Tuesday, the day they crossed over.

Claim #3: The Last Day of Unleavened Bread could not be on a Sabbath because the Children of Israel would have had to march around Jericho seven times and fight the war on the Sabbath.

Answer: The Eternal has always permitted people to do his commanded work on the Sabbath (Matt 12:5, John 5:16–18, 7:22–23). If He commanded them to do this on the Sabbath, then they did it. The symbolism makes sense. The Eternal's servants will warn about sin for 6,000 years (the first six Days of Unleavened Bread). Their trumpets can be heard, but the sinners are free to heed them or dismiss them. Then, on the Seventh Day of Unleavened Bread, The Eternal's servants celebrate victory over sin in the last thousand years—the world's millennial rest-pictured by the Sabbath.

— Norman Edwards

corruption is in them, and defects are in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf."

BEATTIE: In context, the subject of this verse is animal sacrifices (not grain offerings), which were not to be anything less than perfect animals. Verse 18 specifically says that foreigners could offer sacrifices, but here in verse 25 it says the priests were not to make exceptions for foreigners—they could not accept any defective animal for sacrifice from either Israelites, or foreigners. "Bread" is a generic term for food, not necessarily grain (cf. Lev 3:11 where the same Hebrew word is used to refer to kidneys and fat). "Their corruption" is referring to the animals, not the foreigners. The NIV says, "and you must not accept such animals from the hand of a foreigner and offer them as the food of your God. They will not be accepted on your behalf, because they are deformed and have defects."

RITENBAUGH: Leviticus 18:24–30 shows the entire land was defiled, so was everything growing there.

BEATTIE: The Scriptures say that because of their wicked behavior, God was going to remove the people from the land. But claiming the ground and crops were polluted from this is a stretch. The Canaanites may have done the planting, but it was God who created the seed and gave the increase. Deuteronomy 20:19–20 discusses the trees which were growing in the land. They were not defiled. Deuteronomy 6:11 and Joshua 24:13 say that God gave them the land, and gave them what they did not plant themselves for food. Mr Ritenbaugh correctly points out that an individual was not to pay vows with money obtained through his own immoral behavior (cf. Deut 23:18).

But Joshua instructed that the gold and spoils of the wicked city of Jericho were holy to God, and placed them into the tabernacle treasury (Josh 6:19). Although there were times when God commanded destruction of all the animals (cf. 1Sam 15:3), normally the spoils of battle taken from the immoral people around them were kept by the Israelites, in accord with God's instructions (cf. Josh 8:2, 27; 11:14–15), and freely given to God in offering. Numbers 31 discusses the division of spoils after one battle, and the portion of the animals that were required to be given to God. There are other examples of the Israelites offering sacrifices to God from the spoils of battle, for which they were not condemned. When Abraham returned from his battle with the four kings, he gave God's portion—a tithe of all directly to Melchizedek. This apparently included the tithe of what had been recovered from the wicked city of Sodom (Gen 13:13; 14:11, 20–24). This concept of the produce and animals of the land being inherently corrupt, and not to be devoted to God, is an invention. There are no Scriptures making this claim, and several examples that show otherwise.

6. RITENBAUGH: The Wave Sheaf, and its other offerings, had to be offered in the place God chose. That was initially Shiloh, and they wouldn't establish that for 7 years.

BEATTIE: The Israelites had been able to offer sacrifices at the tabernacle since the day it was erected at Mount Sinai. God gave instructions on how to move the camp, and the tabernacle and altar, and how to set them up again whenever they made camp (cf. Numbers 2–4). They stopped when the pillar of cloud or fire stopped. Every place that they stopped was a place that *God chose!* They set up the tabernacle in their midst when they made camp in Gilgal, as instructed by God. The altar was in its place; the daily, weekly and annual offerings were able to continue. It is even likely that Gilgal was where the tabernacle stayed until it was relocated to Shiloh, since the Israelites seemed to return to Gilgal regularly (cf. Josh 4:19; 9:6; 10:6, 15, 43; 14:6). In any case, the scripture never says that they could not do a Wave Sheaf offering at the tabernacle in Gilgal, so this is not a proof it could not be done.

7. RITENBAUGH: Because the tabernacle was not set up at Shiloh, no planting could take place. The people lived off of what grew of itself for seven years (including those tribes east of the Jordan, who were not allowed to plant either), until the first Wave Sheaf offering could be made from something they had planted.

BEATTIE: Try to find that in the Bible. Only 40,000 of the men who settled east of Jordan went with Joshua (Josh 4:12–13). Numbers 26 indicates there were perhaps three times that many men of war-age that could have gone, so most stayed with the women and children to protect them, take care of the flocks and herds, and undoubtedly to till the ground. God specifically told them that they were to gradually take over the land, so that the wild creatures would not overwhelm them (Ex 23:29–30). God did not have them spend seven years fighting battles, only to return to the now desolate and abandoned land to fight the wild beasts. They needed to hold the land, and work it, to keep these animals in check. Undoubtedly they also lived well off the Canaanite's bounty as they conquered new areas (Josh 5:12; 8:2; 11:14; 22:8). But were they forced to do this for seven years because they hadn't yet moved the tabernacle and altar to Shiloh? The Canaanites planted the crops, the Israelites reaped the harvest of a land that flowed with milk and honey (Deut 26:9; Lev 23:10; John 4:38; Deut 6:11; Josh 24:13). And as with all of the other spoils of war, they presented offerings to God from that harvest, including the first of the first-fruits.

In recent months John Ritenbaugh has presented his views on how to count Pentecost in additional forums. His position, and attempted support, remains basically the same as what was addressed in the Bible Study mentioned above. He still believes in the ***late*** method—that the count to Pentecost must begin with *the Sabbath that occurs during the days of Unleavened Bread*. This is indeed what was carelessly assumed and taught in WCG until 1974, because the Sabbath in question did fall within Unleavened Bread for nearly two decades before that.

But to say that the Sabbath preceding the Wave Sheaf must always fall within Unleavened Bread is to add to the words of the Bible something that was never intended. What the Scriptures actually say is that the counting for Pentecost must begin, not with the Sabbath day, but rather with the actual cutting of the Wave Sheaf (Deut 16:9) which was done in the

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Respecting and Correcting Toward COG Perfecting

A Helpful Personal Story

by Arlean Kelley

This article was originally two e-mails written by Arlean Kelley, the former *Servants' News* Small Group and Evangelism Editor (she is gradually recovering from her illness). They were written in May and July of 2000 as she was getting to know and respect some Church of God brethren in her area. I think this "outsider's" look at the CoG groups can provide helpful correction.

Our regular features about small groups and evangelism will continue in the next issue. — NSE

I now have friends who are former WCG members. These wonderful people are amazed that some who used to be so devout in their church now "seem just so happy to be able to eat a ham sandwich!" On the other hand I, who never attended any church that regarded "clean meats" laws, would not touch a ham sandwich.

What's the difference? I think the difference is whom we have been encouraged to follow. If you've been encouraged to follow man, then when men change, so do you. If you are anchored in the Almighty, and you've learned to get your direction from Him, then things around you may change, but your anchor holds!

Once one turns from following God and starts following man—no matter how great a teacher—he has put that man in the place that God wants to hold in his life. When it comes to Bible knowledge, people just don't "get it" all at once. God teaches people and changes them according to His wisdom, which probably works out a lot differently than our limited wisdom.

My god (or God, depending) is whatever controls my life. If I line up with a belief system of a church or a leader—that I can't really see for myself—in order to be accepted into fellowship by that person, I would be making that leader my god because that is who I would be seeking to please—not the Almighty. I now have been taught to follow man as a substitute for God. That did happen to me to some degree—for years.

But as I continued my goal of aligning my life with His will for about 40 years, I have changed so much. What I did not believe at one time, I now believe, and some things I did believe at the start, I no longer believe. It is a process of growth. If the Eternal just opened our heads and poured in all knowledge and understanding at once, it would be nice. But it seems that He does it more line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little.

Learning the Sabbath From God

For example, I was taught from childhood to set aside Sunday (not Sabbath). I memorized verses to support that position. People who were, themselves, convinced had taught the historic change from Sabbath to Sunday. Of course it was in error, but I didn't have a clue. Yet my relationship with God was real and close and I was growing in my knowledge of Him and my relationship to Him all along. He accepted me, loved me, answered my prayers, and showed me truth from scripture.

And then one day He started to encourage me to question the Sabbath. When did it change, and why? In fact, it was during that research that I came across Norman Edwards and *Servants' News* on the internet several years ago.

But that was only a coincidence of my research. I was fully convinced only after I did a complete study of every Bible verse I could find and write down regarding Sabbath. I then outlined those verses, and I had my answer. But that happened only after I had given up all inclination to follow man. If I had still been following man, I would never have come into this truth because I would still have been trying to keep the approval of men that I respected. I think we have to give up following men if we ever want to experience true intimacy with the Almighty.

The church I attended did not concern itself with the Sabbath. I had no acquaintances that did. My recognition of the true Sabbath was spontaneous. Why it took so many years for God to get around to that, I don't know, but because He showed me, the setting aside of Sabbath is not something I do because an organization demands it before I can be included. It flows from my heart with love toward Him and it is a joy, not a burden.

Ministering Is For Everyone

So now my focus is to encourage people to learn to follow the Eternal in their daily lives, search the Scripture, show courtesy to men, but when it comes to spiritual things, learn to follow God. I do think it is learned.

The Bible says that man looks on the outside but God looks on the heart. That seems to indicate to me that, while I may not agree on some issues, the Eternal is more concerned with the state of a person's heart toward Him.

I understand why the WCG was against the shallow practice of asking people to simply "give their heart to the Lord" without enough knowledge to know what a godly life was like. Young converts need a way to be nourished. The WCG's paid ministry and written literature certainly helped, but it is so sad to me that so many precious brethren have never grasped the fact that the Father has called and wants to anoint **all** of us to ministry—including evangelism! A "minister" is not necessarily a CEO or one who makes speeches. A minister is one who "ministers"—who serves the sheep—as the Spirit leads. A "pastor" (minister?) cares for the sheep, binds them up when they are injured, seeks them when they are lost, loves them, "feeds" them, comforts them in times of distress. A pastor cares for the sheep. He or she does not necessarily make speeches.

The Word says we are priests! **All** of us (1Pet 2:5,9). I could elaborate ad nauseum!

How foolish, in my opinion, to teach people there is one "minister" when in fact God has called all. How different it would be if the whole Body were equipped, scattered throughout the community acting as ministers to their

world in His name and by His power. What results we would see! Our job—the job of leaders—is to "equip the saints" for this work. In my opinion, someone has not been doing the job. I do not target WCG here. The priestly hierarchy is well in place in most organizations and the lowly "layperson" sits in the pew and listens—or naps.

Talking With Wanda

Wanda is a dear, precious woman who has suffered many injuries during her WCG years, yet she remains faithful. I admire her. [The person is real, but "Wanda" is a fictitious name used for this article.]

I decided to ask her about a number of things in an attempt to better understand the WCG concepts of evangelism and related subjects. I don't know if Wanda is typical, but she sees no clear concept of conversion—the "new birth". She said she literally doesn't even have a word for anything like that. We had to agree on a term to assure that both of us understand what we are talking about.

She seems to believe in salvation by works. She would not say that, but that's what it sounds like to me. You just start "obeying the commandments" one of which is baptism—going under the water and coming up a new creature. She says she was never taught much about this so has no solid answers.

I agree on the symbolism of baptism. But that is not guaranteed to be a new birth since one can go under a dry sinner and come up a wet sinner. Yet I believe the new birth **can** take place at baptism **if** that is the point at which that person repents and turns to God with all his or her heart. But without repentance and turning, baptism just gets you wet! And obeying the commandments won't do it either because it is clear we cannot earn our way.

I asked her, "if one of the people at work asked you how they could be right with God and have eternal life, what would you tell them?" She cast about for an answer. It is obvious she had "not been here before". Wanda is an intelligent woman with a responsible job—but answering this was not part of her experience as a believer.

Arlean's Conversion

I told Wanda about my own conversion. I was working as a secretary/assistant administrator at a church-sponsored children's home. A contributor sent in a box of children's clothes. In that box was a beautiful (used) Bible in red leather. I put it on my desk. My job was not very demanding at times. During those times I started to read it. Then I started taking it home in the evenings to read. I think I read the entire New Testament.

I had been a church member (Baptist) for years although not attending for a long time. Yet I saw from that reading that I had never repented and turned the control center of my life over to Him. I was lost to God. I was in eternal danger and in need of salvation! The knowledge haunted me as I weighed the situation.

So, driving to work one day, stopped at a traffic light in front of Sunniland Shopping Center (Kendall, Florida) I prayed. I told God I was sorry that I had lived my life to please myself, asked him to forgive me and cleanse me from my sins as His Word said He would, and that from now on my life was His. I added, "I won't change anything in my life because someone else says so, but if **you** tell me to change, I will." (I still live by that, although I do respect other believers and would not deliberately offend. Example: I would not eat meat offered to idols if it caused my brother to offend.)

My life changed at that moment. I had not attended church for several years. Church seemed irrelevant. But the Father gave me a new heart and a new life at that moment. It was a spiritual birth dependent on nothing but Him. I was about 23 at the time.

It was soon tested. Just days later the administrator at my work came in and said, "If Gary calls, tell him I'm not here." As usual, I said, "Okay." Then it hit me. That would be a lie. And thence came the struggle and it was intense. I loved my job, but I now couldn't lie. Struggle, struggle, struggle! What was I going to do? Fear! What if the phone rang before I got this issue settled? What would I do?

Finally I went in and said, with fainting heart, "Could you do something for me? If you want me to tell him you're not here… could you please (long pause) leave?"

The administrator looked at me for a long moment, picked up her purse and left. First test—passed! And so it went. But I didn't obey because of some outer rules, but because of an inward transformation, a spiritual birth that had taken place at that traffic light when I invited Jesus to take over my life. It was not me, controlled by rules, it was His life freely flowing from a new heart.

Obedient Heart Brings Results

I did not give Wanda this exact example, but I gave her others (there were others). I am not bragging on myself. This was my experience but is to His glory and not mine. My belief is that when a real birth takes place, obedience will flow out of a heart of love. If it is something merely imposed from outside, then I cannot tell you what it is. My experience is that if we truly love God, we will not want anything to harm that relationship. This is my belief and my experience. He says He will give us a heart of flesh in place of our stony heart. I think this is symbolic of what happens in the new birth. It is a supernatural work performed by the Father.

These particular WCG people are astonished how quickly others have responded to the relaxation of rules, happy for the freedom to eat ham sandwiches, for example. This would make me question some things. **True obedience flows out of a changed heart,** and no man is going to change us if that is the case. Why were they obeying in the first place? Because of a changed heart? Or from the desire to be accepted in an organization? The first produces eternal life. The second does not.

I hasten to add that I believe we can "backslide" and (horrors, to some) be lost. **I don't see "eternal security" in the Word.** I do see a wonderful, personal walk with God that will keep us if we continue the process that got us there in the first place—stay yielded to Him. And if we do get off track, go back and repent, ask forgiveness, get back on where we got off. He promises to forgive if we do that.

Wanda says she never heard anything like this, has never had any experience like that. She says it certainly

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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.

How Does the New CoG Believer Fit Into Old Ways?

LETTER: January 15, 2001

Norman Edwards:

Thanks, I read many CoG publications and there is always several people who want them when I'm done, I'm blessed with many sources and ways of obtaining material and some people are not. I have been with the CGI [Church of God International] for about 15 months. My wife and I were baptized September of 2000. Some of the newsletters (monthlies) from some of the churches have a lot of uplifting articles. I receive the *[Philadelphia] Trumpet, Tomorrow's World, Good News, Servants' News, Vision;* church member-type publications like 21st century Watch, *International News*, *LCoG Monthly*; I print the monthly pubs from UCG and David Hulme's group from the internet; plus offerings from the television programs.

As a child growing up my family never went to church but I was drawn to *the Plain Truth* and other WCG publications until I received an issue showing they had gone mainstream. For a few years I just felt betrayed by it all until I found out some groups left and kept the truth although there seem to be differences about how the church should be governed and other differences. I live within a reasonable driving distance of a CGI, LCG, UCG and Church of God Seventh Day, and for years I didn't have a clue where to go to church until I discovered the Internet. Finally after collecting knowledge since I was 12 or 13, God drew me into a relationship and repentance.

Thanks,

— James Rich, jamesar@ipa.net

RESPONSE: Thank you very much for sharing your background. As you have discovered, many of the Church of God groups act as if they are **the only** or at least **the main** group that God is using and that membership in their group is important if one is to avoid the tribulation and be in the Millennial Kingdom. Yet it is so easy for those truth-seekers who are new to the CoG groups to see that each group has certain areas where they are teaching and serving, and that the groups would be a whole lot better off if they stopped trying to keep their members by exerting control and instead emphasized their service. It is no longer possible for Sabbatarian organizations to convince objective new believers that there is only one group "with the truth".

— NSE

This group of three letters from James Rich contains enough valuable subject matter to be an article. I hope you will read it and think about how Church of God brethren appear to others, and to the Eternal.

— NSE

LETTER: February 2, 1990

Yes, please do use my letter in *Shelter* magazine [probably means *Servants' News*]. As long as you put the materials on your web site you will not need to send me new issues, I have downloaded and already printed most of your material, including back issues of *Shelter* and *Servants' News*.

[Paragraph removed about living near *SN* original publication place, Springdale, Ark.]

The older issues are really interesting to me because I was never a member of WCG. Some of our members are still resentful of the Armstrongs (both) and of problems with the WCG. Some of them were disfellowshipped and I guess I don't know how that feels.

About 20 years ago I requested a visit from WCG and finally two men came and talked with me. They didn't stay long, didn't say much and never contacted me again—maybe I was lucky.

The two doctrines that have been the most harmful to me in deciding to be baptised were tithing and much talk and finger pointing about "Laodiceans". I struggled through thinking that if an end time group is called Laodicean and Christ will spew them out of his mouth and others say they will get the worst out of tribulation, then why bother?

On the tithing issue, my wife takes about nine different prescription drugs plus other diabetic supplies. We had been tithing for awhile and when the Feast came we were broke. We used a credit card. When we came back from the feast our oldest son was in jail for failure to pay a fine I never knew anything about. We borrowed money and got him out. Immediately after that our youngest son was suffering terribly with some bad teeth so we paid for 4 trips to the dentist but he is no longer our dependent he just couldn't afford to go. At this point we had to get a loan to catch up and we haven't done this for several years.

I know some older church members who tithe faithfully and need help to buy basic needs. What I do now is this. If I can tithe and pay all my bills, I do. If and when it will deny me a living, I pay less or none that week. Sometimes I use it to help a family emergency but I believe in any event God wants me to live like a human being should, after all how can you be a light to others—someone they would want to mimic—if you are bankrupt. I read your article about how we should give to the Eternal and it makes perfect sense. Giving should not be of necessity but because we want to, and we should not deny our own household.

— James Rich, jamesar@ipa.net

RESPONSE: I have prayed for your family that you may be delivered from the various troubles you mentioned.

I have spoken with several others who had contact with the WCG many years ago, but then either purposefully or accidentally avoided any more. Most now keep the Sabbath and other biblical doctrines, and are glad that they did avoid the WCG experience. I agree that the two doctrines you mention have been difficult for many believers.

I think it is a complete mistake for the "ministry" to demand tithes of people

whose "gift" is not giving and who cannot afford it. Giving is listed as a "gift" and not everyone has it (Rom 12:8). On the other hand, I have met people who have a policy of giving only when they have money leftover—and they just never seem to have any left over—there is always something for which to spend it. Paul gives the answer in two short verses—we should set a plan ("purpose in our heart") and then we should do it.

> "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2Cor 9:6).

Many other verses tell us that we will be judged for all that we do in this life. Not providing for one's own family is a sin (1Tim 5:8). On the other hand, many people spend more on their own entertainment than they do on serving God.

— NSE

LETTER: March 1, 2001

Hi Norm,

Here's something that might interest you. Yesterday I received *the International News*. In one of the articles concerning a trip made by Charles Groce and Benny Sharp to visit some of the congregations there were comments made about independent groups. Here is an excerpt:

> "He commented that local church growth has been affected by the current trend of 'independence' evident all over the country. Although we understand the rationale for this freedom, its theological substantiation is at best weak. So many people appear to be susceptible to popular philosophies, which satisfy their personal needs rather than the Christian objective of doing what's best for the body of Christ."

Later on in the same article there is another attack:

> "We talked about the requirements of 1 Timothy 3 and the evaluation process followed in the CGI. We discussed the errant trend of "dumbing down the ministry" that is particularly rampant in some breakaway groups. In particular, we talked about the self-serving practice by certain ministers of rewarding loyalty with ordination. We hear about this all the time—appointing men to the ministry even though they are involved in egregious public sins as adultery and drunkenness."

I am presently fellowshipping with CGI but I attended the feast with two other groups. It saddens me because every group has a sly remark for another group or one of their leaders (not really the group but certain speakers within the groups). I noticed that the practice of visiting other groups or reading their material doesn't appeal to many. Also I don't see very many people who have been involved in a fellowship for many years who are eager to learn new truths, they are just sort of waiting it out. After learning a few truths some folks just quit looking and wait on new things from headquarters.

My wife and I were baptised last September and we have been with our group for about 16 months. It is disappointing because no new people are really coming in to our local congregation. When I repented and began to study the Bible it had nothing to do with any group at all. I was not involved with or reading anyone's material, just the Holy Bible. I was able from that to make a decision about keeping the Sabbath and did for quite a while before I realized there was anywhere local to attend a service. It all began at home with God drawing me into a relationship and the learning process was well under way before I even found a congregation to meet with. **The fact is I didn't join a group to learn what to believe but just to fellowship,** I am capable of teaching myself and others at this point, I always seem to find myself around people who have Bible questions. If I don't know the answer I dig in to a study to find out.

One thing I might add is that I learn 20 times more at home than I do at services.

Your friend in Christ

— James A Rich, jamesar@ipa.net

RESPONSE: Thank you for expressing what is obvious to you, an outsider, but not so obvious to us long-time CoG members. Just during the last few years I have come to see what has happened. When we were unified in the WCG, we did go to a church group to learn what to believe (much truth and some error) and we had a clear mission: to tithe to support "the Work" and to obey God's government (the church hierarchy).

After the WCG leaders reversed direction, many of us began to study the Bible like we had not done in years. We learned that the Bible does not require us to tithe or follow a human hierarchy. But we did not replace it with sound Bible teaching like this:

> "Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [stake] daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?' " (Luke 9:23–25)

I have visited many congregations and found some primarily interested in studying doctrine and some in just socializing—not denying themselves and doing Christ's work on a daily basis. Christ talks about losing one's life for His sake, but there are many who do not seem interested in losing some new gizmo for His sake. Praise the Eternal for some exceptions, but we need more!

To me, the obvious solution is that Church of God members need to get out among others to share what they know. They need to keep learning, too—there is a lot they could learn from other groups about how to serve and minister to various groups of people. CoG members tend to forget that Christ helped the hungry and sick **before** they accept his teaching. He helped thousands during His ministry but only had 120 disciples after it was over (Acts 1:15). Christ was only one Person, so He helped many people through miracles. The Body of Christ today has many people and the physical resources to help others without miracles.

I know a number of Sabbatarians who seem to facing the same dilemma that you are: They would like to attend a group that:

1. Meets on the Sabbath
2. Is not organizationally aligned
3. That is actively serving and teaching others

An independent Sabbatarian congregation fulfills # 1 & 2, an active corporate group may fulfill # 1 & 3, and an active non-denominational protestant church fulfills # 2 & 3. It is difficult to find a group that does them all. One usually ends up going to a group with two and trying to help the people see the third point.

May the Eternal strengthen all of us and help us to strengthen our brethren.

— NSE

Keeps *SN* in a Binder

LETTER: February 2, 2001

Hello again,

We did finally receive our Sept./Oct. issue of *Servants' News* yesterday. Thank you very

much, and thank you for this publication. My husband puts each issue in our loose-leaf binder as soon as he gets it. Then he reads every article. He says it is the best overall information he receives. I don't read as much as he does, but I also find the articles I read to be very helpful.

Sincerely with Christ's love,

— J.L., California

RESPONSE: I am sorry that we are behind schedule and that the mail sometimes takes weeks.

Servants' News was designed to be kept in a binder, and I am glad to hear that people do it. Many of the articles are not that time sensitive—they will be of value for a long time to come. We publish a new index about every year so that you can easily find articles in back issues. We hope to improve our web sites so that it is easy to find past articles there as well.

— NSE

Canonical Order of Bible

LETTER: March 16, 2001

Dear Norm:

It would be a good service to God's people to do a research article on the original canonical order of the New Testament. I asked Dr Hoeh for info on this, and he said that he had it in some box in his second house, and who knows how long that would take to find.

But—good news—I found on Appendix 95 and 192 in the Companion Bible evidence that the original canon had a different order, as we have all known. What we have lacked are definitive sources of proof for this. I am now seeing that the Catholic Church did preserve the canon as far as what books to include in the New Testament, but messed up the order! Therefore, it would be great to show some definitive proof of this.

Bullinger comes close to hitting the nail on the head in paragraph 2 of his Appendix 192. It would be good to have further proof.

Yours for the truth

Graham Davies

RESPONSE: I think this question is well worth studying. I have read several things about it over many years—most have been in agreement with each other. The chart included was taken from one handed out at Ambassador college in the 1970s—its author is unknown.

A entire book on the subject is *Restoring the Original Bible* by Earnest L Martin ($23.95 from Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, PO Box 25000, Portland, OR 97225; tel: 503-292-4352, e-mail: askoffice@askelm.com, web-site: www.askelm.com). This book has a lot of quotes of second and third century history that would be hard to piece together elsewhere, but in places Dr Martin seems to have difficulty believing in a God that actually interferes with the affairs of mankind.

For example, Dr Martin's efforts to determine the date of the authorship of the book of Revelation include many comparisons to what John wrote and the conditions existing at closing decades of the first century. Since Revelation 11:1–2 mentions the Temple, Dr Martin uses this as supporting evidence that the book was written before the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Dr Martin seems to ignore the fact John was not deciding what to write, but was told what to write (Rev 1:11, 2:1, etc.) and that he was on the island of Patmos "in the spirit" (Rev 1:9–10), not in Jerusalem. There are many other such examples in the book. Nevertheless, I do believe that Dr Martin **is** trying to arrive at the truth as he understands it—he is not writing to please a denomination or to get rich.

An entire new Bible translation will soon be available in the "original order". It is called *The Original Bible Project*, edited by Dr James Tabor, Professor of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In addition to retaining the original manuscript order, the goal of this translation is to provide the English-speaking reader with notes on alliteration, puns and word plays, idioms, rhythms, redundancies, and even obscurities that are usually lost in most translations. Dr Tabor and others working with Him are not writing to satisfy any particular denomination and I believe this will be one of the best study Bibles available.

The Original Bible project actively seeks input from serious Bible students. It is now being produced in a loose-leaf version and parts of the Bible will be mailed as they are completed. I have been on their mailing list almost since the project started. They will mail these items free of charge, but they obviously cost a lot to produce (much more than *Servants' News*). I would not be doing them a favor if the publishing of this response brings them hundreds of more requests for their Bible segments but little additional support. I hope readers who contact them will help as they are able.

For information, contact Bob Elsworth at The Original Bible Project, 408 S. Pasadena Avenue Suite 1, Pasadena, CA 91105; 626-799-2000; e-mail: bobelat111@aol.com, web-site: www.centuryone.org/obp.html. The web site contains a lot more about the project.

— NSE

Sivan 6 on Saturday?

LETTER: November 26, 2000

Servants' News,

I have a quick, hopefully easy question. In one of the issues of *Servants' News*, I would say at least 3 years or more ago I remember reading something about the Talmud saying something about Sivan 6 occurring on a Saturday. The point being made was that this indicated that postponements were not in effect at that time. Can you tell me what issue of the *Servants' News* that was and what article that was in? I am interested in knowing where in the Talmud the quote was taken from.

Thank you for your work

— "rubyct" via the Internet

RESPONSE: I showed that the Talmud quotes show that the Day of Atonement sometimes fell on Friday which shows that postponements were not always in effect. That was covered in *Servants' News* November 1996, page 23. (Talmud passages: Shabbath 1114b, footnote 16; Menachoth 100b, footnote 12; K'rithoth 19a, footnote 10).

I do not remember saying anything about Sivan 6 occurring on a Saturday. I did say that with an observed calendar, there would sometimes be two 29-day months and sometimes two 30-day months between Passover and Pentecost which would sometimes cause Pentecost (by the most common Jewish observation) to fall on either Sivan 5 or Sivan 7. Nevertheless, the most likely thing would be one 29-day month and one 30-day month which would result in a Sivan 6 Pentecost. Today, with the fixed Jewish Calendar, any Pentecost counted from the day after the First Day of Unleavened Bread will be on Sivan 6.

— NSE

Calendar from the Bible

LETTER: November 5, 2000

[Quoting another letter:] Okay all you guys, I'm giving you a project. If all

you have is the Bible—(and I'll even let you have a *Strong's*)—how would you put a calendar together from the Scriptures?—Construct a calendar for me—I wants lots of input! — Diana

Hi all!

Now that's a good and the correct question regarding this matter! Y-e-e-a-a-h Diana!

All right guys, now it's a group effort. No more 31 page speculations and theories, only the Bible! No more Jewish Rabbis and scientists, no more confirmation bias, belief bias, belief perseverance—let's go to the Bible! The answer is there in God's own Words!

I will be authoring my findings (in chronological order of progression of God's calendar) then sending this info to those who are doing a serious study too. With this we can compare and refine so as to establish once and for all a ***Calendar of the Saints***.

Excited? I am! God is trying to tell His people something here—to return to His Living Word, to return to His ways, to establish His truth, to return to "that faith once delivered".

We need to establish a day of common communications—when to email our findings to each other—so that we all have a time frame for study and composition. Any suggestion? Sundays, Mondays?

Hope you have inspired and revealing studies…

A Servant,

— David W Lacey, dwlacey@earthlink.net

RESPONSE: May the Eternal bless you with wisdom and understanding in your studies. May He also bless you with peace if you end up disagreeing with those that study with you.

Most people I know who set out to study the calendar wanted to do exactly what Diana is suggesting: study it from the Bible. Most are seeking the truth in their study and would accept an answer that disagree with all Jews, Christians and Church of God groups. Yet these brethren who study rarely ever come up with the same answer. However, I think the "belief perseverance" factor that you mention is one of the major problems. Once people study something themselves for many hours, they tend not to want to admit that they could have studied all those hours and come to a wrong conclusion.

If you completely intend to ignore all Jewish Rabbis and scientists, your study may take many years. Part of the problem with calendars is related to the meaning of certain Hebrew words. Exactly what do *moed* (appointed time), *chodesh* (month or new moon), *tequfah* (solstice or equinox), *abib* (first month, green ears) and other critical words mean?

It is sometimes helpful to look to other Jewish documents to see how these words are used. But most ancient Jewish documents that we have were written and/or preserved by a Rabbi. I think Rabbis have done both good and bad things throughout history. If you plan to ignore every document touched by a rabbi, your search for accurate meanings of these important words may take a very long time.

If you intend to completely ignore all scientists, it will take some time to accurately observe and understand the motion of the moon and sun. Some have said, "if the Bible doesn't explain it, we don't need to know it." You may not need this knowledge to come up with a calendar, but you will need it to determine if your calendar will work on a long-term basis.

I know one group that quickly constructed a calendar with twelve months per year, each month starting with a new moon. For a couple of years, the calendar seemed to work great—but the holy days kept occurring earlier each year in comparison with the seasons.

True Order and Divisions of the Bible

1. The Law (Torah)

Pentateuch *(five books)*
- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

2. The Prophets

Former Prophets
- Joshua / Judges
- Samuel / Kings

Latter Prophets—major
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel

Latter Prophets—minor *(The Twelve)*
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

3. The Writings

Former Poetic *(meter books)*
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Job

The Megillot *(read at festivals)*
- Song of Solomon *(Passover)*
- Ruth *(Pentecost)*
- Lamentations *(Ninth of Ab)*
- Ecclesiastes *(Feast of Tabernacles)*
- Esther *(Purim)*

Later Restoration
- Daniel
- Ezra / Nehemiah
- Chronicles

4. Gospels / Acts

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts

5. General Epistles

- James
- 1 & 2 Peter
- 1, 2 & 3 John
- Jude

6. Epistles of Paul

Church Epistles
- Romans
- 1 & 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians

General Epistle to Hebrews
- Hebrews

Pastoral Epistles
- 1 & 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon

7. Revelation

- Revelation

After 8 years, Passover was in January. Science (and the Rabbis) tell us that the moon cycle is about 29½ days, so they could have predicted their year would be 29½ × 12 = 354 days. Science (and the Rabbis) also tell us that the earth goes around the sun about every 365¼ days, so this group could have seen that their year was 11¼ days shorter than the real year. After 8 years, Passover would predictably become 8 × 11¼ = 90 days earlier in the year.

Other groups have read that the waters began to come on the seventeenth day of the **second** month (Gen 7:11) and that the ground was dry by the seventeen day of the **seventh** month (Gen 8:4) and that that period was 150 days (Gen 7:24 and 8:3). From this, they conclude: 150 days divided by 5 months = 30 days in a month. These months do not match the moon cycles and 12 such months are still 5¼ days short of a full year. Is it possible to see five 30-day months in a row by observing the moon? Yes, but very complex science is involved if one wants to understand how.

Do we want to follow calendars that are "solely from the scripture" if they do not scientifically fit the observable universe? Do we want to join the Pope who proved from the Bible that the Earth was the center of the universe and ordered Galileo Galilei to reject what he had seen with his telescope with the scriptural command: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" (Acts 1:11). The God of the Bible is the God who made science. If our understanding of the Bible and science appear to disagree, we ought not to just throw one out, but check both and see if we can find our mistakes.

The part I find most difficult in calendar controversies is that they frequently follow this scenario:

1. A group of people has been meeting together on the holy days for many years.

2. Some of them rightly discover that the Jewish calendar has "postponements" in it that are not commanded in the Bible.

3. They are upset that Jews took it upon themselves to decide when is "Holy Time", so they promise themselves that they will begin keeping the Holy Days at the correct times they are commanded in the Bible.

4. Individuals study the Bible and come up with what they believe is the "true biblical calendar". Usually, they modify their conclusions several times.

5. Different individuals in the same group do not usually agree on the calendar, so only little parts of the group keeps the holy days together.

6. After a while, they conclude that the subject is complex and that some kind of decisions must be made in addition to what is clearly stated in the Bible. (What does one do when it is cloudy and they cannot see the moon? How far does the sun have to be set to officially count a new moon? How ripe does barley have to be to start a new year? Does the first day of the month or just the Holy Days have to be past the equinox? etc.) At this point, some members of the group may go back to the Jewish calendar, others may decide to cooperate with whatever the largest part does, some may look for another group all together.

7. Many go on to keep the calendar they have determined from the Scriptures, making the best decision they can in difficult areas. They believe God will honor their decisions. They are not the least bit concerned that they occasionally take it upon themselves to decide when "Holy Time" is (compare this with point 3 above).

8. The original group continues to observe the holy days on two or more different calendars and many eventually completely split up over the issue. Any new people that might come to the group wonder why they should keep the holy days when "nobody can agree when they are".

Our paper, Biblical Calendar Basics explains a number of calendar ideas. I believe that there were many good reasons for creating the present fixed Jewish Calendar, but that it is not what the Eternal originally had in mind and will eventually be replaced by a more scripturally correct one. We have clear scriptural commands to assemble on the Holy Days, but there is no clearly accepted alternative to the Jewish Calendar. I choose to fulfill the clear command to assemble with other brethren.

— NSE

Start Year with Green Ears

LETTER: February 24, 2001

[Someone sent this to *SN* via e-mail. It was apparently Pat Brady's answer to someone who believes that the year should begin when barley ears are green.]

I have found a big hurdle to overcome in understanding why you believe the beginning of the biblical year is based on mature barley first then the light of the moon. Noah was first on the ark on the 17th day of the 2nd month in the given year. After reading the whole story months and days were identified (because they were mentioned in context we know they were thus determined). We have no reason to believe Noah did it wrong nor did God correct him so must believe that he did it correctly. Then on the first day of the first month of the next year (Gen 8:13) Noah removed the covering and the ground was dry (that where the ark was set). This was after about 14 days when the dove did not return. Noah stayed in the ark until the 27th day of the second month.

The point in this is that Noah still knew how to determine the first day of the first month of that year and in no way could have been able to verify it by ripened barley. Aside from the fact that barley is more or less a crop related to agriculture other biblical accounts mention months and days of months. We have to impute that these dates are accurate and were properly determined. Further we must ask "Did all those people use verification of ripened barley and thus determine it was the first month?" We know by history the months were given names and so on and the use of the term for the month is not the same use of the term for the grain.

If the visible new crescent is the authority with the 29 or 30 day count from day one to start looking for day one of the next month, then at best the barley recognition can be seen as tradition. We should be able to trace when it was thought to be first used and see if it evolved into becoming the authority through that tradition. The belief that **the** authority is "just make sure we are in the right season and [we will have] the correct first month" seems to overlook the facts and purpose created in the circuits of the Sun and Moon and the luminaries they shine on the Earth (Gen 1:14).

It's interesting that the past few years I've been looking at this question it seems to my recollection in every case that the first new moon that occurred after the equinox (historical evidence shows the astronomical equinox has been relatively easy to determine) has always been in agreement with the ripened barley theory. This at least based on your reports. Gen 8:4 shows when the ark rested

on the ground on mount Ararat which means it was not floating at the next vernal equinox. This means it could have been possible for him to use the light and shadows of reference points he made to determine by the light and shadows the first day of the year cycle or what is known to us as the astronomical equinox. We know the astronomical equinox is not the same as the day in which the amount of time of day and night are equal.

With this being said and knowing Noah could not have seen and verified ripened barley yet knew what month it was (he was in the ark until the 27th day of the 2nd month) shows by strong biblical evidence that visual verification is the authority over the ripened barley theory. Not only this we know that there are various varieties of barley that ripen at different days of germination. This being the case, in ancient days the farmers could determine (or predetermine) months of the next year and thus they were the authority. Where were the farmers when Noah was in the ark? This of course conflicts with the biblical authority purposed in the creation of greater and lessor lights.

Pat Brady, slt@chatlink.com
The Karaite Korner

RESPONSE: This argument is typical of the hundreds that go into calendar papers. It is probably true that the first month, Abib, means "green ears". But the Bible does not specifically say "you shall determine the first month by the presence of green ears". On the other hand, even Genesis 1:14–16 which says that the lights in the sky are for "appointed times" does not specifically prohibit the starting of the year when "green ears" are observed. After all, it is the sun that warms the ground that allows barley to grow.

Pat Brady's explanation does indicate that Noah did not use barley to know when the year should begin. Or did Noah bring some barley and some soil on board? Is it possible that the Eternal just told Noah when the year should begin? He said a lot of other things to him.

Calendar students could argue these points forever. The reason they can is because there is not one clear statement in the scripture that says, "you shall begin the year when…" Lacking such a verse, they are left to find scriptures that **tend to support** their teaching.

May the Eternal grant us wisdom to know when to concentrate on doing and teaching **what He has revealed** versus studying **what He has *not* revealed.**

— NSE

What Law was "Nailed to the Cross"?

LETTER: July 1, 2000

Dear Mr Edwards:

In your March/April 2000 issue (of *Servants News*), you published an article written by former Seventh day Adventist minister, Mr Sydney Davis, entitled *The Creation Origin of the Festivals*. Mr Davis, I'll confess, brought several good points to my attention, which I had never before considered. I must agree with the major thrust of his article, the Holy Days of God were from creation!

However, that is not my reason for writing. In making his point, Mr Davis also touched heavily on something which has been dear to my heart for many long years. Along with the SDA and other organizations, many in the Church of God have accepted the false doctrine which states that some part of God's law was "nailed to the cross" [Col 2:15] at the death of our Lord. That cannot be true!

All of God's law stands or falls together. That means the law and the Sabbaths (weekly and annual). If it can be demonstrated that any part of the law of God was ever "nailed to the cross" and "done away", all of it was nailed there and done away.

It can, however, be easily demonstrated that what was "nailed to the cross" was only the handwritten death bond which, based upon the law, required the penalty of death for all men since all men are sinners—and most definitely not the law itself. As our Lord stated, not one jot or tittle of the law will pass away until it is all being fulfilled (kept) in its entirety! When it is being kept in its entirety, after it has been written in the hearts of men and God's kingdom has arrived on the earth, there will be no more need of a written law.

Not one jot, not one tittle, has ever passed from the law. There has been one change in the law and although Paul, in Hebrews 7:12, informs us of that change, even that part which was changed was not abolished. It has simply been made of none effect and still remains to this day. And what was that "change in the law"? Paul makes it clear, it was a change in the priesthood! Our Lord, a Jew, is now High Priest, an office which by God's Law, was reserved for the Levites until the change was made. Both the priesthood of the Levites and the office of High Priest, were taken from Levi and given to our Lord!

When that change occurred, all of the requirements of animal sacrifices ceased as did the ritual law. The one and only real sacrifice had been made and the others were no longer necessary. We now make a different sort of sacrifice. However, none of that impinged upon the continuing laws of God in any manner. It was nothing more or less than the discontinuing of the law which had made the sons of Levi into a **temporary** priesthood who were to serve until the **real** High Priest should come.

The Law which established the temporary Levitical priesthood is the same law of which Paul speaks in Galatians chapter 3. Here, he indicates that a law was added 430 years after Abraham's time. He also tells us in this chapter, that this law added 430 years after Abraham, could not abrogate the covenant with its promises God had given Abraham 430 years before! For a law to be added, there had to have been something to which it was added. What this law of 430 years later was added to, was the law which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had always kept. When God renewed that law with Israel at Sinai, he added a law to it. The only law which can be found "added" at Sinai and which did not exist prior, is that which established the temporary priesthood of Levi giving that body the right to minister with sacrifices and certain rituals before God for Israel.

Since Levi's sons were made a **temporary** priesthood, there had to come a time when their office failed. That time came at the qualifying of our Lord, a Jew, to be High Priest of the new priesthood—God's church.

The sabbath and holy days could not have passed away at the "cross" of our Lord because not one jot or tittle of God's law passed away at that time. I am appreciative of Mr Davis's article giving this as a side point and I appreciate your printing his article. It is my fervent hope that one day every member of God's church will understand these things and will then be able to give answer to those who claim we are to no longer keep God's sabbaths because the law "was nailed to the cross". Those of God's church or the SDA who think the law was "nailed to the cross" are without the ability to defend sabbath-keeping, since, had it been, there could no longer be a requirement for sabbath-keeping.

If you would like it, let me know, and I will be most happy to send to you a paper of

Continued on page 27

"Truckers Study" from page 2

creature comforts for female drivers in years gone by.

An interesting thing about today relates to a trucker from South Dakota, who was somewhat of a quiet sort at first. When he was given a chance to talk he mentioned that he isn't very religious, but that he believes 100% in God, has seen God's healing hand, has a desire to find a church, and tries to help out those in need as much as he has the opportunity. He prays with others, and at least today he actively sought out the Bible Study group.

He is hesitant to go to a church because he feels that people look too much at nice clothes and then judge others who don't come up to snuff. And they too often don't help the needy enough. I wondered why he referred to himself as "not religious", so I asked him if he knew what the Bible definition of religion is. He was a bit surprised to see that James 1:26–2:6 described both true religion and the false type of worship that he was lamenting.

[It is great to see someone reading the Bible and "setting the captive free". Many in Jesus' day felt inferior because they could not achieve the righteousness of the Pharisees—which He showed to be false. — NSE]

We turned to Micah 6:6–8, where we read what God requires of us: not great sacrifices, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Sometimes we make religion too complicated. And sometimes christians are a very poor reflection of the Father, for the best witness we often can give is the way we live our lives.

Several of the people there commented that he should change the way he describes himself, that in fact he is wrong to say he is "not religious". He does not believe himself "religious" because he doesn't evangelize, but they pointed out to him, correctly, that we each have our own unique ways of serving God.

The Bible study went about 2½ hours today, longer than most, but they wanted to talk, and they needed encouragement, so we let it run. My regret today is that we didn't get into the final topic of discussion sooner. One of the truckers had a brother who lived a drug, alcohol and illicit sex-filled life, and then ended it by suicide. A preacher told him that his brother is forever lost.

Since we had discussed the unpardonable sin earlier in the study, I reminded him that God is the one who judges such matters, and then proceeded to discuss Revelation 20 and the second resurrection. He was encouraged by this and wants to know more (I'm going to send him some literature), but it is amazing to me how so many Bible believers limit God's mercy. Some even get angry at the thought that God could actually give sinners a chance to repent after their first death.

Why is it so hard to accept God's infinite mercy and the plain statement of scripture that God is willing that none should perish? If nothing else today, we gave a rough-hewn but God-fearing truck driver with a big heart some hope for his brother's eternal destiny, and for that alone the day was worth it.

We are among the few who have this precious knowledge of God's plan to save the vast majority of mankind. People are crying out for this knowledge, and it is something we should share every chance we get.

[I believe this truth is indeed important. So many Christians will quote John 3:16 and forget about verse 17: "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." This is why I spent so much time writing on Eternal Judgment and then the tract, "All Who Die Shall Live Again".

Even though I disagree with the universal salvation teaching, it is far superior to the more common "the unsaved burn in Hell forever" teaching. I've been amazed to see the variety of groups that teach universal salvation. The only difference between universal salvation and what I believe is that I believe the Scriptures say there will be a small group of people that will never agree to follow God and will have to be destroyed.

Church of God leaders used to threaten members with being placed in that group for disobeying their hierarchy. In reality, we do not have the judgment of Christ and cannot be sure who will be in this group. It is not worth much argument. — NSE]

January 21, 2001

Two of our truckers today were repeat customers, and there was a gentleman whom Arlo met in the restaurant beforehand and invited upstairs. All three are serious Bible students.

One of the men called himself a "legalist", and I recollected to him the previous time we had met and had engaged in a spirited argument relative to his extreme chauvinistic view of women (which includes in his mind the right of a husband to spank his wife). It was evident that neither one of us wanted to go down that road again and waste both our time and the time of the others there, so discussion went in a more profitable direction.

Another of the guests is a man who drops in whenever he is in the area (sometimes traveling with his wife). We are developing a friendship born of mutual respect in spite of doctrinal differences. It is great being able to disagree about the scriptures but at the same time trying to understand why the other person holds to the doctrines that they do.

The third trucker, who was joining us for the first time, was quiet most of time, but certainly had a knowledge of the scriptures and practical application of them. It turns out his wife is a Methodist minister.

The major topic of the day revolved around the inauguration, and specifically the invocation, where Franklin Graham prayed for forgiveness of the nation's sins and for a spirit of repentance. He also made a point of mentioning the name of Jesus Christ. The benediction had a similar theme. We all commented that this was totally appropriate, and wondered if the prayers would have been similar had the other candidate won.

Most of the time today we discussed what we might call the Christian roots of the American experiment and how much of that has been lost. The truckers all seemed to agree that the United States is the "New Israel", and with that must come supreme responsibility to keep the covenant that our forefa-

thers made with God. Absent our keeping that covenant, the nation must suffer God's judgment. We had two divergent schools of thought in our discussion. One school said to "bring it on". The nation deserves to suffer (read "Ezekiel's Message"?) and the nation simply will not repent.

The other school says that the nation might not repent, but then again it just might. Not only must we preach the gospel, we should be actively involved to save our nation. Who knows whether God might hear our prayers and be merciful to us? It may be that the nation could turn to God and be spared! Personally, I would rather try to get the nation to repent than not try at all. If we don't try at all, then we will never know.

[In the judgment, it seems that we would fare much better if we have tried to help the nation repent now, than if we do nothing at all. Even if they do not repent, we will be training for our job to reign with Christ—which will be helping nations and individuals repent. — NSE]

Part of the study was spent reviewing Judges 9 and the parable of the trees as told by Jotham, son of Gideon. Rather than my recounting the discussion here, I refer to my article published in the Nov/Dec 2000 *Shelter in the Word*, page 7.

I learned several things today. A few weeks ago we had one of these truckers and his wife as guests. The trucker reminded me of something. "Remember that fellow who came in late and sat in the corner over there?" I remembered. I gave him a Bible, and he asked if he could have two. "Remember my wife and I inviting him down for coffee and a bite?" I remembered.

"Well, we found out he was in a bad way. He was on his way home to Montana from Florida where he had buried his mother, and that took all his money. His van was about out of gas, and he hadn't eaten in a while. A policeman had referred him to a local church for help, and they refused because his wife wasn't with him. He tried to find temporary work for a day or two in order to get some food and gas, but was unable to find anyone. We bought him lunch, and he was careful to order only what we ordered. We filled his tank with gas, and he was thankful because it was enough to get him to a city where he had some friends who would help. He never asked us for money, but we gave him some anyway. Do you remember what we were studying?"

I sure did! We were studying "pure religion" and the passage in James that talks about a brother being naked and destitute of daily food and giving them what is needful for the body.

"Well, there we were talking about this, and in our very midst was someone who was in that very position, and we didn't notice and he didn't volunteer it."

I was ashamed of myself for being so thick as not to notice. I was there when this couple just happened to ask this man if he wanted to join them for lunch, and only then did they learn what his needs were. And all he asked me for were a couple of Bibles! I am ashamed because of how insensitive I can be to an obvious need that I can only see now by looking back on it.

After the study today the trucker asked me if I could join him for a cup of coffee down in the restaurant. I sensed he had something on his mind. The questions had to do with the Sabbath and his belief that one day in seven is fine and not necessarily one specific day of the week. (Remember that he has met with us several times and items such as these do come out over time).

My explanation to him went something like this: "We Sabbath-keepers sometimes have a problem. Too often we place the Sabbath at the center of theology, almost putting it ahead of God himself. Now, I am absolutely convinced that the seventh day is the Sabbath. It was instituted in Genesis 2, well before Exodus 20. It was reaffirmed to Israel in Exodus 16, before the Old Covenant was put in effect. It is one of the Ten Commandments. It tells us that we should not work on that day. I have no doubt that the Sabbath is the day, and I keep it. But it is not the center of my theology. Jesus Christ is the center of my theology."

He listened and didn't comment. Frankly, I don't know whether he will see the truth of the Sabbath or not. But I do known that he will drop in again whenever he can. He and I (along with his wife when she can accompany him) are becoming friends and brethren. We enjoy sharing Bible study together.

I don't apologize for what I believe and teach it when the opportunities arise. But I go to the truck stop because it is important for these men and women to have a place where they can get together with people of like minds and talk about the scriptures together. I do not go to grind a doctrinal ax. I am there to walk along side them in their search for God and his Son.

As I was mentioning to the gentleman today, the last half dozen times or so I have gone to the truck stop with a specific topic planned, but I always ask the truckers if they have anything they want to talk about. As it has turned out, we have not covered my topics but theirs, and that's fine with me.

February 4, 2001

Today's guests were men of few words, so it was a bit of a challenge to try to get a discussion going. It's not that they weren't interested. They were more the listening types than the talking types.

We went through a few parables, beginning with Luke, discussing the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the temple and discussed some of the lessons of prayer. We also discussed the parable just before it (the parable of the unjust judge) and the importance of being persistent. We can change God's mind about things, even as Moses changed God's mind about destroying Israel. Also we discussed what God requires of us in the way of how we treat others and the way we live our lives, drawing lessons from James' Epistle. Just good, basic Bible teachings.

The question arose once again about the state of affairs in our nation and what we can do. There were four points that were discussed to address what Christians should be doing:

1. Pray in a repentant attitude: 2 Chronicles 7:14
2. Live an exemplary, godly life. Set the right example and do the morally and ethically right things: Luke 3:7–14.
3. Call sin for what it is and warn the nation: Isaiah 58:1, Ezekiel 33:1-10. You can't do this unless you are living #2, for one lacks the moral authority to preach against the nation's sins if one is participating in those sins, as

evidenced by recent news events of an internationally known preacher.

4. Give them hope by preaching the Gospel to them: Matthew 28:18–20.

*[All of these points are good, but if this were **all** that the Eternal's people ever did, most of us would still be in a state church listening to the scriptures read in Latin. There are times when men and women took action to form independent congregations contrary to state church decrees, to translate the Bible into English, to declare independence from other nations in order to have religions freedom, and many other things.*

Today, we benefit immensely because of the action that previous Bible believers took. God does not call everyone to every job, but we ought to value the work that the Eternal is doing through others—especially if we hope the others will value the work He does through us. — NSE]

On the third and fourth points, one of the men said he must surely have blood on his head, for he failed to preach the Gospel to his father as his father lay dying (specifically referring to Ezekiel 33). I told him I had some good news for him, and began a short study of Revelation 20. I was struck by his reaction: he walked out! Arlo and I get flabbergasted when we run into people who think it is blasphemous to teach that God is a God of mercy and will give everyone a very real chance at salvation. We just don't get it. It is almost as if some want to see people writhing in pain for eternity. Arlo theorizes that maybe this fellow has resentment against his father and really wants to believe the guy is suffering, but in any case we planted some seeds in his mind.

I stayed a little late and chatted with one of the men who had some questions on what things are appropriate and inappropriate to do on Sunday. I told him the fourth commandment says to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. In this command, we need to understand what it means to "keep something holy", and also need to define what the "Sabbath" is. "Holy" means to set apart, in this case set apart for God's glory, and for our rest and enjoyment. It's a blessing that God commands to take a day off—it's a symbol of freedom that was given to the Israelites, who were used to working seven days a week as slaves. It shows that we are free men!

And the Sabbath itself, well—he was savvy enough to interject at this point that the Bible defines the seventh day as the Sabbath. That's right, I said. It goes all the way back to creation in Genesis 2.

As the man said, planting a few seeds.

*[It may be hard for some people to accept, but I believe that Christ was teaching spiritual principles, not physical laws in the later parts of Matthew 5. He is telling the people to be different—to be examples (v 15-16). He tells them he is not changing the law or the prophets (v 17-19). But if one were to take the next verses literally, one would have to conclude that he is **greatly changing the law**.*

Christ was not suggesting that the Israelites put people to death for being angry without a cause (v 22) or lusting after a woman (v 28), but he was showing the spiritual sin takes place in the mind. Even though the New Testament records many sins of believers, there is no record of anyone gouging out their eyes and cutting off their hands to prevent future sin (v 29-30). He did not change the Old Testament laws on divorce (v 31-32 and Deut 24:1-3), but He made it clear that the spirit of their divorcing was wrong.

Christ was not changing the laws that required a person to take an oath (v 33-37 & Ex 22:11; Num 5:19), but clearly stated that their excessive oath-taking was wrong. The "eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" in verse 38 is about compensation when one has been wronged. In verses 39 to 45 (where He says "turn the other cheek"), he is not changing the law, but showing the people that being like their Father in Heaven is more than demanding their due compensation for every offense.

Other New Testament scriptures (John 2:14–17; Acts 5:28–29; 9:22–25; Heb 11:33-34) show that there are times to resist those who would do evil. — NSE]

The Church of God Kansas City would like to offer you the following **FREE** sermons on cassette.

Tape 1: *The Mountain Lion*, by Rick Frazee. Why does God describe Satan like a roaring lion? Hear this sermon and a lesson learned in the Colorado Rockies. Side 2 of this tape has the message given at the Year 2000 Teen Retreat in Kansas City.

Tape 2: Nelson Caswell tells us about *"The Person Down Inside"*. On side 2 is a message entitled *"Heroes"*. John Curry tells us what a real hero is, and that we can all be a hero in God's sight.

If you would like either or both of these tapes, please e-mail me your snail-mail address. 🕮

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Counting Pentecost in 2001
from page 15

evening *after* the Sabbath day ended. Our count to Pentecost does not begin with any Sabbath day. Instead we count *beginning with* the day of the Wave Sheaf. Leviticus 23:10ff describes what the Israelites were to do when they entered the land. It is not unreasonable to assume that Joshua and the elders with him did what they were told. Joshua 5:10–12 seems to indicate that indeed they did, and that the Wave Sheaf was offered that year on the first day of the Feast.

Putting all of the Scriptural evidence together it becomes evident that the day of the Wave Sheaf always occurs *during* the days of Unleavened Bread. And that is the day from which we count to Pentecost.

Unlike certain doctrinal issues, this one is not strictly a matter of personal opinion. It directly affects what we do and when we assemble together. Hopefully the foregoing information will help to clarify this issue and stem the tide of disunity in the Church of God. 🕮

Tethered to Christ
from page 1

If we learn to listen to the Holy Spirit, Jesus will come to us, abide with us, and lead us **one on one**. If we don't listen to the Holy Spirit, we are left very much on our own. Very alone. And we miss out on tremendous blessing,

> "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I." (John 14:27–28)

Jesus **"comes to us"** through the Holy Spirit and we have "peace". We will **"behold"** Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Even today, we can **"behold"** Jesus because of this promise. He will lead us, and comfort us, and teach us through the Comforter, i.e. the Holy Spirit.

We are literally tethered to Christ. We need to listen to our Lord's voice and learn to live with the reality of Jesus abiding with us. We can feel His presence and we can hear His quiet voice.

> "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:27–28)

Too often our comfort comes from other men and women when it should come from Jesus. His job is to comfort and console in times of trouble, **one on one**.

The apostle John taught much of this **at Passover time**. One of the central and eternal messages of Passover is that we are to be bound to Jesus, tethered to Christ, by the Holy Spirit that Jesus sends.

It is good to let Jesus abide with you. It may require some learning. It may require some courage. But there are promises that Jesus made, and we as a people need to believe them. Jesus promised that He would come to us, that He would comfort us and that He would teach us.

We really are tethered to Christ! 🕮

Respecting and Correcting... A Helpful Personal Story
from page 17

wasn't taught in the church she attended before WCG, and not in WCG.

I believe in obedience to all of God's standards—but I believe **genuine obedience flows out of a heart that wants to obey God,** that **loves** to obey Him. Without that, I doubt if a person has spiritual life, although I would not assume to judge an individual.

I have given my view, my conviction. I see how **it can be difficult to communicate this concept of evangelism to the dear people from the WCG.** It is a challenge, but nothing that God cannot do.

How To Evangelize

In personal evangelism, my goal would be to first encourage a person to make that surrender, then stay with them as a friend to share on a friendly basis the basics of living for God, seek to introduce them to Him through the Word in such a way that their dependence for "training" would eventually be transferred to Him as they learn how to seek Him in prayer, read and obey the Word consistently—for themselves. Additionally, I think this second part is the purpose of the *ekklesia*, the home church—to care for each other and lovingly provoke one another to righteousness.

I don't know many who have this concept, but it seems to me that this is the plan Jesus taught His disciples, and that they perpetuated the plan. A true spiritual "parent" does not seek to make the offspring forever dependent on him or her, but seeks to teach them how to be dependent on the Father. Some may never come to that point, but that should be our goal—the complete opposite of seeking perpetual control and establishing dynasties.

Wanda is in "ministry" and has no idea that is what she is doing. For example, she weekly visits one who is currently in jail. In this discussion I said, "Wanda, **you** are a 'minister'." She was incredulous. She said, "I never thought of myself that way." I said, "You are seeking the straying ones, comforting and binding up the wounded. What would you call that? God has called you to ministry and you have responded to His call on your life." I am not talking about someone with a plaque on the wall, but someone who serves.

No Unnecessary Splits

Finally, the former WCG brethren seem to be splitting into smaller groups over names, calendars, Holy Days, and so on. We can each study the Bible and do what we understand. But I believe that the moment a person turns to Jesus with his or her whole heart and becomes obedient within the context that he or she understands, that person becomes my brother or sister in Christ. I don't really see in the Scriptures any other criterion for fellowship. 🕮

Letters and Responses
from page 23

explanation regarding Paul's "nailed to the cross" remarks in Colossians, chapter 2.

Sincerely and in Christian respect,

Obie Folsom Benton
Writer's Inkhorn Ministries
PO Box 7483, Winter Haven, FL 33883

RESPONSE: Those interested in obtaining your paper can write to you directly. This is an important subject, but I have many years of things that I want to read already waiting. These verses are frequently misunderstood:

> "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, **having wiped out the handwriting of requirements *that was against us***, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14–15).

The law of God was never something that was "against us". Rather God told Israel that they would be considered a wise nation for following it (Deut 4:5–6).

David said: "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps 19:7).

However, the death penalty for sin and our sinful nature was indeed against us. Keep studying!

— NSE 🕮

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 Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution, 10 pages. The Apostle Paul knew his rights under the law of his day as he traveled and taught Christ (Acts 16:37-40; 22:25-30; 25:11,16). These documents can help us know ours.

The Holy Scriptures, 400 pages, adapted by Rabon Vincent. The KJV Bible with Old English removed and some translation errors fixed. (The Bibles are being printed and should be shipped two weeks after you receive this. If you requested it before, you do not need to request it again.)

Living Room Church of God Directory Seventh Edition, 22 pages, edited by Robert Bodkin. Just updated, this is the final version (it will be only an Internet site in the future). A good list for those who are traveling or helping friends find an independent congregation.

Learning from the Proverbs, 12 pages by Duane Sholly. Helpful to people just reading through Proverbs or to those making a thorough study.

Mature Literature

Is Disfellowshipping a Christian Practice?, 12 pages by Arlan Weight. A gentle summary of Church of God disfellowshipping practices covering many related scriptures.

Study Resources & Information

Ambassador Report: Should Church of God Brethren Read it?, 10 pages by Eric Snow with comments by Norman Edwards. Two views for those trying to decide.

History Research Projects, 12 pages, by Craig White. This new greatly expanded version gives information on British Israelism and the biblical identity of nations.

Items Featured This Issue (always available)

Basic Literature:

Barnabas Bookmark Bunch by Alan Ruth, 3 bookmarks. Three 2-sided bookmarks covering Bible basics, Plan of Salvation & Words of Comfort, and World Wide Web resources. Excellent to keep, carry or give away.

The Bible Sabbath: Seventh Day or First Day? (from the Bible Sabbath Association) 2 pages. Basic Sabbath tract.

Does the Bible Permit Christians to Eat "Unclean" Meat in New Testament Times? by Steven M Collins. 14 pages.

God, I've Got a Problem edited by Jerry Laws, 54 pages. Bible help for the depressed, tempted, guilty, worried, lonely, afraid, bored, disappointed, bitter, doubtful, proud and dying.

Hebrew Holy Day Calendar (business card size) gives the traditional Hebrew dates for Biblical Feasts.

The Mysterious 7-Day Cycle by Ken Westby, 24 pages. Plants, Animals and man have biological 7-day cycles. The 7-day week is an organic function, not a man-made creation.

The Reason for the Season by Pam Dewey, 14 pages. Historic and Biblical analysis of Christmas customs.

Statement of Beliefs? by Norman Edwards, 2 pages. Why we do not have a more extensive statement of beliefs.

What Is Christian Religion? by Norman S. Edwards, 2 page tract. Introduction to the Bible—shows religion is living by the Bible and Holy Spirit, not joining an organization.

Why Do You Observe Sunday? edited by Tom Justus, 16-page 9"×4" booklet.

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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