Servants' NEWS

Vol. 8, No. 2 *A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be* **Mar/Apr 2002**

Church Bible Teaching Ministry Documents

by Norman Edwards

What makes a nation a nation? What makes a church congregation a church congregation? What makes an alliance an alliance?

Initially, these may seem pointless questions. The countries of France, England, Egypt, etc. have existed for hundreds of years and everybody knows where they are. Everybody knows the country in which they live and in which they are citizens. Countries have clear borders, signs, currency, flags, customs, etc., that make them unique. With regard to independent church congregations, one can ascertain their existence by seeing their building or by attending one of their meetings. What more does anyone need?

With a national alliance, such as NATO, the issue is more complicated. A nation can be part of one or more alliances—of which its citizens may or may not be aware. There may be little or no clear visible evidence that a country is a part of a specific alliance. We might ask, is there a treaty or some other kind of document which states the names of the nations that are a part of that alliance, as well as the rights and responsibilities of being a member? The answer is "Yes". An alliance such as NATO ("North Atlantic Treaty Organization") has founding documents which define its existence, its purpose, its membership, etc. (these documents can be found on the Internet at www.nato.int/docu/basics.htm). These defining documents are essential for member nations to know what to expect from the organization, to determine if the organization is fulfilling its mission and to determine how they will support the organization and continue to be a member.

The reason that founding documents are important for alliances—and for nations and church congregations—is that there is no other human governance with authoritative jurisdiction over them. There is no human group that determines their right to exist or that regulates their existence. They are all ultimately responsible to God. If some individual or group has a disagreement with the activities of a country, church congregation or alliance, the only way to resolve it is to plead one's case directly to the country, congregation or alliance; to take one's petition to God in prayer; or take the matter into one's own hands, which sometimes results in war.

Because existence is such a vital subject, many countries do have documents declaring their existence. The USA has its *Declaration of Independence* (July 4, 1776), *Constitution* (September 17, 1787) and *Bill of Rights* (December 15, 1791). The USA did not "send in an application to the United Nations" (which did not exist then) to become a country, but **declared its existence** through the *Declaration of Independence* and asked other countries to recognize it. Similarly, other countries have also declared their existence, and then later wrote constitutions and other governing documents.

Churches, whether they are large organizations or local congregations, have also declared their existence at various times. While this writer believes that multi-level church hierarchies are unscriptural, history shows that they have had a big part in translating, printing and teaching the Bible. Their overall impact has often been good, in spite of their errors.

But even small, independent ministries that serve God directly (not being accountable to some other church group of civil government) should have documents declaring their existence and stating their purpose. This provides a means whereby anyone who cares to know can be sure that they properly understand the purpose and function of the ministry. Church congregations and ministries can both be accountable directly to God and still coexist with civil governments. If the church disagrees with the civil government, they should be free to preach to the individuals involved and encourage them to change—but not use economic or physical force. If someone in a ministry or congregation is committing a crime, then the civil government should prosecute them, but not attempt to change their Scriptural teaching. Civil governments should neither favor nor persecute any specific church groups.

With this understanding, please read the declaration and the governing documents of Church Bible Teaching Ministry beginning on page 17.

Also in this issue:

2 Truckers Bible Study
3 News from Local Congregations
7 Feast of Tabernacles 2002
12 Yet Another Answer to Hierarchical Leader Letter
17 Church Bible Teaching Ministry Docs
24 Letters & Responses

Truckers Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo.
#96-99

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

February 10, 2002

This morning I was tempted to call Arlo and tell him that I was going to opt out of the truck stop today and take in our congregation's twice-monthly volleyball/basketball activity. I'm glad I went to the truck stop instead. Good things happened.

It is gratifying to bring together men and women who are total strangers beforehand and watch the relationships grow among them. At the end of 1½ to 2 hours so often we have cobbled together a close-knit congregation. They are willing to risk the sharing of heart-felt concerns, personal prayer requests, ask for input and scriptural understanding from their fellows, and often end the session in hugs and not just handshakes. Imagine burly truck drivers hugging each other! One can sense their appreciation in having a safe place to meet where they can study the Word of God together. After a lonely week on the road they need a place where they can feel comfortable in discussing their daily trials and asking for prayer and help.

We had seven truckers today, all men. As is so often the case, the men knew their Bibles and take the words they find there very seriously. I went in today with the idea of either covering Leviticus 23 (the Feasts of the Lord) or Genesis chapters 2 to 4 (showing how the Ten Commandments can be found early in human history—well before Sinai). It was no problem deciding which way to go today, because one of the men suggested (without my prodding) that all the problems facing the human race today could be found in the early chapters of Genesis. So we were off and running.

As is usually the case, we jumped form topic to topic as the Spirit moved us. Our discussion of the forbidden fruit led one trucker to comment about the "me, myself, and I" problem in the world at

Continued on page 27

E-mail subscriptions also available

In addition to the normal printed copy edition which can be received in the normal post, you can also receive *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 four 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 e-mail info@servantsnews.com to change your subscription option.

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 8, No. 2 **Mar/Apr 2002**

The purpose of Church Bible Teaching Ministry is to continue the work of the Church that was started by Jesus Christ (Yeshua the Messiah) and His Apostles in the first century. This work involves expounding the truth of the Bible by means of preaching, teaching, writing and music as well as taking positive action to help and serve other believers and all people of the world. CBTM and those people who work within it are just a few of many parts of the Church, which is the body of Christ. *Servants' News* is a publication of CBTM.

The gospel should be given freely—**you may copy this newsletter and give it to others**. CBTM has nothing to sell, but is supported by free-will offerings of individuals. We do not have IRS 501(c)(3) status, but Churches are tax exempt without this status (see IRS Publ. 557, Nov 1999 ed., p. 15). Please make offerings to *Church Bible Teaching Ministry*.

Editor: Norman S. Edwards

Production Editor & Website Design: David King

***Servants' News* Staff:** Bill Buckman, Marleen Edwards, Missi Lara, David Meidinger, Jon D. Pike, Christine Yoos

Website Hosting: Gary Lesperance, garyl@mcsauto.com

Contributors: Many! Thanks to everyone!

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

New articles and corrections to previous articles will be considered for printing. We do not return writings sent to us, so please make copies of anything you need to keep. Send to:

Servants' News
P.O. Box 107, Perry, Michigan 48872-0107
Phone: **517-625-7480** *Fax:* **517-625-7481**
E-Mail: **Info@ServantsNews.com**
Internet: **www.ServantsNews.com**

Magazine and literature requests may be sent to the following addresses. Money received at these locations will be used for duplicating and mailing. Please make checks out to the name shown with the address:

Australia: Dale Heslin, 9 Alice Jackson Crescent, Gilmore, ACT 2905. e-mail: dale@pcug.org.au

Canada: Cherie Zimmerman, 268 Pennswood Way SE, Calgary, AB T2A 4T3. e-mail: uscazim2@aol.com

Philippines: Cesar Lumbuan; 2298 Flerida St. Balagtas, Pandacan, Manila. e-mail: maxzen@skyinet.net

U.K.: Jenny Whiteman, 2 Warren Road, Narborough, Leicester, LE9 5DR. e-mail: 100623.734@compuserve.com

This publication is produced as a right of freedoms of religion, speech, and the press as protected by the first amendment. It is not legal or professional advice or recommendations.

Most Scripture quotes are from the New King James Version

Circulation mailed from the USA: **1792**; Internationally reprinted: **113**; e-mail: **203**

Servants' News is published bimonthly (six times per year). Issues are regularly sent free to people who request the publication and are genuinely interested in it. *Servants' News* is published by Church Bible Teaching Ministry (3690 Bath Rd, Perry, Michigan—this is not a mailing address). CBTM reserves the right to refuse service to anyone for any reason. Periodical postage paid at Perry, Michigan (USPS 016-995, ISSN 1522-0621). Postmaster: send address changes to *Servants' News*, PO Box 107, Perry, Michigan 48872-0107.

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.

Sabbath Campers Fellowship

You are invited to join us for the Sabbath Campers Fellowship **August 23-25**, located at: Shady Green Pastures, 5841 W Gresham Hwy, Charlotte, Michigan 48813. It is a private Christian campground with 15 sites with electric hookups, numerous sites with no hookups, and five cabins with electricity. The campground offers fishing, paddle boating, swimming, and nature trails. There is running water and a bathhouse with showers. **Please call or e-mail me to reserve a site.**

Ray Wooten will be the guest speaker. A Bible study will be held Friday night. The Sabbath schedule is 11:00 am singing, 12:00 service and a 3:00 pm potluck meal. Saturday evening there will be a concert at 7:00 p.m. by the Northmen, a Gospel quartet from Indiana. Recreational activities are planned for Sunday. **Bring a dish to share at the potluck along with your own table service.**

A freewill offering is suggested for the use of the campground. A freewill offering will also be taken at the concert for the Northmen.

You are also welcome to come for the studies, services and activities, but spend the night in a motel. About 20 minutes away in Charlotte are: Super 8 Motel, 517-543-8288; Holiday Inn Express, 517-541-5000; Comfort Inn, 517-543-7307.

Directions to Shady Green Pastures: Get off I-69 at Potterville, exit 66. Go north, toward Potterville on Hartel Road (this will be a right turn if you are coming from Lansing, a left turn if you are coming from Charlotte or points south). After one fifth of a mile, turn left onto Vermontville Highway. Drive 6 miles then turn at a slight right onto Clinton Trail, heading Northwest. After 1.4 miles, turn slight left onto West Gresham Highway. Drive 3.2 miles to Shady Green Pastures, 5841 W Gresham Hwy.

For questions, suggestions or **to reserve a site or a cabin, contact:**

— Kelli Brophy, 517-543-4685
KelliBrophy@yahoo.com

Sharing Library

If you are seeking Bible knowledge, but do not have money for many current books and tapes, your problems may be solved. The *Sharing Library*, a service ministry sponsored by Giving and Sharing, run by John D. Crissinger is an excellent source of books, audio tapes, and videos. Subjects covered include, the Bible, marriage, parenting, children's books and videos, teen materials, music, history, creation, Hebrew roots, current events, sign language, other religions, etc. There is even some wholesome entertainment.

Borrowing is free, all you need do is pay for return postage. You may request a 12-page list of items from *Church Bible Teaching Ministry* (order code SHRLIB) or directly from Sharing Library, PO Box 581, Granville, OH 43023-0581. — NSE

Cheating God Out of Christianity

The Church of God, An International Community has produced an excellent on-site documentary about the Bible filmed in Israel. There is a segment available to be viewed on their web site:

www.vision.org/bc/index.html

It compares Christmas to the actual birth of Christ. This segment is interesting, yet very factual in explaining the chronology around the birth of Christ as it actually was. It begins:

> We begin with the most familiar account of all—the first Christmas—or was it? Could it be that we have got it significantly wrong? Every year in the closing days of December the town of Bethlehem is filled with pilgrims acknowledging what they believe was the time of their Savior's birth. But does the traditional Christmas story reflect what the Bible and certain facts of history tell us? You might be surprised….

This writer believes that this video is a good Christian work. David Hulme is skilled at this kind of presentation. Brethren from all groups might want to have it to show their friends. It would be nice if the Church of God, An International Community would let other groups show the pro-

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.

gram, and it would be nice if the other groups were humble enough to accept and use it. I believe the cause of Christ would be much better served this way. Unfortunately, the CoG-AIC still talks to its membership as if it is "the work" that Christ is doing. Nevertheless, that should not stop any believer from obtaining a copy of this video and showing it to friends to use it to stimulate Bible learning and discussion. A copy is available for $7.95 from Vision, PO Box 90607, Pasadena, California 91109-0607; 888-777-7203; web: www.vision.org e-mail: info@vision.org. — NSE

Barnabas Ministries Web Site Reaches One Million Milestone in 2001; Plans Bible Study CD

The Bible Study Internet Web Site at www.biblestudy.org reached an important milestone in 2001. Last year the total number of times one of the site's web pages were accessed (called a "page view") around the world reached one million!

The number of "page views" a web site transmits is one of the primary ways of determining an Internet site's popularity. Internet advertising agencies commonly use page view numbers to determine ad rates.

Barnabas Ministries and its founder Alan Ruth have also embarked on what Mr. Ruth calls the most significant project he has so far undertaken (other than the website). Work has already begun on a Bible Study CD-ROM that will not only aid Christians in their study of the Bible but which will also be tailored for preaching the gospel to the world.

The new Bible Study CD-ROM will be called "The Bible Study Toolbox". It will contain at least 20 standard reference works such as *Strong's Concordance*, *Nave's Topical Bible*, the *King James Version* Bible, *The Two Babylons*, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* and *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. The CD will also contain a book or two that has played a role in church theology such as *Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright* by J. H. Allen. More than 100 church of God articles, arranged by topic, will also be included on the CD.

Users of the study CD will be able to view two articles or books at the same time using the Internet Web browsing program (Microsoft's Internet Explorer or Netscape Communicator) already on their computers. Each book put on the CD will also be available on the www.biblestudy.org website.

Mr. Ruth stated that the potential evangelistic purpose of the study CD is the most exciting part of the project. "The church of God has in the past had success with preaching the gospel using magazines and television. We need however to change with the times and add other tools to our outreach." Mr. Ruth went on to say "What I propose is to distribute the Bible Study CD like we do magazines in supermarkets, doctor's offices, for new guests to our fellowships and alike.

The CD will be tailored for distribution by an individual fellowship group, outreach or organization by altering the printing on the CD sleeve/label, the CD's main Web page and some of the CD's contents. Raw costs will be low given blank CDs cost less than 20 cents bulk. My dream is that we in the church distribute the CD just like how America Online has done to advertise its service." (America Online, and its foreign affiliates, is one of the largest Internet content providers in the world with millions of users. It grew in size due to its offer of free hours of Internet access made possible by its free software distributed first on diskettes, then on CD-ROMs.). Mr. Ruth hopes to make available the CD to church of God people around the Fall of this year.

All books on the CD will also be available on the website, available directly at: www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/main.html.

The site showcases more than 225 articles/research papers and more than 370 audio messages by 100 different authors, fellowship groups and organizations. Although operated by one person in his spare time, the Web site is the largest, most visited Internet presence in the church of God.

— Alan Ruth
Barnabas Ministries, PO Box 3393
Farmington Hills, MI. 48333, USA
e-mail: webmaster@biblestudy.org
www.biblestudy.org

Kosher HAMs Wanted

In light of the current events, it would be just prudent to set up a line of communications between licensed Radio Amateurs [HAMs] in the CoGs, regardless of group affiliation. To arrange for bands, gfc. and mode of operation, CW or SSB please contact Len Labunetz, VE3QBH, 52 Peach Willoway, North York, Ont. M2J 2B6, Canada; e-mail: marconi83@hotmail.com.

— Len Labunetz

Using *SN* Statement of Beliefs

I have quoted your Statement of Beliefs here and given credit plus a link:

garygeiser.homestead.com/churchofgod.htm

— Gary Geiser

[I am quite happy that people use some of what I wrote to help teach truth to others. It would be wonderful if thousands or millions did it. — NSE]

Two Ways for Singles to Meet

In order to offer some encouragement (and hopefully increase the Sabbath Singles Connection membership base), I've added a "SSC Success Stories and Comments" section to the website. I shall eventually put it in printed form for our members who cannot access the Internet. See the new addition at: http://home.inreach.com/mikekawa/SSC-for-more-info/index.html and click on the pink "success stories and comments" box.

I received the following e-mail from Clyde Kilough, the UCG pastor in Sacramento California. It may be of interest to you:

> Being a single in the Church presents some challenges in today's world. A rising tide of immorality in most western nations can begin to wear single Christians down with thoughts of just giving in to blend in with the world. Like their married counterparts in the Church, singles stand out in a world that has lost its moral bearings. Coping with that pressure along with the desire to share their thoughts and experiences with other singles who have the same morals and religious beliefs brings a desire in many singles for a means to connect mentally and emotionally with others. We are happy to unveil a new

website devoted to singles in the Church. The site is designed to be an educational and inspirational site to help singles. There are plans for resources like Bible Studies, sermons and seminar materials as well as reviews of books that may be of interest to singles. There are bulletin boards announcing activities for both young and older singles, and a section devoted to singles activities at past and upcoming Feasts. By registering on the site others will be able to send you e-mail messages without us ever displaying your e-mail address. It will be up to you to decide if you want to answer any messages sent from the site. And lastly, there is a Q&A section.

So if you are a single in the Church, why not visit www.ucgsingles.org to see if there is something that will help you. Or visit to post information about upcoming singles events (Young Adults and Singles in the Middle) or to submit material you have found helpful in your walk as a single Christian. It may be a tremendous gift to another single somewhere.

All Sabbatarian singles can participate in Sabbath Singles Connection free of charge. Contact:

— Mike Kawasaki
PO Box 647, Biggs, Calif. 95917
mikekawa@inreach.com

Good Source of Bible Info

Looking for a good source of Bible articles you can share with others and make additional copies if necessary? Those with Internet access (or who are willing to go to a library to get it) can find many such articles on Bill Bratt's web pages:

www.zoomnet.net/~bbratt/religion.html
www.zoomnet.net/~bbratt/icog.html

The icog.html page is the newsletter page for the Independent Church of God. You can e-mail Bill Bratt at: bbratt@zoomnet.net — NSE

Celts in Central Turkey

An interesting article appeared in the Science section of the December 25th New York Times, entitled: *Archaeologists Find Celts in Unlikely Spot: Central Turkey* by John Noble Wilford. It explained how archeological findings near the city of Gordion show that thousands of Celtic people lived there in the 3rd century BC. There is a good chance that many of them were still there in the first century when Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians.

While there is much evidence that the Celtic people are part of the "lost 10 tribes" of Israel, it is not clear whether these people were Israelites who were still on their way migrating northward in Europe, or whether they had gone to Europe and then came back for some reason. In either case, it further submits the links between the Celts and Middle-Eastern peoples.

— NSE

Lost Races of the Ancient World Soon to Publish

Craig White is in the final editing stages and seeking help to publish his book, *Lost Races of the Ancient World*, a book that attempts to find the modern descendants of the nations mentioned in the Bible. He is still looking for a publisher or help with self publishing. Anyone interested and able to assist is encouraged to contact him: Craig White, GPO Box 864, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia; e-mail: surfer1@tpg.com.au.

Each chapter has a section at the front advising the reader of a list of points to be covered within the chapter. At the rear of the chapters a recommended reading list is added followed by the endnotes. The book contains 29 charts. The outline is as follows:

Introduction

An introduction to the subject matter; discusses researchers and writers on the subject of Genesis 10, the need to keep the flame of this truth alive and how to approach the subject.

1. The Incredible Bio-Diversity of Mankind

The chapter discusses the concept of race, nations and tribes and their taxonomy. Physical characteristics are delved into: skull types, hair, eyes, skin, blood groups.

2. The Mysterious Table of Nations

Bible origins of the races, the concept of the baptism of the earth by floods; how all nations descend from Adam and later through Noah. The structure and meaning of the Table of Nations and the typology of bulls. How Noah's three sons fore-type prophecies for the nations.

PART ONE: HAM

Introduction

3. The Roots of the Turkic and Arab Peoples

The Turkish peoples shown to be descendants of Edom/Esau with primary reference to Teman. Gog, a descendant of Edom is discussed and his modern location identified. Ishmael's descendants, Arabs, Jordanians, etc., researched.

4. Mediterranean, North African and Black African identity

The Phoenicians, various nations of Africa including the Africoids, pygmies, bushmen, Hottentots origins documented.

5. The Descendants of Cush

Cush proven to have two branches: eastern and western. Cush's various sons such as Seba, Sabteca, Raamah, etc., traced primarily to exotic locations.

6. The Other Descendants of Cush

Nimrod identified with Lugalzaggisi; the scattering of his empire; the mysterious Sukkim; land and peoples of the Colchis (adjacent to the Black Sea); Australian Aboriginals; Egyptian connection to Australia anciently?

PART TWO: JAPHETH

Introduction

7. Dodanim and Tarshish

The people descended from Dodanim traced and located. Their anthropology discussed. This chapter demonstrates that Tarshish had western and eastern branches. Hebrew contact with Japan.

8. The Russians and Finno-Ugric Peoples

Where are the modern-day descendants of Madai, Meschech, Tubal

today? Who are the Finn-Ugric peoples scattered in northwest Russia, eastern Finland, Estonia and Hungary?

9. The Peoples of China and Southeast Asia

Magog, Kittim, Gomer, etc., all proven to be east Asian peoples.

10. What Happened to the Descendants of Elishah and Tiras?

These people are not easy to trace, but trace them I did. You will be surprised at who they are today on our planet.

PART THREE: SHEM

Introduction

11. The Peoples of Northern Europe

A thorough discussion of Arphaxad and Aram. The descendants, including Joktan, mysterious Ophir.

12. The Origin of the White Russians and Balts

Abraham had a concubine, Keturah. The Mitanni, Medans, Brahmins, Balts are traced back to Abraham.

13. Modern Identities of the descendants of Elam and Lud

Ancient Elam compared to modern nations, including place-names, tribes, etc. Who could his descendants be today?

14. The Assyrians in the Modern World!

A lot of space has been spent discussing the Assyrians in this book. Why?, one may ask. This will become self-evident, but they are a very important and dominant people in the ancient Middle East and impact upon Israel to such a degree, that they must be traced and their descendants identified.

14.1. Mysterious Origin of the Assyrians

14.2. The Fearsome Assyrians and their Migrations Into Central Europe

14.3. The Hittite Empire and the Modern Assyro-Hittites

14.4. What is Germany's Destiny?

The identity of Assur is identified; his exploits in the years after Babel; his character, empire and descendants all discussed. After his empire fell, his descendants were driven out of the Middle East and I trace them on their journey to where they reside today. Given their ancient history and history over the past few centuries, what is their future?

Appendix 14.1 A List of Important Biblical References to the Assyrians

Appendix 14.2 A List of Researchers Who Believe in the Assyrian or Hittite Origins of the Germans

Appendix 14.3 The Khattie Tribe of North-West India

15. Israel—Descendants of Arphaxad

After going into captivity, most of the peoples of Israel disappear from view—what became of them and what is their future?

Concluding Remarks
Glossary
Abbreviations
Bibliography

Craig White has already received a number of positive comments from other researchers in this field. Here are some of them:

"Your book has a lot of valuable information" and "I feel you have a valuable contribution to make to understanding the history of the world" — Dr Terry Blodgett, PhD

"Thank you for letting me read your manuscript. It is very good" (verbal comments) — Dr Hermann Hoeh, PhD.

I recently finished [reading] your book "Who are the Germans?" I have a Bachelor Degree and a Master Degree in History, and from a professional point of view, I was very impressed with your work. I was especially impressed with your documentation. As you know in a work of this type, it is crucial to document sources" — Calvin Lashway, MA.

"I have been spending time with your book… I am most impressed with the thoroughness and sheer quantity of your research" — Dr Ralph Levy, PhD.

"It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to finally meet you [via e-mail]… years ago, when we still had the AC Library, I came across your manuscript on the Assyrians, entitled: "The Assyrians in the Modern World"… I was sufficiently impressed to make a copy of it for my own library" — Emanuel Maidanos, MA.

"Got your manuscript and have been reading through it. You've done a fantastic job… Your synthesis is the best I have found. Even better than Custance's work. You make 'Noah's Three Sons' look like an introduction… your book is a goldmine of information… you have been very thorough in your compilation… your book is a book to be read over and over again" — Ross S Marshall, origin of nations researcher.

"It appears to me that what you have done is the most thorough and comprehensive job on this subject that I have seen. I think it will be a valuable reference tool and I really appreciate your hard work." — John Ogwyn

"I should first say that the volume and scope of your work is overwhelming… the size of the manuscript is impressive, it is also daunting… I found sections 1–2 of Chapter 14 [on Assyria] the most interesting and enjoyable. You bring out numerous ties and connections which I have never seen before. Thank you for setting down the essence of your considerable research in this area so others can share" — Dr Rick Sherrod, PhD.

(Another positive comment, currently misplaced) — Dr Doug Winnail.

It is probably a blessing that no one Church of God group is publishing this book, as that would make it difficult for the others to use it. An independent publishing effort will make it much easier for all Church of God groups (Sabbatarian and otherwise) to use and recommend this book. While I would not say that this is the "last word" on the explanation of Biblical nations, it is the best single reference I know about. Mr White actually believes the Bible is accurate. By contrast, many historians treat the Bible like other historic writings: they assume that its writers may not have known what they were talking about and that they would exaggerate and make themselves look better than they are. Also, Craig White is free of the "serpent's seed" and other erroneous doctrines held by some Biblical researchers who believe salvation is only available to certain races. — NSE

Feast of Tabernacles Sites 2002

Feast sites listed in this article, as far as we know, all welcome non-aligned Sabbatarians. Corporate church organizations' Feasts may be located by contacting their headquarters: The United Church of God-IA at 513-576-9796, the Living Church of God at 619-613-7970; the Church of God International at 903-825-2525.

Please let Feast sponsors know now where you are planning to attend! It is very difficult to plan a Feast when the number of people attending is unknown. Time and money are wasted if attendance estimates are too high. Facilities become too crowded if estimates are too low. **If you are not sure yet**, it is better to notify the site you are most likely to attend, then change your mind later if necessary.

- Unless otherwise noted, all sites use the Jewish calendar—the evening of **Friday, Sep. 20th through Saturday the 28th.**
- We are happy to print information on other Feast sites that welcome all brethren regardless of organizational affiliation.
- Please send information on any other sites to *Servants' News* (see contact information on page 2 or back cover).

North East USA

Hastings, Michigan

The 2002 Feast will be observed at Winding Creek Camp, just south of Hastings, Michigan. This site will focus on the Leviticus 23:41–43 message comparing the Feast of Tabernacles to the wilderness wandering after Egypt. It is not intended to be a typical Feast with "morning sermons followed by expensive entertainment", but an assembly of believers who will spend eight days spiritually preparing to "go into the promised land".

The themes for the eight days will be: 1) Purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles; 2) Meeting the Brethren; 3) How has God blessed you? 4) How has God protected you in difficult times? 5) How can we prove God to the outside world? 6) What does God expect His people to learn and do today? 7) What will we help Christ do in the Millennium? 8) The Eighth Day, a new beginning.

During the Feast, we plan to record and distribute CDs of original songs and spoken words as a thanks and permanent memory of what God has done for us. If you are interested in attending, contact us to make a reservation. Camp cabins and lodge rooms are available in varying sizes. They are nice looking and have electricity, but no plumbing or central heat. They are close to the heated bathhouses. Lodging cost for 8 days is $80 per adult, $64 per child 3–12. The 8-day meal plan (you help prepare & serve) is $85 per adult, $55 per child 3–12. You are encouraged to stay and eat at the camp, but several big stores, restaurants and motels are about 2 miles away. (The camp charges $2 per day per person for daytime visitors). The camp has volleyball, basketball, and many other recreational facilities. For more information, see the Jan/Feb 2002 ***Servants' News*** Issue or contact us at PO Box 107, Perry, Michigan 48872-0107; info@servantsnews.com; 517-625-7480.

South East USA

Eufaula, Alabama
October 22 thru 29, 2002

Angle for large-mouth bass on Lake Eufaula. Take in the sun on our beach. Enjoy an old fashioned picnic, then a leisurely boat ride around the lake. While on the green you can drive a ball around our 18-hole golf course, battle through a hot tennis match, or cool off with a dip in our swimming pool. The kids will enjoy zapping the aliens in our video game room!

Lakepoint Resort State Park (334-687-6676) is located seven miles north of Eufaula off Highway 431 on the Alabama-Georgia line (Route 2, box 94, Eufaula, Alabama 36027-9202). Lake Eufaula is known as the "Bass Capital of the World". This picturesque 1,220-acre park complements the beautiful 45,200-acre Eufaula Impoundment with many resort facilities including a full service marina. You may also enjoy the adjoining National Wildlife Refuge.

The Resort Motel (PO Box 267, Eufaula, Alabama 36027; 334-687-8011 or 800-544-5253) has 101 rooms ($54 dbl, $45.50 sngl), most with balconies overlooking Lake Eufaula. Each is equipped with two double beds, a TV, and telephone. Two-room suites ($106.20) and heated and air-conditioned cabins (2 bdrm $79, 3 bdrm $117, 4 bdrm $158) accommodating 1–8 people are also available. All are furnished with linens, cooking utensils and outdoor grills. Many have fireplaces. The campground has 244 sites ($12 per day) with water and electric hookups. Sewer hookups available at some sites. The dining room, community center, pavilion, beach, boat ramp, bathhouse, laundry, and camp store are nearby.

Marina Facilities include fishing and pontoon boat rental, store, overnight docking, permanent wet storage, fuel dock and boat launching facilities. There are also hiking trails, a picnic area with pavilions, tables, grills and playground, a nature center with a trained Park Naturalist, a beach area, six lighted tennis courts and a swimming pool.

For more information contact **Mark Carr (The Simple Truth)** at PO Box 70635, Knoxville, TN 37938; 865-922-5420, e-mail: mcarr@theSimpleTruth.net.

Chapel Hill, Tennessee

The Feast will be sponsored by the **Church of God, Fellowship** at the Horton Haven Retreat, adjacent to Henry Horton State Park near Chapel Hill, Tennessee. Contact: Paul Bell (615-896-9365) or W.K. Saulsberry (931-294-2127).

Gatlinburg, Tennessee
September 26 to October 4

The Freedom Church of God is hosting a site at the Summit at Gatlinburg, Tenn. Feast themes will be Bible study, prophecy, and the "faith once delivered". For more information, contact Helm Hobrath at 440-639-0916 or Jerry Simmons at 601-736-0418.

Sevierville, Tennessee

United Christian Ministries (Ray Wooten) will again be at the Sevierville Civic Center and Community Center in Sevierville, Tennessee. If you would like to receive an area housing and attractions booklet and map, contact United Christian Ministries, P.O. Box 361725, Hoover, AL 35236; 888-985-9066, e-mail: ucm3821@aol.com.

Destin, Florida

This site, sponsored by **the Church of God, Big Sandy (Dave Havir)**, is at the Pelican Beach Resort hotel on the Gulf Coast. It hosts a kiddie pool, a swimming pool and a jacuzzi as well as a sauna, weight-room and sandwich shop.

The area has plenty of enjoyable restaurants, shopping, fishing, kayaking, jet-skis, sailboats, cruises and, swimming. Beautiful sunsets on the beach with temperatures in the mid-80s °F (30°C) during the days make this site a delight for nearly anyone.

For more information, contact Shelly at 800-946-5545 or e-mail: destin@bigsandychurch.org.

Niceville, Florida

This Feast site is sponsored by **Christian Educational Ministries (Ron Dart).** It features sermons to inspire, encourage, uplift, motivate and take you deeper into understanding what God's Word can do for you and through you; congregational music to bring out the best in every voice in praise to God; outstanding special music and great choirs for all age groups provide opportunities, pleasure and inspiration; thought-provoking seminars to titillate your curiosity, prepare you for greater Christian service, and help with your spiritual and personal needs; and fun activities for every age group to encourage friendships, fellowship and bonding (most are free).

Each day there will be Sabbath School classes where kids age 3–19 will discover God's ways are best for them and love every minute of it. Free full-color state of the art lesson books will be provided for every student. Focused, relevant themes address issues each age group faces. Trained teachers facilitate exciting active and interactive classes. No effort will be spared to reach the hearts of every youth in each class. Action, action, action coupled with fun and effective biblical learning are the orders for each day!

Kids need fun opportunities to create interfaith relationships and to bond. Supervised activities include such things as a family skating party and picnic with a clown and free charcoal broiled hamburgers and hot dogs. A teen beach party, dance, miniature golf, and go-carts are just some of the activities designed to make your kids want to return every year. Youth empowerment is the plan for Youth Day. The entire service is dedicated to our youth and conducted by them. Teen presenters will tell us how their walk with Christ has made growing up easier. Three youth choirs will sing—one with its own band. An outstanding play from the book of Exodus will be put on by all the kids attending.

There's a condo, motel, house, or great camp site to fit almost any budget in Destin and Niceville. For more information on excellent discounts call CEM's toll free number 888-BIBLE-44.

Everyone is welcome! CEM's Feast site is a festival for the people of God! There is no preregistration and no prior approval needed. Niceville offers a cordial atmosphere of love and encouragement. Your friends will be there to welcome you. Learning and growing opportunities prevail in a warm, encouraging, friendly climate. It's a place where God pours out His Spirit. Don't you think you should honor our Creator and rejoice with us? We hope you do! Contact Christian Educational Ministries, P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, Texas 75791; 903-509-2999 888-BIBLE-44; fax: 903-509-1139; e-mail: adm@cemnetwork.com.

Lantana, Florida
October 22–29

The Christian Church of God (Florida) is planning to host a Feast of Tabernacles' site in Lantana, Florida We have hosted a Feast site most years since 1986 when we hosted the original cruise ship Feast. Services will basically be a traditional Church of God format with one service per day. We will have a fun/talent night and limited scheduled activities.

After two years of intensive research and study, we determined a change from the traditional calendar was necessary. We believe these dates more closely comply with the instruction in Gen 1:14 in determining the time, and Deut 16:13 to go to the Feast after the harvest; hence it will be **Oct 22nd through 29th.** Contact Neville Gilbert; PO Box 3827, Lantana, Fl 33465; 561-585-4580.

North Central USA

Black Hills, South Dakota

Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles 2002 in the Beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota. This family-oriented feast site is open to all. The site is being sponsored by members of the **Church of God Fellowship (Lansing, Michigan)** and by members of the **Church of God from Berthoud, Colorado.**

Services will be held at the new (opening in June 2002) Welcome Center at the Crazy Horse Memorial near Custer, SD. Service format will be a split-sermon message (with an interactive question and answer period following the close of services). Inspiring song services and special music will also be presented each morning. A seminar or Bible study and teen and youth studies/activities will be conducted before services each day.

The Feast site is four miles north of Custer and nine miles south of Hill City. Feastgoers can find a variety of housing options including: hotel rooms (some with suites and family rooms), kitchenette units, cabins, rental homes, lodges and camping. Those who plan to attend this site must make their own housing arrangements. Some establishments are offering a discount. Please see our website at www.feast2002.com for more details or you may contact: **John Bensinger**, 12630 Shaftsburg Rd, Perry, Michigan 48872; 517-675-5758 or **Matt Gaffney**, 5413 Schofield Rd., Berthoud, Colorado 80513 970-532-0522.

[I personally know the people organizing this site—some attend our fellowship. While it may not be quite as interactive as the Feasts I have organized, it should be very well run and enjoyable. Independent believers should find the speakers good and the teaching acceptable. — NSE]

Colorado Springs, Colorado
October 21–29

This group has observed the Feast using the visible new moon calendar for nearly 20 years.

For more information, contact **Church of God of Colorado Springs**, PO Box 9901, Colorado Springs, CO 80932-0901; 719-577-9066, e-mail: jehines29@earthlink.net.

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
September 20–30

Join us in the Wisconsin Dells/ Baraboo area for the feast. It will be held from September 20–30 to accomodate the traditional Hillel calendar as well as the observed first crescent. **Several interdependent congregations of the Church of God** will be working together to sponsor the third annual multi-church Feast site in the Wisconsin Dells area.

The format for services may be different from last year, but there will be plenty of interaction and discussion. A daily lunch buffet will follow, giving the opportunity for more discussion. We are planning to broadcast services over the Internet, link to other feast sites, and broadcast those services also. If you would like information on linking your Feast site to ours e-mail networking@thinkgod.org.

This year we will again be meeting at Papa's Place Conference Center in Baraboo, Wisc. (just 6 miles from the Wisconsin Dells). This year we are again pleased to offer a daily lunch buffet following services. Menu items include: pepper steak, beef lasagna, vegetable lasagna, baked chicken, manicotti, roast beef, beef tips, and baked cod. Salads, side dishes, baked dinner rolls, and coffee, tea or milk are also included. Prices for the buffet should be approximately $7.95/adult plus gratuity (no tax). Children 5–10 years of age $5.95; children 5 and under free.

We will have an on-site network available for access to Bible programs, Bible resources and the Internet. We will be able to accomodate an unlimited number of laptops, but please be sure your laptop has a network adaptor card. Without one, you will be unable to access the network. A limited number of computer workstations will also be available for those who don't have laptops but wish to use the network.

Many enjoyable activities are now being planned. These include: a Steak Out, a family dance, a hike at the beautiful Devil's Lake State Park, a fun show and ice cream social, a boat trip or train ride, a pool party or visit to a local water park (indoor of course), a women's seminar, a children's festival program, and calendar seminars.

For information contact Tim Lindholm; 8703 Green Haven Dr; Brooklyn Park, MN 55445-2345, 612-525-5012 or see the website at: cogbereanfellowship.tripod.com/feast02.html.

South Central USA

Lake Texoma, Oklahoma #1

It seems with each year the urgency, tension and insanity in the world builds to a more intense level. Along with that I experience a more intense desire and need for God's feasts and His Kingdom. I hope you do also. Sadly some experience burnout and lose interest, or are diverted from the goal partially or wholly by divisive ideas, different doctrines or false teachers. My aim this year is to provide a safe site where we may all come together to praise our Father. As diverse doctrines and ideas rage out of control in the church let us pray for the unity of the brethren. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa 133:1, KJV)

This year we will add more activities for youth, elders and the church to promote a sense of family. The fun/talent show, Sabbath school, seminars, Bible studies, fun park, prayer meetings and fish fry will continue. Ideas are welcomed and volunteers needed for Bible studies and seminars.

• A small group assembles each night for a song, prayer, reading Psalms, and prayer requests: for all who wish to participate.

• No collections will be taken up. An offering box will be in the back of the room for anyone wanting to make an offering. Funds donated at the feast will be used for feast expenses and festival assistance. Additional envelopes will be provided for you to designate "an offering to the Lord" (Deut16:13–17) and we will forward it as designated; or you are free to attend to that matter on your own.

The Lake Texoma Resort Park has tennis courts, basketball, volleyball, an 18-hole golf course, horseback riding stables, miniature golf, go-carts and a beautiful lake. There's also a fort nearby. There are recreation and naturalist staff to help plan activities. It has a beautiful lobby downstairs and a second-floor seating area overlooking the lobby—plenty of room for visiting and fellowship. There will be another group there this year so lock in your

reservation early and mention you are with the Church of God.

The accommodations (without tax) are: lodge guest rooms $48, king room $58, cabanas rooms $80, studio cottages $52, two-bedroom cottages $89 (no cooking or eating utensils are provided in the cottages). Lodge rooms and suite rates are for two adults, each additional adult is $10 extra. Call 405-564-2566 for campground information. There is a 3,000-foot runway for private planes. The meals are served in the newly remodeled restaurant overlooking the lake. There are two other motels within a short distance.

Feast Coordinator: Steve Kieler, 2193 Sheker Drive, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8707; 515-576-5743; e-mail: skieler@juno.com. For rooms, contact: **Lake Texoma Resort Park**, P. O. Box 248, Kingston, OK 73439-0248; 800-654-8240 (4). Be sure to mention you are with the Church of God.

Note: the State of Oklahoma is considering closing some of its parks, but Lake Texoma is not one of them!

Lake Texoma, Oklahoma #2 September 22–30

Truth On The Web Ministries will be hosting the Feast of Tabernacles in beautiful Oklahoma. This year's site will be in Kingston located in scenic Southern Oklahoma in Lake Texoma Resort Park. We shall be keeping the Feast days in accord with the Biblical New Moon observation-based calendar (determining the new year by the Abib barley), but all from other calendar camps are peaceably welcome. All who read this page are cordially invited to attend the blessed event with us in accordance with the Word of God.

Lodge guest rooms are $49.50 per night, studio cottages with kitchenette (sleeps 4) are $63.00, two-bedroom cabins (sleeps eight) are $94.50. Campsites range from $6 for a regular campsite without utilities, $12–$15 for an RV site with water and electricity, to $15–$18 for all utilities. Camping is not reservable, first-come, first served. Expect a lot of warm fellowship and Bible teaching. Contact: Brian Hoeck 847-593-8943, e-mail: brihoeck7@aol.com, website: http://welcome.to/GodsTabernacles.

Roaring River State Park, Missouri

This site is sponsored by **Raymond Kaping**, a long-time *Servants' News* reader. It will give those who attend a chance to experience the outdoor Feast, to live in booths and to dress modest, chaste and washed. There will not be sermons or an entertainment program, but a chance to join together in dialog to discuss Bible topics. "Come let us reason together says the Lord" (Isa 1:18). There will be assemblies on the high days, other activities will be planned at the Feast.

Roaring River State Park is West of Branson, Missouri and North of Eureka Springs, Ark. It will take place at campground number two, the only one that can be reserved in advance. It has only electric hookups. Water is available and there are restrooms and showers.

For information contact: **Church of God**, PO Box 521, Shell Knob, Mo. 65747; 417-858-3807.

Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri

The Mid-Missouri Church of God (**MMCG**) will again be sponsoring the Feast of Tabernacles at the 54,000 acre Lake of the Ozarks in central Missouri. It will be held this year at the beautiful new **Baymont Inn** in the town of Lake Ozark. To browse the extensive Lake of the Ozarks attractions, see the website: www.funlake.com.

Members of all Church of God organizations will be welcome. Information and registration will be at 5:30 p.m. in the Baymont Conference Hall, with opening services commencing at 7:30 p.m. on Friday night, September 20. (A traditional format is planned—with worship services at 10:30 a.m. on most days.)

Anyone interested in sermon, sermonette, Bible study or seminar presentation, or serving as a choir member, individual or group special music volunteer, accompanist, or assisting with the children's Bible classes, please get in touch. Other kinds of service will also be needed.

For an information packet, please write to **Duke Schneider** at 31879 Triangle Cove Road, Gravois Mills, MO 65037; 573-372-3221; e-mail: ddinmo@advertisnet.com or **Bud and Connie Houston**, 573-392-6677, email: budhouston@prodigy.net.

San Antonio, Texas

The Church of God San Antonio is extremely happy to announce that it will once again host the Feast of Tabernacles in beautiful San Antonio, the Alamo City. All brethren regardless of organizational affiliation are welcome to attend. We are ready to serve as your host to make the Feast in San Antonio a very enjoyable, memorable, and Family Oriented celebration where Our Children will play an important role in our Worship Services. Inspiring sermons, music to honor our Creator, and fellowship opportunities for the entire family are being planned. A family atmosphere, love for one another, and "Rejoicing Before the Lord" are themes that will predominate the Feast in San Antonio. Workshops and Youth Bible Classes are also being planned.

We will meet in the The Park Inn Conference Center, 10811 I-35 North San Antonio, Texas 78233; 800-276-0679; 210-590-4646; fax: 210-590-2464; website: www.parkhtls.com. Mention you are attending the Feast of Tabernacles, Group ID #007 to obtain room rates of $46.50 plus tax for single, double, triple, or quad. The Church of God, San Antonio has contracted to pay the hotel an additional $1,400 in order to obtain this very attractive low room rate for our brethren. Reservations accepted only with a deposit or a major credit card. We must fill at least 30 rooms by August 31, 2002 to avoid forfeiture of any deposits paid or payment of penalties. Please help us by making your reservations as early as possible.

Rooms include microwave, refrigerator, modem hookups, hair dryer, coffee maker, iron/ironing board, pool access and complimentary continental breakfast (each day begins with a bountiful breakfast of freshly brewed coffee, muffins, Danish, and an assort-

ment of fruit and other delightful fare).

There is an RV Park one mile from the Park Inn Conference Center: Greentree Village North, 12015 O'Connor Rd, San Antonio, Texas 78233; 210-655-3331; website is at www.greentreevillage.com.

Contact Julian Cruz, 219 Whitefield Ave, San Antonio, Texas 78223; 210-333-7229; e-mail: jcruz@ix.netcom.com, website: churchofgodsa.com.

North West USA

Sunriver, Oregon

The Sunriver Feast Site is not hosted by any organization. Rather it is organized by a small core of brethren from **various Churches of God** and volunteers who attend the Feast. The hall rental, services, food, and activities are all funded by those who attend. All contributions are collected at the Feast and spent only for the Feast.

No organizations or person(s) receives any funds or gifts. Any contributions that are not spent one year are rolled over into the next year's Feast. This Feast site enables brethren from many different organizations to come together for eight days to worship God the Father and His Son Jesus as their primary Goal.

Daily services are held at the Thousand Trails Great Hall Lodge, about 5 miles south of Sunriver, at 10:00 a.m. Services, sermons and Bible studies are consistent with traditional Sabbath-keeping Church of God theology and do not promote or criticize any Church of God organizations.

Contact: **Al Murrey** at 541-881-8600, e-mail: amurrey@fmtc.com; **Jim Woods** at: 480-998-3073, e-mail: jwoods88@cox.net; or **Steve Moyer** at 541-330-0410, e-mail: skibumm358@aol.com.

Glendale, Oregon

Fir Point Camp will be the site of this year's Feast celebration sponsored by the **Omega Praise Fellowship**. Come for an experience in worship, praise, teaching and sharing together. There will be plenty to do for all eight days. Messianic dancing will be taught to those interested. This is a family experience—living and eating together. Heated cabins have electricity and hold 6 to 12 people. Bathrooms are in the bath house. Three meals per day are provided. RV with electric hookups are available. The total Cost is $240 per adult; children under 18 are free. There are motels in the area for those who prefer them.

Contact Jim Sorenson, 541-837-3642, e-mail: jsorenson@mcsi.net or Sharon Bonney, 541-825-3573, e-mail: sbonney@citlink.net.

South West USA

Showlow, Arizona

The Church of God with Minister Mr. Harold Cormany will again be holding the Feast in beautiful Showlow, Az. The dates are Sept 21–28th The address is 151 West Deuce of Clubs Ave, Showlow, AZ 85901. For more information please contact Keith Hoeck at hoeckksrr@aol.com or 480-917-2738.

Las Cruces, New Mexico

Our congregations is **Etz Chayim-Tree of Life Messianic Congregations** of Las Cruces and Alamogordo, New Mexico: www.etz-chayim.org .

We will be holding a Sukkot-Tabernacles Feast in Las Cruces Mornings will be free time. We will meet for lunch and an afternoon of teaching. Dinner will be together and afterwards a time of praise, worship and prayer. We will open Friday evening with an Erev Shabbat service and have a Torah Service Saturday morning followed by lunch and an afternoon of teaching.

Contact Mordechai Silver: e-mail treelife@etz-chayim.org; 505-382-0193; 505-644-7706; PO Box 467, Organ, NM 88052. We have openings for teachers and can use help in all areas. This is a first time for us and we hope to turn this into an annual gathering.

Angel Fire, New Mexico

The **Big Sandy Church of God** sponsors this site at the Angelfire Community Center.

For info on Church services, interactive studies and activities, contact Ron Avey, 903-636-4238, e-mail angelfire@BigSandyChurch.org.

Big Bear Lake, California

The Eternal Church of God will again celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles at beautiful Big Bear Lake at the Holiday Inn. This year's Feast features wonderful activities for the entire family.

Contact: Art Bradic at 661-274-7862 or The Eternal Church of God, P.O. Box 4063, Sunland, CA 91041; 800-723-6108, or contact via e-mail: Witness@EternalCOG.org; or visit the website: www.eternalCOG.org.

International

Jerusalem, Israel

Christian Renewal Ministries International will once again be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. This is a non-denominational site, open to everybody. Although most all of our attendees are Christian, most of our speakers are Jewish. Some are Orthodox Rabbis, some come from Israel Universities, and others are authors. You will find it educational, inspiring, and an event that will change your life! For more information visit our website at www.originsofourfaith.com/ftjb1.html or e-mail us at crmi@frugal.com or call us at 253-839-6489. We are limited to about 225 people, so we are encouraging those who want to attend to register soon.

Thank you for passing along this information, Rick Richardson, CRMI, www.Shalom-CRMI.org, P.O. Box 111, Auburn, WA 98071; 253-839-6489.

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Last year, 13 people from a variety of church groups gathered to keep the Feast in Edmonton, Alberta. This is the third year that the **Hansen family** has co-ordinated a site. Tapes from Dave Havir and a lot of fellowship make it a good Feast. It is a long way between sites in the great expanse of Canada, so

Continued on page 26

Yet Another Answer to Hierarchical Leader Letter

from "F.G.", a Living Church of God Minister

Sydney Brown, of Georgetown, Guyana, sent this response that he received from a "representative of the Living Church of God". There was not time before going to press to write to Mr. Brown to find out the identity of "F.G.". Even though I thought I was done printing responses, this letter covers a lot of questions not answered elsewhere. It primarily challenges Servants' News *statements made in the Sept/Oct 2001 issue. F.G.'s letter consisted of quotes of my material labeled "***F.G. QUOTES N.E.***" and then his own comments labeled "***F.G. COMMENTS***". I will follow up each of his sections with my standard "***RESPONSE***" paragraph (for a copy of the original* Hierarchical Leader Letter, *see any of the previous 3 issues).* — *NSE*

F.G. QUOTES N.E.: If Christ has shown me truth through the Bible that is contrary to the teachings of Herbert Armstrong, then I must follow it and teach it, even if it requires going through Herbert Armstrong's writing line by line and showing where it is inconsistent or contrary to Scripture.

You speak of submitting to "those whom He puts over us". How do I know whether God has put Joe Tkach, Rod Meredith, David Hulme, the UCG general conference or some other men "over me"? If I try to evaluate all of their teaching and see who has the most truth, am not I deciding, rather than God or them?

F.G. COMMENTS: I would like to ask the same question: How do I know whether God has put N.E. "over me"—to teach me? What is the fruit born by him? Is His work a continuation of what Jesus started? Who did he take over from, and when did this transition occur? By whose authority does he condemn a man who for over fifty (50) years has shown by his fruits that he was a true Minister of God?

N.E. RESPONSE: With me the issue is simple: I do not claim to be "over" anyone, so you do not have to ask the question. Anyone can look at the Scriptures and history that I present, verify them to whatever extent they desire, and whatever conclusions God leads them to. If one wants to know the fruit I have born, one could try contacting many of the brethren in the *Local Servants' Directory*. Many have learned to conduct services and Bible studies, or have found congregations to attend and/or started evangelism outreaches through my efforts. I do not even know who all of them are because I have reached wide audiences and do not teach them to be loyal to me, but to Christ. I have also taught and baptized some new people myself. I believe this is a continuation of the work that Jesus and the Apostles did—but that many others are also doing that work now. Christ manages His whole work, not me or some other man.

Who did I "take over from". Nobody. Who did Apollos "take over from"? Who did Isaiah "take over from"? Who was Paul's or John's successor? The doctrine of "succession of ordination" is from the Catholic Church, not from the Bible. Christ can appoint anyone to do anything at any time. God has not promised to use a succession of human leaders since King David. I started working on my own studies and writing in a major way on November 28, 1994.

Mr. Armstrong appears to have great works and many good fruits if one reads only the publications over which he had control. If one reads other writings about him, a less-fruitful picture emerges. Unfortunately, many CoG brethren "answer the matter before they hear it" and dismiss anything written against HWA as untrue—without looking for any facts. I do not condemn HWA—Christ will judge him in perfect righteousness, but I and everyone else must decide whether they will accept his word over what they can understand in the Bible for themselves.

F.G. QUOTES N.E.: I agree that Dr. Meredith has a personally clean reputation and has worked diligently all of his life to "do the Work" as he understands it. I stopped working for Dr. Meredith because I was not free to openly talk about the things that I was studying in the Bible—I was supposed to represent the headquarters' view.

F.G. COMMENTS: Did Jesus encourage/allow any of His disciples to preach a different Gospel? Did the Apostle Paul encourage/allow the members and Ministers under him to preach any other doctrines?

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matt 28:19–20)

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine (1Tim 1:3).

N.E. RESPONSE: Paul and the other Apostles were trained directly by Christ for three years. They knew what they knew was truth. Mr. Armstrong said that his knowledge came from a six-month night-and-day study in a library. Studying like this is good, but the same books he used are available to you and me. Mr. Meredith attributes his knowledge to diligently learning from Mr. Armstrong. Neither claimed to be taught directly from Christ as the Apostles had. Mr. Armstrong changed doctrines when other "high-ranking" ministers who studied independently came to him (though the average member was put out when he openly studied something different than official teaching).

I was on Mr. Meredith's doctrinal committee and we discussed different doctrines. I hope you realize that was not a sin. Paul asked for unity among believers, but also realized that it would not happen: "For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you" (1Cor 11:18–19). I can find no biblical reason for applying

the scriptural authority of Christ and His Apostles to any church leader (including myself), today. God has given us His Spirit and the Scriptures, but not given us any teachers who speak face-to-face with Christ. If He does send someone like that, I will be quite ready to listen and obey.

F.G. Quotes N.E.: I was later disfellowshipped from the Global Church of God because unnamed people had read my writing *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?* and left the GCG because of it. My difficulty with Mr. Meredith is that after all the years of "training" that you mention, and after claiming to be the head of the church that Christ is using, he is not able to openly answer doctrinal questions as Christ and His Apostles did. He may say that he does not have enough time, but there are probably hundreds of people who have left the GCG and LCG over the issues in my writings.

F.G. Comments: What is the purpose of disfellowshipment?

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!… Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1Cor 1:5).

If the man in question was to do as N.E. did, then he would have started his own Organization. Would God have endorsed his new Organization? Could it be that N.E. had less than the proper attitude towards his disfellowshipment?

N.E. Response: This man was disfellowshipped, not because of a doctrinal teaching, but because of a **sin that everybody knew about.** The Corinthians were told to put him out openly "when you are gathered together" (v 4.). I was put out with no brethren present for a reason that was not explained to me. If my teaching was a sin, should not the leaders be desirous of explaining the exact nature of the sin so I could "repent of it"? I believe I had found a number of significant mistranslations in the KJV and other Bibles that CoG brethren needed to understand in order to obey God, but the GCG was not interested in either teaching this truth or proving it wrong. The Bible states it is possible for a leader to cast true brethren out of the church for the wrong reason (3Jo 9–10).

F.G. Quotes N.E.: Would not it be worth a day or two to prepare and record an open debate so that his members could see both sides of the issue and know that he was right? Of course, I believe that the Bible does not support his view and that the real reason most of the Church of God leaders will not answer doctrinal questions in an open forum is because they know they would have a lot of trouble. But I suppose they learned that well from Herbert Armstrong—he stopped answering open questions in the 1960s. It is much easier to look like one has the answer to everything when you can control the questions.

F.G. Comments: Should God's people be involved in debates?

For I fear, lest , when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults (2Cor 12:20, KJV)

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers (Rom 1:29, KJV).

N.E. Response: Thank you! You have just demonstrated another reason why believers need to carefully examine the KJV. I noticed you quoted the above two verses from the KJV, rather than the NKJV which you had been using. Why? Because nearly every other Bible translation does not say "debate" in these verses. In 2 Corinthians 12:20 the NKJV says "contentions", the NIV says "quarreling". In Romans 1:29, both the NKJV and NIV say "strife". I checked about 30 translations and almost none of them say "debate" in these places. The Greek word is *eris*, meaning "strife" or "contention" and is translated one of those ways almost everywhere else in the KJV. One of King James' stated goals for his translation was to have one text with no alternate readings or notes—he did not want any "debate" either. But the Church of God groups have continuously "debated" his translation and pointed out errors to other Christians regarding Easter, the Trinity, etc. That was a good thing to do.

Furthermore, the Bible does mention some "debates" among brethren. When the circumcision question was to be settled, the Bible says: "After there had been much **debate**, Peter arose and said to them…" (Acts 15:7, RSV; NRS, NAU, NAB also say "debate"). Also, "And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and **debate** with them… (Acts 16:2, RSV).

F.G. Comments: If N.E. wants to convert people to his way of thinking, why doesn't he try with the Roman Catholics or Muslims or someone else? Why is he trying to prove himself right to God's Church? If he is so sure of this righteousness, why doesn't he preach it to the world and allow God to call those whom He chooses? Could it be a sign of insecurity?

N.E. Response: I am not opposed to teaching Catholics and Muslims and I have done it to some degree. There are three people whom I know are Catholic on my mailing lists and two more who were in the past. I have had debates with them over some of their doctrines and tired to show some how they do not need to submit to their hierarchy. I have subscribers in Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Sultanate of Oman, Tanzania and United Arab Emirates. I do not know how many are Muslim. I would be glad to help them to whatever degree they were interested.

Most of my efforts at teaching non-Sabbatarian people have not worked out well, whereas I have letters and e-mails from hundreds of Sabbatarians who have thanked me for my work, and hundreds more questions that I have not been able to answer. When I have surveyed and spoken with our readers, they are most interested in Bible and Church of God related articles—I do not believe that either they or God want me to spend most of my effort giving a message to Catholics and Muslims.

F.G. Quotes N.E.: I remember Mr. Armstrong saying that. He would say it in his many sermons about the two trees—how God's way was "give" and Satan's way was "get". I know many members who gave much to the WCG most of their lives, cooking their own meals in cheap apartments and buying their family's clothes in second-hand stores. Herbert Armstrong, by his own admission, wore the best suits, ate in the best restaurants and stayed in the best places. HWA said these things were necessary to command the respect of kings, but John the Baptist found them unnecessary (Mark 1:6; 6:20). Who learned the lesson of "get and give"?

F.G. COMMENTS: How much is the truth that Mr. Armstrong (led by God's Spirit) **gave** N.E. worth? Would it be enough to buy one expensive suit? If we multiply this by 100,000 members in the Worldwide Church of God, could this money buy him the best suits?

In the same way, the Lord gave orders that those who preach the Good News should be supported by those who benefit from it (1Cor 9:14, NLT)

For the law of Moses says, "Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain." Do you suppose God was thinking only about oxen when he said this? (1Cor 9:9, NLT).

N.E. RESPONSE: The scriptures you quoted are obviously correct—it is right for people who serve by teaching to earn their living by it. I have lived that way for 7 years, though I have also had to gradually spend my own savings. The phrase "in the same way" in verse 14 refers to verse 13 which talks about the way the priests received money for their service. They did not receive dozens of times as much money as the average man of their day. Some believe that elders who serve well should. **There is no biblical example of any man of God saying, "I deserve great physical possessions because of the great value of God's truth that I bring you."** The rewards for what we do now will be given at our judgment (2Cor 5:10). Furthermore, I did not learn that much directly from Herbert Armstrong, but from other believers who taught for free, and from booklets that were produced and mailed by low-paid headquarters staff, and from low-paid Big Sandy college faculty. Paul clearly speaks of "men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself" (1Tim 6:5).

F.G. QUOTES N.E.: I realize that Herbert Armstrong frequently credited God for the "Work". But as Paul's letters are Christ's work through Paul, so the WCG was Christ's work through Herbert Armstrong. The big mistake is that where Paul acknowledged that God worked through other apostles and teachers, HWA claimed that all of Christ's work on earth, both spiritual and physical, was through Him (see organization chart published in the March 6 *Worldwide News*, reprinted on page 26, Nov 1998 *Servants' News*). The Dec 1998 *Servants' News* contains an article about 26 groups that taught the Sabbath, Holy Days and/or clean meats, most of which did not learn any truth from Herbert Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong certainly knew that there were many Holy Day keepers among the 200,000+ members of the Church of God Seventh Day groups. But he virtually never publicly acknowledged that God might be doing a work outside his organization.

F.G. COMMENTS: There have always been other groups who preached varying amounts of truth (and Mr. Armstrong recognized this), but none preached the whole truth the way Mr. Armstrong did. It's a shame that N.E. did not know this.

N.E. RESPONSE: I believe I can show many places where the Bible disagrees with Mr. Armstrong's teaching. When I stand in my judgment, I will go to the Scriptures for what I did, accepting Christ's correction, not to the writings of Herbert Armstrong. There is no promise that he will be there at your or anyone else's judgment. Mr. Armstrong certainly acknowledged that other groups had some truth, but he rarely ever acknowledged that they were part of the Church. Whereas, Jesus Christ, in Revelation 2 and 3 acknowledges a number of groups **with error** that are part of His Church!

The only reason people who were in the WCG and also those in the LCG think they have the "whole truth" is because they only listen to one source. If they would do as Christ and the Apostles did, and speak in open meetings where "outsiders" can ask questions (they must either answer or say "I don't know"), you would find out that there are many Bible questions that they cannot answer. Yes, there are some that I cannot answer, and I admit it!

F.G. QUOTES N.E.: It can also be called "Mr. Armstrong's work" in that he tolerated only people who were at the same level of understanding as he. When Mr. Armstrong kept a Monday Pentecost, he disfellowshipped Sunday Pentecost people. When he switched to Sunday Pentecost, he disfellowshipped those who continued to keep it on Monday. Obviously, HWA was not claiming that God rejects a person for keeping the wrong day—because, whichever is right, he kept the wrong day at some point.

The issue is that HWA would not tolerate a member who was either ahead or behind HWA in their understanding. Understanding the truth a few years early, or taking a few years to understand the new teaching would have gotten most people disfellowshipped. This kind of thing happened with many other issues. It is little wonder that so many WCG members simply followed their headquarters when doctrines began to change.

F.G. COMMENTS: *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! (1Cor 5:1)*

Maybe this man was behind the Apostle Paul in his understanding of sex. Did that stop Paul from disfellowshipping him?

N.E. RESPONSE: Hmmm. The issue here is not understanding, but sin. This man knew he was sinning, the brethren knew he was sinning, even the Gentiles knew he was sinning. Whereas Romans 14 contains a story about some brethren who had a doctrinal question as to whether or not they should eat meat. Paul could have given the answer and disfellowshipped those who disagreed, but he said: "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak…. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; **for whatever is not from faith is sin**" (Rom 14:20–21, 23).

F.G. COMMENTS: *But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the **tradition** which he received from us.*

N.E. RESPONSE: Is Paul saying here that the brethren should withdraw from any beleiver who disagrees with Paul on any point? Let us read it in context. Also, note that the term "walks disorderly" is not in most modern translations as the Greek *ataktos* means to be idle or lazy as the next few verses (as well as verse 11) bring out: The NIV (and many other translations) have it correctly: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we com-

mand you, brothers, to **keep away from every brother who is idle** and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought **to follow our example. We were not idle** when we were with you, **nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it**. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow" (2Thes 3:6–9). Paul's approach was obviously quite different from Herbert Armstrong's. If we are called to let Christ work through us, I agree that we should avoid professed "believers" who do nothing.

F.G. Quotes N.E.: You have questioned my faith several times in this letter, but what do you think takes more faith for a man with a family of six? To work for a $50,000 salary plus benefits for the GCG, a church of thousands that took in millions per year? Or to start an independent newsletter, not teaching that people must tithe to me, not having anyone pledge to support me, not even taking up collections in services?

F.G. Comments: It took faith for Mother Theresa to do the things she did! It took faith for Mahatma Ghandi to do what he did! But did their faith come from God?

N.E. Response: I am not about to judge whether or not their faith came from God. Rahab the prostitute had faith and spared her family (Heb 11:31). A woman of Samaria, who knew almost no truth, had faith in Christ (John 4).

F.G. Comments: All tithes belong to God! Mr. Armstrong always taught that. Tithing is to support God's Work. We tithe to God, then God gives His tithe to His Ministers to use as He directs.

Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, "In what way have we robbed You?" In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house (Mal 3:8–10).

N.E. Response: You have done a good job of quoting Mr. Armstrong, but you cannot find a scripture where God commands people to tithe to anyone other than the Levites who then tithed to the priests. (Yes, Abraham gave a tenth of war spoil to Melchisedec, then gave all the rest back to the people it belonged to—no increase on his part. In Numbers 31:25–30, God asked for 2% of the spoil of war.) There is neither command nor example of tithing to the ministry or "God's work"—but numerous examples of voluntary offerings given to the New Testament ministry. Neither the prophets (unless they were Levites) nor King David who wrote so many Psalms received the tithe, but people did give them offerings. For more information ask for my paper, *How Do We Give to the Eternal?*

F.G. Quotes N.E.: Mr. Armstrong spoke about government a lot in his sermons, and wrote a lot of short articles on the subject, but never wrote one booklet devoted to the scriptures on the subject.

F.G. Comments: Here are some articles/booklets that disprove that statement:

Christ Did Put Authority and Rule In His Church, *by H. W. Armstrong*
May, 1974 Letter on Church Government, *by H. W. Armstrong*
The Wonderful World Tomorrow, *by H. W. Armstrong*
The Incredible Human Potential, *by H. W. Armstrong*
What Is The True Gospel? *by H. W. Armstrong*

The Kingdom of God is the Government of God. Every booklet Mr. Armstrong wrote about the Kingdom of God also addressed the Government of God. Could it be that N.E. never did get the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom/Government of God?

N.E. Response: I definitely got the message of the "Government of God" over the years. The phrase appears over 1,000 times in Mr. Armstrong's writings and I heard it in numerous headquarters sermons. But now that I try to teach from the Bible, I have trouble with it because it isn't in there. I have the same trouble with protestant doctrinal words like the "rapture" which are not in there. Clearly God does govern, he does protect people from tribulation, but when one builds a doctrine around a phrase that is not in the Bible, I think we are in trouble. If the Bible says "Kingdom of God", then that is the term I will use.

Thank you for pointing out a mistake in my writing, for which I repent. I meant to say that Mr. Armstrong never wrote a whole booklet on "***church*** government"—he wrote several on "government". The latter three booklets you mentioned talk a lot about government in the Millennial Kingdom of God. The first two deal directly with church government, but they are only an article and a letter. May 1974 letter goes into the most detail on Church government. I offer a copy of that with my comments to anyone who wants it (ask for order code "MAY74"). The article shows verses that do not speak against hierarchical government, verses that show the ministry does have some authority, but fails to show scriptures that establish a multi-level hierarchy of church deacons, ministers, and higher leaders each of which must be ordained by a leader of greater authority. The Catholic church and most military organizations (even in the Bible) establish such hierarchies, but the Bible does not teach this for the church.

Christ Did Put Authority and Rule In His Church claims that the reason for so many church denominations is that attitude that each man must decide for himself what he will do from Scripture. In reality, denominations are caused by people following the doctrines of church leaders (often without knowing what the Bible says on the issues), assuming their group is right, and all the others are wrong. Numerous "non-denominational" congregations get along with each other and work together, but "church organizations", especially hierarchical ones, often do not. Mr. Armstrong goes on to say that God has always had His Government in His Church, but utterly fails to give the names or locations of the top leaders throughout history (even in the near-history of the 1800s and 1900s). If following a human church government is so vital to obeying God, how can that be done if nobody knows where it is for most of history? The article claims that the church leader's decisions are God's decisions—including decisions such as whether it is all right for women to wear lipstick. This makes God look rather unstable, as Mr. Armstrong reversed his decision a few times on the issue of makeup. Today, groups that still claim to be "the government of God" are still divided on this

issue—even ministers in your church organization have different opinions.

F.G. Quotes N.E.: I am not opposed to God being in charge forever. (And even if I was, God would remain in charge anyway!) But I do not believe that the Scriptures teach that "God always works through one man" and that we are bound to accept one man's understanding of Scripture no matter what.

F.G. Comments: Here are some men who were the only ones in their time who God worked through: Abraham, Elijah, Moses, Samuel, Jesus Christ. Many persons challenged Moses' one man leadership—read about it in Numbers 16.

N.E. Response: Twenty years ago, I would have said, "that's right," without thinking about what the Bible says. But let us examine each of these men and see what the Bible says.

Abraham: Lot received a visit from angels and a miraculous deliverance from destruction (Gen 19). Abraham deceived Abimelech by saying Sarah was his sister, but God appeared to Abimelech in a dream rather than to Abraham (Gen 20:1–7). After Hagar was sent away from Abraham, an angel gave **her** a miracle and a great promise for her descendants for the future (Gen 21:16–19). When Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham promised that God would send an angel (Gen 24:7), but the servant prayed directly to God for a sign of his own request (Gen 24:12–22). Please be honest. What would the leader of your group say if a member claimed to have had a visit from an angel, a dream from God, a personal promise of greatness from an angel, or a miraculously answered prayer? My experience is that the member would not be believed, and maybe be put out of the group for talking about it because "God works through one man".

Elijah. Elijah's primary ministry spans 1 Kings 17 to 2 Kings 2. Obadiah hid 100 prophets from Jezebel because "he feared the Lord", not specifically because of Elijah's command (1Kngs 18:3–4). Elijah thought that he was the only one obeying God, but there were 7,000 whom he did not know about who could not possibly have been "under him" (1Kngs 19:13–18). An unnamed prophet of God spoke to Ahab (1Kngs 20:13–28). Another unnamed prophet delivered a message to Ahab (1Kngs 20:35–43). Finally, Elisha seems to continue the job of Elijah in 2 Kings 2, but Elijah is still alive and writes a letter in 2 Chronicles 21:12. As we can see, God works through as many prophets as he needs, but if God gives a CoG member a prophecy, will the leader of his group reject it, saying, "God works through one man"?

Moses. While Korah and his followers certainly died and God upheld Moses, the chapter does not say "God always works through one man". Rather, it faults Korah for making false accusations against Moses. Furthermore, God had said nothing to Korah, and Moses clearly was following God. But did God work through other people while Moses was alive? He spoke through Aaron and set him over the priesthood. God also placed his spirit upon 70 elders, two of whom prophesied apart from Moses (Num 11:25–27). Did Moses have to assert his position over them? No, because God was working in them, too: "Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, 'Moses, my lord, stop them!' But Moses replied, 'Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit on them!' " (Num 11:28–29). No "just one man" philosophy here!

Samuel. Even though Samuel was alive, an unnamed prophet spoke to Eli (1Sam 2:26–36). Saul and an entire "company of prophets" prophesied apart from Samuel (1Sam 10:1–12). Saul's messengers prophesied and then Saul himself prophesied again, "he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night" (1Sam 19:20–24). This was not Saul's or Samuel's idea. Also, Gad prophesied to David while Samuel was alive (1Sam 22:5). Finally, David wrote some of his inspired Psalms while Samuel was alive. God is great and has no trouble working through more than one man. I think almost everyone agrees that God directly inspired both Samuel and David.

Jesus Christ. Even though John recognized the superiority of Jesus (Matt 3:13–15), he did not immediately terminate his ministry and send all of his disciples to Jesus; John's ministry continued on and he had disciples even when he was in prison (Matt 9:14; 11:3–6; John 3:25–4:1). Jesus was not the least bit concerned that the Father would "go around Him" and reveal things directly to someone. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven' " (Matt 16:17). Jesus Himself taught this important lesson: "Now John answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side' " (Mark 9:38–40).

These many scriptures prove beyond any doubt that God does not always teach and work through "one man" at a time. But one might look at the above examples and say, "God did work through multiple people, but they were not in conflict with the "man God was using". Usually, that is the case, but not always. We already mentioned the debates in Acts 15:2,7; there was a contention between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:39); Apollos disagreed with Paul's plans for him (1Cor 16:12), brethren discussed whether it was all right to eat meat (Rom 14), and other issues. Unity is possible through love and co-operation in the Spirit, not in groups forming around leaders who will decide all truths for their group.

F.G. Quotes N.E.: I realize that the LCG and many of the other CoG groups teach their members not to read outside literature. But again I ask, who will be best able to keep following God in His Kingdom? Someone who has only read and heard the truth? Or someone who has read a variety of things, some true, some false, and who has been able to discern the truth from the error?

F.G. Comments: Adam and Eve were given the same advice that the members of the LCG were given (according to N.E.). They made the choice N.E. made—see where that led us? Adam and Eve sought independence, they decided for themselves what is truth and error, they did not want to depend on God to teach them His way and in His time, so they started their own organization based on

Continued on page 26

Declaration of Establishment

I, the undersigned Christian man, on this 10th day of December in the year of our Lord 2001, desiring to form a Church Ministry under the Sovereignty and Government of Jesus Christ, hereby declare its establishment according to the following articles:

1. Name

The name is **Church Bible Teaching Ministry,** hereinafter referred to as "CBTM".

2. Definition of "Church" & "Ministry"

The word "Church" in this document and other Governing Documents is defined as used in the Bible and also as defined at law, below, to designate the body of Christ, which is the diverse body of all believers doing the work of Christ throughout the world.

> Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh **for his body's sake, which is the church** (Col 1:24).
>
> For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For **we are members of his body**, of his flesh, and of his bones (Eph 5:29-30).
>
> For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are **one body in Christ**, and every one members one of another. **Having then gifts differing** according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith (Rom 12:4-6).
>
> **Church.** In its most general sense, the religious society founded and establish by Jesus Christ, to receive, preserve, and propagate His doctrines and ordinances (Black's Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition).

The word "Ministry" in this document and other Governing Documents is used as it is defined in the Bible and as also defined at law, below, to designate the functions of individuals serving within the Church as directed by Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks for both Christ placing a man into a Ministry and of a man placing himself into a Ministry:

> And he [Christ] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, **for the work of the ministry**, for the edifying of **the body of Christ** [the church] (Eph 4:11-12).
>
> And I [Paul] thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, **putting me into the ministry** (1Tim 1:12).
>
> But we [the Apostles] will **give ourselves** continually to prayer, and **to the ministry** of the word (Acts 6:4).
>
> But brothers, I exhort you. You know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruit of Achaia, and they **appointed themselves to the ministry** to the saints (1Cor 16:15, Green's Literal Translation).
>
> **Ministry. ...**"Ecclesiastical functions" (Black's Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition).
>
> **Ecclesiastical.** Pertaining to anything belonging to or set apart for the church, as distinguished from "civil" or "secular," with regard to the world (Black's Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition).

3. *Lordship of Jesus Christ*

Jesus Christ is the head of all aspects His Church and Ministries, having sole and sovereign authority over them:

> ...[T]he ministry, **which I have received of the Lord Jesus**, to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).
>
> "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as **Christ is the head of the church**: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph 5:23).
>
> ...**[H]e [Christ] is the head of the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (Col 1:18).
>
> So we, being many, are **one body in Christ**, and every one members one of another (Rom 12:5).
>
> Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and **gave him to be the head over all things to the church** (Eph 1:20-22).

4. *Governing Documents*

The primary governing document of CBTM is the Holy Bible. Additional Governing Documents are required to cover issues not specifically answered in the Bible and to establish principles and methods specific to CBTM. These additional Governing Documents of CBTM are maintained by CBTM Elders.

5. *Scope of Powers*

CBTM, acting through its Elders in accordance with its Governing Documents, is authorized to conduct the Church Ministry functions it determines to be necessary. Such activities include, but are not limited to: observance of all applicable Biblical commands; opening financial accounts such as bank accounts; the purchase lease or rental of congregational meeting facilities and work facilities for ministries; the purchase, lease or rental of necessary equipment, musical instruments, vehicles, supplies, implements or tools and any and all other forms of property both real and personal; the purchase of insurance; the remuneration or compensation of those laboring in the Ministry; the distribution of tangible and intangible gifts or benevolent charities; as well as any other necessary and appropriate financial transactions, CBTM acting through its authorized Elders, for the initiation, promotion, expansion and continuation of its activities.

6. *Authorization*

The organizing of Church Bible Teaching Ministry is hereby petitioned for and authorized by:

Norman Scott Edwards Date: 12/10/2001

Norman Scott Edwards, Elder

Church Bible Teaching Ministry

Statement of Beliefs

1. Most religious groups produce a "statement of beliefs"—a concise summary of their understanding of the most important teachings of the Bible. Such statements are often regarded as the group's reason for existence: the members of the group believe that their understanding is a little (or a lot) better than other religious groups. Unfortunately, when people personally "accept" a statement of beliefs, it usually hinders them from learning new things directly from the Bible and the Holy Spirit. If their study should lead them to understand something contrary to their church group's statement of beliefs, many groups might spurn them or even reject them as members.
2. The Bible teaches that the spiritual Church should not be divided into different groups following different leaders (John 17:22, 1Cor 1:11-13; 3:1-15). There is obviously a need to reject flagrant false teachers (Titus 3:10; 2John 1:10-11; Rev 2:2, etc.), but other Scriptures show that mature brethren can tolerate mistaken beliefs of others (Rom 14). The "seven churches" in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 had some severe errors, but Christ still called them all "His churches". When the Bible mentions different church groups, it is always because they were separated by distance: there was a church at Ephesus, another at Corinth, etc. There is no mention of multiple competing congregations in the same city. Nevertheless, the forming of denominations is just one of many sins affecting believers. Much of our Father's work has been done in spite of denominationalism and other mistakes.
3. It is our hope that all people, everywhere, will believe and practice only truth, not error. However, we realize that we do not have a perfect understanding of truth, nor do we know of anyone who does. Throughout history, most people have had extremely limited access to the Bible, either in their own language or in its original languages. We find no consistent set of doctrines held by ***any*** Christian religious group for the past 1900 years. **Each person will be judged primarily by what they do with the knowledge they have** (John 9:41; Luke 12:47-48; Rom 2:12-16; 14:23; Jms 4:17). People with the gift of teaching should teach truth to those who will hear it. We believe that the Bible reveals essential truth (2Tim 3:15-17, John 17:17), though small parts of the Scriptures may have become corrupt in the process of copying and translation (Isa 28:9-13).
4. Not publishing an extensive "statement of beliefs" does not mean that we not study or have beliefs! However, we do not think it wise to state doctrinal conclusions without corresponding detailed explanations from the Scriptures. If a person reads several of our detailed articles and finds them Biblically accurate, he or she should not automatically accept all of our other doctrinal conclusions without similar study—that would be "following a man," not our Messiah. On the other hand, a person can disagree with our teaching on one subject, but still benefit greatly from our explanation of other subjects. We do not knowingly publish error, but we have limited human minds, we do not have a perfect relationship with the Eternal, and Satan is trying to deceive us as he is trying to deceive everyone else. Nevertheless, we do believe that the Eternal wants us to teach, and that he has given and is giving us a substantial amount of truth to share.
5. For the benefit of those seeking truth, we quote what we believe are fundamental Scriptures, below. This will not answer all questions, but as far as the New King James Version of the Bible allows, it is truth:

6. In the beginning God [Hebrew אלֹהִים or *Elohim*] created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1).
7. And God spoke all these words, saying: "I *am* the LORD [Hebrew יהוה, exact pronunciation is in dispute] your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female

servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's. (Ex 20:1-17).

8. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up (Deut 6:4-7)
9. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD (Lev 19:18). (Quoted in Matt 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31.)
10. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all (Eccl 12:13).
11. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1Jn 5:3).
12. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love (1John 4:8).
13. Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD (Deut 8:3, Matt 4:4, Luke 4:4).
14. Yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ [*Yeshua* the Messiah], through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live* (1Cor 8:6).
15. For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6).
16. For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus (1Tim 2:5).
17. For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23).
18. Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
19. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Rom 5:10).
20. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph 2:8-10).
21. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1Jn 1:8-2:1).
22. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you (1Pet 1:3-4).
23. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another,* and so much the more as you see the Day approaching (Heb 10:25).
24. Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Heb.6:1-2).
25. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (Heb 9:27).
26. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2Cor 5:10).
27. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1Jn 3:2).
28. The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! (Rev 11:15)
29. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (Rev 20:4-6).
30. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful" (Rev 21:3-5).

Document Revised December 10, 2001:
Norman Scott Edwards 12/10/2001

STATBE07

Church Bible Teaching Ministry

Mission Plan

1) Mission Statement

The mission of Church Bible Teaching Ministry is to teach the Bible to as many people as will hear, helping them to form local non-denominational congregations of the one Church headed by Jesus the Christ, learning and living the Christian way of life, doing good to others and teaching others to do good, standing up for truth, and holding fast resisting evil, in the name and by the power of the one God, the Creator of the Universe.

2) Foundational Scriptures:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matt 22:36-39)

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matt 4:4).

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad (2Cor 5:10).

3) Vision Statement

Church Bible Teaching Ministry works toward the day when believers everywhere discard their factions and fighting and "all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13) and when "the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Is 11:9).

4) Long-term Goals

a) Produce **free** literature teaching the Bible in a way that is easily understandable to a variety of people. Such literature would include printed material, pictures, recorded spoken messages, music and video productions. Technology has now reached the point where individuals can copy all of the above types of literature many times and still retain a quality product. Those who use and benefit from the teaching literature are its best source of advertising, and now, thanks to technology, can freely distribute it. The teaching of simple, godly truth should have a stark contrast to many religious groups that make themselves wealthy by religion.

b) Produce literature similar to the above exposing corrupt religious, government and business practices—helping people who are personally suffering from them to understand and escape them.

c) Provide access to other ministries, groups and individuals that are working toward similar goals.

d) Make the above items available free of charge through the mail, catalogued and indexed so that people can find what they need when they need it.

e) Make the above teaching items available on web sites so that people can easily find or search for the items they need.

f) Provide personal encouragement and help to individuals as time permits.

g) Take decisive action as God leads: openly encourage true religion, good laws and fair business practices. Confront corrupt leaders in religion, government and business. Cast out demons. Help the imprisoned and afflicted. Be diligent to find the truth and tell it when others are afraid to.

h) Help others to start congregations in their own area or ministries similar to this one.

5) Present Ministry Activities

a) Publish *Shelter in the Word*, a magazine designed for a general Christian audience, to fulfill the Church Bible Teaching Ministry goals.

b) Publish *Servants' News*, a magazine designed for an audience with years of background in Sabbath keeping and Bible Study.

c) Maintain the Church Bible Teaching Ministry web sites: **www.shelterintheword.com** and **www.servantsnews.com**.

d) Print and distribute additional literature offered through the above publications and web sites. Major Church Bible Teaching Ministry booklets include: *Assembling on the Sabbath, How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?, Biblical Calendar Basics, What Does the Bible Say About Eternal Judgment?* and *Starting a Local Congregation.*

e) Help other groups to start local congregations directly under Christ, avoiding submission to human church hierarchies and state intrusion via incorporation or "tax exempt status". Such help consists of sharing information, information sources and personal experience.

f) Travel to speak, as invited, to a variety of groups on biblical subjects.

g) Compose, play, record and distribute Bible-teaching and generally helpful music.

h) Explain Bible principles to individuals as they call, write or send e-mail.

i) Maintain the Living Room Church of God Directory and the Local Servants Directory so people looking for congregations and other Bible-believing individuals will find them.

j) Organize Feast of Tabernacles sites and help others to do the same.

k) Write letters to individuals in government explaining the wisdom behind Biblical laws and principles (Deut 4:5-9) and encouraging them to implement them in our nation. Encourage other believers to do the same. (The State should never be used to force people to join or participate in a specific religion. But as the State serves its people and punishes evildoers, it would be better for everyone if Bible principles were followed.)

6) Working with Other Ministries and Congregations

a) Church Bible Teaching Ministry is one of many ministries serving within the body of Christ. It is not a church congregation, nor does it "have congregations". The Church, the Body of Christ, has many members. Those members may serve in this or many other ministries and attend a great variety of congregations—or attend no congregation at all.

b) Church Bible Teaching Ministry works with and encourages many other ministries and congregations. It is not the responsibility of Church Bible Teaching Ministry to determine who is and is not in the Body of Christ (Christ does that), but at times, it is necessary to make a determination as to which groups it is possible for us to work with. The Bible teaches believers to work with others who may hold some different doctrines (Rom 14), but to avoid those with flagrant sin (1Cor 5, 1Tim 3, Titus 1) or serious false doctrine (Rom 16:17-18; 2Jn 1:10-11). Sometimes, one must avoid working with other believers because one is unsure if God is inspiring their activities or not. All believers must have confidence to do the work that God has given them, knowing that Christ will manage His Church.

c) The main concern of Church Bible Teaching Ministry is to see its goals accomplished in a manner Christ approves. Whether the work is done through this ministry or through others is less important.

7) Governance

a) Currently, Norman Scott Edwards operates as the one and only Elder with all the decision-making responsibility for Church Bible Teaching Ministry. In the future, if other elders become equally committed to this ministry, it will be governed via a constitution and agreement of its elders. Church Bible Teaching Ministry is not a local congregation or "church organization" and is therefore not in conflict with the Bible teaching that a congregation's members choose their leaders (Acts 6:5; 15:22; 2Cor 8:19, etc.). It is a Ministry of God's Church, serving God, operating individually, as did Stephen (Acts 6:8-7:60), Philip (Acts 8) and Apollos (Acts 18:24-19:6; 1Cor 16:12).

b) Many people help with the work of Church Bible Teaching Ministry by editing publications, writing articles, laying out literature, preparing mailings, printing literature, helping internationally and sending offerings—the ministry as it is would not be possible without them. Their opinions are respected and considered, but at this time they bear neither decision-making authority nor liability for actions of Church Bible Teaching Ministry.

c) Church Bible Teaching Ministry is subject to the methods that Christ placed in His church for resolving difficulties. Anyone who believes that someone representing Church Bible Teaching Ministry has sinned against them should apply the instructions in Matthew 18:15-17: 1) State their case in person, then 2) state their case in front of other witnesses, then 3) bring their case to "the Church". Normally, "the Church" referred to in this scripture would be a local congregation. If the one offended will accept it, the local congregation attended by the accused can fulfill this function. (This congregation is not controlled by Church Bible Teaching Ministry in any way). If the one offended

does not accept this congregation as being able to give an unbiased decision, then the offended and the accused should pray that God would provide them a just "congregation" to hear this problem. Then, each should choose an equal number of people from their own congregations, write their names on equal-sized pieces of paper, put them in an opaque container, ask unbiased individual to draw out half of the names in the container, and use those people as the "congregation" to help the issue.

8) Methods of Promoting Church Bible Teaching Ministry

a) Church Bible Teaching Ministry magazines and literature
b) Articles, advertisements and letters to the editor in other religious as well as secular publications
c) Church Bible Teaching Ministry web sites found via referral and Internet search engines
d) Links from other web sites
e) Speaking engagements, seminars and conferences
f) Direct mail
g) Radio and television interviews
h) Exhibitions at conventions and state fairs
i) Joint promotions with other ministries

9) Funding

a) Church Bible Teaching Ministry is funded by brethren who voluntarily support it (2Cor 9:7). The Bible teaches that those who teach for God should be supported by other believers that are able (1Cor 9:6-14). It also teaches that brethren should determine which leaders are doing a good work and support them (1Cor 9:12, 2Jn 1:7-11, 1Tim 6:3-8). The work of each believer will be "tried by fire" (1Cor 3:11-15). Those who support groups that accomplish little for Christ will be saved, but have little to sow at His return.
b) Church Bible Teaching Ministry operates as a free ministry under the protection of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America—as most ministries did before the 1900s. Churches and ministries are automatically immune from taxes and regulation without the need for "incorporation" or "applying for tax exempt status".

10) About the Elder

Norman Scott Edwards was born in 1956 to conservative, Bible-believing parents. He walked down the aisle of an independent Bible church and dedicated his life to God when he was 15. While he still had much to learn about the Scriptures, the process of seeking to follow God certainly began there. He was baptized at age 18 while attending a church-sponsored college. He worked for churches and church colleges from 1978 until 1994, mostly in technical areas. However, his last few years involved writing and editing for church publications and serving on the doctrinal committee.

Difficulties within church leadership, and being a member of churches that broke up caused Norman to study the Bible to determine what it really says about how church congregations and leadership should operate. His study for the booklet, *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?,* taught him that the typical church concepts of "ordination"; clergy and layman; deacons and ministers were "forced into" the King James Bible—that many verses about these subjects are different in Bible translations made before or after the King James. Seeing the Bible's testimony to Christ's desire for a personal relationship with each believer, and His promise to personally direct His members and congregations, Norman has labored to live, teach and encourage these and many other biblical mainstays.

Norman was married in 1983. He and his wife had four children from 1985 to 1993.

Document Revised December 10, 2001:

Norman Scott Edwards 12/10/2001

Contact: Norman Scott Edwards at: PO Box 107, Perry, Michigan 48872
517-625-7480 Fax: 517-625-7481 e-mail: info@shelterintheword.com

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.

Place of Safety

LETTER: November 9, 2001

Mr. Edwards,

Thank you so much for sending *Servants' News*. I was trying to attend WCG when everyone was coming out. At that time there was confusion and much disorder, I have since joined with another group and am trying to live by **God's** Word. I am wondering what your reasoning is on the place of safety and if you have read the article by R C Dick in *The Journal* on this subject. If not, would you please do so? There are so many that believe blindly and we need someone with common sense to help us evaluate **God's** Word so that we can have a better understanding. You have helped me in my quest for the true word and I thank you again.

Sincerely,

— Joanne Miller, Texas

RESPONSE: The "place of safety" teaching has had a tremendous affect on the Church of God brethren for decades—and I think that most of the affect has been very negative. The affect has been very similar to other Christian groups which may be teaching a "rapture" or some other "go to heaven" teaching. Why? Please understand that I know and love scriptures such as these:

> "But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent" (Rev 12:14).
>
> "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Rev 3:10).
>
> "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him" (Mal 3:17).

I believe that the Bible promises deliverance for believers in many places and that God often provides it. There are many stories today of Christians who live in countries where they are persecuted and who believe they have obtained divine deliverance from God. I cannot personally verify all of these stories, but I have talked to some who certainly believe they are true. On the other hand, Hebrews 11, Matt 16:24 and other scriptures show that God does not always save His servants from difficulty and death.

The ultimate way to deal with tribulation is to have the faith in God to know that He will either **rescue you from it or help you get through it.** This is the faith that Jesus had:

> "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

The "place of safety" doctrine becomes dangerous when it is viewed as a corporate church benefit. Some churches actively teach that **only their members** will be the ones to escape the "Great Tribulation". Others teach that there is a place of safety which God will reveal to their group, but that they simply don't know about other groups. The dangerous effects of this doctrine are these:

1. Using the term "place of safety" creates one more doctrine for which the title cannot be found in the Bible (much like "rapture"). It is very difficult for other Bible students without a "Church of God" background to relate to a teaching with a non-biblical name.

2. It replaces individual trust in Christ for guidance and protection in all situations with trust in the corporate church that promises a "place of safety".

3. It discourages people from examining themselves when they think they "have it made".

4. It encourages people to actually want the Tribulation so they can be "saved from it", rather than people being saddened by the sin in our nations and doing what they can to prevent it (see Ezk 9:1–6). The WCG taught that its mission was to "warn the world", and then members could sort of sit back and watch it blow up during the Tribulation. Today, many CoG groups believe that "the Gospel has been preached", so some are sitting back and "waiting for the world to blow up". Whereas, Christ told us to continue to work till He comes (Matt 10:23; Luke 12:35–48; 19:13, etc.).

People who trust that their group will lead them to a "place of safety" to avoid the Tribulation need to realize that they are trusting their leaders to interpret a prophecy with pinpoint accuracy: "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house" (Matt 24:16–17). Have these leaders ever interpreted a prophecy that accurately before? Have they ever had any clear, provable revelation from God?

Can we have faith that God will keep His promise and, through His Spirit, show us what we need to know— "show us things to come"? (John 16:13). Is not that better than trusting in the doctrine of an organization that has no proven "track record" in specific prophetic interpretation and no direct promise of revelation from God?

— NSE

Helped By Reading Back Issues

LETTER: November 27, 2001

Hi Norman!

I'm having a great time reading back issues of SN! I've made it going from the present back to about mid-97. Thank you so much! These are really helping me to heal from my spiritual wounds. I am getting ready to go forward! We need to really preach the gospel! I need to teach about Jesus Christ to people who have no hope (great response to the elder turning atheist, I think it could be expanded into a very good article, appropriate for *Shelter in the Word*, appropriate for approaching people with the gospel who have the atheist mindset).

And I absolutely loved your satire on non-Rev 2 and 3. In my opinion, that's the way HWA would have had it written. Anyway, the

language was very **very** familiar to me… I could conceive of someone witty being able to expand it even further, some parts made me split my sides, but not nearly as much as the "Graveyard CoG" (not your article) where it mentioned that "the… heads were all inside" after talking about normal church steeples in most cases.

[Literature request omitted.]

Thanks again for listening. I'm sorry for snowing you with emails, but you've become such a part of my life. I regard you as the "watchman" for the brethren. Please keep up the good work as long as the Eternal inspires you to continue!

By the way, you can print anything I send you, just use my email address, not physical address.

— Susan Owen, Switzerland
atl04@yahoo.com

RESPONSE: Thank you very much for this encouragement. It helps to know that the back issues are still being read and helping people. I think many of them are still relevant for today.

— NSE

Do Ministers Rely on God?

LETTER: Feb 28, 2002

Dear Norm

I wanted to make some comments on the letter from Don Anderson [*Servants' News* Sept/Oct 2001, page 9.] about UCG's financial report and about how the ministers have their second tithe "held back" and given to them at FOT time. Let me see, Don makes $45,000. Half of that for each of Don and his wife is $22,500.

Do any of the ministers realize that that is higher than a lot of people make in this country? A lot of people barely make above minimum wage in this country. Let me see how the tithes would add up for a man and his wife and two children living on this salary. A tithe on $22,500 is $2,250. A second tithe is $2,250. Together that is $4,500 taken off a salary that Uncle Sam lays claim to also. That leaves the "average lay member" $18,000 to share with Uncle Sam and to live on. Don and/or his wife would have $22,500 plus the 9% second tithe withheld which is $2,025 making his/her salary $24,525. Oh, but I forgot the tax breaks Uncle Sam gives ministers. While I have no idea of the amounts that these tax breaks are, I'll bet they are substantial.

Is it "sour grapes" to point out that if Don or any other minister is giving 10% of his salary as a tithe to the church, since he is getting back 9%, doesn't that mean that **in reality**, they are only giving 1% of a salary of $22,500 which is $225. While the poor person making $22,500 is giving $2,025 **more** than the minister who is supposed to be caring for God's sheep. Does something start to stink around here?

Let me point out that I am a "member" of UCG. When I got on the Internet after getting a computer and started to find out about the abuses, I was shocked, but what has done the most damage to the most people is the false doctrine of tithing. Also the false premise that the ministers are "**relying on God**". Bull pucky, they are relying on God's people. They are continuing the con artistry of HWA (haven't they learned well!). The faithful lay members of all of the churches of God who teach tithing have long ago learned how to rely on God and depend on His love and grace to see them through. The "ministers" haven't so much as laid a finger to lift a burden from the shoulders of the sheep of God's pasture. In fact, they continue to see just how much they can add to that financial burden. Yes, there are the verses that say that we shouldn't muzzle the oxen that treads out the corn. I'm afraid that in this case, the oxen as a group are eating most of the corn.

Now, before anyone thinks I have absolutely no esteem for the "ministry", let me set them straight. I have met some very fine ministers and their families. Even if I hadn't, the law of averages says that in a group of ministers, there has to be some who are genuinely doing or trying to do God's will. Don may well be one of these ministers. I'll take his word for this fact. But the fact also remains that the COGs have caused havoc among God's people with their demands for money.

I don't know how anyone can try to make a case for teaching people to tithe especially to you, Norm, because you are a good example of relying on God for your family's welfare. I've heard stories of how you have put out the *Servants' News* and had some tough times doing it. Can't the ministers see that God has taken care of you and your family? I think that you are one of the few who realize that God is not promising to make us all like Abraham, David, or Solomon when it comes to wealth. Even Christ relied on God to provide, but the ministers can't follow His example.

Norm, if any of these ideas are wrong, please don't hesitate to set me straight. I'm not the greatest math wizard, and am not the greatest thinker I know, but am willing to be corrected. If you decide to print this in the *Servants' News*, go ahead and print my name and town address. If UCG wants to disfellowship me for my opinions, so be it. I was going to print out what you published about UCG's tax audit and show it around my local congregation. Someone pointed out that the people would likely just gloss over the facts, and they wouldn't think anything of the money situation. That may well be, but I can't in good conscience stand by saying absolutely nothing while I watch people who struggle with a near minimum wage to pay their tithes. If you have any questions of me, feel free to ask them.

— Pat Miller, Yeagertown, Pennsylvania

RESPONSE: Your math was unfair to the minister. You subtracted two tithes from your "typical member's" salary saying all they had left was $18,000. You correctly added the $2,025 second-tithe bonus to make $24,525, but to have a valid comparison of salary without tithes for both people, you should then also subtract first tithe from the minister, which would leave them with $22,500 – $2,250 = $20,250 after tithes. This is still more that the "typical member", but not as much different as your numbers.

I do not think this is a totally unreasonable amount for someone who serves full-time in a congregation to receive, but I do think it would be better if they set an example for the congregation and relied upon what God caused to be sent to them. The way most churches operate today, as corporations, it is quite difficult for them to do this. Rules for corporations require standardization of payment, hiring, firing, workload, etc. The Bible does not mention any of this. There have been a number of times when I was short of money, prayed about it, and then realized that I needed to change what I was doing and then God sent more money. Our whole society is geared around job seniority, insurance, welfare, unemployment benefits, etc. If something goes wrong we tend not to want to ask, "God what am I doing wrong?" Nor do usually want to ask our neighbors for help. But I think those are the things that God wants us to do.

One thing I might say to help you: Do not become bitter about the ministry taking too much money, teaching tithing, and these sorts of things. I supported and defended that system for years, not knowing any better. We should have similar patience with those who have not yet learned. Those who perpetuate the system knowing it is unbiblical will be judged by God. We do not have to judge them now.

There are other church groups that have

more exploitation and corruption than the Church of God groups—and they have less truth as well. Yet, they still turn some people to the Bible and Christ, and He works with them. Certainly do what you can to help other ministers and members see the truth on these issue, but try to find other ways to serve God. When we rise from the dead, we don't want to be able to tell God just what is wrong with the ministry and members of many groups, we want to be able to say, "this is what we did". And we hope He will reply: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matt 25:21).

— NSE

Thanks for Help

LETTER: April 25, 2002

Thanks very much for your reply to the request about the Sacred Names issue in *the Good News*. We had also asked Richard Nickels, and he is sending us a photocopy of his *Good News*.

But thanks very much for your own personal article on the Sacred Names [ask for our order code SNAMES]. This, and together with some other literature, we will print more copies of and forward them to those brethren who are interested. Thanks again for your help, and for going the extra mile to serve the brethren—it means a lot to us.

Regards

— Mike, Cape Town, South Africa

RESPONSE: Sometimes my issues are late because I spend too much time handling individual requests—even then, I do not get to all of them. However, I am happy to do something that I know somebody is really going to use.

— NSE 🕮

"Yet Another Answer to Hierarchical Leader Letter" from page 16

their own human discernment of truth from error!

N.E. RESPONSE: How did this mix-up occur? I never said people should decide for themselves what is truth, but that they should study the Bible and rely on God's promise for the Holy Spirit to lead them into truth (John 16:13). Please notice that God let Satan tempt Adam and Eve. He did not keep Satan out of the Garden (He could have). If Adam and Eve had believed it was their personal responsibility to seek God on the matter, they might well have rejected Satan. Instead, they believed Satan's doctrinal error because he seemed "good" (2Cor 11:14). Apparently, they had not received the Holy Spirit, which gave Satan the edge on them. God did not stop Satan from tempting Christ (He could have), but He was glad to see that Christ overcame Satan. We need to use the Holy Spirit and be able to resist and defeat Satan. "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jms 4:7).

F.G. QUOTES N.E.: Galatians 6:1 states: "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." God wants mature believers to help others. If you would like to read my writings and find error in my ways, I would be glad to be helped out by it.

F.G. COMMENTS: *For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist," says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isa 66:2).*

God's Ministers are always happy to help anyone who is genuinely repentant. That is a part of our God-given duty.

N.E. RESPONSE: May you help many people! Notice that we are to tremble at God's word, not Herbert Armstrong's. If you would like to read *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?* and show me my sin in there, I would be glad to listen and repent if you convict me from the Scripture.

N.E. CONCLUSION: Thank you for writing. This dialog helps everyone to read the Scriptures and see what they say. When I read through the many scriptures on eternal judgment, I concluded that we will be judged more strongly on how we treat our family, neighbors and associates than we will on our technical doctrinal learning, though the latter is also important. I hope to see many brethren, who have been in and out of church organizations in the first resurrection! — Norman Edwards 🕮

"Feast of Tabernacles 2002" from page 11

come if you are close. Contact Bill Storey, 18817 62nd St NW, Edmonton, AB, T5W 4C5; 780-471-2820.

Collingwood, Ontario, Canada

The Canadian Church of God is hosting this site at the Toronto S. Call Len 416-492-8651 or Veronica Martin 416-531-9701. Website: www.canadianchurchofgod.com.

Llandudno, Wales, U.K. September 22 to 30

After researching the costs of keeping the Feast in central England it became apparent that North Wales represents outstanding value and some of the most varied and breathtaking scenery in the whole of the UK. Llandudno is the jewel of North Wales, a vibrant Victorian coastal resort backed by the dramatic mountains and castles of the Snowdonia National Park.

The Conference Centre there will provide the ideal location, with easy access for all; very central on the promenade and surrounded by a huge choice of accommodation. A well illustrated brochure listing a vast range of accommodation with prices can be obtained free by request from the Llandudno Tourist Information Centre by e-mail llandudno.tic@virgin.net, tel: 01492-876413, fax: 01492-872722 (from USA dial 011-44 in place of initial 0).

For Feast information, write to **North West Church of God,** PO Box 88, Wirral, CH63 2R, website: www.nwchurch-of-god.org.uk.

Filey, England, U.K.

This year's Festival of Tabernacles sponsored by the **Churches of God, UK** will be held in Filey, North Yorkshire, England. For information contact James McBride 01526-861217, e-mail: coguk@aol.com.

🕮

"Truckers Study" from page 2

large, and we ended up discussing several passages in Scripture that illustrate this and where it came from. In several places various characters are quoted who overload their speech with "I", "me", "my", "mine", etc. In Isaiah 14, we see that Lucifer had this problem, and that attitude seems to have its origin in him. But we also see it in Luke 12:17–21, Luke 18:9–14, Job 31, and 1 Samuel 13:9–12, to name a few.

Eventually we were able to get back to the Ten Commandments in Genesis, but the diversions were most interesting and helpful (as it turned out) to some of the men. So I floated the question: Where do we find the Fourth Commandment in Genesis 2–4? Why did God create the Sabbath day? The first thing God did after creating the man and the woman was to say, "Hey, let's take a break. Let's get to know each other better." And one of the problems in our world is that people don't "set aside" the time (i.e., sanctify the time) to get to know God better.

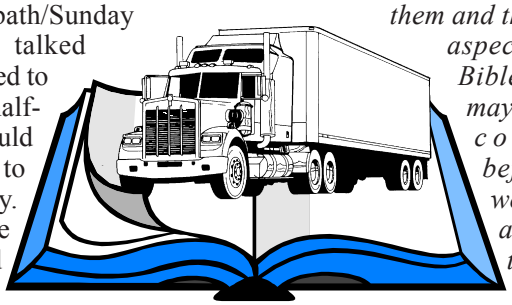
Question: If as truck drivers we can't take Sunday off, should we find another day of the week to do it?

Answer: Let's turn to Exodus 20 and see what it says, since we're interested in what the Word of God says about the matter and not what men say. It shows that the Sabbath points to God as the Creator. We wouldn't have to worry about the evolution debates if we all correctly understood who the Creator is.

At this point a driver sitting behind me asked, "Okay, tell me something. If the Bible says the seventh day is the Sabbath, why do we go to church on Sunday?" I asked him, "Well, what do you think?", and he answered, "I think the Romans stole something from us."

Interesting that people who study the Bible for what it says must eventually ask the question about the true Sabbath day. One of the truckers said that we don't need to keep the Sabbath on the seventh day because we now have liberty in Christ. So we turned to Deuteronomy 5 and studied how the Sabbath was a sign to Israel that they were no longer slaves, but free men and women. So the Sabbath isn't a bondage at all but an affirmation of the freedom we have in Christ.

Several things were striking about this exchange. For some in the room, the conversation just blew right by them. They could not see the significance of the Sabbath/Sunday discussion and talked instead about the need to pray to God for a half-day off so they could find a place to go to church every Sunday. One man saw the issue clearly and insisted that the law is not necessary for salvation. Another man, the one who theorizes (correctly) that the Romans stole Sabbath from us, is without question sincerely seeking the truth of the matter, and the others had a seed planted that they might just think about.



Today was in some ways a watershed. I have been by trial and error trying to find a way (at Arlo's suggestion) of bringing the Sabbath into the studies more often, but without being confrontational about it. That's not necessarily an easy thing to do. It now looks as though I have a formula for doing so that allows the question to be raised of its own accord. Start in Genesis, show that God certainly had His law in effect before Sinai, that the Sabbath was before Sinai, that the law is good for us. Then keep pursuing Sabbath scriptures through the Bible until a savvy Bible student raises the question.

As we were finishing today, I mentioned that one of the most frustrating things to me about this truck stop ministry is the temporary nature of the weekly congregations that we form. After just a few hours we disband our newly formed assembly. Do you realize, I said, that we will likely not be in the same room together again until Christ returns? That's sad, because the presence of God's Spirit was so evident today, as was the appreciation these men had that they could spend a few hours together.

[We can be glad for what we have. I have visited plenty of local congregations that meet together frequently and they have very little sharing of personal problems and aspirations. Hopefully we can all learn from what has been accomplished at your studies. I think it is very important to establish love first and then add truth to it. It is great that truckers left knowing that someone cared for them and that there are aspects of the Bible that they may have never considered before. It would not be as effective if they leave knowing they have heard a lot of new doctrinal arguments from people who were sure that they were right. Many church of God congregations need more of the love of Christ so that visitors see that—and then want to know about their doctrine. — NSE]

February 24, 2002

We had a quiet crowd today, so I had to do most of the talking. This is somewhat unusual because normally these folks like this opportunity to talk.

I began by saying we were going to do a study in Genesis, but we would start the study in Genesis by turning to Deuteronomy, specifically Deut 30:19, where God says that he set before Israel a choice, life and death, blessing and cursing and His command to choose life. This was the same choice that God gave Adam and Eve. We reviewed the Ten Commandments as revealed in Genesis and how they give life, as well as the depth of Satan's deception of Eve and how their choices impact the world to this day.

Once again we had the opportunity to discuss the first and second resurrections. This wonderful truth, hidden from so many, answers questions about God's mercy for those who just don't know better. By simply reading the Scriptures for what they say, the truth becomes plain and the hope it generates is so apparent.

March 10, 2002

Let me tell you about John so that you know what to pray for. John was first at our Bible study a number of weeks ago. Later that same day he had a

heart attack and was rushed to the hospital. Because of his heart condition the state police came to the hospital and took his commercial license, effectively putting him out of work. His wife died some years ago and he has been estranged from his family since then. Before she died, his wife made him promise that he would go to church. He dislikes church because, as he says, "wearing a tie is against my religion", and so he attends truck stop studies and services instead.

John has been at our Bible study for the past couple of weeks. He is awaiting surgery for a pacemaker, and he also is suffering from diabetes. He was able to find someone to lease his truck, plus he is getting a disability payment. He has had several heart episodes since his hospitalization and will probably have more.

So now you know his situation and what to pray for.

[One of the good things accomplished by the WCG was a sense of family among all members worldwide. One could travel almost anywhere in the country or world and receive friendly treatment, be invited to activities and member's homes, etc. This fine effect was achieved partly by the Spirit of God and partly by a standard human "us versus them" mentality. Churches, clubs, societies and groups of all kinds have a certain internal camaraderie. That is one of the big reasons why people join them. When CoG groups split into many little groups, the family atmosphere has suffered. We need to work hard to maintain that within any group we have and with others. My heart goes out to this man who is sick, has no close family, and apparently few friends. There are many more people like this. The world needs many Christian servants. — NSE]

We had seven truckers today. I began with a short study on the verse in 1 Corinthians about "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us", and explained the spring holy days from both the Old and New Testaments. Sometimes this subject brings forth great interest, but not so today, so we moved on to other things. Several of the men today had significant religious experiences and were obviously there because they wanted to be. One man I would deem a seeker, someone who knows there is a God but has little or no knowledge of the Bible. He asked if he could take a Bible with him, which I was glad to provide.

[Not everybody is at the same place in learning. Not every message is received well by everyone. The Bible is full of stories of God working in different ways with different people. We need to be learning how best to help each person as best for him or her. — NSE]

March 24, 2002

Before the study today I was speaking with one of the truck stop employees, who was telling me about a television evangelist whom she viewed just this morning. His program was about Biblical dietary laws including clean and unclean as well as the proper way to slaughter animals for human consumption. Part of the broadcast involved discussion with medical doctors. When she mentioned the name of the preacher, I recognized the name as a mainstream Evangelical type, and significantly enough he has recently written a book on the feast days. I am gratified to see greater interest in the Old Testament and some of these subjects that we have known for years and perhaps take too much for granted.

[If one searches for Feast Day information on the Internet, it has much. Many are apparently unrelated to CoG groups. We ought never to think, "God has to reach the world through us." — NSE]

We had five drivers today. I wanted to impress on them the reasons that God had to send his Son to suffer for us, that he was our "pioneer", the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10) and all that this means. The great thing is when people take a step back and do not necessarily agree with everything they hear and question what they are being told. When they do this in the right spirit, it results in stimulating and thought-provoking conversation.

The Epistle to the Hebrews says that Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered and that He was made perfect through sufferings. Wrap your mind around this, that Jesus had things to learn and Jesus had to be made perfect. I do not understand this completely, but it is what the Scriptures say. One of the truck drivers today said that God is perfect and God is all knowing, so there was really nothing for Him to learn. Certainly, though, Jesus as our High Priest understands us and our struggles better because He went though the same things we do.

After the study I was reminded again of the toll truck driving can take on family life. One of the men wanted to talk about a personal issue related to his wife. One day he came home from the road to find that she had taken everything from the house and had left. This can be a trying profession.

[Before anyone says, "Christians shouldn't be truck drivers", I challenge them to try to live a life without the benefits of trucks. Most things that we possess today, have spent some time in tranist on a truck—and the makings of those things probably spent time in trucks, too. I could not possibly do my ministry without the truck shipment of printing equipment and supplies, computers, etc. These men and women do a good service for society and we ought to do what we can to help their life be better and more Godly. Thank you for your good work, Lenny. — NSE]

L_cacchio@yahoo.com

Lenny Cacchio
705 NE Bryant Drive
Lee's Summit
MO 64086