

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 1, No. 2 A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be May 1995

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves”

—James 1:22

Most of us are witnessing the greatest single reorganization of Sabbath-keeping congregations in our lifetime. What is our role as individuals?

Over 300 people met in Indianapolis April 30 through May 2, 1995 to lay the groundwork for a new organization, The United Church of God *An International Association*. Immediately many questions come to our minds. What will this organization be like? Who will be a part of it, who will not?. What will it teach? Will it preach the Gospel to the world? What will be expected of this ministry and the membership? Can a government with voting work? Will it grow large enough to eclipse the Worldwide Church of God? Or will it fall apart and fail?

Others, presently comfortable in another group may ask “who cares?” The important issues are: What does the Eternal think about it? And what will you (each individual person) do about it?

We see a number of good things that the United Church of God has done (see accompanying article). They have declared peace among the other groups, asking their members not to try to recruit others. They acknowledge the other Sabbath-keeping groups as brethren, not some lower-level of the church. They have asked members to pursue a peaceful policy in the disposition of local congregational assets.

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Summary of Proceedings:

United Church of God *An International Association* **Conference of Elders**

April 30-May 2, 1995

The following summaries were produced directly by the United Church of God and received by *Servants' News* by fax and computer. Only reformatting and deletion of duplicate material has been done.

Schedule of Events for Sunday Evening, April 30

4:00	Registration	
4:30	Call to Order	
	Welcome	
	Opening Prayer	Burk McNair
	Opening Address	Victor Kubik
	Affirming Doctrinal Beliefs	Jim Servidio
	Why the Regional Pastors Acted Now	Bob Dick
6:30	Closing Comments	
	Closing Prayer	Dean Wilson

Daily Summary for Sunday April 30, 1995

Our conference has exceeded our expectations. On the Sabbath we held two services in Indianapolis, Indiana. Attendance at the morning service was 198 and in the afternoon was 323. Split sermons were given by Lyle Welty from Cleveland, Oh; Bob Dick, Kirkland, Washington; Jim Franks, Houston, Tx and Dennis Luker, Garden Grove, Ca.

On Sunday, 312 from across the country gathered together to begin the Conference of Elders. Victor Kubik from Pasadena, Ca. gave the first presentation, followed by Jim Servidio and Bob Dick.

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Principles of Understanding Bible Prophecy

1. Do not try to force everything into end-time prophecy. Some prophecies have been fulfilled. For example, those concerning Babylon (Isa 13:19-22) and Nineveh (Hah 2:10; 3:7, Zeph 2:13-15).

2. Some prophecy is specific end-time prophecy. There are key words that tell. There is also blending of the two (Hab. 2:3; Dan 8:17; 11:40).

3. Some prophecies are dual. History does repeat itself. For example, what happened to Jerusalem in 70 AD, martyrdom of saints (Rev 6:11) and "Elijah truly is coming and "Elijah has come already" (Matt 17:11-12).

4. The Bible interprets symbols found in prophetic symbolism. Never apply human interpretations. For example, "mountain" = kingdom or government (Jer 51:24-25; Dan 2:35,44); "beast" = kingdom or government (Dan 7:17,23); "horn" = kingdom or government (Dan 7:7,24, 8:20 Mof); "flood" = a hostile army (Nah 1:8, Isa 8:7); "lamb" = Christ (John 1:29; Rev 17:14); "dragon" = Devil (Rev 12:9).

6. Bible prophecy contains types

and antitypes. Certain events and personalities in the past foreshadow or symbolize future conditions. What happened in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes (168-165 BC) was a type of what is yet to occur. The apostasy of the Hellenized Jews led to the calamities suffered under Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Maccabees 1:11-16; Dan 11:30-31) The apostasy of the church will lead to the calamities yet to be suffered under the "man of sin" (2 Thes 2:1-4).

Historically, the abomination of desolation was the image of Jupiter Olympus—a Greek and Roman god—which Antiochus Epiphanes, with the help of his army, placed in the temple in Jerusalem. Therefore, the modern "abomination of desolation" will also be some kind of false "God" in Jerusalem.

7. Use the above principles and the historical record to evaluate past prophecies. History verifies past prophecies concerning ancient cities: Tyre (Ezk 26:3-5,7,12,14,16); Samaria (Micah 1:6); Gaza and Ashkelon (Zeph 2:4,6, Amos 1:8); nations: Edom (Jer 49:16-18); Egypt (Ezk 29:15); and empires: Chaldean =

Lion (Dan 7:4); Medo-Persian = Bear (Dan 7:5); Greece = Leopard (Dan 7:6); and Roman (Dan 7:7).

8. Use the same system to make the transition to end-time prophecies. Thus the composite beast of Revelation 13:1-2 can be interpreted by the symbols of Daniel 7 (Lion, Bear, Leopard) to have been the Roman Empire which had spread out from Rome and occupied all the territory of the previous empires. There is logic, consistency, and internal structure in Bible prophecy.

9. A very large proportion of the prophecies of the Old Testament are poetical in form and substance. (ISBE, s.v. "Poetry, Hebrew"). This is a factor in interpretation because Hebrew poetry consisted in matching, reversing, or balancing thoughts in symmetrically constructed sentences.

10. Major and minor themes, history and prophecy, are sometimes blended. Embedded in the prophecies relating to eighth century Israel and Judah (Isa 7:1-9:7) is the theme of the Messiah's birth to a young virgin (Isa 7:14).

compiled by James R. Calvert

Vol. 1, No. 2 A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be May 1995

Servants News is published monthly by *Friends of the Brethren*. Subscriptions are free to individuals interested in obeying their Creator as described in His Word. We believe His law is the basis for living a life that is pleasing to Him in harmony with our neighbors. We believe the holy spirit gives us the power to live such a life as long as we continually repent of our sins and accept the salvation provided through our Messiah and Savior. We believe in living "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Deut 8:3).

We believe the gospel should be given freely: you may copy any or all of this publication and give it to others. Friends of the Brethren is financed by donations and has no ties with any of the other organizations listed in this publication.

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Contributors: (many) "Thanks" to everyone involved.

Servants' News accepts articles for publication. Include a self-address stamped envelope for items that you want returned. We do not publish materials that attack individuals or organizations, nor do we publish materials that claim there is only one human organization through which the Eternal works. We are happy to print corrections for any significant errors. Address articles and letters to:

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Talk to Brethren by Computer

While computers are not for everyone, they can be a valuable resource for our own growth and serving others. If you have a computer with a modem (2400 baud will work, 9600 to 14.4K is better), you may wish to subscribe on one of the on-line services where many brethren exchange notes and Bible information.

To subscribe to CompuServe, call 800-848-8990. After you have connected to CompuServe, select **Services**, then **Go** from the menu. Type in **religion**. When you look at "messages" or "libraries" select #10, "WWide Church of God."

To subscribe to America Online, call 800-827-6364 and ask for a 10-hour free trial kit. After you connect, select **Go to**, then **Keyword** from the menu. Type in **religion**. From this list box, select "Christianity", then "Christian Fellowship" from the next list box. In the third list box, find folders titled "WWCOG" or "The Church of God." You make look at messages & replies, add a reply, or create a new message of your own.

—Norman S. Edwards



*“And this **Gospel of the Kingdom** will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”* —Matt 24:14



“But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of man comes.” —Matt 10:23

Hello from Knoxville and the Seventh Day Christian Assembly of the Church of God! We, a local congregation of about 20, would like to share a few ideas we have used or are thinking of using to spread the Gospel and to let others know about our congregation.

Although we are an independent congregation, we have, for several months now, sponsored a taped radio program on WTNN, a local station. The taped program is produced by John Pinkston of the Congregation of God, Seventh Day in Kennesaw, Georgia.. Any responses to the program, “Watch America,” are directed to our phone number. The program airs 9:30 AM each Sunday, 670 on the dial, at a cost of about \$50 each week.

We have received over a dozen calls from the program and 9 people have visited our congregation as a result. One person attends regularly, and another couple attends occasionally (they live quite far away.)

One of our members has independently run an ad in a local “items for sale” type of newspaper, offering a free paperback Bible and a correspondence course just for responding. He purchased KJV Bibles in case lots at a low cost (\$2.35 ea) from the American Bible Society. A short thank-you letter was included, which mentioned our church and phone number. He received several responses although no one has yet made contact to attend services.

Another good idea is to place the church number in the telephone book. We are listed in both the white and yellow pages, using bold-faced type in the white pages. We recently have had a couple of inquiries resultant from this.

We believe this has been particularly effective for us as our name includes the phrase “seventh day.” People that have read the Bible and concluded that they are to keep the seventh day look for congregations that meet on the Sabbath.

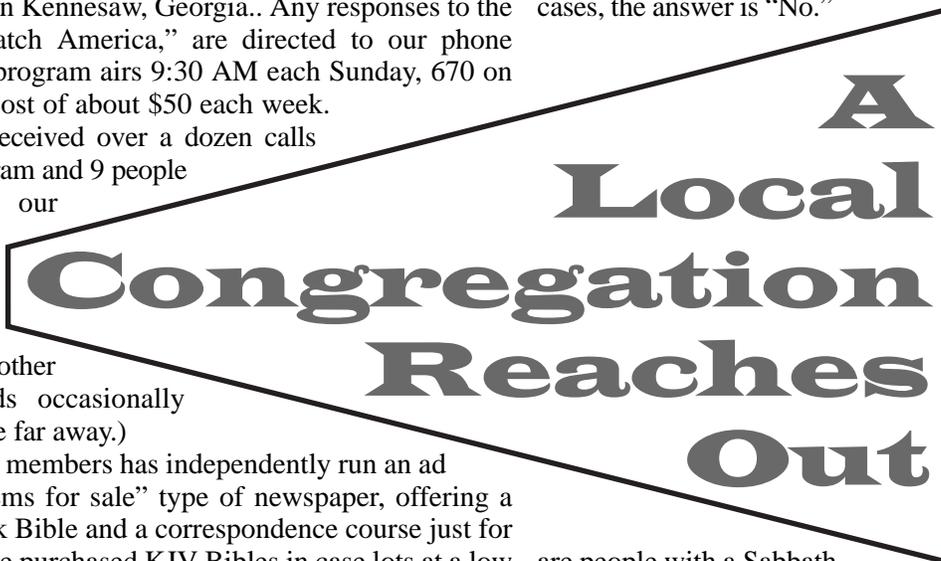
We are contemplating running a small block ad in the religion pages of the local newspaper. This can be somewhat expensive, but we can simply insert it when funds allow.

Also, we thought it important to list ourselves in the “Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups” published by the Bible Sabbath Association, including a brief descriptive text.

One important factor to keep in mind is that many peo-

ple will be curious to read about your beliefs even before committing to a visit. We would advise that any group develop a “Statement of Beliefs” as soon as possible. Careful proofreading and a professional printing job are musts. Be prepared to answer questions about church government and structure.

Some might ask the question “Does it work to allow people to attend Sabbath services when they have not had any of our Bible literature to study beforehand?” In some cases, the answer is “No.”



We have had people attend a few times that were interested promoting their own political, social or religious ideas. This is why it is important to have a congregation that is solidly grounded in the truth. When these people realize that our congregation is not going to go after their agenda, they move on. On the other hand, there

are people with a Sabbath keeping background that are looking for a congregation to attend. They may have recently moved or left another congregation that lost its way. Also, there are a few people that have simply spent a lot of time studying the Scriptures with an open mind and have come to beliefs very similar to our own. This shows Who does the calling!

We must realize that it is our Father in heaven that calls people and not ourselves. John the Baptist did no miracles and had no advertisements, but people came to hear him and repent from all over the country.

In considering these options, we also recognize that perhaps the most important tool of all, personal one-on-one evangelizing by letting our lights shine, cannot be neglected as many of us have in the past. Even the large organizations with big media operations recognize that their biggest source of new members is personal contact with other members!

May the holy spirit guide us into a new period of obedience, knowledge and growth.

—Glenn H. Flemming

Seventh Day Christian Assembly: 2244 Maplewood Drive
Tel: 615-688-1107

Knoxville, TN 37920

To the Ministry of the Church of God...

This letter was written before the current United Church of God organization, but its message is still relevant for now.

As God's ministers, we must realize that we do not merely have a profession or a career; we have a calling from God our Father. Our calling entails two fundamental responsibilities:

(1) Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.

(2) Feeding Christ's flock—those whom He has called for us to serve and to nurture.

We have, in the past, concentrated more on the first responsibility, enabling only a few people to do most of the evangelizing. The majority provided direct financial support, but were only vicariously involved with the evangelistic efforts.

Because of recent events, however, the necessity of the second aspect of our calling has reached a point of crisis. Historically, our relationship with God's people has been one of keeping them encouraged to "pay and pray." As a result of this attitude and our hierarchical structure of government, we have not seen the overwhelming need of God's people to be properly nurtured and respected for the gifts they have been empowered with by the Holy Spirit. Many ministers have tended to function as lords or governors over their congregations, which is **not** biblical. Others have had genuine love and concern and a strong desire to nurture, but their approach has often been like that of a parent to a child. Though this approach may be best when the brethren are babes in Christ, it limits their growth and their use of the gifts of God's Holy Spirit as they mature spiritually.

Times have changed—for the world and for God's people. In this age of rapid technological change, corporate and business decentralization—and of empowerment—the church simply **must** understand the importance of a **shared** ministry with **ownership** at the local level.

God's people do not need a hierarchical structure where a central headquarters receives all resources and then doles those resources out—just as a parent would dole out an "allowance" to a little child. This would be "Pasadena Part II!" It is time for us to trust God's Holy Spirit to work within the membership at a local level. They have matured and, in many cases, are very capable in various administrative areas. The original apostles

understood this concept during the first century of the Church. Because of their example, and in light of recent experiences in the church and in the world, we have no reason not to organize with a similar faith and structure. The Apostle John, in his dying days, wrote letters to seven different churches. Those churches existed contemporaneously and administered their local congregations with local talent led and **united** through the Spirit of God—not by any man-made central organization!

We are to serve as ministers of Jesus Christ. The idea that the ministry is a lofty position and that we have an exclusive relationship with God over and above what others have simply must be eradicated. Though many of you already understand this, I firmly believe that this is the only way God will bless the reorganization of the Body of Christ. Why do I feel this way?

One reason is because there has been no single leader emerge on the scene. Why? Because God has not sent one! There is no single human voice that God's people are hearing. Rather, they are hearing the voices of a group of God's ministers who stand loyal and faithful to the Truth. *[Actually, a number of groups of ministers —editor.]* Could this be telling us something? Should we wait for thunder and lightning or a supernatural sign of some sort, or are we going to respond to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit to "feed my sheep?"

When and how are we going to respond to this urgent need that we all are able to plainly see? Should we wait until all of the brethren are in place so that we can conveniently move into a new organization? Or do we make the move that we know in our hearts must be made—trusting in faith that those God has already provided can establish an environment where others can come as God draws them?

Circumstances will never be ideal for us to make the move! We must go forward in faith allowing God's people to worship Him in Spirit and Truth, without opposition. And we must rely on God to draw others to our fellowship, as only He can do.

By reorganizing and nurturing God's people in a proper and peaceful environ-

ment, we will perpetuate and expand the preaching of the gospel through a **shared** ministry!

The reason I feel so strongly about what I'm saying in this letter is because of my personal experiences with God's people. After my termination from the ministry of the corporate Worldwide Church of God, I had an opportunity to become established in an entirely new career where I would have had tremendous likelihood to become financially successful. When I mentioned this to one of the young ladies in the area, she said, "Mr. Wooten, you are not going to leave us are you?" I was startled to detect a touch of panic in her voice. "No," I replied, "I'm not." At that point, I realized the profound importance of the decision I had just made.

One nearly blind 88 year old widow called me and said, "Mr. Wooten, I don't like what they are doing to my church! What are we going to do? They keep saying 'Moses said this and Moses said that...' But it was God who spoke with His own mouth and wrote with His own fingers **His** commandments!"

Another lady called me and said she had not been as diligent as she should have been in keeping God's Sabbath and paying God's tithe. But now that these eternal truths are being taken away, she realized how much she loved God's truth and told me that if I would let her come to church, she would never again neglect these things.

These are the voices I hear and am compelled to respond to. God's people must be nurtured **now**. This is why I was willing to give up my retirement, job security and ministerial career—to become a servant and a helper to Christ, the true Shepherd of His sheep. A few others have taken the same step. If you feel that Christ has given you the same calling, the United Church of God [through locally autonomous congregations] offers you the vehicle through which you may make that sacrifice. People will love you for your service, not for your position. Such love is infinitely more meaningful and profound because it is true Godly love—not a false love based upon the position or office you hold.

—Ray Wooten
PO Box 361334
Birmingham, AL 35236

Local Congregations



This section is for short articles or letters about activities of local congregations. We will mention local congregations as they form or as we learn of significant news. Groups listed in this section may have some doctrines or policies which we cannot justify from the scriptures, but we believe most of them are a reasonable place for fellowship with the brethren. We believe the holy spirit will guide you in your fellowship decisions if you will study and ask.

Since there are so many new congregations starting with the United Church of God, it will be some time before we can cover them. We would appreciate any brief stories sent to Servants' News, PO Box 6516, Springdale, AR 72766.

New Global Church of God Ministers

The following ministers have begun working with the Global Church of God during the last few months.

Adair, Colin	Pace, Hadden
Apartian, Dibar	Sexton, Rex
Burson, David	Weston, Gerald
Millich, Rand	

We appreciate their efforts to continue teaching the truth as they understand it from the Bible:

Feast of Tabernacles

A number of organizations are planning festival sites that will accept people without regard to their corporate affiliation. **If you know of other sites that are open to any of the Eternal's people, please let us know and we will be glad to list them here.** We expect to have an even greater number of sites for the next issue. The United Church of God sites simply say "UCG" for now—please give

Continued on next page

United Church of God & Worldwide Church of God Texas

The people starting these organizations agreed to work together under the name United Church of God *An International Association*. See the story on page 1 for more information. Many local congregations are already meeting. We do not have details on all congregations at this time—some are still forming. However, you may call one of the following men near you for information about a congregation in your area:

Minister	Region	State	Telephone	Fax Number
Dick, Bob	Pacific N/West	WA	206-821-8250	
Franks, Jim	South Central	TX	713-370-5924	
Holladay, Roy	East/Atlantic	FL	813-463-4622	813-463-4622
Horchak, Doug	Mountain	CO	970-686-7760	970-686-7649
Luker, Dennis	West	CA	714-559-9165	
Pinelli, Richard	Midwest	IN	307-844-8379	307-844-8379
Servidio, Jim	Upper Midwest	MN	612-323-0257	612-323-2047
Welty, Lyle	Northeast	OH	216-572-9478	
Wooten, Ray	Southeast	AL	205-822-8524	205-822-8529

In addition to the men listed above, we have a list of ministers that we believe are working with the United Church of God. This list was collected from on-line computer services and other sources **but may have some mistakes, so please independently verify this information before making any significant decision based on it.**

We encourage everyone to be patient during this time of transition—finding the location of meetings and getting answers to simple questions may take much longer than normal. Many physical details that make a congregation run smoothly must be redone all at once., such as hall rentals, mailing lists, disposition of assets, etc. Simply transferring all of the information from one computer to another can be an all-day job. Even church leaders have many personal and emotional issues to work through—that means a few late-night discussions with family and close friends. Please remember not to try to push people into attending one place or another; each person is responsible for their own actions. Here a list of ministers **probably** associating with the UCG:

Bald, John	Hooser, Don	Noel, Eugene	Thompson, Dick
Billingsley, Alton	Horner, Noel	Orchard, Brian	Tuck, Jim
Bosserman, Tony	Hulme, David	Petty, Gary	Walker, Larry
Buchanan, Steve	Jacobs, Bill	Peoples, Robert	Walker, Leon
Cisneros, Herbert	Jahns, William	Register, David	Waterhouse, Don
Dove, Roy	Knapp, Mitchell	Reyes, Camilo	Waterhouse, Gerald
Dunlap, Wayne	Kubic, Victor	Roybal, Larry	Webber, Robin
Elliott, Rob	Langarica, Saul	Sable, Carl	Weinland, Ron
Foster, Roger	LaRavia, Ellis	Salcedo, Dan	Wilson, Dean
Greer, Lambert	McNair, Burk	Segall, Stuart	Winnail, Doug
Greider, Larry	Mills, David	Seiglie, Mario	Zehrunge, Warren
Hargrove, Vernon	Moody, Steve	Stiver, Randall	Zimmerman, Chuck
Havir, David	Myers, David	Swenson, Guy	

Continued from previous page
them a few weeks to better organize before asking too many questions.

The festival dates are listed with each site as multiple calendar systems in use among the Eternal's people. Please be sure to verify that the dates of the Feast you plan to attend correspond to your understanding of the Eternal's calendar. *[We are not trying to say that one calendar system is as good as another. Many individuals have sincerely studied the scriptures and arrived at different conclusions. The Eternal honored alterations to his festivals when the intent was good (2Chr 30:1-3,20,23,27) but condemned those with an evil intent (1Kngs 12:32-33,13:1-3). It is not our job to judge people for the understanding they have deduced from the scripture on this rather complex subject.]*

Only the initials of the organization are specified for sites run by a larger organization. You may obtain the address and phone number of the organization from the list at right.

Feast Sites in Order by State:

- Arizona, Tucson.** Oct 9-16. Contact UCG.
- California, Kings Beach.** (near Lake Tahoe) Oct 9-16. Contact CGI.
- Colorado, Glenwood Springs** (90 miles east of Grand Junction.) Oct 9-16. Contact Fred Coulter. 408-637-1875.
- Florida, Destin.** (East of Pensacola) Oct 9-16. Contact James Rector, 3802 Olive St, Texarkana, TX 75503.
- Florida, Panama City Beach** (East of Pensacola) Oct 9-16. Contact CGI.
- Florida, Pensacola.** Oct 9-16. Contact Fred Coulter. 408-637-1875.
- Kentucky, Land-between-the-lakes.** (near Paducah) Oct 9-16. Contact CGI.
- Missouri, (southwest).** Details announced next issue.
- North Carolina, Asheville.** Oct 9-16. Contact UCG.
- Oklahoma, Wagoner.** (near Muskogee) Oct 9-16. Contact CGI.
- Oregon, (coast).** Details to be finalized soon.
- South Carolina, Myrtle Beach.** Oct

- 9-16. Contact John Pinkston, PO Box 2345, Kennesaw, GA 30144.
- Texas, Corpus Christi.** Oct 9-16. Contact UCG.
- Texas, Tyler.** Oct 9-16. Contact CGI.
- Canada: British Columbia, Whistler** (90 minutes from Vancouver) Oct 9-16. Contact CGI.
- Canada: Ontario, Collingwood.** Oct 9-16. Contact CGI.

Places to Fellowship

This list contains a number of organizations with many Sabbath-keeping congregations. Some welcome any seriously interested visitors, others may insist you meet certain requirements before attending. By our experience, visitor acceptance varies tremendously among congregations of the same organization.

We encourage all people with the holy spirit to fellowship with each other as practical within or without an organization. We are in the process of constructing a comprehensive file of local congregations including large organizations and local groups. We will announce it here when it is ready.

Church of God, 7th Day [Salem WV]. PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426. 304-782-1411.

Church of God, International. (CGI)P.O. Box 2530, Tyler TX 75710. 903-825-2525

General Conference of the Church of God 7th Day. PO Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233. 303-452-7973.

General Council of the Church of God (7th day). 1827 W. 3rd St. Meredian, ID 83642. 208-888-3380.

Global Church of God. PO Box 501111, San Diego CA 92150. 619-675-2222.

Philadelphia Church of God. PO Box 3700, Edmond OK 73083. 405-340-7474.

United Church of God. See article on previous page.

Tape Ministries Available

If you are not able to fellowship with a Sabbath-keeping group that feeds you,

there are organizations that will send tapes on a weekly basis, plus provide other literature. While we do not endorse every teaching of these organizations, we feel there is much to be learned from them. Some of the organizations listed under "Places to Fellowship" have cassette programs also.

Christian Biblical Church of God. PO Box 1442, Hollister, CA 95024. 408-637-1875.

Church of the Great God. PO Box 471846. Charlotte, NC 28247. 800-878-8220 or 704-544-2100

Congregation of God Seventh Day. PO Box 2345, Kennesaw, GA 30144.

Cornerstone Publications. 3802 Olive Street, Texarkana, TX 75503.

Kansas City Congregation

As reported last issue, **Gerald Weston, David Burson** and about 200 members began meeting independently in the Kansas City area. Mr. Weston (816-228-2035) has since decided to work for the Global Church of God. As of this writing about 100 members are attending with him, and about 100 members are attending with Richard Pinelli (307-844-8379), associated with the United Church of God.

Sabbath Conference in California

You may attend the conference "Jubilee '95, The Sabbath in the 21st Century" this May 28-29 at the Dana Point Resort, Dana Point, Calif. Activities include Lectures, panel discussions, question-answer, education, dialogue, fellowship, books & literature displays. No organizing, no proselyting, nothing to join. Reaching out, across corporate bounds.

Speakers include Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, Dennis & LeeAnne Luker, Ronald Dart, Dr. Peter Nathan, Dave and Sandy O'Malley. Cost \$95 for single, \$175 couple, children free. For information write to *Friends of the Sabbath*, 27068 La Paz #500, Laguna Hills CA 92656 or call 714-362-4444. 

Local Church Autonomy

VS.

Central Control

The leading ministers of the Church of God all agree on two things. The first is that a separation from the WCG is now imminent for the Church of God. Second, there should be unity, if at all possible, in separating, so that the brethren have a clear and viable choice.

Discussion taking place between the leaders of three possible separation alternatives has led to the issue of governmental structure being identified as a possible stumbling block to unity in separating. The real issue is not governmental structure, however. It is the attitude and belief system behind each proposed governmental structure. This is where the real conflict lies. And this is what this memo addresses.

Briefly, the three separation groups and their alternatives are as follows:

1. United Church of God (UCG). UCG believes very strongly in local church autonomy where each individual local church congregation (LCC) would be separately incorporated and have a strong sense of member ownership and involvement in LCC affairs. Each LCC would collect tithes and offerings locally and each LCC would be more involved in preaching the gospel message locally. Each

LCC would also be a member of a central association and would generously support it, as they are able. The central association office (CAO) would be a service provider to its members (the LCCs). The CAO

would help recreate a body of literature, preach the gospel message nationally and internationally, help with international legal matters, help establish Feast sites, provide central purchasing of insurance, etc. There would be a regional pastor system of overview, a doctrinal committee, and other checks and balances against LCCs each going off in their own direction.

2. Worldwide Church of God-Texas (WCGT). WCGT is a Texas corporation that is purposefully structured (as one can surmise from the name) to be as close as possible to the WCG when Mr. HWA was still alive. The major difference would be that the WCGT would be governed by a real Council of Elders (made up of all ministers) who could fire the human President if he were to go off the track. Tithes and offerings would be collected centrally. There would be a fairly large headquarters type of facility or operation since the operating

3. United Church of God—California (UCG-CA). UCG-CA also believes in a central headquarters' type of operation with tithes and offerings being collected centrally. UCG-CA would like the field ministers to elect a Board of Directors who would hire a President to run the organization. The Board of Directors could fire the President if he were to go off of the track. Other than the name, there is very little substantive difference between UCG-CA and WCGT.

Basically the two choices for governmental structure can be characterized as local autonomy (freedom) versus central control (control). That is how the balance of this memo will address them.

The former USSR has as many natural resources as the USA, if not more. However, natural resources are only potential wealth. Why did the USA prosper but the USSR flounder? It is true that God did bless the USA to fulfill

This memo was written by a Southern California CPA in early April, 1995—before the United Church of God reached its present form. While *Friends of the Brethren* does not agree with all of the ideas or technical estimates stated in this document, we feel it is a well-thought-out expression of the difficulties facing so many of the Eternal's people—especially the leaders. For a Biblical perspective, please write for our in-depth article, *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?*

structure or philosophy very closely parallels what the Church of God experienced during the HWA days of the WCG. WCGT would like to make every effort to help save Ambassador University, if that is possible.

fill the birthright promises, but we should look at how He did it. God used the Founding Fathers to chain government better than it had ever been chained before (with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights). With a large central bureaucracy effectively neutralized, creative people were finally free to act. And they did. The subsequent release of creative human energy (freedom) resulted, over time, in the highest standard of living the world has ever seen. God used freedom to bless this country—not a large central bureaucracy with all of its rules and regulations.

To illustrate the difference between freedom and central planning consider this fact. Prior to 1917 Russia was one of the world's leading exporters of grain. Under central control it had to import grain. What is particularly telling is that even during communism, peasants were allowed to work plots of land (one acre or less) and to sell the output at what amounts to a real market price. Less than **one percent** of the total land of the USSR was farmed this way. The collective output, though, of these one acre or less plots was... what would you guess? About one percent? Not even close. 50%! That's right, the less than one percent of the land farmed with freedom produced 50% of the USSR's entire agricultural output. Did it ever occur, to the central planners, to abandon central planning and let the people own the land again? Unfortunately not. You see, it takes honesty, courage, and living faith to live free. They didn't have it.

It wasn't until about 1913, with the passage of the income tax amendment and the institution of the Federal Reserve Board, that the federal government gained the real power to control things centrally. And now look what has happened. The central bureaucracy got loose from its chains and started eating the people it was supposed to be serving. Now, after decades of central planning, and an attempt to redistribute untold wealth, more people than ever have become dependent on receiving handouts from the government in order to exist. The economic destruction is bad, but what is far worse is the spiritual and moral decline of the people receiving the handouts. They are ruined people who have been taught not to fend for themselves. Do you know what could be purchased with the collective amount of money that has been spent fighting poverty in the United States since 1965? Every acre of farmland in the USA and every Fortune 500 company.

If the Founding Fathers had tried to play it safe, emulating the British Government, from whom they were separating, the American experiment

with freedom would have been a collective yawn and the world's highest standard of living would not have been achieved.

The central hierarchical structure has failed the modern era of the Church of God. It is nonsense to only take the good returns (HWA's leadership) and not count the bad returns (the last several years). The author of this memo is from Orange County, California. When Bob Citron, Orange County's Treasurer, was achieving better than average returns on investment, it is nonsense to not consider the rest of the story, the \$2 billion loss. The total return on investment is just that, the TOTAL return on investment, not just the good times before the crash and burn phase.

The central hierarchical structure has resulted in two kinds of training which are both detrimental. The first is that ministers are taught to simply take orders. The second is that members are taught to pray and pay and that's basically it. This has led to the current situation where the ministers have stood by waiting for orders (which aren't coming because there is no one to give them) while their sheep have been slaughtered. Please see Mr. Ray Wooten's letter [on page 4 or this issue]. It has also led brethren to wonder why aren't any of the leaders doing something? After all, since they have prayed and paid, their responsibility has ended. It's someone else's problem to solve. NO IT ISN'T!

I believe that God's people have proven that they have good attitudes and will obey. Now, I believe, that God wants to know what kind of decisions each individual will make. By forcing individuals to make decisions (to exercise and develop good judgment) it forces on each of us a much higher standard of involvement and responsibility. A central hierarchical structure will defeat this. It will be pray and pay and take orders all over again, versus a SHARED ministry with member ownership and involvement at a local level. To head the Church of God in its present state will take an open, honest, warm and loving approach, not more central controls.

You can't put a "melts in your mouth, but not in you hands" coating on a headquarters and say it is something different. It is not something different. It is simply a return of the chained central control. But central controls have defeated their chains throughout history. Are we really so smart that we will be the first ones ever to successfully chain it? The central hierarchical structure has been an instrument of ABUSE toward both the field ministry and the members. In an age of incredible technological advances, central bureaucracies are dinosaurs. Central bureaucracies do not innovate, they destroy people and their lives.

Ministers are going to have to see the irony of teaching that we are going to become members of God's family, but at the same time teach us that we can't handle money or make a hotel reservation without a list of hotels to pick from. Either we are or we are not going to have tremendous responsibility some day. So let us act-like it NOW.

Some ministers and members may be afraid of local church autonomy because it is new to the modern era of the COG. An honest examination of the work involved shows that it is very doable.

Local Incorporation Requirements

1. It takes a few hours to incorporate and costs about \$500. This includes qualifying to do business in your home state. It will take several days for your corporate seal, minute book, etc. to arrive. There is a Legal Start-up Memo, complete with sample Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws available to local churches wishing to incorporate. The Legal Start-up Memo's section on Checks and Balances concerning LCCs and the CAO is enclosed as Exhibit B. It should be read because it contains a good discussion of the checks and balances that are necessary.

2. It takes a little one-time effort to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS and to open a bank account and a Post Office Box.

3. You do have to fill out IRS form 1023 in order to obtain a determination letter from the IRS that your LCC is tax exempt. And you should also obtain tax exempt status from the state you are located in. But this is a one-time thing and UCG can provide a sample form 1023 for LCCs to use so the process is relatively painless.

4. There are no annual reporting requirements for churches with the IRS and with most states. So once you have incorporated, qualified to do business in your home state, gained formal tax exempt status, etc. there is no other big legal thing to do. All of these things can be done for less than \$1000 and a couple of days work.

5. On an ongoing basis, even for a large LCC, there is little extra work to do. If a larger LCC had 200 attending and the average family size was three people, there would be about 67 families. There are about 22 working days in a month. If each family wrote one tithe/offering check per month the LCC would receive about 3 checks per day. This would take someone less than 30 minutes per day to photocopy the 3 checks, prepare the bank deposit, prepare and mail 3 contribution receipts, and note the deposit into a cash receipts journal. Even a large LCC would write no more than 15-20 checks per month. This is less than one check per day. The entire accounting of even a large LCC would take less than one hour per day of either volunteer or even paid labor. It just is not a big job. Once a month someone with accounting skill, or a local CPA firm, or a hired bookkeeper could prepare a simple financial statement. Again, there are no external reporting requirements for churches. And LCCs should use a full service payroll company that will literally do everything concerning getting a payroll processed.

Is there a minister out there who will say that an average member can become a part of the God family, but cannot deposit three checks per day into the bank and write one check per day to pay bills? A person with a modest amount of clerical training can open envelopes, remove checks,

copy them, fill out a deposit slip, fill out contribution receipts, mail the receipts and make a bank deposit. We have taught the principle of "resourcefulness" for years: it can be put to use for the rare exceptions such as bad checks, foreign currency donations, unreadable addresses, etc.

The truth is that while making very little extra work, organizing locally does provide MAXIMUM POSSIBLE PROTECTION for the Church of God. If a LCC could not find one person, or hire one person, to do less than an hour's worth of accounting, per day, in order to meet together to hear the truth, and to be nourished spiritually, there is nothing a central headquarters is going to do for that LCC either. They are dead, dead, dead!

Concerns and Answers About Local Autonomy

1. **The cost of administering the LCCs is too high.** A conservative estimate of the failure of central control is \$250 million down the drain. And thousands of shattered lives. The truth of the matter is that a lot of the labor necessary to have a LCC function will be donated, which is the beauty of it. The person donating the labor will benefit most, because they are doing so out of love for God's church and his people. And of course the LCC will benefit. The Holy Spirit will inspire these acts of service and because there will be a REAL sense of member ownership at a local level, there is a very good chance that per capita giving will be much higher. This is because people will know what they are giving for and why. Also, when members know they are paying the bills locally, creative energy will be unleashed to hold costs down and to make every dollar count. Don't be surprised if better halls are found for less money, etc.

Since ministers are going to have to be paid anyway, and because hall rental will have to be paid anyway, and there are no annual filing requirements for churches, I don't see any higher administrative costs, other than the admitted hour per day of donated accounting labor. There could be

come LCCs that need to purchase a modest amount of accounting and legal help, but that is minimal. To offset this, loyal church members who are lawyers and CPAs can each adopt 3-5 LCCs and help [not control] them in their legal and accounting needs. I am a CPA and I could easily advise a number of LCCs. We are supposed to serve each other.

It is true that insurance can be much more cheaply purchased as a block. But the advocates of UCG believe very much that a CAO can and will purchase the insurance with each LCC being billed for their prorate share. The same thing is true if a 403B pension plan (the 401K equivalent for non-profit corporations) is set up. Each LCC can be billed their prorate cost of the 403B.

2. **There is a risk of doctrinal differences, especially over time.** UCG proposes that the CAO have a doctrinal committee and that any LCC who does not hold to the truths once delivered will be de-listed from membership in the association and lose the benefits thereof. If a LCC goes doctrinally south, usually because the minister there has done so over time, there is little either a central control or anyone else can do about it. It is probably less likely with local control because the LCC's Board of Directors can fire the minister and hire one who teaches the truth. Of course, a Regional Pastor needs to be given a chance to mediate the dispute and a Regional Pastor system will be set up. LCC's and the CAO should both follow Biblical standard, e.g. Matthew 18, in attempting to resolve differences. That would be a nice change for the modern era of the Church of God.

3. **The LCCs will spend all of their money locally and none will be left over to do a Work.** If the CAO genuinely provides services to the LCCs, why wouldn't they support it? LCCs do need to have a Christian giving perspective. By our estimates, there could be about 250 LCCs, 200 full time ministers, and an annual income to the CAO of about \$9.2 million. This assumes each of the LCCs remit 65% of their funds after expens-

es, retaining 35% to preach the gospel locally. Obviously, the correct number might be lower or higher. The point is, there is ample money to do a Work, if Christian people will work together in the right spirit and attitude. And if they do, God will add more money and people.

4. Ministers are afraid of getting fired. UCG's proposed Bylaws call for a seven person Board of Directors, of which the minister is one. The proposed Bylaws also call for the necessity of a 70% vote to fire a minister. This means that it would take 5 out of 6 of the Directors, excluding the minister, to fire him. And this would be after the minister and the LCC had mediation by a Regional Pastor. If, after a Regional Pastor's efforts have failed, a minister still cannot get at least two votes from a six person board, he would best serve by going someplace else. Ministers and the entire Church of God need to understand that this is a world of instant information and empowerment of the average person. The day of the old attitude of lording it over other people, that some (nowhere near all) ministers have utilized to rule their congregations, is over.

Ministers and members need each other. We should all have a spirit and attitude of service to each other. Any minister with this attitude has nothing to worry about. There is going to be a shortage of good full-time ministers. Good ministers are going to be valued like they never have before.

5. There will be pay inequity as some LCCs will pay their ministers more than a comparable LCC will pay their minister. So what. If one LCC wants to keep their minister and is willing to pay him a little more, whose business is that anyway? The whole LCC process will tend to raise the pay level of the ministry, which is a good thing. Field ministers have been too long abused by not having any say about where they shepherded, etc. And that is nonsense.

6. LCCs will become involved in local power struggles. Better at that level than at a central control level, where huge damage has been done

and can be done. If the LCC's members (in the legal sense) are comprised of long-time faithful tried and tested leading people, they can snuff out a local power struggle at any time by electing a new Board of Directors, etc.

7. Smaller LCCs will need financial help to rent a hall and hire a minister. That is nothing new. The larger local church areas have always subsidized the smaller ones. The only reason that wasn't widely known before was because tithes and offerings were collected centrally and then doled back out. The larger LCCs will need to help out those sister LCC's in need. And they will.

8. There is some concern that in most congregations about 20% of the people do 90% plus of the work. That is probably true. And one of the reasons is members have been taught to primarily pay and pray. If they are encouraged to participate and have a sense of ownership at the local level, you will see a diversity of talents spring forth like you have never seen before from God's people.

9. There won't be ministerial rotation. Good.

One of the leaders of UCG-CA commented that the field ministers should elect a governing board to run the central organization. He later commented that a central organization was absolutely necessary to prevent 500 dictators (the field ministers) from each going their own direction. I am sure it has not occurred to him that having 500 potential dictators vote for a governing board is an inconsistent position. Are they 500 potential dictators, or are they men who are wise enough to elect a board? This whole idea of men controlling other men is something that God is going to totally smash.

The Houston South church, which is the church where the lead's of WCGT are, actually formed their own separate non-profit corporation last year. They did so to collect and hold funds to ultimately purchase their own church building. Their research showed them they needed a separate non-profit organization to protect

"their" money from being raided by headquarters. For this, I commend them as wise and prudent. Headquarters does have a tendency to raid local church activity funds. But now these same men wish to propose WCGT, which is about as close a rehash of the same old thing as you can get for the rest of us. Their own actions are so loud I can't hear them! They have a separate non-profit corporation, but propose central controls for the rest of us. I think this is wrong.

If, after reading this, the senior ministers of the Church of God still believe in central control, then for the sake of the members, why not just go with the Global Church of God? It would certainly be less divisive to the overall Body of Christ and Global is already up and running. I realize the pat answer is, "Because the ministers don't want to be under one man rule again." But, someone has to be in charge. Why not go with Global, with the warning that if Mr. Meredith ever goes south doctrinally, is too heavy handed administratively, etc., we will then separate and put a system of government in place where there is a real Board of Directors. Who is being thought of here? The ministers, who don't want to work for Mr. Meredith, or the members? We can always separate later, if it becomes necessary, and deal with it then.

God used freedom to fulfill the birthright promises to modern Joseph. He can certainly use freedom, coupled with his Holy Spirit, to bless the modern era of the Church of God. Freedom means member ownership and participation. It means the ability to develop good judgement and learning how to work together because we want to, in a spirit of service and love, not control. It means that local ministers can stop being abused and stop worrying about administrative details that have nothing whatsoever to do with their calling. They can fulfill their calling and let God show us who the real leaders are by their attitude, by their service. and by the fruit that is born. As it says in the last half of 2 Corinthians 3:17: "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 

The Good News

OF THE KINGDOM

Formerly... "The BULLETIN"

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by Herbert W. Armstrong

DID CHRIST Reorganize THE CHURCH?

JUST What is "The Church?" What is its object and purpose ---its real mission?

Is it AN ORGANIZATION, or a spiritual ORGANISM, composed of those saints whose names are written in heaven, and who have, and are led by, the Holy Spirit?

And, granting it is not just some one organization, . . . yet should not the true Church be organized---and if so, HOW?

Just what is the true BIBLE form of organization and Church government?

A startling new truth now comes to light; thru God's precious Word!

Most of us have ASSUMED one or two central points in this important question ---taken them for granted without investigation. And this careless assumption has led most of us into error. It has left us open to be deceived!

The Bible cautions us to PROVE ALL THINGS! It is profitable for CORRECTION as well as for instruction in righteousness. The true Christian must be willing at all times to be corrected and chastened---and must continually seek to GROW in knowledge as well as in grace!

It is the true remnant people of God who keep the COMMANDMENTS that the Devil is wroth with today. It is US Satan is seeking to deceive. He will deceive even the very elect IF POSSIBLE. And it is possible if we are careless, and assume things without careful study of all sides, and ample PROOF from the Scripture. We must be continually ON OUR GUARD, never trusting any man, or even a board or group of men, but God along, thru His Holy Word!

So let us SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES! Let

WHICH is the one true Church?

Here is amazing new light from the Bible, establishing the TRUTH of this important question of Church organization and government.

Let us open our minds, and without prejudice, search the Scriptures, whether these things are so!

us begin at the beginning.

The CHURCH, as we know, actually BEGAN at Mount Sinai, in the days of Moses. (Acts 7:38)

True, this was the Church under the OLD Covenant, not the New. True, there is a vast difference between the Old and the New---and part of just what constituted that difference is one of the important things we want now to

investigate. We want ALL the facts on the subject.

The CHURCH WAS MARRIED TO THE LORD!

At Mt. Sinai, God set up AN ORGANIZATION. Make no mistake about that!

In our quest to learn WHETHER God's people should join themselves together in an ORGANIZATION, having CHURCH GOVERNMENT, let us begin by recognizing that in the beginning, at Sinai, God Himself formed His people into an ORGANIZATION, having GOVERNMENT.

At that time God's people--the ONLY people on earth who were the people of God ---were formed into a NATION. As such, they had LAWS, and GOVERNMENT. They were A KINGDOM. First of all, they formed a civil government. But in this government, God also placed certain church governments, giving them the rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Law of Moses. Church and states were inseparable.

In any government, men are placed in AUTHORITY, with power to GOVERN and to RULE. There never was a government without MEN in authority, ruling over others. And, perhaps without exception, there always is, and al-

This article, by Herbert W. Armstrong, shows his view of church government during his early years. He wrote it primarily to "counteract" a new form of government being introduced into the Church of God Seventh Day, which contained a 12-man board, 70 elders, and 7 deacons to manage the finances of the organization.

It is interesting to note that the Radio Church of God grew and prospered greatly under this "government directly by Christ." Eventually, with much encouragement from others in his organization, Mr. Armstrong changed to a hierarchical government with tight control over doctrines and members. For more information on what the Bible says about government write for our article: *How Does the Eternal Work Through Humans?*

We have reproduced the original first page so the reader may see Mr. Armstrong's original artwork. We have recomposed the rest of the article for easier reading---retaining all of Mr. Armstrong's original emphasis, and adding some of our own in bold-face type.

HWA—Continued from previous page ways was, some ONE MAN who was in actual fact, tho not always in name or title, the real head or ruler.

As God first organized his people, He was their HEAD—their King. But soon the Israelites wanted a MAN to be their king, like the Gentile nations around them. It is IMPOSSIBLE to have ORGANIZATION, or GOVERNMENT, without having a MAN as the actual or real head, even tho we SAY Christ in heaven is the Head, and continue to try to believe it that way.

A fact that many of us have never mentioned is that THE OLD COVENANT WAS A MARRIAGE COMPACT!

When God first set up AN ORGANIZATION on earth, the people who formed this organization were MARRIED to the Lord. It was this MARRIAGE that bound him and his people together!

In Jeremiah 3:14, the Lord says: “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I AM MARRIED UNTO YOU.”

THE LORD DIVORCED HIS WIFE!

The making of the Old Covenant, as recorded in the 24th chapter of Exodus, was the MARRIAGE CEREMONY. If anyone may doubt this, let us merely ask, WHEN, if not here, did the Lord ever enter into a marriage ceremony, joining Himself and his people together as husband and wife? Where else, in all the Bible, can you find any account of a marriage ceremony?

The MARRIAGE ceremony was the OLD COVENANT CEREMONY! They are one and the same. It was this marriage, then, that established ORGANIZATION and GOVERNMENT among God's people!

We want to repeat that! We want you to understand it—for it is of great importance—it is the KEY FACT upon which the real truth, so long hidden, really hinges! IT WAS THE MARRIAGE THAT FORMED GOD'S PEOPLE INTO AN ORGANIZATION HAVING CHURCH GOVERNMENT!

That being so—and it IS so, and none can deny it—then it naturally fol-

lows that THE ORGANIZATION and GOVERNMENT of God's people, at least as ordained and sanctioned by the Lord, EXISTED ONLY AS LONG AS THE MARRIAGE UNION WHICH ESTABLISHED IT!

If the marriage was done away, the ORGANIZATION and the CHURCH GOVERNMENT was at the time done away! For it was only this marriage relationship which established the organization—the kingdom—the government, both civil and ecclesiastical!

When God first proposed the Old Covenant marriage (Ex 19:5-6), he promised his people that IF—notice the IF—they would be obedient, as a wife should to her husband, they would become “a kingdom of PRIESTS, and an holy NATION.” In other words, a GOVERNMENT of a religious character—a CHURCH GOVERNMENT!

This is repeated in Leviticus 26. There the blessings to accrue for obedience are enumerated, together with the PUNISHMENT for DISOBEDIENCE! And what was that punishment to be?

Notice it!—“they that hate you shall REIGN OVER YOU... SEVEN TIMES”—or 2520 years! (Verses 14-28).

Look at it, in your own Bible! If Israel, the WIFE, married unto the Lord, proves disobedient, Israel is to LOSE her government! No longer to be AN ORGANIZATION! Enemy nations shall REIGN OVER—rule over—the Israelites. Their own government no longer will rule them. No longer will they be an organization of their own.

Thus God threatened to turn the GOVERNMENT—the ORGANIZATION, if you please, over to the GENTILES for 2520 long years, TAKING ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT AWAY FROM HIS PEOPLE!

Now let us see whether he did that! Israel, of course, disobeyed.

“And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I HAD PUT HER AWAY AND GIVEN HER A BILL OF DIVORCE” (Jer 3:8).

Surely that ought to settle the matter! Israel was DIVORCED! This cut off the GOVERNMENT, the ORGA-

NIZATION, from among God's people, and TURNED IT OVER TO THE GENTILES FOR 2520 LONG YEARS—until the very present generation! Still other Scriptures PROVE it!

GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATION TURNED OVER TO GENTILES

Let us follow the story thru the Scriptures. Let us see if the other Scriptures confirm this astounding truth!

Israel sinner [sic] first, and was taken captive to Assyria about 721 B.C. But the House of Judah remained, and as long as they did God's true BIBLE FORM OF ORGANIZATION and CHURCH GOVERNMENT continued with them.

But soon Judah was sinning even worse than Israel, and they, too, were taken captive. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon captured the Jews, destroyed Jerusalem, moved the Jews to the land of the Chaldeans. Among them was Daniel, the prophet.

Soon after this captivity, Nebuchadnezzar had the dream in which he saw the great metallic image. Of course, you are already familiar with this.

Only Daniel could tell the king his dream, and its meaning, as GOD had revealed it to him. But notice a point in its interpretation:

“This is the dream”, Daniel said, after describing the image, “and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, are king of kings”— in other words, a WORLD RULER—“for THE GOD OF HEAVEN HATH GIVEN THEE A KINGDOM”. (Verses 36-37).

Note it! GOD gave the kingdom over to him! Now God never makes covenants with GENTILES. God never did, and never will, marry a Gentile people as such, or establish them as HIS kingdom, HIS government. HIS organization, HIS Church!

Yet it plainly says, here, that GOD GAVE NEBUCHADNEZZAR A KINGDOM! How? And WHY? Since God could not have established or set up a kingdom in Babylon, among the Gentile Chaldeans, the only way God could have GIVEN Nebuchadnezzar a KINGDOM was to have given OVER to him the Kingdom he already had set

up—the one set up AT SINAI!

Babylon never was the Kingdom, the Government, or the Church of GOD! But Nebuchadnezzar, under God's divine direction, TOOK CAPTIVE the people of God's kingdom and church. And so God GAVE OVER TO HIM the KINGDOM—that it, the GOVERNMENT—the AUTHORITY TO RULE—which had been set up at Sinai!

Understand it! The AUTHORITY to RULE and to GOVERN was now taken away from the people of God, because of disobedience, and this AUTHORITY was transferred over to NEBUCHADNEZZAR and HIS SUCCESSORS for 2520 years!

WHEN THE KINGDOM IS RESTORED

Now notice the truth revealed in this Gentile image a little further.

The AUTHORITY TO RULE was not only turned over to Nebuchadnezzar—not just temporarily—but it was to continue in the power of his successors for 2520 years!

“And after thee shall arise another kingdom . . . and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule OVER ALL THE EARTH.” (Verse 39). Note it! The RULE God had transferred over to Nebuchadnezzar was to continue in the Persian Empire, and the Grecian Empire—they were to bear RULE over ALL THE EARTH! Yes, and by God's ordination!

Then followed the fourth kingdom of iron—the ROMAN Empire. In the latter days—at the end of the 2520 years—NOW—in OUR generation today—this Roman Empire is once more to be restored by a union of ten European Dictators, as foretold in Revelation 17.

And then what shall happen, at the END of this 2520-year Gentile reign?

“A STONE (Christ). . . smote the image”—smashing this Gentile reign into pieces! Yes, CHRIST, at HIS SECOND COMING, is to SMITE it, and end it. What will happen then?

“The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: . . . but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and IT shall stand forever and ever.” (Verses

34,44).

Jesus' disciples understood that the KINGDOM, with all authority to GOVERN, whether civil or church government, had been taken away from His people, and turned over to Gentiles. You'll remember how they asked him, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). But he did NOT restore it, then. He did NOT bring the government, the organization, the authority to rule, back from the Gentiles to his people! Consequently he did NOT reorganize his people, or establish any government, ecclesiastical or civil, among them! This the New Testament Scriptures, also, abundantly prove!

God had proposed to demonstrate, thru his people. what blessings and prosperity would naturally follow a civilization based upon HIS laws. And ALL the laws hang on that great basic principle of LOVE—love to God, and love to neighbor. The principle of “GIVE” and of “SERVE”, not of “GET” and “ACCUMULATE”.

But when his people Israel would not continue governing themselves according to his laws, based on this great fundamental principle, God turned authority of government over to the Gentiles, and gave them 2520 years to DEMONSTRATE, by experience, the fruitage of the Gentile ways of lust.

The 2520 years is now up. The Times of the Gentiles have run their course. And just LOOK at the results of this Babylonish Gentile civilization! Governments are overthrown, and now arming to the teeth to destroy one another! Business and industry is bankrupt under the principle of competition and strife and self-gain, want and poverty stalk the land, and millions are in want in the midst of plenty! Society is rotten and immoral, crime, racketeering, vice, gambling, run rampant. Religion is in confusion, torn by strife and division, in the grip of the GENTILE system of injecting ORGANIZATION and GOVERNMENT into the Church! Truly, in its every phase, our modern civilization is in BABYLON today!

Praise God, JESUS IS SOON COMING! Yes, coming to RESTORE the Kingdom—the government the or-

ganization, to the TRUE people of God! Coming to DESTROY all this “BABYLON” which has visited such unhappiness to the world! Coming to reign and RULE!

THE 12, THE 70, AND THE 7

But, did not Jesus SET THE CHURCH IN ORDER? Did he not REORGANIZE it again, at his first Coming? **Did he not set up a definite “BIBLE FORM OF ORGANIZATION”, and establish a definite “CHURCH GOVERNMENT”?**

We have always ASSUMED that he did! Yes, we have taken this carelessly for granted! But let us prove THIS point -- let us prove ALL THINGS! Let us search the Scriptures whether this assumption be so!

First, did Christ ever set up an ORGANIZATION, with its boards of HEAD MEN, with authority to govern over the “spiritual affairs”, or the “FINANCIAL AFFAIRS” of the Church?

Let us see whether we can find such boards, or Scriptures giving them such authority.

True, Jesus did call out TWELVE disciples, who afterward were called “apostles”. But WHERE in the Scripture are they called “THE BOARD OF THE TWELVE”—a term we hear freely used today, under claim of having “the BIBLE form of organization”?

WHERE do we read of one of them being appointed as the “CHAIRMAN OF THE TWELVE” or another as the “SECRETARY OF THE TWELVE”? Is this Biblical and Scriptural? If so, where is the text?

When Jesus called them, and ordained them, did he give them AUTHORITY TO RULE? Just what did he give them POWER and AUTHORITY to do?

Notice it, in Luke 9:1-2:

“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority”—for what? To GOVERN? To RULE the Church? Notice carefully! Let us have a BIBLE REASON for all we accept and do! . . . “and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases, and he SENT THEM to”—sent them to WHAT? To rule and

HWA—Continued from previous page govern? To have supervision over the spiritual affairs of an organization? Notice it, IN THE BIBLE! ... “He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.”

The word “apostle” means “one sent”. The definition in Cruden’s Concordance is “One sent forth. Used as referring (1) chiefly to one of the 12 disciples of Christ; or (2) to any of various other followers of Christ who did evangelistic work.”

An apostle does not mean one IN authority, but one UNDER authority—one SENT by the authority of another! The only power and authority Jesus ever gave even his original twelve was to heal the sick, and cast out demons. And he SENT them, not to rule, but to PREACH—not to BEAR authority, but to MINISTER, to serve!

Nowhere in the Scripture do we find the slightest hint that the twelve constituted a higher-up church board, and nowhere were they ever given power to rule, or govern, or decide what doctrines the other disciples must believe.

WERE THE 12 CONTINUED ON?

Is there any Scripture giving plain instruction that the TWELVE were to continue on perpetually as a Church board? There is none!

Yet many have been led honestly to suppose that the apostles were to be continued exactly twelve in number, because a successor was ordained to replace Judas Iscariot. So let us SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES on this point, whether this is so.

What was Jesus’ PURPOSE in ordaining twelve disciples? Let the Scripture say:

“And he ordained twelve, THAT THEY SHOULD BE WITH HIM, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.” (Mark 3:14).

Not that they should rule the spiritual affairs of an organization.

Jesus ordained the twelve in order “that they should BE WITH HIM!”

Now notice WHY he wanted them

to be with him—and WHY a successor was appointed for Judas!

Judas’ successor had to be a man possessing a certain qualification—because he was “ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” (Acts 1:22).

Notice the necessary qualification. Not ability to govern, nor talent to discern and vote on right doctrine. Look at it in your Bible:

“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained TO BE A WITNESS WITH US OF HIS RESURRECTION.” (Acts 1:21-22).

Do you grasp it? Do you see plainly revealed here the PURPOSE of the twelve?

First, Jesus ordained twelve “that they should be with him.” Later, after his ascension, one of these was replaced. And it had to be ONE WHO HAD BEEN WITH HIM, along with the others, throughout his entire ministry, beginning with the baptism of John!

Why?

“TO BE A WITNESS WITH THEM OF HIS RESURRECTION”!

Search the Scriptures as we may, we cannot find any other purpose for the twelve apostles, except to go out and preach, and heal, and to be WITH Jesus throughout his ministry, in order that they might forever PROVE the TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION!

That was the only reason for the definite number of TWELVE! To suppose that this definite number of twelve was to be continued and perpetuated AFTER THEIR MISSION WAS FILLED is absurd!

Is there any statement that others later called “apostles”—ones SENT to preach—merely evangelists—such as Paul, Barnabas, etc., were “one of the twelve”? There is no such statement in the Bible! Rather Paul and Barnabas, after they were called apostles, (as in Acts 14:14), went up to Jerusalem UNTO THE APOSTLES (Acts 15:2). And here, at this conference, the Holy

Spirit revealed truth TO BE WRITTEN AS PART OF THE SCRIPTURES, which were not yet, at that time, complete. Surely no “12 apostles” are authorized by the Scriptures to receive such special instructions from the Holy Spirit, to be made part of the Holy Scriptures, TODAY! Such an implication is little short of blasphemous!

True, Paul and a few others are called “apostles”. But an “apostle” is merely “ONE SENT”. If we could find one single Scripture where Paul, or any other than the original twelve, ever were called “ONE OF THE TWELVE”, as we freely hear men style themselves today, then we would know the twelve continued on.

BUT THERE IS NO SUCH SCRIPTURE!

The words “the twelve” are NEVER used except to refer to the original twelve which companied with Jesus throughout his ministry, to be witnesses of his resurrection!

There is NO SCRIPTURE even hinting that the twelve were continued. On the other hand, every Scriptural indication is that THEY WERE NOT. Even the authors of “A History of the True Church” [Dugger and Dodd] were unable to find any continuance of the TWELVE in the TRUE Church!

That ought to settle the matter. The Scriptures speak of FALSE apostles, and of “them which SAY they are apostles, and are not, but hast found them LIARS” (2 Cor 11:13, Rev 2:2). Let us beware being deceived. It is the COMMANDMENT KEEPERS whom the Devil seeks, in these latter days, to deceive!

Let us be sure everything we accept is based on true BIBLE AUTHORITY, and not falsely read INTO the Bible by imputing a meaning to various scattered texts contrary to plain, obvious intended meaning IN ITS SETTING!

NOW ABOUT THE SEVENTY?

Now let us look briefly at the “70”.

Did THEY constitute a CHURCH BOARD? Was power given to govern, or rule, or act as an advisory board in matters of doctrine or church government? Was THAT the purpose for which Jesus appointed them?

THE ONLY PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT where "the seventy" are mentioned is in the 10th chapter of Luke.

Beside the twelve, whom Jesus ordained "that they should be with him," for "a witness of his resurrection", and whom he sent forth to preach, "the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two by two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come". (Verse 1).

Did they ASSEMBLE—as a board?

No, they WERE SENT, not together but preparing for the personal visits of Jesus to these various towns and cities! Instead of assembling as a church board, THEY SEPARATED—two and two!

What instruction did Jesus give them? Did he invest them with power to RULE, or set them up as an advisory board, or appoint them to be the LEADING elders?

No, he said, "Go your ways . . . and HEAL THE SICK . . . and say unto them, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Verses 3,9). They were authorized only to heal, cast out demons, and preach! That is all!

They returned from this special mission (Verse 17), and Jesus gave them power to tread on serpents and scorpions so nothing should hurt them. AND THAT IS THE LAST EVER HEARD OF THEM! Their mission was ended!

Brethren, let us be honest! IF the Lord ever intended them to be a continuous church "BOARD OF THE SEVENTY", do you not honestly think we should find some further mention of "the seventy" in the Bible? Do you not think we should find, in the book of Acts, where some of the elders or evangelists were "of the seventy"? Do you not think we should read of this "board" in the history of "the TRUE Church"—if they ever were such a board?

No, the simple truth, when we come to "search the Scriptures WHETHER these things be so", is that they never were a church board, and they ENDED their work and mission before Jesus was crucified!

The fact that in one or two instances Moses selected seventy elders for certain duties of that day, BEFORE God took the government away from Israel and turned it over to the Gentiles—BEFORE he divorced Israel—certainly has no connection with the seventy Jesus sent on this special mission.

WERE THE "SEVEN" A FINANCIAL BOARD?

And now a brief glimpse at "THE SEVEN".

Were they set up as a FINANCIAL BOARD? Were they appointed to receive and handle the TITHES of the whole world-wide Church? Did they ever supervise the financial affairs of the ministry, hiring and firing ministers, and paying them their salaries, or "allowances"? Were they set over THAT business?

Let us not be deceived, but look at this AS IT IS IN THE BIBLE, honestly!

In the early days of the New Testament Church, brethren sold their possessions, had all things common, and took care of the PHYSICAL needs of their own widows and orphans.

In the 6th chapter of Acts, we notice in the first verse, the Grecians complained against the Hebrews, because their widows and orphans were being neglected in the daily ministrations of material needs.

Then the twelve—the ORIGINAL and ONLY twelve of the Bible, ordained to be witnesses of Christ's resurrection—called together the disciples and said, "It is not reason that we should leave THE WORD OF GOD and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men ... whom we may appoint over THIS business" (V. 2-3).

They were appointed over BUSINESS—but what business? Note it IN YOUR BIBLE! The business of WAITING ON TABLES—of feeding, serving, the MATERIAL needs of the widows and orphans!

And WHY were they appointed? So that the apostles might devote their time to the PREACHING of the gospel, and the WITNESSING TO THE RESURRECTION, which they were sent to do, INSTEAD OF this

business of ministering to the PHYSICAL needs of women!

The business for which the seven were appointed had nothing whatsoever to do with receiving and disbursing tithes for the ministry and preaching the Word!

We should like to see any text in the New Testament showing that there ever was appointed any BOARD to act as a TREASURY for the tithes of the disciples, and to receive and to disburse the money for the whole Church! We say such a thing is UNSCRIPTURAL, and unless SCRIPTURE can be produced for it, such a practice ought to be discontinued!

If there is ONE LINE of scripture for such procedure under the New Testament, the editor of the Good News agrees to print it in the next issue—if any can supply it! This is our challenge, and we await replies!

JESUS' TEACHING ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT

There is not one single HINT in the NEW TESTAMENT of any Church BOARD with authority to rule, to govern, to decide doctrine, or to handle tithes and church finances (the whole church). In a later number we shall devote an article to explaining Acts 15, which certainly sets no such example.

Jesus never organized, or re-organized his Church! There is NO SCRIPTURE for it!

All authority and power to rule is limited solely to each LOCAL congregation. But there is NO BIBLE AUTHORITY for any super-government, or organization with authority over the local congregations!

The plain teaching of Jesus is JUST THE CONTRARY! Listen! "Jesus called them unto him, and saith unto them, "Ye know that they which are accounted to RULE over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise AUTHORITY upon them. But so shall it NOT be among you". (Mark 10:42)

The AUTHORITY—the GOVERNMENT—the RULERSHIP—was turned over to the Gentiles for 2520

HWA—Continued from previous page years—until Christ RESTORES the kingdom at his Second Coming!

WHERE CHURCH GOVERNMENT ORIGINATED

How, then, did ORGANIZATION, and the idea of CHURCH GOVERNMENT get into the Church?

It came out of BABYLON! Spiritual BABYLON—that is, ROME! The same as nearly all the false doctrines of Satan.

In the early 4th Century, Constantine, the Emperor, who officially started SUNDAY observance in the Western world, saw his Empire in danger of disintegrating [sic].

At the same time a great controversy was raging among the leaders of Christianity over Dr. Arius' doctrine concerning the origin of Christ, as opposed to the Trinity doctrine.

We quote from Encyclopedia Britannica, (article, ARIUS) :

"This controversy over Arius' doctrine reached even the ears of Constantine. Now sole emperor, he saw in the one catholic church the best means of counteracting the movement in his vast empire toward disintegration, and he at once realized how dangerous dogmatic strife might be to its unity. Constantine had no understanding of the questions at issue. ... He summoned a general council (the Nicene Council). ... It was finally decided against Arius. ... Constantine accepted the decision of the council, and resolved to uphold it."

Thus it was CONSTANTINE—the "BEAST"—who injected and introduced into the Church the idea of a BOARD to decide doctrine, and to rule.

Thus it was that CONSTANTINE made doctrine, as decided by a higher-up BOARD, the basis of fellowship and unity in the Church!

Jesus never said "By this shall all men KNOW that ye are my disciples—if ye all speak the same thing the BOARD OF THE TWELVE vote on". That is the policy of some today—but it is NOT BIBLE POLICY! Jesus said we should be known to be in the true Church IF WE HAVE LOVE one to another! And

doctrine has only brought STRIFE!

In the next century, came the PAPA-CY in full bloom, starting the idea that the CHURCH is an ORGANIZATION having CHURCH GOVERNMENT!

Listen to authentic history! In the Encyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. 7, p. 629, we read :

"The first pope, in the real sense of the word, was Leo I (440-461 A.D.)"

To him the plan of government of the Roman Empire was an obsession. He applied and adopted that form of government to the church, forming the PAPA-CY.

Myers' Ancient History, says :

The Church (under Leo I) set up, "within the Roman Empire, an ecclesiastical STATE (government) which, in its constitution and its administrative system, was shaping itself upon the IMPERIAL MODEL."

Truly, an IMAGE OF THE BEAST!

Thus was CHURCH GOVERNMENT introduced into the Western world a century after Constantine (the "Beast") injected the idea of church BOARDS to decide what doctrines the rest of the church must believe. And thus the very PRINCIPLE of CHURCH GOVERNMENT becomes THE IMAGE TO THE BEAST!

The whole thing is FALSE! It is NOT ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE! It is part of BABYLON! Those who are IN, and MEMBERS of such an organized church government, submitting to doctrines declared by unscriptural boards as a fellowship test, are IN BABYLON, and actually worshippers of the IMAGE OF THE BEAST! and God is calling us, HIS people OUT of BABYLON today, before it is too late—before the PLAGUES fall!

Brethren, let us have the courage to accept the TRUTH, and to COME OUT!

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Finally, what is the very PURPOSE of the New Testament Church? Is it to BUILD AN ORGANIZATION?

Let us, now, finally understand it.

The first kingdom and government

was set up by Nimrod—the first ancient Babylon (Genesis 10). The Devil is the god of this world, and since Nimrod the kingdoms have built civilizations based upon the Devil's ways of SELF and of GET, contrary to God's ways of LOVE, of OBEDIENCE, and of GIVE, as defined in GOD'S LAW.

So God formed Abraham's children into a NATION, giving them his LAWS, to show how a nation would be blessed that would build its civilization according to his Commandments. At Mt. Sinai, Israel was united to the Lord in MARRIAGE, as HIS GOVERNMENT, both state and church.

But when Israel went after the ways of other nations, breaking the Commandments, God DIVORCED Israel, and gave over the GOVERNMENT (which included CHURCH GOVERNMENT as well as state) to the Gentile kingdoms symbolized by Daniel's image and the four "beasts". He gave the GOVERNMENT into Gentile hands UNTIL THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, when the government, church and state shall be RESTORED to Israel!

When Jesus comes with POWER and great glory—power to RULE, and the SAINTS possess the kingdoms of this world—he will make a NEW Covenant with Israel and Judah, which NEW Covenant will be the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB!

As the Old Covenant MARRIAGE ceremony set up Israel as a NATION, so will the new.

Now TO WHOM will Christ be married, at the marriage of the Lamb? Notice it, IN YOUR OWN BIBLE—Revelation 19:7—he shall marry H I S W I F E ! Note it!!!

Yes, his WIFE whom he divorced. A wife who is divorced is not free to remarry until the death of her husband! And so Christ, Israel's husband, DIED to REDEEM ISRAEL! And now Israel is FREE to MARRY AGAIN!

And who will the New Covenant be made with? Notice Hebrews 8:8—with the same wife he made the first covenant with but later divorced—ISRAEL!

Then he shall RESTORE the Kingdom to Israel—both Church govern-

ment and state, Christ will rule not only as King of kings, but also LORD OF LORDS—Church government, as well as state!

Christ's FIRST coming was to REDEEM—not to restore.

Jesus never set up an organization, nor did he establish any church GOVERNMENT. He did not RE-ORGANIZE the Church!

Instead, he came calling INDIVIDUAL disciples out from among the church organizations, sects, and denominations—out from among the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes—out from among worldly Gentile organizations and contacts—he called his saints to be SEPARATE—to COME OUT!

The very word “ekklesia” from which “church” is translated, means “called-out ones” as well as “assembly”.

The New Testament Church is not a kingdom—not a church government—but an assembly of individuals CALLED OUT—Spirit-filled individuals, and therefore a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, not an organization.

The OBJECT of the Church is not to build up an organization, or a movement. Let us see this great purpose clearly.

The CHURCH is Israelitish. Not a Gentile Church just called “Israel”. It IS Israel. But those who do not come by faith, and who are disobedient, are CUT OFF, the Israelitish-born, while Gentile converts, thru Christ, are ADOPTED into Israel. Thus, spiritually speaking, Israel IS the CHURCH.

And it is the CHURCH who shall be married to Christ—Israel REDEEMED by the blood of the Lamb of God!

The CHURCH is God's instrumentality thru which, and in which, he is selecting a people for his name—gathering OUT of “Babylon”—OUT of worldly ways, worldly organizations,, various individuals—one here, one there—to repentance, faith in Christ, receiving of and being led by the Holy Spirit, thus having HIS LAWS written in their minds and hearts—living, individually, a life of trial and test, of OVERCOMING, that they may be thus fitted and trained for positions as

kings or priests in the KINGDOM OF GOD, after Christ's second coming!

The CHURCH of God shall then become the KINGDOM of God. It is the CHURCH which shall be married to the Lamb, establishing God's GOVERNMENT on earth—restoring the KINGDOM to Israel!

So THE CHURCH is God's instrumentality for overcoming the FAULT of the Old Covenant. That FAULT was disobedience. The NEW will be made with those in whose minds and hearts GOD'S LAW has been written, by his Holy Spirit! (Heb 8:10).

And this MARRIAGE will not be made with some one organization! It is THE INDIVIDUAL SAINTS—not some organization—which shall possess the government, and rule (Dan 7:18; Rev 2:26-27, 3:21, etc.).

His WIFE shall have made herself READY! But how? By a “re-organization”, or some “new movement”? What folly! Read Ephesians 5:25-27. The CHURCH is the collective body of individual saints who are sanctified and CLEANSED by Christ! Let us stop speaking of some organization as “the Church”, or “our Church!”.

Jesus said, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be ROOTED UP!” Our heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any church GOVERNMENT, or set men IN AUTHORITY over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church.

Any such “plant” was never planted of God—and therefore IT SHALL BE ROOTED UP!

Our fellowship is first with God, and with Christ—then with each other, in LOVE! The saints, as far as they know one another are not to forsake assembling together for their mutual edification. **For this purpose,—and that all things may be done decently and in order—the Scriptures give us instructions for ordaining local elders and deacons, in every city—every local congregation, or Church. But there is no super-organization over and above local congregations IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!** Any such ‘plant’ is certain to be ROOTED UP!

All such organizations and governments came out of BABYLON—and are today a part of BABYLON!

Brethren, let us have the kind of cooperative FELLOWSHIP, based on LOVE, that was practiced by the early saints, as recorded in the book of Acts. Let us work together, in unselfish effort to GIVE of the “waters of life” to as many precious souls as we can reach-- to GIVE out the last warning message with great POWER!

But let us drop all effort to BUILD UP A MOVEMENT or AN ORGANIZATION. Let us quit working FOR organizations, and work FOR THE LORD—and the salvation of souls!

What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God? Nothing but ORGANIZATION—which has led to politics, ministers lusting for rule and for power—striving against each other, lining up the brethren on THEIR side, against the other! It is SUCH PREACHERS who have split up and divided our brethren!

God's Word commands us to COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, and be separate.

God's last warning is, “COME OUT OF BABYLON”!!

Organization and church GOVERNMENT has brought us only strife, jealousies, divisions, bitterness! It is not of God, and it can bear no other fruit.

The CHURCH OF GOD needs more of the POWER of GOD---more of HIS LOVE—of HIS HOLY SPIRIT, that the work may now begin to go forth IN MIGHTY POWER! We ought to be ASHAMED of the pitiful, puny, weak, feeble work that has split up and divided brethren, reached but so very FEW with the message, with almost no real conversions! **All this, while leaders desiring power to RULE send out misleading, exaggerated, deceiving statements designed to convince tithe-payers that “the Work is progressing”. What a mockery! What a tragedy! What a pity!**

We praise God that many of the more spiritual HAVE COME OUT! Let us obey GOD!

—Herbert W. Armstrong



Letters

& Responses

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

Why So Many Differences?

LETTER:

April 27, 1995

Dear Mr. Edwards,

I'm a member of God's Church and have been since 1976. When Mr. Armstrong died in 1986, I knew God would continue His work through whomever He chose to succeed Mr. Armstrong. I know God places people in different positions to accomplish His goal. Now it has become clear that we were following a group of sincere people who diligently are serving the Church. This group is God's people, just as are many of the other groups who have separated themselves from the corporation. But I feel the former have been caught up in a great deception perpetrated by Satan himself. Leaving God's truth once delivered. My wife and I recently began reading "The Mystery of the Ages". This has really opened my mind to just how far we in the WCG had gotten off track. I have always said I'll never leave God's Church. But Wednesday we informed our local associate pastor we were not attending WCG anymore. We never thought this would happen. We examined our minds and asked ourselves if we in our decisions and thought were right. Then we finally realized that we and many more like us are still a part of God's Church. We are now looking for spiritual food.

We look around us and see many splinters all teaching the truth and we know it. But there are some things puzzling me: Why are there so many differences? Why do there seem to be factions and divisions in God's Church? We should all be speaking the same things shouldn't we? It seems everyone is pointing the finger and doubting each

other. When Christ returns, is He going to find everyone squabbling over doctrine, minor differences, each accusing the other of not being a part of God's people? Are we not the elect of God?

I'm not trying to bash or put anyone down. I'm very concerned about where we are

going to find the truth and a group of God's people that God Himself is working in. Each group we look at has good fruits as far as we can see. Each one is preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and of Christ. All appear to be what we were used to under the leadership of Mr. Armstrong, teaching just what the Bible says. So why all the differences, cliques, divisions, and the fear of choosing the wrong group of God's people? We hear of warnings, if you go with this group or that you will be making the wrong decision. I'm worried at this point. I see the warnings that God has given us in this end time, and many other prophecies that are in motion that many are not even paying attention to, as though they were nothing. Why did God reveal them to us if they were nothing. Thank you for listening to me, I just need to voice my concerns at this point. It is a scary time for us. We all need to unify at some juncture down the road, and soon.

Sincerely,

—D. & T. B., Georgia

RESPONSE: Thank you for your thoughtful letter. It expresses something I have heard multiple times over the past few months--something that the groups and their leaders need to hear.

I believe there are two main reasons why there are so many factions and divisions with so many apparent differences.

1) For many years most of us lived under the impression that the WCG was the one true church and it had "most of the truth." I remember getting to the point where I no longer had many Bible questions: I felt I understood most of what I needed to know, and if I didn't understand it, I was sure that someone at "headquarters" probably did or certainly would understand it when God revealed it. People in the WCG that did study on their own and occasionally ended up with conclusions different than headquarters quickly learned that they could not openly talk about what they learned--they would probably be disfellowshipped for "causing division."

With his busy writing, speaking, and administrative schedule, Mr. Armstrong was never presented with many of the ques-

tions that existed among the members and ministers. With the recent attempt to teach Protestant theology to some of the Eternal's people, many are now studying more than ever. Openly disagreeing with "headquarters," once unthinkable in the minds of many, is now commonplace. Many questions which have been brooding for years have surfaced. While some of the questions are minor, some are significant. Many are complicated and require days of study to come to a full grasp. We can't all do that at once. Even if we were perfectly open to the holy spirit, we cannot know all of the same things at once since we do not study all of the same things at once.

These differences are real, not imagined--though their importance may be blown out of proportion. To illustrate with just one: most organizations ordain "deacons" and "ministers" as separate offices, yet there are not separate Greek words for these two English words in the Greek scriptures. The separate offices were written into the Bible by the King James translators and copied by most other translators and implemented in most Protestant church organizations. When faced with this evidence, some organizations ignore it (is that living by every word of God?), some say "O.K., we will stop teaching that the scripture creates these two separate offices, but we will still use them because it worked in the past," and others will say "if the new testament congregations made no distinction between a 'physical' (deacon) and 'spiritual' (minister) servant, then we will not do so either." There are other differences among the groups, even more fundamental than these.

We have a human tendency to want to find another organization that has "nearly all of the truth." Hence, when organization A and B see a certain doctrine differently, they cannot work together because they believe they would have to accept a doctrine that was false and then they would no longer be the true church. It takes a while to get used to the idea that we can fellowship with people in an organization without agreeing with all of its doctrines. Romans 14 shows that we should be tolerant of people that have different understandings (as long as they are not some major sin). The seven churches in Rev 2, 3 had some false doctrines mixed in with their truth: Christ commanded those in error to repent, but he did not command those that understood the truth to depart from the brothers that had the error (not to be confused with other commands to completely depart from false systems and teachers devoid of the holy spirit).

Continued on page 21

"United Church of God" continued from page 1

Schedule of Events: Monday morning, May 1

8:00	Registration	
8:30	Call to order	David Hulme
	Opening Prayer	Roger Foster
	Orientation	David Hulme
9:15	Building on a Rock	Burk McNair
9:30	Break	
10:00	Proposed Transitional Plan	Dick/Luker
11:30	Board Selection Process	Richard Pinelli
	Prayer	Richard Pinelli
12:00	Lunch	

Schedule of Events: Monday Afternoon, May 1

1:30	Call to Order	Richard Pinelli
	Prayer	Don Billingsley
	Board Selection	Richard Pinelli
2:00	Perspectives	Dean Wilson, Ellis Laravia Gerald Waterhouse
2:45	Break	
3:15	Announcement of Board Selection	Lyle Welty
3:45	Discussion with Board	Board Members
4:45	Discussion Results	Jim Franks
	Explanation of Church Name Selection Process Closing Comments	
5:00	Closing Prayer	John Bald

Daily Summary for Monday, May 1, 1995

On the schedule today were presentations, balloting for ratification of a proposed transition plan, board nominees and finally a balloting for a board of directors. 288 were in attendance for today's meeting.

The proposed transitional plan was approved by 98% of the delegates (a 50 to 1 margin). [Information gathered from later interviews: Local congregations may incorporate separately, receipt donations locally, and pay local expenses directly—including local Gospel-preaching expenses. The rest of the funds will be forwarded to the central organization which will pay the ministry, provide literature, and be responsible for national and international Gospel-preaching.

The UCG sees other Church of God Groups as brethren in different branches, such as CGI, Global, Philadelphia, Seventh Day and also Worldwide. There is agreement on many doctrinal issues with some of these groups, but disagreement in areas such as a hierarchical form of government

As a part of the plan, there will be another general meeting in early December to ratify bylaws and move from a transitional government to a permanent structure.

After the board was selected, we broke into discussion groups and the conference delegates shared with the board members their concerns and what the delegates hoped the board would consider as we enter the transitional period.

Faxback System Was Down

Our faxback system was down for most of the day yesterday. At some point in the morning it "froze" and stopped working. We were all at the conference and restarted it immediately after we returned. (It is located about 45 miles from the conference location). Please accept our apology. 206 calls were logged in the first three hours after it was restarted, so I know a lot of people were frustrated in their attempts to communicate.

The Final 24 Nominations & the Elected Officials

(Individuals Marked in **Boldface** were selected.)

Dick, Bob	Luker, Dennis
Dunlop, Wayne	McNair, Burk
Foster, Roger	Myers, Dave
Franks, Jim	Pinelli, Richard
Havir, David	Servidio, Jim
Holladay, Roy	Stiver, Randall
Horchak, Doug	Swenson, Guy
Hulme, David (chairman)	Thompson, Richard
Jacobs, Bill	Waterhouse, Gerald
Kilough, Clyde	Welty, Lyle
Kubik, Victor	Wilson, Dean
LaRavia, Ellis	Wooten, Ray

Daily Summary for Tuesday, May 2, 1995:

Today the chairman of the board was announced, a name for the church was selected by a ballot by the entire assembly, transitional managers for two operational areas were announced, a regional pastor system of pastoral support was introduced, planning meetings for the Festival of Tabernacles were held, a temporary address for the "home office" was secured, a presentation on ethics during the transition was given, guidelines for how to begin a local congregation were discussed and employment applications were distributed to interested ministers. 265 were in attendance.

The board of directors met on Monday evening and selected David Hulme, Pasadena, California, to be the chairman of the board during the transition period. Victor Kubik, also of Pasadena, California, was selected to be the operational manager for ministerial services. The consulting services of Ritchie Gaston were retained to oversee the establishment of the business office. The media/publishing operational management was not selected at this time.

Three church names were suggested, and the assembly proposed a fourth. This fourth option was the one selected by the assembly. The name under which the church will incorporate is:

**United Church of God
An International Association**

Its temporary address is:

**United Church of God
P.O. Box 661780
Arcadia, CA 91006-1780**

A temporary place of business will be found and telephone numbers secured in the immediate future. A set of

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 four conference audio tapes was distributed to the elders present. On the tapes were sermons given on the previous Sabbath by Lyle Welty and Jim Franks, and conference presentations by Victor Kubik, Robert Dick, David Hulme, Burk McNair and Doug Horchak.

Requests for additional information about the church can be addressed to the above address. 575 requests for information about the conference were logged on this system in the last 24 hours. Included in the faxback information is a copy of the handout from the ethics presentation.

**Church of God
 Proposed Transitional Plan
 General Conference of Elders
 Representing the Membership**

It is proposed that the General conference of Elders accomplish these tasks through an annual meeting:
Elect Directors to the Board
Review annual financial audit
Ratify all by-laws
Ratify all doctrinal changes

**Transition Board of Directors
 9 Elected Members
 Serving at the pleasure of the
 General Conference**
 (Will hold regular meetings)
 Serve 3-year staggered terms
 (transitional board expires
 Jan. 1, 1996)

Approve all long-term contracts
Approve operational managers
Approve yearly budgets
Establish doctrinal studies group
Propose by-laws and changes
Elect Chairman of the Board

Chairman of the Board

Directs day-to-day operations of the corporation
Nominates operational managers
Serves 3-year term

Ministerial Services

-Ministry -Evangelism
 -Feast Planning

Media/Publishing	
-Editorial	-Correspondence
-Booklets	-Public Relations
-Mail Processing	
Business Office	
-CIS	-Budgets
-Accounting	-Human Resources
-Insurance	

**A Brief Summary of
 Common Beliefs**

We believe:

1. In one God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the source of life.
2. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the prophesied Messiah, who will return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.
3. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are God's revelation for humanity.
4. That the Church is the called out body of believers who have and are being led by the Holy Spirit.
5. That salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and that Christians will be rewarded according to their works at Christ's second coming.
6. That God's eternal spiritual law of love, defined by the Ten Commandments, is being written on the hearts and minds of His people through His Holy Spirit.
7. That the seventh-day Sabbath established at creation, and made holy by God, is a commanded observance.
8. That the seven annual Holy Days, outlining the plan of salvation, were kept by Christ, the apostles and the original New Testament Church, are to be observed today.

All other doctrinal matters will be discussed over the coming months by a doctrinal team to be established for ongoing Biblical studies. A collaborative approach will be practiced to encourage participation by the entire ministry and membership.

**Attitude and Conduct
 During Transition**

1. We will show love and honor to all and respect their freedom of reli-

gious belief.
Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.
 —1 Peter 2:17

2. We will welcome to Sabbath Services all who sincerely desire to visit and peacefully worship with us.
For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.
 —1 Corinthians 14:33

3. We will not criticize, judge or condemn any individual or groups publicly or privately.
Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?
 —Matthew 7:1-3

4. We will not attempt to draw members away from other church organizations. We will encourage all members to refrain from such activity.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.
 —Matthew 5:9

5. We will return all corporately owned assets of the Worldwide Church of God to their designated representative as soon as possible.
Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.
 —Hebrews 13:5

6. We will err on the side of generosity in negotiations regarding the distribution of congregational assets, including local church activity funds.
Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others
 .—Philippians 2:4

7. We will honor and respect all Worldwide Church of God hall rentals. Where possible, we suggest selecting an alternate location for our services.
If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.
 —Matthew 5:40-41

"Letters", continued from page 18

In summary, I do believe we still need Elijah to come and restore all things (Matt 17:11). There is much studying to do until then and it is unlikely that we will agree on everything until then. While Paul said we should all speak the same thing, that was much easier when there were many teachers that all remembered the direct words of our Saviour. Today, we must read the words that have been copied for centuries and translated by men that understood doctrine much differently than we do.

The second big cause of divisions is the quest for power and money. These sins are hard to see in ourselves, and I am sure that many leaders do not realize how great an influence these factors are in their decision to form an independent, non-cooperating group. It is a powerful feeling to say things like "God only works through me," "I am the government of God here," "I'm the human head of the true church," etc. Is not it interesting to note that we never once find a command in the New Testament where someone said "obey me because I am an apostle, evangelist, etc.?" When the disciples realized they needed to replace Judas in Acts 1, Peter did not say "I am the government of God" and appoint another apostle.

Leaders are using their understanding of doctrine to claim to be the primary person with everything right and therefore the only "right" one to follow. Once they are the "head of the Church on earth," then they can command all tithes and offerings to be sent to themselves and assure themselves of a continued job. If the membership were simply left to determine which shepherds fed them, and which men were effectively preaching the Gospel, then some of the shepherds might find themselves without enough sheep to make a living. That is a frightening thing when you have made a living as a minister for 20 to 40 years and are nearing retirement. However, we must all have the faith to trust our Father, to do his will first and to rely on him to take care of us (Matt 6:33). I think it is a mistake for a leader to try to "trap his people" into supporting him alone—if a leader's work is good, everyone will see it and the Eternal will reward him.

It does seem scary at times, we are responsible for a lot more than many of us thought. But, it is a wonderful thing to know that we are trusting in and responsible to the Great Creator of the Universe, and that our life does not depend upon the path of a leader or an organization.

May the Eternal grant you understanding and peace as you study to obey him.

—Norman S. Edwards

"But be doers", continued from page 1

They have welcomed all serious attendees—we assume this forgives disfelowshipments that may have been made due to questionable doctrinal differences.

On the other hand, there are significant questions that have yet to be answered: Will the gracious policies mentioned above continue or will they be curtailed? Will members respect UCG ministers that were dogmatically supporting Pasadena Protestant doctrines only a year or so ago? Will members be able to recommend men to be good leaders (as in Deut 1 and Acts 6) or will they be required to accept whichever minister is assigned? Can a government with voting work at all? Will the Spirit of God be allowed to work in a powerful way, or will there be great emphasis on the financial aspects of the organization?

As the men at the conference had much debate over exactly what their organization should be doing, so will the many members, onlookers, and opponents. What will our approach be? If we basically agree with this effort, will we help in it or will we just watch and comment? If we think this effort is a mistake, will we leave it alone so the people can learn a lesson or will we condemn and discourage their efforts?

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom this master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My Master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 24:45-51).

Our master told us to be doing the work when he returns, not fighting those that we think are doing it incorrectly. We need to pray and fast about

our part in His work. **If you come to see that it is the Eternal's will to help the efforts of the United Church of God, then do it with your might!** There is an incredible amount of work to be done when an organization first starts. There may be a need to find a new hall, a new piano, new people for new responsibilities. Ministers and assistance recipients may be without payments for weeks—they may need your help. Publications, feast information, booklets, contribution receipts and other things may not be as pretty or as timely as you are used to—be patient.

There may be difficulty in finding someone to answer your questions in a timely manner. But perhaps, you can pray and search the scriptures, finding the answer yourself. Perhaps, if you have known the Truth for a number of years, you can be a teacher rather than one still needing the "milk of the word" (Heb 5:12-13).

If you believe that it is not the Eternal's will for us to help the United Church of God, should we not live in peace? The Eternal may well do his greatest work through groups other than the UCG, but do we have any justification for making trouble for them? "Then John answered and said, 'master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is for us' (Luke 10:49-50). This is a general statement from our Savior showing that we should not try to stop someone that is teaching in His name just because "he does not follow us." The disciples were not told to follow or try to unite with the other person, but they were told to stop trying to "stop him."

Remember the parable of the minas in Luke 19:11-27. Not every servant was equal: even though some accomplished twice as much as the others with the same resources; they were both accepted into the kingdom. But the man that was thrust out was the man that had a "good excuse" for why he could do nothing!

—Norman S. Edwards



FIRST CLASS

Please do find ... a way to bind ... if you don't mind.

In order to reduce the cost of envelopes and postage, we have attached these loose-leaf pages with a sticker. Please remove the sticker and use the binding of your choice: 3-ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip. Our goal is to bring worthwhile information to as many people as want it at the lowest practical cost. If your issue is damaged in the mail, please let us know. We hope to improve the paper and print quality at some time in the future.

Literature List

Friends of the Brethren is in the process of making a wide range of literature available from a variety of sources. We are still in the process of reading, editing, formatting and printing some of the many items that have been submitted to us. (In fact, we only mailed a few of the items requested since the last issue—please be patient!)

We accept literature that does not attack individuals and organizations, does not hold up one group as superior to all others, and contains no obvious Biblical or logical errors. Please write or call about your ideas.

The Apple of God's Eye by Jim Rector, 13 pages.

God's love for us is far greater than we imagine and we often take it for granted.

Assembling on the Sabbath by Norman Edwards, 12 pages. An exposition of the scriptures regarding our need to fellowship on the Sabbath and how to do it.

A Call to Arms by Jim Rector, 16 pages. Valuable lessons

we can learn *for today* from Revelation 2 and 3.

Does the New Covenant Do Away with the Letter of the Law? by Eric V. Snow. 32 pages. A "must read" for those that feel it does.

Did Christ Reorganize the Church? by Herbert W. Armstrong written in 1939. 7 pages. Very different than his later years approach: Christ never authorized a hierarchical government. (Printed in this issue.)

Friends of the Brethren Statement of Income and Expenses, 2 pages. (Automatically sent to contributors)

The Heart of the Matter by Jim Rector, 31 pages. Our calling is to spiritual growth, not just attendance, socializing, politeness or legalism.

How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans? by Norman Edwards, 30 pages. An analysis of leadership in the Bible and how it can be applied today.

The Worldwide Church of God Splits: Their Triumphs and Troubles by Allen Ruth, 55 pages. Facts and analysis of the last 20 years of church history.

We want to send this newsletter only to people that want it! If you are not interested, please send us a postcard or give us a call: 501-872-1003, fax: 501-872-1004, eMail: 75260,1603@Compuserve.com