

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 1

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

January 1996

1996 Feast of Tabernacles

Would You be Interested in a Non-Aligned Feast?

Many of us saints have, in the past few years, come to a greater understanding of true Christian responsibility and freedom in Christ regarding church governance. We have seen the proper role of leadership and that there are not different classes of God's people, i.e., "minister" versus "lay member". Some were ahead of most of us in this understanding and we would not listen to them because they were classified as "dissidents" back in the '70's and '80's. Some of the understanding that we have come to is that God's holy spirit can work in all of us. We all have spiritual gifts and do not need some man or system to squelch them.

Every year when the Feast of Tabernacles comes around, many of us have wondered where we would go.

We have more often than not settled for a site where our only spiritual role would be that of a "hearer of well-established doctrine." With all that in mind, it is time for some Feast sites to be planned that fulfill our need to participate, learn and grow.

A small group spearheaded by Norman Brumm is intending to host/coordinate one or two feasts sites and assist any others who desire to do the same. While we do recognize that some groups have been doing this for years, we would like to help publicize such events and to expand them to make them available to more and more of God's people. We are in the process of setting up our own guidelines and encourage others who are interested in doing the same to incorporate as many of our guidelines as they choose. We hope also to communicate with other groups planning feast sites with similar principles and to assist members in finding these sites. (For example, a person may wish to travel to a different part of the country and would like to know if there was a feast of this nature there.)

We have put out a few feelers and have received some feedback already. We would like to receive much more feedback from any who are interested in giving it. Following are some incomplete guidelines that have been put together so far. At this

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Jubilee '95 Promotes Learning, Toleration

Jubilee '95, a three-day conference, was sponsored by *Friends of the Sabbath* [no relation to *Friends of the Brethren*]. It was held in San Antonio, Texas, December 23-25, 1995 at the La Mansion del Rio Hotel. The primary subject of the conference was the Holy Days, with a secondary theme of cooperation among Sabbath-keepers. See box on page 9 for a list of all topics.

Speakers included life-long professional theologians employed by large organizations, people from small groups, and Bible students that have never earned any money from their religious activities.

The conference was open to the general public and approximately 240 people attended the conference. Those attending listed affiliations with over 20 organizations.

Friends of the Sabbath is not attempting to unify these various organizations or to establish a "church of their own." The Missions statement of *Friends of the Sabbath* is to **Cultivate "Through Supportive Communication and Continuing Education" a Greater Appreciation of and Devotion to One**

Another Among the Community of Sabbath Believers, with Each Contributing According to the Gifts which God has Granted Us to Accomplish His Work.

While many of the individual presentations were very interesting and instructive, the overall atmosphere of the conference was the most impressive. The fact that so many people from so many different backgrounds could speak to each other, listen to each other and learn from each other was truly encouraging. This is a great difference from the suspicion with which most organizations speak of

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Attention All Sabbath Keeping Groups:

From the Bible Sabbath Association:

January 4, 1996

Dear Fellow Sabbath Keeper,

The Bible Sabbath Association is in the process of revising the **Directory of Sabbath Observing Groups**. The directory is circulated to Sabbath keepers all over the world.

During the revising process we are contacting every Sabbathkeeping organization we can to make sure that they will be included in the revised Directory. The BSA requires that the organization recognize the the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Yahshua the Messiah) and observe the seventh-day Sabbath.

Some groups were inadvertently omitted and there are a number of new

groups. Since the records are now on computer we are constantly updating as we get new and corrected information. We also plan to use some cross-referencing in the 1996 edition.

If your group wishes to be included in the 1996 edition, please let us have your information as soon as possible. If the information used in the 1995 edition is still current we will use the information if you let us know.

We are asking you to submit the name and address of any Sabbath-keeping groups you know of that should be included. We are also asking you to complete the enclosed form for inclusion in the Directory. For inclusion your response must be returned to us by **March 1, 1996**.

Should you desire to include more

information about your organization than will fit in the standard space, additional space is available at the cost of \$50.00 per page. Photos (black/white are better than color), can be inserted in your extra page for \$20.00 each.

The directory of Sabbath Observing Groups is a very helpful directory and can be useful to everyone if the information is current. Please help us keep the information up to date.

Thank you for your timely reply,
Bryan Burrell, Secretary-Treasurer.

Please include the following information on a sheet of paper and send it to:

The Bible Sabbath Association
HC60, Box 8
Fairview, OK 73737
(405) 227-4494

Information needed:

Name	Address
City	State
Zip Code	Country
Phone #	Purpose
Leadership Body	History
Distinctive Doctrine	Holy Days?
Sacred Names?	Periodicals
Evangelistic Efforts	
Affiliation/Membership	

The standard space for each section is limited to 255 characters. Sections may be left blank. 

Contribution Receipts

Receipts for contributions in 1995 will be mailed by the end of January. If you contributed over \$5.00 in 1995 and do not receive a receipt by the middle of February, please contact us. Our 1995 statement of income and expenses will be sent with the receipts.

Anyone else who wishes to receive our 1995 statement of income and expenses should write or call to request it.

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 1 A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be January 1996

Servants News is published monthly by *Friends of the Brethren*. Subscriptions are free to individuals interested in obeying their Creator as described in the Bible. 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.

Editor: Norman S. Edwards
Associate Editors: Norman Brumm III, Marleen Edwards, Robert & Christine Feith
Contributors: (many) "Thanks" to everyone involved.

Servants' News accepts articles for publication. Include a self-addressed 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, letters and subscription/literature requests to:

<i>Friends of the Brethren</i>	Phone: 501-872-1003
PO Box 6516	Fax: 501-872-1004
Springdale, AR 72766-6516	E-Mail: 75260.1603@CompuServe.com

Subscription and literature requests may also be sent to these addresses:

Canada: Friends of the Brethren, R.R. #2, Hastings, Ontario, K0L 1Y0
Scotland: Steve Little, 14 Roman Camp, Broxburn, West Lothian EH52 5PJ

Most scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

UCG Rules of Association

Comments and Suggestions by Craig White

CHAPTER 1 - SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL INTEGRITY

Rule 1-100 Purpose and Function

The following rules of association are intended to regulate the conduct of the affairs of the United Church of God, an International Association (UCG) and to effectively facilitate the work of the Church. These rules have been adopted by the Council of Elders (Council), approved by the General Conference of Elders (General Conference) and are subordinate to the Constitution of the UCG (Constitution). These rules are based upon the scriptures. Their integrity derives from the spiritual ethic of love and mutual submission and the principles for problem resolution enunciated in Matthew 18 and other scriptures. Together with any standards adopted by the Council, these rules shall be binding upon the members of this association, as the term member(s) is defined in Chapter 3. Members of the Association shall manifest their consent to formal association by submitting a statement to that effect in writing to the Council chairman who shall cause such consents to be filed with the secretary. These rules are not exclusive as to required or prohibited conduct. Members of the Association are also bound, primarily, by the scripture, the Constitution, to the extent applicable, the bylaws of the UCG and applicable law. These rules also establish standards for disciplinary action, as defined in Chapter 3.

Comment/Suggestion: Add the words and approved by the National Councils in co-operation with the membership. The mention of Matthew 18 is essential and most welcomed. Outline what the statement should say. Why mention disciplinary action?

Rule 1-110 Geographic Scope of Rules

These rules shall govern the activities of the members of this Association throughout the world. If any rule promulgated herein is in conflict with the law of any sovereign state, then, except as provided in scripture, a member of the Association is expected to give preference

to the law of that state.

Comment/Suggestion: This appears okay.

Rule 1-120 Qualification Standards for Association

Each prospective member of this Association must be willing to adhere to the following standards to qualify as a member of the Association. Each member of the Association must uphold the following standards to retain membership in this Association. To be qualified for Association, a member must: (1) Support the consensus of the General Conference with respect to the fundamental beliefs of the UCG as enunciated in the Constitution. (2) Support the consensus of the General Conference with respect to the goals and purposes of the UCG. (3) Support the consensus of the General Conference with respect to matters of governance. (4) Be willing to share surplus resources with other members of this Association, according to what God has given, so that the needs of the Church throughout the world may be supplied.

Comment/Suggestion: Okay. But also "with respect to the fundamentals of belief and the [statement of belief]. Add new sub-section: (5) Be willing to utilize the grievance resolution and dis-fellowshipping review committee in the USA as the final 'court' of appeal.

Rule 1-130 Authority for Compliance

The Council and the General Conference, respectively, are authorized to adopt and approve these rules. Therefore, they shall each in their own respective capacities, have authority, as set forth herein, to act, in order to give force and effect to these rules. Members of the association shall conform to the conditions set forth by these bodies. In the event action is required to give effect to these rules, then these bodies are authorized to prescribe such action according to biblical standards.

Comment/Suggestion: What extra "conditions" are these? How do they legally do this? What actions? Is

this the disciplinary action spoken of elsewhere? If so, what exactly are those actions? How will they be enforced against a foreign country or a separately incorporated congregation?

Rule 1-140 Affirmative Duty of Devotion

Each member of the association has an affirmative duty to support every other member of this association in complying with these rules. Therefore, no member of the association shall assist in, solicit, or induce any violation of these rules.

Comment/Suggestion: Add the following words after "of these rules" [... unless it is perceived that the Constitution is being surreptitiously undermined.]

Rule 1-150 Legal Structure

Each member of the association is responsible to choose the legal structure which most effectively enables the church to accomplish its mission within a particular location and provides the maximum protection for the baptized members of the Church and the Church's financial assets.

Comment/Suggestion: Seems okay.

Rule 1-160 Use of the Name United Church of God, an International Association

The name United Church of God, an International Association, is the name of the incorporated entity which has been established by the General Conference as an instrument to aid the Church in fulfilling its mission. This entity is the parent entity of the United Church of God wherever located. Therefore, use of the name United Church of God, an International Association, is reserved to that corporation. To avoid confusion, incorporated and unincorporated entities that are formally associated may not use the name United Church of God, an International Association. Members of

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the association shall use the name "United Church of God - (Location of Incorporation)." For example, United Church of God - France. In nations where it is not possible to follow this pattern, representatives from the nation so affected shall choose a name which incorporates the Church of God in the title and seek the recommendation of the Council as to further descriptive language.

Such use is a permitted use by virtue of association with the United Church of God, an International Association.

Comment/Suggestion: I cannot find fault with this section.

CHAPTER 2 - RELATIONSHIP AMONG MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Rule 2-100 Dissemination of Teachings

Each member of the association agrees to accept the Fundamental Beliefs of the UCG as stated in the Constitution. Each member of the association agrees to participate in and support the development of doctrine for the edification of the Church and the preaching of the Gospel. Each member of the association agrees to participate in a

process for the further development of rules under this rule that allow for literature and other materials (in whatever manner constructed) to be designed to effectively teach the truth of the Bible in the cultural context in which they are distributed. Members of the association agree to participate in a process to promulgate such other rules as are necessary to give effect to this rule.

Comment/Suggestion: What of the expected separate "Statement of Belief" which, hopefully, will go into somewhat more detail. Add that private diversity of opinion is acceptable and privately publishable.

Rule 2-200 Ordination of Elders

Each member of this association agrees to participate in the development of procedures for a joint review of a proposed elders credentials by the recommending member of the association and the Council. Each member of this association agrees to accept the scriptural standards and qualifications for elders and abide by Article 4.3 and 4.3.1 of the Constitution. Since elders are called upon to teach and are admitted to the General Conference, joint approval of the Council and the recommending member of this association shall be required for the ordination of an elder.

Comment/Suggestion: Fine. Add that the National Councils should agree to a Code of Conduct for the ministry. "Approval" for information and records purposes?

Rule 2-300 Conflict Resolution

Each member of this association agrees to participate in the development of rules under this section for the resolution of conflict between baptized members, members and the ministry and between ministers, where the involvement of the Church is sought in the resolution of such conflict.

Comment/Suggestion:

And add "in accordance with Matt 18 and related scriptures". Perhaps also state that there should be an attempt at standardized or consistent procedures wherever possible (including warnings/suspension/disfellowshipping policy and disfellowshipping review boards, with the Council of Elders or a committee in the USA being the final 'court' of appeal.

Rule 2-400 Coordination of Resources

Each member of this association agrees to participate in the development of rules under this section for the use and sharing of information and resources that

will enable this Association to develop and execute national and international strategic plans, operating plans, budgets and other financial administrations. Members of this Association agree to participate in the development of rules for the sharing of human resources to enable the Church to accomplish its mission.

Comment/Suggestion: Fine. This will ensure unity, co-operation and open lines of communication.

Rule 2-500 National Councils

Each member of this Association agrees to participate in the development of standards and qualifications for national councils. Each member of this Association agrees to participate in the development of rules which define the relationship between national councils and the Council and the General Conference.

Comment/Suggestion: Add the words "qualifications for [their own] national councils". Aren't these supposed to be the rules?

Rule 2-600 Local Congregations

Local congregations, regardless of geographical location, whether incorporated or unincorporated, agree to be bound by these rules of Association.

Comment/Suggestion: Mention also affiliate churches (unless this is treated in a separate document). What if they do not agree? Then outline actions (e.g., no vote at the Conference of Elders, but still regarded as UCG).

CHAPTER 3 - DEFINITIONS

Rule 3.1 Member

Rule 3.2 Disciplinary Action

Comment/Suggestion: Why has this section not been completed? Member, as understood by the action we are taking, refers to the UCG in a foreign country/incorporated local congregation, not individuals. There is no need for disciplinary action to be mentioned here, is there? Discipline against a "Member" as defined as a foreign country, congregation or an individual? How will it be enforced? There may be a need for other definitions such as:

- 3.3 National Council
- 3.4 Conference of Elders
- 3.5 Council of Elders

Craig White

Servants' News publishes Craig White's articles because he represents a well-thought-out approach to many Biblical subjects. We have no financial arrangements between each other. We have differences of opinion. The statements we have written about him and his activities in the November and December, 1995 issues are our own opinions—not something he asked us to say.



New Future for CGI Congregations

The Church of God International has served many people in many ways since its beginning in 1978. It provided a place to fellowship and to grow for many people that left the Worldwide Church of God. It provided one place where people could contribute money that would be used to preach the Gospel to the world. Thousands of people have heard the Bible expounded and were baptized as a result of CGI broadcasts, literature and ministry.

While the CGI membership has been about 5000 for many years, it is important to note that over 25 local congregations and several larger groups have split off from the CGI over the past years. We look on this positively since many of these groups have gone on to grow and teach the Bible to others. Some of these split-offs

still cooperate with CGI and with each other. (For more details, write us for a free copy of *The Worldwide Church of God Splits, Their Triumphs and Troubles*).

When one understands that Jesus the Christ (Yeshua the Messiah) is the living functioning head of his body today, it should not be a fearful thing to see corporations come and go or consolidate and splinter. Our Savior said He would build his *Ekklesia*—a body of called out believers. He said nothing about building corporations or organizations. It may be a little traumatic to attend services in a different building with different (or just fewer) people. It may be hard to get used to a different hymn book or other new publications. It may be tough to admit that we were not attending the “one true church” or at least the “most correct church.”

But these are only small things compared to what happened to our brethren in Acts 8:1-4. They were driven from their homes as well as from their spiritual leaders—all at the same time. Fortunately, most Sabbath-keepers are not experiencing this kind of persecution yet.

Nevertheless, the Church of God International is not without trials. In our last issue we reported that Suerae Robertson sued Garner Ted Armstrong

for unspecified damages for his conduct while she was giving him a massage. We also reported that a video tape was made of this incident and that we received a letter back from Garner Ted Armstrong acknowledging the existence of this tape, but stating: “the actual tape is in the hands of the FBI, and I hesitate to go into detail, since it is supposedly a ‘covert’ investigation, and of course with the federal offense such as extortion, some rather lengthy prison sentences could be handed down, and the last thing

in the world I want to do, is the extortionist’s work for them.”

Since that time we have not been able to confirm that any such FBI investigation has taken place and the original tape is in the hands of the plaintiff. We have spoken with **four witnesses that have seen the tape all of which agreed on its content**—which also agreed

with the suit filed by Robertson. Without going into all of the details, the tape shows about 40 minutes of a completely undressed Garner Ted Armstrong receiving a massage and making frequent sexual advances toward Ms. Robertson. Armstrong made no effort to flee this encounter, nor was there the slightest bit of evidence that he was being forced to stay there. To the contrary, all of the viewers indicated he appeared to enjoy the whole affair immensely. Armstrong told Robertson on the tape that his evangelistic work was so important that God would forgive him for any sins he might commit.

Why Mention This?

But why do we bring these things up? Should we not let each man deal with his own sins? Shouldn’t we be satisfied with all of the good preaching Garner Ted Armstrong has done?

No.

That is not what conversion is about. Leaders are not there just to “talk the talk” but to “walk the walk.” They are to be examples for the others to follow (1Pet 2:21, 5:3, Heb 13:7). The Messiah’s basic complaint against the corrupt scribe and Pharisee leaders of his day was that “they say, but do not do” (Matt 23:3).

We have nearly two chapters in the Bible devoted to the qualifications of leaders in our congregations—1Timothy 3 and Titus 1. There would be no point in these chapters if we always looked the other way whenever anyone sinned. Also, it makes no sense to say a man must meet these qualifications to become a leader, but once a leader he is no longer subject to them.

A leader should not be removed just because someone accuses him (1Tim 5:19). But there are now several witnesses to Armstrong’s doings and a lot more evidence will become public as the trial progresses and as these items are released to the press. If one reads these chapters of Timothy and Titus, it becomes obvious that a publicized sin of this magnitude disqualifies a man from a leadership position. Continuing to recognize such a man as a leader says to the public that our religion is vain—that it does not matter if we practice what we preach.

Repentance?

Should not Garner Ted Armstrong be given a chance to repent? Yes, he should repent. The first step in repentance is to publicly acknowledge the sin as David did (2Sam 12:13, Pslm 51:3). The Eternal is very concerned about what people think of His work based on the actions of his servants. When David sinned, the Eternal told him: “...by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme...” (2Sam 12:14).

A person further disqualifies himself from serving if they continue to lie about their sin or pretend that it never happened. He should step down, repent and bring forth fruits of repentance. “Therefore bear

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When one understands that Jesus the Christ is the living functioning head of his body today, it should not be a fearful thing to see corporations come and go or consolidate and splinter.

Leaders are not there just to “talk the talk” but to “walk the walk.”

Personal Letter Regarding CGI Situation

January 13, 1996

Dear Fellow Christians,

This is the most challenging dilemma of my Christian life. On the one hand are the babes in Christ and the innocent ones. On the other hand I must end the lies and hypocrisy that I have been deceived into perpetuating. We were admonished in a sermon yesterday to ask "is this action compatible with the character of Christ?" I have searched the scripture and see many examples of calling a sin, SIN. Yes, He quietly forgave the woman at the well—as we should forgive those around us striving to overcome sin. He also labeled the scribes and Pharisees for what they were—publicly—for all to hear. He seems to have detested a deceitful heart above all things!

From the beginning of this present crisis, for about the last 3 months, Ian and I have repeated to everyone we talked to, our positive feelings and our support. When Mr. [Ron] Dart resigned and then Mr. [Garner Ted] Armstrong "stepped aside" we were thrilled to see opportunity for a church to function with a team effort, with input and decisions from men whose desire it is to serve God. And we were supportive of Mr. Armstrong and his present situation. We believed we had been told the truth in both areas.

Mr. Armstrong told Ian personally that he had visited a

massage therapist "3 or 4 times", had made a dreadful mistake and that a video tape had been made, unknown to

him. He also said this woman was threatening him with a lawsuit and that the accusations were false. On several occasions the leadership in Tyler said things that made us believe it was a one-time event—a "mistake."

From the beginning, I heard rumors that "there were other massage therapists and other problems" and every time I heard that I said "can you give me a name?" Without that I tossed it out as rumor and gossip. When people from other areas mentioned this rumor I would go to great lengths to explain that in a community like Tyler, "surely I would have heard such stuff." I exerted my influence to get them to believe as I had been led to believe. (This deceit—even though unintentional—on my part is why I HAD to write this letter.) On Jan. 7, someone repeated the accusation and gave me two names...after prayer and soul-searching I knew I had to follow up and prove this a false accusation. That was my motive. I used the Tyler yellow pages, under "Massage Therapist", and on Monday, Jan. 8 verified that 5 out of 5 had either seen Mr. Armstrong as a patient or in the case of being owners of salons, their employees had treated him. This was bad enough, but then four of them described to me what had led them to terminate their services to him—his actions and words were sexually improper. Some of the reasons they gave are: "He hit on my employees", "He was sexually eccentric", "He asked for special things", "He talked about his sexual frustrations and personal matters",

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fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones" (Luke 3:8).

Work of the Eternal

We hope those that remain in the Church of God, International realize that theirs is a work of the Eternal, not of Garner Ted Armstrong. If He can raise up stones to be children of Abraham, he can raise up stones to be evangelists. Some of our readers will remember the wondering in 1985 about who could possibly continue the WCG telecast after Herbert Armstrong died. Three "rookies" started making programs and within a few months their average weekend response was greater than Herbert Armstrong's average response. It is the message and the power of the holy spirit, not the person.

CGI has received a copy of the tape through the court discovery process. We hope that they will use a Biblical, faith-filled approach in deciding what to do about the situation. While Garner Ted

Armstrong may mitigate his legal liabilities by attempting to prove that he was "entrapped," that has little bearing on his Biblical qualification as a leader. Anyone who will do what he did (frolic naked for 40 minutes with a woman that is not his wife and then lie to cover it up) should not be a spiritual leader.

Several local congregations have already broken away from the Church of God, International because they refuse to be associated with this disqualified teacher. Other congregations are considering disassociation. Tom Justus, a long-time board member, has resigned over the issue. Other Tyler CGI employees are speaking out (see accompanying letter). We hope that the CGI's board of directors will take the necessary steps to see that good works can continue.

Meanwhile, we are trying to make the Eternal's people aware that their faith and trust must be in their Father in heaven, not in a man (Jer 17:5). You can continue or even expand your personal service with or without a particular corporation. The books of Joshua, Judges, Kings, and Chronicles contain many stories of kings

of Israel and Judah who made alliances with other nations to protect them from their enemies. These pacts almost always ended in disaster. If they had concentrated on obeying the Eternal, they would have been able to defeat their enemies themselves (Deut 23:6, 32:29-32).

It is never good to compromise with clear Biblical commands simply to "keep the work together." As with military alliances, it may appear to work for a time. But powerful nations do not enter into treaties unless there is "something in the deal for them." And likewise, sin extracts its penalty and price. "Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later" (1Tim 5:24).

We encourage everyone to look to our great Leader and Savior in this time of difficulty. Ask for the wisdom and understanding to know what to do. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matt 7:7-8).

—Norman S. Edwards

Local Congregations



Camping Anyone?

Dear Brethren;

The Sabbath Campers Fellowship is a group of people who desire to act as a hand that reaches across all barriers of men and organizations, and doctrinal differences, to celebrate the things that we share in common—faith in God, obedience to Him and the Sabbath, to name a few. What is it, after all, that makes us brethren? Isn't it the fact that we have the gift of God's spirit? I think that we all would have to agree with that statement.

Brethren, we sure hope that you will be able to join us at our Sabbath Campers Fellowship gatherings this spring and summer. We are looking forward to seeing you all there.

In Christian Love,
Sabbath Campers Fellowship

Tom and Joy Moody

Local Church Members Fasting Across Party Lines

The following letter, asking the Church of God to set aside a day of fasting and prayer, is submitted from a member of the Hattiesburg, Mississippi Church of God. After seeing a similar request in IN TRANSITION the entire local church felt that this is an effort worth pursuing.

The Hattiesburg Church is served by Mr. Steve Meyers (UCG) and Mr. John Ogwyn (GCG). The congregation is made up of members from both organizations and also members of the body of Christ who have chosen not to affiliate with any physical organization at pre-

sent.

They feel that the spirit and body of Christ transcends ALL physical organizations and therefore have put aside their organizational differences to worship and live in unity, peace and harmony as the Church of God at Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

January 8, 1996

Dear Brethren,

I would like to make an appeal to each member, group and organization of the Church of God to come together before God in a day of fasting and prayer. Many people have expressed their desire that all the groups be 'one', that is, one physical organization. Whether or not that is possible at this time, I do not know, but through fasting, we can seek to be one in Spirit and in

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Sabbath Campers Fellowship

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35

Attention Christian Campers!!:

Christian Sabbath keepers are planning campouts for fellow Sabbath observers of all affiliations to celebrate their common bonds as God's people in a spirit of love and edification. These campouts will be held in the northern Indiana and southern Michigan areas beginning in May, 1996. Sabbath services are being planned, featuring exciting speakers such as Jim Rector, Ray Wooten and Carl Franklin. We will sing songs of praise to God, listen to inspiring messages and enjoy evening campfire fellowship as weather permits. The campouts will be a great opportunity to meet more brethren, promote our mutual purpose and show love one to another! If you would like to participate in one or more of these campouts,

you will need to make your own reservations, so contact us for more information. If you do not wish to camp overnight but would like to join us for Sabbath services and/or fellowship on Friday or Sunday, please feel free to come on any of the scheduled camp days. (The campgrounds charge a small fee for entry.) All campgrounds offer swimming and other activities for families.

The first campout is planned for the weekend beginning Friday, May 17 through Sunday, May 19, 1996, at Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park in Fremont, Indiana, close to the intersection of I-80 and I-69.

Our second campout will be the weekend of Friday, June 21 through Sunday, June 23, 1996, at the Holly State Recreation Area in Holly, Michigan.

The third campout will be the weekend of Friday, August 23 through Sunday, August 25, 1996, at 5000-acre Yankee Springs State Park, in Middleville, Michigan, just off M-37.

Please contact one of us if you plan

to attend any of the Michigan/Indiana campouts. We will get the camp site information out to you because you will need to make your own reservations by calling the appropriate parks. We will also need to have you on our campers' list in order to advise you of any necessary changes in plans, as well as to inform you of specific times and locations of Sabbath services.

We hope that many brethren, whether independent or affiliated with an organization, will feel free to join us. If the distance is too far, why not form your own Sabbath campers fellowship in your area, and be sure to include us on your mailing list!

If you would like to participate in our Sabbath Campers Fellowship, please contact:

Sabbath Campers Fellowship
P.O. Box 520
Genesee, Michigan 48437-0520
(810) 232-2288
(810) 232-5562 (fax)
E-mail: TMoody8480@AOL.com
Amocogal@AOL.com

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purpose. As individuals we seek God in prayer, study and fasting, humbling ourselves to Him; asking that He will show us His will, help us overcome, help us love Him and love one another as our own self. Collectively, God calls us to humble ourselves to one another. As Churches of God we have so much in common. Even with the differences we have the most important things in common. We will be one in the world to come, working side by side as sons and daughters of God.

Perhaps God is working out something I can't see in allowing the separate groups, but it is certainly pleasing to Him for His people to come together before Him to seek His will and purpose! It seems to me the least that could come from a fast would be a better attitude in each of us, and that each group could do their part of God's work more effectively. How can we know what could come of our collectively seeking God with all our heart?

I believe it is worth the effort. I suggest the date, March 23, 1996, to be set aside by all the Churches of God as a day of fasting and prayer. Additionally, I would like to ask that everyone who is in agreement with the feelings expressed here please write to the head of each organization and tell them their feelings.

"Jubilee '95" from page 1

other organizations in their own meetings.

I was reminded of our Savior's and the apostle Paul's instructions not to try to stop others who are teaching in His name (Mark 9:38-40, Phil 1:15-18). We are also reminded of Biblical examples of men such as Cornelius and Apollos that became leaders in the congregations, but were not trained directly by the apostles (Acts 10-11, 18:24-26, 1:1-5; 1Cor 3:6). We learned that we could learn from each other without having to control each other.

We believe that learning is much greater in an environment like this because speakers must justify their teaching from scripture and history—they cannot simply say "this is our church doctrine—believe it or get out." A microphone was placed in the center of the conference rooms and many sessions allowed people to ask questions or make comments. Most people were able to defend their beliefs.

Rather than attempt to cover every session in detail, we will cover some of the outstanding sessions and note that a com-

A member of the
Hattiesburg Church of God

Places to Fellowship

This list contains a number of organizations with many Sabbath-keeping congregations and/or regular sermon-tape mailings. There is a diversity of doctrinal teachings so we encourage everyone to study the scriptures and prove doctrines for themselves. Most of these organizations welcome visitors, though individual congregations greatly vary. We encourage the people of the Eternal to fellowship and serve each Sabbath if practical.

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

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

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

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

Cornerstone Publications (CP). 3802 Olive Street, Texarkana, TX 75503.

plete set of tapes, or some individual tapes, are available from *Friends of the Sabbath*. Their address is on the bottom of page 10.

We will cover what we believe to be some of the highlights of the conference and some of the important things we have learned there.

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi

The featured and most frequent speaker was Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi. He was born in Italy, very close to the vatican. His father was given a Bible by a Waldensian (a religious group that relied on the Bible and rejected much of mainstream "Christian" theology). After studying his Bible, Dr. Bacchiocchi's father concluded that the seventh-day Sabbath should be kept. He looked for a seventh-day-keeping congregation in Rome, but could find none so he began keeping the Sabbath on his own. Young Samuele was persecuted in School because he did not attend the Saturday classes. The only kind of exemption that was allowed was medical. Fortunately, they found a doctor that

903-792-1352

Christian Educational Ministries, (CEM). P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, TX 75791.

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. Meridian, ID 83642. 208-888-3380.

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

United Church of God (UCG). PO Box 661780, Arcadia CA 91066- 1780. 818-294-0800.

E-mail Information Lists

Those interested in E-mail discussions about learning and growing from the scriptures with or without organizations might like to be placed on the "Like Minds" e-mail list run by Rick Stanczak: Buffinc@teleport.com.

A "Church of God" e-mail list of people interested in discussing doctrinal subjects is available being run by Alan Ruth:

Aruth88521@Aol.com.



declared him "mentally incompetent to attend school on the Sabbath."

Later on, the Bacchiocchi family found some other Sabbath-keepers to meet with. Today, Samuele Bacchiocchi is a member of the Seventh Day Adventist church and teaches at Andrews University—a Seventh Day Adventist school. He also derives a significant income from the 11 books he has written. Mr. Bacchiocchi's books are widely read within his organization as well as by the general populace.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Bacchiocchi's research sometimes puts him at odds with his own church organization. Of the 12 Seventh Day Adventist Universities, only 2 will allow him to speak on their campuses. Nevertheless, the fact that he is able to publicly disagree and still remain employed is an improvement upon the practices of many other hierarchical church governments.

But does this allowance of disagreement just create confusion? It may create some confusion, but it also has advantages.

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One advantage is that the Seventh Day Adventist Universities welcome Sabbath-keeping students that are not members of their own church organization. *Servants' News* readers might want to communicate this option to young people they know that are seeking a place for further education.

An even greater benefit of allowing disagreement: **truth can be learned.** Mr. Bacchiocchi's latest book is entitled *God's Festivals in Scripture and History, Part I: The Spring Festivals.* Mr. Bacchiocchi concludes that these festivals have much meaning for us today and should indeed be kept. While the governing body of his church organization does not seem likely to accept this idea, it does seem that there is much interest among some Seventh Day Adventist leaders and members. If only 10% of the eight million Seventh Day Adventists begin to keep the holy days, they may be the largest holy-day keeping group of people anywhere!

In another session Samuele Bacchiocchi explained how he was able, as a non-Catholic, to graduate from the Pontifical Gregorian university in Rome. While there, he was able to examine documents from the first few centuries AD and conclusively show how various church leaders gradually changed their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. Much of this information is included in his book *From Sabbath to Sunday.* It is interesting to note that the professor who was in charge of Bacchiocchi's study program has since been persecuted for allowing him to study and the Vatican has “shut the door” to any further such non-Catholic students.

Dr. Bacchiocchi gave several other sessions that we found interesting and mostly in agreement with our understanding of the Bible. His delivery was full of gestures, emotions and an Italian accent—a real attention-keeper. If there was any criticism of him, it is that he went overtime, spent a little too much time plugging his own books, and occasionally monopolized the question and answer time of other sessions.

Jim Franks—Church History in USA

Jim Franks' presentation was extremely interesting in light of the doctrinal changes that many organizations are going through today. From 1981 to 1987, Mr. Franks spent a lot of time in old churches, museums and grave-yards researching Sabbath-keeping in the origi-

nal 13 American colonies. Preachers that did not obey the Church of England in the 1600's were often persecuted and sometimes executed. Puritans came to the colonies seeking relief from the persecution, but they often persecuted others (such as Sabbath keepers) that did not agree with their doctrines.

Rhode Island was founded as a colony with complete religious freedom. Some of the early political leaders either kept the Sabbath or were very sympathetic to those that did. A walkway crossing the border between Connecticut and Rhode Island is still known as the “Sabbath Path” today.

Its name came from the citizens of Connecticut that would travel it down to Rhode Island each Sabbath where they could safely attend Sabbath services. One of the largest Rhode Island newspapers is still not published on Saturday.

What happened to all of these Sabbath keeping congregations? Are they still there today? A very few are. Some of these congregations saw no need to name their organization, just considered themselves part of the body of true believers. While this is a Biblically sound concept, it is more difficult to trace the history of a group without

Continued page 10

Jubilee '95

Sabbath, December 23

- 1:30 Introductions and Instructions.
- 1:35 *My Search for the Sabbath at a Vatican University*, Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi.
- 2:45 *The Sabbath in early America, Historical Presentation*, Jim Franks.
- 4:05 *Examples of Sabbatarian Cooperation: The Bible Sabbath Association, also Giving and Sharing*, Richard Nickels.
- 4:55 *Church of God, 7th Day, in 19th and 20th Centuries*, Calvin Burrell.
- 6:05 *Typology of Holy Days in the New Testament*, Ronald Dart.
- 7:00 *Holy Day or Holiday*, Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi.

Sunday, December 24

- 8:00 *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi.
- 8:50 *Sabbath and Holy Day Linkage*, Dr Donald Ward.
- 9:40 *Holy Days Observance in the Early Christian Church*, Peter Nathan.
- 10:45 *Paul and the Holy Days*, Larry Walker.
- 11:15 *Holy Days in Galatia and Colosse*, **Panel:** Bacchiocchi, Burrell, Nathan, Walker, Ward.
- 1:45 *Are the Feast Days for Christians?*, Calvin Burrell.
- 2:35 *Holy Days for Christianity, an Overview*, Larry Salyer.
- 3:35 *Update: My Research on the Biblical Holy Days*, Samuele Bacchiocchi.

Split Session—Espada Room:

5:20 *Determining Time: Biblical and Historical Calendars*, **Panel:** Edwards, Martin, Solinsky.

Split Session—Iberian Ballroom:

5:20 *Holy days in revelation: Language and Symbolicity*, Gerald Aust.
 6:05 *Passover Controversies*, John Sash.

Combined Session:

7:45 P.M. *Meet the Professor Reception and Displays*, All speakers.

Monday, December 25

8:00 *The Biblical Holy Days and their New Testament Significance*, Dr Ernest Martin.

Split Session—Espada Room:

8:50 *Sukkot & The Millennium*, Larry Salyer.
 9:35 *Yom Kippur's Two Goats*.

10:40 *New Moons* **Panel:** Nathan, Nickels, Solinsky, Sash, Walburn

Split Session—Iberian Ballroom:

8:50 *Diversity Among Sabbatarians*, **Panel:** Edwards, Nickels, Ruth, Walburn

10:40 *John 5:17: A Sabbath Controversy*, Debate between Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi and Dr Ernest Martin moderated by Ronald Dart.

Combined Session:

1:15 *The Professors Answer* (open for questions), Aust, Bacchiocchi, Burrell, Dart, Edwards, Martin, Nathan, Nickels, Ruth, Salyer, Sash, Solinsky, Walburn, Walker, Ward.
 3:00 *Concluding Comments*, Peter Nathan.

Jubilees '96 Announcements:

The "Friends of the Sabbath" announces two new local chapters: Sidney, Australia and Houston, Texas.

The initial plans for the Jubilee conferences for 1996 have been developed. Instead of 2 large luxury Jubilees with many speakers and many subtopics, the conferences will this year be more focused, speakers limited to 3-4, and they will be locally coordinated and sponsored. Local community sabbatarian churches and fellowships that request a Jubilee will support the conferences locally. The Jubilee topics will cover the Sabbath, the Holy Days (same high quality scholarship) plus one other topic of local interest (eg sabbath history, spiritual gifts, Christian service, etc).

Dr Bacchiocchi has agreed to continue to be the key note speaker at all of this year's Jubilees. Efforts will be coordinated in some cases also with the Bible Sabbath Association. Costs have been reduced, local housing will be provided, and more time will be allotted to discussion and fellowship. There will be no conference registration fees.

The focus will be on evangelizing the community as well as fostering sabbatarian cooperation. Fruits of the evangelistic efforts will, of course, be reaped by the local churches who participate.

Conferences are being planned for:

March 22-24	Indiana
April 5-7	Michigan
June 7-9	Alabama
July 4-7	Sidney, Australia
August 3-5	Seattle
Sept 26-27	Arizona
Nov 29-Dec 1	England
Dec 27-29	Mexico

We greatly appreciate all who have participated in and supported our efforts over the past year.

Keep these efforts in your prayers. Your comments, suggestions, and support continues to be much appreciated.

—John Merritt

Friends of the Sabbath
27068 La Paz, Suite 500
Laguna Hills, Ca 92656
(714-362-3687)

"Jubilee '95" from page 9

a name. The majority of the congregations, and even a college founded by Sabbatarians, seemed to do something we are witnessing in our time: gradually change from Sabbath-keeping to Sunday-keeping organizations. Sometimes a confrontation would occur and the Sabbath-keepers and the Sunday-keepers in one organization would be forced to separate. Jim Franks' presentation helped us to see that many of the Eternal's people have striven to preserve truth while others strove primarily to preserve an organization.

Dr. Ernest Martin

Departing from the Worldwide Church of God in the mid seventies, Dr Ernest Martin has continued to study the Bible and write articles since that time. While his positions on some subjects probably differed greatly from most of his audience, his research was very thought provoking. He spent most of one session explaining how Zechariah 12-14 is a single long prophecy which indicates a great revival before the returning of our Savior. He felt that the returning to the holy days of some Seventh Day Adventists and some of the Church of God 7th Day groups is part of that revival. Cases of independent Sunday-keeping churches switching to the Sabbath are also growing in frequency.

Holy Day Messages

Gerold Aust, Ronald Dart, Peter Nathan, Larry Salyer, Larry Walker and Donald Ward all delivered very useful messages largely in agreement with traditional "Church of God" teaching. Certainly some aspects were brought out in ways that we had never heard before. Though we are not covering these messages individually, we do not mean to imply that they were any less worthwhile than the others.

Calendar and New Moon Issues

Panel discussions were held on Biblical and Historical Calendars and on New Moons. These two discussions were very closely related and for the sake of brevity we will highlight the calendar discussion. In it Norman Edwards presented an overview of calendar issues. Most of the information presented is in the paper entitled *Biblical Calendar Basics*, offered on the back cover of this issue. Also, Herb Solinsky presented a summary of his research on what he understands to be the

Calendar used during the time of Moses. Of all the various calendar systems in use by various groups, we feel that Herb Solinsky's writings are the most thorough. His writings exceed 100 pages, but we hope to be able to set it in different type and include it as a future literature offering. A limited number of copies of his writings are for sale from *Friends of the Sabbath*.

Sabbatarian Cooperation

Three sessions were devoted largely to Sabbatarian Cooperation. Richard Nickels had the first session. He has run an organization known as Giving and Sharing since the mid 70's. He makes many Bibles and helps available at wholesale cost and freely distributes many of his own writings and the writings of others. Nickels pointed out that too many Sabbath-keeping organizations are far too interested in how much money they bring in and not enough in teaching their members to use their gifts and to teach others. The *Giving and Sharing Order Form* is available from our literature list on the back page.

The *Diversity Among Sabbatarians* panel presented a number of issues about preaching and teaching apart from large organizations. Alan Ruth presented his plans to share information on the Internet, Norman Edwards presented the basic concepts of *Assembling on the Sabbath*, and *How Does the Eternal Govern through Humans?*, Richard Nickels explained some of the great historical variety of Sabbath-keepers, and Dr. Greg Walburn spoke from a converted Jewish perspective. We feel that the tape of this session would be quite worthwhile. Much of the final session, *The Professors Answer*, consisted of questions relating to this session and was also quite worthwhile. In this final session, the scheduled conference speakers were joined by Yaffa King, the founder and principle speaker for the Roots of Yeshua radio program.

Many Sabbath keepers today are unaware that there are dozens maybe hundreds of groups that have a Jewish background but have accepted Yeshua (the man we call "Jesus") as Messiah. While some of these groups are essentially protestant—they believe in the Trinity and that the law was "nailed to the cross," other groups seem to be much like the first century believers—Jewish in background

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"Personal Letter" from page 6

"He repeatedly asked me to work higher", "He obviously came for his version of sex, not professional care."

This was over a period of several years. Please realize that if it was this easy for me to learn this, then others probably already have, including the lawyer for the woman suing Mr. Armstrong. I did not have the heart or the need to keep making calls.

I am dealing with two main sets of concerns...#1) My heart is full of grief for this fellow brother who is so troubled by his vices and problems, that he denies them and has not sought counsel to help him overcome what is obviously a lifelong sickness. How can he truly feel the forgiveness of God when he doesn't acknowledge the depth of his sin? And how can he know he is cared about when he doesn't understand "unconditional" love. In his eyes, you are either FOR him, i.e., willing to coverup, lie for him and allow him to be a hypocrite with no limits or punishments expected or you are AGAINST him, i.e., asking him to be honest, to humble himself before God, the Creator, and Jesus Christ (who is IN the members of the CGI). I wish that before he dies he could come to understand that many of us can care about him, genuinely be willing to help in any way we can, but that we don't condone or

approve of his actions, sins, etc.

And...#2) I told Charles Groce that I could represent CGI as a minister's wife and as a Christian and that I could forgive Ted and support him in the future but that if I ever learned I had been lied to and deceived and that they allowed me to represent those lies and deceit to others, "I would be one hopping mad woman." I am! It is obvious that the past and present hierarchy of the CGI has known and hidden this all along. When men hold themselves up to be respected, to be our teachers, but cover up this kind of habitual sin, their sham is as serious as is the sickness of the sin.

I believe that this church has been built with lies, deceit and hypocrisy at its core. We have true doctrines, but it is time to set some wrongs right. The criteria for every minister must be the same whether their name is Armstrong, Hufton or Chapman. It is time to be honest and not protect the guilty and punish the innocent because they won't protect the guilty. If this is truly "not Ted's church" then Ian and I will not be put out of the body for writing these letters. It is time for the people to come together, prune the tree (not kill it, just clean it up severely!), and work to let God grow something productive. It is time for the double standards and "hidden sins" to be recognized for what they are and for there to be room for sincere truth and moral strength in

this church.

Yes God forgave David and called him a "man after His own heart." But David accepted his punishment, never tried to hide or deny the enormity of his sin. **And he didn't do that sin again!** I have wrestled with "the message vs. the messenger" as well, because we have all been repeatedly told by Mr. Armstrong not to use him as an example for our children, not to look at his life, etc. I read so many words in the Bible and they tell me that if a messenger can't or won't do what he is saying, he is a hypocrite. How do we get around that one? (By the way, hypocrisy, lying and deceiving others can be repented of and repeated no more. All things are possible with God.)

It is time for the "Country Club" atmosphere to give way to prayer, fasting, sincerity and hard work. I have a fervent desire to serve God, right where I am, in the CGI. It is sad to realize standing up for righteousness may result in our dismissals, but I have made the decision to obey God first. Please join me in praying that God's will be done, that we will put His will before our own, and that His love for us all will govern our future. We must worship God with all our hearts and love one another with our lives.

I remain in service to Jesus Christ and my fellow Christians,

Thalia M. Hufton

"Growing Pains" from page 16

working. [We cannot put this point any further down on the list, or it might never get done at all.]

5. Answer letters written to us. Questions that we are asked by multiple people or that we feel are particularly relevant, we try to answer in Servants' News. Some letters we do not feel we can correctly answer with our existing knowledge and require us to do more research. That moves them into category five [which explains why some of you have been waiting so long for answers].

6. Read doctrinal articles from others and prepare for publication. On straightforward, basic subjects, all we need to do is make a few corrections, format the article and print it. Some articles we find we can't publish, and others we ask the writer to explain certain

questions or scriptures that we feel the article did not adequately cover. Even if we feel that an article is not worth our time to publish, we have begun to accumulate a list of articles available from the individuals that wrote them. This will allow these works to be circulated—there may well be truth in them that we have not understood or overlooked. We have over 100 articles that we still need to read and process in some way.

7. Do doctrinal research—both to answer specific letters and to write new articles on topics we feel are important. [We have had very little time for this—though we did complete the first version of an article on Biblical calendars—see the back page of this issue.]

We would like to be spending most of our time on points 6 and 7, but that has not been possible. We are looking for ways to be involved in more study

in the future. We have upgraded our mailing and computer systems so more people can work at once. We are making arrangements for others to help with some of the day-to-day mail processing. We are confident that the Eternal will make a way.

We would like to be able to serve everyone that asks us to help them. But we are content to do as much as we can. We hope everyone realizes that truth and the power to teach others ultimately comes from our Father in Heaven. We will do the best we can, but each person is ultimately responsible for "working out their own salvation" and learning from the scriptures and from the many other fine teachers that are available.

We would like to thank all of the people that have been an encouragement and help to us.

—Norman S. Edwards

As was his custom for several years, Jim Rector (Cornerstone Publications) began planning the 1995 Feast near the end of the previous year. He arranged for facilities right on the Gulf coast beach in Destin, Florida. About 120 people planned to attend. Jim Rector had scheduled a variety of speakers, three of which normally attended with his group: Leo Holley, Ralph Pierson and himself. But in addition, he allowed men from other small groups to speak: Norman Edwards (Servants' News), Myron Martin (Patriots of the Kingdom), Alan Ruth (Barnabas Ministries) and John Trescott (Church of God, Anadarko, Oklahoma).

None of these men were assigned a topic. They were simply told which days and times for which they were scheduled and about how long they would have to speak. Does this sound like recipe for confusion? It did not produce confusion! And the actual circumstances were much more trying than you might have imagined.

Opal Showed Up, Too!

Three days before the feast began, Hurricane Opal came ashore rendering the intended meeting facility unusable for several weeks. Several of the speakers were already enroute. Jim Rector and Norman Edwards decided to move the site to Springdale, Arkansas. Jim Rector called as many of those planning to attend as he could reach and Norman Edwards found an available hall and a variety of accommodations. Due to the difficulties with available airline flights and the greater distance for many drivers only about 60 of those originally planning to attend were able to attend. About 20 of these people had never attended a Feast with Jim Rector before.

In spite of the difficulty caused by the hurricane, all of the speakers arrived and every service except two were held as originally planned. (One was moved to another day and another was cancelled due to the hall being unavailable). A scheduled family cookout and a family variety show required some adjustments, but were an obvious success. Several other activities were scheduled to replace the lost opportunities of San Destin. The congregation sang the lively feast music distributed well

Non-Aligned Feast Sites Really Work

before the feast and added some songs from the *The Bible Hymnal (1974)* since many of the people attending were familiar with them.

Variety of Messages

Topics were a fine mix of correction, instruction and Bible prophecy. Jim Rector spoke on coming out of Babylon, being at the crossroads of our lives, and the possible prophetic parallels between the traditional Hebrew wedding and the return of the Messiah. Also, he delivered numerous announcements and several short encouraging messages. Leo Holley spoke on preparing for persecution. The late Ralph Pierson (heart attack 12/3/95) delivered two outstanding messages encouraging personal spiritual growth: *Going on to Perfection* and *Prepare to Meet Your God*.

Norman Edwards spoke on learning from our past mistakes in church organizations and the Biblical model for Sabbath services. Myron Martin gave three messages: *Comets*, *Come Lord Jesus* and *Identifying a Laodicean*. Alan Ruth spoke on spiritual gifts and how we can learn to identify ours. He attended half of the feast in Springdale and the rest in Colorado with the Christian Biblical Church of God (and apparently no one was offended). John Trescott's messages were: *Finally*, *Romans 13 Revealed*, *The Last Great Day*, and *Circumcision*.

While most of the services consisted of traditional singing and speaking, some speakers invited questions and comments from the audience. Two open discussions were held in the evening where about 40 adults openly discussed topics such as how to preach the Gospel locally and how "false Messiahs" will try to deceive people into believing they are the true Messiah.

While we felt that a small percentage of the things preached at this feast were in error, we can look back on our history of WCG feasts and see that a we heard a certain amount of error there, too—prophetic interpretation that failed and doctrines such as "truth always comes into the church through one man at the top." So is

there any difference? Yes! In the former days, a person that felt the speaker was in error ran the risk of being put out from his congregation if he tried to point out the error to anyone. In the Springdale feast, people could freely go to the speaker and try to show them their mistake from the scriptures. At least one speaker admitted his mistake and changed his understanding.

Let's Do it Again!

Everyone at Springdale agreed that this the kind of format for a feast they would like to have in the future. Rather than just "listening to a message" each person felt responsible for thinking about and in some cases responding to the message. While there was time for good meals and physical recreation, the focus was clearly on the spiritual teaching and understanding.

How was the money handled? It was all very simple. Norman Edwards rented the hall and bought a few other essential items. Alan Ruth bought the initial items for the free snack bar. A box for donations to the snack bar was set up and also a box for general feast donations. The people that replenished the snack bar kept track of what they spent and what they took in from the snack bar box. At the end of the feast, Jim Rector paid for the hall rental, the minor outstanding snack-bar expense, a few other miscellaneous expenses, and used the rest of the money for his ministry. Individuals were perfectly free to mail a portion of their holy day offering to other ministries if they so desire.

While we learned many spiritual lessons from sermons at this feast, one big lesson we learned is this: **The desire of the Eternal's people to come to a feast site and learn is far more important than the physical arrangements.** Most of the people that came to Springdale, Arkansas did not even know that it existed only four days beforehand. Nevertheless, most of the people were able to stay in reasonably-priced lake-view condominiums less than 30 minutes from the hall. Others found motels only five minutes from the hall.

If we make the "spiritual environment" of the feast site we choose this year a high priority, the Eternal will not let us down. Happy Feast!

—Norman S. Edwards

“Feast ‘96” from page 1 point, nothing is set in stone.

The Feast ...

Overall Approach

One of the main purposes of a feast of this nature is to promote true, godly unity among God’s people, a unity not based on some man’s or on some organization’s doctrines but on godly love. Jesus did not say in John 13:35, “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you all see eye to eye on every point of doctrine.” He said that we will be known to be his disciples if we “have love for one another.”

Locations/Size

While some have felt that it would be good to have sites of 500 to 700 or more people, others feel it would be better to keep the size of the sites between 200 and 300. The thoughts regarding the larger numbers have considered those from a WCG/UCG/GCG mentality who might feel that a feast site about the same size as their local congregation might not seem much like a feast at all. The thoughts for the smaller sites have shown that many have attended a smaller site and have found them much more inspiring. Also the smaller sites would allow a higher proportion of people to be a part of the service.

Some existing sites with which we have had some communications already include places like Knoxville, Tennessee, the Florida panhandle, West Virginia, the Oregon coast and the Vancouver, BC area. Potential areas that we might directly coordinate include somewhere in the Rockies, Springdale, Arkansas and maybe in the New England area. We hope to plan so that a last-minute surge of attendees at any given site can still be accommodated. We are hoping that this idea ventures into some international areas.

Facility Management

This would include areas such as Parking, Seating and Meeting Hall related (set-up, clean-up, bathroom, etc.). A parking crew may be necessary in areas where parking is scarce, where handicapped individuals need help or where parking spaces are not marked. Helping others to carry bags or find seating is something everyone should be doing when it is necessary. In years gone by, the most significant function of some of these crews was reserving special parking and seating for the “min-

istry.” By eliminating this unnecessary separation, the entire job can be reduced or eliminated.

Regarding the Meeting Hall: This is a low-profile area that does need attention. It is a big job for one individual to always open up the hall as the first people arrive, close it down after the last people leave, and keep it clean every day. We are looking for a good method of spreading around these duties as much as possible.

Schedule

The first thing to consider is what kind of format would a “service” be? This may even vary from day to day. How packed would the schedule be? What should the balance be regarding activities, lecture-type messages (sermonettes, sermons), open Bible studies or free time? While we have all seen a time when activities and lectures have been overemphasized, we want to emphasize allowing God’s spirit to work with all of us. We do know that attendance will never be coerced.

What activities should we schedule? We definitely want some social activities (a family dance and/or variety show is usually a big success) and enough free time to allow spur-of-the-moment small group studies for individuals who love that kind of stuff and for families that just want to be together.

Music

Song Service: This is much more complicated than it used to be. We need to focus more on enjoying this portion of worshipping our Creator than having some polished professional lead us in the same old songs every day. Many of us come from groups that use different hymnals. Also, many are recognizing that this is one area of our worship service that definitely needs expansion and improvement.

Special Music: This should not be limited to solos but also include duets, quartets, octets or any other combination of people and instruments. We do not plan to have an audition for approval but we will encourage those who can truly praise God in music and/or song to step forward and be a part of the worship service in a special way.

Messages

Obviously, some sites will be run by small organizations and will have their speaking schedule determined by their organization. Our thoughts are as follows: Messages will be allowed to be given by

any and all who have something worthwhile to say. Now, if we have a site of 250 people and 100 people wish to speak to the group, we will then obviously have a scheduling problem. Regarding the messages, it is so far a consensus that time (10 to 30 minutes) always be allotted after the message for a question and discussion session regarding what was just said. A large part of our Savior’s ministry consisted of answering questions asked of him. Now, when those 100 people wishing to speak realize that they will have to answer questions from a Bible-studying congregation right afterward, the potential speaker list may dwindle down to 10 or 20!

Regardless, someone will have to coordinate or oversee the scheduling of messages. With that being the case, those interested in giving a message will need to make themselves known and volunteer themselves and the following information: topic of message, length of message, type of message (i.e., opening, middle or end of feast, Bible study, Youth, Singles, etc.) and any other relevant bit of information that may affect a scheduler. The schedulers should give wide latitude to the topics sent in and should just manage what comes in and refrain from directing what the topics actually will be. We need to learn to trust in God and His holy spirit.

Regarding time limits, both points of view are present here as well. Yes, limit the messages; get to the point! No need to ramble on. How many times have you heard a 15 minute message stretched and dragged out to fill up an hour’s sermon? Yet, how do you fairly limit a message that definitely has more time to go? Putting a time limit on the initial message may not be too difficult—just use the speaker’s own original estimated time. Putting a limit on the discussion period afterward is usually harder. While these sessions can get quite lively and invigorating, some also can seem to drag on and on.

Offerings

Deuteronomy 16:16 commands all the males to appear before the Eternal three times not empty handed. We are able to fully recognize that this scripture says three times—not seven—one of the times mentioned is at the Feast of Tabernacles. We do not plan to pass a basket on any given day. We intend to have a box for people to put money in as they desire and are moved to. This appears to be more

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consistent with Biblical offerings. At the beginning of the Feast we intend to publish already incurred expenses and anticipated expenses. Obviously, the money collected will first cover all festival expenses, but what should be done with any extra money?

If there is extra money early on in the

Feast, that can always be used to subsidize some later activity. A small amount of extra money (assuming there will be some) will be held over to help out next year's Feast. Communication will be continuous throughout the feast regarding this issue. We will encourage those who have a relatively large offering budget to send part of their offering to the cause of their

choice. We do not wish to receive too much money nor do we intend to get into redirecting funds from members to organizations. After the feast, all expenses and revenues will be published in detail, sent with receipts to the donors and made available to any who ask.

Housing

This will be a low-keyed area. A rented hall can be deeply discounted if a certain number of rooms are rented out in the same facility and/or if certain events are catered by the same facility. While we hope to take advantage of any and all discounts available, no one should ever be pressured to stay at such-and-such a place. Granted, the convenience of staying at the same place does have its advantages. We hope to go to a variety of nearby housing establishments and inform them of the Feast dates. We will offer to include them in a brochure of housing establishments and ask them what kind of discount they will give those calling under our name. Individuals will be free to make an arrangement that they deem best.

Miscellaneous Areas to Consider:

Attendance: Attendance will be open to anyone. We intend to "advertise" this Non-Aligned Feast and any Open Feasts (see box on page 15) as far and wide as possible as an invitation to individuals, groups and organizations, no matter what their affiliation or background is. "Ordained Ministers" (from the WCG way of thinking) are also welcome to attend and speak. This is not an "anti-minister" Feast. We are all brethren and ministers (servants) of one another. We understand that many are "suspicious where ex-WCG 'ministers' are involved", but they, as brethren, are invited to be a part of the feast. There will be neither a hierarchy nor a class distinction of people.

Festival Assistance: We do not intend to collect any moneys for the purpose of Festival assistance. We will encourage those who are in need to ask for help from any they may know who are able to help. We also encourage that any of these helpers provide the need and not just money (e.g., take the person to the Feast, pay for a rental contract or provide a room). We do not mind to assist connecting those who need help to those who can give it.

Literature Distribution: The Feast can

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Feast Message Guidelines

Here are some guidelines that have been mentioned for messages presented at the feast. These are suggestions right now but can serve as a good starting point in developing something. The people responsible for scheduling would also follow the guidelines when setting up the schedule.

Messages should consist primarily of these four categories:

1) Bible Exposition of a Particular Subject: Speakers should concentrate on what the Bible says about a subject, not on what they or some famous person thinks. Personal examples and interesting stories can add interest and help us to better understand, but they should never replace the scriptures. Studying the original language and other principles of Bible study should be used in preparing these kinds of messages. This category is extremely broad as the Bible covers a great many subjects.

2) Relevant History: Our understanding of truth can be greatly enhanced by knowing what has happened in the past. It is helpful to state the reference works you used or to prepare a list to hand out.

3) Relevant Current Events: It is more and more difficult to get news of Biblically significant events. Short, pointed messages of this nature are a great service to the brethren.

4) Divinely Inspired Messages: Both Testaments are filled with examples where the Eternal gave a message to someone through an angel, dream, vision or some other

means. We should listen to individuals who believe they have a message from the Eternal and judge if it contradicts scripture (1Cor 14:29, Deut 13). If the Eternal does not directly inspire you, you cannot give this kind of message. Please realize that interpreting existing Biblical prophecy does not fall into this category. If you think you have studied and come to a new understanding of some Bible prophecies, that belongs in category 1. If the Eternal reveals the meaning of a prophecy in a dream or vision, then it would belong here.

Messages in categories 1 and 2 can and should be prepared well in advance. Present them to a local group first, if possible. Messages for the latter two categories may not be known until shortly before the Feast. A speaker may have to substitute a more urgent category 3 or 4 message for a planned category 1 or 2 message. Those planning the feast schedules should allow for a "last-minute" message.

One hour should probably be the longest time block for a presentation. Topics that require more time should be presented in two sessions. If too many people desire to speak, the brethren may need to select by show of hands which topics they feel would be most helpful.

If a number of people wish to speak on the same topic from various points of view, a viable option would be to put together a panel of those individuals to present the topic and then have an open discussion/question and answer session afterwards.

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indeed be a place to proselytize your point of view! We do realize that at a non-aligned, independent Feast of Tabernacles, the doors are wide open for promoters of various points of view. It can also provide an extremely vibrant exchange of fellowship and it is this latter we hope to accomplish. A suggestion has been made to have an area where literature can be displayed with a these guidelines: People should not distribute literature any other way (such as placing it on seats, handing it out at the door, etc.). Everything in this area should be free. If someone has something to sell, a catalog or flyer should be given away describing the item(s) and where and how they can be purchased. Private selling is fine, but we want to avoid the atmosphere of people selling their wares in the temple.

Conclusion

The above list is by no means complete, but it does cover many major areas and gives a flavor of what we are working to accomplish. We do have some immediate needs.

IMMEDIATE NEED #1: We need to have an idea of the numbers of people that would be interested in attending a Feast of this nature and what part of the country they would like to go to. We need to begin nailing down some locations. We are not looking for any commitments yet.

IMMEDIATE NEED #2: We need volunteers to assist us in coordinating sites. We already have some tentative offers and there may be others with various skills in various areas. In addition to the physical aspects we are also looking for some plain old advice. In the multitude of counsel there is safety and wisdom.

For anyone thinking of doing this as well, individuals will need to start thinking of doing the coordinating. Someone needs to be responsible for securing the hall, arranging for the setup, seeing that deposits are paid and seeing everything through to the issuing of a final statement of income and expenses. Since no funds will be available until the Feast begins, a site coordinator will need to have some financial resources of his own to get the process started. Obviously, this is an opportunity to serve, not to be exalted.

IMMEDIATE NEED #3: We need feedback on everything mentioned above. It seems that almost everybody has thought

of a better way to run one aspect or another of the Feast. Also, surely there are areas that need to be considered that are not mentioned above. Anyone interested in volunteering for one area or another would be very welcome to come forward now.

Please contact us via any of the below methods:

 Feast '96 — Non-Aligned
 510 Gillespie St.
 Locust Grove, Oklahoma 74352

Phone: (918) 479-8111
 Fax: (918) 479-8555
 Email: PHMF81A@prodigy.com

We do not have any idea how many people will be interested in attending. We will not base our judgment of success on numbers. If only 50 people attend, we believe that it can be just as much a success as it could be if we have 1,000 people. If more than 1,000 people want to attend, the more the merrier!

One member wrote to us, “There’s no doubt that God’s church is out there scattered in small groups and that they would flock to a true Feast convocation that avoided the mistakes of the past and the patterns of the WCG clone groups.” That is the kind of Feast that we dream of seeing. We feel that the *ekklesia* is ready for something like this.

—Norman A. Brumm

Types of Feasts

Non-Aligned or Open

There are two types of feasts that we are intending on working with. The first is a Non-Aligned Feast. By this label we mean a feast site that we or other individuals have put together that is not affiliated with any other recognized organization and incorporates many of these guidelines.

The second type we are calling an Open Feast. An Open Feast site does not have to adhere to all of our guidelines to be recommended as such. This is a site that is sponsored by a recognized organization but also holds to the spirit of true openness as the main article tries to put forth. Our intent is to be able to recommend an Open Feast site to someone with the confidence that it will be fairly open.

“Jubilee ‘95” from page 10

and custom but accepting Yeshua as the one sacrifice for sin.

As the Sabbath was ending on the first day of the conference, Greg Walburn and Yaffa King performed a brief Havdalah ceremony and lit Hanukkah candles. While many Sabbath-keepers today would consider these things as unnecessary Jewish traditions, few understand the Biblical references to these things. Historical records indicate the Havdalah ceremony was in practice during the first century and Paul is apparently conducting one, though he spoke much longer than normal (Acts 20:7-11). In John 10:22-23, we find Yeshua in the temple on the Feast of Dedication—another name for Hanukkah. This feast was begun to celebrate miracles performed on the Jew’s behalf (1 Maccabees 4). These customs were not presented in an attempt to convince anyone else to practice them, but in an effort to help others understand that these customs are based on scripture and were probably practiced by the early believers.

Conclusion

We conclude our remarks on Jubilee ‘95 by repeating how important it was to see people from different backgrounds work together to increase their understanding. Yes, there were some disagreements and even an instance where one man shouted at a speaker for taking a certain view of a specific scripture. But later, the “shouter” publicly apologized for his action and received a great applause from those at the conference. Much more learning takes place in an environment where people make mistakes, admit them and change, than in an environment where leaders “know” they are right, do not allow any public disagreement, and simply ignore any private disagreement.

We would like to thank Dr. John Merrit for all his work before, during and after the conference. He made sure that the conference ran smoothly, but did not try to control what was said. We look forward to Feasts of Tabernacles conducted in a similar manner—with a diversity of speakers, questions, and lots of open Bibles, concordances and other related books. We believe this is the process by which truth will be learned, not by a few men meeting to decide what is “truth” for their organization.

—Norman S. Edwards

Our goal is to bring worthwhile information to as many people as want it at the lowest practical cost. This loose-leaf format is inexpensive and allows this non-copyrighted publication to be easily copied. You might wish to bind it with a 3-ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip.

GROWING Pains

We are sorry that some of you are having to wait awhile to receive a response from us. The work we have to do is growing faster than we can do it. We would like to send each issue at the beginning of the month, but our schedule keeps slipping to the end of the month.

If you have sent an article a detailed letter, we still hope to respond to you, even though some have been waiting months. We believe that we have fulfilled all literature requests that we have received (though some items mailed fourth class may not arrive for two more weeks). If you have not received items that you requested, please let us know.

We have been receiving many letters, phone calls, faxes and e-mails. The *Servants' News* mailing list is now about 1,050—nearly all of these subscriptions were personally requested. (Less than 100 of these subscriptions were requested “for a friend.”) Over 4000 individually requested pieces of literature have been mailed and over 100 have been sent by electronic mail.

Our priorities are as follows:

1. Ask the Eternal to guide and use us in His service. [If we do not do this, the rest of the points do not matter.]
2. Open the mail as it comes in and send out existing literature. Scan long

letters for literature requests and vital comments that we may possibly use in *Servants' News*. Print and send out literature. [This priority is first—if we do not have time to send out things that we have already written, why bother to write more.]

3. Publish *Servants' News* each month. This helps people to stay in touch with other brethren—for both Sabbath services and the Holy Days. It also provides a small, but regular source of spiritual meat.

4. Improve our operations to make them more efficient for the future. This includes making arrangements for people to help us, upgrading equipment and finding more efficient methods of

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Literature List

All items are free. New items are highlighted with shading.

Mature Literature

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 S. Edwards, 16 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. Lessons for today from Revelation 2-3 including the oppressive doctrine of

Biblical Calendar Basics by Norman S. Edwards, 10 pages. Introduction to the issues about the Biblical and Hebrew calendars (beginning of months, years, postponements etc.) the Nicolaitans and the doctrine of Balaam.

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

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

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 S. Edwards, 34 pages. How the KJV translators altered Scriptures about government to please King James and an analysis of what the Bible says about how we should govern in today's congregations.

Just What Does the New Covenant Do? by Joseph Chunko, 18 pages. Explanation of the difference between

the law, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

The Letter to the Galatians, a Paraphrase with Built-in Commentary by John McCauley. 18 pages. Lively vernacular paraphrase with some notes on book of Galatians.

The Worldwide Church of God Splits: Their Triumphs and Troubles by Alan Ruth, 56 pages. Facts and analysis of the last 20 years of church history.

Basic Literature

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

God's Purpose for Your Life by Fred McGovarin, 40 pages, half-size booklet. A “first booklet” for people just becoming interested in the Truth. It introduces Hebrew names (Yahweh and Yashua) for God and Jesus.

The Resurrection of Christ—Is It a Fact? by Don Hudgel. 2 page tract for those skeptical of the Bible & resurrection.

Study Resources and Information

Barnabas Ministries Mission Statement by Alan Ruth. 2 pages.

Commonwealth Publishing Order Form by Kirk Gearhart. 4 pages. Religious books, including Darrell W. Condor's.

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

Giving and Sharing Order Form by Richard Nickels. 3 pages. Has many excellent free items, low prices on hard-to-find religious books, and fine literature on floppy disk.

History Research Projects Order Form by Craig White. 6 pages. Hard-to-find books on the origins of nations.

In Transition 16 page newspaper. One free sample issue. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups.

The Sabbath Sentinel 16 page magazine. Sample issue with Bible Sabbath Association order form: Sabbath books & tracts.

We want to send this newsletter only to people who 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