

Servants' NEWS

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PASSOVER: SHADOW OF OUR SAVIOR

Richard A. Wiedenheft

The Passover memorial, commanded by God for the children of Israel to commemorate their coming out of Egypt foreshadowed the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1Cor 5:7).

But beyond the general parallel between the passover lamb and the Lamb of God, there are many striking parallels of details—some are obvious, some are not so obvious. But all show the central importance of Jesus' death in God's plan for mankind.

Old Testament Commands—Messianic Parallel

Lamb Set aside on 10th

On the tenth day of the Hebrew month Abib or Nisan (spring of year), a year-old lamb or kid was to be chosen from the flock and kept until the fourteenth (Ex 12:3). During that four-day interval, the Israelites had time to observe the lamb to make sure it was healthy; they also had time to become quite attached to it—it doesn't take long for children especially to make pets out of animals. Thus, killing the lamb on the fourteenth was even more of a sacrifice than it would have been had the lamb been chosen from the flock hours before it was sacrificed.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus was becoming a champion and friend of many people in Judea and Galilee—so much so that the Jewish religious leaders were very jealous (Matt 21:46, 27:18). But Jesus kept his distance from Jerusalem, where a latent expecta-

Continued on page 28

Is Having the Truth Enough?

Jack M. Lane

There are a number of churches and denominations (outside the Church of God) which profess to be Christian, but who think that the Gospel message is one of social relevance, doing good deeds, feeding the poor, making a social impact, changing the political scene, and so on.

In our collective quest over the last few years to recapture the truth and make it our banner, some of us have tended to exalt "having the truth" as being an end in itself. When that happens, there is a tendency to think, "We have the truth, those other churches (Catholics and Protestants, for instance, or possibly other former churches of God) don't have the truth. God called us, and we know the end from the beginning better than they do." It's a gratifying feeling, but when that happens, there's a danger that other aspects of our Christian life may fall by the wayside.

Having the truth is indeed a matter of paramount importance in our religious life. But it's not the only thing.

We might ask the question, "Those denominations which don't have the truth of the Bible, as we know it, but go around doing good works instead, are they examples of the true New Testament Church of God?"

Christ answers: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will of My Father** in heaven" (Matt. 7:21) "And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For **laying aside the commandment of God,**

Continued on page 26

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 The Great Commandment** - *The connection between "love" and "law".*
- 3 The LORD's Passover** - *A virtually indisputable article on the Passover!*
- 7 Are We Ready for Miracles?** - *Can we handle the power of performing miracles?*
- 9 Church News** - *Feast Updates, Conferences, Pen Pals, Local Efforts....*
- 11 The Great Commission** - *Is it just the preaching of the Kingdom of God?*
- 13 Friends of the Brethren Ends** - *An update on the "Non-Profit Incorporation" status of SN.*
- 17 Letters** - *Missing Members? Judaic Origins, Gossip?, Jubilees '95, "Friendly Visits"....*

The Great Commandment

by Will Benedetti

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment (Matthew 22:34-38 KJV).

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment (Mark 12:28-30 KJV).

How many of us, if we weren't already familiar with Yeshua's answer, would have answered the same way? Probably no one would. Instead, people today do exactly what the Pharisee did, that is, they try to rate the law in order of importance. The apostle James told us that this was wrong in James 2:10-11:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

People still use Christ's answer to try and rate the law, by saying that some of the law shows love towards God while the rest shows love towards neighbor. This is still wrong. Some of the law shows love towards neighbor and ALL of the law shows love towards God. By loving your neighbor you also show love towards God.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (I John 5:1-3 KJV).

One of the first things that algebra teaches is what is known as the commutative property — if “a” is equal to “b”, and if “b” is equal to “c”, then “a” must also be equal to “c”. Likewise, if the greatest law is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:37-38), and the love of God is to keep his commandments (I John 5:3), then the greatest law is to keep God's commandments with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. By doing this you show love to God, to Christ, and to your fellow Christians (I John 5:1-3). 

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The LORD's Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread (As Found in the KJV Bible)

Exodus 11:1-8

And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servant, and in the sight of the people. And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

Exodus 12:2-36

This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for a lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep¹ (Editor's note: see Strong's definitions in the footnotes on page 24) it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper

door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning, and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute⁴ judgement: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep² it a FEAST to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep² it a FEAST by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first

day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done⁴ in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done⁴ of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that

Continued on page 4

Plenty of Passover Papers

We have received about a dozen papers on the timing of Passover from a wide variety of viewpoints. It would simply have not been possible for us to publish all of them—not to mention difficult for our readers to go through over 1000 pages of Passover papers. We selected the two Passover articles for this issue because they were compatible with nearly all views of Passover. We realize that there is much disagreement about the proper translation for some of the scriptures we printed and with Strong's definitions of some words. Whatever your understanding of Passover may be, we felt a review of the related scriptures would be helpful at this time.

The biggest difficulty we find in read-

ing these papers is that each author often references the scriptures that prove his thesis while nearly ignoring scriptures that do not fit well. During the next year we hope to produce a Passover study paper that explains how each point of view understands each relevant scripture. We would rather "hear this matter before we answer it," even if it takes a few years.

There are several different approaches to both the New Testament and Old Testament events. The major Old Testament approaches center around when the lamb was killed. The Bible makes it very clear that the time the lamb was killed was "between the evenings" or in Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*. The question is: what do

Continued on page 22

"Passover" from page 3

soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all you habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

Then Moses called for the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to

"... it is the LORD's passover."
(Exodus 12:11)

the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep³ this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

And the children of Israel went away, and did⁴ as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did⁴ they. And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get ye forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their knead-

ingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did⁴ according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

Exodus 12:39

And they baked unleavened cakes of dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared⁴ for themselves any victual.

Exodus 12:42-51

It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof. But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep⁴ it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep⁴ the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep⁴ it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. ... And it came to pass, the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

Exodus 13:3-10, 18

And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib. And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou

shalt keep⁵ this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did⁴ unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a SIGN unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD's law maybe in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep³ this ordinance in his season from year to year.

But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 23:14-16, 18

Three times thou shalt keep² a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep³ the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. ... Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning.

Exodus 31:13, 17

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep³: for it is a SIGN between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. ... It is a SIGN between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made⁴ heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Exodus 34:18, 21-22, 25

The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep³. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. ... Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe⁴ the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast

Continued on page 5

"Passover" from page 4

of ingathering at the year's end. ... Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.

Leviticus 10:9, 11

Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: ... And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

Leviticus 23:2-11, 14

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done⁴: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation: ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

These are the feasts of the LORD even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do⁴ no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do⁴ no servile work therein.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. ... And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Numbers 9:2-7, 10-14

Let the children of Israel also keep⁴ the Passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep⁴ it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye

keep⁴ it. ... And they kept⁴ the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did⁴ the children of Israel. And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep⁴ the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day: And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel?...

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep⁴ the passover unto the LORD. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep⁴ it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep⁴ it. But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbearth to keep⁴ the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep⁴ the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do⁴: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

Numbers 28:16-18, 25-26

And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the LORD. And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do⁴ no manner of servile work therein:

And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do⁴ no servile work. Also in the day of firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do⁴ no servile work:

Numbers 33:3

And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out

with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

Deuteronomy 16:1-10, 13, 16

Observe the month of Abib, and keep⁴ the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee: But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do⁴ no work therein.

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

Joshua 5:10-12

And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept⁴ the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

"It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD..."
(Exodus 12:42)

Continued on page 6

“Passover” from page 5

II Kings 23:21-23

And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep⁴ the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of the covenant. Surely there was not holden⁴ such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden⁴ to the LORD in Jerusalem.

II Chronicles 8:13

Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandments of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

II Chronicles 30:1-21

And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep⁴ the passover unto the LORD God of Israel. For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep⁴ the passover in the second month....

So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep⁴ the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done⁴ it of a long time in such sort as it was written. So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria....

So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem....

And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep⁴ the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation....

Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and

the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD....

For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD. For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one....

And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem, kept⁴ the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD.

II Chronicles 35:1-19

Moreover Josiah kept⁴ a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month....

So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do⁴ according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these were of the king's substance. And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiyah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred small cattle, and three hundred oxen. Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel, and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen....

And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites flayed them....

And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them speedily among all the people....

So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep⁴ the passover, and to offer burnt offerings

upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah. And the children of Israel that were present kept⁴ the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no passover liked to that kept⁴ in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did⁴ all the kings of Israel keep⁴ such a passover as Josiah kept⁴, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept⁴.

Ezra 6:19-22

And the children of the captivity kept⁴ the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat, And kept⁴ the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Ezekiel 45:21

In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

Amplified Bible

Exodus 12:14-15

And this day shall be to you for a memorial. You shall keep it as a FEAST to the LORD throughout your generations, keep it as an ordinance for ever. [In celebration of the passover in future years] seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; even the first day you shall put away leaven [symbolic of corruption] out of you houses; for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

Ezekiel 45:21

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

Continued on page 24

ARE WE READY FOR ... Miracles?

How was the first century group of believers so effective in preaching the Gospel to the world without modern electronic media and without government or big business backing? How did the 120 original believers (Acts 1:15) gain the attention of much of the known world and convince many thousands (maybe millions) of people to change beliefs held by their families for generations?

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and **preached Christ** unto them. And the people with one accord **gave heed** unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the **miracles** which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was **great joy** in that city (Acts 8:5-8, KJV).

One man was able to reach an entire city in a very short time through the power of the Eternal. This is the same method used by our Savior (Matt 4:23), by the apostles in training (Mark 6:12-13), by the seventy men sent out in Luke 10:1-20 and by the apostles after His death (Acts 2:41-43, 2Cor 12:12). Our Savior said:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. (John 14:12).

He also said:

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.... And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover (Mark 16:15,17-18 KJV).

If anyone needs more Bible confirmation that miracles were the main method of gaining attention to preach the Gospel, look up the words "miracle," "sign," "wonder," "healed," etc. in a good concordance. Dozens of scrip-

tures show that this was the primary means by which the Gospel went forth.

While it is obvious from the scriptures that the Eternal does not give every member every gift (1Cor 12:27-31), **why does there seem to be a general lack of these miraculous gifts among Sabbath-keepers today?** We certainly hear of individual healings and personal miracles, but we know of very few cases of open, obvious, public miracles that gain attention like those in the first century (Acts 4:16). [If these kinds of miracles are occurring, Servants' News is unaware of them and would like to hear from you so we can write about them.]

We Need Powerful Miracles

During his long life, Herbert Armstrong was responsible for spending somewhere around a billion dollars (in today's money) on electronic and print media to preach the gospel. A market survey conducted shortly after his death concluded that only about 1 of 10 Americans recognize the names Herbert Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God or Plain Truth. In Canada the figures were better, but in the United Kingdom it was closer to 1 out of 100. These numbers reflect name recognition—a much smaller percentage of people actually understood what he was preaching.

While much fruit was born from Herbert Armstrong's work, it is hard to imagine that the Eternal will judge nations when 90% to 99% of the people have no idea why they are being judged. The Old Testament is full of stories of prophets and other messengers warning nations of impending destruction unless they repent of their evil ways.

We certainly want to encourage all of those groups that are teaching the world through TV, radio, and the printed word. However, it is also important to realize that most organizations spend several hundred dollars on media to get one new person on a mailing list where the organization can begin to teach the Bible to them. To reach all of the 100 million American households this way would cost over 10 billion dollars—not even beginning to reach the rest of the world. We must also realize that the

combined media budgets of all Sabbath-keeping organizations today are probably less than the Worldwide Church of God media budget in the 1980's. This is further complicated by the large number of people (we have seen varying estimates from 50% to 95%) that never watch or listen to religious programs.

We do not want to discourage anyone from teaching the truth by any method (Phil 1:15-18). Each person will be judged by the work they do (1Cor 3:12-15). It is better to do a little work or even a high-cost, low-return work than do no work at all. Our point here is that traditional media-based evangelism is unlikely to reach the nations in the next 20 years. If the Eternal uses His people to witness to all nations in a big way, it will probably be by His spirit and His miracles, not an ever-increasing media budget.

Why So Few Major Miracles?

Explanations for why the Eternal does not bless us with great miracles include: we need to get every point of doctrine right first, we have to eliminate sin first, we have to get "closer to God" first or because "these miracles would bring great persecution on the church and it could no longer function." Yet we find the Corinthian congregation not lacking in spiritual gifts (1Cor 1:6-7), even though the rest of the book reveals their sins, doctrinal errors, and almost nothing about persecution. Spiritual gifts were so prevalent that Paul had to teach the Corinthians how to make them work together (1Cor 12), but he still encouraged them to ask for more (1Cor 14:1,12). The major difficulty we find in Corinth is the beginnings of sectarianism—brethren claiming they were followers of a certain human teacher rather than members of the Body of our Saviour. Paul taught against this in chapters 1, 3 and 12.

In summary, the Corinthians had spiritual gifts because they had asked and were asking for them. It appears they were beginning to try to use these gifts to distinguish one member as somehow "more spiritual" or "better" than the others, but there is no evidence that the sectarianism had progressed to the point where brethren were refusing to recognize one another because of it.

Today, our situation is much worse.

Continued on page 8

"Miracles?" from page 7

Most congregations do not encourage their members to ask for spiritual gifts at all. Our sectarianism has been disastrous. Today there are hundreds of "Sabbath-keeping" organizations (The Bible Sabbath Association publishes a directory. For details call 405-227-4494). While many of these groups have an essential core of similar beliefs, most discourage their members from attending with other groups. Many will insist that their particular doctrines prove they are the "one true church of God," even though they have made little effort to examine the doctrines of all of the other organizations. (Since Matthew 7:2 shows we will be judged with the judgment that we judge others, it seems mighty risky to declare other groups or individuals "unconverted" when we do not even know what they believe or do. Should we be judged "unconverted" without a hearing?)

Our Savior warned his servants that they should not be fighting among themselves when he returns (Matt 24:45-51). Yet today, that is what we see. If we look at **James 4:1-3** in this light, it appears to provide the answer as to why we do not have great miracles in our congregations today:

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?

Where do the arguments come from between the Sabbath-keeping groups? From the desire of one organization to be seen as doctrinally superior to another so it can have more members, which means more income, higher salaries, more benefits, nicer offices, etc.

You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war.

We have seen all kinds of "numbers" tricks used by organizations to make their membership or income look bigger than it is. Fortunately, we do not know of any murders committed to expand congregations, but there are many stories of lying, deceit and unjust "disfellowshipping." Many organizations cannot see that their efforts to control and keep "their members" often ends up driving them away.

Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

If we want to serve and help more people or if we want to take a witness to the world, all we have to do is ask. Most of the ministries under "Study Resources" on the back page of *Servants' News* began as one person deciding to serve. **If we desire spiritual gifts, we need to fast, pray and ask for them.** An informal study of long-time "Church of God" members in 1994 found only a few percent had ever fasted and prayed for the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. However, nearly all of them had fasted and prayed for an increased income for their organization. Do we really believe that income is more important than the power of our Father?

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

This verse (James 4:3) should be discussed at length. Some brethren are now asking the Eternal for spiritual gifts. But what would happen if they received them in today's "church organization environment"?

What Would Happen if We Had Great Spiritual Gifts Right Now?

Many "church publications" contain articles showing how that particular group is the only, the most Philadelphian, or somehow the best church. These claims are usually justified by showing the group's doctrines to be the most correct, claiming they have some modest divine healings (ignoring healings in other groups), or showing they have the right balance of evangelism, headquarters facilities, field ministers, etc. These organizations are usually quick to point out doctrinal or managerial errors of other organizations. They usually assure "their members" that the most converted and productive brethren will be members of their organization.

What would happen if the Eternal suddenly gave miracle healing power to a leader of one of these organizations? Would that leader get busy using this power to preach the Gospel to others? Would he encourage brethren everywhere to ask for the same power and to preach the Gospel, too? Or would he claim that his gift proves that his organization is the "one true Church of God"? If an organization uses the size of their media budget and other technical mea-

surements to prove they are the "most active branch" of the Church of God, how much more would they use a manifestation of divine power?

Furthermore, if a man in organization "A" were granted miracle working power, what would organization "B", "C", "D", etc. say about organization "A". Would they point out the doctrinal error of organization "A" and claim that the great miracles were meaningless? Would they forbid their members to observe the miracles or be healed? More importantly, what would be the reaction of the general public to all of the infighting among Sabbath-keeping organizations? **If the Sabbath-keepers do not recognize the Eternal's miracles, how can we expect the rest of the world to hear and repent?**

What about you?

What would happen if the gift of miraculous healings were given to someone in your congregation? Do you think he should immediately "take over" the administration of your local congregation? Should all doctrinal questions be taken to him? Would you begin seeking his counsel before making any important decisions?

What would happen if the gift were given to you? Would you immediately begin to set up your own church organization? Would you give your doctrinal opinion on matters that you have neither studied nor prayed about? Would you assume that since you had this gift, that the Eternal would not let you make a doctrinal mistake? Would you allow others to begin "following" you and become your disciples?

Your answers to these questions show how much sectarianism is still in you. It is a human tendency to want to "get behind" the most spiritual, most knowledgeable, most capable or most gifted leader we can find. The Corinthians were beginning to have that problem (1Cor 1 and 3). The false doctrine of hierarchical church government reinforces this thinking: **If the Eternal worked only through one top human leader, then it would be our task to find that leader and to serve him—all spiritual functions including preaching, teaching, miracles and prophesying would be controlled by the one top man.** If we had

Continued on page 25

News from:



Local Congregations And



Scattered Parts of the Body

Feast '96: Non-Aligned! An Update:

Plans are continuing for the upcoming Non-Aligned and Open format sites. In the next issue, we will include a survey form so coordinators will know how many people to expect and to whom they should send site information packets (including suggested—not mandatory—accommodations). If you know of other sites we should list, please contact Norman Brumm, below:

Non-Aligned

West:

Location: Lake Tahoe, California
Contact: Norman A. Brumm
510 Gillespie Street
Locust Grove, OK 74352
(918) 479-8111
NonAligned@Prodigy.com

Location: Sun River, Oregon

Contact: Al Murrey
210 NW 14th
Pendleton, OR 97801
(541) 276-1400
(408) 427-2275

Central:

Location: Northwest Arkansas
Contact: Norman S. Edwards
P.O. Box 6516
Springdale, AR 72766
(501) 872-1003
75260.1603@Compuserve.com

Middle Atlantic:

Location: Snowshoe, West Virginia
Contact: James Rector
3802 Olive Street
Texarkana, TX 75503
(903) 792-1352
ATIR903@aol.com

Southeast:

Location: Panama City, Florida
Contact: David Owen
4213 Owen Road
Dalton, GA 30720
(706) 277-3433

Open Format

West:

Location: Victoria, BC, Canada
Contact: Fred McGovarin
RR 2
Hastings, Ont K0L 1Y0
(705) 696-3111
fredmcgovarin@oncomdis.on.ca

South Central:

Location: San Antonio, Texas
Contact: Ted Phillips
P.O. Box 2109
Corona, CA 91718
(909) 280-9046

Southeast:

Location: Gatlinburg, Tennessee
Contact: Ray Wooten
500 Hoover Plaza, #205
Birmingham, AL 35226
(205) 822-8524

To once again summarize the difference between a "Non-Aligned" site and an "Open" site:

The first is a Non-Aligned Feast. This label means a feast site that individuals have put together that is not affiliated with any other recognized organization and incorporates many of the guidelines published in the January issue of SN. Contact either SN or Norman Brumm for that information if you need it.

The second type is called an Open Feast. An Open Feast site does not have to adhere to all of the 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 guidelines try to set. The intent is to be able to recommend an Open Feast site to someone with the confidence that it will be fairly open.

Also, we are interested in knowing of any groups that would like to be listed with us as we hope to be able to recommend a number of sites that would satisfy the varied interests and needs of the members.

For detailed information about these efforts or to pass on information about

other groups, please contact Norman Brumm at the address/numbers listed at the top of the first column at left.

Preaching the Gospel

The Church of God Fellowship located in Russellville, Arkansas, has in the recent past broken ties with organized religion as we have come to know it. They have started a course of their own as they intend to personally fulfill the commission of Jesus Christ.

They have already begun a 15 minute radio program called "Points of Truth" that they air on at least 4 area radio stations including the area super-station of KAAY out of Little Rock, Arkansas. On that station the program airs at 6:45 pm at 1090 kHz on the AM dial.

They have a toll-free number (1-800-897-3999), transcripts of most of the broadcasts and are developing Bible Study tapes. They are also planning to offer literature in a magazine format by the second week of May. Incidentally, they are desirous of any basic articles that any can provide to assist them.

The Church of God Fellowship is only a local assembly with no designs of building a "chain" of churches. They wish to serve and cooperate with as many brethren as they can. Anyone that wishes to provide an outreach ministry in their local area is welcome to air their program.

For a sample Points of Truth program or for more information contact:

—Larry Lassiter at 501-967-5050 or:

—Louis Harris at "Lharris@cswnet.com".

Upcoming Conferences

There are two conferences that we are aware of that are coming up in the near future. The are:

Continued on page 10

"News" from page 9

Elders and Hosts Conference at Tulsa, Oklahoma:

The Tulsa, Oklahoma, Church of God is hosting an Elders and Hosts Conference in their church building on April 12-14.

This conference is to seek God's will and to consider if and how the independent Churches of God should co-operate with each other to reach people in and beyond their local communities. Please email, fax or phone any agenda items as soon as possible, so that your ideas may be circulated and thus trigger others to add their ideas to:

Email: hufton5@gower.net

Phone: 903-769-3520

Richard Gawith is the Tulsa point man for arranging transportation to/from the airport, motel and church building. For Tulsa particulars, Richard can be contacted at 918-455-5753 or emailed at 72401,1510@Compuserve.com.

The conference is planned to start Friday evening at 7:30 and end on Sunday around noon or so.

In the spirit of openness, elders, hosts, wives and observers of the independent churches are all invited and welcome.

Christian Renewal Conference

On April 6 and 7, a conference is being sponsored by Ron Dart of Christian Educational Ministries with the cooperation of Ray Wooten of the United Church of God, Birmingham.

The conference is titled "Practical Helps for a Growing Church" and will be held at the Unicoi State Park near Helen, Georgia. Camp site, cottages and motels are available at the park. Call 1-800-864-7275 to make reservations. Children are welcome as there are already children's activities planned.

For more information contact:

CEM

P.O. Box 560

Whitehouse, TX 75791

Phone: 903-509-2999

Email: cem@gower.net.

The Ekklesia in Cyberspace

Are you an "Internet" freak? Or are you barely computer literate but have an online account somewhere where you enjoy "browsing the Web" every now and then? You may be interested to know that the "ekkleisia" is starting to make quite an impact in cyberspace. If you are interest-

ed in browsing some World Wide Web sites, try these out:

-<http://www.teleport.com/~stanczak>

-<http://www.fred.net/rohrerll/wcg.html>

-<http://www.gatecom.com/~barn-abas>

/index.html

There are a few email lists that are active and full of very stimulating fellowship. By being on the list you are part of a network. If someone makes a comment, everyone hears it. If you post a thought to the network, then everyone hears that as well. The fellowship is with people around the world.

To subscribe to the "LikeMinds" list send an email note to Rick Stanczak at stanczak@teleport.com.

To subscribe to "CGI/Ex-CGI" list send an email note to Marilyn Meyers at MZMUNRO@aol.com.

Sabbatarian Cooperation

VISIT BY CHURCH OF GOD (SEVENTH DAY) MINISTER EXEMPLIFIES CO-OPERATION AND BROTHERLY LOVE

"There is much more commonality between the Church of God (Seventh Day) and the United Church of God than we imagined," members commented after Sabbath services 6 January 1996 at Wollongong. The members were referring to a wonderful sermon by Pastor Richard Cress of the Tulsa, Oklahoma congregation of the Church of God (Seventh Day).

Some time ago the Bible Sabbath Association contacted a member of the Sydney congregation of the UCG advising that Mr. Cress and his wife would be visiting Australia and asked whether a meeting could be arranged. Pastor Bruce Dean of the Wollongong UCG congregation agreed to have a split sermon with Mr. Cress. While having a minister of another sabbatarian group present a sermon at UCG services may seem extraordinary to many members, yet such inter-sabbatarian co-operation has been rather the 'norm' over the centuries, and even by the fledgling Radio Church of God in the 1930s and 1940s which co-operated splendidly with other groups.

[Last year] Dennis Luker and Vic Kubik met with the leadership of the Church of God (seventh day). Calvin Burrell, leader of that Church, "told us ... that we had a friend in Denver who respected our convictions and stood ready

to continue the friendship we had established in June 1993". The visit by Richard and Jewell Cress is a prime example of what to expect in future.

Their short visit was a first for the UCG in Australia and we all hope will not be the last. In addition to visiting the UCG, the Cresses also visited the Seventh-day Baptists in the Blue Mountains which, it has been noted, have much more in common with us than previously thought.

Long live inter-sabbatarian harmony and co-operation!

—Craig White

Special Sabbath Announcement

Ken Westby, of The Association of Christian Development and editor of The New Millenium, will speak at Mountain View Church of God in Aurora, Colorado on Saturday, April 6th at 11:00 am. All are welcome and a potluck dinner will follow services. Bring your favorite dish, or whatever is convenient for you. The address is:

10700 E Evans

Aurora, Colorado

For more information contact Larry Whitesell at 303-384-3300.

**Friends of the Sabbath:
Upcoming Jubilees '96**

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 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.

Continued on page 23

THE GREAT COMMISSION

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Mat 28:18-20)

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved, but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who have believed; in My Name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues, they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; and they will lay hands upon the sick and they will recover. (Mark 16:15-18)

Most Christians are familiar with these verses as we have read and heard about publishing and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. This is the great commission—as is commonly titled—from Jesus Christ given to His church. Indeed, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is the main focus and rallying point for many church organizations. But, is this a correct application of these particular Scriptures?

A case in point: read these scriptures in your own Bibles, again, to see if you find the words, “Kingdom of God” mentioned. Although we can acknowledge that much of the scripture is given in brief summary form, the Kingdom of God is not specifically included, according to these texts. Don’t misunderstand what is being said here, the future coming Kingdom of God is a part of the Gospel message, and this is clear from Matthew 24:14 and many other scriptures, but it should not be the primary focus of the great commission message, as given to us in Matthew 28 and Mark 16 above.

As a matter of fact, there are also other gospel messages mentioned in the scriptures which are part of the “good news” of Jesus Christ, but again, they are not the primary focus of what is commonly referred to as “The Great Commission.” For instance, the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1); the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24); the gospel of God (Rom. 1:1); the gospel of peace (Rom 10:15); the gospel of salvation (Eph 1:13) to name some additional messages of the good news.

What then is this so-called “Great Commission” given to the church? What is Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-18 saying to us? It is “...go therefore and make disciples...” and in doing so the good news messages will be

taught. The goal or end result will be disciples. In the light of examining ourselves, we must ask, “Is the church accomplishing this responsibility of making disciples?”

This is the purpose of this paper: To define what our responsibility is before God—what he expects of His disciples according to the scriptures—and to examine whether or not we are fulfilling Jesus’ words to us—the called out ones, the church.

Mark 16: Spurious?

Before we get into this, we must address the issue of Mark 16:15-18, being inspired and in harmony with Mat 28:18-20, as quoted above. Those scholars who canonized the holy Bible felt that it should have been included. Some of the more modern scholars have said, and I quote from the NIV Bible, “The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-29.” Of course, there are many other areas and words in the canonized Bible—which most of us use as our study Bibles—that do not appear in “early manuscripts: and are therefore “suspect” as to their accuracy. One question that is asked to determine whether or not these types of “scriptures” are relevant is, “Is the message consistent and supported by other parts of the Bible which are included in the early manuscripts?”

Regarding miracles, even a casual reading of the book of Acts shows us that there are many instances of miracles in the New Testament performed through the disciples, “...and these signs will accompany those who have believed...” (i.e., disciples). Also, the apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you, with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and mira-

cles” (II Cor 12:12). Paul had been developed, through much time and suffering, into a mature stage of discipleship—an apostle, or “one sent” by God to do His will.

It is consistent that the account of “The Great Commission,” as recorded in Mark 16, is in harmony with Matthew 28, is compatible with many other scriptural teachings, and therefore relevant to the New Testament church today, just as it was when Christ first gave His assignment to the early disciples.

Also, the word “gospel” is not mentioned in Matthew’s account, but is included in Mark’s account, and because this word is used consistently in many other places in the scriptures, it is correct to include the good news messages as part of the great commission of “making disciples.”

What is a Disciple?

Now, let’s address the issue of “What is a disciple?” If His “called out ones” (the church) are instructed, indeed, commanded to “Go therefore, and make disciples...”, then we should understand the meaning of the words disciple and discipleship.

The Hebrew (Is 8:16) carries the meaning, “...instructed; trained; accustomed; learned; taught; skilled.” In the Greek it is, “to be a pupil; to enroll as a scholar; to instruct; to teach; to be a follower—a learner who becomes attached to the teacher.”

To get into the meat of this matter, we need to understand and appropriate Jesus’ standards of discipleship. No where was our Lord Jesus more explicit and firm than when He discussed discipleship:

“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of

Continued on page 12

"Commission" from page 11

Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt 10:38-39).

..."If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it" (Luke 9:23-24).

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (John 15:7-8).

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple ... So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26-27, 33).

These are hard words, are they not, especially when applied to ourselves? But Jesus knew His standards, and He was clear about what he wanted accomplished with His disciples. Meditate on them and make them part of you.

Discipleship is a process of purification (Tit 2:14) and includes at least seven identifiable standards that Jesus set forth for His people:

1. Take up his own cross.
2. Deny self.
3. Follow Me.
4. Hold to My teachings.
5. Bear much fruit.
6. Love one another.
7. Love God more than anyone or anything else.

Each one of these seven standards

for discipleship deserves special individual consideration, and therefore are beyond the scope of these notes to you.

However, the first one, "Take up his own cross..." is the foundation for the other six standards, and until a disciple correctly understands and appropriates the cross, the others cannot be fully developed by the holy spirit.

Very briefly, we should know how not to take up one's cross. Christians need to understand that bearing the cross does not refer to the trials or troubles which we sometimes call crosses. It does, however, refer to the daily giving up of life—dying to the self—which must mark us as much as it did the Lord Jesus. We need this "marking" in times of prosperity almost more than adversity.

We must cease to confuse the word, "a cross" with "the cross". Sometimes believers in self pity bemoan themselves and say, "I have taken or must take up my cross and follow Jesus." Would that we would lose sight of our cross in His cross. Then His cross becomes our cross; His death, our death; His grave, our grave; His resurrection, our resurrection; His risen life, our newness of life. No, taking up our cross does not mean the stoical bearing of some heavy burden, hardship, illness, distasteful situation or relationship. Enduring anything of this nature is not bearing one's cross. Taking up the cross may or may not involve such things, but *things do not constitute our cross.*

In Romans 6:1-11, Paul gives us the direction we are to take to make the cross our very life. Study and meditate on these verses for yourself and see if you have truly and deeply "identified" yourself with Jesus Christ to the point that He is manifesting His life in your mortal flesh (II Cor 4:11). Paul set the example for us and as he reached a higher state of spiritual maturity he was able to confidently say to us, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal 2:20). This is the believer's cross, and

this takes much time and the best of our attention during this physical life we have been given, "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph 5:15-16).

Is the Church Fulfilling this "Great Commission?"

To answer this truthfully, we must further ask more probing questions. "How many believers do we know (including ourselves) that are now walking in Christ, and living up to the standards that He has set for His disciples, according to the scriptures?" Also, "How many believers do we know that have witnessed to us the power of Jesus Christ with signs, wonders and miracles?"

If the gospel messages are part of "The Great Commission," and they are, according to Mark 16:15-18, so too is the manifestation of signs, wonders and miracles, "...and these signs will accompany those who have believed..." In context, this is speaking specifically about believers who are also disciples, and there is an important distinction to be made here. All believers are part of the body of Christ, and all believers are useful within His body. However, the disciple is a believer who has been developed into a more useful servant of God, those who are going through the purification process and are "...zealous for His good deeds" (Tit 2:14).

Even though this explanation may make some in the body feel at ease about themselves—seemingly letting you off the hook of discipleship—the question before us still, "Is the church fulfilling this 'Great Commission' and making disciples in all creation?"

If the answer is "Yes" then these disciples are well hidden from the majority of Christianity, as we know it today. (Look again at the standards of Jesus and the commission given in Matthew 28 and Mark 16.) And this is a sad state of affairs because, by all outward appearances, the church has missed the mark on this one.

We need to examine ourselves in light of Jesus standards, We need to apply what it tells us in Jude 3 and "...contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints."

—Jerry Laws

How many believers do we know that have witnessed to us the power of Jesus Christ with signs, wonders and miracles?

Friends of the Brethren Corporation Ends, Service to Brethren Continues

During the past few years, much has been written about how “the church” should be governed. Thousands of hours have been spent writing and reviewing constitutions and bylaws of the many “church of God” organizations. Many papers have been written from both Biblical and legal perspectives.

I have undertaken my own studies in this area. In the past, I have said little about our own organizations in *Servants’ News*—including it with receipt letters instead. Many friends have advised us to seek tax-exempt incorporation and many advised against it. I have now made some decisions about our form of operation that will affect us and our contributors for years to come. I believe these decisions please our Father in heaven.

If the Eternal is willing, I will continue publishing *Servants’ News* and other literature as well as help organize local congregations and Feasts. Except for the non-profit incorporation assistance (part of point 4 on page 4), the stated goals in our April 1995 issue are all still intact. However, I have now withdrawn our request for IRS tax exempt status and will be dissolving the *Friends of the Brethren* Corporation.

Why change direction now? In the past year, I have learned a number of things about Biblical government as well as United States law. Also, I hope I have grown in faith—trusting more in our Father and less in systems of men. I hope to use this article to show how *Friends of the Brethren* began, and why the corporation is not really necessary. I have tried to include enough background material to show the reasons behind these decisions—please bear with me.

I had worked for the Worldwide Church of God and its affiliated corporations from 1975 until the end of 1992. During the last several years there, I felt many of the doctrinal and administrative changes were wrong, but I did not know what to do. I began to study my Bible as never before. Gradually, I realized the problem was not simply “the wrong man in charge,” but that people had come to utterly rely on headquarters for truth, not

on their own understanding of the Bible.

I worked for the Global Church of God from its beginning in 1993 until 1994. (I served in technical capacities, on the Board of Directors, on the doctrinal committee and as a writer and editor.) While this organization does a good job of preserving much truth taught in the WCG, I feel it still left people reliant on headquarters for truth. Bible study resulting in any conclusions different from official doctrine was discouraged.

During 1993 and 1994, I realized that tens of thousands of Sabbath-keepers were departing from the WCG and not attending any major Sabbath-keeping organization. I personally knew people that were doing this. Some were so disillusioned that they had completely given up on God and the Bible. Others seemed to be strong in faith, but felt that the Eternal was not working through these WCG look-alike organizations.

It was nearly impossible for me to openly discuss these issues while being an employee of the Global Church of God—I was expected to represent the official line. I gave notice of my intent to leave in the summer of 1994 and moved to Arkansas to be closer to my parents in late November that year. I spent much time in Bible study about government, the church and the responsibilities of converted individuals. I exchanged ideas with many friends.

Our basic conclusions were that people were better off attending with an organization than in giving up altogether, but many organizations were not learning the lessons that desperately needed to be learned from the break-up of the WCG. We hoped that we could encourage scattered individuals to fellowship with other believers wherever they were welcome, and we hoped we could encourage organizations to **build** rather than **boss** their members.

Who are Friends of the Brethren?

Friends of the Brethren never was a formalized group of people. There never was a membership “sign-up list.” Some people helped us in our studies, some

helped us financially, some helped us with names and addresses and some helped us write and edit articles. In February of 1995, we mailed a 6-page letter to many people that we believed to be Sabbath-keepers. The letter encouraged people to continue keeping the laws of the Bible and fellowshiping with brethren in whatever way possible.

About 200 people responded to that letter. Most encouraged us to keep up our work. My wife and I sold more of our investment property and began to publish *Servants’ News* and other articles as we had time. Marleen and I do all of the telephone answering and mail processing. I used to lay out the newsletter until that responsibility was assumed by Norman Brumm in the fall of 1995. He also coordinates the non-aligned feast sites. Many people help write articles, edit and proof-read. As of this writing, the circulation is about 1250 and about 400 people have contributed financially.

Friends of the Brethren was incorporated in the State of Delaware on April 28, 1995, though there was no business activity until June. A company specializing in forming Delaware corporations did the paper-work. Our two stated purposes for incorporating were (1) to obtain non-profit mailing rates and (2) to obtain “assured” tax deductions for those that desired them. (I did not find out until later that incorporation is not really necessary to obtain either goal.) Although I did not write it as a goal, I will have to confess that I felt creating a tax-exempt corporation would make me appear “more legitimate” in the eyes of others. While that is probably true for some people, I had lost my focus on simply serving the Eternal and His people. Tax exempt corporations have been formed by atheists, Satanists, Buddhists and nudists. Being approved by the state means little; being approved by the Eternal is what is important.

Nevertheless, in June *Friends of the Brethren* applied to open a bank account and for IRS tax exemption. I did not put any long-term assets (printing equipment, computers, etc.) in the corporation as I

Continued on page 14

"Incorporation?" from page 13

remembered how the State of California took control of the assets of the Worldwide Church of God in 1979. Also, I realized that when corporations begin to have a lot of assets, people like to become a part of them so they can take part in the **wealth**, not the **work**.

Before we continue, we should explain corporations and IRS tax exemption. It is possible to have one, the other, both or neither.

What is a Corporation?

A corporation is not a big office building or factory, but an artificial "person" created by the state. All 50 states have unique laws regarding the creation and dissolution of corporations. These corporations can do most of the things that a natural person can do: own property, enter into contracts, earn money, pay taxes and even commit crimes. One important difference between corporations and people is people have certain inalienable rights recognized by the Constitution, where corporations only have those rights which are given to them by their charter and applicable law. Notice this definition from Bouvier's Law Dictionary:

Corporation—Not a Person. A corporation is not deemed a person within the clause of the Constitution of the United States protecting the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States from being abridged or impaired by the law of a State, and the liberty guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment against deprivation without due process of law is that of natural, not artificial, persons [204 U.S. 359].

While this may seem like just "legal talk" it has very real consequences. Corporations are required to follow their charters and the bylaws that they may pass. When the State of California placed the Worldwide Church of God in receivership in 1979, it was not based on criminal charges or a nonsense interpretation of the law. It was based on paragraph 9505 of the California Corporation Code at that time:

Supervision of Attorney General Where Property Held in Trust.—A nonprofit corporation which holds property subject to any public or charitable trust is subject at all times to examination by the Attorney General, on behalf of the State, to ascertain the

condition of its affairs and to what extent, if at all, it may fail to comply with trusts which it has assumed or may depart from the general purposes for which it is formed. In case of any such failure or departure the Attorney General shall institute, in the name of the State, the proceedings necessary to correct the noncompliance or departure.

The California Attorney General was seeking an accounting of funds and a possible replacement of the board of directors of the corporation if they proved to be violating the corporation's charter and bylaws. In order to prevent the "pilfering of assets" by the directors (a mostly "trumped up" charge), the Attorney General asked for a receiver to be given control of all church assets. The receiver even had the ability to sue other persons in the name of the WCG!

Were the Attorney General's activities ever found illegal or unconstitutional? No! The Worldwide Church of God was a corporation and the state had the right to investigate and control such corporations. The receivership was physically stopped by asking members to contribute to an Arizona address. From there, critical church bills could be paid, but the receiver's bills were not paid. As it happened, due to the extra legal fees and due to a general drop in revenue because of people not contributing during the receivership, the corporation barely remained solvent. Had the State of Arizona or Federal law enforcement chosen to intervene in the temporary WCG Arizona office, the WCG would have gone bankrupt. Is the state responsible for damages if a corporation it is investigating goes bankrupt? No! Again, see the definition of "Corporation not a Person" at left.

In the end, the Attorney General's proceedings against the WCG were dropped, not by court order, but because the California legislature passed a bill specifically limiting the Attorney General in church corporate investigations. Could other lawfully authorized government agencies still investigate church corporations? Yes!

Where is our national constitutional protection of freedom of religion in all of this? That protection is for people, not for corporations which are creations of the state and therefore governed by the state. **While most states leave religious corporations alone, they legally do have a**

large amount of control over them. As governments at all levels attempt to exert more and more control over nearly every aspect of life in our country, it seems prudent to **not** voluntarily submit to government control if we do not have to. The scripture is clear that true servants of our Father will be persecuted at some time (John 15:20).

The claimed "advantages" for corporations may well be disadvantages for churches: limited liability, respectability, and perpetuity. **Limited liability** means that a corporate director's personal fortune cannot be taken away if someone sues his corporation. A church leader can legally pay himself a high salary, give himself lots of benefits and let the corporation go bankrupt—he is not responsible to pay anything back personally. We have already discussed **respectability**—the ability to incorporate has absolutely nothing to do with truth or honesty. **Perpetuity** (the ability of a corporation to exist forever) initially sounds like a good thing. If leaders die, they can be replaced by others and the same work can go on. But how does one know that the stated mission of a corporation will continue—future directors can usually change the articles and bylaws. "Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool?" (Eccl 2:18-19.) If the WCG headquarters is sold, the proceeds may be used to fund the preaching of doctrines nearly opposite of the doctrines held by the people that contributed to purchase that campus many years ago.

I am not saying that no church or business should ever incorporate. I do not know everyone's situation. I am saying the price of incorporation appear to outweigh the good **for our operation.**

What is Tax-Exempt Status?

Corporations, associations, churches, community chests, funds, trusts, and foundations may fill out IRS Form 1023 and apply for tax exempt status. (Individuals and partnerships may not.) Since the regulations describing this process are in Internal Revenue Code section 501(C)(3), such organizations are often called 501C3 organizations.

Receiving tax exempt status from the IRS eliminates the need to pay Federal Income Tax, and makes most contribu-

Continued on page 15

"Incorporation?" from page 14

tions by individuals tax deductible. Many other governmental agencies recognize the IRS status and grant exemption to other taxes and fees: The US Post Office provides non-profit mailing rates, state governments waive income taxes, some state and local governments will waive sales taxes, etc. If saving money is a primary goal, the above reasons make exempt status worthwhile. Tax savings can easily make up the \$465 cost of applying.

However, these economic benefits are not obtained without price. In exchange for tax exemption, the organization must pledge that its purpose, all activities and assets must be used in accordance with current and future IRS regulations. In the process of applying for tax exempt status, we received IRS Form 503-4-351 which requires the following statements to be placed in the foundational documents (such as articles of incorporation) of an organization:

A. The purposes for which the organization is organized are exclusively religious, charitable, scientific, literary, and educational within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any **future** United States Internal Revenue law.

B. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, this organization **shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax** under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any **future** United States Internal Revenue law.

C. Upon the dissolution of the corporation, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any **future** federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas...

Points "A" and "B" above give the IRS complete control over the purpose and operations of any organization that has applied to them for tax exemption. When an organization applies for tax exemption, **the IRS reserves the right to**

decide what is a church and what is not. A church organization that does not meet the IRS definition has to change or forgo tax exemption.

To the IRS, What Is a Church?

During the application process for *Friends of the Brethren*, it became obvious that we would either have to change what we do or we would not qualify as a "church." The basic points of determination the IRS uses came from a federal court case *American Guidance Foundation, Inc., v. United States*, 490 F. Supp. 304 (D.D.C. 1980). We will reproduce the points below with a comment on whether or not we would qualify.

(1) A distinct legal existence. Yes—though extra book-keeping would be required.

(2) A recognized creed and form of worship. Probably No. The Edwards, Brumms and others have occasionally met together for services, but most of the time we attend with other groups. These groups use a variety of forms of worship which we do not control.

(3) A definite and distinct ecclesiastical government. No. The IRS will not accept someone with the primary goal of servicing rather than governing others. The leadership of the Messiah is not distinct to them.

(4) A formal code of doctrine and discipline. Maybe. They will not simply accept "the Bible" as a doctrinal statement—it is not "formal" enough. When an organization produces a detailed "statement of belief," there is a great tendency for people not to study subjects in that statement, because if they concluded anything different, they would essentially be removing themselves from the beliefs of their organization. The IRS did not seem happy with our existing statement of beliefs that essentially states the above principle and then quotes what we believe are foundational scriptures.

(5) A distinct religious history. Probably No. We serve people seeking to "live by every word of God." We do not want to label ourselves "former group xxx."

(6) A membership not associated with any other church of denomination. No. This is another IRS-mandated point of division! If we treat those in other church organizations as equal to those that attend with us, we will not satisfy this IRS requirement.

(7) An organization of ordained minis-

ters. No. Even though the Bible does not contain one example of a man being "ordained" to become a "minister," the IRS still wants us to have this doctrine.

(8) Ordained ministers selected after completing prescribed studies. No. When choosing leaders, the Bible puts more emphasis on how a person lives and if they are full of the holy spirit. (1Tim 3, Titus 1, Acts 6:3). The IRS wants a humanly devised program of study.

(9) A literature of its own. Yes. Publishing *Servants' News* and other literature satisfies this requirement.

(10) Established Places of Worship. No. Since we meet with a variety of congregations, some of which meet in a variety of locations, we do not qualify here. (It is interesting to note that the early apostles sometimes relied completely on the holy spirit for where they would go next—Acts 8:26; 11:13; 13:2; 16:6,9).

(11) Regular Congregations. No. Our meeting with and speaking to a variety of different groups disqualifies us here.

(12) Regular Services. Probably No. Our meeting somewhere every week was looked upon favorably by the IRS, but the variety of locations may have caused us to lose this point.

(13) Sunday schools for religious instruction of the Young. Maybe. The IRS would accept a Sabbath-school, and we had one some times. Some other congregations we attended had one and some did not. The IRS does not recognize Biblical responsibility of parents to teach their children (Gen 18:19; Deut 6:7; Eph 6:4).

(14) Schools for the preparation of its ministers. No. We find no New Testament example of a "ministerial school."

The IRS does not require compliance with all 14 points but requires a church to be largely in compliance to receive tax exemption. *Friends of the Brethren* easily complied with only 2 requirements, and may have complied with 5 others. While the final decision is left completely up to the IRS, we believe we had little chance of acceptance as a church. We would like to point out that a single local Sabbath-keeping congregation would probably have much less trouble qualifying for points 2, 6, 10, 11, and 12. With a properly worded statement, a single congregation might also qualify under points 3, 7, 8. (Indeed, many Sabbath-keeping congregations do receive tax-exempt status from the IRS.)

The IRS recognizes tax exempt reli-

Continued on page 16

"Incorporation?" from page 15

religious organizations other than "churches"—for which *Friends of the Brethren* could qualify. However, these types of organizations are required to regularly report to the IRS and have many more restrictions and regulations put upon them compared to church organizations.

It is interesting to note that the first century ministries of our Savior and the apostles would probably not qualify as churches under these rules. In preparation for this article, I spoke with Carl Franklin, a man that has spent hundreds of hours researching many aspects of early church history. His research indicates that the Roman empire did have "incorporation" (state-created organizations), but the first century church did not use it. We find none of the related legal terms in the Bible or church history documents. Roman "incorporation" would have given them legal protection from persecution at the expense of being partly controlled by the Roman state.

Abiding by All Future IRS Laws

Because of the American concept of "religious freedom," the IRS seldom interferes with churches, but they do reserve powers of investigation to ensure that churches (and other organizations) are complying with applicable regulations. Looking back at points **A**, **B** and **C** on the previous page, you will see that all tax exempt organizations are bound to any future IRS laws that might be enacted. Could tax exempt churches be required to do objectionable things by the IRS in the future?

On April 6, 1995, Gerald Solomon (R-NY) proposed HR 1453, a bill to remove tax-exemption "if any portion of the activities of such organization consists of promoting the legalization of any controlled substance." In simple languages, the bill proposes to take away tax exempt status of any organization that advocates the legalization of drugs. Actually, I have read credible studies that indicate drug usage would probably go down if drugs were legalized because (1) nearly all people that want to buy illegal drugs know where they can get them, (2) organized crime often gives away or even forces drugs on young people so they can charge high prices when the people become addicted, (3) addicts that want to get off of drugs are slow to seek help because they do not want a criminal record and (4) the amount

of death, injury, and destruction resulting from the crime associated with obtaining money for drugs is greater than the actual damage caused by drugs.

I do not claim to know the validity of such studies, but if HR 1453 passed, a tax exempt organization could lose exempt status for including the above paragraph in a newsletter. Worse yet, Rep. Solomon stated in the congressional record that "They [organizations advocating drug legalization] need to be investigated and their contributors should be required to pay taxes on past contributions." People could be asked for tax and interest on what were supposed to have been "assured" deductions. While it is unlikely that such a bill would pass, Rep. Solomon is chairman of the House Rules Committee and he has threatened to attach this provision to another important bill. If it did become law, all tax exempt organizations have already agreed to abide by it.

Some religious organizations (including a few churches) have lost or been threatened with the loss of their tax exempt status for speaking against abortion, homosexuality, and government officials. The assertion was that these are political issues outside the purpose of religious organizations.

If the Eternal raises up a powerful, miracle-working, righteousness-teaching, corruption-condemning work in our nation, it will certainly incur the wrath of our civil governments—just like the first century believers did. Passing a few specifically targeted tax laws would be a simple way for the government to stop any tax-exempt organization doing such a work. Could the organization simply drop its tax exempt status and keep working? Point **C** on the previous page requires that the organization give all of its assets to another tax-exempt organization. Assets include all buildings, equipment, money and the copyrights on literature that it has written. At best, they will have to start over.

Past Contributions Deductible?

I am not sure how the IRS will view contributions made to *Friends of the Brethren* during 1995. Because of the guarantees of our constitution, the IRS cannot require churches to apply to be tax-exempt. From IRS Publication 557 (Jan 1995, p 23):

Although a church, its integrated auxiliaries, or a convention or associ-

ation of churches is not required to file Form 1023 to be exempt from federal income tax or to receive tax deductible contributions, such an organization may find it advantageous to obtain recognition of exemption.

How the IRS views contributions to an organization that has applied for exemption and then withdraws is not clear to us. One professional told us he would take the deduction without including a copy of the receipt, but would be ready to pay the tax if the IRS disallows it. I am not qualified to give advice in these matters, so please consult qualified professionals for advice.

Our Future Operations

I have already withdrawn our application for tax exempt status, and I will dissolve the *Friends of the Brethren* corporation as soon as possible in April 1996. I will open a separate bank account as Norman S. Edwards doing business as *Servants' News* and *Friends of the Brethren*. *Friends of the Brethren* checks received after March 31 will go into the new account. I will probably remove the name *Friends of the Brethren* after a few months because it does not serve any real purpose and may be confused with the defunct corporation. In the New Testament, we find the names of men that preached the Gospel, not the *Friends of Jerusalem* or the *Greater Gentile Ministries*.

I will simply accept whatever funds the Eternal sends, pay the expenses of publishing, telephone bills, contract laborers, etc. I will feed and house our family from what is left. If, at some time in the future, we need more income to live on, I will work as the apostle Paul did. I will continue to provide receipts and a statement of income and expenses to anyone who contributes or asks for a statement. Anyone wishing to examine our books in detail should make an appointment.

People wanting to help us can make checks payable to *Servants' News* or Norman S. Edwards. Including the word "ministry" or "minister" (meaning "service" or "servant") on checks made out to Norman S. Edwards might be helpful in demonstrating that you consider us an unregistered church. If you would like to contribute to what we do, but want a "guaranteed" tax deduction, we can furnish you with information about tax

Continued on page 30

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. To avoid any difficulty, writers should specify how much of their name and address they would like us to print. 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.

Where Have All the People Gone?

LETTER:

March 10, 1996

Dear Mr. Edwards,

Thank you again for all the hard work you put into *Servants' News* every month. It seems like every issue gets better, and the "grumbling and negativism" that I commented on several months ago seems to have all but disappeared, supplanted by even more quality Bible studies that really inspire one to get into God's word and dig for every ounce of truth.

I wonder where Dr. Bacchiocchi got his numbers in the Feb WCG crisis article? Have that many people really left in the past year? If so, I would have to believe that a large portion of them are staying home or are meeting in small non-aligned groups, as the membership of the main spin-offs put together doesn't approach anything near 50,000. But I don't imagine Worldwide really wants anyone to know how many have left, either, so it may be difficult to get an accurate count.

Please accept the enclosed donation to help cover your costs, and if you would, please send us the following literature: [titles deleted].

Thank you. Yours truly,

—George (and Kay) Paetzman
112 Carden St, Hendersonville, TN 37075

RESPONSE: We have seen and heard a great many different estimates of how many members have gone to different places. Only our Father in heaven really knows who had gone where. The methods used to count attendance vary so widely between the organizations, that it is very difficult to reconcile. We will briefly describe some of the problems involved.

Reported statistics do not always differ-

entiate between baptized members and people attending (both baptized and unbaptized). Methods of counting vary greatly. Some organizations actually count how many people attend each week (or the average attendance for the month) and total it

for all of their congregations. Others give statistics based on membership lists from headquarters. Once a family begins attending, they are listed as members on headquarters files—but if they attend multiple groups or stop attending completely, they will still be listed as a member for many months. Some organizations assume that anyone to whom they send a sermon tape must be sitting down listening to that tape on the Sabbath as "their service"—not realizing that many people get tapes from multiple organizations and listen to most of them while driving, doing housework, etc. (At least one group assumes the average household is 3 people, so they multiply their tape mailing list by 3 and count them as members.) Finally, some groups count everyone on their mailing list.

We personally know of cases where people quietly stopped attending the WCG, but are still on their membership list. They began visiting one or more other groups and were placed on all of their membership lists. Other people were disfellowshipped from the WCG or asked to be taken off of their membership list and do not want to be on any other group's membership list, even though they attend somewhere every week.

Since the headquarters of most organizations base the need for a "field minister" (and sometimes his salary) on the number of people in a congregation, ministers tend to count everyone that they can and are slow to remove people from membership lists. In an effort to look successful, headquarters organizations tend to use the highest of all possible attendance figures.

We do not know exactly where Dr. Bacchiocchi got his figures or what the real numbers are. But nearly every week we receive a subscription request from someone that had left the WCG to keep the Sabbath at home, not knowing of any other group that his beliefs would allow him to attend. If we think that His Body is one particular human organization that all the faithful must join, then the situation looks rather miserable. If we realize that His Body is made up of members bound together by the holy spirit and that He is capable of leading His people whether they be in big organizations or tiny groups, then we have nothing to fear.

Christianity's Judaic Origins

LETTER:

March 5, 1996

Dear Mr. Edwards,

The December *Servants' News* gave me the idea to make this request. I would very much like to locate and correspond with other CG brethren who are of Jewish heritage or have a deep appreciation of Christianity's Judaic origins. It is through study of Jewish culture that God began to open my eyes to His Truth back in 1970, and it has remained integral to my religious expression ever since.

Unfortunately, this has been met with both ridicule and hostility in the church organizations to which I previously belonged (WCG, CGI). I have investigated various "Messianic" groups but find them uncomfortable because of Protestant Evangelical influence. It is my hope to find other like-minded church brethren to share with and encourage one another in our modern "Diaspora." Your help by publishing this letter would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

—Sadie Morgan
221 Ivy St.

Rossville, GA 30741-2031

RESPONSE: We hope you will receive some responses. Many people now realize the first century "church" was essentially Jewish in character—some enemies simply considered it another Jewish "sect" (Acts 24:5). Unfortunately, we live nearly 2000 years after that time and there is much erroneous Jewish tradition to sift through (very similar to the erroneous Catholic and Protestant tradition we must sift through).

We have found the same difficulty with some of the Messianic Jewish movements: they accept the trinity, "heaven and hell," "law nailed to the cross," "once saved always saved," and a host of other doctrines from protestantism. Two groups that we have found different are: Restoration Foundation, PO Box 421218, Atlanta, GA 30342 and Genesis 2000, PO Box 561476, Charlotte, NC 28256. We do not endorse everything these groups teach, but we have found much of their information helpful.

—NSE

Tell It Like It Is

LETTER:

March 8, 1996

Attn: Norman Edwards and Norman Brumm
Gentlemen,

Let me congratulate you both on a superb issue of the *Servants' News* (Feb 96) and encourage you to continue standing firm against those who would misread what you say

Continued on page 18

"Letters" from page 17

or misunderstand your intentions. Lamentably, far too many folks in the churches of God seem to automatically believe that if a person steps out on faith *in Christ*, that person has a **hidden agenda** of some sort and is **obviously** seeking to **gain power** over the brethren. To all those who are **exclusivists** and **authoritarian**, and so reason this way (and you know who you are) I say "give it up, already." Isn't it fairly clear that Christ is cleansing His sanctuary of all wrongdoing and law breaking, not to mention lawbreakers? And that He won't quit until the job is done? We should rejoice in this.

The sanctuary is the Holy Place. That's where true Christians, those in Christ, abide today. Christ is the only door to the sanctuary, and we enter through Him, not by following any law, any man, or any organization. Once inside the Holy Place, we must be obedient to Christ our King, and if we are not, then out we go, sooner or later, perhaps even before the wedding feast, through the same door we came in. When Christ was on Earth before, He ran the lawbreakers out of the temple physically, and now He is doing it again, but this time it is spiritually. Judgment has begun at the House of God.

We, in our separate camps, readily give lip service to a number of truisms: Don't believe me, believe the Bible; Don't follow me, follow Christ; We **really** don't believe we're the **only** true Church; etc., etc., ad nauseam. Spare me. But when we catch someone else actually trying to do what many of us **profess** to encourage, we revoke his license to hang around in our midst, in **our** church. That person's ideas are feared, mostly, I think, for a distinct lack of real confidence in Christ that he will give His followers discernment. As a result, that person is either rejected outright, or simply given the cold shoulder (but we like to call it "**protecting God's sheep**"). And those who do this are proud to be in "God's Church." But make no mistake. There is a serious warning in what's happening today. Those who practice the subtle art of hidden, covered up, or denied sin, especially on the corporate teaching level, may find themselves rightly squirming in the spotlight for a time just where they should be, then they'll wind up on the outside of the **spiritual** body of Christ, looking in. Every man's work, personal or corporate, will be tried by fire. And it won't matter whether or not we're warming a pew in someone's **personal** church. The Lamb's Book of Life is a roster of all God's children, and it is up to date. Christ knows and cares very much about every one of those who are His, even if we do not.

So continue telling it like it is, gentlemen. The truth, even though it is sometimes painful

and often threatens our comfort zones and minor kingdoms, is necessary in this day of division and unity. God's purpose **will** work itself out here down below. All things work together for good to those who love God.

May God bless you and yours all the days of your lives.

Sincerely,

—F. Paul Haney,

PO Box 370, Watertown, CT 06795

RESPONSE: We agree that this is a time of cleansing and making the Bride ready. If the Eternal worked only through a "hierarchical government," we would expect the cleansing to occur by "the human head" issuing orders through the hierarchy and those members and ministers that did not comply would be put out. But what has happened? We have seen error coming from hierarchies and members looking into the Bible and having to decide who they will obey: self-professed leaders or the scriptures.

You bring up an interesting point about "seeking a following." There are so many Scriptures warning us about false priests, prophets, and ministers that are primarily interested in seeking money (1Sam 2:29; Is 56:10-12; Ezk 34:2-3; Mic 3:5-11; Matt 23:14; 24:48-51; Rom 16:18; Phil 3:18-19; 1Tim 6:5-10; Tit 1:11; 2Pet 2:14-15; Jud 12). Today we find "ministers" in organizations that receive good salaries, lease cars, a separate festival allowance, tithes from local members gardens and a variety of free services from local members. Usually, the value of this compensation is not disclosed to the membership. Yet these organizations point to a non-aligned teacher that is unpaid or paid a low, disclosed amount and say: "he is just trying to attract followers and money for himself."

This controversy could end if all ministers and Bible teachers disclosed their salary and benefits. If a leader cannot tell his followers that his salary and benefits are Biblically proper compensation, then he probably should not have them.

All of these things do take time to understand and realize. We should be patient with people that are slowly coming to see these things.

—NSE

Gossip or Evidence?

LETTER:

March 5, 1996

To the Editor:

You probably won't print my letter in your paper because it might hurt you selling these "quote" *Servants' News*.

A question I would like to ask you. What is the difference in a tale bearer or gossip going from house to house spreading gossip and you sending this paper in people's homes, or for that matter a person getting this paper from you for the purpose of reading this gossip?

What is the difference in your paper and the "National Enquirer?" Your paper is only different in that it is for God's people, people who wouldn't dare read the "Enquirer."

You publish in the front of your paper Deut 8:3, "We believe in living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

If you do, maybe you need to reread these scriptures. Lev 19:16, Prov 11:13, Prov 18:8, Prov 20:19, Prov 26:20-22 and the whole chapter of James 3.

You may say your paper enlightens people. Then print things like Philippians 4:8.

I'm sorry I saw your paper: you quoted things in it that you never even got first hand—sometimes it had come down through 4 or more people. I had to ask: "Is this God's way."

I would close by asking you and your readers that maybe we need to read the Beatitudes once again in Matt 5.

I hope you see the harm you're doing to God and his people.

—O.T., Arkansas

RESPONSE: We hope we can give a satisfactory answer to your questions. We do believe in living by "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," but it is obvious that not every scripture applies to every situation. We are told to "pray always" (Luke 18:1), but Joshua was once told to stop praying and go take care of a problem (Josh 7:10-13). We find numerous instructions to love and be patient with others, but when Joseph understood Potiphar's wife's intentions, he didn't discuss the matter, he fled.

Most of the scriptures you cited dealt with "talebearers." A talebearer or gossip is someone that tells stories of doubtful truth or stories that are true, but do not need to be told. The purpose of the "National Enquirer" and other similar papers is to make money for the publisher. I once saw a headline that said "Grandmother Gives Birth to Eggplant Shaped Like Richard Nixon!" I doubt that story was true. Other headlines are often about celebrity marriages, divorces, etc. There is some chance these are true stories, but does anyone need to know them? Whoever told you that I am "selling" *Servants' News* is a talebearer because it has always been given away freely—as page two of every issue so states.

Continued on page 19

"Letters" from page 18

Servants' News deals primarily with spiritual articles and positive news about the brethren. Nevertheless, when there is sin among us, we cannot just simply think positive thoughts and hope the problem will go away. The story has to be told and the problem has to be dealt with (1 Cor 5:1-5). We have not received any letters or calls correcting any of our statements made about Garner Ted Armstrong. The only thing we printed that we have found to be in error was his letter to us claiming that the FBI had the video and was involved in a covert investigation. We have now viewed the video ourselves and have verified the statements of the previous witnesses. Since the CGI board of directors has not removed Armstrong as a leader, we are conveying accurate information to people that **need to know so they can make decisions about who they will support and where they will fellowship.**

The beatitudes and Philippians 4:8 are wonderful scriptures to read, **especially** for people that are greatly tempted to sin: "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Phil 4:8).

—NSE

Jubilee '95 & CEM Questions

LETTER: Feb 9, 1996
Dear Editor,

There are a few things I find in your recent *Servants' News* that are disturbing.

1. Your glowing report on Jubilee '95 despite the fact it featured two speakers, Drs. Ernest Martin and Bacchiocchi, who both hold views that are contrary to "classic" Church of God teachings (necessity of the Holy days, non-trinity, clean & unclean meats, etc.). Hypothetically, why not include people like Billy Graham or some other main-stream Protestant to talk about grace? To my knowledge, Seventh Day Adventists hold to most of the mainstream Protestant beliefs. I am familiar with Martin's teachings and he says the "mature" Christian is not bound to observing anything. He does, however, encourage avoiding the pagan holidays. I enjoy your newsletter, but perhaps I've missed the point, are you serving all Sabbath-keepers or are you oriented towards Church of God people?

2. I've noticed *Servants' News* is not afraid to confront "touchy" issues (UCG doc-

trines, Garner Ted, etc.), but I wonder why you haven't asked Ronald Dart to be truthful about his recent change in ministries? Mr. Dart bows out of CGI citing poor health and stress, then goes and starts a whole new organization. That doesn't seem to make sense. Do you at *Servants' News* engage in selective criticism?

In closing I'd like to again say that for the most part I enjoy the "News" but these are some concerns myself and other Church of God members have had.

Respectfully,

—D. C., New York

RESPONSE: Our "glowing" report about Jubilee '95 was primarily concerned with the way information was shared and that so many people from different religious backgrounds were listening. This is a great difference from hierarchical organizations where leaders sometimes "proclaim truth" for their organization and members must either accept it or leave—no matter what the Bible says. Some of the people teaching certainly believe some incorrect doctrines—I was probably one of them.

It is the goal of *Servants' News* to serve people with the holy spirit, wherever they may be. We serve mostly "church of God" groups because we are most familiar with the issues facing them, but we would like to encourage cooperation among all believers, not just the ones we know best. When Herbert Armstrong was first baptized, he did not keep the holy days. Was he unconverted until he did? When Armstrong abandoned his Biblically sound 1939 government principles for a hierarchical government, did he become unconverted? I do not think so. Similarly, if Drs. Martin and Bacchiocchi do not keep the holy days, must they be unconverted? I do not believe it is my decision to pass judgement on them.

I think we make a mistake if we say someone else cannot be converted or used by the Eternal unless they "understand as much truth as I do." Who is to say that the Eternal is not using Dr. Bacchiocchi to teach the holy days to the Seventh Day Adventists? Could this exchange of ideas also bring him to see other errors taught in his organization? While I do not agree with many of Dr. Martin's conclusions, I do find his research valuable in some areas. But let us suppose there was a speaker at one of these conventions that you felt was simply not worth listening to at all, you would be perfectly free to skip his sessions. Is not a conference worthwhile if you learn from 14 out of 16 speakers?

In regard to your point #2, I was also

amazed at the sudden change in Ron Dart's approach. He resigned because of severe stress and cardiac arrhythmia. He assured us saying "I sincerely hope to maintain a warm and friendly relationship with the CGI in the years to come..." In his very next letter, he announced a "tape program," a "newsletter," "literature," "Sabbath school materials," "an alliance of ministers," "a package of assistance for those who want to start a small church" and "a lot of other ideas in the works (including evangelistic outreach)." Weeks later, when the GTA story became common knowledge, people wondered why Ron Dart had completely hid this major problem and why he had received such a generous severance package from CGI. A lot of people asked Dart those questions and he answered some of them in his March 1, 1996 newsletter.

I have devoted little space to these difficulties because Ron Dart has printed nearly all of the facts—he is not involved in a coverup campaign as we found with Garner Ted Armstrong. I certainly do not understand why Ron Dart felt no need to take the GTA problem to "the church" (Matt 18:15-17) after his efforts to deal directly with him failed. If the situation was so bad that a "shepherd" had to "flee the wolf", who's job was it then to warn the sheep? The wolf's? How does this fit in with his "warm and friendly relationship with CGI?"

On the other hand, we must realize that we all make mistakes. I supported hierarchical governments for years and never questioned what I was doing. On the positive side, I am very happy to see Ron Dart leave nearly 40 years of hierarchical government to serve congregations as they want to be served. We and others have made suggestions to Ron Dart and he has listened. We need more leaders to do this rather than less!

—NSE

Aware of Friendly Visits

LETTER: March 4, 1996
Dear Mr. Edwards,

I am responding to your article *Beware of Friendly Visits* in the February issue of *Servants' News*. Along with all the other articles, this one is very eye-opening. Although I can't say I'm very surprised with its content.

It is upsetting, to say the least, to see that we, the members of Christ's Body, are still looked upon as dumb sheep who have to be told, at every turn, what and what not to do. I

Continued on page 20

"Letters" from page 19

see the old WCG mentality is still alive and well.

This very attitude totally negates the fact that God Himself is living and "breathing" in each and every one of us who has the Spirit of God within.

We have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5, 1Cor 2:16) and He is living inside us (Gal 2:20). How careful we should be in how we treat one another. Each of us, as members of Christ's *ekklesia*, are learning and understanding at different levels and we're told not to judge another person for we cannot read their heart.

It is totally wrong to label someone a wolf simply because they question.

Are we not to prove all things including "church government" and the time honored and cherished system of tithing? (Remember, it's not just a single 10% in question here but an additional second and a third tithe plus generous offerings.)

Have we ever tried to prove or disprove this system from the pages of the Bible? Where are the clear scriptures concerning this major doctrine? It seems to me that hazy implications should never be used to establish a major doctrine which drastically affects so many people.

As most people know by now, WCG abused this system and many people have suffered untold hardships trying to pay up to 35% (and sometimes more) of their gross income only to be told they were at fault if they did not prosper or their blessings were spiritual. All the while, those living off the tithe weren't obligated to pay a second or third tithe and were living in comparative luxury. They bound burdens on us that they were not willing to bear. (Sound pharisaically familiar?)

So, whether we agree or not with the existing organizational structures and their method of survival, we should be able to question, prove, or disprove without being labeled a wolf and being dealt with covertly and deceptively.

If an organization believes certain things, should it not be glad to have opportunity to prove its doctrine? Why should they try to privately quell any challenge?

Certainly, it is not the standard of handling disputes that Christ gives us in Matthew 18, is it?

The admonition of 1 Timothy 5:19-20 actually gives the members the right to bring a leader before the congregation for a judgment. This would be totally alien and unheard of in today's hierarchical churches of God.

Yet, we are not to question?

It is somehow ironic that we are still looked upon as dumb sheep who have to be "led" by someone ("ministers") in some kind of

authoritative government. Leaders are to lead by their examples, not by authority and power (1Pet 2:21, Matt 20:25, Luke 22:25, 1Pet 5). Where were these leaders while we were being butchered and mauled by the "government" of WCG? Who "led" us to see this apostasy and "led" us out of it? Where are those brethren who listened to their leaders and stayed put?

We, the body of Christ, have emerged from this battering a whole lot wiser and wary. We are no longer the naive, trusting little sheep with no mind of our own.

Mr. Edwards, I hope you and others will continue with your service of helping to keep us informed. We must all make our own personal decisions before God but we must have information sufficient to do so.

In response to the article on Nicolaitanism, it is noteworthy that in Rev 2:13-15 the condemnation of this doctrine follows Christ's encouraging words that the church of Pergamos had held fast God's name and had not denied His faith. If Nicolaitanism had been idolatry and adultery, could Christ have said "you have not denied my faith?" It seems like this was intertwined with the worship of God which would substantiate the clergy/laity concept.

Enclosed is a donation to help in your service.

Thanks much. Sincerely,

—T. R., Hamilton, AL

RESPONSE: We generally agree. For years, the WCG required members to tithe at least 20% every year and 30% in the third and sixth year out of seven. In addition, people were encouraged to give generous regular offerings, holy day offerings, emergency fund contributions and building fund contributions, though we have never heard of anyone being disfellowshipped for not doing so. Many people prospered under this system and many met financial ruin—we have no estimates of the percentages of each.

It is also true that ministers in the WCG were required to pay only a first tithe. An 8% of salary "Feast allowance" was given to them. They never paid third tithe. Some WCG look-alike organizations still maintain this policy.

We do believe much clarification is needed in regard to these doctrines. The phrases "second tithe" and "third tithe" never occur in the Bible. The Bible gives specific instructions for a tithe in "the third year," but says nothing about "the sixth year." Some of the WCG tithing doctrine was drawn from the apocrypha and Jewish sources. What many people do not know, is that there are several different under-

standings of tithing in these sources and the WCG chose the most expensive one. One principle that nearly all of these sources agree on and that the Bible never denies: tithes were paid from agricultural products by the people that owned land. Wage-earners did not tithe on wages.

We have not studied this issue enough to write conclusions, but there are many questions to answer. When we raise tithing questions, we also like to point out that the WCG did many good things with its money. It is certainly wrong for an organization to demand more money than the Bible specifies, waste half of it, and "do the work" with the rest. But it is equally wrong, if not more so, for an individual to keep **all** of his resources and do absolutely nothing with them.

We continue to be amazed, as you do, at how many of the WCG-splinter groups still want unquestioning obedience. For years they taught that all that members had to do was follow the government and God would see that the men at the top were corrected. Yet, they all agree that it didn't happen in the WCG. We all have some learning to do!

Thank you for your comment in the Nicolaitan doctrine. We did not see this, but it certainly strengthens the understanding conveyed in our article.

—NSE

**Against "Friendly Visits"
Article**

LETTER:

March 18, 1996

Dear Mr. Edwards,

I have enjoyed reading your "Servants' News" for a while now, and it has given me pause to think about some of my closely held beliefs. I hope you will take the time to read this letter to completion. I am responding to an article that carries your byline.

We all (Sabbatarians) believe the Sabbath is a commandment from God. Many have taken the time to point out that nowhere except in the area of Hebrews, is the Sabbath spoken of as something we are supposed to do. People wheedle Hebrews to say whatever they want so they don't have to do the Sabbath. Yet you and I take God's word from the beginning as binding.

In your article you state that tithing is not taught. Let me correct you, if you will. Jesus NEVER directly said to keep the Sabbath. Yet, he did tell us to continue to tithe. Mat 23:24 and Luke 11:42, Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders, yet he said

Continued on page 21

"Letters" from page 20

they were right in that they DID tithed. Why will we fight to keep a commandment not repeated in the NT (Sabbath), yet strive to disprove clear instructions from our Lord?

RESPONSE: I did not say that "tithing was not taught," but that there were questions that I have seen few groups attempt to answer. Yes, it is obvious that the Levitical tithing system did continue up until the time of the destruction of the temple. The part that is harder to explain is the claim that tithing changed to the "ministry." Some say that the "change of the law" in Hebrews 7:12 is a change in the law of tithing, but to me the context is the priesthood (not the Levites) and a change in the law of sacrifices—from animals to the One Perfect Sacrifice. I have not finished my study of tithing, so I have not written on it. I am hoping that some people, such as yourself, would attempt to answer these questions.

LETTER: Just because something is not CLEARLY stated in the NT, does not make it void. In Acts 20:34, Paul is talking of how he gave example of how a person SHOULD work to support the weak. Could that not be an instruction on how to fulfill the 3T obligation? Since Corinth was largely, if not all, gentile, could this not have been early in their teaching? Much of God's word was not taught me until I was in the Church. I, personally, did not know of clean and unclean meats before I was baptized. Others did not know of 2nd and 3rd tithe. God reveals things to people as HE sees fit.

RESPONSE: I agree completely with you that Old Testament laws do not need to be restated in the NT in order for them to be binding. Yet with tithing, we are not dealing with a continuance of an Old Testament law, but a change of tithing from the Levites to New Testament leaders. Such a change would have had a great impact on that society and should have been a great point of contention. The church would certainly have been accused of being money-hungry and "against the Torah" if brethren were taught to stop tithing to the Levites and to tithe to the "church" instead. The Jewish leaders would have been enraged by this. (If you do not think so, try asking your favorite hierarchical organization if it is all right to teach their members to tithe elsewhere.) Why would they have invented all kinds of false charges against Paul and the other apostles when they could have easily condemned them for teaching men to tithe contrary to the law?

You have stated two possible explana-

tions for the puzzle in Acts 20. First, that Paul's encouragement to support the weak is really a reference to third tithe. This could be possible, but if the Ephesians were tithing it does not explain why Paul was working rather than living off their tithes. Paul was taking a different approach than has been common in "Church of God" groups. These groups tend to emphasize the payment of third tithe (either gross or net), and reserve the right to themselves on how to spend it. (Most organizations take in more "third tithe" than they spend for the poor, so they use it for minister's salaries and benefits.) Your other explanation that Paul had simply not taught tithing yet is hard to accept as Paul just finished telling these Ephesian elders in Acts 20:20,27 that he "kept back nothing that was helpful" and "not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." If Paul made those claims but had not yet taught tithing, tithing must not have been very important to him.

LETTER: You spoke of 1 Cor 16 as a collection, not of 3T. So what? Does that do away with 3T? There was a famine in Jerusalem at that time. The collection was above other obligations. 3T may not have had enough in it when you consider the level of income of the people at the time. In Jerusalem, they had all in common. Yet they needed help. That should show the depth of the need at that time.

RESPONSE: When the Worldwide Church of God took up special offerings for a number of reasons, they were always handled by the same people and process that handled the regular tithe collection. Yet in both 1Cor 16:3 and 2Cor 8:19 we see that a person was specifically chosen to take the gift to Jerusalem. If tithe distribution systems were already in place, why was their a need to appoint a new person to see that this gift was administered fairly?

We will study tithing more as we feel there are many questions that are unanswered. We discussed the issue slightly to show that we felt it was a mistake to immediately assume someone was a "wolf" just because they, too, had unanswered questions about tithing. For the record, we would like to state that it is obvious that much good has been accomplished through the giving of many people and that the New Testament requires that we give our all for His Work (Rom 12:1). We hope no one will use the questions we raise about New Testament tithing as an excuse to do nothing with their abilities and resources.

LETTER: As far as the rest of your article, I find it totally slanted. Granted, if you take

the tack you do, someone might see something to fear. One who is trying to cause division would be found out and required to leave. If a person has a definite misunderstanding, or disagreement, then it also would be found out and possibly teaching, without offense, could be undertaken.

RESPONSE: The scriptures certainly indicate that there are times when people must be stopped from speaking error or causing division. Titus 3:10 tells us to "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition...." Matt 18:15-17 similarly tell us to go to our brother alone, go to him with witnesses, then take the problem to the church (congregation). These scriptures emphasize multiple attempts, involving multiple people to tell someone of their difficulties. The GCG article emphasized telling the suspected "wolf" as little as possible and involving as few people as possible. It is those quick and quiet situations that have the most potential for abuse. We have received dozens of phone calls and letters from people attending a variety of organizations that had experiences very similar to the article--they were nicely asked to explain what they had studied or believed, and then they were later informed that they were no longer welcome. We would like to think that people are put out of congregations only for righteous reasons, but it appears that people are sometimes put out because they ask questions that their leaders cannot answer.

LETTER: The idea that all of us have been well grounded in the word and need not protection and guidance is ridiculous in the extreme. How is it that we have some 140 different groups which have split off, and several hundred more different disagreements, even in the various corporate bodies? We speak casually of the HOLY Spirit leading us, but obviously it takes more than that or you and I would agree on everything, as would everyone else. Or do you think your way is right and everyone else wrong!!!

RESPONSE: Some certainly have not been well grounded, but the way to help people become that way is to publicly answer difficult questions or, if necessary, admit that you do not have the answer. For many years the WCG tried to make sure only one opinion was presented of their members. When new leaders began to reverse many of the doctrines, many members simply continued to believe whatever "headquarters" taught. If we all "followed the government" we could all be unified in the WCG. Is that what you or our Father wants? No, He specifically

Continued on page 22

"Letters" from page 21

told us there would be false teachers and divisions to test His people (Deut 13:3, 1Cor 11:18-19). If the number of groups is any indication, I would guess our Father is doing a lot of testing right now. I believe the holy spirit will lead us, but this process takes time. I ask for the holy spirit's guidance when I study, but I probably have 10 years of study that I would like to do right now. There has been nearly 2000 years of copying, translation (including some mistranslation), tradition, and somewhat questionable history that stand between us and the time when our Saviour personally instructed the apostles. If He still claimed all seven of the diverse congregations in Revelation 2 and 3 as His own, we can certainly expect His congregations will be even more diverse today.

For years, I read my Bible to primarily confirm everything that Herbert Armstrong taught. I thought he had nearly all of the truth—except for a few prophecies that "were not revealed yet." Since I believed what he taught, then I thought that *I* had nearly all of the truth. How simple! How nice! But now, it is evident that Mr. Armstrong's claim that "God governs from the top down and will always correct the man at the top" does not always work. **Like the kings of ancient Israel, church leaders seem to do whatever they want.** I now realize I was relying on an organization of men to show me truth,

not the holy spirit. I believe I learned a lot of truth from Mr. Armstrong, but it took leaving the WCG to let the spirit show me some of the areas where Mr Armstrong and myself were wrong. Today, there are a great many organizations claiming to have nearly all of the truth. And if there is an organization that does, I may still need the 10 years of study I mentioned above to prove that everything they are teaching is true.

Our statement of purpose in the first Servants' News says "We do not claim to have 'more truth' than anyone else." After all, we do not know what everyone else teaches!

LETTER: Some of the articles you have published on government seem to have merit at first glance. I find, however, on farther examination, that there is a definite agenda in them. You are attacking the Global organization for their stand. That is unbecoming of a person who claims to be Christian. Disagree, if you will, about the subject, but do not use innuendo and half truth to make your point as you do in this article. Like Paul said, "Should I lie that the truth may prosper? GOD forbid!" (paraphrased) and that is presumptuous of you to suggest that what YOU say, is the accurate truth. I would like to support you in your efforts, but I await your response. Can you address a subject critically with out being critical? Subject without bias?

Regards,

—B. W., Missouri

RESPONSE: From experience, I was aware that spy-type approaches were used in many different organizations. I published this article because it was the first time I had seen it so clearly defined in print. The primary purpose was to inform brethren in any organization that such practices really are used. Many people have thanked us for printing it. One long-time GCG member did not even know there was a Ministerial Journal, much less this article. My intention was not to attack the GCG, but to encourage them to change this policy. I and numerous "other witnesses" have written several letters to the GCG headquarters about similar issues over the past year, but have never received a response. Matthew 18:17 indicates that the next step is to "tell it to the church." Printing the item in Servants' News is the best I can do in this regard.

I am not sure exactly which statement(s) you are referring to as "innuendo and half truth." Please let us know. If we are guilty of what you say, we are sorry. I did work for the Global Church of God and serve on their Board of Directors and Doctrinal Committee for nearly two years and believe I am familiar enough with their operations that I am not misrepresenting them in any way.

I will be sending you a copy of "How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans" which should help clear up some Biblical government issues.

—NSE

"Comments" from page 3

these words mean? We know of five approaches:

1. Between sunset and dark. The lamb was killed right at the beginning of Nisan 14, just after the sunset.

2. Between sunset and dark. Adopting the same meaning as above, but believing the day begins at dark and the lamb was killed just before the end of Nisan 14.

3. Between sunset and dark. Adopting the meaning above but believing a Biblical day is from sunrise to sunrise so the lamb was killed on the middle of the 14th.

4. Between noon and sunset. The lamb was killed about 3 PM on the afternoon of the 14th.

5. Between sunset and sunset. The lamb could technically be killed any time on the 14th.

New Testament questions center around the apparent difference between the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and the book of John. The synoptic

gospels appear to say that the Messiah ate a passover meal with the twelve on the evening beginning Nisan 14th and John appears to say Jews were having their passover meal one day later. Exactly what is the name and nature of each of these two events. The possibilities vary greatly depending on which old testament view one accepts. Some approaches are:

1. Point 1 in the "Old Testament" section is correct and was continued into the New. The lamb was killed on the early 14th and the Jews were keeping the Passover 1 day late.

2. The Jews were keeping the Passover at the correct time at end of the 14th but the Messiah moved it to the early 14th.

3. The Jews were keeping the Passover at the correct time and the Messiah added a new ceremony in commemoration of his suffering.

4. The Jews were keeping the Passover at the correct time, but the Messiah kept it one day early so he could teach his disciples before he died.

5. The Passover described in the synoptic gospels was a late-14th Passover and our Savior was actually killed on the first day of unleavened bread.

There are many other sub-points that can fit with a number of the above theories. Some say we should literally wash each others feet as a ceremony, others believe it was an example for how leaders should literally serve their fellow man. Some say 1 Corinthians 11 is about the Passover or Lord's supper (vv 20,23), others say that it is about the frequent taking of bread and wine in a traditional Jewish Kiddush (v 2, 26). Finally, we had one paper indicating that Jesus was taken into custody on the Nisan 10 (the day of Passover lamb selection), and was kept there until his death.

If we have missed any other major approaches to this subject, we apologize. We would caution people not to condemn anyone with any of these viewpoints if they have never heard the reasoning behind them (Prov 18:13)

—Norman S. Edwards

"News" from page 10

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, with contact details are as follows:

April 5-7 Michigan

Contact: Melvin Rhodes—517-669-1448.

June 7-9 Alabama

Contact: Ray Wooten—205-822-8524.

July 4-7 Sidney, Australia

Contact: Craig White—craig-wh1@ozonline.com.au (email).

August 3-5 Seattle

Contact: Ken Westby—206-589-1017.

Possible Future Locations:

Sept 26-27 Arizona

Nov 29-Dec 1 England

Dec 27-29 Mexico

For further information contact:

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

Pen Pals

Lonely Widow—Senior—longing for friendship & companionship with like mind, who keep the Sabbath and holy days. Long time member of God's church. I enjoy Bible research, singing, reading, exercising, gardening, travel and TV, and living life to the fullest. Write to Lonely Widow, P.O. Box 487, Talent, OR 97540.

Approximately 30 members in Kenya, Africa are "looking forward to fellowshiping with other brethren who love the Lord from other parts of the world. Please, do publish my name and the church address ... so that others can contact us." Joseph Kimani, Box 2470, Nakuru, Kenya E.A.

Single, white male age 19+ desires correspondence with single, white female who keeps the 7th day Sabbath, the Leviticus 23 holy days, believes in Jesus Christ of Nazareth and loves God the Father. John Phillips, 1455 Wyandotte, Lakewood, Ohio 44107.

Hoping to write other brethren: Gary Primo, RR3, Fenelon Falls, ON, Canada, K0M 1N0

GTA Problem Continues

The Church of God International sponsored a ministerial conference in Tyler, Texas February 23-25. (Two weeks after the ad-hoc conference of CGI ministers reported in the February SN.) Several proposals were voted on, new members were added to the ministerial council and board, some new committees were added, but Garner Ted Armstrong's position remained intact.

Conference attendees were invited to view over 800 mail-in cards each indicating that the sender still wished to receive sermon tapes from Garner Ted Armstrong. However, little was said of the thousands of people that did not return their cards and there was no way to know if those that returned the cards are aware of the problems. Some leaders have told their local CGI congregations about the lawsuit against Armstrong alleging massive sexual impropriety and others have not.

Because Garner Ted Armstrong has not been removed from all duties, approximately 50% of the CGI ministry and membership have left the organization. We are aware of additional groups planning to leave. Some local congregations have joined other Sabbath-keeping organizations, but it appears that the majority may become locally autonomous. Some have expressed interest in the non-aligned feast sites. The Canadian, Australian, and the English offices of CGI have severed ties with the USA organization—making themselves independent. We will try to print a report on the status of local CGI congregations in a future issue.

In other developments, a Tyler judge accepted CGI's motion for a summary judgment removing CGI from Suerae Robertson's lawsuit. This summary judgment essentially means a judge said "even if everything in the lawsuit is true, there is not a case against the Church of God International." Ms. Robertson's attorney is appealing this decision. **The lawsuit against Armstrong has not been dismissed** and is still awaiting trial.

Servants' News was able to obtain a copy of the massage therapist's videotape. Our viewing confirmed the accuracy of the interviews we used for previous articles. The video does not show a man making a "single passionate mistake," but over 40 separate attempts to engage the woman

in varying types of foreplay. This tape, and the many letters and phone calls from Tyler attempting to cover-up the problem, are a black mark on people everywhere that keep the Sabbath or claim to live by the Bible. The issue is not repentance but church leadership—and the solution is not to keep covering the problem up!

If Armstrong had acknowledged his sin and resigned, or if the CGI board had acknowledged the problem and removed him, there would be no need to make the details public. Unfortunately, many CGI members have been told "people are just out to attack the work," and "the woman entrapped him," and "it was a little one-time slip-up." A few people have believed this cover-up campaign and havethat *Servants' News* to prove what we print.

If anyone still doubts the validity of what we have said, they may view a copy of the video tape themselves. Gary Porter, a former CGI minister, will send a copy to anyone who feels they need such proof. This tape has not been edited in any way—it is explicit and disgusting. The only value in viewing it is to help people understand that a man can preach the Bible for 40 years but still be so far away from living by it.

You may obtain a copy by calling Gary Porter week-nights at 801-562-2532 or by writing him at 11968 N. Honesty Lane, Pocatello ID 83202. There is no charge. Post-paid envelopes or postage would be appreciated.

Leaders should be people that live righteous private lives and that are full of the holy spirit (Acts 6:3, 1Tim 3:1-13, Tit 1:6-9). Matthew 23:3 through 24:2 describes the evil and destruction from leaders that **"say and do not do."** No amount of preaching righteousness can make a man righteous. What will happen when men and women new in the faith learn that their brethren still accept such a person as a leader? Is the solution to do a better job of hiding our leader's sin? No! It is to remove the leader.

When another corrupt man wanted to be a "church leader," the apostle Peter said: "You have **no part or share in this** [ministry], for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness" (Acts 8:21-23, NRSV). ☞

"Passover" from page 6
God's Definition of "Even"

Exodus 29:38-42

Now this is that which thou shalt offer⁴ upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day, continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer⁴ in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer⁴ at even, and shalt do⁴ thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.

Leviticus 23:32

It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

Deuteronomy 23:11

But it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall wash himself with water: and when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp again.

Joshua 8:29

And the king of Ai, he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.

Joshua 10:26-27

And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day.

II Chronicles 18:34

And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed himself up in his chariot against the Syrians until the even: and about the time of the sun going down he died.

Jeremiah 6:4

Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the

day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.

Scriptures of Possible Relevance

Exodus 31:14-17

Ye shall keep³ the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth⁴ any work therein, that soul shall be cut off among his people. Six days may work be done⁴; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth⁴ any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep³ the sabbath, to observe⁴ the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a SIGN between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Deuteronomy 5:12, 15

Keep³ the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.

And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep⁴ the sabbath day.

A Warning from the Lord

Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2

Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep³ the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

The above is all that I could find on the Passover in the Old Testament. If anyone can find any relevant scriptures which I have missed, please add such scriptures that you have and circulate for the edification of others.

John Paul Benedetti

Footnotes:

(From Strong's Concordance)

1) 4931. mishmereth, mishmeh'reth; fem. of 4929; watch, i.e. the act (custody) or (concr.) the sentry, the post; obj. preservation, or (concr.) safe; fig. observance, i.e. (abstr.) duty, or (obj.) a usage or party:-charge, keep, to be kept, office, ordinance, safeguard, ward, watch.

2) 2287. achgag, khaw-gag'; a prim. root [comp. 2283, 2328; prop. to move in a circle, i.e. (spec.) to march in a sacred procession, to observe a festival; by impl. to be giddy: celebrate, dance, (keep, hold) a (solemn) feast (holiday), reel to and fro.

3) 8104. ashmar, shaw-mar'; a prim. root; prop. to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; gen. to protect, attend to, etc.:beware, be circumspect, take heed (to self), keep (er, self), mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, reserve, save (self), sure, (that lay) wait (for), watch (-man).

4) 6213. `asah, aw-saw'; a prim. root; to do or make, in the broadest sense and widest application (as follows):-accomplish, advance, appoint, apt, be at, become, bear, bestow, bring forth, bruise, be busy, X certainly, have the charge of, commit, deal (with), deck, + displease, do, (ready) dress (-ed), (put in) execute (-ion), exercise, fashion, + feast, [fight-] ing man, + finish, fit, fly, follow, fulfil, furnish, gather, get, go about, govern, grant, great, + hinder, hold ([a feast]), X indeed, + be industrious, + journey, keep, labour, maintain, make, be meet, observe, be, occupied, offer, + officer, pare, bring (come) to pass, perform, practice, prepare, procure, provide, put, requite, X sacrifice, serve, set, shew, X sin, spend, X surely, take, X thoroughly, trim, X very, + vex, be [warr-] ior, work (-man), yield, use.

5) 5647. `abad, aw-bad'; a prim. root; to work (in any sense); by impl. to serve, till, (caus.) enslave, etc:-X be, keep in bondage, be bondmen, bondservice, compel, do, dress, ear, execute, + husbandman, keep, labour (-ing man), bring to pass, (cause to, make to) serve (-ing, self), (be, become) servant (-s), do (use) service, till (-er), transgress [from margin], (set a) work, be wrought, worshipper.

"Miracles?" from page 8

Bible questions, we could just ask the top man—knowing that even if he was wrong, we will not be faulted for following his "Government of God." (For an in-depth study of human government in the Bible, please write for our article, *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?*) But if we read what the Bible says on spiritual gifts, we find they are given directly by our Savior as He sees fit (Rom 12:4-8, Eph 4:11-16, 1Cor 12).

The gift of administrating is just one of many gifts. Yet, so many organizations are geared to placing someone in charge who will then control nearly all functions within the organization—even though these leaders are powerless to grant any spiritual gift. Our need is for individuals to pray for spiritual gifts, for the Father to grant them, and for them to be recognized by the other brethren.

Brethren with the **gift of wisdom** should be consulted in making major decisions and judgements. Brethren with the **gift of knowledge** should speak on difficult scriptures and subjects that require study and research. Those with the **gifts of healings and miracles** should work with those with the **gift of teaching** to preach the Gospel. People with the **gift of languages** (tongues) can help preach the Gospel internationally. Without covering every spiritual gift, we can see, in general, how the Eternal was working with the Corinthians.

But do we know how to work in this manner?

If the Eternal gave you great miracle-working power today, but someone came to you tomorrow and tried to show you a scripture that you misunderstood, would you still listen to them with the same attitude that you had yesterday? Or would you assume that since the Eternal is working through you, your doctrines must be nearly right?

We would like to think that everyone would see their gift as a great blessing while maintaining their attitudes of humility. But we receive many letters, phone calls, and publications that indicate otherwise. Even among people that have rejected hierarchical government, we too often find a disturbing attitude: "I have the holy spirit, I study, and I have no known errors in my theology. I disagree with your understanding of this doctrine and therefore you are in error

and not worth listening to."

A Little Truth can be Dangerous

We believe we have learned Biblical truth from a number of individuals and groups—both large and small. Yet we find groups from which we learned truth taking an "all or nothing approach" to learning from others. We receive letters and calls like this: "I read your article on such-and-such and I must admit there were things in it that I have never thought of before. But if you are so smart, please tell us how you explain this..." that person will continue to ask a question about a difficult doctrine, prophecy, or scripture. If we do not understand it the way they do, they are often ready to completely reject us—they have proven we have a point of "error" and we therefore cannot be the "true church." Sometimes, they are not even interested in teaching us what they believe to be the truth.

If we have not studied that particular point of doctrine, we may have to say that we have not studied it enough to give an opinion. A few people accept that. Others do not seem to understand how we can be teachers, but not be able to answer their Bible question.

This, again, is influenced by years of top-down authority. A leader of a Sabbath-keeping group is often expected to have the answer to every Bible question lest his followers conclude that the Eternal is not working through him. We at Servants' News wish we could have the answers to all Bible questions, but the Eternal has not given them nor have we studied every important question. It would be utter foolishness on our part to pretend that we do have the answers when we do not. We believe we can teach others on some subjects where we have studied and been given understanding, and we believe we can learn from others that have studied and/or been given understanding. The holy spirit will guide us as we are ready.

We would like to have a Passover article in this issue that teaches the Biblical truth of the matter and answers all of the significant questions asked by other points of view. But what good would it do to publish an article that does not answer everything and claim that it does? The principle of distribu-

tion of spiritual gifts shows that **the Eternal does not give all of the gifts to one person**, but spreads them out.

We hope that people, to whom the Eternal has revealed truth can also recognize that they are still learning, too. If they have special understanding of a doctrine or scripture, they should teach it to others, not use it to set themselves up and divide the brethren. If brethren become divided because one was given a small doctrinal understanding, how much more will they be divided if one is given great miracle-working power?

On to Perfection!

We must get over the idea that we (as individuals or a group) have all of the answers. We must realize that all brethren are growing. Spiritual gifts are "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:12-13, KJV). None of us have arrived yet!

If we are to receive spiritual gifts, we need to (1) ask for them, (2) be ready to acknowledge them in others, and (3) be ready to use our gifts to the glory of our Father, not to the glory of ourselves or our group.

—Norman S. Edwards

Not All "Gifts" are the Real Thing.

The Bible shows that Satan is able to create "signs and wonders" also—with which he hopes to deceive (Matt 24:24). We should never desire spiritual gifts so badly that we accept a counterfeit—we would be better off with no gifts at all.

How can you be sure whether a gift is from the Eternal or Satan? "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1Cor 14:32). If a person is no longer in control of himself, it is not a true gift. Miracles and healings must do nothing but good. People do not fall over backwards when divinely healed! Those that "speak in tongues" must speak a real language that someone else can understand (1Cor 14:13,19,27-28). Those that prophecy or teach must not contradict the scriptures (Deut 13:1-3, 1Cor 14:29).

If you still don't know about where a gift is from, pray for someone with the gift of

"Truth" from page 1

you hold the tradition of men..." (Mark 7:7-8).

These and other scriptures show that having the truth of God, obeying the commandments of God, and desiring to live the life of a child of God, is what will help us make it into the first resurrection. All the good deeds in the world won't save us.

We understand about having the love of the truth, living by every word of God, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and so forth (2 Thes. 2:10; Matt. 4:4; 5:6). So we know that when we hear the question, "Those denominations which don't have the truth of the Bible, but go around doing good works instead, are they examples of the true New Testament Church of God?", the answer is no. We can't even consider any group to be "in the church" unless they know and live by the truth of God.

We know that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws them (John 6:44); and in order to do that, the Father must first open their minds to understand the truth. There are churches or denominations which only do good deeds, because they think that's what Christianity is, because God hasn't as yet given them a knowledge of the truth. Those churches can't be a part of the work we've been called to.

This isn't to say that they're not good people, or that they're not God's people, or that they're not seeking God with their whole hearts, or that they're doomed. They just aren't called yet. We should remember that we were called **ahead** of the rest, not **instead** of the rest.

It's the Father's responsibility whom He will call, and when He will call them. Until that time, they **can't** come to Him! And the Father decides when that time will be. And He does this out of love, and mercy, and compassion for the people involved.

That was a short answer to a long question. But if we stop there, we'll miss a vitally important area of understanding. There's a flip side to this question, which is occasionally overlooked. Having the truth is not enough!

What About Works?

If having the truth is what marks a group as being truly Christian, truly called by God, rather than a group that

doesn't have the truth but emphasizes doing good works, does that mean that the true church of God—the one that has the truth—doesn't have to do good works?

There's a temptation to ask, "If good works don't save us, why should we do them?" That's like asking, "If we aren't saved by our righteousness, if our law-keeping doesn't save us, then why be obedient?" Does that sound familiar? That's the new theology over at the large church body from which many of us have recently departed.

But what about good works? If they don't save us, why do them? Christ also told us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may **see your good works** and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

According to this, we're not excused from doing good works. We need to be a shining light, showing forth good works, so that men would glorify God who otherwise would not glorify God; but they **will** glorify God, because they have seen what God can do through us!

It's not for our own salvation at all!

Peter makes a similar statement in 1 Peter 2:12: "having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by **your good works which they observe**, glorify God in the day of visitation."

The true church is to do good works; not for our salvation, but as one of the signs to show others where the true church is.

What about the word "works" in the Bible? Is it some esoteric term with all sorts of spiritual meanings?

When the New Testament talks about works, or doing a work, it's usually using the Greek word *ergon*, which means: business, employment, anything accomplished by hand, an act, a deed. In the KJV, *ergon* is translated as "work" 152 times, and as "deed" 22 times. In science and physics, *ergon*, or the erg, is a unit of energy usage, when something does work, expends energy, burns calories, uses electricity, or moves an object. We get words from *ergon* such as "ergonomics," the study of the workplace.

So when the Bible says "work" or "works," it's a literal translation, in most cases, of the word *ergon*. It's not a big,

fluffy religious concept. It's what you do. It's how you live.

There are all sorts of works. The New Testament talks about good works (2 Thes. 2:17; 1 Tim. 5:10; 2 Tim. 2:21), the work of God (John 6:29; Rom. 14:20), the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10), the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12), the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5), the work of faith (2 Thes. 1:11).

It also talks about evil works (2 Tim. 4:18), wicked works (Col. 1:21), works of the law (Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16; 3:2,5,10), works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19), the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11), dead works (Heb. 9:14), and so forth.

God has works. The heavens are the work of His hands (Heb. 1:10). He set man over the works of His hands (Heb. 2:7). Ancient Israel tempted God and saw His works for 40 years (Heb. 3:9). He rested the seventh day from all His works (Heb. 4:4). And, best of all (from our standpoint), God has begun a good work in you, and He intends to see it through (Phil. 1:6).

We should walk in good works (Eph. 2:10), have godliness with good works (1 Tim. 2:10), be rich in good works (1 Tim. 6:18), show a pattern of good works (Tit. 2:7), be zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14), learn to maintain good works (Tit. 3:8,14). Paul speaks of our work of faith and labor of love (1 Thes. 1:3).

All these and more are translated from the Greek word *ergon*. We are required to do a work, both individually and collectively, as a church.

And yet, we were called, not because of our good works, but because of God's purpose and grace (2 Tim. 1:9). God's kindness and love appeared, not because of our works of righteousness, but because of His mercy (Tit. 3:4-5).

In Romans chapter 4, Paul is talking about a different kind of "work," by which one could earn one's own salvation. But Paul reassures us that God imputes righteousness to us **without** those kinds of works (Rom. 4:1-8)!

And yet, Paul tells us that evil men will be judged according to their works (2 Cor. 11:15; 2 Tim. 4:14). In Revelation 20:12-13, the dead will be raised, the books will be opened, and

Continued on page 27

"Truth" from page 26

men will be judged according to their works. And you'll recall that judgment is already on the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17).

James writes about faith that does not have works, and he indicates it's dead on arrival. James tells us that faith helps works, and that faith is made perfect by works. He tells us that man is justified by works, and not by faith only. James mentions Abraham and Rahab as examples of people who were justified by the right kind of works (James 2).

So we can see that, although our works don't save us, God expects us to do good works. If we don't do any good works, as the Bible defines them, there's a possibility that we could sleep right through the first resurrection.

Yes, truth is important. The scriptures tell us that we must have sound, secure, firm, steady doctrine, and hold to the traditions of the elders (that is, the first century apostles). There is no doubt that if we don't have the truth, we aren't God's church. But having "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," is not enough.

We have always understood that people usually aren't able to understand the truth of the Bible unless God calls them. Although we never would have thought so a few years ago, now it becomes important to ask, "Is it possible to have the truth and yet be unconverted?" We might suspect that's the case with some people we've known for years, leading people, teachers, ministers, people we used to look up to as pillars, who have disappointed us mightily in recent years.

Love

What's been missing all these years? Why have so many failed?

We need to have the truth. We must also have good works. But in addition to that, we must have love. In Hebrews 10:24, we are told, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up [both] **love and good works.**"

Let's look briefly in the writings of the apostle John, who is known as the apostle of love, and also as the apostle of truth. In addition to the many times John wrote about the truth, he also wrote several times in his epistles that we are to love one another (1 John

3:11,23; 4:7,11-12,20-21; 5:2; 2 John 5). In his gospel, John quotes Christ as saying, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

We can see that, like having the truth, and like doing good works, having love for one another is a sign that this is the true church. All three aspects must be present in our Christian lives. To only do good works, and have lots of love, but not to have the knowledge of God's truth, is not sufficient. But likewise, to know the truth, but not show forth God's love in good works, is also not appropriate.

And to know the truth of God, and yet hate a brother or sister in Christ, or speak evil of other members of Christ's body, is worse yet. Anyone doing that is being disobedient, and violating a clear sign of who is a true disciple! Such a person may not be a true disciple of Christ!

Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

A few years ago, a false minister said, "Notice, 'truth' isn't even mentioned as a fruit of the Spirit." Of course not; "truth" is an abstract concept; the list of fruits is a list of personality characteristics and qualities.

But to have the truth without having the fruits of the Spirit—such as love, kindness, gentleness, self-control—indicates that such a person may not have the Spirit at all!

Ephesians 4:15 says, "but, **speaking the truth in love**, [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ." Wouldn't it be ghastly for someone to speak the truth without love? Would it even be possible to "grow up," to spiritually mature, under such circumstances? Does any child thrive in a loveless environment? Can any Christian be expected to thrive in a loveless environment?

Jesus said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Do you love yourself? It's okay to love yourself. But you have to love

your neighbor as much as you love yourself! And I think Christ has made it abundantly clear who our neighbor is (Luke 10:29-37), and that we can't just shut off or judge another member of the body.

Romans 14:4: "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand." And if God is able to make him stand—maybe now, maybe later—who are we to judge him now?

Ray Stevens, the comedian, has a funny song called "Mississippi Squirrel Revival," about the time a squirrel was running around loose in church during services at the First Self-Righteous Church. The squirrel would run up various people's legs, and they'd jump up and yell like a good old Pentecostal. The squirrel scampered over to the "Amen Corner" and ran up the dress of Sister Bertha Better-Than-You; she jumped up and confessed all sorts of things! It was a hilarious song, but it had a point. The idea of the First Self-Righteous Church, and Sister Bertha Better-Than-You, have stuck with me ever since I heard that song. They're a good object lesson.

We can read more about this subject in the "love chapter."

1 Corinthians 13:1: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels [with all the oratory skills it's possible to have], but have not love, I have become as sounding brass [a trumpet, used to call out very simple signals to alert people, but can't say any words] or a clanging symbol [just a big noise]."

Verse 2: "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge [all the truth, all the really detailed information in the Bible], and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains [even to the point of working miracles!], but have not love, I am nothing."

Verse 3: "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor [there's a good work], and though I give my body to be burned [another good work, martyrdom], but have not love, it profits me nothing."

If we don't have love, it profits us

Continued on page 28

"Truth" from page 27

nothing! It doesn't do us a bit of good! None of it does! Not truth, not good works, not being called, not all the righteousness (or self-righteousness) we can muster! Without a pure, sincere, unfeigned love of the brethren, *it's all just playing church!*

Not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom, but whoever does the will of the Father (Matt. 7:21-23). And what *is* the Father's will?

Micah 6:8: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to **do justly**, to **love mercy** [that is, to forgive your fellowman every chance you get], and to **walk humbly** with your God?" In other words, don't get the big head and think you're proudly walking shoulder-to-shoulder with the Father and Christ.

This should be our goal and objective in our congregational life: "Since you have purified your souls in **obeying the truth** through the Spirit in sincere [margin: unhyphocritical] love of the brethren, **love one another fervently, with a pure heart**" (1 Peter 1:22).

This is God's apostle talking. "Love one another fervently, with a pure heart." Not just if they live up to our ideal. Not just if they meet with our approval.

1 John 3:18: "My little children, let us not **love** in word or in tongue, but in **deed** and in **truth**." Here are all three of these factors together in the same verse: the truth, deeds (*ergon*), and love (*agapao*). We must love—*agapao*—in works—*ergon*—**and** in truth.

This is how **we** can know if **we** are examples of the true New Testament Church of God. Do we have **both** the truth **and** love? And do we show it in good works? If we do, then the apostle John says to us, "Grace, mercy and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth **and** love" (2 John 3). 

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"Passover" from page 1

tion of a Messiah was building. Finally, just before Passover, He appeared and made his triumphal entry—possibly on the 10th day of the first month. The hopes and dreams of the Jerusalem crowds were given free reign. They jubilantly hailed Him as king, ushered Him into their city and took Him into their hearts.

He was there in Jerusalem, just long enough to become the darling of the city's population—to have thoroughly won their hearts and excited their Messianic hopes. But on the fourteenth day, he was taken from them to be crucified as the Passover Lamb of the world!

A Lamb without Defect

God specified that the Passover lamb had to be without defect (Ex 12:5). The Apostle Peter wrote that we are redeemed "...with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1Pet 1:19). The Apostle Paul wrote, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, was unspotted by any blemish of sin (2Cor 5:21).

A Lamb Offered Whole

God specifically instructed the Israelites how to prepare the Passover lamb. It was not to be boiled or cooked in parts; rather it was to be roasted whole; no bones were to be broken (Ex 12:8-9, 46). In like manner, Jesus was offered as a whole sacrifice for sin. Contrary to the Roman custom of breaking the legs of their victims, when the soldiers crucified the Lamb of God, they did not break any of His bones. John recorded the event: "The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.... These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. 'Not one of his bones will be broken,' and, as another Scripture says, 'They will look on the one they have pierced'" (John 19:33-34, 36-37; cf Ps. 34:20).

Eating Prepared to Travel

God told the Israelites to be ready to leave their homes as they ate the Passover lamb. Their cloaks were to be tucked in their belts; their sandals were to be on their feet; their staffs were to be in their hands (Ex 12:11). Why?

Because that night they would be ordered out of Egypt—they had to be ready to leave their homes at once.

When we accept Jesus as our Passover Lamb, as the Lord and Savior of our lives, we must be ready to travel too—we must be ready to embark on a spiritual exodus from spiritual Egypt. We must be ready to leave behind our life of slavery to sin and the ways of the world to follow God's will. Paul wrote to the Romans about our freedom from slavery to sin—and our need to become slaves to righteousness. "We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer... Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God.... You have been set free from sin and have become slaves of righteousness" (Rom 6:2, 12, 13, 18).

Accepting Jesus as one's Savior (the spiritual counterpart to eating the Passover) is not something to be done casually. It must be done with spiritual readiness to embark on the spiritual exodus that follows immediately.

Blood on the Doorposts and Lintels

After the Israelites killed the Passover lamb, they placed blood on the jambs and lintels of their doors. This blood was a signal to the death angel to pass over their homes as it went on its rounds slaying the firstborn in all Egypt (Ex 12:7). The people were commanded to remain in their houses—behind the shield of the lamb's blood—until the death angel had made his rounds. Anyone venturing out, would not be under the protection of the blood.

Secure behind their bloodied doors were all kinds of Israelites. There were lazy ones, ambitious ones, poor and rich, leaders such as Moses and Aaron and the poorest of the land. There were probably adulterers and thieves, pleasant people and cantankerous people. But they all had one thing in common—they were willing to follow Moses' instructions by putting blood on their door frames. And regardless of what kind of people they were, as long as they were behind the bloodied doors, they were protected.

The spiritual parallel is striking. All kinds of people can come under the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Continued on page 29

"Passover" from page 28

Indeed, Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). He warned the self-righteous Pharisees, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.... For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him" (Matt 21:31-32).

All men, even the most evil, can accept Jesus' blood as payment for their sins. As long as they are covered with that blood, they are protected from death. Should they venture out from under the blood, rejecting the sacrifice of the Savior, they are no longer protected—they are exposed to death.

Of course, those under the protection of Jesus' blood are commanded to leave their life of sin (spiritual Egypt) and follow the example of their Savior. But it is the covering blood of Jesus Christ that protects them from death—not any other action or activity.

The Passover taught the principle that the life of one living soul could be substituted for another. The blood of the Passover lamb saved the life of the first-born. The blood of all Old Testament sacrifices, while it didn't actually forgive sin, taught the Israelites to look for an ultimate sacrifice that would pay for sins. That ultimate sacrifice was the Messiah, Jesus Christ. His blood was shed on Golgotha almost 2000 years ago as sufficient payment for the sins of all mankind.

Passover in the New Testament

Just as the Old Testament Passover was a celebration that looked forward to Jesus' death, so the New Testament Passover is a memorial looking back to the same event. There is a good deal of controversy regarding the nature of this event: How often should it be observed and when? If it is to be done annually on the anniversary of the event, what calendar should be used? Was the Passover at the beginning or the end of the 14th of Nisan? Is the New Testament memorial identical to the old, a slight modification, or a completely new institution? What should it be called: Communion, Lord's Supper, Passover, Memorial Service or Kiddush? Who should be allowed to par-

ticipate? Must feet be washed? Should wine or grape juice be used? Should leavened or unleavened bread be used? Should it be a token amount or should it be a meal?

Millions of words have been written to proclaim the "Bible truth" regarding all these questions. However, there is substance of much greater importance! There is substance that eclipses all the technical issues! That substance is the spiritual meat: the death of Jesus Christ and the importance of that single event in all of human history—and for each of us personally.

No matter how we take bread and wine, the essential teaching of the apostle Paul applies to us:

Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you (1Cor 11:20-22).

The Corinthians were making a Feast out of it, selfishly ignoring those who couldn't afford to feast. Drunkenness is never appropriate (1Cor 5:11)—especially on this important occasion. Instead of focusing on the spiritual meaning, they were filling their bellies. The lesson for us is that our focus should be on the spiritual significance—not on physical food, drink, and human fellowship (none of which is wrong of itself in moderate amounts).

In verses 23 to 25 Paul recounted what he had been taught about how Jesus, had taken the bread and the cup on the night before he was betrayed. Paul concluded by saying that the eating and drinking proclaimed the Lord's death (v 26). The act of eating and drinking is a statement by the individual that he recognizes the real significance of our Savior's death. And therein lies the possibility of eating and drinking unworthily.

Being Worthy to Participate

Paul warns the Corinthians to examine themselves and to beware of eating and drinking in "an unworthy manner" (vv. 27-32). In contemporary writing and preaching, much emphasis has been

placed on the self-examination that should precede the Lord's Supper, on the danger of being unworthy. Unfortunately, this emphasis misses Paul's point. Obviously, no human being is worthy of the grace of God extended through Jesus' death and resurrection. Regardless of how good or bad we have been, regardless of how rich or poor, how strong or weak, we all are worthy of death. Only by the grace of God are we given the opportunity to have our sins forgiven and to receive eternal life! Indeed, it is because we are unworthy that we need the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—and that we need to take the bread and cup that represent it.

Paul's warning is not against being unworthy to take the Lord's Supper—for he recognized that he of all people was unworthy (1 Cor 15:8-10; 1Tim 1:15-16). Rather, Paul's warning is against taking the memorial in an unworthy manner, and in 1Cor 11:29 he explains exactly what he means: "For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself." If one eats the bread and drinks the cup without understanding and believing in what it represents, he is taking it unworthily—and asking for God's judgment. When Paul urges the Corinthians to examine themselves, he is concerned about their recognition of the reality of Jesus' death—as payment for their sins.

To be sure, there is value in self-examination, in searching for improper attitudes and actions in one's life. We need to ask ourselves questions such as: Do I recognize the significance of asking for the Jesus' sacrifice to personally cover my sins? Have I repented of ill will, malice and enmity towards others? Am I seeking to turn away from sin and live according to God's will? Is serving and obeying God the most important priority in my life? Am I spiritually more mature now than I was a year ago?

But the real message of the taking of bread and wine is that we are imperfect, unworthy humans, who continually need the grace of the one true God. And regardless of how sinful we have been in the past, regardless of how imperfect we are yet, in taking the memorial of Jesus' crucifixion, we affirm our continuing belief in the only remedy for sin and human mortality—Jesus' shed blood. ☞

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“Incorporation?” from page 16
exempt organizations that work together with us in some areas.

I realize that the decisions to drop incorporation and tax exemption creates some difficulty for some people that have helped us. On the other hand, I believe that the freedom to speak out against all evils and corruption in our society and government is more important than the financial factors. Since our primary function is a newsletter, we need to be free to print the truth as we see it.

This article is not a condemnation of

organizations that are incorporated or tax-exempt. It is an effort to explain why I believe our course of action is correct for us now. Secondly, it is an effort to show that incorporation and tax exemption are not necessary and to encourage other groups to consider the merits of various alternatives.

Finally, someone might ask, why I do not have a board of directors or a committee of elders to make policies and give direction. In a very real way, the "board" consists of the people that write letters and contribute. I include articles as the

holy spirit leads me and leads through the council of others. If I go astray, I hope that others will see it and tell me—if I do not listen, I hope they will stop contributing. We do not control other people or congregations. We do not disfellowship people or try to separate them from their friends. Anyone is free to read or not read our publication—or to start their own publication. *Servants' News* and other publications are a service that we provide as the Eternal guides us. May He bless all of us, grant us understanding and peace, and help us be ready for the difficult days

Literature List

All items are free. New items are highlighted with shading. All back issues of *Servants' News* are available.

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 the Nicolaitans and the doctrine of Balaam.

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.)

By What Authority? by John A. Diffley, 16 pages. A brief overview of authority and its structure in the New Testament churches.

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.

Where Is the True Church Today? by Jack M. Lane, 18 pages. How can there be so many similar groups, yet one true church? What is required of members? Read and see.

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.

A Church of God Ministry Order Form by Lon Lacey & friends. 1 page. Free literature on nature of God & Satan, Biblical law, prophecy, history, church government, etc.

Commonwealth Publishing Order Form by Kirk Gearhart. 6 pages. Religious books, including Darrell W. Condor's.

Servants' News & Norman Edwards Statement of Income and Expenses, 2 pages. (Always 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 One free sample issue of 16 page newspaper. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups.

The Sabbath Sentinel One free sample issue of 16 page glossy magazine—doctrinal & human interest articles. With Bible Sabbath Association order form: Sabbath books & tracts.

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