

# Servants' NEWS

Special Issue:  
SN Index for two years!

Vol. 2, No. 10

A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be December 1996

## BE WISE AS SERPENTS, Harmless as Doves

During the past years, many brethren have come to see that they have placed too much trust in men and/or organizations and not enough trust in our Savior to directly lead us (John 16:24, Col 1:12-18). In most cases, the fruit of this has been good. However, if a person carries the process only half way—puts off the men and organizations, but does not diligently seek the leadership of our Savior, the result is a sheep gone completely astray and probably worse than the original condition.

We must realize that even the hierarchical organizations do teach a lot of truth and refute a lot of heresy. They do make a great effort to protect “their members.” It is not

our job today to judge how much of this protection stems from love for the brethren and how much stems from the desire to keep paying members in the organization. Some “ministers” are good shepherds—protecting their flock from wolves, other “ministers” are wolves themselves—but they protect their flock from foreign wolves because they do not want competition. Some leaders act as part shepherd and part wolf. Nevertheless, all of the above situations give a certain amount of protection to the flock.

When a person begins to look directly to his Savior for salvation, he removes himself from this human protection. This obviously occurs when a person begins meeting with a small home congregation or begins to attend a variety of Sabbath services. But it also occurs when a person *continues to attend with an organization* but makes the decision that they will study what they decide to study and believe what they decide to

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**Please Find the Card  
in Your Envelope—  
AND SEND IT BACK!**

**NOTE ADDED TO BACK ISSUES:** If a card was **not** included with this issue, you do **not** need to return one. We sent cards to every subscriber when this issue was originally mailed, but we can also use certain letters and other items as proof of your request.

In order to send Servants' News to you at the “periodicals” rate, we need to have “signed documentation” that our publication has been “requested” by our readership. The periodical rate will cause your *Servants' News* to arrive one to two weeks earlier and save us a little on postage. All you need to do is check the box, sign the line, place a stamp on the card and drop it in the mail. (International readers: we need cards from you, also—we did not use any surface mail so you can respond in time.)

In order to have time to process all of the cards, we will not be sending a January issue. So, we have included several extra articles in this issue. We hope it is of value to you. Please do not forget the card!

Why don't most other religious publications ask for a signed card? Most religious publications use non-profit corporation rates. We have decided to avoid non-profit incorporation (see March-April 1996 *Servants' News*), so we are using “requester publication” rates. The postal system wants to verify that we are sending something that people really want—not advertising material.

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# Independence Day

BY DAVID COHEN

For years it has been taught that any ministries not affiliated with a centralized church government are apostate and not Biblical. Also frowned upon were ministers or preachers who had no formal theological training from the "approved" Bible College, or those who did but later separated themselves from the administration due to doctrinal differences. This is what most Christian denominations teach. But is this a proper "litmus test" of a true minister of God? Is this even scriptural?

Well, it is Independence Day! Not independence from our Savior or his Church, but from oppressive church governments. A number of Christians are beginning to realize that a "church" functions better apart from such a governmental structure. However, some leaders are capitalizing on this move and feigning "independence" to gain a following. God's people need to watch and be sober!

## Centralized Church Governments

Centralized church governments and hierarchical administrations have their positive traits, no doubt. All ministers and teachings must fall in line with whatever official proclamations come out of the church's headquarters. Any dissenters will be expelled. This produces a uniformity which gives security to those who are weak or young in the faith, as well as preserves the church as a corporate organization thereby ensuring a steady income. If the teachings and policies held by the administration are sound and Biblical, those truths will be rapidly and consistently reproduced in all the local congregations. However, any errors, misunderstandings or personal whims of those at the top also become quickly fastened in the minds of all members as "truth".

If members were allowed to question the officials about errors and potential errors, that would provide a safeguard to spreading and magnifying mistakes. But, in churches structured this way, any who seriously question the conduct of the leaders or the smallest policy are usually disciplined or labeled as "rebellious". Leaders are considered to be "experts", chosen of God and beyond questioning by the laity, because the laity is assumed to be unqualified to challenge or discern anything. Jesus Himself was considered unqualified to question the leaders of His day or teach the people because He had not attended a "Rabbinical School" (Jn 7:14-17). The Word clearly shows that His people will know the things of God by the Spirit of God (1Cor 2:10-12) and not by academic credentials (vs. 13).

Besides the inevitable occurrence of error in all churches composed of men, this type of system is susceptible to those with personal ambitions and organizational agendas. When leaders refuse to repent of personal sins, or ruling their flock without mercy, they usually go unchallenged. Serious doctrinal errors, embedded in the fabric of a church, can remain unnoticed by all. Corruption or sin in the leadership will fester and spread because the members fear that if they speak up, they will be shunned or cast out (3Jn 10, Jn. 12: 42-43) as a traitor, dissident or whistle-blower.

The pyramidal, top-down type of hierarchy, composed of a Chief Executive and Board of Directors, is copied from worldly corporations. We are told not to copy the way the world does things (Rom 12:2), but rather, to allow God's transforming power to lead our renewed minds into all truth and orderly conduct. In Jesus' day the Roman Empire had a similar top-down design, and He forbids His followers from emulating the Gentile rulers (Lk. 22:24-26), who considered themselves "authority figures" ("lords", 1Pet. 5:3). Jesus said **true** Christian leaders would consider themselves "*servants*" instead (Mk. 9: 34-35), seeking to serve the brethren to the point of sacrifice (1Cor 15:30-31).

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*Servants' News* is published monthly except for combined March/April and September/October issues. Subscriptions are free to people interested in obeying their Creator as described in the Bible. We believe His law is the basis for living a life pleasing to Him and living at peace with our neighbors. We believe the holy spirit gives us the power to live such a life as long as we continually repent of our sins, accept the salvation provided through our Savior and strive to live "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Deut 8:3).

We believe the gospel should be given freely—you may copy this newsletter and give it to others. *Servants' News* has no financial ties with other organizations, but is financed by gifts and donations to our ministry. We have not received IRS tax exempt status, but the IRS allows some charitable deductions without such status (see IRS Publication 557, p. 16, col. 1).

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Most scripture quotations are from the New

With great interest I have read your article on marriage and divorce in the latest issue of the *Servants' News* [November 1996].

In this article you mention marriage contracts and this, I think will be new for some of us. Marriage contracts are rare these days but I have read an article which covers a modern day application. It is from an American magazine so you would be able to find this article in one of the major libraries:

These ambitious newlyweds have signed a 16-page contract of matrimonial dos and don'ts covering every aspect of their lives. Now they're...

#### **LIVING by the RULES**

by Gary Belsky

*Money*, May 1996, pp. 100-109.

Some quotes:

But the LeGalley's 16-page single-spaced document goes way beyond the norm. It prescribes in detail how the spouses are to behave in virtually every area of their lives, from how many children they will have to what kind of gas they will buy.

More important the couple have an abiding faith in their power to control their futures by setting goals and thinking positively.

The couple decided the way to head off marital discord was by hashing out every potential conflict in advance and then recording a mutually acceptable solution for it in the prenup.

[A "prenup" is short for a prenuptial contract—a contract signed before "nuptials" or marriage vows. Most prenups simply cover who gets the property and any children if the couple should divorce. This one is much more thorough.]

"We talked about a lot of things when we were dating and realized we had different needs."

"We worked out all the things that usually cause fights—sex, kids, pet peeves and money. Teresa agrees: We haven't had a fight since we got married."

For all its possible shortcomings as a design for living, however, the LeGalley's penchant for planning has unquestionably had a healthy effect on their finances. Many of the resolutions in the couple's prenup—to pay cash, to pay off credit-card debt first,

# The Marriage Contract: Does Anyone Really Do It?

for instance are certainly prudent.

They also contracted to divide household chores, typically along traditional sex-based roles. The Bible says the man is the head of the household, says Teresa, who buys all the groceries and is directed in the prenup to work off a list every time she goes to the grocery store. Rex maintains the exterior of their house while Teresa attends the spotless interior. Other prenup guidelines: a promise to accept each other unconditionally and to spend time together doing things 15 to 20 hours per week.

Goals are nothing more than dreams put down on paper, says Rex. We have a lot of things down on paper with a date on them. Indeed. So pleased are the LeGalley's with the success of their formalized marriage contract that they fully expect to be able to expand the prenuptial agreement over the years.

It's a living document, says Teresa. Some highlights:

1. We will provide unconditional love and fulfill each other's basic needs.

2. We will engage in healthy sex three to five times per week.

3. Family leadership role and decision-making is Rex's responsibility.

4. Teresa will work off a (shopping) list every time she goes to the grocery store.

5. Nothing will be left on the floor overnight—unless packing for a trip.

6. Be to work on time even if we need to get up an extra 30 minutes early.

7. We will both make ourselves available (to each other) for discussion 15-30 minutes per day.

Another possible framework for a marriage-contract could be provided by an old WCG publication: *Staying Sane In A World Of Uncertainty*, last chapter. Some readers of the *Servants' News* may still have this publication. Some guidelines from this chapter:

1. build strong family relationships
2. lead a well-ordered, stable life

3. be gainfully employed"
4. value recreation and take care of your body
5. create an uplifting environment
6. follow God's laws

With this frame-work couples could ask themselves the following questions substituting each one of the 6 points above at the end of these sentences:

What do we mean to...[point 1, etc.]

What examples do we have of other people having and doing to...

What factors seem to work to ...

What factors appeal to us to...

Considering our definition of to ..., how do we plan to...

Which action do we have to take in the short term and long term to...

How do we know when we have accomplished our goal to...

How can we turn our actions into habitual behavior to...

How do we involve others (parents, children) to help us to...

Another approach might be found from Samuelle Bacchiocchi's articles I read on the Internet. Although I do not agree on all his points, he refers to someone who has translated the 10 Commandments as originally given to the Israelites into 10 Commandments for marriage. For example, No other gods: no other wife or husband; do not steal: share finances and make room for a special budget for the wife so that she could pursue a hobby; or honor your father and mother: make special time to visit parents and building special moments of rest to strengthen the relationship. Sometimes wives have a tendency to give too much, i.e. to work for their families; special events every now and then will balance self-sacrifice and self-appreciation.

—Joop Peterse

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Joop Peterse wrote the above as two letters, but we made it into a short article to help individuals seeking more information about marriage contracts.

While not everyone may need contracts as detailed as those above, too many details are far better than the common approach of: "we're in love, lets get married, now how are we going to live?"

The continuation of the *Marriage and Divorce* article from November 1996 should be ready for the February or March 1997 issue.  
—NSE

**"Harmless" from page 1**

believe in spite of their organization's doctrinal statement. All of the above people are seeking to "work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12).

The solution is for each believer to continually go to the Eternal in prayer for guidance and deliverance from evil. This does not mean that we blindly go about our business figuring "the Eternal will always protect us," but we must pray and strive for a Biblical perspective with each decision we make. 1 Peter 5:7-9 explains it well:

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

We can expect to have problems from two sources: people coming from outside of our congregations trying to sell their own ideas, and people who are with us trying to convince us that we need to follow them. Paul stated it this way:

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves (Acts 20:29-30).

We, at *Servants' News* continue to hear of cases where people **are specifically targeting local Sabbath-keeping congregations** to promote their ideas or products. Some are doing it out of a sincere belief that they are helping people. Others simply see our brethren as a gullible target to make money. Some of these people go to Sabbath-keepers conferences, call organizations' headquarters to find local congregations, and use the Living Room Church of God Directory, not for fellowship, but **to target people like you.**

Many of them have spent months or years thinking about their "sales pitch," and often it is not easy to refute it. We need to ask for wisdom in these matters. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (Jms 1:5). Most of us studied the Scriptures for months or years before we

were baptized. We do not need to make decisions hastily. If someone comes to you with a new idea that is going to make a massive change in your life, you can think about it for a few months and counsel with a variety of people. If it is a good idea, it will still be a good idea later. Salesmen of bad ideas want you to accept the idea "now" before you discover what is wrong with it.

The purpose of this article is to acquaint you with some of the "devices" of Satan that have been troubling some of the brethren lately. This list is obviously not complete, but it should help many people who are having these difficulties. Furthermore, most everyone probably knows someone who is having these difficulties. We have classified these difficulties into four major areas. Also, see the separate article in this issue on finances.

### Doctrine

Most of our readers are very interested in studying the Bible, so they are ready to listen to others with interesting points to teach. That is how it should be. Yet, it seems there are too few people saying "this is what I understand and what I do," and too many people saying "this is what you have to do or you will not have eternal life!" You should be suspicious when a teacher begins a message with scriptures like "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" and "The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire." **Teachers should teach** to help others, not so they can judge them. **We should accept** new teaching because the Bible supports it and the holy spirit confirms it, not because we are scared into believing it.

It is a wonderful thing to want to live by "every word of God" and to be willing to change in a moment if we are shown new truth. Some truths, like the Sabbath, are very evident from the scriptures from nearly every translation. Other truths require—or are entirely based upon—knowledge of history and/or ancient languages. **Until you study the issue thoroughly and consider a variety of points of view on the issue in question, you are not rejecting Biblical truth, but you are rejecting what a person is claiming to be Biblical truth.** If a man tells you, for example, that he knows the original pronunciation of the Father's name, but you

decide not to use it; you are not rejecting His name, but one man's understanding of His name. On the other hand, if you give up studying every subject whenever a bit of historical or linguistic understanding is necessary, then you will miss out on a great deal of truth that you should have.

Everyone will be judged by what they do with what they are given (Matt 25:14-23). You will not be able to fool the Eternal and say that you did not know enough to obey Him when you did. On the other hand, very few Sabbath-keepers had any access to original historical works and original language Bible manuscripts during the past 2000 years. Will our Father hold them accountable for not knowing things He did not make available to them?

We are amazed at how quickly some people change their understanding of what is necessary for conversion. We have heard multiple cases of people who had been baptized for over 20 years and then discover a new truth—and then feel that they cannot fellowship with anyone who does not also accept that truth. They did not get rebaptized, so they must have considered themselves converted for the previous 20 years. They must believe that the Eternal tolerated that error in them for 20 years, but they cannot tolerate it in others for 2 hours of a Sabbath Service.

If someone comes to you with a new doctrine based on their understanding of history, Hebrew or Greek, **go slowly.** Check the teaching in reference books available to you. Ask questions of the teacher and see if he can really answer them, or if he just tries to assure you that he is right and that questions do not need to be answered. **Look for other sources of information on the subject.** Look at the fruit of the teaching in the lives of others who believe (or believed) it. Understand the implications in your life. Seek the Eternal's will. If the truth holds up under these tests, then put it into practice in your life.

### Social issues

Big church organizations feel that their "work" is being done by their headquarters, and they keep their members busy supporting the headquarters and working in local church activities. When people become involved in local evangelism, they become known in their local community; and there is a tendency to

become involved in community activities. For example, a mother involved in home schooling may be asked to lead a local home schooling organization. Later, the home school organization may get involved with efforts to change the state's home school laws. Sometimes, these activities can be helpful in furthering the Gospel. Sometimes, they distract our brethren and replace the preaching of the Gospel with social activism.

As a general rule, it seems sensible for brethren to be involved for social issues for two main reasons:

1) **The circumstances of their life demand that they be involved.**

2) **Their involvement helps in preaching the gospel.**

We will mention a few specific areas as examples:

**HOME SCHOOLING:** In some parts of some cities, sending a child to public school is one of the most dangerous things a parent can do. In some places, children are over ten times more likely to be the victim of a violent crime (including rape and murder) in school or on their way to school than they are staying home. In such an environment, little learning takes place. Even a poor home schooling program will exceed a public school education. Also, some public schools are teaching atheism, socialism, premarital sex, homosexual sex, and other evils. In a few places, parents can be fined if they cause their children to miss too many days of school by taking them out for the holy days. On the other hand, there are areas where public schools are quite good.

The choice of whether or not to home school is up to each child's parents. People should not judge each other for the course of action they take. We have witnessed sad cases where parents home school children because their friends did—not because their heart was in it—and their children's education was not very good. Similarly, we have seen cases where parents were having a terrible time with a particular school, but were afraid to home school because their friends would think they are extremists.

If you have school-age children, then it is your duty to be involved in their schooling, whatever form that may take. You may need to get involved in support groups and sometimes school legislation. But it is a mistake to try to spend a lot of time trying to convince other brethren to

adopt your method of schooling. Also, if visitors to your local congregation hear a lot more about schooling than they do about the Bible, you have lost your focus.

**ABORTION:** We would hope that most Bible-believers would consider abortion murder. But what do you do when an anti-abortion activist calls on you for support? Should you help them counsel pregnant teen-agers, distribute literature, collect money, influence legislation, picket clinics? Before you get involved in any such project, first make sure that your life is in order, and that you are not using this "cause" to hide from your own problems. Secondly, we can only recommend the first two activities in our list—they are aimed at helping individuals avoid abortion. Most hard drugs are illegal, but that has not solved the problem. Until people have something to fill their lives with, neither our abortion nor our drug problems will go away—legal or not. While it makes sense to encourage governments to eliminate programs that encourage premarital sex and abortions, it is still better to educate individuals to not want them.

**SABBATH-KEEPERS RIGHTS:** These issues are sometimes related to schooling, but more often related to jobs and whether people can be fired, or not hired, because of the convictions to keep the Sabbath and Holy days.

Like so many other areas, we recommend that you stay out of it, unless it is affecting you. Ultimately, Sabbath-keepers should hope that governments would simply leave Sabbath-keepers alone. If a person loses their job or if their children are being persecuted in school, then there may be cause to take legal action. This author cannot find any scriptural example where servants of the Eternal went to the state to force other parties to make it easier to keep the Sabbath. We think it is a mistake to sue a school, club or other organization to have an equal number of Saturday and Sunday activities—or to make some similar change. Whether such suits are successful or not, they invariably create ill-will toward Sabbath-keepers and make it more difficult to preach the gospel.

**"LEGAL FUNDAMENTALISM":** Many brethren have recently discovered that "church leaders" have taken authority to themselves that the Bible never gave them. Some have gone on to investigate laws of the various civil governments in

the USA and discovered that the leaders here have in many cases taken authority to themselves that the constitution does not give them. They note that many religious organizations began with servants (ministers) who seriously serve the people and grow to where the "servants" are largely serving themselves. Similarly, they find that civil servants started out serving the people, but are now largely serving themselves. Finally, they note that just as brethren have been placing too much trust in their organizations and do not really know the Bible, they see that people place too much trust in lawyers and government agencies and do not know enough about the constitution and the law themselves.

While this author has not spent a great deal of time studying these issues, it is amazing to see how far away our present-day law is from the constitution, bill of rights and other law penned by our founding fathers. Most people born in the USA are probably as ignorant of their constitution as they are of the Bible. Most people in the USA do not realize that lawyers are "officers of the court"—they do not exclusively represent their clients. It is clear that the apostles were knowledgeable of the laws of their day and represented themselves in courts (Acts 4:16-21, 5:27-29, 16:37, 21:33-22:1, 22:25-28, 24:24-26:1, 28:17-20; 2Tim 4: 16-18).

Unfortunately, just as some people have left one religious organization only to begin following another man, so some people have rejected the commonly accepted view of law to embrace the views of one self-proclaimed legal expert. There are many such experts afoot today, and they do not all agree on the important issues. But some of these experts travel around, even to Sabbath-keeping congregations to recruit followers—usually to sell an expensive course of some kind. Some of these courses may be worth the money, some may not be. A high price is no guarantee of value.

We offer the following recommendations to those who are interested in studying more about civil law.

1) Do not let your legal study replace your Bible study. This world's systems will crumble, but the Truth of the Eternal endures forever.

2) Realize that legal teachers are a lot like Bible teachers, they may have a little, a middle or a large amount of truth. Just because you prove some of their

teachings correct, does not mean they are all correct.

3) Watch out for teachers with hidden agendas. Ask for details of their background. Specifically ask if they believe in racism (certain races are inherently superior to others) or in taking up arms to support their cause.

4) Do not listen to one teacher exclusively, even though teachers may insist that you do it.

5) The legal profession should deal in **facts**—not in emotional statements. If a legal teacher tells you, for example that “obtaining a *birth certificate* makes you a servant of the state,” he should have public documents to prove it—not simply emotional statements like “why should the state be licensing births anyway?” or general statements like “it’s hidden away somewhere in the legal codes of all 50 states.”

6) Study based on the need in **your** life. If you are busy serving in your congregation and have little need of legal study, then you should not stop your service to your congregation to study law. If your child has been taken away because someone wrongly accused you of child abuse, or if your business is about to be shut down due to a Federal regulation of which you have never heard, then you may need to study law with urgency.

**CONSPIRACY THEORIES:** There are probably hundreds of authors who attempt to explain world events in terms of secret conspiracies. Some include legal fundamentalism, some do not. Almost all have some truth. It is a well-established fact that the Federal Reserve is a private corporation that has great influence on the economy of the USA. The names of its board members are a matter of public record. However, many of its internal workings are secret. Its actions often do not seem favorable to the USA, but it is difficult to know the exact reasons for such actions—hence, conspiracy theories arise. Similarly, it is no secret that United States and other nations’ armed forces are increasingly being asked to serve under United Nations command. Is this an effort to help make the world a safer place to live, or is it an effort by a “New World Order” to enslave the world? Conspiracy theories usually extend far beyond these two issues, some interpreting nearly every significant world event in terms of the conspiracy they see.

We can see numerous examples

throughout Scripture where men and women conspired to take over kingdoms or to stay in power. Abimelech killed 70 of his own brothers in an effort to become king (Jud 9:1-5), Saul secretly plotted to get rid of David, a well-liked man (1Sam 23:9), and the religious leaders paid Roman guards to tell a lie about our Savior’s resurrection (Matt 28:12-15).

The big question regarding these conspiracy theorists is: how desirous are they to tell the truth and how desirous are they to gain a following? We have seen conspiracy publications where some issues contained easily verifiable information and other issues contained unproveable speculation. Some theorists have gone as far as telling people to sell their possessions and move to a certain place where they would be protected from the New World Order. Can a man guarantee you protection from such a thing?

If your motivation for studying conspiracies is only to protect yourself, keep in mind what our Savior said: “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matt 16:25). Nevertheless, Solomon said there is a time to know: “The wise man’s eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness...” (Eccl 2:14). He also said: “Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh” (Eccl 12:12). We recommend studying conspiracy theories less than we recommend studying legal fundamentalism. The proportion of unproveable speculation seems much higher in conspiracy theories. However, if you do study them, please consider the previous six recommendations for legal fundamentalism.

### Sex and Marriage

**QUESTIONABLE PEOPLE LOOKING FOR A MATE:** It may sound like something out of an old movie, but for years the Church of God groups have had problems with a few people who moved around the country until they would find a prospective mate and a minister who would perform a wedding ceremony without asking too many questions about their past marriages. Since the minister agreed to perform the ceremony, unsuspecting spouses often assumed that “God was blessing it.” (See the November 1996 *Servants’ News* for an explanation of why ministers do not have Biblical authority to “bind and loose marriages.”) As you

might expect, most people who have had several unsuccessful marriages have trouble with their next marriage. Too many are far too concerned about *finding* the right person and not about *being* the right person. At this time when there are many different groups, we cannot expect the ministry or the leader of a group to be able to find out a person’s past marital history. Nobody should assume that just because a person talks a similar theological line that they will be a good mate. If a person refuses to help you find out about their past life and set up a time to talk to their past spouses and hear “their side of the story”, then they are indeed a “questionable prospective mate”.

**QUESTIONABLE PEOPLE LOOKING FOR A DATE:** For many, it is even harder to imagine that a person could walk into a local congregation with his Bible, participate in the service, and be looking around for someone whom he or she might try to seduce (or force) on a date. Nevertheless, it does happen. Some of these people are largely outsiders that see Sabbath-keepers as naive targets. Others are very mixed up, long-time Sabbath-keepers that have somehow failed to practice what they profess. They must justify it somehow. They may look at the examples of David, Solomon, and other servants of the Eternal who were used in a great way, but still had great sexual sins. Unfortunately, they fail to see the great problems that such sins bring to all who are involved with them: David’s family fought all his life and Solomon’s son lost most of the kingdom. The solution is for single people to date in group activities or in restaurants and places where there are other people. Also, it is essential to have a firm commitment to sexual abstinence until marriage. People with such a firm commitment are much less likely to be seduced.

### Look to Our Father for Answers

After reading all of this, it may sound like we cannot trust anybody for anything. The Bible tells us not to place our trust in men (Jer 17:5). But it is possible to love and reach out to others without completely putting our trust in them. Our Savior did it and so can we. In time, we may find them to be wonderful people. Good friends endure. If we find them to be less than wonderful people, our slowness to place our trust

in them will save us grief.

When we hear a new idea or consider making some major change in our life, we should evaluate it before following it. This includes studying the subject, seeing what the Bible says on the subject, obtaining counsel, and prayer. We can ask our Father in heaven to clearly show us what He would want us to do. He was very patient when Gideon, a man who was humble and unsure of himself, asked for a sign (Judges 6:36-40). The New Testament contains many examples where the Eternal directly revealed things to people through dreams, visions and other kinds of revelations. [To study this, look up "dream(s)", "vision(s)", "reveal(ed)", "revelation", "prophecy", etc. in a concordance.]

The Eternal does answer many who do ask in faith. If it seems He does not answer you, then He may be giving you the latitude to decide. You must do the best job that you can based on your understanding of the Bible and your life experience. What else can you do? You need not be fearful of your decision, but you can be confident that you have done what you can do.

If the Eternal gives you an answer, praise and thank Him for it! But if He does not tell you to take it to others (which, by our experience, he rarely does), then do not try to convince others that the Eternal has spoken to you (see Rom 14:22). We have witnessed several examples of people who we believe had a revelation from the Eternal, and then they decided that they must be a prophet or prophetess. They went on to try to interpret every dream and major life experience they had as a sign that they were to preach to others. We are told, "Despise not prophesyings" (1Ths 5:20), but we must never try to "put words in the Eternal's mouth." If He does not answer us or if we do not understand His answer, then we must accept it. Remember to...

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6:11-12).

—Norman S. Edwards

# Being Wise and Harmless— In Our Finances

Prophecies for Israel today are full of condemnation for injustice and unfairness in our business and legal practices. Are you affected? Probably so. We are continually bombarded by advertising: TV, radio, print media, billboards and even telephone calls. Most of us know that this advertising is cleverly designed to motivate us to purchase something that we otherwise would not. Products are marketed to us to *solve our problems*: they tell us that if we buy their deodorant, people will like us; if we buy their toy, our children will be good for us; if we buy their car or clothes, we will have others' respect.

How often do we find ourselves buying something that "we have heard of" or that "we are excited about" rather than something that we have carefully thought out and decided that we need? If we believe that we are here in this life to grow to become like our Savior (Eph 4:13-14), then we should want to think out our decisions and make them as He would make them, rather than simply doing what someone says is "good for us" or doing "what everyone else is doing." Eternally valuable character comes from within, not from what we buy.

There are numerous schemes and scams out there waiting for us. Some try to convince us that "everyone is doing it," others tell us they have "a special deal, just for you." Some try to take advantage of your generosity, others try to take advantage of your greed. We can mention only a few, but the principles should help you with others.

## False Charities

As shocking as it may seem, most charities do very little good with the money they receive. Nearly all of the money collected is spent on the collection process and on a few high salaries of the people running it. Understanding **this is especially important for peo-**

**ple who have left large church organizations and are looking for ways to do good.** You may have received phone calls and mail solicitations asking for money for anything from international disasters to your local fire department. It is usually lawful for a person to say he is "collecting for the Red Cross" or your "local police department" as long as he gives them a dollar out of the thousands he collects.

If you ask the soliciting organization for an audited statement of how much they receive and where they spend it, many of them will simply stop talking to you. An honest charity is usually staffed at least partly by volunteers and is usually very happy to tell you about the people and groups that they help. If a charity tells you that they must keep the recipients of their aid confidential, how will anyone ever know that anyone received anything from them? **We, the people with the holy spirit, are told to let our light shine—not pay someone else to shine for us.** When others see the work of the spirit in us, we should be ready to give an answer (1Pet 3:15).

## "Hard-luck" Con Artists

There is no end to the varieties they will use, but the story almost always involves an apparently "righteous" person (the con artist) with no money and who desperately needs a little money (yours) right now. The stories are well thought out to make it hard for you to verify anything important. For example, a person may claim that he came to your town for a job interview, but his wallet was stolen and he needs \$63 dollars to get a bus back home where his wife (or mother) is severely ill. The place where he applied for a job is closed, his wife does not have a phone, but the bus station will verify that the ticket to his "home town" costs \$63. Many of us want to help people

who have genuine need, but if we help a con-artist, we are just encouraging his evil ways of living.

**Keep in mind that the con artist wants money, but a "hard-luck" person wants a solution—however it may come.** One of the best ways to find if people are serious about their problem is to think of a way to solve their problem **without giving them money** and see if they are interested. In the above example, it might work to offer to take the person to the bus station and buy them a non-refundable ticket. If they are really a person in need, they will be overjoyed. If they are con artists, they will be hesitant or refuse you.

Another approach that will eliminate some phonies is to ask many detailed questions and take notes: his wife's name, her parent's names and grandparent's names, where they grew up, the description of their houses, the job for which he was applying, the jobs he previously had, the names of his bosses, etc. Then, ask the same questions over again and see if you get the same answers. A man in trouble can easily remember these details, a con-artist will have trouble inventing all of this detail (he cannot tell you how he really lives) and keeping it straight. You can be straightforward with them and tell them that you are not sure that they are telling the truth. If the person gets angry with you for questioning them, it is almost a sure sign that they are a con-artist. People who really need help will be glad to talk to anyone who is giving them even a little consideration.

### Phone Bill Funny Business

More than one fellow Sabbath-keeper has tried to sell long distance service to me. Telephone billing has become so complex that many of the people who sell telephone services do not understand it. (I had a salesman tell me that I should give up trying to understand it—just trust that his company was better.) Long distance companies often promise to save you 20% to 50% off of AT&T's basic rates. They do not mention that almost no one pays AT&T's basic rates—that AT&T offers at least a 25% discount to nearly everyone. After analyzing some of these "20% to 50% savings" deals, I found

that the vast majority of the savings was only 20%—the 50% savings only occurred only on unusual calls (e.g. from Maine to Hawaii). There are a few companies with better rates than AT&T, but many of those claiming to have better rates are into a big-time deception.

Other long-distance companies will down-play the rates issue and tell you to use them because they give money to "Christian causes" and that the "big three" long-distance companies give money to "gay and liberal" causes. Avoiding business with a company that you know is doing evil is Biblically sound. However, some of the "proof" offered by these small "Christian companies" is extremely poor. Why should we let one long distance company evaluate the morals of another long distance company for us? We, not a telephone company, should decide to which charities we will give. We should seek an honest phone company that provides good service at a reasonable price.

Right now, there is an insidious phone scam using Caribbean phone numbers with an 809 area code. Local long distance companies in the Caribbean charge outside callers extremely high rates (over \$20 per minute) and give big rebates to people who receive foreign calls. Scam artists make calls to the US, hoping to get an answering machine (if someone answers, they hang up). When they get a machine, they leave an 809 area code number and a message about a dying relative or some other emergency. If you call back, you will either get a long recording or someone who speaks broken English and essentially just tries to keep you talking a long time. Since you made the call, you are legally responsible for paying for it. The problem will get worse when the new area codes are implemented for each Caribbean country: 242, 246, 264, 268, 284, 345, 441, 473, 664, 758, 767, 784, 787, 868, 869, 876. Hopefully, some enterprising long distance company will offer a service to warn customers when calls they are making exceed a certain rate (e.g. \$1 per minute).

### Free-Loaders

Even the tightly-controlled hierarchical organizations had their share of

free-loaders. I know of cases where people would wander among church areas with a sad story, and members would take them in for a while. I know of others who only attend services when there is a pot-luck meal—and they never bring anything. Still others seemed to be experts at qualifying for "third tithing assistance." But when ministers from various congregations would get together, they would sometimes find the same people were free-loading in other congregations. These were almost always people who could work if they had to. "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (2Ths 3:10).

The smaller organizations and independent local congregations are probably considered "easy marks" by free-loaders. They usually have an open atmosphere and it is easy for a person to bring up their "troubles" to the whole congregation. The leaders probably have little experience with free-loaders in the past. Some free-loaders can even sing or play an instrument well, or do a good job of expounding the scriptures. If they tell a heart-rending story, cry, praise God for bringing them to a congregation, and only ask for prayer—they are likely to get some food, a place to stay, and/or some money. It is right and good that we look after needy brethren, but it is also right that we discern truly needy people from those who would simply prefer that others work for them. An honest person who is taking a hand-out should want to do some kind of work, if possible, in exchange for what he receives. If a "down & out" guest can walk around, visit and do enjoyable things, but is not eager to help with simple house-work, this is a sign of trouble.

### High Return Investments

You can find thousands of flyers, newsletters, classified ads, investment counselors, stock brokers, and other entities offering investments that "almost certainly" will return 30% or more each year. Many private individuals invest in these schemes. But think about it. If the huge banks and corporations normally invest billions of dollars in places that will only return about 10%, why don't their full-time money managers find and invest in all of these 30% and more investment opportunities? Because they know that such a

high percentage of these investment schemes will fail that they would be better off with a relatively sure 10% return than 40% returns where half of the investments completely fail (100% negative return).

Yes, there are some investments that really do pay high rates or return. But **all** of them sound good to the investor—especially if this is the first time that he heard about such an investment. It is usually the worst investments that are the most promoted—the better ones people see and do not need much promotion. Unless you have the ability to really analyze the people, the organization, and the technical merits of a high-return investment, then you are just taking a bad risk. A retired dairy farmer probably has the skills necessary to evaluate a new dairy farm operation that is seeking his investment. If he feels the operation will be a success, it makes sense to invest—he will be able to tell when things go wrong and to insist on corrective action. The same man probably should not invest in soybean fields in Costa Rica or a start-up cable television company—even though the profit potential might be higher. He simply cannot evaluate them as well.

The Old Testament law and the book of Proverbs agree: it is best if a person manages his own resources, rather than leaving them to others. If age or other concerns prevent a person from day-to-day responsibility, a person should invest in areas where he can **know** that he is making a wise choice.

#### **Little or No Work Money-Making Schemes**

Again, you can see these ads like this in the back of many magazines:

Anyone can earn \$50,000 a year in your own home with no investment and no special skills. Send \$30 for complete information available no where else!"

If you answer such an ad, you may get instructions to place an ad just like the one you answered. Or, you may get some other dishonest or impractical scheme. Whether the scheme produces money or not, you must ask these questions: Are you doing something useful for the money you receive... or are you becoming a con artist? Could everyone in the world have a job that paid well

and required little knowledge or work? If so, who would feed us, build houses, make clothes, etc? If we expect the Eternal to bless our efforts, we must be serving our fellow man with our efforts, not simply extracting money from somewhere.

#### **Pyramid or "Chain Letter" Fund Raising.**

One of the most common false money-raising schemes is based on the old concept of the "chain letter." You have probably received a letter that asks you to send a letter, picture postcard, or a certain amount of money to someone on the top of the list in the letter, and add your name to the bottom of the list and mail some number of copies (between 10 and hundreds) of the letter to friends or a purchased mailing list. A letter may explain in detail how you need only send one dollar to the person on top of the list, then send 100 letters to people who all send 100 letters to people who will all send a dollar to you when your name is finally on top of the list and you will get a million dollars. Wow! It sounds great: you spend a dollar and get a million dollars!

But consider the end of it: the million people who sent you a dollar all hope to get a million dollars too. When they send out their hundred letters each, there will be enough for every one of the nearly 100-million households in the USA. Then, where will those hundred million people get their million dollars? There is no significant number of people who have not received a letter, so everyone who has already received a million dollars has to be willing to accept more letters so that everyone can have a million dollars. How many letters, on average, does each person have to accept and process so that everyone can have a million dollars? A million letters! Yes, if everyone is going to get a million dollars, they are all going to have to pay a million dollars! Even if they use bulk mail, each will have to pay about \$200,000 in postage. Is this a productive activity?

In reality, such nonsense is never carried to the entire country—most people ignore the letter, some people follow its instructions, and some people replace all of the names and addresses on the letter with their own

home, work, PO Box and best-friend's addresses and do not bother to send "the dollar to the person on top of the list." This causes them to get more money from the scheme and others to get less. **Another sign of an evil enterprise: the more deceptive you are, the more money you make**—not true about honest work. The conclusion of the matter is: some people pay more than they receive and some receive more than they pay, but nothing useful is accomplished and a lot of time and effort is wasted.

It is our understanding that the

## **Why Write About all this Physical Stuff?**

The Eternal put us in a physical universe so we can learn spiritual principles that we can use for all time (1Cor 10:11, 9:9-10, 15:46-51). We have used several pages to cover some physical items to both explain those items and how spiritual deceptions can work.

It is easy to understand that a long-distance salesman will try to convince us that rates are horribly complicated and we shouldn't try to understand them. That makes the customer feel better about not understanding them and also makes it possible for the salesman to receive his commissions for selling his service which may well be a bad deal.

Once we understand this deception, then we can understand a "spiritual teacher" who might tell us that doctrines are too complicated for us to understand, and that we should leave them to the professional theologian (him). We become comfortable trusting in a teacher who seems to "have it all figured out." Later on, he tells us that we should never listen to any other teacher besides him—and we should send all of our contributions only to him. While he claims that these teachings are for our benefit, it becomes obvious they primarily benefit him. —NSE

above type of pyramid scheme is now illegal in the United States. However, there are many similar, apparently legal, schemes where the participants are instructed to buy some token item from one or more of the "people on the list." The effect is the same as above, only even more money is wasted on postage and meaningless products.

### Multi-Level Marketing

Multi-level marketing is a method of sales where salesmen are compensated not only for how much product they sell, but also how many people they sign up as salesmen for the company. When a worthwhile product that requires a lot of hands-on customer education is being sold, multi-level marketing makes sense. Unfortunately, some multi-level marketing programs are little more than disguised, big-dollar pyramid schemes. Some programs require a new salesmen to personally buy initial inventory, samples, instruction materials and other items. Some require a substantial cash payment for the "privilege" of becoming a salesmen. Often, the person who signed up the new salesman receives a portion of this initial payment. When this happens, there is a great motivation for individuals to simply sign up other salesmen and not to sell the product at all. It is much like the "pyramid fund-raising."

I know of one specific company that gave new salesmen the best commission percentage if they would start by buying thousands of dollars of their product—a gasoline additive. They told salesmen there was no risk, because they gave a written guarantee that they could return unopened products back to the company at any time. Millions of dollars of product was purchased, commissions were paid, and everyone was happy. Later, after some salesmen realized that the world just doesn't need millions of gallons of gasoline additive, they began returning their entire hoard of product. The company had trouble getting back commissions that had already been paid, so they revised their buy-back policy: within 90 days they would begin refunding only about 75% of the product purchase price. Most of their salesmen decided to return the product before the 90 days were up and the company went bankrupt—nearly all of their profits had been on product sold to salesmen—not to people actually using the product.

On the opposite extreme, I personally worked for a multi-level company that made water filters. Most of Southern California has very hard and/or polluted water. Bottled water distributors and gro-

cery stores do a big business in selling water—individuals often spent over \$100 per year. I was looking for a place where I could buy an effective water filter, but could not find it. By chance, an out-of-town friend offered to demonstrate a water filter and had some very good scientific data on how the filter worked. Furthermore, it paid for itself in a little over a year. I purchased the filter and became a salesman—it cost very little to get started. I sold about 10 water filters to friends over several years—doing the plumbing work myself when necessary. I never had to go to meetings or buy any training material. I earned enough money to make my efforts worthwhile and I never had any complaints from customers. Most of my sales came from customer referrals. I never signed up any other salesmen. Later, I began using another non-multi-level company that would sell me a comparable filter cheaper and let me charge an even lower price for it. I continued selling until I moved. Had not my friend introduced the filter to me and been motivated to "sign me up" as a salesmen, I and many others would have spent \$1000's more on bottled water over the years.

Unfortunately, most multi-level marketing experiences are not as nice. The most common problems are:

- 1) People put in more money than they ever get out.
- 2) People put in far more time than the little amount of money they receive is worth.
- 3) People lose their friends when they continually pester them to buy or become distributors.
- 4) People lose their friends when their friends do buy the product and are unhappy with it.
- 5) People lose their friends when their friends become distributors and experience these five problems.

If you are considering joining a multi-level marketing program, look for the following points:

1) The product must be good. If the product does not live up to its claims, you will be making enemies with each sale. Remember, you will probably see your customers again in the resurrection. Will they be happy about what you sold them, or will you have to say "I needed the money." No amount of marketing can make a bad product good. Use the products a while before selling them.

2) The product must be the most cost-effective solution and easily available. If the same thing is available from a Sears store at a similar price, why should anyone

buy it from an individual? Sears will often replace or repair defective items anywhere in the country—multi-level can't make such a claim. There is really no reason to multi-level market toilet paper, potatoes, or undershirts. The cheapest way to sell things that everyone uses is the large warehouse concept: items are moved directly from trucks to the sales floor by forklift, and the sales people need only unwrap the pallets and open the boxes.

3) It must be financially worthwhile for a person to only sell the product and not "sign up" other salesmen. If the entire emphasis of the program is on how much money you will make when you sign up 10 salesmen who each sign up 10 other salesmen, it is a pyramid scheme as we previously described. Simple math shows that only a few percent of the people in an organization can have 100 people "underneath them." If the "people at the bottom" cannot survive, the whole pyramid will eventually come crashing down.

4) You should not be required to continually go to "hype meetings" or pay for continued motivational materials and training. If you are selling technical products that really do require training (for example, you learn to install an outdoor swimming pool), that is good. But most programs require attendance of meetings that just tell people to sign, sign, sign distributors and sell, sell, sell products. All this will do is frustrate you or cause you to have *problems* 3, 4, and 5 listed above.

### Summary

These problems are especially difficult with members of the same local congregation. For some reason, some people get mixed up and think that because they are doing business with "church members," that the other guy should be especially nice to them. If they are buying, they expect better work or a better product at a lower price. If they are selling they expect that if they do not deliver the product or service on time or as promised, that "the brother will understand and not be angry." In reality, people should **always** try to expect and/or deliver the agreed upon product at the agreed price.

Our Savior taught that these big issues—how we conduct ourselves in our relationships—are the weightier matters of the law—more important than many lesser issues (Matt 23:23). **The book of Proverbs has much to say about business practices:** what we should do and how we should deal with others. It is worthwhile reading!

—Norman S. Edwards

# Church Newspaper to Begin in February

## *The Journal: News of the Churches of God*

### *In Transition* Staffers Tackle New Publication

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—A new publication for members of the Churches of God scattered abroad is scheduled to roll off the press in February, announced its publisher, Dixon Cartwright.

Mr. Cartwright is taking orders for the new publication, which is targeted at members of the Churches of God that have their roots in the Worldwide Church of God as well as other Sabbatarians.

It's also aimed at readers of *In Transition*, who for almost two years could read the latest news of the people of God in that publication.

#### Another *In Transition*?

Comparisons with *In Transition* are inevitable, Mr. Cartwright thinks, but he notes differences as well as similarities in the two publications.

*THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD* will do its best to report on happenings in the groups and will publish essays and sermon summaries based on Scripture.

*THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD* will provide a forum for God's people to communicate with each other in what Mr. Cartwright is sure will be a lively letters section.

"Some people loved the letters in *In Transition*, and others hated them," notes Mr. Cartwright, who served as editor at *In Transition*. "But I think most subscribers turned to them first because we didn't mind allowing people to have their say."

*THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD* will keep tabs on the happenings at Ambassador University as it faces the most challenging year in its history.

It will bring readers news of United,

Global, International and, as much as feasible, Philadelphia.

"We have brethren in all these groups, and I think it's important to people wherever they are to keep up with their friends and brethren," said Mr. Cartwright.

#### The extent of individuals

But, besides spotlighting the larger offshoots of the Worldwide Church of God, *THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD* is committed to letting its readers in on the activities, trials and efforts of those groups of two, three or two dozen as they go into all the world starting with their next-door neighbors.

"Many people are coming to realize the extent of the network of individuals and tiny gatherings," Mr. Cartwright says. "I think a service our newspaper can do is to let people know they are not the only ones, whether they're individuals or part of the biggest or smallest assemblies."

Mr. Cartwright, who has worked on Church of God publications since 1973, believes the new newspaper can provide for a need that was filled "admirably" by *IN TRANSITION*.

"But there are still articles to write. We're not all out of transition yet by any means. The people of God are a dynamic, in some cases cohesive, but many times shattered set of individuals, and a publication in the format of a newspaper can do much to encourage and inform the brethren during their efforts to do the will of God."

A few surprises await readers of *THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD*.

"We've got some good information on some controversial subjects—the calendar postponements, for example. We plan

early in 1997, before the spring festival season, to present what I feel will be extremely helpful information, including some concepts brethren on all sides of the issue haven't heard before. As things stand now, we plan a two-part series beginning in the first issue to address the calendar head on."

#### Getting the word out

Mr. Cartwright is asking the brethren to help get the word out about *THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD*. Although he previously announced that *In Transition* subscribers would each receive a free issue, he was not able to complete that arrangement.

In lieu of that offer, he is offering the first issue free to charter subscribers, who will receive 12 monthly issues for \$18, plus the free Vol. 1, No. 1 (while available).

Subscription rates for international readers will vary depending on country of residence, but for the time being Canadian readers may subscribe for \$24 (U.S. funds) and other international readers for \$36 for 12 issues (plus the free first issue).

Arrangements are being worked out for regional distribution of the newspaper in international areas.

#### Asking for help

Mr. Cartwright solicits material from God's people scattered abroad. His mailing address for queries, news, comments and subscriptions is *THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD*, P.O. Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755, U.S.A.

Send E-mail to the publication at [kartreit@aol.com](mailto:kartreit@aol.com). Or send faxes to (903) 636-9097.

If you would be interested in distributing the free first issue to other people, please contact the publisher as soon as possible. You can receive 10 to 100 copies of the first issue to distribute mailed to you in bulk. Please request only as many as you would be able to distribute to potential subscribers. The response to this offer will affect the print run, so please write P.O. Box 1020, Big Sandy, TX 75755, U.S.A., fax (903) 636-9097 or E-mail [kartreit@aol.com](mailto:kartreit@aol.com) by Jan. 31. Donations to help defray shipping costs are appreciated but not necessary.

To subscribe to *THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD*, send \$18 for 12 issues (plus free Vol. 1, No. 1, while available) to: ***THE JOURNAL: NEWS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD*, Box 1020, Big Sandy, TX 75755, U.S.A.** (Texas residents add sales tax). If you cannot afford the subscription price, free subscriptions will be made available as funds permit.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/state/zip/country \_\_\_\_\_

Price for Canadian residents: \$24 for 12 issues (plus free 1st), \$36 for other countries.



# News from Local Congregations



## Sabbath-keepers Come Together for Message on National Origins

It was a great pleasure speaking before about another 20 people today (Nov 30, 1996)—this time in the Central Coast. Incredibly hot day and very uncomfortable surroundings.

But it was worth it. I was supposed to speak in 2 weeks but they asked me yesterday to speak today as the person who was going to come down sick.

Decided to speak to them about the rise of Germany and the part she plays in European history, the model Holy Roman Empires over the centuries etc. Again they were convinced and some agreed on a Germany=Assyrian link.

They also agreed that the separated (or historical) Adventists are much closer doctrinally to the various COG's than the current SDAs! In fact they called me an Adventist much to my surprise.

Also, you may be pleased to know that as a DIRECT result of the FOSA conference, a couple of them which attended turned off the trinity and adopted Unitarianism or Binitarianism. Now that has spread amongst the groups I have visited in Canberra and Campbelltown as well as the Central Coast.

In fact, coincidentally, some of them had actually dropped the trinity at the same time without knowing those who came to the conference had!

I am also trying to introduce them to the concept that the original Adventist statement of beliefs stated that there were 2 new births—one at conversion and another at the resurrection.

Also, I met the wife of one of the publishers of a newsletter I have received (on and off) for years.

Afterwards we had a great typical SDA lunch in an idealic Edenic setting at one of their homes. One of them actually did visit UCG recently.

—Craig Martin White,

GPO Box 864, Sydney, Australia 2001  
craigwh1@pop.ozonline.com.au

## The Bride's Journal Magazine

The objectives that this magazine is striving to accomplish is to bring a much lacking and much needed teaching of separation to the COG brethren. This includes homesteading, home schooling, Biblical courtship, and the like, as well as eschatology. It also plans to bring a strong teaching of Family to encourage Malachi 4:6 EliYah relationships in the COG part of the Body and to teach the spiritual analogies of Father-Son, Husband-Wife, betrothal-courtship. Other areas will include Sabbaths, immutability of Law, etc.

**Title:** The Bride's Journal

**Cost:** Free (donations appreciated, even a dollar or two, but will be sent to those unable to give.)

**Address:** Doves Farm Ministries, Kunkletown, PA 18058

**Phone:** Toll-free 888-887-DOVE.

## Staying At Home? Try the Church of God Seventh Day

After some twenty plus years in the Worldwide Church of God, I felt it was time to move on in early 1994. Unlike Jim and Barbara, I decided to stay with an organization, (the Church of God Seventh Day). [Jim and Barbara Damiano wrote the "stay-at-home Church of God" letter explaining why they do not attend with any group, August 1996 *Servants' News*].

I feel fellowship is very important. You can attend a Church on a regular basis without agreeing on every doctrine and without ever becoming a member. During the past year and a half, I have been a lay leader of COG7 in Huntsville, Alabama. Over that year and a half, we have had a few people from the WCG and the CGI attend until they could find the place God wanted them. We didn't mind providing fellowship for them, and we did not ask them for finances.

If anyone is in this position around our area, they are more than welcome to

visit with us anytime, no strings attached. Call me at 800-772-0940 for location and time. I feel if there is a COG7 in Jim and Barbara's area, they would treat them the same way.

God is so much more than a denomination or a set of doctrines! I feel I can worship God anywhere, but it does feel so good to have a group you can fellowship with when you can.

—Clyde Thompson

P.O. Box 1236, Huntsville, AL 35807

## UCG Plans Ministerial Transfers

The following quotes are from Richard Pinelli's letter to UCG ministers and wives. Pinelli is the Director of Ministerial Services, United Church of God, an International Association.

Underlining was added by SN.

In the United States the United Church of God has 118 full-time and two part-time field ministers serving 231 congregations with an average weekly Sabbath attendance of 13,600. This means that we have the equivalent of one full-time minister for every 114 individuals attending. Since we have had to spread out to cover all the churches, this may have increased our workload, and yet this may be less than the workload from the past. This is due primarily to having fewer members across the same geographic area. Because of this diminished ratio of full-time ministers to attendees, the Church is currently spending over 60% of its income for salaries and other related expenses. This leaves less than 40% for all other expenses including the preaching of the Gospel to the world. Hopefully, a steady increase in membership over the next year will allow us to begin to put a higher percentage of the Church's income into preaching the Gospel.

Because the proportion for ministerial salaries and benefits is already so high, we simply cannot hire more ministers. Yet there are still areas which cry out for pastors. Some of our men are stretched beyond their human capacity, while in other areas there is an excess of manpower. The Ministerial

[Continued on page 20]

# Questions & Responses on “Tithing”

*What does the Bible say about tithing? Where have modern tithing practices come from? Our research began with this letter from Dale Stogner in September of 1995. It covers a number of basic questions that many people ask. For an in-depth study, write for our free article, **How Do We Give to the Eternal?***

**REQUEST FOR RESEARCH:** There is a need for someone to do honest research into the subject of tithing and how the Church of God should be financed. Do you know of someone who has done non-agenda driven research into this subject? Here are some questions that I believe need to be answered:

**RESPONSE:** I have a number of articles on the subject and I am beginning to study it. Most articles seem to be biased—either for or against. Most articles in favor of tithing seem to be written from the point of view of “God’s work will collapse if this eternal law is not obeyed.” Most of the ones written against it seem to take the approach that everyone who tithes is foolishly wasting their money.

I’ll answer as many of your questions as I can—and hopefully produce a written work on the subject in a few months.

**QUESTION 1:** Since tithes were originally to be paid to Levites (Numbers 18), and there are no Levites today, how is tithing justified? I realize that the WCG, and many others, have taught that Hebrews shows that the Levitical system was transferred to the ministry, but that is not what the Bible actually says. It says it was transferred to Christ.

**RESPONSE:** When we realize that the greek *diakonos*, translated “minister” means “servant,” and that there is no scripture that says all “ministers” are a special “ordained” class of people, then it becomes very difficult to define exactly to whom tithes could have been transferred. Some commentators conclude the word translated “honor” in 1 Timothy 5:17 means compensation, but the verse states that the compensation was only for those

that do a good job. Where would tithes go if a local elder was doing a bad job? The real difficulty we find with studying tithing in the New Testament is this: there are multiple verses about giving money to people who preach the Gospel and to the poor, but there are no verses at all about any congregational leader collecting or using tithes.

Hebrews 7 shows that Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils of war to Melchizedek. But it is hard to call this “increase” since Abraham gave all of the rest of the spoil back to the king of Sodom (Gen 14:22-23). Abraham gave this amount as a thanks to the Eternal for delivering the enemies into his hand (Gen 14:20). We can also be sure that spoil of war was not normally tithed as only 1/50th was given to the Eternal in another war (Num 31:30-47). The reason the writer of Hebrews uses this example of showing Levi (son of Abraham) was subservient to Melchizedek is because this is the only story in the Old Testament that we have about Abraham and Melchizedek. There is only one other reference to Melchizedek is in Psalms 110.

Some will say that the “change of the law” spoken of in Hebrews 7:12 is a change in the law of tithing. However the context of either side of this verse is sacrifices and a change in the priestly duties. This would be an unusual context to mention tithing since tithes were given to the Levites who gave to the priests. Priests did not receive tithes directly (Num 18:26-28).

**QUESTION 2:** Some Jewish scholars hold that there was only **one** tithe. What we have come to know as *second tithe* was simply a portion of the

first tithe used by the Israelites celebrated the Feasts. Also, a portion of it was shared with the poor and Levites in the third and sixth years. Others say that there were two tithes. One we would think of as first tithe. The second we would think of as second tithe in years 1, 2, 4, and 5 and third tithe in years 3 and 6. I don’t know of anyone but WCG and splits who held to three tithes. We should at least look at this.

**RESPONSE:** There is a reference in the apocryphal book of Tobit to paying three tithes and some other references in the Talmud. These sources were used to justify the third tithe in the article *Does God Really Command Three Tithes?* by Raymond McNair (Global Church News, Nov-Dec 1994, p 12). As far as I know, the WCG, GCG and other major off-shoots, always presented this minority Jewish view to their congregations as if it were the only Jewish view. My limited research indicates that most religious Jews believed in two tithes, but some actually believe in one.

**QUESTION 3:** Some scholars say that all that was tithable was farming and ranching, not wages, and not even fishing or mining, even though they depend on natural resources. Others say wages are tithable.

**RESPONSE:** All biblical commands for tithing are associated with produce from the land. I think most Jewish sources recognize that if a man lost his land and was working for a wage, he did not pay tithes on his wage. All tithes were given in produce. Only tithe for the festival is mentioned as being possible to convert into money (Deut 14:23-26). Some have quoted Exodus 22:29 (KJV) as proof that people should give tithes on manufactured products: “Thou shalt not delay to

offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors." Most other translations do not say "liquor" but "juices." This does not appear to be some lengthy manufacturing process, but another way of harvesting produce. When some fruits are very ripe and soft, it is easier to juice them for short-term preservation than keep the fruit whole. Secondly, this verse is about firstfruits, not tithes.

I think it is important to look at the context for all the commands to tithe. Almost every one is in the sections of scripture dealing with land distribution and the fact that the Levites do not have an inheritance. We find nothing about tithing in the major chapters on law such as Ex 20-24, Lev 18-20, Num 6-8, Deut 21-25. Tithing always appears to be mentioned in the context of the land of Israel.

**QUESTION 4:** Some say that only Israelites living in certain geographic areas are bound to tithe.

**RESPONSE:** I think tithing would apply as long as there is a civil government with Levites and priests to tithe to. It is also important to realize that the Eternal **gave them** land free and clear—today almost no church members own land that produces wealth. Most of us pay taxes, we pay rent or a mortgage just to live somewhere, we pay for transportation to get to our job, and numerous other payments that could hardly be counted as part of our "increase." Tithing on net or even gross income in our society extracts a much larger part of one's disposable income than it did in ancient Israel.

**QUESTION 5:** Why are there tithes paid in the seventh year? Even if there is biblical justification for tithing in years 1-6, why tithe in the seventh year?

**RESPONSE:** This question shows how far away we are from the complete system the Eternal gave Israel. Leviticus 25:21 promises a blessing in the sixth year that would be enough for three years. I worked for tithe-collecting church organizations for nearly all of my adult life and they never increased my salary three-fold in the sixth year—nor did I receive other blessings to make a three-fold increase

in the sixth year. Can we keep the seventh year and the 7-year cycle without the sixth year blessing?

Deuteronomy 12 mentions tithing "in the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you to possess"—right after it mentions destroying all the places where the nations served other gods. Today, churches are not in charge of civil governments and do not destroy false worship services. Should they collect tithes? It is important to note when Israel gathered manna before they went into the land, it says each man gathered according to his eating (Ex 16:18). If tithing were an eternal law, why did not the Eternal have the other tribes tithe their manna to the Levites?

**QUESTION 6:** Some say that Christ and the apostles did not receive tithes, but instead told the disciples to be happy with what people give you.

**RESPONSE:** There are about a dozen references to funds and money in the New Testament. None of them indicates that the congregation leaders received tithes. Most indicate the opposite. When explaining the need for supporting congregational leaders, Paul twice quotes (1Cor 9:9, 1Tim 5:18) from Deut 25:4, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Paul definitely knew the tithing scriptures. **If tithing is the key to personal financial prosperity, I am uncertain why he did not teach it to them.** Also, if tithing were a regular practice, we would expect to see questions or discussions on how the money was spent. Nearly every group that tithed in our day has had such questions. However, every time there is a financial need in the New Testament, we do not find decisions on how to spend money, but ways to collect or earn money: (1Cor 4:12, 1Cor 16:1-4, 2Cor 8, 1Thes 2:9, 2Thes 3:8). If most of the New Testament congregation was tithing to "the church" it is hard to know why Paul was still working for a living. Where was all of the tithe money going?

**QUESTION 7:** The Bible clearly states that the tenth animal is the tithe to be paid, yet the WCG has used the firstfruits scriptures mentioned in the Bible to say that God has first claim on

increase. Can someone clearly explain how firstfruits applies, if at all?

**RESPONSE:** Firstfruits were a separate offering of unspecified amount. The Pentecost wavesheaf and other offerings were firstfruits. 2Chr 31:5, Neh 10:37, Neh 12:44 and other scriptures show that tithing and firstfruits were separate. Yes, the tenth animal was the one tithed. If you were poor and had only nine animals, there was not one to tithe. If some animals died during the year or if the king took some away as taxes, it seems one would tithe on the increase that was left. These scriptures would seem to be relevant if one was trying to decide whether they should tithe on gross or net income.

**QUESTION 8:** The WCG, and others, use that fact that Abraham was the Father of the Faithful and he gave ten percent to Melchizedek. Yet the Bible says he gave, not that he paid. Also, the example of Jacob is used, but Jacob says **if** you do this and that I will pay ten percent.

**RESPONSE:** We have already discussed the fact that it was not even an increase from which Abraham was paying ten percent. Jacob asked for a deal with the Eternal in Genesis 28:19-22: he asked to be taken care of and to return to his father's house in peace—in exchange for 1) making the Eternal his God, making the stone God's house, and tithing on what the Eternal **gave** to him. Jacob served Laban six years for his cattle and his wages were changed 10 times (Gen 31:41). There was no record that he tithed on any of this—how does one tithe on wives or on cattle when your wages are changed 10 times in six years? Also, these things were not given to him, he worked. As the promise to make that stone "God's house" was not fulfilled until much later when Israel left Egypt to become a nation, there is no Bible evidence that tithing began until Israel entered the promised land. There, the Eternal gave Jacob's descendants land, and they fulfilled Jacob's promise and gave Him 10 percent.

**QUESTION 9:** Paul, in the letter to the Corinthians says he has robbed other churches instead of receiving what he was due from the Corinthians.

But, from this arises two questions. First, how can Paul legally and morally justify permitting the Corinthians to not pay the tithe? He could not legally or morally justify letting them break the Sabbath or become thieves. Second, if Paul can claim the authority to receive a tithe from other churches, why does he use the word robbed? It can only be robbery if the funds belonged to another person. If they belong to another person, how does this wash with the heavily quoted Mal. 3 regarding a man robbing God?

**RESPONSE:** If tithing was an age-old law like the 10 commandments—essential to physical prosperity, then it is hard to understand why Paul did not command it. But he did not. You have made a point about robbing other churches, the Greek word appears to mean that. If tithing were sent to a central office, it certainly would have been Paul's decision on how to spend it. Malachi made his prophecy while there were hundreds of years of the Levitical system left. These verses are very national in promise: "For you have robbed Me, even this whole nation." (Mal 3:9). "'And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,' Says the Lord of hosts; 'And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,' says the Lord of hosts." (Mal 3:11-12). This must be about the nation of Israel. Did any other church or nation call the WCG "blessed" because they have a lot of money?

**QUESTION 10:** When I studied the old WCG tithing booklet, I noticed two things. First, the booklet starts with what amounts to fear tactics. Second, the booklet continues on with the needs of the Church to preach the gospel. The scriptural references are not exhaustive, which they could be on so limited a topic. The above questions were not addressed. The booklet basically assumes a position and uses fear and the needs of the church to impose tithing. Is it possible that this booklet, which has so greatly affected many people's financial planning is in error?

**RESPONSE:** We would like to do

some more research, but it seems that you are right. I would like to point out that giving is listed as a spiritual gift in Romans 12:8. I think many people have been blessed for their cheerful giving (2Cor 9:7) and great works have been done because of it. However, this above verse indicates that people should not give grudgingly or out of necessity (which is the way many people tithe). There are many other spiritual gifts, but we have not been encouraged to cultivate them.

I have seen people study the scriptures on tithing, conclude it was not applicable for today, and then cease to support or do any kind of work. I think a person is better off giving 10 percent to support an organization that wastes half of it and preaches the gospel with the other half, than they are to produce no fruit on their own. Each person will be judged by their work (1 Cor 3:11-15). If "giving" is the only gift we possess, we should do it "with liberality". Nevertheless, there is no commandment anywhere in the Bible for a priest, congregation leader or anyone to check on people to see if they are "giving according to the law." They stand or fall before the supreme Judge in this matter.

For years, organizations with tithing doctrines have told their members that if they trusted the Eternal, they would have more available money if they tithed and trusted the Eternal to make up the difference. People sent in their tithes in faith and some received miracles that kept their budgets balanced. A question we might ask today is: do the church organizations have faith that the Eternal will provide for them if they honestly tell their congregations what the scriptures say about tithing?

**QUESTION 11:** Can you help me out with some published Church of God research on the above questions? Or, can you give me answers to the above questions from the Bible and logic. It is an important topic that needs to be addressed. I personally will continue to follow the example of my Father Abraham and give at least ten percent of my increase to the Church of God. If tithing is biblically mandated, then I will be happy to continue tithing, as I

have all my Christian life.

**RESPONSE:** I tithed on my gross income for many years and it never bothered me. I was happy to be a part of the good work that was done through the WCG. People like myself and others learned so much about the Bible because someone else paid for an expensive radio broadcast and a magazine. I am not saying it always has to be done that way, but that is the way that the Eternal reached me. I was largely unaware of the error and evil that went on in the WCG until my last few years there. If I had a similar job and family size today, I would probably contribute about the same amount (somewhere else) to preach the gospel as I did back then. However, since I am now involved in a full-time service to the brethren, and since we are not receiving enough now to feed our family, it does not make sense for me to borrow money or deplete savings so I can contribute somewhere else. [This article was written in September 1995, in 1996 we received enough support to pay our living expenses—NSE.]

**QUESTION 12:** Have you achieved tax exempt status yet? Many more people would contribute more money once you have done so.

**RESPONSE:** When this was written in 1995, I was still attempting to receive tax exempt status. Later, I came to realize how IRS tax exempt status essentially puts an organization under the control of any and all IRS regulations, both present and future. (See the March-April 1996 *Servants' News* for more information.) When an organization teaches its members to pay three tithes on their gross income, tax exemption is a near necessity for the survival of the members. When preaching of the Gospel is done from a low-budget, high-faith approach (Luke 10:4,17; Acts 3:6), tax exemption is not so important. People can give less but the a work done mostly by the spirit can still flourish.

For more information write for our free article, *How Do We Give to the Eternal?*

—Norman S. Edwards

### “Independence Day” from page 2 Independent Ministries

When you hear the word, “apostolic”, does your mind conjure up images of well-bred, refined men in royal robes sitting in meeting rooms like statesmen, planning the course of Christianity? If so, then the word “minister” probably calls to your mind visions of men in tailored suits in modern board-rooms, answerable only to their superiors, drawing a regular salary, enjoying the use of a car and their house paid for by church funds, and bearing unquestioned rule over the membership.

The Apostle Paul then, would not be a “minister” by this definition. At times, he had no clothing, no office or even a place to live, was considered “poor” and sometimes went hungry (2Cor 11:27). He taught that ministers and laity should be answerable to each other at times (Eph. 5:21). He had no secured income, for he was self-employed (1Cor 4:12, 1Thes 2:9) so other ministers would follow his example (2Thes. 3:8-10). He walked most of the time, and when he did have a craft to travel in, it was often very unreliable and dangerous, resulting in several shipwrecks (2Cor 11:25). When he had a home, he rented it with “his own “funds (Acts 28:30), and often chose not to take any money from certain brethren (2Cor 11:8-9) and clearly stated that he preached the gospel “for free” (2Cor 11:7, Strong’s Greek #1432, gratuitously, as a gift). Yet, he said himself that he was a “minister” (Rom 15:16).

Some of what we have come to assume as true may be false and tainted by the world’s standards. Let us wipe the slate clean and seek God’s wisdom (James 1:5) in prayer, asking Him to lead us into all truth (Jn. 16:13). The apostles were common blue-collar folk (fishermen, Mt. 4:18), the despised of society (publicans/tax collectors and sinners, Lk 5:27-32) and formerly self-seeking, immoral men (Eph 2:2-3). Men who, in spite of their former occupations, lowly status and standards, went boldly into other churches whose beliefs were radically different from theirs to share the Good News God had given them (Acts 6:8-11, 9:19-20, 18:4). They did not sit at home, as many do today, thinking, “Don’t bother with them, they won’t believe anyway.” We are instructed to follow the example of the apostles (1Cor 4:16).

The apostles did not advocate a class-

room-like church setting, where one man speaks and the rest take notes, **but rather that all may speak, one after another, as the Holy Spirit moves** (1Cor. 14:29-33). When one man said he could not learn without a “trained” teacher (Acts 8:31), the holy spirit took the teacher away (vs. 39) possibly to establish that this idea was false. No particular man is necessary for the congregation to learn, since the Holy Spirit is our primary teacher (1Jn 2:27), however, men can be helpful as we learn from one another (1Cor 14:31) But spiritual knowledge (1Cor 12:9) and the ability to teach it (Eph.4:11) are **gifts** from God and cannot be acquired by graduating from an accredited college, though college may be helpful in developing these gifts.

You can expect that those who teach the Word of God and have little or no formal training, will be belittled by the religious leaders who do have the training, even as Jesus was by the Pharisees, (Jn 15:20). In fact, those closest to Jesus, who grew up with Him and knew Him the best, treated Him the worst, no doubt thinking that He couldn’t be a “teacher of the Law” and shouldn’t contradict those who are, for He was only a carpenter (Lk. 4:22, 24). Of course, Paul was only a tentmaker (Acts 18:1-3)! Likewise, those closest to you are likely to rebuke you when you start to speak independently from an established church entity, especially those who are familiar with your former role as a church “spectator”. Expect that things might get quite ugly one day (Lk. 21:12,16)!

### Beware of Wolves

Many Christians were taught that one sign of a church’s authenticity is that its “officers” were trained at its approved ministerial school, with its teachings and policies handed down from a tightly controlled, corporate hierarchical board. Therefore, many look for that sign when they are shopping for a new church. However, as it is being revealed to multitudes that that is contrary to scripture, many are seeking groups with no structure, no control, no teachers and no accountability. This error goes to the opposite extreme. Accountability to one another is an essential ingredient to a healthy, growing church (Gal. 6:1. 2Tim 2:24-25, James 5:16, Heb. 13:17, Rom. 15:1)!

Clearly, it’s “Independence Day”! Men and organizations have noticed that independence “sells”, and are quick to try to capitalize on many who search for an “independent church”. But that is not Christ-like and such men will eventually be exposed for what they are. Leaders without good conscience can cause many sincere brethren to be “shipwrecked” along the way (1Tim. 1:19).

Some ministries seek to gather many independent ministries under their wings. In order to become affiliated as an “independent ministry”, groups may be asked to fill out an application (can you imagine Paul or Peter doing this?) agreeing that they will abide by certain policies and adopt certain doctrines. While this may seem like a reasonable safeguard against heretical teaching, such affiliation takes away from independence! Do you see the contradiction here? Small groups, eager for fellowship with others, and accustomed to large gatherings, may jump at the chance to become affiliated, not realizing that they have been deceived and brought into bondage once again by men, and have lost their liberty in Christ.

Other organizations are founded on the premise that they will utilize the gifts of all members and not just a handful of ministers. They initially encourage local evangelism and decision-making. While this sounds good, too many ministers and members are still ingrained with the concept that the *only* way a New Testament church can operate is with central control. But usually, within the first year, most of the local decision-making comes to an end and everyone again defers to the central headquarters.

I pray for you, my brothers and sisters in the faith, that you will seek always the Lord God of heaven and earth, who purchased you with the life and blood of His own Son, that “*ye be not the servants of men*” (1 Cor 7:23), or men’s systems. Always remember, that when you draw your last breath, no man, no matter if he seems anointed or especially gifted, can raise you from the grave. You will be judged on how well you served your Creator, not on how well you served a corporation. Therefore serve God in liberty, that you may serve Him to the fullest. “*Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*” (2Cor 3:17). And “*by love serve one another*” (Gal. 5:13). 

Several friends in their late 20's are talking to an elder of a local congregation which they all would like to begin attending. The elder sees his responsibility to make sure that they understand the Bible definition of sin, their need for repentance, and the mercy and power for goodness that is available from our Father in heaven.

The group is very serious and open: all of them realize that their present lives have been going nowhere.

John knows he needs forgiveness: he supported himself by stealing for over two years. It became such a habit and compulsion, that he stole a few more times even after he was caught and served his jail sentence. However, he has resisted and not stolen any more during the last three years—though “easy to steal” situations still tempt him.

Paula has had drinking problems even since high school. She has lost three different jobs because of her drinking and has been in and out of numerous programs with varied successes. She has stayed away from alcohol during the past nine months that she has been studying the Bible, but it has not been easy.

Mark was always getting into fights during school years. When people insulted him, he could not resist letting them know “who was boss.” Later, he joined the Marines and was sent to the Gulf War. He still remembers how hot he was in his chemical-weapons resistant suit—and how he gunned down three surrendering enemy soldiers to vent his rage. His commanding officer yelled at him for doing it, but since there were other enemy soldiers shooting at that moment, the issue was quickly forgotten by everyone—except Mark. His life is calmer now, but when someone offends him, much of his temper is still there.

Jackson never wanted to fight anybody. He always had something interesting or funny to say. There were always women that were happy to date him—and sleep with him. He no longer remembers exactly how many did. His lifestyle made a sudden change when he spent two months in a hospital fighting a life-threatening sexually transmissible disease. There, he began to study the Bible and to realize that he had to live differently. He has had only a few partners since that time.

What would you do if you were the

elder talking to these people? Hopefully, you would encourage these people to continue in their struggle against sin—to repent, be baptized, receive the holy spirit, and to use the

power of our Savior to live a righteous life. We would hope that all of them would be welcome in your congregation as long as their past sins did not resurface and cause major difficulties for your congregation.

After the others had left, Anna continued to talk with the elder:

Anna had a difficult home environment growing up—to this day she does not want to talk about it. Nevertheless, she was a bright young lady and did very well in college. Young men would occasionally ask her for a date, but they always seemed like such oafs to her. During her junior year semester break, she had her first sexual experience with another woman at college. It was the first time she ever felt really close to another human being. For the remainder of her college stay, she moved into the sorority building where most of the practicing gay women lived. After college, she found the business world would treat her much better if she kept her practices secret. But Anna was forced to reevaluate her life last year when Janet, her best friend and “lover,” committed suicide. Janet had the job of her dreams, but Janet’s boss had found out about her lesbianism and found a legal way to fire her. Nearly all of Janet’s friends deserted her, too. Anna wants to live by the Bible, but is now more fearful than ever that she will be completely rejected if people find out the way she is.

What would you do if you were the elder? Would you tell her she is not welcome at your service? Would you quote the scriptures to her that say homosexual acts are punishable by death? But would you have told Mark and Jackson that they are not welcome because murder and fornication are punishable by death? **It is amazing how many people will easily accept a known fornicator or adulterer into their congregation who claims to repent, yet will reject without any further discussion a person with homosexual problems of any**

# Hope for Homosexuals

kind. (Members of one Sabbath-observing group seemed quite willing to continue to let a man lead them who had been video-taped committing adultery only a few months before—see SN March-April 1996, p 23.)

New Testament scriptures show that people living a homosexual lifestyle will not be in the Kingdom of God (1Cor 6:9, Rom 1:26-27, 1Tim 1:10). Anna must overcome her problems to be in that kingdom. But these same scriptures show that John, Paula, Mark and Jackson must also overcome their problems or they will not be there either. The Eternal is “longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2Pet 3:9).

**Why do so many of us treat homosexual sins as so much worse than other sins?** Probably because most of us are not tempted to commit such sins. We therefore have little empathy, and it is easy to simply condemn people with those problems. If several married (supposedly converted) men are together and one of them makes a comment about how he would like to “spend a little time with” a beautiful woman that they see, they might laugh it off or one of them might gently remind the other that he is married. But if one of those men were to seriously say that he might like to “spend a little time with” another man, they might be ready to “beat him up” or abandon him as a friend. Most of us understand heterosexual temptation much better than homosexual temptation.

But we are told “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24). There are many sins that were punishable by death in the Old Testament—temptation to commit one is little different than temptation to commit another. Punishments were applied only when someone acted on the temptation.

Why do people have homosexual tendencies in the first place? The answer is not simple. The gay movement insists

that people are born that way and it is the duty of society to recognize it. Anti-gay people often claim that homosexuals are simply the worst kind of "perverts." But both of these positions do not reflect reality. The largest majority of homosexuals seem to come from families where one or both parents are overly dominant or controlling—and not very loving. They just never had good role models to see normal man-woman love in operation. Some are forced into it against their will—usually when they are young. Other people appear to become homosexual simply because they had friends that were and decided to try it. People who have had many heterosexual partners (and little or no true love) often try homosexual acts simply because they are bored with heterosexual ones. A very small percentage have a fairly normal childhood, but just never develop normal heterosexual feelings—just as some people are never able to learn to read very well. Finally, there is a very small percentage on the opposite extreme: people who thrive on homosexual acts because they seem evil and perverse.

Most people reading this article have read about some of the extremely perverse and unsanitary practices of homosexuals. While gay activists may lobby to make these practices considered normal and socially acceptable, they do not represent the entire homosexual community. When some people read an article about perverse homosexual practices, they assume that anyone they meet with homosexual tendencies must have done all of those perverse things. Most of the time, that is not the case.

### Should People With Homosexual Tendencies Attend Your Services?

Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 and other scriptures contain the general principles for deciding when to refuse fellowship. We should refuse fellowship only to people who pose a real threat to our congregations, not to people who simply have different temptations than we do. There are three major points that congregations should keep in mind:

#### 1) Refuse fellowship to people who pose a threat to the congregation.

Among other things, this includes:

- a) people who have ongoing problems with killing or injuring others.
- b) people who repeatedly steal

from others

- c) people who seduce or force others into illicit heterosexual acts
- d) people who seduce or force others into homosexual acts.

If someone is involved in any of the above practices, the person who knows they did it—and ultimately the whole congregation, if necessary—should demand that they leave until they have been free of the problem for a long time.

2) **Refuse fellowship to those who bring a bad name** on the congregation by sinning openly. The last thing you want your congregation to be is a place where practicing gays come to find a homosexual partner. It should be a place for people who have acknowledged the error of their life style to receive help.

3) **Help those who want help.** When a person is really seeking to obey the scriptures and live by the power of the holy spirit, then congregations should help them—no matter how difficult their problems are and no matter how long the overcoming takes.

### What about AIDS?

Some will ask, "If we encourage people who have homosexual difficulties to attend our congregations, won't that increase the chances of someone coming and spreading AIDS?" Should people with AIDS be allowed to attend? We can answer those questions with a question: How do you know that there are not people with AIDS attending your congregation now?

The growth of AIDS cases is now actually higher among the heterosexual population than the homosexual population. However, since people with AIDS are often assumed to be homosexual, and since people with homosexual problems are largely unwelcome at Sabbath-keeping congregations, most people who have tested positive for AIDS keep it a secret. Also, we must realize that tests for the AIDS virus are not 100% accurate. There have been people who have tested positive, and then later tested negative. Should a person become an outcast because of results from a test that could be faulty? If you tested positive, but had no idea where you could have gotten AIDS, would you want to keep your test results secret until more research could be done?

If a congregation declares that they will not let anyone attend that has tested

positive for the AIDS virus, they are saying that they will not let the forthright and truthful people attend, but they will allow to attend those that simply never tell anyone. This is probably the opposite of what they want. It is up to the person who has tested positive for the AIDS virus to decide who he or she will tell and when. Obviously, if someone has tested positive for the AIDS virus, there is a very good chance that they have it and they should not engage in any kind of activity that might transmit the disease. If they do so knowingly and carelessly, they are guilty of murder! (See Ex 21:29.)

Homosexuality is somewhat like alcoholism, drug addiction, and other severe mental-physical disorders. There are some things the person with the problem can do to help themselves, but the power of the holy spirit is usually needed for a lasting solution. To be healed of homosexual desires, people may need to follow all of the instructions in James 5:14-16:

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. **Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.** The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

The confessing of sins to others and requesting prayers can be an important part of the healing processes. Sin just does not seem as bad when only we know about it, or, only we and our heavenly Father. When other people know—it seems awful. (Notice that there is no command to confess sins to ministers, priests, the entire congregation or the world, but to "one another"—some of our brethren.) Also, when others know about our sins, they provide encouragement as well as a monitoring system that can easily tell whether we are making progress or not.

All of the Eternal's people need to pray for the healing of other brethren—whatever the problem may be—so we can be the children our Father desires, and so we can be His light to a world that needs light.

—Norman S. Edwards

It seems difficult for society to show any balance on the subject of homosexuality.

On the one extreme is the gay movement, where men and women defy convention and give themselves up to a lifestyle that is far from happy or gay, and which has been a major contributor to the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases, especially AIDS.

At the other extreme we have the Christian Right which considers homosexuality a choice and threatens eternal damnation on all those who struggle with this problem. It seems as if all correspondence on this issue in our local press reflects one extreme or the other.

As with so many issues confronting our society at this time this problem is not so simple. Let's look at the facts:

**1. Few people choose to have homosexual tendencies.** They find themselves that way. Acting on those desires, however is a choice. It's time people understood that there is a difference. Some people have **homosexual tendencies:** they are sexually attracted to a member of the same sex. Some from this group choose to live a **gay lifestyle:** this often includes same-sex relations, homosexual pornography, certain types of dress, and other behavior. Some of those living a gay lifestyle will do so openly, so it is evident to most people that know them. Others living the gay lifestyle will do so secretly ("closet gays")—they do so in order to keep their jobs, friends and sometimes,

their church congregations.

It is possible to have homosexual tendencies and be Christian. It is **not** possible to live the gay lifestyle, openly or secretly, and be Christian; the gay lifestyle is anti-biblical.

**2. Nowhere in the Bible are those with homosexual tendencies condemned.** In fact, except in some modern translations, the word homosexual is not even used. What is condemned, are sexual acts among people of the same sex.

The purpose of *ANCHOR* magazine is to help those struggling with homosexual desires to realize that there are alternatives to the gay lifestyle.

At the same time, we want to show those influenced by traditional Judeo-Christian teaching that the simplistic approach of some churches is not helping and is often far from Christian.

Inspiration for the title of *ANCHOR* magazine is taken from Hebrews 6:19, "We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul...."

That hope is based on a simple statement of faith: that the Bible would not condemn specific homosexual acts if it were not possible for people to deal with their homosexual desires. In the Apostle Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians he assures us that "God is faithful, and he

# Caught Between Two Extremes

will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it" (1Cor 10:13).

Elsewhere in the same epistle the Apostle Paul writes: "Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

"And such were some of you..." (1Cor 6:9-11).

*ANCHOR* is published by *THE CORINTHIAN FOUNDATION*. The name takes its inspiration from the passage above, "... such were some of you".

It is our absolute conviction that it is possible to overcome homosexual feelings enough to live a heterosexual life.

This problem is not new. Clearly, it was a common problem in the time of the Apostle Paul. But for almost two thousand years the Christian world has failed to deal with it. Today, in our liberal secu-

We are including this "Letter to the Editor" as a sample of the effect that an understanding, caring and biblical approach can have on a real person afflicted with real tendencies.

Dear *ANCHOR* Editor,

I hardly know where to begin. I just received a copy of *ANCHOR*. I must tell you that I have been conflicted for several years now. I have been conflicted with homosexuality for at least 20 years. My father was distant and uncaring to me. He wasn't physically or verbally abusive, he just basically ignored me. It isn't surprising that I longed for his attention, or the attention of any male who took an interest in me. I was a very quiet, good boy. I never got into trouble and did well in school. About my freshman year in high school I began to notice that I was more interested in the guys in my class than any of the girls. While the other guys were dating and going out with girls, I maintained an aloofness and kept myself busy away from any of the girls. It wasn't that they weren't pleasant, they just didn't interest me.

I attended a local church here in my home state while I finished college. I always made excuses to the other guys that I had a test or whatever to get out from dating and going out with any girls. I am sure that they all put me down as an eccentric.

I was really reeling from powerful conflicts. Is it possible to be gay and a Christian? Certainly not!! But then, why has God cursed me so? Why won't He answer my prayers for healing? If this is so abominable, why doesn't He help, why doesn't He care, what do I do?

I was afraid to go to my minister fearing he would put me out of the church. This despite the fact that I have never "acted out" any of my temptations. I felt so torn. I became cynical. "God must not care." I thought. In the 15 years of silence and isolation I have never seen any substantive articles. I have not talked to anyone in the church, or outside for that matter except for one time that I went to a psychologist who just told me to accept my "gayness" as a gift from God. I discounted the entire psychological community for their inability to offer any real help. All the books on the subject and all the magazines point to accepting the lifestyle, the inevitability of it all. I refused to believe that that was my destiny, what with AIDS and all out there, but it is a consistent message that does have an effect.

A friend of mine confided something very personal about himself a few months ago, not dealing with homosexuality, but with something else. I finally got the courage to confide in him as well and that was such a moving and powerful experience for me. I had never told anyone. He was understanding and kind. He told me about your publication. I cannot tell you how encouraging it is to read it. I have read it 4 or 5 times, cover to cover. It has been tremendously encouraging and helpful.

Please accept my most sincere thanks for what you are trying to do and for what *ANCHOR* stands for. I look forward to getting any future copies.

—USA

lar western societies we are much more open about homosexuality. Gay activists have become politically very powerful — it is estimated that the six million gays in the United States gave victory to President Clinton in 1992.

The issue is out in the open. At the same time, new therapies have been developed and proven, enabling men and women struggling with their homosexual desires to learn how to deal with them in such a way that they have been able to change and live a heterosexual lifestyle.

It is for those still struggling and those who want to understand their struggle that this magazine is dedicated.

There are a number of top-quality non-pornographic gay-lifestyle magazines on the newsstands. There is **no** widely available magazine offering an alternative. It is our hope that *ANCHOR* will fill that gap. Our goal is to turn this

into a quality magazine to rival those produced by the pro-gay lobbies offering a message of hope to homosexuals seeking to leave the gay lifestyle.

*ANCHOR* will serve as a forum for ideas that may help those struggling with homosexual feelings and who do not wish to enter the gay lifestyle. We are not trying to force practicing gays to change.

Inclusion of a specific article does not denote complete approval on my part as Editor. Differing ideas may be promoted in this magazine. But all articles will reflect the two-fold mission of giving hope to recovering homosexuals and of re-educating the public unduly influenced by misinterpretation of scripture.

You may receive a free one-year subscription to *ANCHOR* or have the opportunity to share in our two-fold mission by writing *ANCHOR*, PO Box 153, Okemos, MI 48805-0153.

All subscriptions are confidential—we do not sell or share our mailing list! Thank you for your interest!

—Melvin Rhodes,  
*ANCHOR* Editor

This article was reprinted and slightly edited from the first issue of *ANCHOR* magazine. A one-year free subscription is available from the address at left. A single, free issue is available from *Servants' News*.

**If you know someone who could be helped by this publication, please send them a copy of *ANCHOR* or this issue of *Servants' News*—anonymously if need be. They may not get other help.**

It may work better to send the issue anonymously if you are not sure that the person wants help.

—NSE

**“Local Congregations” from page 12**

Services team has been struggling to rectify this situation and find the right men for the right places. Recently we asked a large number of pastors to help us fill a vacancy. We met with little success. Each one had reasons why he needed to stay put, and some had very good reasons. Yet, the Ministerial Services team has the challenge of serving the real needs of the membership while striving to be understanding and considerate of the sensitivity that some field ministers have expressed about being moved.

For the past year and a half there have been very few transfers because we have tried to develop and maintain stability. By next summer two years will have passed since the Church began under its new name. In an effort to more effectively serve God's people and be good stewards of God's tithes, we feel we must begin to take steps to correct the imbalance of manpower that exists in a number of areas. In other words, some transfers will be inevitable due to need this coming summer (and likely every year that follows). In some cases, we may need to rearrange circuits and reassign ministers to fill the manpower needs in areas currently understaffed. As a result, we must face the fact that full-time employment as a minister of the United Church of God may soon depend on a willingness to transfer to where the need is greater.

In October Ministerial Services held a preliminary meeting to discuss manpower needs and possible transfers. During the first week in December, we will hold a Regional Pastors Conference to discuss, among other things, plans to better utilize our manpower.

Transfers will only affect a small percentage of our manpower in the next eight months. If your situation is such that you might be among those who would be asked to transfer and there are extenuating circumstances, or if you would like to be considered for a move, or possibly transitioning out of the full-time ministry, it would be good to discuss your situation with your regional pastor. After doing so, it would be good to send him and the Ministerial Services team a cc:Mail message explaining your situation and the factors you would like to be considered in any manpower discussions. Your needs, suggestions and input will be carefully considered.

As ministers of Jesus Christ, we must shepherd those God has given us the privilege to go serve. In the past, this has required us to go where needed, and it requires us to be willing to do the same now. Your willingness to serve all of God's people and help us solve the manpower needs of the Church during these financially demanding times will be greatly appreciated.

**SN:** We realize there are many difficulties in organizing serving brethren in so many different places. However, it seems that the biggest problem arises when administrators take too much upon themselves. When this letter says: “By next summer two years will have passed since the Church began under its new name,” it is seems that they are saying “the Church” was the Worldwide Church of God and is now the UCG-AIA. The UCG Indianapolis conference supported the creation of local congregations with a home office to serve them. The home office is run by a council that derived its power from the

vote of the elders—they were not appointed by a voice from heaven, signs, wonders, or anything of that nature. How can the home office transfer a pastor when his local congregation wants to (or votes to) keep him and has the funds to pay him?

To us, the solution is relatively simple. The ratio of one full-time minister to 114 individuals attending is good. In places where a minister serves a much smaller group, he should be willing—even glad to move where there is a much bigger group with no minister. What reason is there to move the majority of ministers that are already effectively serving a large group?

Unfortunately, it seems that this transferring may be a continuation of the WCG's old practices: Ministers were transferred approximately every seven years to prevent long term friendships from building that might interfere with loyalty to headquarters. Ministers who mistreated their congregations were corrected, than transferred—given a new start in a congregation that did not know about their past abuse. Ministers with questionable loyalty were also immediately transferred so that if they were fired or resigned, they would not have nearby friends to help them. We have already received a report of an attempt at this kind of practice in the UCG-AIA.

We hope the UCG-AIA home office will realize that they will be wanted as long as they serve the brethren. But they are only one of many viable Sabbath-keeping organizations—and nearly all of their members know that. If they attempt to impose something on a congregation that is not acceptable to it, they will only add to the fracturing of that congregation. “But if anyone seems

# What Did Jesus Mean When He Prayed, “Thy Kingdom Come”?

by Toli Bohonik, e-mail: toli@prostar.com

The most famous prayer in all of scripture is probably the “Lord’s Prayer” in the sixth chapter of the book of Matthew. It is a prayer that we memorized as children, and many of us can still recite it by heart. With it the Messiah teaches us how to pray. Jesus begins by giving praise and honor to the Father. He says, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name” (Matt 6:9). Jesus then goes on, “Thy kingdom come” (v.10).

Have you ever wondered why the very first request the Messiah makes of the Father is to send the Kingdom of God to this earth? Have you ever asked what time frame Jesus Christ was referring to? When did He want the Father to send the Kingdom? Also, why did He tell us, His disciples, that we should pray for God’s kingdom to come? Jesus knew what He was asking for—but do you?

## Why Pray for the Kingdom of God?

It was near the beginning of His ministry when Jesus was teaching his disciples to pray. Many have assumed that He was telling them to pray for something that would not come for at least another 2,000 years. Two thousand years is a great expanse of time, far beyond the ability of most of us to comprehend. It would seem unnecessary, almost futile, to pray for something so far into the future. Did Jesus expect us to pray for something He knew we would never see in our lifetimes? Are we being asked to pray an unanswerable prayer?

Oh, yes, there would be one final generation at the end of the age that would watch the Kingdom of God come to this earth, but that generation would involve such a small fraction of the people of God, especially when you consider all the Christians who have ever lived prior to that time.

Millions of Christians have prayed the Lord’s prayer and have asked the Father to send His kingdom. Certainly

those who prayed for God’s Kingdom to come when Jesus began His ministry in 30 AD did not cause it to come any sooner. They died in the faith, fortunate to have personally known the Messiah. But did the Father in some way answer their prayers? Were they in some way given access to the Kingdom of God?

Christians prayed for the Kingdom to come during the persecutions that fell on the true Church of God in the middle ages. They undoubtedly felt compelled to do so, since those were certainly very, very difficult times. They had read the Lord’s prayer just as we have. What answer did the Father send to them? Did He in some way send them the Kingdom?

In quiet moments, when life was good, Christians, in their thankfulness for the Lord’s kindness, have prayed for the Kingdom of God to come. They prayed as Jesus had instructed. Did the Father answer any of these prayers?

Yes, He did!

The Father, in a very real way, answered all sincere prayers asking for His heavenly kingdom to come to this earth! The Father answered by giving Christians access to His Kingdom now, in this lifetime. The Father’s Kingdom, is, in a very real way, available to us now! It is ours for the asking and for the taking. We, in the Assembly of God, have direct access to the Kingdom of God! The World does not have any such access. That is why Jesus told us to pray “Thy kingdom come.”

## A Kingdom is “The Realm of a King”

Before we discuss how the kingdom of God is available to us now, we need to understand what a kingdom is. A kingdom can simply be defined as “the realm of a king, or sovereign.” A kingdom must have a king—that is the main requirement. In our modern world we use the term “nation” instead of kingdom. But a “nation” and a “kingdom” are essentially the same. Today’s nations are generally ruled by one indi-

vidual. The ruler can be elected, or appointed, or he may be an hereditary ruler. Regardless as to how a ruler gets where he is, in a Biblical sense a ruler is considered as king over a kingdom.

The Father is Sovereign! He is the ruler of the Kingdom of God. The Father has ruled His Kingdom for all eternity. All things in the universe are subject to Him. Jesus the Messiah is subject to Him, all the angels are subject to Him and so are all Christians. In Eccl 8:2-5 we read about how kings rule, and the Father is the greatest of all kings. In verses 3-4 we read that the king “...does whatever pleases him. Where the word of a king is, there is power and who may say to him what are you doing?” The Father’s power as King is absolute, He does what He pleases!

The Kingdom of God includes all that the Father has created and all that the Father has eternally ruled. We read that “...His kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.” (Dan 4:3). His Kingdom is without beginning and without an end. Also see Psalms 145:13, where we read “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.”

It is important to realize that the Kingdom of God is not the Church, nor is the Church to become the Kingdom of God. The Church will become an integral part of that Kingdom at the resurrection when we will inherit and enter it. We read in Dan 7:18 that the saints “...of the Most High shall receive the Kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever and ever.” The Kingdom of God is something we shall receive at the resurrection—we shall possess it! But the Church is not now the Kingdom of God.

**It would be incredibly presumptuous to say that the Church is the Kingdom of God! The Church is new. It did not exist until there were**

men and women to become the church. Compared to the Kingdom of God, the church is ever so small in size. It is, in this age, limited and finite. It first came into existence anciently within the nation of Israel and continues its existence under the New Covenant. The Church is incredibly precious to the Father, but the Church is not the Kingdom of God.

**God is Involved in the "Kingdom of Men"**

We understand nations and kingdoms from an earthly perspective. The kingdoms of this world are to a great extent patterned after the kingdom of God. The book of Daniel deals in a unique way with the subject of kingdoms.

There is a great deal of discussion about the kingdom of men (singular) and the Kingdom of God in the book of Daniel. The "kingdom of men" is comprised of the various kingdoms of this world. There are also detailed prophecies about these various kingdoms and the eventual establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth.

The kingdoms of this world have been setup on this earth as a type of the Kingdom of God, but they are not God's Kingdom. God maintains a high level of involvement, even in the kingdom of men. The Father "...the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men." (Dan 4:17). Nebuchadnezzar was corrected personally by God. Nebuchadnezzar learned that it is God who sets up kings and removes kings. He also learned that the Father holds the rulers of the kingdom of men responsible for what they do.

**Patterned After Things in Heaven**

There are many things on this earth that are patterned directly after the Kingdom of God. We take most of them for granted. Take for example a sword, where did a sword come from? A sword was a part of God's Kingdom long before mankind used it here on this earth. The first mention of a sword is in Gen 3:24, where we read about cherubims and a flaming sword that

guarded the way to the garden of Eden. Man did not invent the sword. It had a place of some kind in God's heavenly kingdom. It was obviously a weapon, but what was a sword used for in the Kingdom of God? We can speculate, but we really don't know.

Most of the creation about us is patterned after things in God's heavenly kingdom. Certainly the relatively few things that we recognize are only the tip of the iceberg. There are probably more on this earth than we can imagine. We read of armies in heaven and angels riding horses. Think about it, there are

It is important to realize that the Kingdom of God is not the Church. Nor is the Church to become the Kingdom of God.

spirit beings who look like horses and other spirit beings who ride them (Rev 19:14). We read about chariots flying through the heavens. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands; The Lord is among them..." (Ps 68:17). The chariots are spirit and the angels that ride them are spirit. The chariots apparently have wheels. Why are there chariots in heaven? And why are there wheels in heaven? We don't know, but they are part of God's heavenly kingdom.

**Satan's Kingdom Exists Within the Kingdom of God**

In John 18:36 Jesus plainly said that God's kingdom is not of this world. Satan rules over the kingdoms of this earth. Satan took Jesus into a high mountain and showed Him the glory of all the kingdoms of this earth, and offered to give them to Him (Matt 4:8-9). They were his to give! Satan does influence those kingdoms. When we look at the nations about us, and the rulers of this earth we must realize that we are seeing much of Satan's handiwork.

Satan was wise, rich, and beautiful (Ezekiel 28:11-19). He was on the holy mountain of God and he walked among the fiery stones present there. He became lifted up with pride, and filled with violence! His wisdom became corrupted, and he decided to take over the rulership of the Kingdom of God. Satan rebelled against the Father. His rebellion is chronicled in the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 14:12-17).

Satan the dragon and his angels were cast down to this earth (Rev 12:9). Jesus watched Satan fall from heaven as lightning falls from a stormy sky (Luke 10:18)! They became the spiritual rulers of this present evil world. Christ acknowledged the rulership positions maintained by Satan and His devils, Satan is referred to as the god of this world (II Cor 4:4) who blinds the minds of all the people on this earth!

We share the earth with Satan and the fallen angels. The inhabitants of the kingdoms of this earth, are under Satan's influence and rulership. There is a very real spirit "...that now works in the children of disobedience," the vast majority of mankind (Eph 2:2). All Christians must fight against this very powerful evil force. We can build the character of Jesus Christ (Gal 2:20) by resisting the sin, the corruption and the depravity so characteristic of Satan's governance (Deut 13:2-3).

We are expected to reach out and strive to build a loving relationship with our Father through His Son Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus said "the violent" take the kingdom of God by force (Matt 11:12). When we reject Satan's way of life and Satan's authority over us, we break out of Satan's Kingdom. Upon repentance and baptism, our citizenship is transferred from this earth to God's heavenly Kingdom, and we become literal citizens of an eternal heavenly kingdom!

**We Now Have Access to the Kingdom of God**

The Father's Kingdom is in a very real way available to us now!

The Father calls us out of Satan's world. He creates a veritable window to freedom for us. The Assembly of God is offered a way of escape from the corruption that Satan has built into this society and is given direct access to the Kingdom of God. Jesus, as our elder brother and the captain of our salvation, leads us into that Kingdom. It is only through Jesus Christ that we escape the evil rule of Satan.

In Matt 4:17 Jesus said "...repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was made available to the Assembly of God, and the Assembly of God is to

preach that it is at hand now (Matt 10:7). We have access to it now, today, in this fleshly life! In Matt 5:3 Jesus said "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Again it is ours now!

In Matt 6:33 Jesus tells us to seek this Kingdom first and foremost—to seek access to it now. It is through Jesus and His presence in the Church that the Kingdom has come to us. Jesus said "but if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (Lk 11:20). It has literally come upon us in the Assembly of God! Jesus meant what He said!

We are citizens of that divine kingdom. We are "...no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19). Once we are converted we become citizens of the kingdom of God. Satan no longer holds sway over us, he is no longer our master. We become sons and daughters of the Sovereign Who rules the universe, and we belong to the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. We have become a part of the Kingdom of His divine son. The Father has personally "...delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the son of His love" (Col 1:13).

The Father gives us the Holy Spirit. We are working with the Spirit of God to have the same attitudes and attributes of mind that the Father, the Messiah and the angels have in God's heavenly Kingdom. We become like Him. We dramatically escape this world. The rest of the world continues to be cut off from the Father and His Heavenly kingdom. Satan continues to rule and influence all of it! The wars continue around us, the hate continues the vanity continues the greed and the selfishness continue unabashed.

In the Lord's prayer, Jesus Christ said that we should pray for the Kingdom of God to come. He was saying that we can be converted and have the Father's Kingdom abide with us through His presence leading us and the comfort of the Holy Spirit abiding in us! Without that spirit we are not his subjects—we are "none of

his" (Rom 8:9).

**Our Names Are Written in Heaven**

The "violent take the Kingdom of God by force" (Matt 11:12). The Greek for violent is *biases* and means "a forceful or violent man". We are to forcefully come out of Satan's world and take the kingdom of God by force. When we do this, we, the Assembly of the firstborn, have our names written in heaven (Heb 12:23).

The Father's magnificent throne is in heaven, and we read about it in the fourth chapter of the book of Revelation. The apostle John saw it in vision, and attempted to describe it for us. It is wondrous beyond words. The throne of God is surrounded by a sea of crystal, with an enormous emerald rainbow surrounding it. There are millions of angels singing praises to the Father. In the midst of the throne and around the throne there are four living creatures, one looks like a lion, another a calf, another a man, and the last, a flying eagle. There are twenty-four elders, very special angelic beings, who discuss matters of governance with the Father. All of these spirit beings praise and honor Him.

What a wondrous place for our names to be written—for our citizenship to be recorded! God shares this picture of His throne with us so that we will grasp where our citizenship now resides. The Church is given access to this very real Kingdom!

**We Will Inherit the Kingdom of God**

**We are now citizens of God's Kingdom, but we have not entered it nor inherited it.** It is important to realize that being citizens of the Kingdom with access to the Kingdom is different than entering the Kingdom of God. They are two very different things. To understand this, imagine a son that lives in his father's house: he has access to much of it, but it is not his house until he inherits it. The situation might be even better illustrated by an ambassador: he lives in a foreign country (the world), though he still has limited access to the country of his citizen-

ship (the Kingdom of God). And, our Master said that he would go to his Kingdom and "prepare a place" for us (John 14:2-3).

We are yet to enter and inherit the Kingdom. Both are still ahead of us and will occur at the resurrection.

When Jesus Christ returns, those who died in the faith will be resurrected, and at that time they will inherit the Kingdom (Matt 25:31-36). Jesus will say "...Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (verse 34).

The Kingdom of God is something we will enter as spirit beings when we are born at the resurrection. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ( I Cor 15:50 ). And we most certainly are flesh and blood. So we must wait to enter the kingdom of God.

Entering the Kingdom of God at the time of the resurrection is something that the Churches of God have always preached. That is our hope—birth into spirit life in the Kingdom of God. Yet now, in this life, we do have direct access to the kingdom of God through the death and life of Jesus Christ. We are reconciled to God by Jesus' death and saved by His life (Rom 5:8-10).

**It is ours for the asking and for the taking!**

**The Father calls us out of Satan's world. He creates a veritable window to freedom for us.**

**Their Prayers Were Answered**

For the past two thousand years Christians have followed Jesus Christ's command to pray for God's Kingdom to come. When they did, the Father answered. He gave them direct access to the Kingdom. They broke free of Satan's evil kingdom and were given citizenship in God's heavenly kingdom. Jesus Christ now abides with each and every Christian—we are saved by His life. He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us (Heb 13:5). He is fulfilling that promise. In the world Christians do have troubles, but through the Messiah they overcome the world and Satan's influence (John 16:33).

When you pray, "thy Kingdom come" realize that it is one of the most important prayers that you can pray. That prayer guarantees you access to God's Kingdom and all of it's very special benefits!

# MADAI, TUBAL AND MESCHECH

by Craig White, e-mail: craigwh1@ozonline.com.au

In the book of Revelation, a great horde of peoples is recorded, collectively called the "Kings of the East". The Greek is "Anatoles heliou" literally translated as "rising sun" composed of two hundred million troops seen invading Europe and the Middle East. Who will compose these eastern and northern armies also referred to in Daniel chapter 11?

## Isaiah's Warning

The prophet Isaiah also referred to them: "The noise of a multitude of mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of Nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle...Behold, I will stir up the Medes, against them [the Chaldeans]..." (Is 13:4, 17). "Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof, have I made to cease...'Babylon is fallen, is fallen'..." (Is 21:2, 9).

Jeremiah also predicted the downfall of modern Babylon at the hands of these northern forces:

"For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great Nations from the North country...Behold, a people shall come from the North, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up, from the coasts of the earth. They shall hold the bow and the lance : they are cruel, and will not show mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses..." (Jer. 50:9, 41-42).

"...the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes : for his device is against Babylon... ..call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat [Georgia, Armenia between the Black and Caspian Seas in Russia], Minni [anciently the northern frontier of the Medes] and Aschkenaz [the descendants of Gomer in south-east Asia]..." (Jer. 51:11, 27).

We know that initially Russia will be a firm ally with German-led Europe. Ezekiel equates Babylon/Chaldea with Tyre; the peoples of Tyre are in southern Italy and Sicily, but symbolically it applies to the coming tremendously prosperous National European Socialist

Empire. God warns the soon-to-arise modern Babylon/Chaldea/ Tyre/Europe "...I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations..." (Ezekiel 28:7).

Thus Russia and her Asiatic allies will have a terrible falling-out with Europe. After this great battle between Europe and Russia, Christ will return and restore peace to this troubled planet, slowly, but surely, extending His righteous rule across the entire globe.

So, dear reader, where may we find Meschech, Tubal and Madai today? The only way we can understand the prophecies for our time is if we are able to locate these nations mentioned in God's Word.

## The Modern Descendants of Madai

The peoples of Madai first dwelt in North-west Iran, being called the Medes along with Medan. Their capital was Hagmatana (Persian) or Agbatana in Greek. They were called Ma-da-ai, in the Assyrian inscriptions and became associated and linked up with the Medanites who invaded their territory from the west. Thus the names Madai and Medes were used interchangeably, but the Medanites formed the ruling class.

After the defeat of the Scythians in 584 BC, a colony of Medes was established along the Don River. They thus moved north of the Black Sea and into Scythia

The Greeks called them the Sauro-Matae and they spoke the Scythian tongue which was much like that of the peoples of Persia and were also known as Surmatai or Syrmatai. It would appear that many Elamites, who dwelt adjacent to the Madai in Iran, probably migrated with them into south-eastern Europe [see Is.21:2].

Many ancient writers refer to them. Strabo mentions the Matiani or Matieni as does Herodotus and Pliny. Ammianus Marcellinus speaks of the Sauro-matians dwelling near the Hister (modern Danube). We also know that the Sea of Azov was anciently known as Maeotis Palus; on its shores dwelt the Maioti or Maiotiki.

The Sarmatian dagger and sword used by these people were exactly like that of the Medes. Researcher, Sulimirski, maintains that "the Sarmatians were...closely akin to the ancient Medes, Parthians and Persians."

Rostovtzeff wrote that "the Scythian kingdom—a formation almost completely Iranian, a northern counter-part of the kingdom of Darius and Xerxes...the Sarmatians, whose Iranian nationality is not disputed".

Herodotus wrote that the Medes were beginning to settle in the Ukraine even in his time. He maintained that there was a people who "dress in the Median fashion" and who "claim to be colonists from Media" that "live north of Thrace...beyond the Danube". Pliny noted that "Next come the two mouths of the river Don, where the inhabitants are the Sarmatae, said to be descended from the Medes".

Professor Lundman says that the peoples of Russia, today, around the Black Sea and the Don are "perhaps...vestiges of the descendants of the Irano-Scythian tribes who inhabited southern Russia in ancient times".

Who lives today along the Don, in southern Russia? The Ukrainians! They are also known as the Ruthenians and Little Russians. They comprise the second largest racial group in Russia after the Great Russians consisting of some 50 millions.

The Ukrainians near southern Poland and east Czechoslovakia are more brachycephalic than the others. Those in the north, the Volhynians, are shorter and are related to the White Russians or Byelorussians as we have seen in chapter two. The Ukrainians living to the south and east are taller, but their hair and eyes are darker. Their head forms are virtually identical to that of the Volhynians and blondes are not uncommon, while their eyes are generally a light brown. Finally, Herodotus associates them with Meschech and Tubal: "the Matienians, the Moschi, Tibereni...".

We should, perhaps, also realise, that before the advent of Gorbachev and then Yeltsin as Russian Presidents, the

previous ruthless Communist bosses Chernenko, Brezhnev and Khrushchev were all Ukrainians and not Russian (Stalin was a Georgian and Lenin's father was probably a Tartar, although his mother was German).

### Where is Tubal?

In discussing Tubal, Gesenius noted that Tubal was founder of the Tiberani, "a nation of Asia Minor dwelling by the Euxine Sea to the West of the Moschi." He concluded that there should be no doubt that Tubal and Meschech comprise the modern Russian people.

The people of Tubal were variously known as Tubla, Tabal or Tabali by the Assyrians who refer to them as giving tribute of "great horses" to Ashurbanipal; Tiberani or Tibarenoi by the Greeks; and Thobelites by Josephus. They were always identified with the Moschi in Asia Minor. The Septuagint version translates "Meschech and Moschi" as "Mosoch and Thobel".

Where could they be located today?

After the Hittite Empire fell (c 1200 BC), the Tabali moved into the territory vacated by the Hittites, establishing twenty-one city-states. A region of their territory became known as Subartu. The Tabali of Toboli migrated over the Caucasus like so many others before and after them. Once in southern Russia, they became identified with the Muschovites and Sarmatians, establishing themselves for a time along the River Volga.

Bohn, the editor of *Marco Polo's Travels*, has this to say: "The Bolgar, Bulgar, or Bulghar, here spoken of is the name of a town and extensive district in Tartary, lying to the eastward of the Volga, and now inhabited by the Bashkirs, sometimes distinguished from the Bulgaria on the Danube, by the appellation of the Greater Bulgaria."

It appears therefore that "Volga" and "Bulga" are one and the same; they appear to be identical with the root form of the name Tubal! Huxley agrees that the name Volga evolved into Bulgaria.

Tubal thus split into two like so many families: one branch migrated northwards, the other westwards. The group which moved into the Balkan Peninsula became known as the Bulgarians, mingling with the Sarmatians and adopting their particular Slavic language and customs.

There was a city called Bulghar on the River Volga, near the River Kiama in the land of the Bulgars also known as Bulgaria! Interestingly, a leader of the Khazar armies which filled the void left by the Toboli after migrating out of southern Russia, was called Balkan.

On the Volga today, all that is left of the once great city of Bolgara which Marco Polo mentions in his first chapter, is a little village. For a time it became the seat of Mongol rule in the thirteenth century.

The mountain range of Hoemus was changed to the Balkans in south-eastern Europe after the Toboli settled there. The name recalls the Balkan hills and Balkan Bay alongside the Caspian Sea where Tubal once settled. Perhaps the name Toplitza in Bulgaria is a derivative of Tobol.

The second syllable of the word "Bulgaria" is of central Asiatic origin being found in the name of Kash-ghar in the plateau of Pamir, where some of Tubal once lived. The Bulgars conquered the native Slavs in that land. To this day there are two types in Bulgaria: a tall, dark-haired type; and a shorter, fairer type, descendants of the other Slavs.

The other branch of the Toboli migrated northwards, perhaps giving their name to Lake Bataton Balta and the Baltic Sea. Today, they are settled north-east of Moscow around Tobolsk. There is also the tribe of Tubalai who live on the banks of the Tuba River and although they speak Turkic, are perhaps Samoyed. They may have acquired their name from Tubal.

A place-name alongside the Volga was known as Siberia. Today, Siberia is in northern Russia where the Toboloskis migrated. The name originated in the Subartu district of ancient Tubal in Asia Minor.

Another mutated branch of Tubal may be the Basques who dwell on the border of Spain and France. Basques is the form of the Latin Vasco. The French province of Gascogne or Guascogne is named after them. Also, the mountain range separating France and Germany is called the Vosges, anciently called the Wasgen Forest of the Basques—this signifies their migration into the area after the Flood. Roger Collins, in his excellent work, *The Basques*, states that Basque historian, Esteban de Garibay

published four volumes of his *Compendio Historial de las Chronicas* (Antwerp AD 1571) in which he claimed to trace their origins:

"He took up the notion, already popular with other Spanish antiquarians, that the Iberian peninsula had been populated by the descendants of Tubal, one of the sons of Japhet the son of Noah. However, he gave this legend a distinctive twist in making the Basque regions... the principal focus of Tubal's activity and he 'proved' this thesis by claiming affinity between various Basque place-names and those in the Bible that were associated with Armenia, where the ark had come to rest...".

Collins then proceeds to give the similarities in place-names and so forth. Garibay may be correct, but further investigation is required.

### Meschech

The descendants of Meschech were well-known to the people of the Middle East centuries after the great and terrible flood of Noah.

The Assyrians knew them as the Mushku, the Greeks as the Moskhi and by others as Musku, Muskaaia, Moshi and Moska. Herodotus, a well-known ancient historian, calls them Moschi and Tibarenoi. And the ancient capital of Cappadocia was Mazaca.

While in Asia Minor they were inseparable from the Toboli. They were the "natural" or hereditary enemies of the Assyrians and were largely the cause of the Assyrians losing power over other peoples from time to time.

They migrated with Tubal up to the Black Sea and into the Russian plains. Dr. Gesenius wrote, in the nineteenth century, that Meschech became the Moschi, a very barbaric people. They dwelt, he said, in the Moschian Mountains. The Moschian Mountains were the connecting chain between the Caucasus and Anti Taurus Mountains. *The Scofield Reference Bible* says that the "reference to Meschech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolosk) is a clear mark of identification". Strabo claimed that here was a district named "Moschice", a very barbaric people, while Lempriere stated in his dictionary that the Moschi were a people to the west of the Caspian Sea.

Expert Milner explains: "The terri-

tory first occupied by Meschech after their descent from the table-lands of Pamir was the plain at present peopled by the Turcomans, between the Oxus and the Caspian... The whole district within five hundred miles of Moscow seems to be saturated with the name of Meschech".

He then refers the reader to Steiler's *German Hand Atlas* to prove his point by referring to the following place-names: Moscow; the Moskva River; the Novo-Mosc-owsk on a tributary of the Dnieper; Mosch-Aisk near Borodino; Mosch-ok between Moscow and Nijini Novogorod; Mosch-arki stood on a tributary of the Volga River; Misch-etski stood between Moskow and the Tula; Mischiritschi on the border with the Ukraine; Mesch-a, a branch of the Dwina River; Mesch-Tschowsk near Tula; Mesch-Tschenskaia on the border with the Ukraine and Meschk-uze near Riga! It should also be noted that the Finns of Russia are divided into two tribes, Erses and Moskshes.

**Russian Claims of Ethnic Origins**

No doubt, the Great Russians occupying the thousands of square kilometres around Moscow descend from their ancient forefather, Meschech. The city of Moscow is spelt Moskva by the Russians themselves and it stood in the midst of a Russian state once known as Muscovy. The whole of Russia, in fact, was known as Muskovi for a long time even until the time of Ivan the Terrible.

The Peoples of Moschi were renowned as being a cruel race anciently: "woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech". The term quoted here is from the Bible, being used as we use the term "Vandal", "Hun" or "Philistine" today, as being typical of cruelty and mercilessness.

It has long been generally understood by many Russian academics that much of their population is descended from a branch of the Scythians. A famous Russian poet, Alexander Blok, for example, noted such in one of his poems, *The Scythians*. Also, Russian historian Alekseyev, in his work, *In Search Of Our Ancestors*, writes that the Russians are a branch of the Scythians.

There we have it—as plain as day-light! The peoples of Madai, Tubal and Meschech may be found in western Russia. They are a very tough, hardened people, best to be left alone and not interfered or tangled with.

However, scores of various groups fall within the borders of modern-day Russia, although dominated by Meschech. They include 16 autonomous republics, 5 autonomous regions, 10 national districts, 6 territories and 49 regions. They include ethnic entities such as the Komi, Karelia, Chuvash, Bashkiras, Tuvas, Yakutias, Jews, Ossetias and so forth. The list is virtually endless. These people are destined to more-or-less stay together and attempt to forge an empire out of the rubble of the mess left behind by the Communists. It will be an enormously powerful empire, with huge manpower and natural resources and with technological assistance from Germany. It seems that Russia will hearken back to the days of the Tsars and appoint someone who can be seen to be a symbol of unity, and who would once again ignite the imaginations of these tribes and peoples. He would have ancient roots and therefore a 'right' to champion their cause for a better lifestyle and religious liberty. As a royal he would be the mystical union between the present and the past, the people and their God, embodying the soul of the nation and representing them on the international stage.

Finally, dear reader, expect a far different looking Russia in the years ahead. Prophecy seems to indicate that the Baltic states will be joined with Europe and the Ukraine may gain some form of semi-independence. While the Great Russians will initially be partners of Europe, they will eventually have a terrible falling out with them which will lead to the most horrible conflict in human history.

**Suggested Reading**

Collins, R. (1986) *The Basques*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.  
 Coon, C. (1948) *Races of Europe*. Macmillan, New York, USA.  
 Milner, W. (1941) *The Russian Chapters of Ezekiel*. Destiny Publishers, Mass., USA. 2nd edition.  
 Yamahuci, E. (1982) *Foes from the Northern Frontier*. Baker Book House, Michigan, USA. 

**FEAST '97 ALBUQUERQUE?**

**It's up to you!**

The New Mexico Region Church of God/A Church of God Ministry would like to know if you would attend a Feast of Tabernacles in Albuquerque, New Mexico if it were offered.

**Let us know if you are interested in attending!**

We have lots to offer including:

- Lots of excellent restaurants, entertainment and family activities
- Longest tram to the top of Sandia Mountains
- Indian pueblos and museums
- Zoo/Aquarium/Arboretum
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- Incredible Southwestern scenery
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**YES!** We are very interested in attending the 1997 Feast with you in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of adults attending: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of children under 12: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of teenagers attending: \_\_\_\_\_
2. We have these special needs: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. We would be interested in serving as: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. We are interested in seminars or workshops about: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Comments and suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Return** this questionnaire to:  
 A Church of God Ministry, PO Box 20457, Albuquerque, NM 87111, Tel: 1-505-822-8709.

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.

**Already Understood Ephraim to be USA and Manasseh to be Britain**

**LETTER:** December 15, 1996  
Dear Mr. Edwards,

Very recently, I was shown a copy of your November Servants' News which contained several articles on Ephraim being the USA and Manasseh being Britain. I am curious and wish to know what reference source material(s) was/were used to inspire the writing of these articles—if this can be divulged?

Several years ago, I learned about this and became convicted on it (it's a reversal from what I had learned in WCG, which I no longer attend), and the person I learned it from received information about it from someone who attended Ambassador College in the early 1970(s).

I think it is encouraging to see people print the Truth when it is adequately proven,—and have the guts to do so—as I believe you have shown.

I would like to know if you would please put me on your mailing list? Also, if supply is available, I would like to have a copy of all back issues, including this November copy of which someone had given me a xerox copy of (Ephraim/Manasseh articles). This person knew I was aware of the "interchange" of who Ephraim/Manasseh were—compared to what I was taught in the past.

Finally, do you have something that explains who you are and what you represent.

Thank you and thanks for "standing in the breach" for the Word of God!

Sincerely,

—John Gordon, Nashua, NH

**RESPONSE:** The first person from which I first heard about the Ephraim and Manasseh reversal was Harry Curley, the writer of one of the related *Servants' News* articles. Harry worked at the WCG headquarters during the 1970s through the 1990s, but I think he came to the conclusion

on his own. I have heard the idea from a number of others since then. I did not use any one else's material for my article.

We will add you to our mailing list and send you all of the back issues. The first issue contains our goals and purposes which have largely remained unchanged. My background is covered in the answer to a letter in the August 1995 *Servants' News* on p 14.

—NSE

**"Friends in Pasadena" Letter**

**LETTER:** July 22, 1996  
Dear Mr. Edwards:

What, exactly, is the "Friends of Pasadena" newsletter? I've heard it mentioned in a couple of places but without explanation...

I would be interested in hearing of your experiences in Global during the time not long before your departure.

Thank you. Sincerely,

—Illinois

**RESPONSE:** The "Friends of Pasadena" letter was a six-page letter written primarily by Norman Edwards with help from his wife and a few other friends in Pasadena. It was mailed in late December of 1992 to about half of the Worldwide Church of God ministry and a few hundred other individuals (the mailing list was constructed from the names and address in the WCG family album and telephone directories). The letter asked WCG leadership to be more forthright in their approach to doctrinal changes. It also mentioned the enrollment in Protestant colleges of some of the WCG leaders and other facts that were not commonly known among the WCG membership. **I do not agree with everything in the letter today—it placed too much emphasis on retaining the old ways of Herbert Armstrong and the WCG.** Nevertheless, it raised a number of questions that the WCG leadership found difficulty in answering. A six-page rebuttal to it was printed in the Pastor General's Report several months later.

The letter contained no return name or address because I was still employed by the WCG at that time. I felt that I must attend with some church organization, and I did

not think I was yet ready to lose my job and be disfellowshipped. The next Sunday after the letter was mailed, I met in Rod Meredith's home to help lay the plans for the beginning of the Global Church of God. The next day I resigned my job at the WCG (where I had worked for 18 years) and started working on the computer systems for the GCG.

We will gladly send you (or anyone else) a copy of the original Friends in Pasadena letter. Also, I have another letter that explains my relationship with the Global Church of God. One section needs updating, but I will send it as soon as it is ready.

—NSE

**"Found Calendar Paper Helpful"**

**LETTER:** August 12, 1996  
Dear Mr. Edwards,

Thank you very much for the Biblical Calendar Basics. Your approach was refreshing—giving the facts and letting people decide for themselves. That type of courage is rare among God's leaders.

On page 8, under the section entitled "How does the Jewish calendar work?" you stated that there were references in the Talmud and other histories indicating how to keep the Sabbath when it comes after the Day of Atonement. May I please have a copy of those references (bibliography)? We are examining the calendar and that may be very helpful to us. Thank you.

Sincerely,

—Colleen DuBose, Phoenix AZ

**RESPONSE:** The specific fact that shows that the Jewish calendar has changed are the references to keeping the Sabbath when Day of Atonement falls on a Sunday or a Friday (it never does in the present Jewish calendar). The references, from the Soncino edition of the Talmud are:

- Shabbath 114b (See footnote 16)
- Menachoth 100b (See footnote 12)
- Krithoth 19a (See footnote 10)

In the next issue of Servants' News, we will be covering the calendar convention in Dallas, TX. We should be able to list a lot more sources from information gathered there.

—NSE

**If Not Mr. or Mrs., then What?**

**LETTER:** July 18, 1996  
Dear Mr. Edwards:

Regarding Norman Brumm's article in the May 1996 issue entitled "The Three H's of True Christianity...", I respectfully ask

how we are to address you. I understand not addressing another man by "Father," "Master," etc. However, I have been taught for 60 years to address any man, especially one my senior, as "Mr. So-and-So." Likewise to address a woman as Miss or Mrs. However, Mr. Brumm implies we are not to address people this way. Maybe I missed the point, but would like it clarified.

Name withheld

**RESPONSE:** The instructions in Matt 23:8-11, are to "call no man father," and to not be called "rabbi" or "master." "Father," in an ultimate sense means "Creator" and is a title reserved for the Eternal. Our Savior told His disciples not to be called by some exalted name because it makes class distinctions and takes away from the attitude of brotherhood and service that leaders should have.

It is not a sin to call other people by lofty sounding titles as long as they are not attributes or names exclusively belonging to the Eternal. We give two examples where it was done in the Bible:

But he [Paul] said, "I am not mad, **most noble Festus**, but speak the words of truth and reason" (Acts 26:25).

It seemed good to me [Luke] also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, **most excellent Theophilus** (Luke 1:3).

Festus was not always truly a noble person (Acts 25:9), but Paul addressed him the way he expected to be addressed. It is not wrong to address people as "Mr." or "Mrs." today if it is what they are expecting. By using these words, neither you nor they think you are idolizing them. Nor are we required to stop everyone from calling us "Mr." or "Mrs." There are Bible examples of people who used flattering titles to address converted leaders. Sometimes the leaders corrected them, but sometimes they did not. The sin is when a fellow brother decides that he must be called "**Mr. Smith**" (or any other name) by his brethren.

—NSE

## Where is the Third Resurrection?

**LETTER:** August 10, 1996  
Dear Mr. Edwards,

I think that you should be made privy of the fact that your publication has drawn us closer to God and given us insights we had never dreamed of. This past week we attended Ron Dart's Christian Renewal Conference in Hattiesburg, MS, and are thrilled to hear Jim Rector, Ray Wooten, and Ron Dart.

I tried to contact you in the past weeks. We attended a living room Church of God meeting and somebody asked me where the third resurrection is mentioned in the Bible and I was at a loss. In WCG I had been taught about the three resurrections and never questioned it. We looked it up in the Bible when we got home and it really doesn't say "third resurrection." They maintain there are only two. What does God's Word say about this?

Sincerely

—Ken Omick, Wisconsin

**RESPONSE:** In this aspect, resurrections are a lot like tithing. The WCG taught three resurrections and three tithes, but the phrases "second tithe," "third tithe," "second resurrection" and "third resurrection" never appear in the Bible. However, the phrase "first resurrection" does appear in Revelation 20:5-6. Also, we find the term "second death" in Revelation 2:11, 20:6, 20:14 and 21:8. These scriptures are a very strong indication that there is more than one resurrection, but they say very little about how many more. If we want to count every possible resurrection, we must count the resurrection of our Saviour and the many people who were raised back to physical life through His ministry and the ministry of the apostles and prophets.

I think most are interested in counting major resurrections involving many people. The "first resurrection" in Revelation 20:5-6 is clearly for those who have died following the Eternal. Later verses in the chapter show a resurrection to judgement. How long those people will live and what chance they have of repenting is not perfectly clear. Verse 15 says "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." This appears to be in contrast to verse 12 where people are "judged... according to their works." In my understanding, it was this difference that prompted the "second resurrection" (v. 12) and "third resurrection" (v. 15). doctrines.

In my view the most important thing to see is that we will be judged according to our works now, and that some people will come to an end in the lake of fire for their deeds. Whether this happens all in one resurrection or in two or more separate ones is nearly irrelevant. Does anyone believe that they will be able to escape the judgement "on a technicality"—maybe by telling God he brought them up in the wrong resurrection? I do not think so.

We believe this is an excellent example of the harm done when organizations write extensive doctrinal statements. Very difficult-to-prove doctrines are elevated to the same level of dogma as obvious statements

from the scriptures. There is no reason why two brethren cannot completely get along, worship, and serve together, even though one may believe there are two resurrections and the other three. Does anyone believe that a person who seeks and obeys the Eternal with his whole heart will not be in the first resurrection because he doesn't understand exactly how many resurrections there are? It is likely that many of the brethren that died before the writing of Revelation did not understand it.

We encourage you to continue in your studies. Every word of the Bible is worth understanding.

—NSE

## Over-zealous Music Letter Apology, Ridding Ourselves of "Elitism"

**LETTER:** December 11, 1996  
Dear Norman:

Greetings once more and thank you very much for your considered and kind response to my letter of November 5 as published in SN, November 1996 issue.

You are right. Lack of praise for Jesus is not specifically among the things named in the Bible that could keep an individual's prayers from being answered or keep him out of the kingdom. God will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy. And you are right again in your statements about corrective actions, put-downs, and sarcasm. I wish to apologize to John and Deb Sash, and to anybody else, for that matter, who might have found my letter to be offensive in that regard. It was not my intent to be offensive, but merely to emphasize the gravity of a subject which appears to be one symptom of an earlier-taught elitist position. And most certainly no sarcasm or put-down was part of my thought processes as I composed my letter, even though it admittedly could be taken that way. Please forgive me. As to the singing of praises in worship of the Father and/or Christ, the final test is of one's heart, and probably balance is key.

Having been involved with WCG from the mid-sixties to 1981, and then later with CGI up until the fall of 1994, it has been my experience, especially noted in hindsight, that elitism was most definitely taught, not only there, but elsewhere as well. I think the majority of folks did buy into that "ruling class" notion, including myself. But throwing off shackles of elitism is much more than simply playing musical churches. One does not unlearn very much without a decided effort accompanied by plenty of heartaches and tears. And it **does** pain me

to see the influence of those days reflected today. Yet, we have to grow through these things somehow, one step at a time. Sad to say, authoritarianism is alive and well, and promoted to one degree or another in a number of religious organizations in America, Sabbath-keeping and Sunday-keeping alike.

The fault, however, does not lie with the Sash family or similar folks who are doing the very best they can under the circumstances. The fault lies with the hierarchical leadership of elitist churches who have merchandised the brethren time and again, some of who continue to do so to this very day. How many times have we been "warned" as it were, about "those Protestants" out there and others who were so beneath us in wisdom, understanding, or adherence to scripture? Warned that they **only** traveled the narrow scriptural paths of their seminary teachings, never daring to stray into areas of theology **we** had re-opened? How pompous we were. The instances of this kind of teaching abuse by the ministry heaped upon little ones is legion. I say abuse, because to mislead any of God's children **is** abusive, and those doing the misleading will certainly have to give an accounting for their misdeeds. Yet, this fact does not get abused sheep off the hook; we all bear a certain amount of responsibility for what we learn, accept, and follow.

Our challenge, perhaps, is to remember that the price of freedom is diligence, and the only insurance against theological error and nonsense is real Biblical knowledge, something that never comes easy, and something that possibly may never be fully attained by any of us in this life. Paul said "now we see through a glass, darkly," but he did not say we have to stay that way. In the meantime, we look to Christ, "the author and finisher of our faith," and rely on God's spirit to guide us through this valley of the shadow of death. A lot of work needs to be done, Norman. I appreciate the service of the Servants' News crew.

Sincerely,

—F. Paul Haney, Watertown, CT

**RESPONSE:** Thank you for the excellent example of how we can discuss these issues, learn from each other and remain friends. It is nice that you can see that you are still rooting out elitism—I still find some of it in my own approach to others.

## Out of WCG / Questions on AIDS

**LETTER:**

October 24, 1996

Dear Mr. Edwards,

December 1996

Today, I have received quite a bundle in my mail. Thank you for that! The articles are very interesting I have already read many of them. It is just as in the first period when I first got into contact with the WCG (fall 1990). Due to a less liberal minister, I have gotten much "old" material of the WCG in that first period. After that, I got official information of the liberal WCG. I felt that I did not learn anything at that time. Now it seems that again a time of growth in knowledge is appearing in my life. Your magazine, among others is contributing greatly. Again, thank you!

Furthermore I have one question: in your July 1995 article, *Oh, How I Love Your Law!*, you mention on page 10, "Modern research has shown that AIDS and other diseases are a direct result of bestiality". To be honest, I do not know of such research but I gladly would like to know. Do you have some references with which this statement could be backed up?

Sincerely,

—The Netherlands

**RESPONSE:** I have read or heard of the bestiality connection with AIDS in several places over the years, but the only one I could find right now was on page 1 of *The Aids Cover-up?* by Gene Antonio (San Francisco: Ignations Press, 1987). The AIDS virus has been found years ago in Africa in monkeys and sheep—both animals commonly used by those who practice bestiality. While it is possible that the disease was passed by animal bites or the eating of infected meat, animal bites occur vary rarely, and the virus is usually destroyed by cooking.

It was a mistake for me to make such a dogmatic statement without irrefutable evidence that proves the virus was passed in this manner. Recently, several writers have put forth the theory that AIDS was the product of a biological warfare experiment that was tested in monkeys and sheep and subsequently released into the human population (*Emerging Viruses: Aids and Ebola—Nature, Accident, or Intentional?* by Dr. Leonard Horowitz, Tetrahedron Press, 1996, 800-336-9266).

The point of the article is that human suffering is usually caused by human sin—the breaking of the Eternal's law. If **any** of the above theories prove to be correct, human sin is the cause. It is interesting to note that the people least likely to contract AIDS today are those who live a life based on the Eternal's laws: one heterosexual spouse, no drugs, and avoid hospitals and medical procedures as much as possible.

—NSE

## Does the State Get Married, Too?

**LETTER:**

December 7,

1996

Dear readers and staff of Servant's News,

I have been reading the thread on an internet forum called Likeminds, on the subject of being legally married, and I think that there are some facts that are not commonly known to the average individual.

We automatically assume that for a marriage to be considered valid, it has to have the approval of the state. But where did we get that idea?

If two people get a marriage license and get married, then the state becomes party to that marriage. The state therefore has a legal right to dictate terms within that marriage or in cases of dispute. The state, in effect is the third party to the marriage. By extension, the state has legal claim to compensation. It may even have rights to assets. The compensations that are obvious are the attorney fees. The attorney, in legal terms, is an agent of the court. The attorney is empowered to secure assets for the state.

All this may sound like protection for the parties in a marriage, but there is a high price to pay for that legal protection.

But why a state license? No one, it seems, questions why two people in love, need the permission of the state. It should suffice that the two people involved would make their vows public, within their community and church.

But why a license? A license is a permission given by the state to perform something that is otherwise illegal. In effect the state considers marriage illegal, unless IT, the state, has a vested interest in that marriage.

More people opt out for "common law" marriages as a means of by-passing the state and its invasion of the privacy of the marriage.

Most people in today's society look down their noses on common law marriages. If one seriously considers the legal ramifications of having the state having a stake in one's marriage, then the value of common law marriage becomes obvious.

A common law marriage does not have to be a clandestine non-ceremonial event. It can be a public display of vows with the benefit of witnesses, but with the exception of the state.

I hope that, rather than taking things for granted, we can look at issues in a more in depth manner, which will allow us to be less judgmental and by far the wiser.

Sincerely,

—Donald Steckey Allentown, PA

**RESPONSE:** We certainly do not see any Biblical reason for the state or "the clergy" to be involved in authorizing marriages. Nor does it make sense for them to decide the terms of a divorce. Paul indicates that believers should not go to this world's courts of law for solutions (1Cor 6). So far, we have not seen any documentation that demonstrates the rights the state has as the result of granting a license. If you have it, we would be most interested.

—NSE

## Out After 26 Years of Hierarchy

**LETTER:** December 3, 1996  
Norm,

The names I submitted to you were people who have asked me to have their names added to your mailing list so they are all aware.

Some of us in this area are just coming to see this government issue in a new and different light so any information you may have that would help our understanding on this matter would certainly be appreciated. I have just come out of Global Church of God and a few of us are now meeting as independent in my living room—it is a very scary undertaking after 26 years under the hierarchical structure but I just don't feel like I can grow in Global anymore.

Anyway, thank you for adding those names to your mailing list and thank you for the Servant's News—I really appreciate it!!

Sincerely,

—R.B.

**RESPONSE:** I can remember that "scary feeling" during some changes in congregations our family made. However, the realization that we are now directly looking to our Father, not to a human organization, more than makes up for it. We learn how to walk by faith in Him. There are now so many ministries assisting independent congregations that they need not to feel alone. There are plenty of conferences, Feasts and other opportunities for fellowship. Also, there are many ways independents can preach the gospel.

On the other hand, there is much more personal responsibility for ourselves and for others. No one is going to try to "make you obey" anymore. May the Eternal bless you in your new group.

—NSE

## Independent Believer for 17 Years

**LETTER:** November, 1996

Greetings:

I was enjoying reading the latest SN

and I thought I'd give you an update on what's been going on with us.

As you may know, we started attending with GCG back in December 1994 when we moved out here (not long after you moved to Arkansas). (Deleted personal information).

The local group in GCG is a fine bunch of people. The host (in his mid-30s) is a good natured young man and tolerated our "radical" views rather well most of the time. So we sat back, basically kept our opinions concerning the governmental structure of the organization (and other concerns) to ourselves and enjoyed the fellowship of the local people. Our presence taught them a lot. They were totally unaware that there were lots of us (independents) who left in the 70s who were still following God's way and maintaining the faith. They were completely shocked with the standards that we had maintained in the keeping of the Sabbath and the Holy Days, the truth we had maintained and even the growth and the understanding we had experienced simply by leaving WCG and teaching ourselves how to study and research God's Word and receiving inspiration and knowledge from a variety of sources other than those specifically sanctioned by "headquarters". This group up here has really had a learning experience in fellowshiping with us because we've really made it clear that not all independents are kooks who had no good reason to leave other than to exalt themselves into positions of power and authority.

Unfortunately, the leadership of GCG didn't take too kindly to our "independent" ways. It became clear as the months passed that only so much of our "radical" thoughts would be tolerated before and after church services. We did have one-on-one conversations with several of the members who know that something is not quite right with the structure of GCG and have asked us questions regarding our experiences with other groups. But these people have never known anything different and they chose GCG because it was very similar to what they left and they didn't want to change the way they worship. They were open to discussing things that went wrong with WCG but still think that GCG is doing things differently.

However, this past spring, when Mr. Meredith came down hard on independents and free-thinking people, the group here became very concerned about us because they saw these sermons as attacks against people like us. We, because of our talent in music and my husband's ability to speak and to teach, have

been very willing to give of ourselves for the betterment of the group. But the reservations concerning the structure remained.

We sent a long letter to Mr. Meredith in the summer telling him quite frankly that he was totally wrong in his attacks against independents. That even though he may be a minister of 40+ years, he most certainly was perceived as one of the "bad guys" during the 60s and 70s when the ministry, under his leadership, was composed of many, many dictators and tyranny abounded. When we left in 1979, it was not so much because of doctrinal differences (only a few were changing at that time that we disagreed with) as **it was the tyranny of the local ministry and the horrendous mistreatment of the brethren**. People were being disfellowshipped simply because they mentioned the name of GTA, or read a letter from him, or questioned the irrational behavior of people at headquarters or — most ridiculous of all — refused to sign a statement wherein they "vowed" to be totally loyal to HWA. When they asked if they could add "as long as he followed God and Christ" to the "oath", they were told that they couldn't do that, that they had to sign the oath as is. When they refused, they were told that they were no longer in God's Church. This type of tyranny was totally out of control and unbiblical in every sense of the word, but **it was being perpetrated on God's people all over the country, depending upon the minister and how much of a dictator he was**. This was one of the main reasons we left in 1979. And here Mr. Meredith was, condemning those who left WCG before he did and condemning those who left WCG and didn't join GCG. And some of the sermons at the Feast were coming on strong with God's government and how GCG is portraying that government properly and correctly. Excuse me! I think not!

So when we got home from the Feast, we started working on a letter of resignation. It took about two weeks to finalize but we have sent it to the local minister and we have withdrawn our presence from the local brethren. Several of them understand why we could no longer attend and "support" GCG but others have done exactly what the WCG brethren did to us in 1979 — turned their backs on us. **My children are simply amazed by this**. They only attended with GCG for two years and they are perplexed and disturbed by this treatment. I told them that I attended in Memphis for 17 years and experienced the very same treatment from people I had grown up with. People I had known my entire life! **Is this**

**God's way of handling differences? I think not!** Church bashing is totally uncalled for. God's Church is not an organization. God's Church is made up of people from all walks of life, attending all different types of services and learning and growing in God's grace and knowledge. There are too many other things to be dealing with than bashing people who decide they don't want to be a part of a particular organization.. I hope if nothing else that God's people of this day and age learn that lesson because if they don't, they'll not be able to get along with God's people when God decides to unite them and they'll be the ones left behind.

As you can tell, this is a very sore subject and has been for many, many years. My own family turned against me in 1979. My very best friends for my whole life turned against me in 1979. Several different organizations have made us unwelcome because we've tried to "correct them gently" with scripture and love. They refused to take the correction and told us to remove ourselves from their presence. Of these various organizations, none are viable Churches of God any longer. One has split so many times because of the sins of the top man that it has no base. Another went into the occult. Another has become a social club only. And the rest have completely disbanded. They weren't open to discussion, correction, or simple direction. They were solely interested in continuing the faulty government structure so widely accepted as "the way to do it" and which has failed so miserably in the past 10 years, (and longer).

Now I'll come down off my "high horse". My husband and I are doing just fine personally. We are meeting – for the moment – with a local UCG group. But we have not committed ourselves to them. They also have a lot of growth to do and changes in approach and such. **But they are a nice group of people and our concern is for our children to have fellowship with others in God's church.** So we meet with them with the understanding that our options are open and we are "radical independents". The local ministers have visited us and I'm sure they really don't know quite what to think of us. We are so different from them in our thinking of how God's Work should be done they just look at us and shake their heads. But they didn't forbid us from fellowshiping and that's something in itself.

[Personal section removed]

Wherever we fellowship and wherever we go, we'll maintain our independence. That's just our nature after 17 years of

being on our own with no particular allegiance to any organization or group. **The strength of God's people is their ability to stand on their own two feet and face all the adversities, trials and tribulations Satan can throw at them.** They must be able to stand on their own – no crutches allowed. Leaning on someone or an organization to the extent of not being able to support themselves is a very serious problem that many of God's brethren are facing now. They leaned on an organization for so long that now they are without that organization, they don't know what to do or where to go or how to continue maintaining the faith. It's such a shame.

You guys are doing such a wonderful work putting out the Servants' News. We tried doing something similar back in the early 80s. It was called *The Sounding-board* and had a mailing list all over the world. But the need for it wasn't as great then because the corruptness of the various Church of God organizations in existence back then wasn't as extreme as it is now. My husband wrote many articles for it and for other publications over the years and if he can get them printed up again, we'll send them on to you. (I'm so glad you agree with our basic understanding of a woman's role in the Church. We've believed that for years but you'd be surprised (or maybe not) at the resistance we've met simply because it isn't the general belief accepted by most). It's amazing what getting away from the general mainstream of worship will do for enlightening one's mind. We learned lots when it was just the four of us meeting in my parent's home and studying the Bible and letting it interpret itself rather than taking the word of someone else.

Please keep up the good work and take comfort in knowing that you are doing a wonderful service for God's people.

—Mrs R,

**RESPONSE:** Your letter is a fine expression of your experiences. It is evident that independent congregations have difficulties as do hierarchical ones. However, when the leader of a small independent congregation goes astray, most of his followers leave and his bad administration and teaching comes to an end. However, when people believe that one corporation is "The True Church", then they are trapped there no matter how bad the teaching or the administration may be.

I remember hearing that you had "left the church" back in 1979 and I thought your family was "lost". Now, I know people who have given up on the Eternal completely when the WCG changed and people

who will apparently stay in the same organization no matter what it teaches. I now realize it is a mistake to classify anyone as "lost." Some people will view the large number of congregations you have attended as a mark of instability. To me, it shows that you are committed to the Eternal in spite of what organizations do.

I am also glad to see that you still recognize that there are many of the Eternal's people in hierarchical groups and that there are still many things that can be learned and shared there. It is sad to see people in independent congregations who will have nothing to do with people in hierarchical groups and vice versa—how can we severely judge people for having an error that we had ourselves for so many years?

I am sure that your family will continue to be pillars in whatever group you may attend. Thank you for writing.

—NSE

## Plan to Rebuild the WCG

**LETTER:** November 29, 1996

To the editor,

God's Government is top down in authority. We are all learning that lesson whether we want to or not.

In the past few years, the successor to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong failed to hang onto the faith once delivered. He tried to move God's Saints back into the world.

God struck him down with an incurable disease just like some of the kings in ancient Israel were destroyed for their folly.

This is probably the most positive thing to come out of this whole apostate situation we have just been through.

It shows that God will intervene like Mr. Waterhouse told us! God did and will continue to intervene if we do our part by fasting, praying and seeking God's will!

**RESPONSE:** I recall Mr. Waterhouse emphatically telling us that "**Herbert W. Armstrong would not die.**" It is true that Joseph Tkach, Sr. died, but it is hard to prove that he was supernaturally "struck down." He was only a few years short of the seventy years that the scripture allots to man. If we look at the kings of Israel, we find that a great many bad kings reigned a long time. Manasseh, a bad king, reigned 55 years—the longest of any. The vast majority of Israelites lived under a bad king. Did that give them an excuse to follow in the sins of their king? No! Did the Eternal provide some kind of alternate top-down government of prophets or priests ruling over the righteous? No! Elisha thought he was the only righteous one, even though there were 7000 others that he did

not know about (1Kngs 19:14,18).

We believe that the most positive thing to come out of "this whole situation" is the great amount of Bible study and prayer done by brethren looking into the doctrines that various people teach. There is far more learning and conviction now than there was when most people's personal beliefs were simply a carbon copy of their organization's beliefs.

**LETTER (CONTINUED):** We do not need to vote! God through Christ, the Head of the Church is in charge. They know what we need before we even ask it.

Now if we could all see the absolute power we as a collective body really have we could get the work back on track! Our prayers could destroy Mr. Tkach's son and all of the other false ministers that are going along with these Mystery Babylon doctrines!

We are to one day judge angels. This current situation is kid's stuff. Here's what we need to do! All of us need to pray the following:

**RESPONSE:** If "God is in charge," then why do we as humans need to formulate a plan and put it into action? You, Don Wheatley, do not claim that you are the head of the government or that the Eternal has revealed this plan to you. You are asking for our voluntary compliance with your plan—not what we would expect if we are being ruled by a top-down government.

**LETTER:** 1) That God will slay Mr. Tkach, Jr. and the one he would turn the Church over to. They have all been warned repeatedly! They are without excuse!

**RESPONSE:** It is not good to judge another man now. "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged..." (Matt 7:2). We hope that everyone will repent. Most of us would probably not have kept the ancient kings of Israel on their thrones, but the Eternal did.

**LETTER:** 2) Next, pray that God will show us a more capable man or have Mr. Meredith take the lead position for restoring God's Government in the WCG. He has taken the lead in preaching the Gospel this past year. He has demonstrated to the rest of us that God is working most effectively through him and is the most capable man God is using to do the work.

**RESPONSE:** This is the problem that has plagued many. How can government be hierarchical, yet we are not sure who the head of that government is? From your other letters, Mr. Wheatley, it is clear that you once thought the head was Gerald Flurry, and now you think it might be Mr. Meredith. Leaders of organizations often cite their numbers of members, ministers,

radio stations and magazines as proof that they are the place where God is working. These statistics change from year to year and we have no way to prove their accuracy. If one group runs out of money and another group "takes the lead in preaching the Gospel" next year, does the head of the top-down government change? Does anyone really believe that our salvation is based on how we evaluate these statistics?

**LETTER:** 3) Then, let everyone of us write to the WCG, and tell them that unless they turn over the controls of the WCG to the one Christ has chosen, then they too will all be dead men. God will destroy them next and we will fast and pray until one of those two things happen!

**RESPONSE:** We really think it is a mistake to fast and pray until the Eternal does our will. We need to fast and pray until we learn His will. The Eternal can do His work with or without the WCG corporation.

**LETTER:** 4) Put Gerald Flurry in charge of the Herbert W. Armstrong Foundation for preservation of all of Mr. Armstrong's works only if he will submit to God's Government.

**RESPONSE:** Should we preserve all of Mr. Armstrong's works, or should we delete his early doctrines that he later changed and his prophecies that failed?

**LETTER:** 5) Put Mr. Hulme back in his old job with public relations.

6) Let the other ministers in the GCG, PCG and UCG assume the ministerial positions forming the top down government necessary in carrying on the work.

7) Let's go forward with greater conviction than ever and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and warn this world of the coming Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord.

We don't need to vote! If Mr. Meredith gets off track, all we have to do is pray and fast about it. Christ, the Head of the Church will straighten him out! And if he bevels like Mr. Tkach, Sr did, then he's a dead man too and he and all of us know it!

WAKE UP, FORMER AND CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD!! Pray that God will destroy the leadership in the WCG so we can get the work back on track like we did in the early 80's!! Time's a wasting!!

**RESPONSE:** This is a very interesting attempt to unify the various groups and give all of the leaders some kind of job. However, most of them have publicly stated that they are not interested in working together. Furthermore, if the plan you have given is God's plan for putting His government back on the track, why did God give it to you instead of His Chosen hierarchical

church leader? And if your plan is **not** God's plan for putting His government back on the track, why are you publicizing it? In reality, it seems that you are following in the American tradition of perceiving a problem, formulating a solution, and trying to convince your peers that your solution is right. We do not believe your solution is the Eternal's will, but we do agree with the method you are using to offer a solution. **If** all truth from the Eternal comes through a top-down organization of men, then all we need to do is stay home until "God's government" finds us and tells us what to do!

Also, we should ask this question: Should we also continue to pray that the Eternal will put the Seventh Day Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Church of God Seventh Day, and other groups "back on the track"? Most Church of God groups trace their history though these groups. **Did all of the leaders of each of these groups quickly die after they left their original doctrines?** No! Other leaders took over, lived a long time and the groups are all still functioning, today! An honest look at the history of Sabbath-keeping groups shows that there has not been a single hierarchical leader most of the time. We should not be confused if we cannot find one today.

**LETTER:** Mr. Armstrong always focused on the **big picture**. He was the only one who could unite us on a **human level**. We need to all fast and pray so we can be united on a spiritual level!

Please take this fax seriously! This may be our last chance!

**RESPONSE:** Our Father in Heaven will unite us on a spiritual level if we will submit to him. He will hear those who seek Him. He is not withholding salvation because there is not a clear hierarchical government to submit to.

**LETTER:** Again, I say, WAKE UP!! RETURN TO GOD BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!!

Sincerely,

—Donald Raymond Wheatley  
PO Box 20144, Greenville, NC 27858-0144

**RESPONSE:** Your last statement we completely agree with! We appreciate your desire to see the Gospel preached and to see people stand up for the truth. We hope that you and others will see that it is possible to have a close relationship with the Eternal and to do great works in his name regardless of what human organizations do. We need to return to our Father in heaven—not a corporate organization which the Eternal has allowed to decay!

—NSE



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For free back issues, please request the year(s) and month(s) that you would like: *Servants' News*, PO Box 220, Charlotte, Michigan 48813-0220 or telephone 517-543-5544 or fax 517-543-8899 or E-Mail 75260.1603@CompuServe.com. See page 2 for international addresses.

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- 20 *Godly Unity Questions (letter)* by Norman Arthur Brumm
- 21 *Good Questions on Nicolaitanism* by Norman Edwards

**March-April 1996 Servants' News, Vol 2, No 3**

- 1 *Is Having the Truth Enough?* by Jack Lane
- 1 *Passover: Shadow of Our Savior* by Richard A. Wiedenheft
- 2 *The Great Commandment* by Will Benedetti
- 3 *Plenty of Passover Papers* by Norman Edwards
- 3 *The Lord's Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread* by John Paul Benedetti
- 7 *Are We Ready for Miracles?* by Norman Edwards
- 11 *The Great Commission* by Jerry Laws
- 13 *Friends of the Brethren Corporation Ends, Service to Brethren Continues* by Norman Edwards
- 19 *Aware of Friendly Visits (letter)* by [NSE response]
- 19 *Jubilee '95 and CEM Questions (letter)* by [NSE response]
- 20 *Against "Friendly Visits" Article (letter)* by [NSE response]
- 23 *GTA Problem Continues* by Norman Edwards

**May 1996 Servants' News, Vol 2, No 4**

- 1 *Expansion in Russellville, Arkansas* by Larry Lasiter
- 1 *Giving & Sharing and Bible Sabbath Association Expand* by Norman Edwards
- 1 *The Christian Beacon Lays Foundation* by Norman Edwards
- 1 *Tulsa Meeting Agrees to Let Christ Lead* by Norman Edwards
- 2 *Utilizing Resources in the Local Church* by Craig White
- 3 *The Three H's of True Christianity* by Norman Arthur Brumm
- 7 *Aligning Ourselves With God* by Alan Ruth
- 7 *The Apprenticeship of God* by Alan Ruth
- 8 *Why Hasn't Servants' News Printed or Distributed Your Article?* by Norman Edwards
- 9 *Teaching Unpopular Truth to Skeptical People* by Norman Edwards
- 12 *If I Be Lifted Up...* by Larry Lasiter
- 24 *High Praise for Approach to CGI (letter)* by [NSE response]

**June 1996 Servants' News, Vol 2, No 5**

- 1 *Grace Vs. Works* by Eric V. Snow
- 1 *Pastor Resigns from WCG: Against the Leadership, Not Doctrine* by David Covington
- 2 *God is Light* by Jerry Laws
- 3 *The Messiah is to Lead Us* by Toli Bohonik
- 14 *Ancient "MMT" Text Helps Us Understand What Paul Meant by.. "Works of the Law"* by Eric V. Snow
- 15 *The Church and Salvation* by Robert B. Schimmel
- 17 *Real-Life Indiana Jones Says He's Close to Finding the Lost Ark*
- 19 *Cannot Repeat Our Past Mistakes (letter)* by Tawanda Ray
- 22 *Husband & Wife in Different Groups (letter)* by [NSE response]

**July 1996 Servants' News, Vol 2, No 6**

- 1 *Answering the Lord's Prayer?* by Pam Dewey
- 1 *Servants' News Moves to Michigan* by Norman Edwards
- 2 *International Biblical Learning Center* by Norman Edwards
- 3 *Oh, How I Love Your Law! (Part 5)* by Norman Edwards
- 7 *Response To David Covington's Letter* by Jeanette Cristoforo
- 15 *The "Plymouth Brethren" Movement of the 1800's* by Pam Dewey
- 16 *Old Testament Prophecies and Holy Days Answer the Lord's Prayer* by Pam Dewey
- 20 *Answers to Questions & Anointing (letter)* by Richard A. Heath
- 21 *Glad to Get the Facts on GTA (letter)* by Wayne Schatzle
- 22 *Point 6 for Passover Article (letter)* by Kevin & Ada MacPherson
- 22 *Why Lambs Selected on the 10th? (letter)* by John Sash
- 23 *Philadelphians=Scattered Brethren (letter)* by [NSE response]
- 24 *Not All Messianic Jews Alike (letter)* by Veronica Smith

**August 1996 Servants' News, Vol 2, No 7**

- 1 *Dealing With Doctrinal Difference: Toleration, Separation or Forced Conversion?* by Norman Edwards
- 2 *Children—The Forgotten Victims* by Pam Dewey
- 3 *God Works in Spite of Hierarchies* by Norman Arthur Brumm
- 5 *Resignation Exposes Hierarchical Problem* by Wesley Webster
- 7 *Choosing Music for Group Worship* by Pam Dewey
- 12 *Far-Reaching Insights at Friends of the Sabbath Conference* by Norman Edwards
- 13 *The Commandment of Christ* by Hari Merman
- 15 *Encouragement for the "Stay-At-Home Church of God"* by Jim Damiano
- 19 *Getting to Know Christ* by Jerry Laws
- 21 *Pen Pals and Running a Group (letter)* by James & Sadie Morgan

25 *Much Learned at Assembly of Yahweh Unity Meeting* by Pam Dewey

**Sept-Oct 1996 Servants' News, Vol 2, No 8**

- 1 *Feast '96: Non-Aligned—The Concept Does Work!* by Norman Edwards
- 1 *Festival '96 Reports* by various authors
- 1 *Why Does Our Father Let Us Believe Error* by Norman Edwards
- 2 *Praise & Worship Music* by Pam Dewey
- 5 *You Can Contact Scattered Brethren* by Norman Edwards
- 9 *Living Room Church of God Directory* by Norman Edwards
- 15 *Shalom—Reconciliation is Our Preparation* by Gary DuBois
- 16 *Response to the Famous "Stay-at-Home Church of God" Letter* by Lawrence Maayah
- 17 *The Celtic Church in Britain (Book Review)* by Richard Nickels
- 24 *Starting a New Congregation (letter)* by [NSE response]
- 25 *Many Questions About Sabbath Services, Including Role of Women (letter)* by [NSE response]

**November 1996 Servants' News, Vol 2, No 9**

- 1 *Marriage & Divorce* by Norman Edwards
- 1 *Where Are the 12 Tribes of Israel Today?* by Norman Edwards
- 2 *Is Thanksgiving Only For Turkeys?* by Norman Edwards
- 3 *In Transition Concept to Continue* by Norman Edwards
- 9 *Focus on the Family: What Can We Learn From Their Work?* by Norman Edwards
- 13 *"What God Has Joined Together...Let Not Man Separate"* by Marleen Edwards
- 14 *Coronation Stone Goes to Scotland* by Norman Edwards
- 14 *Will the Real Ephraim Please Stand Up?* by Harry Curley
- 15 *Ephraim, Manasseh, Texas and the Bill of Rights* by Lyle Timmons

17 *Ephraim and Manasseh—Which is Which? (Comments on McNair Article)* by Norman Edwards

- 21 *When Christians Disagree, What Do You Do?* by Steven M. Collins
- 23 *Calendar Not Always "Postponed"* by [NSE response]
- 24 *Music Praising Our Savior (letter)* by F. Paul Haney

**December 1996 Servants' News, Vol 2, No 10**

- 1 *Be Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves* by Norman Edwards
- 2 *Independence Day* by David Cohen
- 3 *The Marriage Contract: Does Anyone Really Do It?* by Joop Peterse
- 7 *Being Wise and Harmless in our Finances* by Norman Edwards
- 11 *Church Newspaper to Begin in February* by Dixon Cartwright
- 12 *Staying At Home? Try the Church of God Seventh Day* by Clyde Thompson
- 12 *UCG Plans Ministerial Transfers* by Norman Edwards
- 13 *Questions & Responses on "Tithing"* by Norman Edwards
- 17 *Hope for Homosexuals* by Norman Edwards
- 19 *Caught Between Two Extremes* by Melvin Rhodes
- 21 *What Did Jesus Mean When He Prayed, "Thy Kingdom Come"?* by Toli Bohonik
- 24 *Madai, Tubal and Meschech* by Craig White
- 26 *Feast '97 Albuquerque? It's up to you!* by Lon Lacey
- 27 *Already Understood Ephraim to be USA and Manasseh to be Britain (letter)* by John Gordon
- 27 *Friends in Pasadena Letter (letter about it)* by [name withheld]
- 28 *Where is the Third Resurrection? (letter)* by [NSE response]
- 29 *Does the State Get Married, Too? (letter)* by Donald Steckey
- 30 *Independent Believer for 17 Years* by [name withheld]
- 33 *Servants' News Index—Arranged by Issue* by Norman Edwards
- 35 *Servants' News Index—Arranged by Subject* by Norman Edwards

**— Arranged by Subject —**

We have assigned one or more subjects to all of the previously listed articles and are presenting them here in order by subject. We realize that the subjects we have covered the most are "church government" and "church organization." We have devoted much space to these issues because it is difficult for people to learn more truth if they believe truth is revealed only through one man or organization.

**\*Acts 15:10**

April-95 Acts 15:10: What is the "Heavy Load" or "Yoke"? (letter)

**abortion**

July-96 Oh, How I Love Your Law! (Part 5)

**Ambassador University**

July-95 Big Changes in Big Sandy

**anointing**

July-96 Answers to Questions & Anointing (letter)

**archeology**

June-96 Ancient "MMT" Text Helps Us Understand What Paul Meant by.. "Works of the Law"

**Ark of the Covenant**

Aug-95 One Ark or Two

June-96 Real-Life Indiana Jones Says He's Close to Finding the Lost Ark

**Armstrong, Herbert**

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May-95 Did Christ Reorganize the Church?

July-95 Learning From the Writings of Herbert W. Armstrong

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Aug-96 Much Learned at Assembly of Yahweh Unity Meeting

**Beacon**

May-96 The Christian Beacon Lays Foundation

**Bible Educational Serv.**

June-95 Sources of Bible Information

**Bible Sabbath Assoc.**

June-95 Sources of Bible Information

May-96 Giving & Sharing and Bible Sabbath Association Expand

**Bible study**

April-95 Ten Principles of Bible Study

May-95 Principles of Understanding Bible Prophecy

Dec-95 Sabbatarian Bible Fellowship

July-96 International Biblical Learning Center

Sept-96 Why Does Our Father Let Us Believe Error

**Bible, authority**

Feb-96 "The Trinity Re-examined" (letter)

**Big Sandy**

July-95 Big Changes in Big Sandy

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Feb-96 A Proposal: Intersabbatarian Cooperation

**brethren, relationships**

April-95 "For with the judgment you judge..."

Aug-95 Avoiding Competition (letter)

Dec-96 Being Wise and Harmless in our Finances

**British Israelism**

July-95 History Research Projects Catalog

- Nov-96 Coronation Stone Goes to Scotland
- Nov-96 Ephraim and Manasseh—Which is Which?  
(Comments on McNair Article)
- Nov-96 Ephraim, Manasseh, Texas and the Bill of Rights
- Nov-96 Where Are the 12 Tribes of Israel Today?
- Nov-96 Will the Real Ephraim Please Stand Up?
- Dec-96 Already Understood Ephraim to be USA and  
Manasseh to be Britain (letter)

**calendar**

- Nov-96 Calendar Not Always "Postponed"

**CEM—Ronald Dart**

- Dec-95 CEM Emerges From CGI Reorganization
- Mar-96 Jubilee '95 and CEM Questions (letter)

**children**

- Aug-96 Children—The Forgotten Victims

**Christian living**

- Nov-95 On Blessing Those Who Curse You
- May-96 The Apprenticeship of God
- May-96 The Three H's of True Christianity
- June-96 God is Light
- June-96 The Messiah is to Lead Us
- Aug-96 Getting to Know Christ
- Sept-96 Shalom—Reconciliation is Our Preparation
- Dec-96 Be Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves

**church division**

- June-95 Why are there Divisions in the Church?
- July-95 Acceptance Without Compromise
- July-95 Deep and Serious Questions (letter)

**church finances**

- Aug-95 Questions and Comments on Church Governance

**church government**

- April-95 "For with the judgment you judge..."
- May-95 "But be doers of the word and not hearers only,  
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- May-95 Did Christ Reorganize the Church?
- May-95 To the Ministry of the Church of God...
- June-95 Why are there Divisions in the Church?
- July-95 Follow Me!??
- Aug-95 Questions and Comments on Church Governance
- Aug-95 Ten Reasons Why You Should Not Leave the  
Worldwide Church of God
- Sept-95 Article on Government (letter)
- Sept-95 Church Government—It doesn't have to divide us!
- Sept-95 Letter from Alan Ruth to the UCG Board with  
Response from Jim Franks
- Nov-95 Nicolaitanism—First-Century Clergyism and Priestcraft
- Nov-95 Ray Wooten on Church Governance
- Nov-95 Submission on the UCG Draft Constitution
- Nov-95 The Myth of Government from the Top Down
- Nov-95 Thoughts Regarding UCG-AIA "Draft" Constitution &  
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- Nov-95 What is the Role of Church Members in Governing  
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- Dec-95 Independence: Is it Rebellion?
- Dec-95 UCG Approves Constitution
- Jan-96 UCG-AIA Rules of Association—Comments and  
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- Feb-96 Beware of "Friendly" Visits
- Feb-96 Good Questions on Nicolaitanism
- Mar-96 Against "Friendly Visits" Article (letter)
- Mar-96 Are We Ready for Miracles?
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- June-96 Cannot Repeat Our Past Mistakes (letter)
- Aug-96 Dealing With Doctrinal Difference: Toleration,  
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- Feb-96 Church of God—Adventist
- July-96 The "Plymouth Brethren" Movement of the 1800's
- Sept-96 The Celtic Church in Britain (Book Review)

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- Dec-96 Staying At Home? Try the Church of God Seventh  
Day

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- Sept-95 Church Government—It doesn't have to divide us!
- Dec-95 CEM Emerges From CGI Reorganization
- Jan-96 New Future for CGI Congregations
- Jan-96 Personal Letter Regarding CGI Situation
- Feb-96 Action Taken at Church of God, International  
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- Feb-96 Why Does Servants' News Report on Another Man's  
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- Mar-96 GTA Problem Continues
- Mar-96 High Praise for Approach to CGI (letter)
- May-96 Tulsa Meeting Agrees to Let Christ Lead
- July-96 Glad to Get the Facts on GTA (letter)

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- May-95 "But be doers of the word and not hearers only,  
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- May-95 Did Christ Reorganize the Church?
- May-95 Local Church Autonomy vs. Central Control
- May-95 Summary of Proceedings, UCG-AIA Conference of  
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- May-95 To the Ministry of the Church of God...
- May-95 Why So Many Differences? (letter)
- June-95 Does Voting Cause People to Play Politics?
- June-95 God's True Church
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- Feb-96 Worldwide Church of God: Crisis and Lessons
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- July-95 An Open Letter to All the Churches of God

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- Aug-95 The New Circumcision

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- April-95 The Sabbath and Clean Meats

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- Mar-96 The Great Commandment
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- April-95 "You shall be judged"

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 April-95 Elijah Work Yet to Begin (letter)

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 Jan-96 Non-Aligned Feast Sites Really Work  
 Dec-96 Feast '97 Albuquerque? It's up to you!

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 Dec-96 Be Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves

**stay-at-home COG**  
 Aug-96 Encouragement for the "Stay-At-Home Church of God"  
 Sept-96 Response to the Famous "Stay-at-Home Church of God" Letter  
 Dec-96 Staying At Home? Try the Church of God Seventh Day

**study sources**  
 June-95 Sources of Bible Information  
 July-95 Learning From the Writings of Herbert W. Armstrong  
 Sept-95 Peaceful Cooperation among the Ekklesia  
 May-96 The Christian Beacon Lays Foundation

**tax exemption**  
 Mar-96 Friends of the Brethren Corporation Ends, Service to Brethren Continues

**teaching**  
 May-96 Teaching Unpopular Truth to Skeptical People

**Thanksgiving**  
 Nov-96 Is Thanksgiving Only For Turkeys?

**The Churches of God**  
 May-96 Tulsa Meeting Agrees to Let Christ Lead

**The Journal: News of CGs**  
 Dec-96 Church Newspaper to Begin in February

**theft**  
 July-95 Oh, How I Love Your Law! (Part 2)

**tithing**  
 Dec-96 Questions & Responses on "Tithing"

**trinity**  
 Dec-95 The Trinity Re-Examined

**truth**  
 Mar-96 Is Having the Truth Enough?

**truth in reporting**  
 June-95 Your Paper Said It, But Is It True?  
 July-95 We Can Do a Better Job

**UCG, Birmingham**  
 April-95 United Church of God  
 June-95 UCG On the Air with Hope for Humanity in Alabama  
 Sept-95 Formal Statement Regarding Fellowship and Affiliation: UCG, Birmingham  
 Sept-95 Letter from Alan Ruth to the UCG Board with Response from Jim Franks

**UCG-AIA**  
 May-95 "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves"  
 May-95 Local Church Autonomy vs. Central Control  
 May-95 Summary of Proceedings, UCG-AIA Conference of Elders  
 May-95 United Church of God & Worldwide Church of God Texas  
 June-95 Global or United Church? (letter)  
 June-95 United Church of God  
 July-95 Deep and Serious Questions (letter)  
 July-95 We Can Do a Better Job  
 Aug-95 Questions and Comments on Church Governance  
 Aug-95 United Church Conference, Growth  
 Sept-95 Church Government—It doesn't have to divide us!  
 Sept-95 Letter from Alan Ruth to the UCG Board with Response from Jim Franks  
 Nov-95 Submission on the UCG Draft Constitution  
 Dec-95 Praise for the UCG Conclusion  
 Dec-95 UCG Approves Constitution  
 Jan-96 UCG-AIA Rules of Association—Comments and Suggestions  
 May-96 Utilizing Resources in the Local Church  
 Dec-96 UCG Plans Ministerial Transfers

**unity**  
 Nov-95 Godly Unity  
 Feb-96 Godly Unity Questions (letter)  
 July-96 Answering the Lord's Prayer?  
 July-96 Old Testament Prophecies and Holy Days Answer the Lord's Prayer  
 Aug-96 Much Learned at Assembly of Yahweh Unity Meeting

**voting**  
 June-95 Does Voting Cause People to Play Politics?

**WCG**  
 June-95 Your Paper Said It, But Is It True?  
 July-95 Learning From the Writings of Herbert W. Armstrong  
 Aug-95 Ten Reasons Why You Should Not Leave the Worldwide Church of God  
 Sept-95 Joseph Tkach, Jr. Assumes Father's Office  
 Feb-96 Worldwide Church of God: Crisis and Lessons  
 June-96 Pastor Resigns from WCG: Against the Leadership, Not Doctrine  
 July-96 Response To David Covington's Letter  
 Dec-96 Independent Believer for 17 Years

**WCG history**  
 Dec-96 Friends in Pasadena Letter (letter about it)  
 May-95 Did Christ Reorganize the Church?

**WCG, Texas**  
 April-95 Worldwide Church of God Texas  
 May-95 United Church of God & Worldwide Church of God Texas

**wisdom**  
 Dec-96 Be Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves  
 Dec-96 Being Wise and Harmless in our Finances

**women**  
 Sept-96 Many Questions About Sabbath Services, Including Role of Women (letter)

# Literature List

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

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

## 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.

**Basic Bible Study Tools** by Richard Nickels. 36 pages. An excellent summary of available Bible study aids and how to use them. Samples of many study aids included.

**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, 10 pages. Brief overview of authority and its structure in the New Testament.

**Christ's Birth—Hanukkah—and the New Testament Believer** by Eric Paschall, 5 pages. Our Messiah was conceived near Hanukkah and born near Tabernacles.

**Does the New Covenant Do Away with the Letter of the Law?** by Eric V. Snow. 42 pages—revised Jan. 1996. 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.

**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.

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

**Christian Educational Ministries Correspondence Course** by Ron Dart. First lesson from SN. Others free from CEM.

**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.

**How Do We Give to the Eternal?** by Richard Tafoya and Norman Edwards. Biblical study of giving and tithing.

**The Key to the Book of Revelation** edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 12-page 9"x4" booklet.

**Lazarus and the Rich Man** edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 16-page 9"x4" booklet.

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

**Why Do You Observe Sunday?** edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 16-page 9"x4" booklet.

## Study Resources and Information

**ANCHOR Magazine** edited by Melvin Rhodes. One free 16 page sample issue. Reaching out to recovering homosexuals.

**Barnabas Ministries Mission Statement** by Alan Ruth. 2 pages.

**The Christian Beacon** Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter "for the shared ministry of the Royal Priesthood."

**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.

**The Fellowship Commentator** by F. Paul Haney. Sample 8 page issue of free quarterly newsletter.

**Friends of the Family Lending Library Order Form** by Rod McKown, 2 pages. Check out family books and tapes.

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

**Hebrew Roots** Sample 24-page issue of free newsletter with emphasis on the Hebrew roots of "Christian" belief.

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

**The Journal: News of the Churches of God** edited by Dixon Cartwright. (Similar to *In Transition*). 16 pages.

**A Living Relationship with Original Language Text Unfolding** by John Purvins. First issue of free Christian living magazine and Hebrew-Greek study course, 38 pages.

**Living Room Church of God (LRCOG) Directory** edited by Robert Bodkin. 8 pages.

**The Modern Church, Divine Institution or Counterfeit?** by Peter Kershaw. 24 page booklet. We do not agree with all of it, but it has good legal info on unincorporated churches.

**Sabbath History** edited by Leon Lyell in Australia. One free sample issue of 26-page newsletter about the history of Sabbath keepers & groups. There is nothing else like it.

**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.

**Servants' News & Norman Edwards Statement of Receipts and Expenses**, 2 pages. (Always sent to contributors.)

**The WAY** Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter of doctrinal articles relating to the Biblical way of life.