

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 3, No. 5

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

July 1997

Praising Athletes,



Praising LEADERS,



Praising God?



Nearly everyone has been to a local sports game. Whether it be baseball, football, basketball, or some other sport, there is much in common: A cheerful, energetic person makes announcements and introductions. A good singer accompanied by a live band starts the event by singing “The Star-Spangled Banner”—the audience sings along. Well-rehearsed cheer-leaders lead the audience in cheering—arms waiving, legs jumping. The audience joins in the cheers—often imitating some of the motions. In addition to these planned cheers, there are innumerable spontaneous leaps, shouts for joy and words of encouragement and congratulations for the players. Even the most reserved participants will applaud when something spectacular happens. People dress festively and bring banners praising their team. The band plays frequently, and other special events may be featured at “half-time.”

American political meetings are similar to the above.

They have similar bands & banners, songs & slogans, and claps & cheers. The biggest difference between these two events is that the sports audience praises people for what they are doing at the event, whereas the political meeting usually praises people for making promises. To what extent believers should be involved in such praise of human beings is beyond the scope of this article.

The point we want to make is that **our society completely accepts almost anyone that goes to the above events, then stands up, sings, cheers and/or shouts for their team or their leader.** A man or woman can work an eight-hour day at a most respectable job, and then wholeheartedly cheer for their little high school basketball team the same evening—and no-one will consider him or her insane or abnormal. The person can be a mother, father, teen-ager, teacher, judge, mayor, farmer, tradesman, businessman, doctor or just about

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Ostracization: A Church of God Tradition

Over the past 2 years I have visited many congregations in several states, affiliated and unaffiliated with various "Church of God" organizations. Sadly, one common denominator that we've inherited from our collective past, is still in unfruitful operation today in many different settings: ostracization.

There is a great need being met by the various church organizations that continue to provide basic training for God's thousands of saints. Unfortunately however, a common adjunct to this basic training is that our brethren are led to believe that they have already "arrived" when they have really only re-arrived...at the beginning! If only this basic training was available to everyone who needed it—regularly, or occasionally as a refresher, with no strings attached! Then God would be served because **all** spiritual growth is to His glory, and for His purposes and pleasure.

If it was more common for those who offered this basic training to do so because they truly wanted to further God's purposes for His people instead of being obviously secondary to preserving their own prestige, and encouraging God's people to remain dependent upon the organization to preserve the comfortable status quo...then we would have a win-win-win situation and God would probably be more inclined to call more individuals into His Church. Is it really any surprise why most of us can count on one hand the number of people who have come to a saving knowledge of God's Truth during the past few years?

Instead, most of our brethren today (many of these could be aided by a little basic training refresher) have been forced to conclude that the cost is just too great; the politics are too thick; the implications of even being a guest necessitate too much disclaimer; and frankly, the atmosphere is just too devoid of uplifting, constructive, inspired content to partake of such basic training.

In today's situation, men "lead" various **divisions** of the Body, and abhor the potential for further division within their division, but are quite comfortable with upholding the "distinctions" of their division by discouraging fellowship across imaginary organizational boundary lines—because the existence of their division justifies themselves and their roles.

Another, even sadder, division of the modern Church is a **chronological** division of all things! Since the now largely discredited cultic culture of the past exuded an implicit **ownership** of God's Truth and His People—those who wised up to the systemic spiritual paralysis are often ostracized by those who didn't figure it out until later and by those that figured it out a lot earlier. The tragic result of this is that the church groups are littered with outcasts from each other—either by their own decrees or by their actual practice. This cultural, ostracizational response has resulted in a little-acknowledged mountain of judgmental sins to be repented of and has created a most difficult barrier to fellowship and worship in large assemblies, especially for the earlier outcasts.

"Early outcasts" are hard to accept because other brethren probably spoke against them—maybe with no facts at all—when they were "cast out." Also, there's a **huge** likelihood that these outcasts may know about mistakes that the big groups would like to keep hidden. It is much easier to be objective about such things when outside the organizations! But at least one thing will be almost certain—they will have asked themselves, "Just how much of my former church experience was truly of God, and how much was simply me standing in the firing line of the propaganda of men couching their own agendas in spiritual-sounding language?" That's a good question for all of us!

Perhaps most tragically, though, the days of outcast-production are not over! To further corporate goals of uniformity (commonly mislabeled as "unity"), more outcasts can be readily made simply by the pronouncement of a few choice innuendos from the pulpit. Then **presto**, the old practiced pavlovian ostracizational reflex fires nearly as well as it did a decade ago and the basest cultural force in our collective "Church of God" memory churns out another

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Servants' News is a ministry to help others understand the Creator's will, obey Him, and teach others. We believe that the Bible contains the foundation of knowledge about our Creator and that He is actively working through people today. Our focus is to help the Sabbath-keeping brethren who believe Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah, but we realize that the Eternal works with many groups and individuals.

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When Does the Sabbath

Begin & End?

by Herb Solinsky

Sabbath-keepers want to know when this holy time begins and ends. More generally, as students of the Bible, they want to know when any numbered day of the month begins and ends. The meanings of Hebrew words are very critical to this study. Sound principles of word study will be needed to reach an accurate conclusion.

One principle is to establish meanings of Hebrew words from easily understandable biblical contexts, and leave the puzzling contexts for later. Another principle involves the translation of special Hebrew words that are important to this study: it is mandatory for these special words, that one English word always be used to translate one Hebrew word, and that this English word is never used to translate any other Hebrew word. This will be rigidly applied, and whenever the abbreviation of a published translation is shown, it will either be cited in isolation (as RSV) or with "m-" (as m-NKJV), where the latter indicates that a minor modification was made in order to rigidly apply the "one to one" translation of significant Hebrew words to only one English word. **The NKJV translation will be used unless otherwise noted.** Other translations are used when they are closer to the literal Hebrew in some important way.

Many Bible passages that are important to this study have several Hebrew words of significance that require explanation. Unless meanings can be established one word at a time with Scriptures that have a clear context, nothing logical can be achieved. In order to achieve logical results, we establish some preliminary approximate findings for some words, and then later return to discuss some of those words again and achieve a more refined understanding (but not contradictory).

Patience is needed with this approach of letting the context determine the meaning rather than some lexicon or dic-

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tionary. All such reference works are modern; **there is no known Hebrew dictionary that was made in ancient times.**

The Sabbath

And on the seventh **day** God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh **day** from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh **day** and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God created and made (Gen 2:2-3).

The word "**day**" occurs three times here, always from the Hebrew *yom* (Strong's #3117), which is a significant word for this study. All three times the "seventh day" is stated. This day was blessed and sanctified by God, and a reason given for this is His example of resting on that day. This passage does not mention the law for human rest, nor the word "Sabbath" from the Hebrew word *Shabat* (Strong's #7676), which is a significant word for this study.

The significant Hebrew word *shabaton* (Strong's #7677) is often not translated consistently, but "**solemn rest**" will always be used in this study. This word occurs eleven times in the Bible: Ex 16:23; 31:15; 35:2; Lev 16:31; 23:3,24,32,39(twice); 25:4,5.

Work shall be done for six **days**, but the seventh is the Sabbath of **solemn rest**, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath **day**, he shall surely be put to death (Ex 31:15 m-NKJV).

Here the Hebrew word *yom* occurs in the plural ("days") and then the singular. Comparing this with Gen 2:2-3 it is clear that the seventh day which was blessed and sanctified is named the Sabbath day and is a day of abstaining from work. Ex 20:8-11 and Deut 5:12-15 corroborate this.

Day and Night

There are examples in which day and night are opposites.

Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah:

"He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night" (Jer 36:30).

Here "day" and "night" are opposites, showing it is cooler at night than during the day. The translation "**night**" is from the Hebrew word *lailah* (Strong's #3915), which is a significant word for this study.

That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by **day** or stolen by **night** (Gen 31:39).

Here again is an example where day and night are opposites. Some other corroborating examples of these opposites are in Gen 8:22; 1Sam 28:20; 1Ki 8:29; Ps 74:16; 88:1; 136:8-9; Eccl 8:16; Isa 27:3; 62:6; Amos 5:8.

A 24 Hour Day

As in the English language, Hebrew often has multiple meanings for one word, and it will now become quite clear that this is true for the Hebrew word *yom*.

Therefore you shall abide at the door of the tabernacle of meeting **day and night for seven days**, and keep the charge of the LORD, so that you may not die; for so I have been commanded (Lev 8:35).

Here "seven days" refers to seven periods, each of which is a day and a night, so that "day" (used in the plural) is a daytime followed by a nighttime, a natural 24 hour period. Also:

Go gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for **three days, night or day**. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish! (Est 4:16).

Here "day" (used in the plural) is a nighttime followed by a daytime, a natural 24 hour period. These two examples differ in which comes first; one example has the daytime first in the 24 hour day, while the other has the night-time first. But neither of these examples

involves the Sabbath or a numbered day of the month, the primary focus of this study.

Before giving a translation of Ps 32:4, it must be mentioned that it contains the Hebrew word *yomam* (Strong's #3119) which is (you guessed it) another significant word for this study. This word is a form of *yom* used in different Hebrew grammatical senses from *yom*. It may be argued that this word should also be translated "day", as it usually is, but in order to distinguish between these words in translation, *yomam* will be translated "**daytime**" because that seems reasonably suitable, and we can judge its sense when it is used.

When I kept silent my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For **daytime** and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer (Ps 32:3-4 m-NKJV).

Here one day is shown to be a daytime (Hebrew *yomam*) followed by a nighttime, a natural 24 hour day.

...[P]lease let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You this day, **daytime** and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You (Neh 1:6 m-NKJV).

Here one day is shown to be a daytime (Hebrew *yomam*) followed by a nighttime, a natural 24 hour day.

Morning, Evening, and On the Morrow

Two more significant Hebrew words: *boker* (Strong's #1242) is to be translated "**morning**". and *erev* (Strong's #6153) is to be translated "**evening**". Here are some of the verses that make it clear that morning and evening are time periods of the 24 hour day that are separated from one another:

This is the offering which Aaron and his sons are to present to the LORD on the day when he is anointed; the tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the **morning** and half of it in the **evening** (Lev 6:20 NASB).

In the **morning** you shall say, "Oh, that it were **evening!**" And at evening you shall say, "Oh, that it were **morning!**" because of the fear which terri-

fies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see (Deut 28:67).

Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice (Ps 55:17).

The king also appointed a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings: for the **morning** and **evening** burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the new moons and the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD (2Chr 31:3).

For the sake of consistency for the reader, the Hebrew phrase *ad erev* will always be translated "**until evening**" and the Hebrew phrase *ad ha erev* will always be translated "**until the evening**" in this study. The Hebrew word *ad* is Strong's #5704 which is a preposition whose meaning varies according to the expression in which it appears. The Hebrew word *ha* means "the". The presence or absence of the Hebrew word *ha* for "the" in the phrase "until the evening" seems to have no real significance as illustrated here:

On the morrow Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from morning **until the evening**. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand about you from morning **until evening**?" (Ex 18:13-14 m-RSV.)

Notice that verse 13 has "until the evening", while verse 14 merely has "until evening", yet both refer to the same event. The meaning of "until evening" in Ex 18:13-14 is generalized in Ps 104:23 where we find (m-NKJV), "Man goes out to his work and to his labor **until evening**." In an agricultural society where outdoor light is needed for earning a living by most people, this particular context would imply that "until evening" has the approximate sense of "until daylight fades." Later, more will be said about the phrase "until evening".

In Ex 18:13 immediately above, the phrase "**on the morrow**" is a translation of the Hebrew phrase *me macharat* where the flexible preposition *me* is Strong's #4480 and *macharat* is Strong's #4283 which means "morrow" and refers to the period of time following the sleep pattern. For example:

And they made their father drink wine that night. And the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass **on the morrow** [*me macharaf*], that the first-born said unto the younger: "Behold, I lay **yesternight** with my father. Let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father" (Gen 19:33-34 JPS17).

The translation "**yesternight**" is from the Hebrew word *emesh* (Strong's #570) which also occurs in Gen 31:29, 42. (In the Hebrew, the two words *me macharat* have no space between them, as is typical with many prepositions.) Unfortunately, most translations use the word "day" instead of "morrow" here, which could give the reader the false impression that the Hebrew word *yom* may occur. For consistency, the Hebrew phrase *me macharat* will always be translated "on the morrow" in this study. Note that in Gen 19:34 above, the conversation that occurred "on the morrow" followed an event that occurred in the night, so that both the event and the conversation took place within the same night and daytime 24 hour period.

A Numbered Day of the Month

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month **at evening**, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month **at evening**. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land (Ex 12:18-19).

The unbroken time interval for eating only unleavened bread is here given a beginning time and an ending time, the whole period of which is stated to be seven days in length. Here "day" (used in the plural) is a 24 hour day, each of which begins "at evening" and ends "at evening". This context involves a numbered day of the month, a matter of primary interest in this study.

Also the tenth of this seventh month shall be the day of atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.... It shall be to you a **Sabbath** of

solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth of the month **at evening, from evening until evening**, you shall celebrate your **Sabbath** (Lev 23:27,32 m-NKJV).

The Sabbath (Hebrew *Shabat*) mentioned here twice is the day of atonement rather than the Sabbath of the seventh day. (*Shabat* is also used this way in Lev 16:31.) As in Ex 12:18 above, this verse mentions a **numbered day of the month ending "at evening" at which time the next day begins**. Since an "evening" is mentioned in Lev 23:32 as both the beginning and ending of the tenth day, this is surely a 24 hour day rather than a daytime. Each of the seven days in Ex 12:18 is a 24 hour day also. Thus, as numbered days of the month, we have consistency of Ex 12:18 with Lev 23:32. This also makes the beginning and ending of *Shabat* in agreement with the beginning and ending of a numbered day of the month.

Light and Darkness

You make darkness and it is night, in which all the beasts of the forest creep about (Ps 104:20).

And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day (Gen 1:4-5 NASB).

In this very first time that the words "day" and "night" occur, they are here defined in the Bible. Here the first use of "day" (Hebrew *yom*) is given the meaning "light", which obviously concerns its meaning in the sense of the daytime portion of a natural 24 hour day, rather than the 24 hour meaning of "day". Gen 1:4-5 does not explain how much light is needed at the extremities in order to be considered still "day". The word "evening" occurs here for the first time, but is not defined in the chapter. The possible meaning of the second use of "day" at the end of Gen 1:5 partly depends upon the meaning of "evening", which we now discuss. From Gen 1:4 we know that night is defined by darkness, except that when heavy rain prevails, daytime may appear dark. We are excluding such exceptions that muddy the water of discussion.

There are two passages of the Bible that demonstrate that "evening" lasts into the "night". We will consistently translate the Hebrew word *neshef* (Strong's

#5399) as "**twilight**".

...[S]o I am allotted months of emptiness, and nights of misery are apportioned to me. When I lie down I say, "When shall I arise?" But the **evening is long**, and I am full of tossing til the **twilight** (Job 7:3-4 m-RSV).

Here many translations give "night" as the meaning of the Hebrew word *erev*. The word translated "**is long**" in "the evening is long" is a translation of the Hebrew word *madad* (Strong's #4058) which also occurs in 1Ki 17:21 which reads (NKJV), "And he **stretched himself** out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him.'" Here "stretched himself" is the translation of the Hebrew word *madad*. Job is saying (in Job 7:3-4) that when he lies down, his conscious time in the evening is prolonged due to his physical discomfort.

Concerning the evening lasting into night, the other Scripture to be discussed is Ps 30:5. In order to understand how far "evening" extends here, the key issue is the Hebrew word following *erev* which is the verb *leen* (Strong's #3885).

For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping **may endure [leen]** for an **evening [erev]**, but joy comes in the morning (Ps 30:5 m-NKJV).

Here the Hebrew verb *leen* is translated "**may endure**". On the basis of the use of *leen* in the rest of the Old Testament, it does seem that in Ps 30:5 evening extends into some of the night, perhaps until sleep comes. But in poetic language where there is a scarcity of words, translators often take liberties to capture their own thoughts on the intent of the Hebrew. This verb *leen* occurs 85 times in the Old Testament, but it has two categories of meaning that are not related to one another; one is "to remain (or lodge)" and the other is "to murmur (or complain)". The latter meaning occurs 16 times (if Ps 59:15 is included as "howl" or "growl").

Of the remaining 69 times, the word "night" is understood from the context or explicitly stated 51 times; for example, Judg 19:7 states (NKJV), "And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again." Here the NASB has "spent the night" instead of "lodged" for the Hebrew word *leen*. 1Ki 19:9 reads (NASB), "Then he

came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" Here the NKJV has "spent the night" instead of "lodged" for the Hebrew word *leen*.

What about the other 18 (= 69 - 51) times, which includes Ps 30:5, our current focus? In all 17 cases (excluding Ps 30:5) the time period is not precise, but understood to be at least a night, and often many years. One highly figurative example in which Job's friends have been provoking him for many days is Job 17:2 in which Job says (NKJV), "Are not mockers with me? And does not my eye dwell on their provocation?" Here "dwell" is used for the Hebrew word *leen*. It thus seems understandable that JPS17, NASB, NKJV, and RSV translate the Hebrew word *erev* in Ps 30:5 as "**night**", yet the literal meaning is "evening".

Recognizing that the biblical evening extends into the night, we are in a better position to comment on the use of "day" at the end of Gen 1:5:

And there was evening and there was morning, one day (Gen 1:5 NASB).

This must refer to a 24 hour day rather than a daytime. We can only guess at why there is such brevity in the description of this day as well as the next five days. What happened at the very beginning of the first day? Any answer involves speculation.

The Stars

Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a **light** by daytime, the ordinances of the moon and the **stars** for a **light** by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (the LORD of hosts is His name) (Jer 31:35 m-NKJV).

Note the words "stars" and "light". The light of these heavenly bodies determine or separate daytime and night.

To Him who made great lights, for His mercy endures forever, the **sun to rule by day**, for His mercy endures forever, the **moon and stars to rule by night**, for His mercy endures forever (Ps 136:7-9).

This serves as a commentary to:

And God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; and the stars (Gen 1:16 JPS17).

The amount of the night that is ruled by the light of the moon varies greatly

during the month, from no rulership at the astronomical new moon to full rulership at the full moon. Gen 1:14 mentions the purpose of defining "years", so the context of Gen 1:16 indicates general purposes for the sun, moon, planets, comets, and stars, rather than a precise description of what happened on that specific fourth day. Any claim that Gen 1:16 proves that the fourth day was a full moon is reading too much into that verse and ignoring the context of general purposes for the heavenly bodies. The thought of rulership by a heavenly body refers to dominance of its light. Since the moon itself has so much variation in dominance, as a sign for separating daytime from night, the **role of the moon is speculative at best**. On the other hand, as long as the weather is relatively clear, **the stars are an excellent sign for separating daytime from night**. Gen 1:14-16 does not mention the words "sun" or "moon", which puts emphasis on their function to serve as lights.

Sunset is the time when the circle of the sun first disappears over the horizon. After sunset, there is still a period of light from the sun (the sun rules) until the light from the stars begin to rule. The length of this time period, which is most of twilight, varies with the season and the latitude of the observer. At the equator this time is several minutes, but it can last a couple of hours in southern Canada and much longer when approaching the poles of the earth. If there had been a human observer on the earth during the first three days, he would not have been able to see the circle of the sun at all because the "heavenly lights" were not "created" yet (Gen 1:14). Thus, there were no sunsets during the first three 24 hour days, yet there were three periods of dark and light. In order to have consistency in light for rulership during the first three daytimes in comparison to the fourth day and beyond, it would seem that "sunset" is not the precise separator between daytime and night. Before discussing sunset in the Bible, there is another significant Scripture that involves the stars.

The Hebrew word *sachar* (Strong's #7837) will consistently be translated "dawn".

From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half of them held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail; and the lead-

ers stood behind all the house of Judah.... So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears **from the break of dawn till the stars came out** (Neh 4:16, 21 RSV).

Note that one half were defending and one half were productive. The break of dawn is near the start of the twilight of the morning, about the time when stars cease being visible. The defenders were active from about the time of the loss of the visibility of the stars to appearance of the stars.

Likewise at the same time said I unto the people: "Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and **may labour in the day**" (Neh 4:22 JPS17).

Thus the defenders were to spend the night sleeping in Jerusalem with the others, but during the "day" defined by the light of the stars at both ends, the defenders were to be active. This is consistent with the concept of the light from the sun ruling the day in the sense that it prevents the stars from being visible. It is consistent with the first three days during which there was no sunset. **Thus, daytime is when the stars are not visible**. Israel is a land with significant hills and valleys, thus making sunset come at varying times depending on one's physical location. On the other hand, visibility of the stars is more uniform throughout Israel.

Sunset is Not Technically in the Bible

There is no single Hebrew word for sunset in the Bible.

So afterward Joshua struck them and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees; and they hung on the trees until the evening. And it came about at **sunset** that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and put large stones over the mouth of the cave, to this very day (Josh 10:26-27 m-NASB).

Where this has "sunset", the margin of the NASB (Reference edition) states that this is literally "**the time of the going of the sun**." In this literal statement in the margin, the Hebrew verb *bo* (Strong's #935) is translated "going" and the Hebrew word *shemesh* (Strong's #8121) is translated "sun". There is

never a Hebrew word for "down" in any of the 31 contexts of the Hebrew for "goes sun" for an alleged "sunset" in the Bible. These contexts are Gen 15:12,17; 28:11; Ex 17:12; 22:26; Lev 22:7; Deut 11:30; 16:6; 23:11; 24:13,15; Josh 1:4; 8:29; 10:13,27; 23:4; Judg 19:14; 2Sam 2:24; 3:35; 1Ki 22:36; 2Chr 18:34; Ps 51:1; 104:19; 113:3; Eccl 1:5; Isa 60:20; Jer 15:9; Amos 8:9; Micah 3:6; Zech 8:7; Mal 1:11. None of these verses provides clear visual evidence of what "goes sun" means, but there are significant clues. If we see "sunset" in a translation, we should simply recognize that it is "goes sun", though the verb tense may vary.

In an Aramaic portion of the Old Testament we find in Dan 6:14 (NKJV), "And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him." The translation "going down" is from the Aramaic word *mehal* (Strong's #4606) which only occurs in this place in Scripture. On page 166 of Wood at this verse it states, "literally, 'going in of the sun.'" Since this Aramaic word only occurs one time and it's in the context of Babylon with no specific indication of its precise meaning, little can be said of this.

Prepare war against her; arise, and let us attack at noon. Woe to us, for the day declines, for the **shadows of the evening** lengthen (Jer 6:4 NASB).

This indicates that some of the evening occurs when there are long shadows, i.e., before sunset.

There is biblical evidence that "goes sun" is a loose time interval rather than a precise brief time.

...but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name, you shall sacrifice the Passover in the **evening at sunset**, at the time that you came out of Egypt (Deut 16:6 NASB).

This verse is discussed because it will help us understand "goes sun". If we can determine the time interval for sacrificing the Passover, that should tell us something about the time of "goes sun". From Jer 6:4 above, we have already seen that "in the evening" includes some time before sunset.

Sunrise is Opposite to Sunset

Notice the contrast between sunrise

and sunset:

The Mighty One, God, the LORD, has spoken, and summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting (Ps 50:1 NASB).

From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is to be praised (Ps 113:3 NASB).

Also the sun rises and the sun sets; and hastening to its place it rises there again (Eccl 1:5 NASB).

This contrast of opposites is also seen in Zech 8:7; Mal 1:11. The box at right explains the biblical definition of sunrise: the time period beginning when there is enough light that objects become clearly visible (before the circle of the sun rises above the horizon) until it becomes definitely warm (sometime before noon). The application of the meaning of biblical sunrise to the meaning of biblical sunset is that both are significant time intervals and both occupy a portion of daytime. Biblical sunrise occupies the first portion of daytime, and biblical sunset occupies the last portion of daytime. As indicated above, daytime is when the stars are not visible.

Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go **down** on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you (Deut 24:15).

And when all the people came to persuade David to eat food while it was still day, David took an oath saying, "God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes **down**" (2Sam 3:35).

In both of these verses, the word "down" is not based upon any specific Hebrew word that means "down". Each verse indicates that daytime ends at the end of biblical sunset (already shown not to be identified with the circle of the sun going below the horizon).

Between the Two Evenings

The Hebrew expression *ben ha arbayim* means "**between the two evenings**"; *ben* means "between", *ha* means "the", and *arbayim* is the dual plural form of "evening", meaning "two evenings". The Hebrew ending *im* is the general plural, while the Hebrew ending *ayim* is the dual showing two things (pp. 100-101 of Lambdin). Whenever we encounter this expression, we will consistently translate it "between the

two evenings". This occurs eleven times in the Bible: Ex 12:6; 16:12; 29:39,41; 30:8; Lev 23:5; Num 9:3,5,11; 28:4,8.

Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it between the two evenings (Ex 12:6 m-NKJV).

On the fourteenth of the first month **between the two evenings** is the LORD's Passover (Lev 23:5 m-NKJV).

If someone should conjecture that "between the two evenings" means any time between the evening on one certain day and the evening on the following day, this could be refuted by going

to Deut 16:6 where the time for sacrificing the Passover is when "goes sun", and certainly this latter expression does not mean a 24 hour day.

And you shall say to them, "This is the offering made by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs in their first year without blemish, each day, as a regular burnt offering. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer between the two evenings" (Num 28:3-4 m-NKJV, Ex 29:38-39 is similar.).

This sacrifice between the two evenings is called the evening sacrifice:

Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assem-

What is the Biblical Definition of Sunrise?

In Ps 104:21-22 we read (NKJV), "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God. When the sun rises they gather together and lie down in their dens." Mr. Chris McBride spent several years living in the wild, studying the habits of lions about 350 miles northeast of Johannesburg, South Africa. On page 152 of McBride we find, "From the observations I've made, it appears that temperature plays a tremendously important part in influencing lions' behavior patterns. I have taken the breathing rates of these lions under all sorts of conditions and found that it can vary from 120 times a minute in the heat of the day to about 12 times a minute in the cool of the evening. My belief is that they are mainly nocturnal hunters because it's easier for them to be active when it's cooler. They'll hunt in daylight on the Machaton when it rains, or on an overcast windy day, so it looks as if there's a purely physical explanation behind it." In relation to Ps 104:21-22 this shows that "when the sun rises" they become inactive because the temperature becomes warm. But when does the temperature become warm? On page 232 of Batton we find: "Minimum temperatures are usually experienced 30 min to an hour after sunrise." This indicates that biblical sunrise is not the moment when the sun begins to come up over the horizon, but it includes a significant time later when it begins to get warm.

In Nahum 3:17 we read (NKJV), "Your commanders are like swarming locusts, and your generals are like great grasshoppers, which camp on the hedges in a cold day; when the sun rises they flee away, and the place where they are is not known."

Locusts and grasshoppers have similar habits. On page 6 of Dallinger we read, "Grasshoppers are usually quiet at night and active during the day. As with all insects, their bodies must be warm in order for them to be active. During the coolness of night they climb onto plants and rest quietly without moving. When the first rays of sunshine reach them in the morning, they begin to stir. After warming up, they start eating." Page 207 of Milne states, "Once a locust swarm is airborne, the only thing capable of stopping it is a change of weather. The pests fly on if their food reserves permit, as long as the temperature of day remains between 77 degrees and 104 degrees F., or above 81 degrees at night." Thus the biblical description of grasshoppers and locusts at sunrise can not fit the time when the circle of the sun begins to come up over the horizon because at the latter time the temperature is still approaching its coolest time. This indicates that biblical sunrise includes a significant time after sunrise when it begins to get warm.

In Ex 22:2-3 we read (NKJV), "If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft." Here we see the difference between killing a thief before the sun has risen compared to afterward. Before visibility it is not considered murder because one can not see the nature of the enemy, but after visibility it is murder. Thus, sunrise is associated with visibility, which occurs before the circle of the sun begins to show on the horizon.

bled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the **evening sacrifice**. At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God (Ezra 9:4-5).

This evening sacrifice is also mentioned in 2Ki 16:15; Ps 141:2; Dan 9:21. It is also mentioned without the word "evening" explicitly stated, but nevertheless understood, in 1Ki 18:29, 36. In reading 1Ki 18:29-45 it should become obvious that from the time of the first mention of the evening sacrifice until darkness is indicated due to heavy clouds in 1Ki 18:45, some hours of daylight must have passed. Thus "between the two evenings" as the time of the evening sacrifice must occupy some hours in the afternoon before the night begins.

Hence the Passover sacrifice must occur during some hours in the afternoon before the night begins, and Deut 16:6 shows this to be called "goes sun" or "sunset" in common translations.

Conclusion

The biblical evidence that a daytime even when the stars become visible is based upon Jer 31:35; Ps 136:7-9; Gen 1:16; Neh 4:16,21-22. This evidence along with the evidence of sunrise (from Ps 104:21-22 and Nahum 3:17) leads to the conclusion that "the going of the sun" is roughly a few hours long and ends with the appearance of the stars. In English usage, the time of "sunset" is brief and precise, but in the Bible it lasts some hours and ends when the stars appear. Deut 16:6 says that the sacrifice of the Passover animal occurs during the (present tense) "going of the sun." Deut 16:6 also mentions "in the evening" which it recognizes as imprecise, so it clarifies this by adding "at the going of the sun." The phrase "in the evening" can vary from sometime in the afternoon until sometime in the night; the Bible does not state the exact beginning and ending time of "in the evening."

The Sabbath and a Numbered Day of the Month

The expression "between the two evenings" indicates that there are two

evenings. Ex 12:18 and Lev 23:32 showed that the Sabbath and a numbered day of the month begin at evening and end at evening, but we need to discuss which evening. From Jer 6:4 and 1Ki 18 we have seen that one evening begins before sunset. From Job 7:4 and Ps 30:5 we have seen that evening lasts into night. Within the evening there is a transition from daytime to night when the light from stars become visible.

The biblical word for evening is ambiguous, so the only solution to determining the "evening" that begins a day is a process of logically eliminating all but one rational choice. Several verses above showed that a biblical 24 hour day is either a daytime followed by a night, or a night followed by a daytime. Only the latter choice allows evening to begin and end a 24 hour biblical day, so only this choice is viable to show the boundaries of a day. This is also the only plausible choice to be the start of the second evening, so that Lev 23:32 means the Sabbath is to be kept from the second evening to the second evening. Deut 24:15 and 2Sam 3:35 add weight to this. The conclusion is that the Sabbath and a numbered day of the month begins and ends at the beginning of night when the stars come out, and that this is also the start of the second evening.

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How Should Sabbath Timing Affect Our Lives?

We printed this article now because we have received several letters insisting that "the Sabbath is from sunrise to sunrise." Some scriptures might be interpreted to support that idea if certain Hebrew words had only one narrow definition. However, look at the English word "day". It can mean a "24-hour day", "the period when the sun is out" or "a general period of time" as in the expression "the day of vengeance". A concordance will show you all of the uses of the Hebrew *yom* (day)—it has all of the same meanings as the English "day". While our Father is perfect, he works through human languages that are sometimes imprecise.

Another reason given for the "sunrise to sunrise" day is that the expressions "day and night" or "so-many days and so-many nights" occur more in the Bible than do "night and day" expressions. But almost none of these expressions are specifically about the issue of when a Sabbath or other day officially begins or ends. On the other hand, there are plain scriptures such as Nehemiah 13:19:

So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, **as it began to be dark before the Sabbath**, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath.

The conclusion of the attached study is that specific Biblical days, including the Sabbath, begin and end when the stars become visible—when it is dark. Even when it is cloudy, it is easier to tell when the sky becomes dark than it is to guess when the sun might be slipping below the horizon.

Does that mean we have been sinning by engaging in non-Sabbath activities before dark on Saturday? Probably so, but aren't we only dealing with a matter of a few minutes, maybe less than twenty minutes? We must realize that the timing of the Sabbath is not given in the 10 commandments, nor is there any major section of the Bible that explains it. It is "here a little, there a little." All of the Sabbath related condemnations in the Bible are against those who do not keep it, not against those who are keeping it "a half hour off." We will be judged on how we keep the Sabbath according to our understanding of the scripture. We should still be able to fellowship with others who have a technically different understanding of the Sabbath.

—Norman S. Edwards

"Praise" from page 1

anyone else, and almost nobody will find it unusual.

But if these same people were to attend a service to worship the great Creator of the Universe, **could they find similar enthusiasm?** Could they loudly cheer, clap, and sing for Him? Think about who is being praised: these teams and leaders sometimes lose their contests—and they all eventually still get too old to perform. But the Eternal's greatness continues forever.

Our sports and political events show that we, as a people, are capable of energetic, powerful praise. But what kind of praise does the Eternal want? That is a fair question. Does He ask for the staid, somber, "respectable" speeches and music that has been the backbone of "Christian Churches" for hundreds of years? What does the Bible say about this subject?

Bible Commands Us to Praise

The Bible says a lot about praise. The book of Psalms is full of praise to the Eternal, as well as **commands that we praise the Eternal.** The last chapter of the book is a good summary:

Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 150.)

We cannot list all of the verses in Psalms about praise in this short article! But there are more commands to praise Him in the Bible than there are to keep the Sabbath, to keep the Holy Days, or to observe many other doctrines that people regard as "essential." Praise can take on many forms: shouts, singing, clapping, playing musical instruments and even dancing.

It is clear that the Eternal did not want His Praise to become old and boring; He wanted it to stay new and exciting. Five times, we are commanded to "sing a new song" to the Eternal (Psalm 33:3; 96:1; 98:1; 149:1; Isa 42:10). So

often, parents are frustrated when their children seem to have no interest in "church music," but are only interested in the popular music of their day. This difficulty is made much worse when the "church music" is either hundreds of years old, or newly-written music in a **style** that is hundreds of years old. While not every modern style is appropriate for praise to the Eternal, the majority of styles are. Young people like **energetic** music—and so does the Eternal! The age-old idea that religion should be a solemn, emotionless experience is simply not in Scripture. The Bible speaks of loud sounds and shouts of joy:

Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a **shout of joy** (Ps 3:3).

Oh, **clap your hands**, all you peoples! **Shout to God with the voice of triumph!** (Ps 47:1.)

I will **greatly** praise the LORD with my mouth; Yes, I will praise Him among the multitude (Ps 109:30)

I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints shall **shout aloud for joy** (Ps 132:16).

Like the sports teams of our day, the Eternal provided for well-rehearsed people to lead the praise in His temple. About 4,000 people worked to produce music in the temple—day and night. (1Chr 9:23; 23:5). They sang and used harps, other stringed instruments, trumpets, cymbals and tambourines (1Chr 15:16; 13:8). This was not some kind of quiet background music—they sang and played loudly (2Chr 30:21; Neh 9:4; 12:42)

Praise Is Not Just "The Icing on the Cake"

Nearly every one will agree that "praise is good," but some will liken it to the "icing on the cake"—after important matters of doctrine, government, financial management, buildings, etc. are calmly taken care of, then congregations should turn to the subject of emotions and praise. The Scriptures teach otherwise. When David brought back the ark, it was accompanied by much rejoicing (2Sam 6). When Asa realized that the entire nation needed to repent, it was a loud, emotional experience:

Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel **was to be put to death**,

whether small or great, whether man or woman. Then they took an oath before the LORD **with a loud voice, with shouting and**



trumpets and rams' horns. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around (2Chr 15:12-15).

Probably the ultimate example of praise as an integral part of government policy is found in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30. King Jehoshaphat knew he did not have a sufficient military force to defeat the enemies coming against him, so what did he do?

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy *endures* forever." Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated (2Chr 20:21-22).

And finally, when Nehemiah was attempting to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and the temple in the face of many adversaries, praise was high on the priority list: "And the Levites,...said: 'Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God Forever and ever! Blessed be Your glorious name, Which is exalted above all blessing and praise!'" (Neh 9:5).

Praise in the New Testament

The New Testament contains fewer commands to praise the Eternal than the Old does, but it gives no hint that any of the Old Testament praise commands are obsolete. Rather it confirms that David, the greatest man of Old Testament praise, was a "man after My own heart" (Acts 13:22). The apostles continued to participate in temple services, even after the Resurrection (Acts 3:1). When the praise of some of Jesus' followers disturbed the Pharisees, look at our Savior's answer:

Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a **loud voice** for all the mighty works they had



seen, saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." But He answered and said to them, "**I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out**" (Luke 19:37-40).

But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?'" (Matt 21:15-16).

Notice in the above verse that young people were involved in praise—it is not something just for the older, mature, "converted." The Eternal accepted praise from Samaritans:

Luke 17:15-16 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a **loud** voice glorified God, And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

There are a few direct and obvious New Testament commands to continue to sing praises to the Eternal in worship services. Please read the following verses:

How is it then, brethren? **Whenever you come together**, each of you has a **psalm**, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification (1Cor 14:26).

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, **speaking to one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the LORD, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God (Eph 5:18-21).

And let the peace of God rule in

your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, **teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing with grace in your hearts to the LORD (Col 3:15-16).

The context of these verses, seems to be the assemblies of the brethren—worship services. What is the difference between a "psalm", a "hymn" and a "song?" The difference is fairly easy to understand when we look at the Greek words from which these were translated: "Psalm" is from the Greek *psalmos* which refers to the Hebrew psalms which were usually accompanied by stringed instruments. "Hymn" is from the Greek *humnos* which means a song of honor, celebration or praise—it does **not** mean a slow, somber song. "Song" is from the Greek *ode* (from which we get our English word "ode") meaning a poetic composition of any kind adapted to singing. Paul uses the poetic adjective "spiritual" to indicate that they were not to sing just any popular song as a part of the service. Paul is telling the Ephesians and Colossians in the above verses that they could use a wide variety of styles of religious music in their services. We can do the same thing today.

Praise at the Time of the End

The theme of praise to the Father and Son continues in the book of Revelation, with apparently everybody in heaven and earth participating—both speaking and singing praise. No matter how you understand the prophecies of this book, you will have to agree that praise is an important part of the events at the end.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of **many angels** around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, **saying with a loud voice**: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard **saying**: "Blessing and honor and glory and power *Be* to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb,

forever and ever!" (Rev 5:11-13.)

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of **all nations**, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and **crying out with a loud voice**, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen" (Rev 7:9-12).

And I heard a voice from heaven, **like the voice of many waters**, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists **playing their harps**. They **sang** as it were a **new song** before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth (Rev 14:2-3).

And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, **and those who have the victory over the beast**, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. **They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb**, saying: "Great and marvelous *are* Your works, LORD God Almighty! Just and true *are* Your ways, O King of the saints! (Rev 15:2-3.)

How Can We Implement More Praise in Our Congregation Now?

Changing our services is not a simple matter since many brethren are accustomed to only quietly singing a few songs in a service. Unfortunately, enthusiastic praise has been given a bad name by some "Pentecostal" or "Charismatic" congregations who have gone to the opposite extreme by encouraging people to roll on the floor, laugh uncontrollably, scream, or fall over unconscious. None of those practices are Biblical. There is a middle ground. As previously stated, we, as a people, are capable of energetic praise, but we usually give it to human athletes and leaders, rather than to the Eternal.



We would like to suggest that many of the **good examples** from our sporting and civic events be considered for use in our worship services. Obviously, there are bad examples (obscenity, disruption, sexual lewdness, etc.) in sporting and civic events that **do not** belong in a service. (We are purposefully not using rock concert behavior as an example!) If a speaker is talking, everyone should be quiet enough that he can be heard easily. People should not draw attention to themselves or distract others from the main purpose. Here are some of the **good examples** that we could possibly use from these events:

Live music is preferable. The “big events” of our day almost always have live music. Live musicians can be inspired and capture the particular inspiration of the moment, whereas recorded music will be predictably the same every time. Also, the sound coming from a multitude of instruments is “more alive” than sound coming from just a pair of stereo speakers. (There is a solid technical reason for this, but we do not have space for it here.)

Use recorded music if live music is not available. Fortunately, nearly every congregation can afford some kind of recorded music. A combination of live and recorded music may make sense in some cases.

Use energetic music. Young people tend to have more energy than older people and prefer more energetic music. They should be encouraged to participate and use their energy. Older people might stay in better physical condition and “feel younger” if they participated in more youthful music.

Use a great variety of music. It is important to look for words that have an acceptable message. Some songs do support unbiblical doctrines, others praise the worshipers more than they praise the Eternal. While “punk,” “heavy metal” and a few other styles of music seem to be largely devoted to destruction and negativism, most popular music styles can be used for positive, uplifting praise. Separation between parents’ and children’s musical tastes is often made worse because parents reject all of the songs in a particular style, not just the songs that are specifically bad for some reason. Of course, some of the great older works of the past are well worth keeping.

Use a variety of instruments if available. The Bible contains many different lists of instruments used in praising the Eternal. Most of the lists differ from each

other. Since no instruments are specifically condemned in the Bible, we conclude that we may use whatever is available.

Encourage everyone to sing along when practical. The musicians and singers “at the front” should always be considered leaders, not performers. Some “special music” songs do not lend themselves to singing along, but people should be encouraged to sing along when possible. Providing words on over-head projectors or in books is very helpful.

Encourage hand-clapping or toe-tapping along with rhythmic music. This is a way that almost anybody (even 2-year olds) can be a part of the music. It is biblical, relaxing and fun (Ps 47:1; 98:8; Is 55:12).

Use group readings or responsive readings. Not everyone can sing—singing is difficult for those who have had little opportunity or encouragement when they were young. Instead of singing, psalms or other short passages of scripture can be read in unison—loudly and with feeling. Responsive readings involve a leader reading a line or two, followed by a response from the rest of the assembly. Sometimes the response may be an echo of what the leader said, sometimes it may be the same thing every time (Psalm 136 is an example). You can use existing Bible passages or write your own readings.

Think about using cheers. These are very short, “catchy” sayings that everyone repeats together—they may include hand or arm motions. They are of particular value in teaching young people. Some single Bible verses can be used, or you can write your own in accordance with the scripture. (If this concept sounds too strange, skip it—there is no clear Bible command to do it, though there is some evidence it may have happened—Ex 24:3,7; 19:8.)

Allow some audience participation during spoken messages. Speakers should ask for questions or occasionally ask questions of the brethren (e.g. “How many of you have seen a real-life example of the ‘good Samaritan?’”) Questions and comments encourage everyone to be listening. While unrelated questions will sometimes take time away from the main message, it is better that everyone hear $\frac{3}{4}$ of the message, than for only $\frac{1}{4}$ the people to hear an uninterrupted message that “put to sleep” the other $\frac{3}{4}$.

Go Slowly, Do Not Offend

We hope that our readers have not

given up and concluded that we are trying to turn worship services into a football game or a circus. Paul clearly instructs that services should be conducted “decently and in order” (1Cor 14:40). **Our point is that services should be energetic and exciting, not “dead” as so many services are.** People should leave remembering what they heard, said, sang, and did—not what the person in front of them was wearing. **Our Great Father is worthy of more praise, pomp, and production than any athlete or leader.**

Nevertheless, it will not be easy for many brethren to get used to services of this nature. Due to dozens of years of repetition, some people believe that a *worship service* is a few quiet songs, two messages, and possibly some announcements or “special music.” The principle in Romans 14 needs to be used. Paul said he would not eat meat if it offended his brother and caused him to stumble. **If livening-up your worship service would cause many brethren to leave it, then changes need to be made slowly—at the rate that brethren can understand them.** (Not all of the above suggestions have been used in this writer’s local congregation, though he has seen them used in at least one congregation, somewhere.) It may be wise not to implement any changes at all right now. Those who disagree with these concepts need time to study the scriptures and to see what the Bible says (i.e. to look up “praise,” “joy,” “shout,” “loud,” “music,” “sing,” etc. in a concordance).

No one should be forced or “talked into” participating in anything that they do not feel comfortable with. Praise should come from the “heart.” The **purpose** for these various forms of praise is **not** to earn salvation, to gain religious “brownie points,” to attract more members or to “do something different.” The purpose is **not** to become “more acceptable” to other “charismatic” religious groups. **The purpose is to give our Creator the praise that He asks for and deserves,** and to teach His Truth to people in ways that will stay with them for a long time. We should not neglect clear Bible instruction just because some other religious groups have at least partially understood and implemented it when we did not.

May the Eternal bless all of His people as they praise Him!

—Norman S. Edwards



E-mail Prayer List Available

Brethren interested in praying for others, or those desiring prayers might like to consider utilizing the prayer list maintained by Rosy Halley. Each week she collects new prayer requests, prayer updates, long-term prayer requests, birth & death announcements, and other related items and electronic mails them to over 220 people. The list typically contains about 60 requests. The list is open to all believers, whether they are members of a church organization or not. To receive the list, send e-mail to:

RosyH@gower.net

If you do not have access to e-mail, try to find someone in your local congregation who does have e-mail—it is usually quite easy for them to print the list. You may make a request for prayer via e-mail or by writing:

Rosy Halley
4502 Skyline Dr.
Chandler, Texas 75758
903-849-2271

New Prayer and Praise Forum

Cornerstone Publications has recently allocated some of their web site to a new feature. It is a forum designed to assist all of us in our Prayer responsibilities. By having a forum dedicated to the topic of prayer requests and praise of thanksgiving, we believe that all who visit and leave their comments will benefit. The Forum is called Prayer and Praise of Thanksgiving and it is located at:

<http://web2.idirect.com/church>

Please restrict the use of this forum to these two topic areas. It is a place where each and every believer can browse, search and record their concerns. The search part of this forum will allow a search of the person's name, condition, location, date and whatever words have been added to the forum messages. There is a follow-up option where a direct reply can thread

itself to the original message.

It is by serving each other in a time of need that shows our Agape Love."

— Keith Henders

Geraldo Airs GTA Masseur Video

The Geraldo Rivera day-time television show aired a short piece of the video tape of Garner Ted Armstrong attempting some kind of sexual relationship with Suerae Robertson, a Tyler nurse and massage therapist. Robertson and her attorney appeared on the Friday, July 11th, show and explained how she was assaulted during a previous massage appointment. Robertson was unlikely to prevail in court with only her word for evidence, so she agreed to have a security camera installed and to accept Armstrong for another massage appointment in order to obtain better evidence. Armstrong refused to appear on the show or to issue any statement.

Robertson has sued Armstrong and the Church of God, International (CGI) in civil court. The case is currently delayed while an appeals court decides whether or not CGI should remain a party to the lawsuit. Armstrong allegedly promises Robertson that God will forgive any sin they might commit together because of his importance to God's work. Robertson's complaint alleges that Armstrong uses his position as a religious leader to carry on his promiscuous activities, and that the CGI board members were aware of these activities, but did nothing to stop him.

Servants' News gave details on this story in the January 1996 issue (also see letter, p.33 in Mar/Apr '97). The issue is not whether or not Garner Ted Armstrong can repent and be forgiven, but whether or not he is qualified to be a spiritual leader (1Tim 3, Titus 1). How can brethren encourage new converts to watch Armstrong's broadcasts or read his publications knowing that any day they could come across this video or news of his trial in the media? How can

we encourage others to attend his services or Feasts? It could destroy the faith of many to see that this "leader" does not "practice what he preaches."

We would hope that the brethren within the CGI will realize that if they are doing a real "work of God," then God will supply someone that meets His qualifications to make the broadcast. If they believe that Armstrong is the only one who can do their broadcast, then indeed they are doing a "work of men."

New Radio Ministries Flourish

A "big work" is not required for a successful Sabbatarian radio ministry. In its first year of operation, Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) now has over 40 radio stations airing Ronald Dart's *Born to Win* program each week. Some broadcasts advertise the phone number of a local congregation, others refer all communications to the CEM office. For information on hearing or sponsoring a CEM broadcast in your area, call 901-509-2999.

United Christian Ministries has about a dozen TV and radio stations airing their program *Hope for Humanity*. Ray Wooten has been working steadily at this broadcast since December '95, though some broadcasts were made over 2 years ago (See *Servants' News*, June 1995). For information on hearing or sponsoring a broadcast, call 888-985-9066.

Radio can be effective even with one individual's effort. Lee Clark, a Sabbath-keeper employed by Radio stations for a number of years, has his own weekly radio program called "The World Now" on KSHP-AM 1400 Las Vegas, 8-9AM Sundays. He covers religious and current-events issues and generates interest among both Sabbatarians and non-Sabbatarians.

Price Correction for Singles

The price for Mike Kawasaki's

Sabbath Singles Connection newsletter was changed after our previous issue went to press. The new rate for one year's subscription is \$14 (USA), \$16 (Canada and Mexico), and \$18 (rest of world). Contact SSC, 3229 Larkin Rd, Biggs, California 95917.

Chicago Renewal Conference

A Christian Renewal Conference was held at the Inland Center, Illinois, on Saturday-Sunday, July 19-20, 1997. The Conference was hosted by The Active Bible Church of God. Over 100 people attended.

Speakers for the conference were:

Ronald L. Dart: Evangelist with "Christian Educational Ministries"

Jon Garnant: Counselor and Speaker in the New Jersey area with the "United Church of God"

Trisha Svehla: Personnel consultant to major corporations, psychological guidance counselor with "Svehla Associates"

Gerald W. Bernardo: Wide experience as a director of youth and music activities; marine chemist with "Waterways, Inc."

John Michael Linacre: Pastor, Active Bible Church of God; Associate Director, "MESA Psychometric Laboratory, University of Chicago".

The topics of the conference were:

"Priorities in Marriage" John Linacre reviewed many basic ideas about the Christian marriage.

"Tools for Turning Teens to God" Gerald Bernardo presented some very fascinating information on tools and techniques parents can use to keep their children interested in the church as they enter their teens years. He also presented some very interesting new Scientific information which points even more clearly to a designed universe.

"Is God Really a Family?" Ronald Dart reviewed the church's teachings on God reproducing Himself through humans and helped focus us on the incredible future ahead of us as children of God.

"The New Testament Family: First Impressions" Jon Garnant demonstrated how important our study of the word was to our becoming part of the family history of the Bible which helps us to grow in even more understanding of the Bible and of God.

"Looking Within, Looking Out" Trisha Svehla had the entire conference do a personality test to help us all understand how different we all are from one another. She pointed out that once we can understand our differences we can build on that understanding and build stronger families and stronger churches.

"The New Testament Family: Deeper Insights" Jon Garnant developed the theme of his earlier message and also pointed out how important proper religious education of the children in the church should be to all of us. He also pointed out how mothers, and women overall, are uniquely equipped to be the primary teachers of children.

"Family in Prophecy" Ronald Dart was able to paint a wonderful picture of the vast universe and pointed out that even after the kingdom of God has been fully established God's project of reproducing Himself and creation is going to continue.

The Active Bible Church of God holds services Saturdays at 12:30p.m. at the Rockefeller Chapel, 59th & Woodlawn, Hyde Park Chicago. For more information on the congregation or to receive tapes of the conference, contact pastor Michael Linacre at:

address: 5610 S Drexel Ave
Chicago, IL 60637

telephone: 773-288-5650

e-mail: scuba@uchicago.edu

web: <http://mesa.spc.uchicago.edu/abcog>

—Bryn Hendrickson

Sabbath-keepers' Rights Upheld

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Kwasi Opuku-Boateng, a Seventh-day Adventist. The US Supreme Court announced on May 19, 1997 that it would not accept the case for review, which means the Circuit Court's decision stands! From the Court's opinion:

This is a case involving an employer's obligation to accommodate a worker's religious beliefs and, in particular, the commitment to observe the Sabbath. Kwasi Opuku-Boateng, a temporary employee of the California Department of Food and Agriculture ("the Department"), sought permanent employment with the Department. He was selected for a permanent position, but when he advised the Department that he was unable to work on

Saturdays because of his religious beliefs, the Department terminated the hiring process. Opuku-Boateng sued the State of California and several Department officials ("the State"), claiming that the State denied him a position on the basis of his religion, in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He sought reinstatement of employment and benefits, back pay, and reasonable attorney's fees and costs, as well as declaratory and injunctive relief. The district court concluded that Opuku-Boateng had established a prima facie case of discrimination but that the State had demonstrated that accommodating his religious beliefs would have caused undue hardship. Accordingly, it entered judgment in favor of the State. We reverse.

"We reverse" means that the Circuit Court reverses the ruling of the lower court and holds that Opuku-Boateng was indeed discriminated against on the basis of his religious beliefs. The remainder of the opinion makes great reading. Some of the footnotes refer to "Hardison" which was a Supreme Court case some years ago where a WCG member who was a mechanic for TWA refused to work on the Sabbath and was fired because of it. In that case, this Circuit Court wrote that "because rescheduling other employees would affect the other employee's contractually-established seniority system thus violating an employee's seniority rights under the collective bargaining agreement by denying him his shift preferences, the Court let his firing stand".

In this case, the court ruled that "the scheduling of shifts was not governed by any collective bargaining agreement, and the proposed accommodation would not have deprived any employee of any contractually-established seniority rights or privileges, or indeed of any contractually-established rights or privileges of any kind."

The full text of the opinion **OPUKU BOATENG V. CALIFORNIA**, 94-16542 (09-19-96), can be found on the internet at <http://www.law.vill.edu:80/Fed-Ct/Circuit/9th/opinions/9416542.htm>

—Ewin Barnett, Compuserve WCG Forum
72406.3715@compuserve.com

This case seems reasonable. Sabbath-keepers should not expect others to work less desirable hours so they can keep the Sabbath, but they need not accept mistreatment when remedy is available. —NSE ☐



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.

Agrees With Servants' News

LETTER: July 1, 1997
Dear Norman,

Those who are condemning you must be reading a different *Servants' News* than the one I get. Every copy I have received has a list of sources for information. You are right to only print the truth you understand. Unless they are limiting God, anything "the Eternal wants to be printed" will get printed by someone, some place.

Indecisive? Never. How well I remember the dogmatic statements made in the late 50's and early 60's by Rod Meredith (he was our pastor) about conditions, events, and dates that would occur in the USA. Never happened. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong.

—Mr. G, California

RESPONSE: Thanks for the encouragement. We read nearly all, and publish some critical letters because we want to be corrected when we are wrong. Yet we receive many articles and letters from individuals who apparently are not open to discussion or correction of their ideas.

—NSE

Marriage and Divorce Part II

LETTER: June 6, 1997
Dear Mr. Edwards,

I just read your article on D & R- Part II. I think it is quite helpful in trying to sort out the subject.

Your comment that each converted person should be completely aware of God's teaching or laws on the matter. Make up his or her mind to follow God and be prepared to stand before God.

—Arthur Roesler, Texas

RESPONSE: Some people greatly object to this, saying that "if people do not have to listen to the ministry and are allowed to make their own decisions in these matters the law of God will largely be ignored." Undoubtedly, there are some cases where ministers have commanded people take the correct action in their marriage when, left to themselves, the people would have ignored, misapplied, or misunderstood the scriptures. Their lives were probably better because of it. However, the purpose of the Eternal calling brethren now is so they can learn to apply the Bible in their lives—so they can learn from the mistakes they make. Those who seek to obey the Eternal will be blessed for it. Those who seek their own way will learn their lessons the hard way.

—NSE

Revisit to Grammar Class

LETTER: July 16, 1997
Dear Mr. Edwards,

Your lead articles in this latest *Servants' News* are informative. However, both you and Mr. Wiedenheft would profit from a revisit to grammar class.

Perhaps you two should each strive to "be an overcomer" in this matter, while possibly I should grow in patience.

—Beth Linehan, Wisconsin

RESPONSE: When I was in school, spelling, punctuation, and grammar were among my worst subjects. A number of volunteers help look for such problems in each issue. **We can use more help from readers skilled in these areas.** The only other requirement is easy access to a fax machine.

Thank you for your patient approach.

—NSE

Find Fellowship with Former Friends

LETTER: May 27, 1997

I was in a hospital recently and I want to thank the many people who sent get well cards, phone calls, or visited me.

The people were not just from one Church of God organization, but from various United, Global, Worldwide, Independent, Church of the Very Elect, etc. Some even met others not from their particular group whilst visiting me in the hospital and chatted friendly.

Is being ill or funerals the **only** ways old friends and acquaintances from a former church organization ever contact each other now? In some cases, it is and how sad. What an example to outsiders.

One last tip before we contact or speak

to them—think on a good point about them to say when we speak to them.

Also, in some letters, I notice attacks on one or two doctrinal or organizational differences between churches, or people who have come out from our former association; when really they agree with over 90% with each other. Yet, they tend to dwell and argue about the small points they disagree on.

Let's think on Philippians 4:8, virtue, **good** report, praise—United, Global, Philadelphia, International, etc. Let's be positive one to another.

—David Young, Scotland

RESPONSE: This is a very fine letter. It is indeed sad that funerals, illness, and occasional weddings are the only things that bring together former friends in some cases. We have heard several specific cases where hierarchical organizations refused to let their congregations participate in local socials for multiple congregations. Their reason is to "protect their congregation from different ideas." **How sincerely they want to protect or how badly they want to keep tithe-paying members for themselves will be judged in the end** (1Cor 4:5). But for now, it seems that they are sowing a certain amount of discord among people who otherwise would be brethren (Prov 6:19).

—NSE

When Does the Sabbath Start?

LETTER: June 7, 1997
Dear Brother Edwards,

Thank you for sending *Servants' News*. It is enlightening and I sometimes use its articles in my sermons (I am a minister on radio and a jail evangelist.)

Since you publish views on various doctrines and understandings of the Faith, I wonder if you'd appreciate material I have on a Thursday crucifixion—Sunday resurrection concept (which I have come to believe after much prayer and study). I'll send this if you wish.

Also, I have an out-of-print booklet by (now deceased) Brother (Elder) John Kiesz of the Church of God Seventh Day I'll send you. It is non-Trinitarian and is titled The Christological Controversy (he was formerly a college professor.)

I myself have been led to reject the Trinity concept as unbiblical (I am now what I term a Binitarian, i.e., I believe the Godhead, the Θεοτης (Col 2:9), is composed of Father and Son.) I am a firm believer that God Himself, our father, is only one God, whose name is Yah (I don't know the ending; some say Yahwah, but this is not provable, though I personally believe this.)

One burning question: If we are commanded to keep the Sabbath from evening to evening, from sundown to sundown, how can a person in the far latitudes, such as Scandinavia, where at a certain season the sun never sets, know when the Sabbath starts and ends (one such nation is called "the land of the midnight sun")?

Another question: If men colonize the moon, how will they know when to keep the Sabbath? I have never seen these questions discussed before, but would like to read a discussion in *Servants' News*.

Yours in Messiah,

—Joseph M McGuire, Alabama

RESPONSE: Please send the material that you mentioned. We are interested in studying all of those subjects, and your sources seem to be unbiased studies by sincere men. We value this kind of source much more than the paper that comes from an individual that is trying protect the existing doctrine of an established group or trying to establish himself as the leader of a new group by unique doctrinal teaching.

See page 3 of this issue for a discussion of when the Sabbath begins. The Bible gives no specific instruction on how to keep the Sabbath when there is no darkness (or sunset) during certain times of the year. Only a few people live in such places, but they still must make a decision on what to do.

The Talmud originally placed the international date line on the east coast of China. When Jews first went to Australia, they kept the Sabbath with the Western Hemisphere. However, since the commonly-used international date line is east of Australia, the Australians considered their Sabbath, to be "Sunday." After some years of going to synagogue on Sunday in Australia, the Jews finally agreed to accept the common international date line so that they could go to synagogue on Saturday.

The Bible provided no specific guidance for the above decisions; they were made by men seeking to make a wise decision. I believe that far-north communities should decide on a time so that they can keep the Sabbath approximately together. (If one started the Sabbath at 6PM and another at midnight, that would create much difficulty in having people over for Sabbath dinner.) Personally, I think I would use the darkest part of the night to start the Sabbath.

How do we keep the Sabbath in space? The Eternal gave man dominion over the Earth (Gen 1:26), but not the moon or other planets. Twenty-four-hour days do not exist at these places. While I am not against space exploration, I believe it is economically impractical for men to live off of the Earth. While science fiction treats travel

between stars as a trivial matter, there is no known technology to do this in less than many human life-times. I see no reason for people to live in space other than to explore it. If I were in space, I would try to keep the Sabbath based on the time at my Earth home—but that is not in the scripture.

—NSE

What is a Woman's Role?

LETTER:

February 3, 1997

Your November 1996 issue's article on "Marriage & Divorce" was enlightening!

I'm 61 years old, been in God's Church for 26 years and still do not know how much of a person I can be without overstepping my bounds. Many sermons have been preached on wives submitting. Consequently, some wives feel guilty if they disagree with their husband.

Years ago, a friend told me she had asked her husband to read one of Dr. Dobson's books on marriage, but her husband would have nothing to do with the book. This reaction seems typical of so many men in God's Church. Is God's ideal of a converted wife an "Edith Bunker?"

I would like to see more written on the marriage roles. You would think God's people would have learned that well, by now!

Sincerely and thank you,

—GN, Arizona

RESPONSE: Perhaps one reason that so many women are confused about their role in the church and world is because the subject is not well understood by the teachers to which we have listened. Maybe the reasons our former WCG teachings on women were unclear is because many of the leaders taught a mixture of Biblical truth and their own beliefs and erroneous teaching from elsewhere. Some verses about women were taken out of context and misunderstood. There are some good writings available that take a more biblical/historical approach to a woman's role, but they are hard to find.

Women, like men, have diverse talents and skills. Women are to work with their husbands and be supportive (as long as the deeds are in line with biblical teachings) and are also to use their talents and gifts to serve others. In the past, some taught that women could only serve as their husbands serve others. We cannot find this limitation in the Bible. Some men appear to be so possessive and jealous that they will support their wife's service and gifts **only** if it serves or benefits them in some way. This may come from a feeling of inferiority, inordinate desire for control, or some other personal difficulty. Nevertheless, the reason such men usually give for demanding control of nearly every

aspect of their wives' lives is to produce complete "unity" in the family. The reasoning is very similar to the reasons given for absolute ministerial control over church organizations. However, both produce a forced and shallow unity that needlessly narrows opportunities for all involved.

What can a woman do who finds herself married to an "Archie Bunker" who wants his wife to be an "Edith"? First, she should pray and ask the Eternal to work with him in the way that he will best respond. When our hearts are right, this can be amazingly effective (Matt 21:22, 1Jn 3:22). A woman must also learn how she can best work with her husband. Nagging and confrontations are rarely effective. A woman can use her female wit and wisdom to both satisfy the needs of her husband and to serve in the areas where the Eternal has given her talents.

Some jobs, such as the head of families and overseers in congregations, appear to be reserved for men according to the Bible. If a real wolf threatened a physical family, it would be the men who would fight it off. Similarly, men have the job of fighting off the wolves that attack spiritual congregations. **In many other areas of service, it seems that the scripture indicates that the most gifted person should have the job, regardless of gender.** Does it really seem logical to stop a female professional music teacher from starting a children's choir in her fellowship because the policy is that "only a man can do that"? Is it sensible to require her to be an "assistant" to a man who has much less experience and training? Is the opportunity for good instruction for the children important? We are aware of cases just like this occurring in congregations. The Bible sets up men as leaders in families and certain congregational functions, but not **in every area of life!**

No, women should not feel guilty for disagreeing with their husbands. Women and men think differently and need to reason together on diverse subjects, then come to a peaceful solution. That is easier said than done. A woman should not try to force her ideas on her husband, nor should she give up on good ideas just because he rejects them the first time. Women need to express their ideas logically in a way that their husbands can understand. If a woman wants to begin a worthwhile project (a personal hobby or a service of some kind), but her husband disagrees, she might try asking him if she can spend only two hours a week on the project. She may need to promise to find a way to do the housework two hours faster each week in order to make time for it. This seems like a lot of effort required just to begin a worthwhile project, but a husband

will be more likely to agree in this "no cost" way. Also, it will give him a chance to see the fruit born by the project and the positive effect it has upon his wife.

Just as wives do not want their husbands to pick at them for every little thing, women will fail if **they** try to change their husbands' mind on little details. Stick to issues that are really important. One way to reason is: "Will this issue make any difference ten years from now?" Since the Bible holds men ultimately responsible for their family, a woman need not feel guilty if she cannot convince her husband to change on an issue that she has presented to him.

It is not surprising that your friend's husband rejected the book she gave him. As a general rule, men don't tend to read books or seek the advice of other men for instruction and edification in their personal lives. Men tend to feel that they can think through a problem and solve it their way, with their knowledge and expertise. Obviously, there are men who are exceptions to this. If a book is really helpful, a woman might ask her husband for a "book swap"—he reads the book she has chosen, and she reads a book he has chosen or does something else special that he wants her to do.

There are many ways a woman can serve in what nearly everyone would accept as a "traditional female role". An excellent book on the subject is: *Spiritual Mothering—The Titus 2 Model For Women Mentoring Women*, by Susan Hunt, Crossway Books. The book contains scattered bits of incorrect theology, but most of it is real stories about older women encouraging and teaching younger women the good things in Titus 3:2-5. It shows the far-reaching effects of women's influence from seemingly humble accomplishments. You may call Great Christian Books (800-775-5422) to order this inspirational book.

—Marleen & Norman Edwards

Who Can Baptize & Lay on Hands?

LETTER:

July 9, 1997

Dear Norman,

Thank you for all the literature you sent me a few weeks ago, my family and I really appreciate it. As I told you in my last letter, we are meeting together with another family. Fortunately we are growing and we already are five families (so far) joining together as a Body.

We have our services in a house (living room) of one of the families. We, as a group, are taking the major and minor decisions about all the things the congregation needs. What to study, How we should organize ourselves, How our services will be,

How to help others, What our preaching plan will be, What our statement of belief will be, How we should solve our doctrinal differences, etc. We, as a group, are trying to answer all the previous questions.

Our sincere wish is to be led by the Holy Spirit, we want to be real tools in the hands of God. We want to thank you again because in the most difficult time, we received a lot of documents from you.

This helped us to see that if we have doctrinal errors or doctrinal misunderstandings in any Christian subject, with a real and honest Biblical study we can know the right answers and obviously the things to do.

We have studied the Passover and after several months of study we have seen that God is merciful with us and no matter how much time we live in error, He sees our attitude and lets us be aware of our doctrinal errors and gives us the opportunity to CHANGE.

The Passover is not an easy subject and we have many questions to answer yet. But at least we have accepted what the Bible says on this regard.

We have made several studies more: Church Government, The Church, The Ministry, etc. and we are happy of the results we have.

Right now, we are studying Baptism. The reason is because one of the persons who is meeting with us is not baptized. He is very interested to know everything about the subject. Not only he, but all of us are interested to know what will be happen in this case. There is not any deacon, deaconess, elder or minister in our congregation. The Big questions are: Who can baptize this person? Is a minister required to do this? Who can lay on hands on him? Can we as a congregation do this?

Our specific request to you is: Do you have any document to send us about this matter? Could you answer the questions above mentioned? Could you give us your experience on this regard?

You can send me an E-mail. I am using the E-mail of the company that I work for, just write clearly my name. I do not have problems to do that.

Thank you again for everything.

Norman: Keep doing the Good Work. Best regards.

—J. J., Mexico

E-mail: laprensa@spin.com.mx

RESPONSE: We are happy to see that your fellowship is going well. We encourage you to remain diligent in your studies.

Regarding baptism: It is important to realize that baptism was not a new thing introduced by John the Baptist. Immersion in water for cleansing one's sin is a practice

among Jews today and was apparently used well before John. Our Savior's disciples baptized people long before His death and resurrection (John 3:22;4:1-2).

Three thousand people were baptized on Pentecost. If only the 12 apostles did the baptizing and laying on of hands, each one would have to baptize and lay hands on 250 people. That would give them less than 2 minutes for each person if they did it for eight hours. If all 120 disciples participated in the baptism and laying on of hands, they could devote 15 minutes to each person and finish in 6¼ hours.

We see no command in the scripture that requires people to be of a certain status or "rank" to baptize others or lay on hands. The Eternal commanded Ananias to baptize Paul, and even though we have much description about Ananias, he is not called a prophet, minister, elder, or any such thing (Acts 9:10-18; 22:12-16). Paul clearly explains that **who** baptizes a person is not very important—even though he preached in many places, he rarely ever baptized anyone, and he could not remember for certain how many people he baptized! (1Cor 1:13-17).

Some have taught that a certain "rank" is required to "lay on hands" based on Acts 8. Philip baptized people in Samaria (v 12), but they did not receive the holy spirit until Peter and John came (v 14-17). The chapter says nothing about why they did not receive the holy spirit. However, it is unlikely that it was due to a "lack of spiritual power" on the part of Philip—great miracles were performed through him (v 6-7). We believe the Eternal withheld his spirit so Peter and John would have a face-to-face encounter with Simon Magus (18-23), whom some historians believe was the false "Peter" who was buried at Rome and founder of a church that is headquartered there to this day!

Finally baptizing or laying on of hands are not in the Bible's spiritual gift lists (Rom 12:6-8; 1Cor 12:7-11,28-31; Eph 4:11-15, 1Pet 4:8-11). Rather, they are listed as basic doctrines that mature believers should have mastered (Heb 6:1-2). Anyone baptizing another should thoroughly understand baptism. The baptizer should talk to the person and make sure they understand that they are making a life-long commitment to obey the Eternal and to live by His word—they are not joining a human organization. The baptizer should refuse to baptize a person obviously in a wrong attitude (Matt 3:7-8). However, the person requesting baptism must understand that he or she is making an agreement with the Eternal, not the baptizer. If a person convinces someone to baptize them for wrong reasons, that person is sinning, not the baptizer!

We have participated in two baptisms since working as an independent ministry. One person was baptized in a horse-watering tank (a clean one), and the other person in a lake. One or two persons assisted the new members in and out of the water, and then many brethren laid hands on them. The idea that a "minister" must push a person into and pull them out of the water is from Baptist tradition, not from the Bible. Jewish tradition indicates that the person went under the water themselves—the baptizer only watched to be sure that they go completely under water. Neither method is described in the Bible, but the symbolism of the later seems better. The first one seems to symbolize a minister "controlling a believer's new spiritual life." The latter seems to symbolize a person responsible for their own spiritual life with other brethren there to find mistakes that they cannot see themselves. We believe that the Eternal honors both methods of Baptism, since the Bible does not spell it out.

We hope this information has been helpful to you. We do not have any other information available on this subject now.

—NSE

Praise & Worship Songs of Jesus

This is Part 4 of a series of letters beginning in the Sept-Oct 1996 issue.

LETTER: January 13, 1997
Dear Norm and Marleen,

I would like to respond to Paul Haney's letter in the November, SN, in which he objected to my not singing certain hymns praising Jesus Christ at the FOT. I had mentioned, "the reason Debbie and I did not sing certain songs was that they overly praised 'Jesus, Jesus' to the exclusion of God." I also said, Debbie and I felt this was a reflection back to the Protestant misconception of the Messiah, Christ. We could not in good conscience sing them." I suggested that rather than ask everyone to sing for the sake of unity it would be better to respect each other's stand in the same way that Paul asked vegetarians and non-vegetarians to respect each other.

I think Mr. Haney may have misunderstood me. I fully agree with most of what he wrote. I extol Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus the Christ) as my Lord, my Saviour, my Shepherd, and my Door to God. My bumper sticker reads, "My Boss is a Jewish Carpenter." **I spent hundreds of hours over a two year period putting together a paper on the chronology of Christ's life.** For years, in the WWCG I decried the lack of emphasis on Christ. I don't relegate Christ to a backseat, but neither do I replace God with Jesus Christ in my worship of God. Jesus

himself directed our worship towards God, "His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.' So He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'"

The reason the apostasy of the Trinity was so successful in the WWCG was that there were questions asked for which we didn't have all the answers. For example, the Bible teaches monotheism, the belief in one and only one God. "Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is' Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one...So the scribe said to Him, 'Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He'" (Mark 12:29,32). Yet, we had Jesus Christ as the Creator of the Universe, the God of the Old Testament, the God of the fathers, and the One claiming to be God doing all the speaking in the Old Testament. Where was the Father? Are we faced with two Gods in One, a Binity? After all, we had Christ performing all the activities of God. Yet the Bible teaches monotheism, one God, not two Gods.

In our addressing this question of who Christ was we are going back to the primary issue that brought about the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. Most of the attendants were ignorant of the issue. In a politically influenced vote, those who declared Christ and God were of one substance won. This was not the end of the matter. Hundreds of years of debate, persecution, and actual war followed until the emerging Catholic Church silenced all opposition by force. Today we are blessed with religious freedom and academic resources unknown in the past to once again look at this issue.

Protestantism in general worships Christ and excludes God the Father. The image worshiped is that of a baby in a manger, an effeminate man, or a dying man hanging on a pagan instrument of torture. The message taught is that Christ kept the law for us and all we have to do is verbally accept Him as our Saviour and we will go to heaven. **This is particularly evident in many Protestant hymns.** Yahshua the Messiah said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matt 22:37-38). When we center our worship on Jesus, which many Protestant hymns do, we are replacing God with Christ, which actually becomes a form of idolatry because we are to have no other gods before the one and only true God.

Jesus the Christ is never described in the Bible as "God the Son". He is always

described as "the Son of God." There is a tremendous difference. Christ never claimed to be God. He claimed to be God's Son. "I adjure you by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Matt 26:63-64). The Father is greater than the Son. This is true by definition as well as by Christ's own words. "I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

Christ did not speak on His own. He spoke the Father's words. "...I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things" (Jn 8:28). Christ did not claim to be the God of the Old Testament. Rather He said His Father was the God the Jews worshiped in the Old Testament. "Jesus answered, 'If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God'" (John 8:54). Christ even called God, his God. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Matt 27:46). "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God (John 20:17). Paul likewise said God was God to Jesus Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 1:3). "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom..." (Eph 1:17).

Peter preached that the God of the fathers was God, not Christ. **"The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate..."** (Acts 3:13). The apostles in prayer to God said God created the heavens and the earth, not Christ. "So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, . . . For truly against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together'" (Acts 4:24,27). Stephen plainly declared throughout his defense in Acts 7 that the God who appeared to Abraham, the God who spoke to Abraham, the God who spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai "with the Angel" (nowhere does the Bible specifically say this angel was Christ) was God the Father and not Christ as Protestant and Catholic Trinity doctrine presupposes. In contrast, note what Stephen says about Christ in this same chapter. "This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your

brethren. Him you shall hear” (Acts 7:37). “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52). “But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus (Yahshua) standing at the right hand of God, and said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’” (Acts 7:55-56).

Mr. Haney strongly asserted 1 Timothy 1:17 refers to Christ, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever.” Mr. Haney uses 1 Timothy 6:13-16 as proof this refers to Christ, “...until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality ... to whom be honor and everlasting power.”

I do not agree with Mr. Haney’s assertion that 1 Timothy 1:17 is referring to Jesus the Christ, nor I do not believe his proof is adequate. In Paul’s letter to Timothy, Paul makes it very clear he is referring to the Father when he uses the term “God.” Paul also plainly uses “Lord” or “Jesus Christ” when referring to Christ. “Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord” (1Tim 1:2). “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour (God is also our Saviour!), who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” (1Tim 2:3-5). “God was manifested in the flesh” (1Tim 3:16). (God wasn’t in the flesh. Rather, He was manifested through Jesus Christ.). “I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels...” (1Tim 5:21). “I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen” (1Tim 6:13-16).

Mr. Haney uses this scripture to prove “God” in 1 Timothy 1:17 refers to Christ, not God, yet it’s very clear from reading the entire letter that Paul uses the term “God” to refer to the Father, not to Christ. Also, it is very unclear in the NKJV whether Paul is referring to God or to Christ in 1 Timothy

6:15-16. Cassirer’s translation renders it, “till the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will be shown forth, at the time appointed for it, by him who is the sole Sovereign, ever-blessed, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. To him alone immortality belongs ; unapproachable light is his dwelling place; and it is he who no human eye has ever seen nor can see. Let honor and everlasting dominion be ascribed to him. Amen.” Here, clearly, it is God who is being ascribed, not Christ.

The apostasy of the trinity, in the WCG should cause us to ask whether we are absolutely correct in our concept of the Messiah. In the above I quoted just a few of the scriptures that seem to conflict with our traditional view of the Messiah. When we find scriptures conflicting with what we think we know, it is usually a sign that we don’t know everything. Perhaps there is more, much more we need to learn about who Yahshua the Messiah was.

It was out of deep respect for God and His only begotten Son, Jesus the Messiah, that my wife and I did not sing certain Protestant songs. They portrayed a different Christ from the Christ of the Bible. Actually these hymns are closer to portraying Mithra, the pagan son-god from Mithraism, the chief rival religion to Christianity in Rome in the early centuries A.D. **On the other hand there are many majestic Protestant hymns that praise either God or Christ from a Biblically accurate basis that we love to sing.**

We hope all is well with you.

In Christian fellowship,
John Sash

RESPONSE: We agree that there are some Protestant hymns that carry Trinitarian, “sweet baby Jesus,” “the law is done away,” and “we are such good people” themes and we avoid singing them. At some other time, we can discuss specifically which hymns you found fault with and why. Obviously, the Bible does **not** give a guideline such as “if your service has more than 30% songs praising the Messiah, it is idolatry.” It is hard for me to believe that it is possible for someone to commit idolatry praising the true Savior “too much”, because He represents the Father—His words are the same as the Father’s words (John 12:50). On the other hand, yes, people probably do commit idolatry worshiping a false understanding of our Savior.

We understand how the “Should we praise Jesus?” question relates to the question “is Jesus ‘the Lord’ (YHVH) in the Old Testament?” If Jesus (Yeshua) is YHVH, then most of the Old Testament praise commands apply to Him. But you have made a

good case showing that **the Father** was “the Lord” (YHVH) in the Old Testament.

Who was the “God of the Old Testament?” We cannot answer that question without more study. In fairness to those who believe that “Jesus was the God of the Old Testament,” we will list some of the scriptures used to support that idea:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him (Col 1:15-16).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me’” (John 1:1-3,14-15).

And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ (1Cor 10:4).

And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You [the Jews] have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form (John 5:37).

We are aware of many arguments about these and other related scriptures; there are other possible ways of translating them and interpreting them. There are many teachers who claim to have it “all figured out,” though we do not believe we have received a paper with a consistent explanation for all of the scriptures on the subject.

Lest we be misunderstood, we are not saying that Trinitarian doctrines might be correct. We do **not** see any evidence whatever that the holy spirit is a “third person” of “the godhead.” The holy spirit has no name (as do YHWH and Yeshua) and no permanent form—it appeared “like a dove” (Matt 3:16, et. al.), as “tongues of fire” (Acts 2:1-4), and in other ways—but it never appears as a person. The nature of the Eternal is clear in the book of Revelation: “...The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ...” (Rev 11:5). There are two! The “holy spirit” is not mentioned in the book of Revelation!

What is not clear to us is the exact nature of Jesus (Yeshua) before his human birth. Was he a being nearly equal with the Father? Was He the Father’s “messenger” or “assis-

tant?" Was he YHWH? Did He not exist at all until His human birth? These are questions that we cannot answer completely, though we have received many papers that claim to have the answer. **While we should all strive to grow in spiritual knowledge, the exact "nature of God" makes little difference in how we live our daily lives.** There is no difference between the teaching of the Father and the teaching of His Son: "Then Jesus said to them, '...I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things'" (John 8:28). When the apostle Philip asked about the nature of the Father, he received an interesting reply:

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" (John 14:9.)

Whether we see the Father or the Son, we see the same thing. **Our greatest need is to better learn and obey what they taught,** not to perfectly understand Their history.

—NSE

Chronology of Christ's Death & Stolen Truth?

LETTER: July 8, 1997
Hello Norman Edwards and Staff:

I am sending you guys another copy of an article that I wrote back in February, that is causing quite a stir. *Servants' News*, did not print my article, nor did anyone write a reply to me concerning it, but have chosen to ignore me and the article, as did all of the so-called Churches of God, also. My question to you and them is this, "Why??" Are you guys afraid of truth?? I come up with an article that blows the lid off of your so-called "passover", and you guys ignore it. What gives? It appears that you can't figure out Truth if it smacks you in the face. My article "proves" to anyone with half a brain, that Jesus Christ or (Yeshua) **was not taken captive by the Jews on a Tuesday night!!!!**

Is William Dankenbring and Bernard Kelly and a few others, the only ones out there with more than half a brain??? Norman, why are you rejecting truth? I guess I can understand you not printing everyone's articles, due to space or whatever, but an article like mine deserves to go to the front of the line with bold headlines! God inspired me to write this article, and you guys don't even have the guts to print it!! Not only have you rejected me, you have rejected the Gods in heaven, who I feel have inspired me to write this article! So here is another copy, in case you trashed the first one! Reject it again, and it will be you who

will have egg all over your faces later on!

You have my permission to print it all, in its entirety, without editing it or changing the words, and you may use my name and address also!

RESPONSE: We received your article and looked it over. Our records show that we failed to send you a reply. We are sorry for that. We did not print your article for three reasons:

1) It was very difficult to follow. Even if everything you said was true, the article would need to be greatly edited or rewritten to make it easily understandable. (Specific difficulties include: the average paragraph size was half a page, the article wandered between subjects, and numerous spelling, grammar and style corrections were needed.)

2) The article was written in a negative, condemning tone—very similar to your letter printed here. About one third of the article was devoted to condemning people who disagreed with you. We see very little love in your writings.

3) While you raised some good questions, we do not believe that your conclusion is supported by all of the relevant Scripture. You condemn the traditional explanations of "scholars," yet you cite the historian Josephus, orthodox Jewish practice, Sanhedrin rules, the International Dictionary of the Bible—all information from "scholarly" sources. We will cover a few of the major difficulties we found with your conclusions:

Your article stated that Christ's last supper had to be more than one night before His crucifixion because Mark 15:25, which says Jesus was crucified at the "**third hour**," and John 19:19:14 which says that Pilate was judging Jesus "**about the sixth hour**". If both of these are in the same "time system," then you are correct. However, we are probably dealing with two time systems here: Hebrew times count hours from sunrise or sunset, whereas Roman times count hours from noon or midnight (similar to what we do today). We agree with your conclusion that Mark was using Hebrew times and therefore Christ was crucified at 9AM (third hour from 6AM, approximate sunrise).

However, it appears John was using Roman time, so his "sixth hour" was about 6 AM, plenty of time for Pilate to finish his judgment before a 9AM crucifixion. Is it reasonable that an apostle would use a Roman time? Yes. Nearly all of the Eternal's people that I know of today use the Roman date and time systems because that is what people understand. John often uses the expression "the Jews," rather than "we Jews" (he was a Jew), so we must conclude that he was writing primarily to Gentiles. There are three other places where John

mentions times. One is hard to conclude much from (John 4:52), but the other two both appear to be Roman times. "He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was **about the tenth hour**)" (John 1:29). If this is a Roman time, it makes sense to say that they "remained with him that day"—10 AM until dark; if it was a Hebrew time, it would be 4 PM, and most of the day would have already been gone. Also, in John 4:6 we see: "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was **about the sixth hour.**" From surrounding verses we see this event occurred at Sychar when Jesus was traveling from northern Judea to Galilee, and his disciples had gone to buy food. Since it would take a major hike to make Jesus tired, we conclude that they must have made the 30 mile trip from northern Judea to Sychar in one day (12 hours at 3mph, with 2 hours for rest breaks, getting water, etc.), arriving about 6 PM in the evening. That would be a normal time for local people to come to the well and for travelers to buy food for a big meal before sleeping. None of these factors make as much sense if we suggest that John was using Hebrew time which would make this event occur at noon. **Our conclusion is that John always uses Roman time in his Gospel and that his account does not demand an extra day between Christ's last supper and His crucifixion.**

Your article cites Sanhedrin rules as proof that an extra day would be required for a "lawful trial." The Eternal's instructions to all judges were "they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deut 25:1). The Sanhedrin was planning to condemn a righteous man for their own selfish reasons. If they would violate the Eternal's rules, they would violate their own rules—especially when "national security" interests were at stake (we have many modern-day examples). Unjust men try to violate as few rules as possible to look righteous, but their desires often exceed the law.

We also disagree with your argument that Pilate and Herod would not be available at sunrise for a trial. Jerusalem was flooded with people for Passover—you might compare it to Atlanta while the Olympic Games were held. If these rulers wanted to keep their positions in the Roman government, they had to keep order and put down any riots or armed insurrection (which were all too common in Judea). If the city were in an uproar, Herod and Pilate would do whatever was necessary to stop it (Mark 15:15). In this case, it meant getting to their judgment halls a little early, and sending a just man to death.

A straight-through reading of Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-15 or Luke 22-23 shows no break in the time when Jesus was captured, to the false charges brought against him, to the formal condemnation by the Sanhedrin, to his Crucifixion. Each Gospel uses a special expression to indicate the formal condemnation of our Savior that took place "very early" in the morning (Matt 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66). A "multitude" was present for all of the judgments by the Romans—it is unlikely that the Roman leaders would take a whole day to act on this problem.

Your article claimed that it would take a long time for Christ to walk between the various judgment halls. From our research, all of them were within about half a mile—less than a 10-minute walk.

Your article contained many other points, some of which we agreed with and some of which we did not. We have Scriptural reasons for the ones with which we disagreed. But should we take the time to explain each one to you? Can we expect that you will listen to us when your article labels everyone who disagrees with it as "blind" and "of Satan the Devil"?

LETTER: I am also sending you an article that William Dankenbring has written on the subject! So far, William has not given me any public credit or praise for my article, which was sent to him back in February! It was "me" who gave him the "reasons why" Jesus Was Not Taken Captive On A Tuesday Night, and It was "Me" who sent out my article to all of the so-called Churches of God back in February, that spelled out to everyone these New Found Nuggets Of Truth!!!

Dankenbring has taken my article, and apparently pulled a Herbert Armstrong, by making everyone think that Christ "revealed" this new knowledge to him personally, without ever giving anyone else the credit!! Please let your readers know, that William Dankenbring did not come up with this new knowledge on his own, but has taken my article and my "reasons" and published them in his *Prophecy Flash* magazine as being his own ideas!!! Isn't stealing against the law???

Sincerely With Love,

—Glen W. Myers

1047 Iroquois St., Clearwater, Fla. 33755

[You may obtain a copy of Glen's article by writing to this address.]

RESPONSE: Since we receive literature from so many organizations, we have often heard accusations of "truth stealing." We will get an article one month from an independent writer, and then find a nearly identical article written by someone else in a newsletter a few months later. We are very much aware that Herbert Armstrong took the writings of others and claimed them as his own. We believe

people should give credit where it is due. *Servants' News* has never received a letter claiming that we have stolen another's material. We are perplexed by people who can appropriate the writings of others, then claim that they were a revelation from God to them. This is a lie and a mockery of true revelation through the holy spirit. How such people will answer in the judgment, we do not know (Matt 12:36; 7:22-23, Mark 2:28).

On the other hand, we are not sure why so many writers are worried when other people are "stealing their truth." Paul was happy that Christ was preached for both good and bad reasons (Phil 1:15-18). If ones' goal is to see truth taught, he should be happy that others teach it whether they give him credit or not. However, if a person's goal is to get followers and money for himself, then it is very important to him to be properly credited for all of his writings so people will look to him. How awful!

We should not be in a hurry to accuse someone of "stealing truth"—we must realize that the Eternal is quite capable of teaching the same truth to many people at once, and demons are capable of teaching the same error to many people at once. Just because two articles reach similar conclusions does not mean that one person had to copy from the other. But when parts of one person's writing are identical to another person's writing (including identical grammatical errors), then plagiarism seems to be the most likely cause. We have no way of proving whether the "two days between last supper and crucifixion" idea originated with you, Bill Dankenbring, or someone else. We will not spend the time to investigate the matter. Bible students need not worry much about possible plagiarism by others. Whether or not a teaching is true is far more important than whether or not it is original. Both truth and error can be self-taught or stolen. Our question should be: "Does this teaching agree with the Bible and reliable history?"

—NSE

Comments on the "Cult" Article

LETTER:

April 29, 1997

Dear Mr. Edwards,

I have just received my copy of the Mar/Apr issue of *Servants' News*, and have read the first-page article, "Cult, Occult, New Age- What Are They?" While you seem to have a fairly good grasp of the last two, your ideas of what constitutes a "cult" and characteristics of cults is quite lacking. I agree with you as far as the definition which the secular media seems to imply by their use of the word "cult", but otherwise what the article has offered is far from what

orthodox Christianity means by "cult." Allow me to share with you a few insights.

Dr. Gordon R. Lewis is probably one of the leading experts on cults in the world today. In his book, *Confronting the Cults*, he offers one of the best definitions of "cult" I have found. Lewis states:

A cult, then, is any religious movement which claims the backing of Christ or the Bible but distorts the central message of Christianity by (1) an additional revelation, and (2) by displacing a fundamental tenet of the faith with a secondary matter. (p.4)

While Lewis admits that there are sociological matters which sometimes enter into consideration, he says that "Christianity is not primarily a sociological phenomenon. On this view the most significant differences between Christianity and the cults are doctrinal rather than economical" (p.13, note 7). Thus, when we as Christians look at various religious groups which claim to be Christian (such as the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons), we check their **doctrine** against what the Bible teaches.

Yes, there are certain biblical doctrines to which groups must adhere in order to avoid being classified as "cult" but these are not determined by ecclesiastical hierarchies or denominational headquarters, but by what the Bible teaches. And, quite frankly, the triune nature of God is indeed one of the cardinal tenets of the Scriptures, thus a "test" of orthodoxy.

While there are some characteristics of cults listed in the article, you seem to omit some of the most telling signs of cult mentality. Such things as: (1) a defective Christology; (2) extra-biblical revelation; (3) a false basis of salvation (a works salvation, or law-keeping salvation); (4) an exclusive claim to truth; (5) an attitude of constantly being persecuted, especially by Christianity. These are just a few characteristics of the cults which I have encountered in various correspondence over the past several months.

Personally, I try to avoid labeling any individual or group as a "cult" until I have done extensive study—examining their teachings against what the Bible teaches. Scripture encourages—even demands—that we "test the spirits" to see if they are from God (1John 4:1-3). We are to "guard the Gospel" (2Tim 1:14), "contend for the faith" (Jude 3) always be ready to defend the faith (1Peter 3:15), and to refute false teaching we encounter (Titus 1:9). Yet, we are to do this wisely and graciously (Colossians 4:5-6). These texts form the biblical basis for apologetics. In my own ministry, I have attempted to follow this outline as best I can.

Continued on page 30



MEN VS. Women?



For hundreds of years, church organizations and civil governments have debated the role of women. In our Western societies today, most **women** have more freedom than at any time in history. But so do most **men**. Is increased freedom for women a sign of national decadence, or a sign of relief from years of women being oppressed?

The truth is probably somewhere in between. The feminist idea of today is that men and women are equal in every way and should have legally enforced equal access to everything—education, jobs and even military combat. Few Bible students believe this view, as the Bible defines different roles for men and women—and simple observation shows that as a whole, men and women have different strengths and weaknesses.

The opposing view **is expressed by the letter, below**, and believed by all too many church men: "women are inferior and their freedom is a major cause of world problems." This letter reads like a combination of the book of Job and a long soap-opera. It demonstrates the amazing lengths to which people can go to justify themselves and blame their problems on others. The statements about women are a vast mixture of error and truth—a massive effort is required to sort out the two. It would require more than a whole newsletter to completely answer every accusation, so we comment only on the biggest difficulties. We pray for the recovery of both women and men who have had bad relationships because of this kind of thinking.

LETTER: June 2, 1997
Dear Norm,

Your politically correct view of men and women in this article, helps explain why you think it just fine for women to teach men in God's Church. It should

NO, Men & Women Together!

be noted women have sought to "teach" and offer "good" advice to men ever since the garden of Eden. Don't forget Adam's sin was letting his wife teach him (Gen 3:17). It is their gullible nature that is the reason they are not to teach (1Tim2:14; 2Tim 3:6; 1Pet 3:7).

RESPONSE: Genesis 3 says nothing about Eve "teaching" Adam. Her words are not recorded, but "she also gave to her husband with her and he ate" (v 6,12). Verse 17 indicates that Eve said something to Adam ("because you heeded the voice of your wife."), but the Hebrew *qowl* for "voice" here implies a "sound," not a "lecture" or long teaching. Adam's sin was **not** that he listened to his wife talk, but that he disobeyed

the clear command of the Eternal (v 17). He was **not** deceived as Eve was.

There are many scriptures relating to women teaching. We will have an article on the subject in a later issue.

LETTER: Women are easier to persuade, any phone call sales personnel knows this. Car salesmen are trained to sell {to} the woman, she will take care of the husband. Like all men, they will give in just to give his ears some rest, and if he doesn't, she will pout for the next 2 weeks. If something negative happens as the result of her not getting her way, he will be subjected to her endless whining and "I told you so. If you would have just listened to me!"

RESPONSE: If a man really believes the Eternal made him the head of his family, then he should improve on Adam's approach and take charge of his family. He should tell his wife that he wants her opinion, but that he is going to make the ultimate decision as to what car they buy. If his wife whines and pouts to get her way, then the husband must deal with her like a child—he must make sure that the childish behavior is never rewarded by "getting its way." He can simply not buy the car or not allow her to drive it until she "grows up." But if something negative does happen because the husband failed to listen to his wife's good advice, then he should learn to listen. It is hard for a man to accept good advice and patiently refute bad advice from the same person, but that is what the Eternal expected Adam to do with his wife, and what the Eternal expects men to do today.

Your letter contains many generalizations about men and women. Scientific testing organizations such as Human Engineering Laboratories have proven that some human capabilities tend to favor one gender. For example, twice as



many men as women scored well on certain engineering aptitude tests, whereas twice as many women as men scored well for some artistic aptitude tests. Also, men tended to score higher on tests requiring concentrated thought, where women score higher on tests requiring thinking about several subjects at once. **However**, these same testing organizations show that there are **many exceptions** to the general rules. There were women with strong engineering aptitudes and men with strong artistic aptitudes.

It should be even more clear if we examine this issue on a purely physical basis. If we picked out 100 men at random and 100 women at random, we would find that a much greater proportion of the men than women could lift 60 pounds over their head. **However, the strongest woman would probably be able to lift more than the weakest man—maybe more than the weakest 10 or 20 men.**

The Biblical principle of judgement is that people are judged on **what they do, NOT** on what their nation, family, or gender **has a tendency to do.**

LETTER: In addition to being easier targets in the physical world, they are also of the spiritual. Women dominate the field of astrology, mediums, physics, channelers. The women in mass seeing visions of mother Mary. That is the real reason why Satan chose to “get” to our first family through Eve. Like women today, she is the weaker vessel. Note during Adam and Eve’s discussion over the two trees, Adam promoted God’s point of view, while Eve promoted Satan’s point of view, and you know very well who prevailed. You may think men and women are “equal,” but if one is easier to deceive than the other, then they are not equal. You decide which is inferior.

RESPONSE: While women may dominate some of the demonic areas that you named, we might ask who dominates the positions of dictators, false religious leaders, inquisitors, and soldiers of genocide? **Men!** While there are exceptions in all cases, the vast majority of humanity’s evils as recorded by the Bible and secular history have been plotted and carried out by men! If we view Genesis 3 as a competition between the strength of Adam and Eve, it looks like Eve is

stronger because her idea was followed. The lesson we are to learn from Genesis 3 is that husbands and wives should learn to work together to follow the Eternal. **Eve was not “anti-God,” she specifically gave Him credit for the birth of her children (Gen 4:1,25).**

LETTER: Oh, I know today it is great sport to hammer on men while exalting women. I might add it is also safer both mentally and physically. Women are much more likely to scream and howl than men are. Sorry, just one more way we are not equal. Yes, I’ve seen men portrayed as fools, while women are exalted on TV, in ads, sit-coms, daytime soaps (we all know who produce soaps, women), movies, (showing women in command or beating up men), magazines and the list goes on. There could be 10,000 men and 1 woman doing some job and the media will of course focus on the woman so all can see her in a man’s role.

RESPONSE: Men, husbands and fathers are certainly exploited in TV and movies—though probably not any more than women have been exploited over the years as mindless sex-objects. Humans have a tendency to like to be told that their problems are someone else’s fault. Our media provides programming for men who want to feel superior to women, and for women who want to feel superior to men. Advertising is designed to get money from both kinds of people. While there certainly are some women advertising and media executives, the majority are still men—men more interested in making money than what they are doing to American families.

Those who believe the Bible should not be trying to “more accurately place the blame,” but working toward cooperation between men and women.

LETTER: Today, we have college courses teaching girls how to have families without husbands. Then we can talk more about “deadbeat dads”. We also can have “take your daughters to work day” but of course no counterpart for boys, that would be discrimination. Women can also be forced into all male schools, but not the other way around, women can and do have a fit until the idea is rejected. Women get preferential hiring for all governmental jobs. We will also lower standards everywhere so women can fill men’s jobs. Then we will

point our finger at those awful men for being angry. In the Church, we will always honor mother’s day, but never father’s day. We will teach, “A train without an engine is like a family without a mom”. I wonder where that puts dad, caboose maybe?

RESPONSE: Obviously, the scriptures teach that children should be raised by both parents. Teaching otherwise is wrong. Except for items reserved specifically for the Levites or priests, the Bible says little about who can do what kind of work. Please remember that, for hundreds of years, women have been legally prevented from even applying for most jobs. Governments should not be in the business of forcing private businesses or schools to accept or reject anybody. Free enterprise means a particular business can decide to hire all female workers or no female workers. If women tend to do well at a specific job, then those businesses that hire women will be more successful, and those that do not will suffer. The same would be true for men.

LETTER: We will teach how equal men and women are, never mind, even though they are stuffing science classes with girls, it is still boys who are inventing everything, just as men always have. Never mind men are more goal oriented and less distractable, (Mr. Kelly had a lot of fun with that one.) while women are very distractable. We will teach: women are just as good as leaders as men. Never mind twice as many women are suffering from depression than men, about 20-30 million in the United States alone. Never mind one of the manifestations of a depressant is a distorted view of reality, as is the case with all paranoids (at times turning little problems into absolute disasters). Anorexia is almost exclusively a feminine problem, is this not a problem that has reality distortion? Never mind P.M.S. is a powerful dynamic in marriage which is exclusively hormone induced and also distorts reality, and she thus becomes totally irrational, illogical, and impossible, also women are naturally more emotional, and emotion also distorts reality. That’s why God teaches men to just get away from them at such times. Proverbs 21:9; 21:19; 25:24; 27:15; 9:13; 14:1. Why don’t you mention these scriptures, Mr. Edwards? Never mind all that, we will teach she is just as capable as him, and he should lis-

ten to her "good" advice more.

RESPONSE: Again, these are generalizations, probably based on some truth. Some ailments are found in women most often and some in men. But saying women are inferior because they tend to have more illness is a distortion of reality. Women, on average, live several years longer than men.

You have listed six scriptures about foolish or contentious women. Here are seven about good women (1Sam 25:3; 2Sam 14:2; 20:16, Matt 26:10, Acts 9:36, Prv 14:1; Prv 31). You can also find a lot of scriptures on evil men and on good men. We could try to count all of the scriptures about "good" and "bad" men and women and see who has the most of each. Or we can get the Biblical view directly: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

LETTER: I'm sorry if this offends you but this is all true. Men and women are not equal, you decide if one is inferior. Let me give you a hint, girls suffer more from low self esteem than boys, while boys are perfectly happy with themselves. Girls know the answer to this question even if you don't. Don't get me wrong, men don't have a higher calling or more potential at all, but to believe that we are all equal is to deny reality.

RESPONSE: I am glad that you see men and women's ultimate calling is not different. I also agree that men and women are not physically "equal"—they have many different characteristics and the Bible never says they are "equal." However, is one superior to the other? That is like asking whether a cow or a goat is superior. It depends on many factors and what your needs are. Most cows will produce more milk than most goats; but the best goat will out-produce the worst cow. Goats can live in places where cows cannot. If you want to design and build a house, the average man might do better than the average woman. If you want to decorate a house and raise four children in it, the average woman might do better than the average man. **Emphasizing whose abilities are superior tends to cause strife. What is needed is emphasis on men and women working together.**

LETTER: In addition we will claim SAT tests are favoring men, how can that be if we are all equal? How can the

same test favor one if the two are equal? **My point is we are only pretending we are equal, when in the real world we are not!** When we enter marriage as "equals", we set in motion inevitable confrontation. Since no one is in charge and we obviously don't think alike, (women elected Clinton not men), there will be strife. Yes, only women would elect a known sex pervert and liar with the character and morals of an alley cat. This is now a known fact.

RESPONSE: There are some tests which men tend to do better on, and some which women tend to do better on. There is not "inevitable confrontation" in a marriage because the Eternal set the husband in charge of his wife (1Cor 11:3). My reading indicates that Clinton derived a large part of his vote from middle- and lower-income women who either did not know or did not care about his background. (Also, we have looked at an Internet site documenting some of Clinton's "exploits" and over 70 of his former associates who have died by "suicide" or murder.) Yet it is interesting that only one woman, Paula Jones, is effectively trying to bring him to justice—apparently numerous men also knew what he was doing. But before we condemn women for Clinton's election, we must look at all the men who voted for him, and all the men who voted for other misfit leaders when women were not allowed to vote.

LETTER: In addition to all the differences above, women are more prone than men to drug addiction (says Betty Ford), panic attacks, phobias, and inability to control credit card spending so say those companies. It is also known women are prone to make decisions based on emotion and feeling rather than fact and logic as men do. This coupled with her unpredictability and irrational mood swings on a regular monthly basis, leads her to distorted perceptions of reality, incorrect conclusions and false accusations. Hardly traits of good leadership.

RESPONSE: The number of men convicted of crimes far exceeds the num-

ber of women. We could write more about how men tend to fight rather than talk and their other failings as leaders, but that would not help anyone very much.

LETTER: Women are superior to men in word processing, they are also very good at a task that is given to them. They have superior smell capability, but inferior night vision, I could go on and on but why?

RESPONSE: Please don't! We do not need any more generalizations.

LETTER: The point is, every strength men have is God-given at creation to perform his leadership role. Every strength we know women have is to perform her support role. **The admission of the reality of such differences destroys the very premise for women's liberation, which is, we are all equal, so there is no need for family structure.** You might as well know, I support men not women in this age of the family-destroying feminist movement, which every one else is supporting.

RESPONSE: Some women, such as Deborah the Judge or Queen Elizabeth, had strengths that made them good leaders. Some men have a lot of muscle, but not the ability to converse and settle problems peacefully. In general, we agree that the Eternal gave more leadership strengths to men and more supporting strengths to women. Working together is the key.

LETTER: In the beginning God created Adam, perfect and complete in every way except reproduction. God made Adam in His own image, contrary to what some believe God is NOT half male and half female in form. God is male in form and has always appeared so. (Ezk 1:26-28, Josh 5:13, Dan 10:5-8; Rom 1:20 and 1Cor 11:7.)

Yes, the woman is part of the human family, and has the same potential, but it is the male form that is the image of God, so says Paul. Yes, God created the human family male and female, "he



Men and women have different strengths and weaknesses, as a whole and as individuals. Rather than boast of one's strengths and fault the other for their weaknesses, both need to work to lessen their own weaknesses, and learn to share their strengths with the other.



created them.”

God, after instructing Adam (Eve was not yet made) about the two trees, and a big job to do, decided if Adam were to reproduce and accomplish His task, God would give Adam some help. Now lets see, if I were to send you some help in producing your paper, would that mean to you this “help” would become your co-boss to whom you would expect to follow? Of course not, you’re the boss, the one in authority if you will. And the helper is just that, helping to implement your direction, certainly not your boss. So it is with Adam and Eve, Adam was her leader from the beginning, just as Christ is subordinate to the Father, they of course made Eve subordinate to Adam. The problem was Eve, just like women today, would listen to anyone but her husband.

RESPONSE: Actually, you have brought up an excellent case: the production of *Servants' News*. I really believe that the Eternal has sent me some help. The three who spend the most time are Marleen Edwards, Pam Dewey and Norman Arthur. I suppose they spend most of their time carrying out my general directions, but they have a very wide latitude. My wife, **Marleen**, selects letters to go into *Servants' News* and types them in, though I may do more “narrowing down.” Marleen has a habit of re-proof-reading the *Servants' News* masters after it supposedly has been “completely proofed.” She finds several mistakes in nearly every issue. **Pam** opens all of the mail and decides what to do with it. She forwards the letters she feels I need to see as well as certain e-mail messages from Sabbatharians on the Internet. (I would like to do this myself, but I still have dozens of unanswered letters and thousands of unread e-mail messages from when I tried to do it myself.) I usually tell **Norman** which articles I want on the front page, and he usually creates the final layout completely on his own. I agree with at least 95% of what he does with each issue.

In nearly every issue, all three of these people disagree with or suggest how to improve something that I wrote or included, and I change the issue because of them. I am not talking about proof-reading only, but major content. After they explain the scriptures or reasons for their suggested changes, I do it.

Other times I disagree. I do not regard Norman’s opinions as more important than Marleen’s or Pam’s opinions simply because he is a man. If I regard one of these three individual’s opinions above another, it is because I believe they have greater experience, knowledge, or wisdom in a certain area, not because of their gender.

Does the fact that I listen to my helper’s disagreements result in major confrontation? Usually not. Sometimes I do get into “arguments” with my wife over what should be included in *Servants' News*. The answer is **not** for me to “stop listening to my wife because she is emotionally inferior.” If I did that, I would miss all of her great help. The answer is for me to be a stronger leader, less emotional, and close enough to the Eternal to answer softly “a soft answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger” (Prv 15:1). Obviously, my wife needs to do the same, and realize that she should obey her husband if it is not clearly in conflict with scripture (Eph 5:22-24, Acts 5:29). **But husbands and wives cannot make each other follow these scriptures, they can only make themselves follow them. So that is what I intend to do!**

LETTER: Adam did his job, he passed on God’s instruction to Eve which she was able to closely repeat to the serpent. Obviously, Adam did his part in communicating what God had told him, to Eve. Short of physically restraining her, Eve listened to the serpent instead and forced her husband to choose between doing right and arguing with her, or following her and having peace, the rest is history.

RESPONSE: I hope that you do not mean this. The way you tell this, it sounds like Adam was so weak that all Eve has to do is threaten to argue and He has to do whatever she wants. It would have been better if Adam stopped to talk to the Eternal: “Father, she ate it! What do we do now?” I think he would have been answered. If not that, he could have re-explained the Eternal’s instructions to Eve, or used his superior strength to run away from Eve for the moment. Adam had choices other than eating what Eve gave him.

LETTER: At this point, God reminded her who was in charge, and it was not her, she has just proved why! Knowing women are the weaker vessel

and that they make decisions based on “feelings”, and Satan being the ‘prince of the power of the air’, I knew following a woman’s “intuition” could be very dangerous. Yet, the church taught men to do so, what a joke.

RESPONSE: There have been times when my wife has wanted to do things based on **intuition**. Sometimes that intuition is based purely on emotion—usually personal fear—and would be best ignored. At other times, she has properly discerned hidden evil intent in others when I could not. Also, she has intuitively known when our children were hurt or in trouble when there was no explainable physical way for her to know. The solution is for men and women to combine their abilities to determine when “intuition” is false and when it is helpful. I have heard of many other happily married couples who try to operate in the same way.

LETTER: The fact is most men have a degree of judgment and decision most women don’t have. They are better chess players, inventors, mathematicians, chefs, etc. Men are more emotionally stable, men are not as prone to deception, they are more goal oriented and less distractable. The result is most men are more capable than most women at most anything, not to mention the obvious physical differences as well. We were created that way, call it what you wish but the fact remains men are better at fulfilling their role than women.

RESPONSE: I’m not sure how I can help you here. If you honestly believe that “most men are more capable than most women at most anything,” then you have not been around many capable women. (Your opinions of them may help to keep them away.) Nevertheless, let me try. I graduated first in my class in college, and, yes, most of my teachers, bosses, and friends since that time were men. But I can think of dozens of things I learned in and since college primarily from women: writing, office organization, word processing, rock climbing, swimming, backpack cooking, team cycling, first aid, chiropractic principles, musical improvisation, hospitality, better interpersonal relations, discernment, Protestant religious history, and I could go on. It is true that “best person in the world” at running, chess, painting, violin, surgery, and most other disciplines is usually a man. **But a per-**

son who thinks that there is little he can learn from most women is going to miss out on much value in life.

LETTER: I'm sorry, some may wish this were not so, but all I have said has been measured and verified. Women are not risk takers, they are more into comfort and security than men are. Men and women are anything but equal.

RESPONSE: Women are not risk takers? Here are a few Biblical examples: The Israelite midwives risked Pharaoh's wrath by delivering boy babies against his orders (Ex 1:15-21). Moses mother and sister could have been punished for preserving Moses—they had no way to know that Pharaoh's daughter would be kind to them (Ex 2:1-7). Rahab risked death if she were caught helping Israel (Josh 2). Jael killed an enemy general by herself (Jud 4:17-21).

LETTER: The reason for pointing all this out is to get to the root of our "modern day" wholesale destruction of our families. While men obviously have contributed, women pretending to be something they are not and their independence movement is the cause. Over the past 35 years, we have gone from peaceful, stable, predictably calm families, when dad was recognized head and leader, to what we have today. **Near total destruction of our families and women are the cause.**

Women's liberation is the only major change back then that was directly targeted at the "traditional" (God design) family structure.

RESPONSE: We disagree! We believe the replacement of God and biblical morality by evolution, science-ism, humanism, and other secular ideas was the major change of this time. During the 60's, many people believed that science would discover the "secret" of life and be able to cure all diseases—including STD's. From there, came the sexual revolution—where many men and many women decided that marital commitment was no longer all that important.

LETTER: Since then all traces of a woman's marital vow of submission has been removed. This has nothing to do with masculine mistreatment at all, it has everything to do with rejecting her subordinate role to become "like" or equal, with equal status with men. Hence family arguing, fighting, and violence, then divorce has skyrocketed in the last 35 years as she changed from sweet, supporting,

submissive helper to a criticizing, fault finding, in your face and mouthy competitor. Apparently, many women today believe God must have said He would make Adam a help arguer, because that's what they seem to do best.

RESPONSE: Either you are blind to men's problems, or you must hang around all the wrong women! Who has "altered marriage vows"? As far as we know, couples can still pick whatever ceremony they want. In older wedding ceremonies, most women did vow to obey their husbands "until death do them part." In some modern marriage ceremonies, such promises are lacking. This is why the **contractual nature of marriage is so important** (see *Servants' News* November 1996). If a man expects to be the head of his family, he should make sure that the vows used reflect his understanding of the scriptures. What other women may or may not promise should not affect one couple's marriage. If a woman promised to obey, then later changes her mind, then she is breaking the agreement and clearly at fault.

While marital difficulties have grown worse over the last 20 years, they were still a major problem 35, 350, and 3500 years ago. In societies where "wifely disobedience" and divorce are not publicly acceptable, the arguments and fights went on privately at home. The working, arguing relationship of the family portrayed in the movie *Fiddler on the Roof* was common in such a society.

LETTER: Your comment relating to self recognition of masculine capability to that of Adolf Hitler is unfortunate, because in order to restore the ability of men to lead their families without having to compete with his wife for his role, it is essential that both men and women accept the fact that men are better family leaders than women.

RESPONSE: If a leader requires perfect followers to lead, he is no leader. What if the Eternal required us to be perfect before he worked with us? We

would all be completely separated from Him!

LETTER: Why did you not rather say that the attitude of desiring the status, possession, or role of one's head or leader, becoming "like or equal" with him, is of Satan the devil? (Isa 14:13-15) Women want to be seen as men's equal and have no intention of submitting to one's husband. And nothing he can do is going to change that. This is the truth, rather than speculation about Hitler for crying out loud!

RESPONSE: This is another terrible over-generalization. You have just **alienated** every good woman who **is trying to submit to her husband**. Why should any woman try to submit if she has been told that she does not want to do it? Why should a man try to be a more loving husband if all the problems are her fault? The thinking in the previous paragraph is a recipe for marital disaster!

LETTER: If you know of men desiring their wives' submission, they are in good company, for God also desires the wife to be submissive. These men know family destruction was caused by her rejecting the idea, and God knows the solution is restoring her submission. Rather than condemning these men they should be commended, and anyone teaching men and women are equal is contributing to the destruction of our families and not telling the truth!! For it is the act of submission that makes arguing, let alone fighting, impossible. This is why rejecting her role, to become equal, opened the door to skyrocketing family destruction since 1960's until present day. It is a statistical fact that skyrocketing family destruction did not occur until

women implemented their liberation movement in the early 1960's. The above explanation is why and how. This should not surprise us for the Bible tells us it is feminine disobedience that will bring down a nation, not masculine dominance. Esther 1:17-18; Prv 14:1 Lam 4:3; Ezk 16:45. One need only to look at the



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1950's when men were the undisputed head of our families and families were placid and calm, there is your proof.

RESPONSE: Most of the above scriptures simply point out the evil of disobedient women, but do not list it as the primary cause of national destruction. The only verses that portend great disaster from disobedient women are those in Esther, which are not the words of the Eternal, but the words of King Ahasuerus' courtiers when they were "merry with wine" (verse 10). It was the same Ahasuerus who issued the order to kill all of the Jews and then "sat down to drink" (Esth 3:13-15). The Bible **does say** that a king can be destroyed by his wrong approach to women and by drinking too much: "The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him:... Do not give your strength to women, Nor your ways to that which destroys kings. It is not for kings to drink wine, Nor for princes intoxicating drink; Lest they drink and forget the law, And pervert the justice of all the afflicted" (Prv 31:1-5).

The lower divorce rates throughout most of history do not mean that marriages were any more successful then. Since divorce usually meant social and economic ruin for both parties, and since very few jobs were available to women, couples stayed together "no matter what." Yet there was plenty of evidence that historic marriages were not going well: houses of prostitution flourished--serving married customers, teenagers ran away from unhappy homes, and the literature of most societies reflects the difficulties within marriages. The women's liberation movement will **not solve** the problems of male-female relationships, but it is a definite indication that the marriages of the past have not made women happy. If most women were happy, women's lib would have found little interest.

LETTER: You make the Proverbs 31 woman sound like she is involved in an independent business career, nothing could be further from the truth. First, women were strictly under the authority of their husbands as God intends, Num 30; Esther 1:22; Gen 3:16. As such, everything she did was with the prior

approval of her husband. Her so called business was for the good of the family, Prv 31:21 (unlike women today working for self career at the expense of the family). This big field she bought was measured by square feet, not acres as it was no larger than she could plant by hand, Prv 31:16 In addition, why did you not say she rises before light of day and fixes her family breakfast. I wonder how many women do that today? Yes, a woman's role is in the home, not out in the business world, competing with men, Titus 2:5; Psa 113:9; Prv 31:15; 1Tim 2:15. And yes, God gives us enough rope to hang ourselves, but He never rewards defiance with blessings. This leads finally to another gross error in your article. You quote Rom 5:8 and say "see men must perform their role whether his wife submits or not".

RESPONSE: We disagree with your understanding of Numbers 30. It does not say that a woman must consult her husband **prior to** making a vow to the Eternal, it says that he can veto the vow in the day that he hears about it—which is obviously after she made it. We disagree with your conclusion on Proverbs 31:16. Verse 15 says the virtuous woman has servant-girls. Even one full-time servant-girl could plant and tend a fairly large vineyard.

LETTER: Let's take a fresh look at what God is really saying. Let's look at how God implements the marriage covenant (for that is exactly what you are talking about). Its the same covenant for husbands and wives (Eph 5:32). Yes, God proposed marriage with Israel while she was "yet in sin" because he loved her, Deut 7:8. God offered his love, blessings, and protection IF she would FIRST submit in obedience, Deut 7:12-13. We all know she promised to submit (today women don't even do that) but we also know that she didn't, SHE is the one who broke the covenant. So, did God still deliver on his part? We all know He did not, it's women who have broken the covenant progression today! It is interesting we would expect men to still deliver even though God did not.

RESPONSE: The Eternal gave Israel much of the promised land in the days of Joshua, and set them high above the other nations in the time of Solomon. Ezekiel 16 describes all that was done for His bride, even though she was imperfect. It was not until she played the

harlot many times that he finally stopped being good to her. Today, if a man's wife does this, he can rightly divorce her and remarry. We know of a few wives who are like this, but this is not the problem that most men are having with their wives today. The problems today are much as Paul describes in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3: Women do not respect and obey their husbands enough, and husbands do not love their wives as Christ loved the Church. Sometimes the fault is mostly with the woman, sometimes it is mostly with the man, but other times it is a lot of both.

LETTER: So, God proposed the way of salvation while we too were in our sins, Rom 5:8. But it doesn't stop there because we are talking of covenant progression. If we want to "dwell in" God's love, we must first "submit", John 15:10. We receive the benefit of Christ's sacrifice of Rom 5:8 only IF we FIRST submit and do his commands, John 15:13-14. Yes, we can only take Passover IF we have FIRST submitted. Strangers in ancient Israel could only take Passover if they FIRST were circumcised. That is a natural flow of a covenant: 1) proposal of promises, 2) her obedience, 3) then his delivery of the promises. This is why every time God addresses marriage today in scripture, He starts with the women's role FIRST, Eph 5:22 (the first scripture husbands or wives are specifically mentioned), Col 3:18-19; 1Pet 3:1. She is always mentioned FIRST because she must start the covenant process in which case a man's love would naturally follow. But today, women have broken the covenant at the outset and as studies prove, she is the one who most often starts the arguments and more often than men engages in physical violence, in which case she loses and the man gets the blame, of course. And that is the sin that is the problem with marriages today!

RESPONSE: You are correct that the major "marriage" scriptures start with the woman. However you are completely wrong about the husband's role being conditioned on the wife submitting. It never says "if your wife submits, then you should love her." We know of many marriages where each person says: "if my spouse will do his/her part, then I will start to do mine." What happens? They both go to the divorce court or their grave wait-

ing for the other spouse to “do his/her part.” We have an example of how we are to live: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). He did not wait for us to be submissive before he fulfilled his part of the covenant.

LETTER: Back to Ephesians 5:21 [“submitting to one another in the fear of God.”] for a moment, this verse is not addressed to husbands and wives at all, as some misguided “teachers” suppose. Verse 21 is still addressing the saints or the church as a whole as stated in verse 3 through 21. Surely no one thinks God is telling husbands and wives to speak to each other in hymns and spiritual songs. In addition, forcing verse 21 into marriage would be totally incongruous with all other scripture. (1Cor 14:34-35; Eph 5:24; Col 3:18; 1Tim 2:11-12; Titus 2:5; 1Pet 3:1) Verse 21 would not fit the covenant progression. Not that it would be wrong for him to defer to his wife, but that is his choice, it is definitely not mandated. No, its women who are expected to submit to an imperfect mate, not the other way around!, Esther 1; 1Pet 3:1. We can’t start by perfecting husbands anyway, as there was only one perfect leader and few indeed have ever submitted to even perfect leadership! And that, sir, is another truth!

RESPONSE: You are correct in noting that Ephesians 5:21 is sometimes pulled out of context in an effort to “undo” the command for wives to submit to husbands. However, the entire chapter is about living a righteous life, and **many of the situations where we need to submit to one another in our congregations, we also need to submit at home.** For example, if two families agree to go to a restaurant together for dinner, but then they each would like to go to a different restaurant, they need to “submit to one another”—each make an effort to satisfy the others needs, rather than just their own. Similarly, if a family is going to a restaurant alone, the husband should not go wherever he wants to go just because the Eternal has placed him in charge. He needs to consider her personal needs and interests as equal to his own, and then make the best decision for the family.

Yes, women need to submit to imperfect men, **but men need to learn to love imperfect wives.** Since men represent God in the marriage relationship, and women represent the congre-

gation of Israel and the church, it seems more important to me that men be as perfect as possible.

[*Repetitious paragraph removed.*]

LETTER: Most women today, not only refuse their role of submission, a large and growing number refuse to accept their husband’s name, you know Hillary Rodham Clinton. Their intent is to maintain their independence. You brought up the parallel of Christ and the church, so I ask, do you think we as the bride of Christ standing before Him would get away with saying “we would like to receive your love and blessings but we refuse to submit to you, and oh, by the way, we want to remain independent so we also refuse to accept your name, we’ll keep our own.” Do you think that Christ will say “well, that’s OK sweetheart. I understand. Here is all my love and blessings.” If you do think this, then something is seriously wrong, because of course, he would not say this! Then I ask, why do we expect men to? Some misguided teachers expect men to do something even Christ would not do, according to scripture! Such a concept is preposterous.

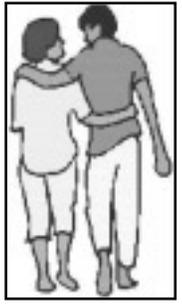
RESPONSE: When Israel failed in the old covenant, the Eternal withdrew His blessings. But He did not give up and say, “There is nothing I can do.” He sent His Son to die and made a way for her to repent. This is the kind of love He has and the kind that men should learn to have.

LETTER: Women’s change in attitude in the 1960’s is why men no longer respect and protect them as we all did in the 1950’s. Not until women get their act together will we even begin to save our marriages and families.

RESPONSE: Again, this is over-generalization. There have been good and bad attitudes in individual men and women throughout history. If an individual woman has no respect for her husband, she is not likely to get much protection. But since our Father put men in charge of marriages, we believe they cannot just leave the responsibility of beginning to improve their marriage to their wives. The May 1997 *Servants’ News* contained what we believe are scriptural grounds for divorce. **Unless they are in the process of getting a scripturally justified divorce, each man and woman has a duty before the Eternal to individually make his or her own marriage better.**

LETTER: Hollywood and TV adver-

tisement producers under the influence of Satan the devil like to portray men as incompetent nit-wits today, anything a man will say to a woman is shown to be wrong; while she is shown to be competent, in control, and always right. This obviously discredits fathers in the eyes of all, including the children. Children are too young to understand, in the real world just the opposite is true. Of course, the church has always supported the Hollywood version.



—Eric Trowbridge and Richard Bernard

RESPONSE: In our personal knowledge of dozens of problem marriage cases, “church organizations” usually counseled in favor of whoever was politically most important to them, whoever would be the most troublesome to disagree with, or whoever came to them first. Sometimes, women were sent back to overbearing, drunken, wife-beating, adultery-committing husbands and told that they were not submitting enough. And yes, the man either had an important position in the church or was a big contributor. Other times, honest men with rebellious wives were treated just as you describe—but their wives were somehow important to the church: they were big contributors, a mistress of someone important, or they knew secrets that could “ruin” people. But in our experience, women suffered more than men at the hands of the ministry.

One last point: my wife entered your letter into the computer for me, and will proofread my reply. She is faster and more accurate than I am in these areas. She also wrote down answers to some of what you said. A few times, I believe her writing was too emotional. But there were times where she brought out scriptures and points that I had not thought of. All of the words here are mine (not hers), but because I listened to her, this response (and many of my other articles) are much more helpful than they would be if I were writing alone. That is what the Eternal had in mind when he made men and women: **“And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’” (Gen 2:18).**

—Norman S. Edwards

Festival Sites By Geographic Region

North West (USA/Canada)

- Anchorage, Alaska**, Global Church of God, 907-262-7059
- Anchorage, Alaska**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Coeur D'Alene, Idaho**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Edmonton, Alberta**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Jackson Hole, Wyoming**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222
- Kelowna, British Columbia**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Ocean Shores, Washington**, Seattle Church of God, Independent, 800-333-5208
- Penticton, British Columbia**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Redding, California**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Seaside, Oregon**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Sis-q-Meadows, Oregon**, Omega Praise Fellowship, 541-855-7220
- Sunriver, Oregon**, The Churches of God, 415-726-3005
- Vernon, British Columbia**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222

South West (USA/Mexico)

- Acapulco, Mexico**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Albuquerque, New Mexico**, Church of God Ministry (Lon Lacey), 505-822-8709
- Colorado Springs, Colorado**, Churchlight Publications (J. Hines), 719-473-0026 C#5
- Colorado Springs, Colorado**, Christian Church of God (Jeff Booth) 806-353-4400
- Flagstaff, Arizona**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222
- Kahuku, Oahu, Hawaii**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Lake Tahoe, California**, Independant fellowship in Sacramento 916-642-8687. C#3,4,5
- Lihue, Hawaii**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Palm Springs, California**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- San Diego, California**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222
- San Diego, California**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Snowmass, Colorado**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Vail, Colorado**, Worldwide Church of

God, 818-304-6110

North Central (USA/Canada)

- Chatham, Ontario**, The Churches of God, 519-351-7978
- Chicago, Illinois**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Little Chute, Wisconsin**, Church Counsel (J. Purvins), 414-733-5271 C#5
- Rapid City, South Dakota**, Triumph (Bill Dankenbring), 818-797-0075
- Winnipeg, Manitoba**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

South Central (USA/Mexico)

- Branson, Missouri**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800,
- Branson, Missouri**, Church of God, In Truth (Russell), 909-279-7302 C#1
- Corpus Christi, Texas**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Hot Springs, Arkansas**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Kerrville, Texas**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222
- Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri**, Cornerstone Publ. (Jim Rector), 903-792-1352
- Lake Texoma, Oklahoma**, The Churches of God, 417-833-9208
- Monterrey, Mexico**, Christian Churches of God (Aus), 512-516-0744 C#1
- San Antonio, Texas**, The Churches of God, 210-333-7229

North East (USA/Canada)

- African Lion Safari, Ontario**, Christian Churches of God (Aus), 519-740-0866 C#1
- Burr Oak State Park, Ohio**, *Servants' News*, 517-543-5544
- Fernwood, Pennsylvania**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Granby, Quebec**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110, French language only.
- Halifax, Nova Scotia**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Lexington, Kentucky**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Louisville, Kentucky**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Mont-Orford, Quebec**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

- Niagara Falls, Ontario**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222
- Paducah, Kentucky**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222
- Rockville, Maryland**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Saratoga Springs, New York**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- St. John's, Newfoundland**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Toronto, Ontario**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Virginia Beach, Virginia**, United Biblical Churches of God (Kimbrough), 352-382-0877 C#3,4,5

South East (USA & Carribean)

- Buck's Pocket State Park**, Creation 7th Day Adventist Church, 800-754-8021 C#2
- Caribbean Cruise**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Clearwater, Florida**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222
- Chattanooga, Tennessee**, Global Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Daytona Beach, Florida**, The Churches of God, 904-673-8324
- Destin, Florida**, The Churches of God, 904-581-2820
- Gatlinburg, Tennessee**, United Christian Ministries (Ray Wooten), 888-985-9066

Feast Calendars

As usual, the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept with a variety of calendar systems. The entries in the adjacent listing are marked with the calendar system they use if it is other than the Hebrew calendar (C#3). Sites supporting multiple calendar systems have the numbers separated by commas (C#1,2).

NUMBER	FIRST FULL DAY OF FEAST
C#1	September 16, 1997
C#2	October 15, 1997
C#3	October 16, 1997 (Hebrew)
C#4	October 17, 1997
C#5	October 18, 1997

If you know of other sites not listed here, please call or write Servants' News.

7th Day Adventist Feast Site

The Creation 7th Day Adventist Church [a split-off of the main 7th Day Adventist Church —SN Editor] shall be holding Feast of Tabernacles this year at **Buck's Pocket State Park in Northeastern Alabama**. All worshippers of the Most High, our Maker, are cordially invited to attend. Any non-believers are surely welcome to spend this holy time with us as well, seeing that we shall provide "a reason of the hope that is within [us]."

Meeting dates: October 15-22 (please setup before sundown the 14th)

First Meeting: October 14, 7:00 pm

Camping rates: Primitive Sites, \$1.00 per night per person; RV Sites with elec. & water, \$5.50 per night; Group Shelter, \$15.00 per family for the duration.

More details are available on the Internet at the following URL:

<http://pw1.netcom.com/~crmin/csdachurch/announce.html>

Email: crmin@ix.netcom.com

Call Pastor "Chick" McGill at 1-800-754-8021 for more information.

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina,
End Time Assembly of God, 800-768-0137

Jekyll Island, Georgia, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Kissimmee, Florida, Christian Educational Ministries (Ron Dart), 903-509-2999

Lewisburg, Tennessee, Church of God Fellowship of Nashville, 615-896-9365

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina,
Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110

Nashville, Tennessee, The Churches of God, 615-896-9365.

Orlando, Florida, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

INTERNATIONAL

Africa

Naro, Moru, Kenya, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Uvongo, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

George, South Africa, Global Church of God, 27-11-664-6036

Zimbabwe, South Africa, Global Church of God, 27-11-664-6036

Mutare, South Africa, United Church

of God, 818-294-0800

Australia & Pacific

Aberdare, NSW, Australia The Churches of God, 011-6149-912525

Bagio City, Philippines, Global Church of God, 63-2-892-6459;

Kambah, ACT, Australia 2902, Global Church of God, 61-6-231-8166

Eden, VIC, Australia, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Launceston, Tasmania, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Naku'alofa, Tonga, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Nelson Bay, NSW, Australia, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Noosa Bay, QLD, Australia, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Penang, Malaysia, Global Church of God, 60-3-930-1187

Perth, WA, Australia, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Taupo, New Zealand, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Ulladulla, NSW, Australia, Christian Churches of God, 042-674-314

C#1

Central & South America

Reserve Burr Oak Housing as Soon as Possible

There are still some reserved rooms available at the Burr Oak Lodge for the 1997 Feast of Tabernacles site. Our remaining reserved rooms will be made available to the general public if they are not used for the Feast soon. Call *Servants' News* at 517-543-5544 for an information packet or for any questions. Make reservations directly at the lodge by calling 614-767-2112.

Esquipulas, Guatemala, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Maitencillo, Chile, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Europe

Hengelhof, Belgium, Global Church of God, 32-71-218-190

Billingham, Lincs, England The Churches of God, 011-441526-860508

Cheltenham, England, Global Church of God, 01-332-835498

La Colle-sur-Loup, France, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Lido di Camaiore, Tuscany, Italy, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Sundvolden, Norway, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Wezuperbrug, Drenthe, Netherlands, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Weymouth, Dorset, U.K., United Church of God, 818-294-0800

Winterberg, Germany, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

York, Yorkshire, U.K., United Church of God, 818-294-0800



"Ostracization" from page 2
fresh batch of outcasts—yet another schism in the Body. Those outward bound are now probably tarred with one of the most stinging "Church of God" epithets, "They sought to cause division!" To the detriment of the spiritual organism, the organizational imperative is allowed to play out; relationships are ruptured as the leaders of the larger division (church organization) congratulate the shunners for their discernment

and faithfulness...never mind that their day will come as God continues to grant discernment to His people.

May the Almighty strengthen the hands of those who seek to serve His people with no spiritual conflict of interest or agenda of their own!

May He raise up more and more of those who will not concern themselves with turf battles over the Lord's heritage! Then perhaps places will emerge where our Father can call new people

into where they and their calling really will count for something more than statistics—places where the lessons of the past will have been internalized but baggage such as what I've written here won't be part of what the new converts must vicariously navigate! May God speed the day of the truly empowered end-time Church (which appears to be taking shape on the horizon) and then the coming of His Kingdom!

—Jon D. Pike

Our goal is to bring worthwhile information to as many as want it at the lowest practical cost. The loose-leaf format used by *Servants' News* and most of the literature below is inexpensive and makes copying easy (most literature is public domain). You might wish to hold the pages together with a 3-ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip.

Highly Recommended Items Listed Every Issue:

Mature Literature

- 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.
- 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.)
- 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 Do We Give to the Eternal?** by Richard Tafoya & Norman Edwards, 36 pages. Biblical study of giving and tithing.
- 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.

- 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 of God" history.

Study Resources and Information

- The Christian Beacon** Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter of encouraging articles for Sabbatarians.
- 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.
- The Journal: News of the Churches of God** edited by Dixon Cartwright. One free sample issue. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups. 16 pages.
- Servants' News & Norman Edwards Statement of Receipts and Expenses**, 2 pages. (Always sent to contributors.)
- Servants' News Complete Literature List & Index**, 30 pages.

"Letters" from page 20

I appreciate receiving the *Servants News*, and the literature I request. You have been quite responsive to my requests, and I thank you for that. I continue to lift up your ministry in prayer.

—Michael J. Ediger, Kansas

RESPONSE: We defined a "cult" essentially as a group seeking to control the actions and thoughts of its members because that is the common definition used by the media and by Americans today. If numerous unbiased observers watched a group, most could agree on whether it was a cult or not using our definition.

We are aware that many groups like to use doctrine to define a "cult," but this is less useful as it essentially means "anyone who has doctrines very different from mine is a cult." Most of these religions would have to consider themselves cults if they were honest with their own definitions.

Let us examine Lewis's definition that you quoted and apply it to the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholics have much "additional revelation" which they hold as equal in weight to scripture. In the 1800's, they went as far as declaring certain of the Pope's statements as "infallible." Also, the Catholics hold various of their own sacraments, not specifically taught in scripture, as matters essential to salvation.

How well do Protestant churches do at avoiding "additional revelation" and sticking with the fundamental tenets of the Bible? The vast majority of Protestants accept the Trinity doctrine, yet their theologians will admit that

it was not taught by the original apostles, but only the "seeds of the doctrine" are in the Bible and the doctrine was perfected by the "church fathers" in the second and third centuries AD—sounds like an "additional revelation" to me! The keeping of holidays like Easter and Christmas on December 25 also fall into the category of "additional revelation" because they are clearly **not** in the Bible.

We find the fundamental tenets of our belief in Hebrews 6:1-2:

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again **the foundation of [1]** repentance from dead works and of **[2]** faith toward God, of the **[3]** doctrine of baptisms, of **[4]** laying on of hands, of **[5]** resurrection of the dead, and of **[6]** eternal judgment.

Some modern evangelical Protestants might teach all of those doctrines out of the Bible. But most Protestant churches will probably replace one of these "fundamental tenets" of faith with one of these errors: **1)** Some do not teach repentance at all or do not teach that power of the holy spirit causes one to "turn around" and cease from dead works. Some even teach "once saved, always saved" which is in conflict with numerous scriptures (Heb 6:4-6; 13:4, Matt 12:31-32; Luke 9:62; 1Cor 6:9-10; 9:27; 1Jn 4:20; Rev 21:7-8). **2)** Some teach "faith in a Jesus who came to do away with the law" more than "faith toward God". **3)** Some do not baptize at all or teach baptism by sprinkling, contrary to the Bible. **4)** Some do not teach "laying on of hands" at all or teach that it is the prerogative of "the

ordained ministry"—another unbiblical idea. **5)** Most groups teach that the dead immediately go to "heaven" or "hell" rather than teaching that they wait for a resurrection (Job 14:14, Dan 12:2 John 6:44; 11:24). **6)** Groups vary greatly in their teachings on who is judged, and when, and how.

From the above perspective, it is clear that many, if not most Protestant groups would be "cults" by Lewis' definition. Lewis would probably object to our use of Hebrews 6:1-2 as the "elementary principles of Christ"—his "fundamental tenets of the faith" would probably be a doctrinal statement written hundreds of years after the Bible. **The only reason he does not consider his beliefs "defective" or "added revelation" is because thousands of theologians and people believe them.**

We agree completely with your "point (4)" as a characteristic of cults—the Bible never teaches that access to the Eternal comes through one individual or group (John 16:13; 1Jn 2:27). We disagree with your "point (5)"—believers **are promised persecution** from their own families and those who think they are serving God! (2Tim 3:12; Matt 10:28,36-39; 24:9; John 15:20; 16:12 Mark 10:29-31; Acts 8:1-3)

We agree with you that everyone should be slow to label any group a "cult" unless we really know what they teach and practice. Thank you for bringing up the issue of "cult determination by doctrine"—it is a common practice in the religious world, and we did not cover it previously.

—NSE ☐