

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 7, No. 2 A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be Mar/Apr 2001

“Your Word Is Truth”

Nearly all Bible students will recognize the quote, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17). They would agree that the Bible contains the word of God, and is therefore truth.

Yes, God has spoken words in addition to the Bible, and still speaks today, but these “non-Bible” words are difficult for everyone to verify. The words that have stood the test of time and that we all agree are truth are the words of the Bible. Let us look at the context of this quote:

“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:15-17).

Christ prayed that his followers would remain in the world, but that they would be “sanctified”—set apart—by the truth, **His word!** This concept of being in the world, but separated by the truth—His word, was so important that He repeated it:

“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” (John 17:18-19).

These words of Christ should help us understand that the ideal way to worship God is **not** to live with a community of like-minded believers and shut out the “evil influences of the world” (Matt 28, 19-20; Acts 8:1, 4). Christ went on to say that this applies to all generations of believers:

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in

Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (John 17:20-23).

Unity was clearly to be based around the Bible—the Word of God. Some of the Bible was already written at the time of Christ, the rest was “their word”—the word of Christ’s apostles. Most of the non-Christian world at least knows that the Bible is the source of Christianity. The non-Christian world generally does not know about the hundreds of doctrinal statements of the various antagonistic Christian groups—and it would be best if they never do.

The fighting between Christian groups and the un-Christian acts of many “Christians”, are probably the biggest reasons why so many unbelievers reject Christianity.

So what happens when someone interested in God contacts a church group and asks them to teach him the truth? **Does the group give him a Bible and a commentary to help him to understand it?** Or do they give him their church literature: a doctrinal statement, a set of booklets or a set of sermon tapes? Do they simply tell him to join their church?

There is no doubt that their literature and sermons will contain many references to scriptures—even alternate translations and explanations of

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Response Page Results

The results of the response pages originally mailed late last year have finally been tabulated. We still continue to get a few more each week, but the vast majority are here:

- 98 returned the response page and asked to unsubscribe;
- 590 did not return it and lost their subscription;
- 500 others did not return it, but their subscription continued because they had recently responded in some other way;
- 1430 returned their page asking to continue their subscription;
- 1930 is the current mailing list;
- 1129 of the above filled out the survey part of the response page;
- 318 asked to be in the *Local Servants’ Directory*, included with this issue.

Thanks to all of those who returned their response page. The *Local Servants’ Directory* should be beneficial to many and the answers to the survey portion have been very helpful in determining what I should do.

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The Local Servants’ Directory follows SN and then Shelter in the Word

Truckers Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo.
#71-78



The Trucker's Bible Study is conducted weekly at the Texaco truck stop on I-70, Oak Grove, Missouri, by Arlo Gieselman, often assisted by Lenny Cacchio, the writer of this series

January 25, 2001

We had two truckers today, and we talked about a number of issues. There was nothing out of the ordinary today, but an interesting paradox presents itself in Jesus' statement about turning the other cheek and how that should be applied in some of the encounters we have in life. One trucker wanted to talk about that. On the one hand Jesus said to turn the other cheek, but on the other hand He entered the temple, turned over the tables of the money changers, and chased them and their livestock out. Jesus was obviously not a door-mat, yet we do have the statement about turning the other cheek.

I'm not sure I can adequately address that question, but it is certainly a practical question to ask.

[I published my answer to the above question in the Jan/Feb Servants' News, but accidentally forgot to publish the question. Please refer to the middle of page 26 of the previous issue for my answer. It is a good question! — NSE]

March 4, 2001

This morning, was an enjoyable and refreshing conversation with three truckers. All are dedicated to their families. One normally travels with his wife, and he says they have driven to 49 states including Alaska and six Canadian provinces. While the children were younger, he only took short runs so he could be home more.

Another trucker was a younger man with two small children at home. They did things a little backwards from the way most people do things: they found a church they liked and chose their residence to be close to that church. He told me with tears in his eyes how he wants to find work near home so he could be with his family more.

The third trucker said that one should never let the "D" word (divorce) come out of one's mouth in a marriage. Once that word is uttered, it is on the table and up for negotiation. He mentioned that this is what happened in his first marriage. You don't want to cross

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E-mail subscriptions also available

In addition to the normal printed copy edition which can be received in the normal post, you can also subscribe to *Servants' News* by e-mail in Portable Document Format (PDF), which can be read using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader (www.adobe.com), which looks the same as the printed copy.

You can also receive an e-mail notification for when the latest issue is available on the website (www.servantsnews.com). Thus the 4 options are: 1. snail mail only; 2. snail mail and link to website by e-mail; 3. link to website sent by e-mail; 4. PDF file sent by e-mail.

Please e-mail info@servantsnews.com to change your subscription option.

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Servants' News is one of many ministries of the spiritual Church of God. 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 and teach Sabbath-keeping brethren who believe Jesus (Yeshua) is the Messiah, but we realize that the Eternal works with many groups and individuals.

The gospel should be given freely—you may copy this newsletter and give it to others. *Servants' News* has nothing to sell and has no financial ties with other groups, but is supported by those who personally decide to help this ministry. We do not have IRS 501(c)(3) status, but church groups are tax exempt without this status (see IRS Publ. 557, Nov 1999 ed., p. 15).

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News from Local Congregations



This column includes information sent to us from a variety of groups. Servants' News does not necessarily agree with the teachings or practices of these groups. Please ask about them before attending their functions.

Sabbath Campers Fellowship

Everyone is invited to the 2001 Sabbath Campers Fellowship, **August 3-5, at Hickory Lake Campground in Perry, Michigan.** Come for Bible study, a Sabbath service, fellowship, recreation and relaxation. The campground has swimming, fishing, boating (no gas motors), volleyball, basketball, and a sports fields. Each site has electric and water hookups, a fire pit and a picnic table. Exit I-69 at M-52 and go south toward Perry. Turn right at the first light which is Lansing Rd. Go west for 3 miles and turn right on Bath Road, which goes under the freeway. Then take the next right, which is Beardslee Rd, and go a quarter mile to Hickory Lake Campground (517-625-3113).

Schedule of events:

Friday: 8:30 p.m. Fireside Bible Study: "Will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" by Norman Edwards.

Saturday: 12 noon Praise and Worship Singing

1 p.m. Interactive Sabbath Service.

3 p.m. Potluck Dinner—everybody bring something.

Sunday: Organized sports and games. Please come for any or all of the activities.

The cost is \$16.00 per space per night. We have paid the deposit on a limited number of spaces, so please let us know to reserve one for you:

— Kelli Brophy, 517-543-4685
kellibrophy99@hotmail.com

Redding, California Ministry

We are a home church in the Redding California area, having recently moved here from Southern California. We literally are two or three in Jesus's

name meeting according to Matthew 18:20.

Weekly meeting time is Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. Call first to be sure that we are not away on a ministry trip and to find the meeting address.

Our primary ministry is literature with more than 200 titles of books, booklets, pamphlets and tracts available. You may have a free sample packet and literature list. The literature list covers subjects about: Bible truth of God versus religious traditions of men, How to share your faith in Jesus Christ, Evangelism tools, Prophecy, Home church fellowship, and more. It is constantly growing in scope and number of titles.

— Al Van Dyk: PO Box 1035
Bella Vista, CA 96008-1035
530-275-1307

[I have read some of Al Van Dyk's literature and found it very helpful. I intend to print some of it and put it on the Internet as time allows. — NSE]

Topical Bible Study Web Site

Short collections of scriptures on a particular topic, with either minimal or no explanation are the standard fare on this web site:

www.topical-bible-studies.org

This should be very useful for personal study or for research for messages or articles. Another, smaller area of the site documents some of the inconsistencies in the WCG's teaching on hierarchical government:

www.topical-bible-studies.org/cgcr/main.htm

The author of these pages is Karen Ray. She was the real writer of "For... Except There Come a Falling Away First", a 1993 book documenting the many doctrinal changes in the Worldwide Church of God which bore

David C. Pack's name. As far as I knew, this was the most conclusive work on WCG changes available and it made a difference in the lives of many people.

I hope our readers will be understanding of why Karen let her work go out under David Pack's name. I was working at the Global Church of God at the same time she was writing the book. Both of us realized the problems in the WCG and knew we had to do something about it, but we thought that any work had to be done through an ordained ministry and a church organization—so we worked with whoever would work with us. It took more personal study and looking to God and His word to understand how his Spirit works in us.

Women's Conference 2001

Although the group was smaller this year, the 60 women and girls who attended the IBLC Women's Conference reported that the atmosphere was more conducive to getting to know one another better.

Here are just a few of the comments I have already received: "It was really great to be able to 'get away' for a few days and experience such wonderful fellowship with our sisters in Christ."

"The blending of personalities and sharing of experiences was enlightening, sobering, humbling and a blessing all rolled together."

"About the magnificent weekend—we had the best time, and as we all have reflected on our wonderful time this one day since we have been back, we realize much more that everything we heard had such tremendous value."

This year we tackled issues that are not normally discussed in the church. I focused on the unspoken rule that we were supposed to have perfect lives,

yet the changes that Ecclesiastes 3 describes are sure to come into every life. But through God's grace, we are able to stand firm in any crisis or difficulty, and I encouraged women to share their experiences and to be advocates for each other.

Jennifer Leagan described in her seminar on divorce and widowhood how the church sometimes took the side of the husband when a divorce was imminent, without bothering to investigate the wife's complaints. She talked about the sense of loss that such women were forced to deal with from both a personal and church perspective. In her seminar on alcoholism, Tarcila Fox recounted how ministers encouraged her to continue living with her abusive former husband and how she had felt that if she were the perfect wife he would stop being an alcoholic.

Brenda Ross showed that women of the Bible sometimes worked outside the home and then guided the women into a discussion on the difficulties faced by working women. Cindy McLendon, Joyce Green, Shirley Senay, and Darlene Warren bravely told how their faith had sustained them through serious illness, the loss of a child, and other life-changing events.

Although in the past women in the church were pushed toward one cookie-cutter pattern, Carolyn Scharpen administered a test showing 17 or more different types of personalities. All of the personality traits can be Scripturally supported, but the unfortunate previous emphasis on only one female personality type being pleasing to God caused women who were different to feel insecure and unworthy.

Kim Skelton made an excellent MC, helping us to feel relaxed during our ice-breakers on Friday evening and providing interesting comments throughout the weekend. Heather McLendon ushered in the Sabbath with a variety of beautiful songs, and Sondra Beam delighted us on the Sabbath with her special music.

Since our topics were so meaty, we had to lighten up with a funky fashion show (thanks to Brenda Ross and Gay Orren) and country music gig from Midnight Trail on Saturday night after sunset. We had a ton of good food and snacks and the hotel was both comfortable and elegant.

Alan Ruth sent us CDs of church music and invited women to submit articles to his Web site, and we had numerous door prizes donated by several ladies in the Dallas area.

We concluded our conference with an old Millerite custom. Since adherents came from all denominations, the Millerite movement grew as a result of its numerous conferences and camp meetings. They took leave of each other by forming a line, which doubled back on itself. That way everyone said goodbye to each person in the line. It was a fitting end for us as well, and not a few tears were shed.

— Linda Hardy White
market1@worldnet.att.net

Wisconsin Pentecost

We celebrated the Pentecost weekend with the Berean Fellowship on June 1, 2 and 3. This is our 35th celebration of Pentecost. I think this was by far the best Pentecost we ever attended.

Dean Wheelock spoke on the Hebrew wedding. It is utterly amazing when you are shown all the things that are spoken of in the New Testament by Christ that equate with the Hebrew wedding. It truly made a lot of things clear that were hard to be understood previously. In a manner of speaking, it took us back to our "Hebrew roots". What made it so interesting was that it does not deal with doctrine but with understanding. Our current wedding practices are only 300 years old. He only gave us a thumbnail sketch, but he did offer free tapes on the subject.

Dr John Merritt had read somewhere that it was a tradition of some Jewish sects to usher in Pentecost by studying the law all that night, so we attempted it at his home on Saturday evening but we only lasted until 4 a.m. It was an open forum and started out with difficult scriptures, but by midnight we were into a very interesting discussion on aspects of the law (or Torah if you prefer). Both of our special speakers were present and because of a wide variety of backgrounds there were a lot of diverse points of view.

Dr Sidney Davis showed us how God used the black man in the history of Israel and his church. And he showed many black men are Jews and that this can be proven by DNA test-

ing. This history lesson was, again, only a thumbnail sketch but well-documented. We were given sources so we could study into the subject deeper if we liked. He showed us how many people in Africa kept the Sabbath, and remnants are still keeping it. It was a lesson that not many churches of God had the privilege of hearing.

From my own personal point of view, the only problem we had was that we couldn't absorb all that was being offered.

— Ken and Arlette Omick
P.O. Box 71, Oostburg, WI 53070

[There certainly are numerous wedding analogies in the Bible. Our modern traditions are very different from the Biblical ones—even the concept of a minister, priest or rabbi "performing" a wedding is less than 600 years old.

However, I have also studied material setting forth parallels between the Bible and the Hebrew wedding and found great variation—sometimes complete contradiction—in stated practices of ancient Hebrew Weddings. The Bible itself gives some details, the Talmud gives others, ancient histories give more, but some claimed "Hebrew wedding customs" seem to have no ancient source at all. — NSE]

Bible Sabbath Musicians: United in Music

Some things are an essential part of every believer, indeed every human being. The need to love and be loved, the will to live, freedom to choose, and a creative spirit, to name a few. Another commonality that we all share in the deepest part of our souls is a love of music. Music could easily be called a universal language. Words and melody go together to help us express feelings of hope, despair, love, joy, and sadness. Through song, we express the deepest desires, prayers, and dreams for our lives and the lives of others. Music helps us celebrate and helps us mourn. It is a gift from our Creator even an essential part of who He is.

As with all the other gifts and talents God has given, music can also be found more concentrated in some individuals than others, in this case the Church's musicians. And this particular gift, like others, can be used in the

Body of Christ for edifying its members and worshipping God. When disagreement over doctrine divides, spiritually uplifting music can unite. When discord and spite enflame the tongue, music can soothe the heart. When what we don't understand gives rise to a wall of fear, music can dismantle it with love. Musicians who exercise their gift in the Spirit of God, without a humanly devised hidden agenda, are goodwill ambassadors for Christ among scattered brethren.

There is a group of us musicians who have a vision. We see hearts united in a fervent desire to be open, vulnerable, and yielding to one another. People looking for any excuse and every opportunity to focus on commonality and discuss differences. And this music group wants to be part of a process toward realizing this hope. Thus, we are pursuing the formation of an organization made up of musicians within the sabbatarian community at large. This organization might be called **The Bible Sabbath Musicians Association (BSMA)**, following in the tradition of the interdenominational efforts of The Bible Sabbath Association. The work of this new organization would be beneficial for both musicians and the general membership, providing services such as:

- Encourage, promote, and report interdenominational music events throughout the Sabbatarian community.
- Provide a single point of access for music written and/or recorded by Sabbath brethren.
- List artist names, music style, and performance availability/schedules.
- Provide a place where musicians can chat with and mentor one another about music interests.
- Provide product information for musicians endeavoring to increase their skill in writing and/or performance through the use of technology.

What we need more of in our community of believers is cooperation and openness. Of course, without love, neither of these is really possible. That is everyone's concern and responsibility. There may be reasons some people have for not rubbing elbows with others of differing doctrinal position, but music doesn't usually have such

boundaries. As I've said, music is somewhat of a universal language, a place on the right side of the brain where even the cautious and fearful can relax to share feelings, hopes, and desires that are common to us all. In such a state of mind, we can find opportunity to stretch ourselves beyond ourselves if we want to. And maybe, just maybe, if musicians can work together, others can too.

If you are a musician who would like to be a part of this type of organization, send your name, phone number, and address to: **Robin Todd, 6413 Stephan Ct. SE, Lacey, WA 98503**, or email RobinSyngs@aol.com. We will send you a questionnaire of basic information needed to establish your membership. Membership can mean that you have music you'd like to share with the brethren either in performance, recordings, or sheet form. It can mean that you wish to be the musician of contact between our organization and your congregation, or promoting the goals of our group in your area. Or your motivation may simply be to add your name to a list of sabbatarian musicians who desire to transcend doctrinal boundaries.

We believe we can make a difference both in the short and long term. If you are a pastor, we would also love to hear encouragement you might have for this effort. With the support of our congregations' pastors and ministers, our goal of united musicians in Christ will be much easier to achieve. If God be for us, who can be against us.

— Robin Todd

Prof Uses Linguistics to Uncover Migratory Trails of 'Lost' Tribes of Israel

Australia and New Zealand were privileged to host Professor Terry Blodgett and his wife Cheryl in June of this year at a number of seminars where Professor Blodgett presented the results of his original 1981 doctoral dissertation and his subsequent 20 years of research and study into the linguistic influence of Hebrew on all the Indo-European languages and especially the Germanic languages such as English, German and Scandinavian.

Prof. Blodgett is the Professor of

Linguistics at the Southern Utah University. He is currently writing a book outlining his research findings which he hopes to complete this year. Given the success of his seminars in Australia and New Zealand, it is likely that the book will be of great academic and general interest to all those interested in the history of Israel and in a variety of individual fields of linguistics studies.

Prof. Blodgett has postulated that ancient Hebrew was the basis of the various Indo-European languages and has been able to show that the various known linguistic sound shifts that became evident in these languages at particular times in their history can be shown to correspond directly to at least one of the four major periods of the migration of the Israelite peoples from Egypt and the Middle East.

The first migration of Israelite people into Europe was said to have been in the time prior to and during the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. The second migration was around the time of the Assyrian captivity of the northern House of Israel; the third around the time of the Babylonian captivity of the southern House of Judah; and the fourth major migration was as a result of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in 70 A.D.

These four migrations apparently impacted on the languages of the peoples affected by these various Israelite migrations to the extent that we are able to directly correlate these changes with what we know of the language of those Israelites who emigrated from their various homelands in the Middle East during the various historical periods of Israelite migration.

An interesting speaker and presenter, Prof. Blodgett enthralled his Sydney audience with the results of his studies and the breadth and depth of his expertise and general knowledge. His mastery of his subject matter was clearly not only the result of his doctoral studies but also his post-doctoral studies in Civilization and Culture at the University of Bonn in Germany and his on-going general studies and interest in history and languages. Apart from his specialty in Historical and Comparative Linguistics his other interests and studies include Ancient History, Archaeology, Middle-Eastern

Studies and English History. His language studies have included Hebrew, English, Gothic, Old Norse, Anglo-Saxon, Old High German, Latin, French and Spanish.

Some 30 people attended in Auckland, New Zealand; 90 people attended the full-day seminar in Sydney; and 85 attended in Brisbane. Of these, **less than half were from "Church of God organizations"**, the rest were from a variety of other religious and secular backgrounds. A very scholarly and very positive atmosphere prevailed throughout the day and the opportunity to ask questions and to make related comments was enthusiastically taken up by the audience both during the presentations and after each session.

The Sydney organising committee, which was also responsible for organising the visit of Prof. Blodgett to Australia and New Zealand, was delighted with both the presentation from Prof. Blodgett at the Sydney seminar and the very positive participation and response of those who attended the Sydney seminar. The fact that so many people from outside of the Church of God organizations attended the various seminars was also particularly pleasing.

Some Church of God groups took up the opportunity offered to make available their tapes and literature to those attending the seminar. As a result, not only were there a variety of books and free literature on offer about the Lost Ten Tribes and the US & BC in Prophecy, but also much literature on a variety of Church of God doctrines, in particular the literature published by the United Church of God. In addition, there was considerable interest in the limited number of available copies of Prof. Blodgett's 1981 doctoral thesis and these were all very quickly sold long before the seminar ended.

Apart from many thanks to the Sydney organising committee, particular thanks are also extended to Bruce Porteous in New Zealand and Geoff Robertson in Brisbane, Australia who both did everything that was necessary to make the seminars the great success that they were in their respective centres.

Lecture tapes are available

from History Research Projects, GPO Box 864, Sydney 2001 for Aus\$20.00. Overseas orders please send US\$20.00. For further study in this area, see Origin of Nations magazine (all back issues are available for free download: <http://www4.tpgi.com.au/users/surfer1>) — Craig White & Michael Baran

Terry Blodgett Responds:

Hi Craig,

Cheryl and I arrived home safely. Our stay, both in N.Z. and in Aussie, was very delightful. We met wonderful people everywhere we went. We seem to share with you and your friends in these two countries a common yearning and striving to find the truth including the search for Israel and other peoples. I enjoyed the discussions you and I had when you picked me up at the airport and around the table when we ate out. The evening of the pot luck dinner at the Carnochan's was very enjoyable as well.

[Personal thanks deleted.]

The articles you have sent and that are on the web are very interesting. You have shown some keen insights. Great work... I will keep working on my book and let you know when it is finished.

— Terry Blodgett

[More can be accomplished in an environment of freedom of study. I believe the weight of evidence clearly shows that the English-speaking and some other European peoples are modern-day Israel. However, some of J. H. Allen's work and the WCG books taken from it mention Irish legends and history for which there is no known source.]

The "only true church" environment prevented open discussion and error correction. Some rejected the entire teaching because of the few errors. Prof Blodgett's work puts this subject where it clearly belongs: in the realm of historic study, not as a "doctrine of faith" to be decided by a church government. — NSE] 



Presentation Outline:

The Four Sound Shifts Which Identify the Four Migrations of the Israelites

- I. 1700-1500 B.C. - The Migration of the Israelites out of Egypt
 - A. The Linguistic Evidence
 1. The Sound Changes
 2. The Vocabulary
 - B. The Extent of the Migrations-Mediterranean Area, Silk Road, Central Asia, India, Europe, Britain, Mexico
 - C. The Cultural Evidence
 - D. Legends and Mythology
 - E. The Alphabet
- II. 734-701 B.C. - The Migration of the Ten Northern Tribes of Israel into the Lands of the North
 - A. The Assyrian Campaign against Israel and the Assyrian Captivity
 - B. Northwestern Migrations of the Germanic and Celtic Tribes
 1. Linguistic Evidence
 - a. The Sound Changes—The Germanic Sound Shift and the "st" and "sk" pronunciations of Hebrew "s"
 - b. The Vocabulary
 2. The Extent of the Migrations
 3. Cultural Evidence
 4. Legends and Mythology
 5. Heraldry
 6. The Alphabet
 - C. Northeastern Migrations into Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and India
 1. Linguistic Evidence
 2. Legends
- III. 604-586 B.C. - The Migrations of the Kingdom of Judah
 - A. The Babylonian Captivity
 - B. Linguistic Evidence—The Hebrew beghadh-kephath letters and the "sh" pronunciation of "s"
 - C. The Migrations into Africa, Ireland, and South America
 1. Linguistic Evidence
 2. Legends and Mythology
- IV. 68-72 A.D. - The Migrations of the Jews
 - A. The Roman Occupation and Persecution of the Jews
 - B. The two Jewish Dialects—one from Palestine and one from Babylon
 - C. The Linguistic Evidence—Aramaic Influence on the High German Sound Shift
 - D. The Migration of the Christian Jews into Europe

Doctrinal or Spiritual Unity?

By Tommy Willis

Knowledge unapplied can easily turn to vanity. “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies” (1Cor 8:1).

When God says, “Great peace have those who love Your law” (Ps 119:165), it does not mean those who just know the principles and doctrines of the Bible intellectually; but it means to have a closeness with the Prince of Peace. “He Himself is our peace” (Eph 2:14).

As our knowledge of God grows, fear will be decreased (1Jn 4:18). Think of the fear that has been there among many of the Churches of God over the past decade with all the scattering—few have been at peace as they should be.

We need to cease disputing and spend more time in fruitful searching for God. He says: “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jer 29:13). Isn’t that the bottom line? What has been wrong? Wouldn’t finding God give us the closeness and unity that Paul said we should have in Philippians 2:2? If more of us were following the lead of God’s Spirit wouldn’t more of us be of one mind as the above scripture commands that we be?

But we have put knowing *about* the Bible above coming to let the Word lead us to build a personal relationship with the Living Word. It is not enough to know doctrine—if that’s all we have then we become like the Pharisees preaching the Ten Commandments.

Many things will have to change in the Churches of God if He is going to have us walk with the closeness to Him that we should have.

Barriers are broken down as we get to know God. We then allow one another the freedom to function and *disagree with respect*. Instead of being dogmatic about our beliefs we keep an open mind and do not push our ways on others. Those who would continue to learn before God cannot afford to have pride: God resists the proud heart (Jms 4:6).

There are oceans of ink on pages that tell us about the Bible; but it is not enough to know about God, we must

come to know Him personally. For the nourishment necessary we need to receive the spiritual portion of the Bible, not just the physical part. But many think doctrine in itself is sufficient. Notice what Paul says:

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph 3:16-19).

As believers we are identified with Royalty—only a righteous being can come into the presence of the Father. And two brethren who may believe different about some doctrine, but are of one mind about the blood of Jesus Christ and have repented of their sins and accepted Jesus Christ, are both spotless in God’s sight (John 1:7). Hebrews 10:19 and 4:16 tell us that because of the blood of Jesus Christ we have access to the throne room of God. You are spotless in Christ and His shed blood—if you had one spot on you then you couldn’t approach the Father’s throne room. This means the babe in Christ and the mature believer are *equally* as spotless in God’s sight. The babe in Christ may be sinning more in their *condition* than the mature believer—but their heavenly *position* is just as spotless!

Now ask yourself—what doctrine is it that one doesn’t understand that will keep them from coming into the throne room of God? If the disagreeing believers disagree over some doctrine but both have truly repented of their sins and accepted Jesus Christ shed blood then they are under the blood of Jesus Christ—*then both are able to approach the Father with the righteousness of Christ*. But this is where we often go astray—we think we become more righteous if we are more “doctrinally pure”. And I am not trying to say the

Some may not consider this a “Bible Study” article because it does not cover technical or complex aspects of the Scripture. Yet, it is the Bible and needs to be read because these things are declared to be most important by Scripture and are not understood by some Bible students.

doctrines are not important, because they are (Matt 4:4). We often have the right doctrines (so did the Pharisees), but like the Pharisees we often fail to see the importance of building up a personal relationship with God.

Too often we get into a religious spirit, but without a *growing* personal relationship with Jesus Christ *all we have is religious activity*. And this fans the flames of our own righteousness. Paul said he had more reason to boast of righteousness than anyone else (Phil 3:4). He went on to describe all that he did right (vv 5-7). But he concluded this:

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me” (Phil 3:8-12).

As stated above, knowledge that is unapplied can easily turn to vanity. We can become a spectator of life and not a doer of the Word (Jms 1:22).

We have often praised the doctrine we preached above the living God. And all too often **we have had doctrinal unity but not spiritual unity**.

Just look at the revelation God gives us with being able to come before His throne room because of the blood of Jesus Christ—there’s no arguing over doctrine here—just pure revelation. Wouldn’t this give us more unity if we centered on this fact even though we are of different opinions on certain doctrine? 

Feast of Tabernacles Sites 2001



Feast sites listed in this article, as far as we know, all welcome non-aligned Sabbatharians. Corporate church organizations' Feasts may be located by contacting their headquarters: The United Church of God-IA at 513-576-9796, the Living Church of God at 619-613-7970; the CGI at 903-825-2525, the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship at 877-846-2072.

Please let Feast sponsors know now where you are planning to attend! It is very difficult to plan a Feast when the number of people attending is unknown. Time and money are wasted if attendance estimates are too high. Facilities become too crowded if estimates are too low. **If you are not sure yet**, it is better to notify the site you are most likely to attend, then change your mind later if necessary.

- Unless otherwise noted, all sites use the Hebrew calendar—the evening of Monday, Oct. 1st through Tuesday the 9th.
- We are happy to print information on other Feast sites that welcome all brethren regardless of organizational affiliation.
- Please send information on such sites to *Servants' News* (see contact information on page 2 or back cover).



North Central USA

Chadron, Nebraska

Chadron State Park, near Chadron Nebraska, will be the location of an interactive, family-oriented Feast. We will share many services, recreational activities and meals together.

Finished heated cabins at the Park cost from \$54 to \$65 per night and sleep 4 to 6. Reservations for cabins or camping may be made by calling the Park at 308-432-6167 (cabins will probably be all taken by July).

Nearby Chadron has many motel accommodations, including the West Hills Inn (877-432-8305) with a heated indoor pool at \$53 per night for a room and \$78 for a Jacuzzi suite.

Extensive information about the site, schedule of events and optional meal plans, see the article beginning on page 1 of the *Nov/Dec 2000 issue* (still available for the asking).

Additional new information not included in that issue: The Westerner Motel, in Chadron has rooms at \$200 **per week** for a single and \$235 for a double. Call 800-947-0847 or 308-432-5577. The Olde Main Street Inn bed & breakfast has rooms for \$35 for a single and \$45 for a double. The seventh night is free (call 308-432-3380).

For questions and more information, contact *Servants' News*, P.O. Box 107, Perry Michigan, 48872; 517-625-7480; e-mail info@servantsnews.com or read the Internet article at: www.servantsnews.com/sn0011/chadron.htm

Colorado Springs, Colorado: Visible New Moon Calendar

This group has observed the Feast using the visible new moon calendar for nearly 20 years. The Festival dates will be **October 3** (beginning the evening before) to **October 10**.

For more information, contact Jack Hines, PO Box 9901, Colorado Springs, CO 80932-0901; 719-577-9066, e-mail: jehines29@earthlink.net.

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

The multi-hosted site is sponsored by the Interdependent Church of God-Minneapolis, the Church of God-Berean Fellowship (Milwaukee), the Church of God-Bloomington, Illinois, the Church of God, Big Sandy, Texas and Friends of the Sabbath, International.

We will be meeting at Papa's Place Conference Center in Baraboo, Wisconsin, just 6 miles from the Wisconsin Dells. We have several rooms at the Baraboo Valley Inn reserved—the same building as the meeting hall. We also have some cabins and rooms at the Log Lodge Motel (within walking distance).

This year we are pleased to offer a daily lunch buffet following services. Menu items include: pepper steak, beef lasagna, vegetable lasagna, baked chicken, manicotti, roast beef, beef tips, and baked cod. Salads, side dishes, baked dinner rolls, and coffee, tea or milk are also included. Prices for the buffet are: adults: \$6.95, children: \$4.95, and under 4 free.

Many enjoyable activities are now being planned: a Steak Out, a family dance, a hike at the beautiful Devil's Lake State Park, a fun show and ice cream social, a boat trip or train ride, and a pool party or visit to a local indoor water park.

For more information, contact Jeff and Anna Hagen, 262-594-2063, e-mail: friendssabbath@aol.com.

South Central USA

Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri

The Mid-Missouri Church of God (MMCG) will again be sponsoring the Feast of Tabernacles at the 54,000 acre Lake of the Ozarks in central Missouri. It will be held this year at the beautiful new **Baymont Inn** in the town of Lake Ozark.

Members of all Church of God organizations will be welcome. Information and registration will be at 5:30 p.m. in the Baymont Conference Hall, with opening services commencing at 7:30 p.m. on Monday night, 1 October. (A traditional format is planned—with worship services at 10:30 a.m. on most days.)

Anyone interested in sermon, sermonette, Bible study or seminar presentation, or serving as a choir member, individual or group special music volunteer, accompanist, or assisting with the children's Bible classes, please get in touch. Other kinds of service will also be needed.

In the planning stage are such activities as "First Day of the Feast" Fellowship Luncheon, Breakfast with the Seniors, Night out with the Singles, Ozark Music Night, Afternoon Lake Cruise, Pie & Ice Cream Social, and a Family Picnic & Cook-out at Lake of the Ozarks State Park. In addition, there are more than a dozen beautiful golf courses and some good fishing spots just a short drive from the Inn.

The following facilities are all within a mile or two of the feast site. There are no reserved blocks of rooms, simply first come, first served, so it's a good idea to make your reservations soon. And to ensure the discounted rates, be sure to mention **MMCG**:

Arrowhead Lodge: (573-365-2345) room: \$55.00; suites: \$65.00 (rates are for singles, add \$5.00 for each additional adult).

Baymont Inn & Suites: (573-365-2700) heated indoor pool, refrigerators, \$59.00, children 18 and under free.

Motel 6: (573-365-4566) heated indoor pool, single costs \$35.99, except \$62.99 on Fri. and Sat. nights; 2, 3 or 4 persons \$41.39, except \$68.39 on Fri. and Sat. nights.

Tomahawk Inn: (573-365-5331) refrigerators, outdoor pool & picnic area, single: \$42.00, double: \$46.00.

For an information packet, please write to Duke and Dotte Schneider, Festival Coordinating Team, at 31879 Triangle Cove Road, Gravois Mills, MO 65037; 573-372-3221; e-mail: ddinmo@mail.usmo.com.

Lake Texoma, Oklahoma

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms... For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice" (Pslm 95:1-2, 7, KJV)

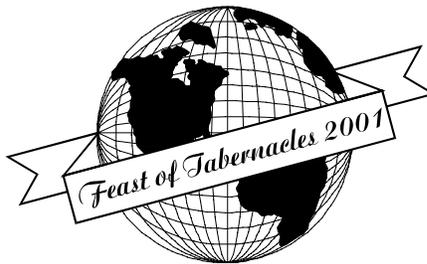
Since this Feast pictures, among other things, the establishment of God's glorious Kingdom, the zenith of His plan is never allowed to escape our minds.

So, as you plan for the Feast, reflect on the wonderful plan, the new beginning that God in His mercy has pre-

pared for all mankind and your role in it.

Our site will have: sermons, Bible studies, family fun park, seminars, youth activities, talent/fun show, Sabbath classes, teen activities, family dance, music, lake activities, a fish fry, mini Bible studies, daily evening prayer (a small group assemble each night for a song, prayer, reading Psalms and prayer requests).

Join us at beautiful Lake Texoma Lodge. Also available are cabins and camping facilities; there is fishing, swimming (pool or lake), tennis, shuffle board, basketball, restaurants, parks, an Indian Fort, etc.; all located on this 93,000 acre lake which extends into Texas. Let's get acquainted.



No collections will be taken up. An offering box will be in the back of the room for anyone wanting to make an offering. All funds donated at the feast will be used for feast expenses and festival assistance. Lake Texoma Resort Park, PO Box 248, Kingston, OK 73439-0248; tel: 800-654-8240 (4). The Feast coordinator is Steve Kieler, 2193 Sheker Drive, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8707; 515-576-5743, e-mail: sskieler@juno.com.

Wilburton, Oklahoma

Truth on the Web Ministries and friends will be hosting the Feast in beautiful southeast Oklahoma, just outside the small town of Wilburton, at scenic Robbers' Cave State Park. It will be held the evening of **October 2nd through the 10th**—using the observation calendar All are cordially invited to attend this blessed event, and rejoice with us before the Eternal in accordance with His Word.

This park offers a number of different facilities and activities, and is quite the environment for "family" Feasting! Its 8,400 acres teems with wildlife and beautiful scenery. It has hundreds of campsites, 26 cabins with fireplaces, a

20-room lodge, and even a cafe and a grocery store. It is situated 5 miles north of Wilburton on Hwy 2.

Lodging prices: Rooms are \$78.00 per night with TVs and telephones, no kitchens. One-bedroom half duplex cabins are \$53; one-bedroom cabin: \$68; two-bedroom cabin: \$93. Cabins have full-sized refrigerators with freezers, stove tops, microwaves, coffee makers, and outside grills. Dishes, cooking utensils, and linens are provided. Towels and linens should be placed on porch for clean supply, as daily interior maid service is not supplied during occupancy. All rooms and cabins must be booked before July 31st to guarantee availability.

RV sites with all hookups are \$18 per night; water/electricity only are \$13-16; primitive camping is \$7 per unit or tent. Reservation fee is \$5, non-refundable. Numerous nature and recreational activities are available at the park. Contact: Robbers' Cave State Park, P.O. Box 9, Wilburton, OK 74578, 918-465-2565; Park Office e-mail: rcsp@onenet.net or 918-465-2562; Cabin and Lodge Office: e-mail cabins@onenet.net. Mention you are keeping the Feast of Tabernacles sponsored by TOTW Ministries.

Also, please contact us with the number of adults and number of children in your party (include children's ages). This will help the Feast Site coordinators to plan ahead for the Feast. Contact: Brian Hoeck 847- 593-8943, e-mail: brihoeck7@aol.com. More information is available at:

<http://come.to/FEAST2001>
<http://welcome.to/GodsTabernaclesmembers.aol.com/KHoeck777/THEFEAST.html>

Corpus Christi, Texas

The Church of God, San Antonio (affiliated with the Churches of God Outreach Ministries) will host the Feast of Tabernacles in beautiful Corpus Christi, Texas—the "Sparkling City by the Sea".

All brethren, regardless of organizational affiliation, are welcomed. We stand ready to make the Feast memorable for the entire family. Inspiring sermons, music in honor of our Creator, and fellowship opportunities are being planned. Family, love for one another, and brethren sharing and "Rejoicing Before the Lord" are



dominant themes for this Feast site.

Workshops for men and women on "Leadership Development" and "Pursuit of Truth" principles will be coordinated by Dr Alfred Harrell, founder of Christian Leadership Academy and School of Evangelism.

Meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn-Emerald Beach—the only downtown hotel situated directly on the beach. With over 600 square feet (55 m²) of beach area, you can enjoy the surf or soak up the sun.

Hotel facilities and amenities include a Conference room for up to 450-plus people and three breakout rooms for youth Bible classes; indoor Holidome Recreation Center with pool, fitness center, whirlpool, sauna, shuffleboard, and Children's Playport; casual dining at the Sandpiper multi-level restaurant ("Kids Eat Free" menu is available for a maximum of 4 children 12 years and under dining with an adult family member ordering from the regular menu); tropical dining at Kokomo's Bar & Grill with a panoramic view of the surf and sand; complimentary airport transportation; a daily breakfast buffet for \$6.95 per person (children 12 years and under free).

Planned activities include a fellowship get-together at the Texas State Aquarium; a boat tour of the bay, youth Bible studies, fun show night, music by Tom William's Pickin' and Grinnin' players, a bay fishing or deep sea fishing event if there is enough interest and much more.

Reservations may be made at Holiday Inn's central number (800-465-4329) or the hotel directly: Holiday Inn-Emerald Beach, 1102 South Shoreline Boulevard, Corpus Christi, Texas 78401; 361-883-5731, Fax 361-883-9079. Give them the confirmation code "FOT" to let them know you are attending the Feast of Tabernacles. Room Rates are \$52.00 plus tax for single, double, triple or quad. These rates are available for dates September 30th through October 9th.

All room reservations must be made by September 3rd to obtain these rates. For more information, contact the Church of God, San Antonio,

P.O. Box 681714, San Antonio, TX 78268; 210-337-8855, Internet: www.churchofgodsa.com.

St. Clair, Missouri Locally Sighted Calendar

Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly was blessed by Almighty Yahweh to reserve a beautiful, secluded, Ozarks campground in which to keep the Feast of Tabernacles this year (October 3-10).

The location is Camp Woodland Hills (314-629-9910), 37 miles southwest of St. Louis on I-44. To get to the camp, take Exit 239 at St. Clair, follow Route WW west for 5.2 miles. (It changes to gravel for 0.3 mile before reaching the campground. Look for our signs.)

The huge modern lodge is fully heated and air-conditioned, with modern kitchen which has a walk-in refrigerator and freezer, dishwasher, and all necessary utensils. We may use the kitchen for communal as well as individual meals (label any personal food you put in the refrigerator). The meeting hall in the lodge has a large fireplace and loft room. Downstairs off the carpeted hallway are 9 carpeted sleeping rooms, each with 8 built-in bunk beds and closets. Ample bathrooms and showers are located at the end of the hall.

Close to the lodge are six large carpeted log cabins all with heating and air conditioning. Each cabin is divided into two rooms. Each spacious room sleeps 8 on built-in bunk beds with thick foam mattresses. Each room has a toilet, sink and closets. Whether you stay in the main lodge or the cabins, supply the clothes hangers, towels, bedding, plastic mattress cover and sheets to be used as room dividers, if necessary. A modern shower house is situated near the cabins. Camping spaces are conveniently located with 22 spaces, 12 full RV hook-ups.

Near the lodge you'll find volleyball, tennis and basketball courts, a baseball diamond, three pavilions, a canteen, and a campfire area with seating. The Bourbeuse River runs near the end of the campground.

The fee for all of this is only \$7.00 per person per day for the 8 days of the Feast (children under 5 free). For those not staying on the campground the fee

is \$4 per person per day. No extra charges for any of the amenities. You are asked to send a \$50 non-refundable deposit. Meals are your own responsibility, but restaurants are located nearby. We plan to have a few scheduled communal meals where everyone is to bring a food item to share.

Missouri can sometimes cool in October, but warm or raining weather is also possible.

Come for a great inspiring time. Yahweh commands us to observe His feast days annually (Lev. 23:14, 21, 31, 41), and the Feast of Tabernacles is the highlight. At the annual auction-brethren can take home a memento of the Feast from among crafts and other items brethren have made or donated. Proceeds go to our outreach efforts.

Those flying to St. Louis should check on the availability of the Greyhound bus line, which makes a stop in nearby Sullivan at 9:50 a.m. daily. We can meet you in Sullivan quite readily. Remember that the first gathering is scheduled for 7 p.m. Tuesday, October 2, with the next meeting Wednesday morning—contingent on the sighting of the Trumpets new moon the evening of September 18.

Think on these things. If you have never attended a Feast of Tabernacles, make this your year of obedience. Prove Yahweh now herewith and see whether He won't pour out His blessings.

We of Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly try to keep Tabernacles much as ancient Israel did. We gather in temporary dwellings such as campers, tents, and lodges where we can be fairly close together. We sacrifice some comforts of home for a week and spend time away from familiar surroundings.

We try to be like obedient Abraham, who willingly left behind his friends, relatives, and family at Ur of the Chaldees, not knowing where he would end up. He, like us, came to Yahweh believing that he "tabernacled" here on earth, seeking the celestial city of Yahweh described in Revelation.

For more information, contact Elder Ron Davis Sr., Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly: P.O. Box 50, Kingdom City, MO 65262; 888-866-9622, e-mail: mail@ynca.com.

North East USA

Ludington, Michigan

Arrangements are being made for a "West Michigan Feast" in the Ludington, Michigan area.

The "keep it simple, saints" approach will be used with emphasis on Scripture reading, singing and family fellowship. There will also be some short messages with opportunity for comments and questions.

Meeting space is limited; so if you are interested in attending, please contact: Darrell West, PO Box 26, Webberville, MI 48892; 517-521-3630.

Fenwick, Michigan

Yahweh's House of Prayer is sponsoring a Feast at Snow Lake Camp Ground from sunset **Oct 2 to Oct 10**.

Contact Bob or Theresa Wells at 517-543-9417; e-mail: mayan@mail.com or theresawells@tir.com; web page is at www.geocities.com/mayanaw/YHOP.html.

Akron, Ohio

The Akron Fellowship is sponsoring a site in interactive format site in Akron, Ohio. All who are present can participate in the scheduled presentations.

Daily topics of discussion include: *Meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles; The Elect—Who Are They?; A Living Sacrifice and the Royal Priesthood; Salvation; Faith or a new Concept; Trust; Hope; The Work, What is it?; and Resurrections/Millennium.*

The Feast will be held at the Comfort Inn West, 130 Montrose West Ave, Akron, OH 44321; tel: 330-666-5050. Rooms are \$61.16 per night, tax included, with 2 double beds or a king with a couch that folds out into a double bed. This includes the indoor pool and free continental breakfast.

The Hotel is just 30 miles south of Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

The Cleveland/Akron area has numerous attractions for all ages.

For more information, contact Will Blair, P.O. Box 5300, Akron, Ohio 44334; e-mail: will_blair@excite.com or Ed Schneider, ets124@hotmail.com.

South East USA

Crossville, Tennessee

The Jerusalem Sentinel is sponsoring this site, which will be held from the evening of **October 2nd through October 10th** at the Cumberland Mountain State Park.

A contemporary praise service will be held each day at 9:30 a.m. and a regular worship service with traditional hymns at 10 a.m. There will be an additional service on the Sabbath and High Days at 2:30 a.m. The park has numerous recreational facilities and accommodations available.

Cabin cost is from \$483 to \$814 for eight nights; call 865-922-5545 by July 1 for reservations or see www.JerusalemSentinel.com for pictures and more information. Camping, with hookups, will cost \$17 per night at the park. Local motels range from \$49 to \$77 per night.

Everyone is invited to participate in the numerous activities that are planned. Suggestions for messages or activities are welcome.

Contact Mark Carr, PO Box 70635, Knoxville, TN 37938; 865-922-5420, e-mail: mcarr@jerusalemsentinel.com.

Chapel Hill, Tennessee

The Feast will be sponsored by the Church of God, Fellowship at the Horton Haven Retreat, adjacent to Henry Horton State Park near Chapel Hill, Tennessee.

Contact: Paul Bell (615-896-9365) or W.K. Saulsberry (931-294-2127).

Smoky Mountains, Tennessee

United Christian Ministries is excited to announce that the Sevierville Civic Center and Community Center in Sevierville, Tennessee has been selected to host the Feast of Tabernacles 2001 for this area of the country.

With seating for up to 600 people, this beautiful facility is ideal. Housing facilities are off-site including hotel accommodations to spacious condominiums and chalets. The property has an adjoining community center, offering a large indoor pool, fitness center, bowling, racquetball courts, gymnasium, and a walking/running trail, making this an ideal site for family activities of all types. This year, we are

planning a Dinner and Dance.



Because this is the peak season, everyone is encouraged to call early to make their reservations.

If you would like to receive an area housing and attractions booklet and map, contact *United Christian Ministries*, P.O. Box 361725, Hoover, AL 35236; 888-985-9066, e-mail: ucm3821@aol.com.

Edisto Island, South Carolina,

The Freedom Church of God is hosting a site at Fairfield Ocean Ridge. Call 877-296-6335 and ask for 20% off in-season rates. Feast themes will be Bible study, prophecy, and the "faith once delivered".

For more information, contact Helm Hobrath at 440-639-0916 or Jerry Simmons at 601-736-0418.

Destin, Florida

This site, sponsored by the Church of God, Big Sandy, is at The Pelican Beach Resort hotel on the Gulf Coast. It hosts a kiddie pool, a swimming pool and a jacuzzi as well as a sauna, weight-room and sandwich shop.

The area has plenty of enjoyable restaurants, shopping, fishing, kayaking, jet-skis, sailboats, cruises and, swimming. Beautiful sunsets on the beach with temperatures in the mid-80s °F (30°C) during the days make this site a delight for nearly anyone.

For more information, contact Shelly at 800-946-5545 or e-mail: destin@bigsandychurch.org.

Niceville, Florida

Over 1,000 brethren are expected again for Christian Educational Ministries well-organized Feast at the Okaloosa Community College Fine Art's Performing Auditorium in Niceville.

The feast combines sermons, music, seminars, Sabbath school, activities for all ages and very pleasant surroundings. Young people will be involved in every aspect of the services and activities on Youth Day. The seminars vary widely, from technical subjects to preparation for practical Christian service. There's a condo, motel, house or great camp site to fit almost any taste and budget in Destin and Niceville.

For more information on excellent



motel, airfare, and car-rental discounts call CEM's toll free number 1-888-

BIBLE-44. Or write to: Christian Educational Ministries, P.O. Box 560 Whitehouse, Texas 75791; 903-509-2999, fax: 903-509-1139; e-mail: adm@cemnetwork.com.

Orlando, Florida

Christian Commandment Keepers, Educational Seminars welcomes you to a family-friendly Feast of Tabernacles site. We are very open to suggestions.

There will be traditional services on the High Days. On the six intervening days, Mark D. Kaplan and guest speakers will conduct educational seminars. Those topics are included in the Festival Schedule. This format includes questions and discussion in each and every seminar. Handouts will be provided to enhance the effectiveness of the presentations. Children are welcome to participate in our "Sabbath School" type youth instruction program called Educational Program Centered On Truth or EPCOT for short.

The Sheraton Four Points Lakeside Resort is located 1.5 miles from Walt Disney World. Free amenities include paddleboat rides on the private lake, tennis on four lighted courts, exercise room, three heated pools and a shuttle service to the theme Parks.

On-site is Hurricane Sam's Bar and Grill, the Greenhouse Restaurant, a General Store, an 18-hole miniature golf course, Pizza Hut Express and Deli. Call the Sheraton at 800-848-0801 and reference "Festival of Tabernacles" to receive the group rate, which is \$64.00 plus tax (\$75.18). Several other hotels are within a few miles.

Arrangements are being made to cater breakfast every day in the meeting room. A one-day outing to Splendid China is also being planned which would include full admission to the 76-acre park, guided tour, acrobat show and dinner. There will be a Pizza Pool Party with additional mini-golf, tennis and boating activities on October 5th. On October 6th, we're planning a evening excursion to tour the Walt Disney World property and watch the nighttime entertainment.

As is "Church of God" tradition,

there will be an offering collected on the Holy Days but please feel no obligation to contribute in this way. Any funds collected in this ceremony will go directly to offset the cost of the festival expenses only. We are not a church organization, but an educational effort, and are happy to have those who attend send money to whatever church, organization, etc. with which they feel most comfortable.

For more information contact: Mark D. Kaplan: feastfever@usa.com.

Lake Worth, Florida

The Lake Worth Church is sponsoring this site. It will be held from the evening of **Oct 2nd through Oct 10th**, using the visible crescent calendar. Everyone is welcome. Contact Neville Gilbert at 561-585-4580.

North West USA

Sunriver, Oregon

Sunriver Resort is a world class year-round ski and recreation community located in east-central Oregon on the eastern edge of the Cascade mountains, providing a fresh, wooded, high desert motif.

All typical resort activities are available, including hiking, river rafting, horseback riding, bicycling on paved trails, tennis, golf, racquetball, shopping, and fine dining. Sunriver is just 20 minutes from the city of Bend.

The Redmond airport provides connections to Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco, and is about 15 miles north of Bend. Services are held each day at 10:00 a.m. at the Thousand Trails hall, about five miles south of Sunriver. Musicians are invited to bring their instruments.

Sunriver is a *No Host Feast Site*; hall rental, services, food, drink, and activities are funded by those who come to the feast. All contributions are collected at the Feast, and then spent only for the Feast. The more that is contributed, the more food, drink, and activities may be enjoyed. All labor is voluntary, performed by those who attend, and no organization or person receives any funds or gifts. Any contributions that are not spent one year, are kept and spent the next year.

Services and sermons are consistent with traditional Sabbath keeping Church of God theology, and do not promote or criticize any Church of God organizations.

This feast site enables brethren from many different organizations to come together for eight days to worship the Father and His Son Jesus Christ as their primary goal.

Accommodations are made directly by each family. Most families stay nine nights, and share one of the many well-kept rental houses in Sunriver with other families to reduce cost. These realtors provide 50% discounts if you me. When calling, mention that you are with the "Church of God" attending the "Feast of Tabernacles".

Sunray Realty: 800-531-1130, Internet: www.sunrayinc.com.

Sunset Realty: 800-541-1756, Internet: www.sr-sunset.com.

Thousand Trails (541-593-8494) is the camping resort where services and most activities are held.

For more information on the Feast contact:

Wayne Atchison, 541-617-8800, e-mail: z2cs@bendnet.com;

Steven Moyer, 541-330-0410, e-mail: skibumm358@aol.com;

Al Murrey, 541-881-8600, e-mail: murrey.al@deq.state.or.us;

Jim Woods (music), e-mail: jimw12@worldnet.att.net;

Michele Dunwoody (children's choir), e-mail: madunwoody@juno.com.

Glendale, Oregon

Fir Point Camp will be the site of this year's Feast celebration sponsored by the Omega Praise Fellowship. Come for an experience in worship, praise, teaching and sharing together.

Contact Jim Sorenson, 541-837-3642, e-mail: jsorenson@mcsi.net or Sharon Bonney, 541-479-0467, 541-825-3573, e-mail: sbonney@citlink.net.

Ocean Shores, Washington

Christian Renewal Ministries International presents Sukkot 2001, a non-denominational feast site dedicated to bringing all people together in worshipping God.

Speaking emphasizes the Hebrew Roots of Christianity.

Contact CMRI, P.O. Box 111 Auburn, WA 98071; 253-839-6489.

South West USA

Mendocino, California

LivingTheWay.org and *The Way Publications* invite you to come celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles at the picturesque Mendocino Woodlands State Park campground in beautiful Mendocino, near the California coast, from October 2-10, 2001.

This Feast site is a cooperative effort among friends and anyone who wants to join in. We have sponsored several Feast sites in the past, in the Lake Tahoe area and in Folsom, California. The participants and sponsors include members of the Sacramento, California Sabbath Bible Fellowship, along with others from around the country. "The open forums, and the questions and comments after the messages, have been very attractive for serious Bible students. It helps keep everyone honest.

Mendocino Woodlands State Park, provides a peaceful, rustic setting creating a unique learning environment for personal growth, retreats, dance, music, church, youth and nature study groups. You can plan a full day of activities or let each day unfold at its own pace.

The many hiking trails, open meadow, large beaver pond, river otters, deer, fox and other natural amenities complete the wonder and beauty of the Mendocino Woodlands.

Feast participants will stay in rustic cabins with fireplaces. Some RV sites may also be available. "Here's your chance to really dwell in booths," said Jack Lane. "The camp has a main hall, which we'll be using for meetings, worshipping, dancing, praising; and there's a large dining facility with two dining rooms, which can also be used for game rooms, chat rooms, break-out seminars, or whatever we need." Meals will be provided as part of the package, to include professional catering on five of the days.

There will be plenty of activities available. Free group activities may include: Family mini-Olympics, Beach Day, Family Dance, and Camp Fire Skit Night.

Other activities (not free) are also available in the area including: charter fishing, canoeing, teen bowling trip, a

ride on the historic Skunk Train, and horseback riding. There will also be a fundraising auction to raise money to help some attend the Feast.

The cost for the entire Feast will be \$425 per adult. Anyone who would like to come only during the day have a fee of \$35 per day per adult; those who wish to spend only a few nights with us have a fee of \$40 per night per adult. Children 17 and under are free; however, donations to help defray the costs for children will be gratefully received and put to good use. The price includes lodging, food, and your share of the cost of renting the facilities.

"Many people have never done a camping Feast," Lane continued. "We did last year, with Omega Praise in Oregon, and we couldn't wait to do it again! It's really a wonderful experience!"

For more information, or to request a registration form, write to Living The Way, P.O. Box 1976, Placerville, CA 95667; or e-mail info@LivingTheWay.org.

Internet-savvy Feast goers can visit the web site, <http://LivingTheWay.org>, to learn more about the Feast site and beautiful Mendocino County, and to print out the Registration Form. Or call the Feast Hotline: 1-800-808-2560.

Angel Fire, New Mexico

Angel Fire is nestled in the southern end of the Moreno Valley in the Sangre De Christo Mountain range of Northern New Mexico. It is situated at 8,430 ft. (2,570 m) elevation with spectacular mountain views in all directions.

Available activities include horseback riding, fishing, hiking, site seeing, and Golfing. There are several restaurants located in Angel Fire, Eagle Nest (11 miles north), Taos (24 miles west) and Red River (28 miles north). The cuisine ranges from traditional Western and Mexican to Italian and Fast Food.

Angel Fire is a village with a permanent population of about 300. The village has two grocery stores, coffee shops, many souvenir shops and a medical clinic. Weather conditions in early October should have low temperatures around 15 to 24°F (-10 to -4°C) and highs around 65 to 74°F (18 to 23°C).

Nearest airports are Albuquerque (3½-hour drive) and Sante Fe (2-hour drive). Angel Fire is somewhat isolated, but its majestic beauty makes it well worth the time to travel there.

Activities planned include an opening night social, youth day activities, and a variety show (contact Rex Jamerson, 913-262-6009). Other available activities include hiking, fishing, horseback riding, golf, and relaxing with old acquaintances or new friends. For condominium prices call Tracy or Patty at Resort Properties, 800-338-2589, e-mail: condos@angelfirenem.com. Identify yourself as attending with the Church of God, Big Sandy We welcome everyone. Anyone who would like to serve by ushering, playing the piano, or performing special music, please let us know.

Contact Ron Avey 903-636-4238, e-mail angelfire@BigSandyChurch.org.

Big Bear Lake, California

The Eternal Church of God will again celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles at beautiful Big Bear Lake. This year's feast featured wonderful activities for the entire family.

Contact: The Eternal Church of God, P.O. Box 4063, Sunland, CA 91041; 800-723-6108, e-mail: Witness@EternalCOG.org.

Lihui, Kauai, Hawaii Feast

The Feast will be observed in Hawaii at the Radisson Hotel in Lihui, Kauai. Condominiums are available at:

Kaha Lani (located in Wailua, 5 minutes from the Radisson Hotel): one-bedroom, 1-4 people, \$139 per night; two-bedroom, 1-6 people, \$204 per night.

Kauai Coast Resort (located in the Coconut Plantation Resort, 10 minutes from the Raddison), one-bedroom, 1-4 people, \$138 per night; two-bedroom, 1-6 people, \$183 per night. Rates do not include 11.4% taxes.

A special airline rate of \$698 from Dallas to Lihue on American Airlines is available with at least a 3 night **pre-paid** hotel/condo included in the package. You cannot get these special fares by calling American Airlines direct.



**"Your Word Is Truth"
from page 1**

scriptures. But almost invariably, some of those translations and explanations will be "stretched" to fit a pet doctrine of that church group. And worse yet, there will usually be large sections of the Bible that they will never quote at all. Some of those never-quoted scriptures will probably contradict some of that church group's doctrines.

The motivation of these church groups may start out good: They want to identify the most important doctrines of the Bible and explain them so that almost anyone can understand them. They usually back them up with Scripture. But after believers meet primarily among themselves long enough, they often conclude that they completely understand the most important doctrines of the Bible and anyone who disagrees with them is either wrong or an unbeliever. This "we have the truth of the Bible here" attitude helps make a stable church with loyal attendance and income—for years or even generations. But it is not a denomination, but the Spirit, that will lead us into all truth (John 16:13).

Leaders of denominations are partly to blame, but not entirely. From the people's perspective, they frequently **want** to attend a group with short, concise explanations of the important doctrines of the Bible. Most want to learn "the important stuff"—maybe just the bare minimum "required for salvation"—and then rest assured that their church group's ministry and leaders have the complex parts of the Bible "all figured out". But God does not want it that way:

"...man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by **every word** that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD" (Deut 8:3, Matt 4:4, Luke 4:4).

God wants every person to live by every word. There is a time for teaching certain Bible subjects from scattered scriptures (Acts 17:11); the need for Bible teachers is well established in Scripture (Rom 12:7; 1Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11; Col 3:16; 2Tim 2:2; Tit 2:4; Heb 5:12). We need teachers even more today because the Bible was written in another language for another culture (Isa 28:11). **But the ultimate goal of any long range Bible teaching should be to help explain the whole**

Bible—NOT to define and explain a set of doctrines that some group has determined to be the most important.

The Massive Effect of Teaching Doctrine Rather than the Bible

This concept is not at all trivial. The idea that religious teachers should determine and teach "doctrine" from the Bible rather than just do their best to teach the Bible has resulted in untold numbers of religious conflicts—leading to the deaths of many.

When Bible teaching is primarily concerned with understanding the proper manuscript reading, translation, historical context and explanation of Bible passages, it is fairly easy for a diverse group of people to pool their knowledge and learn from each other. If they cannot agree about exactly what God said, they can at least present several alternatives to Bible students and then let the Holy Spirit guide them.

But when study consists primarily of determining the "most important" teachings of the Bible, and then defining them more precisely than the Bible itself does, trouble arises. **When groups teach that salvation depends upon accepting the right set of doctrines, then big trouble arises**. The hundreds of conflicting religious denominations and groups of today are its result. Each has a different conclusion as to what the correct doctrines of the Bible are. Groups that understand the seventh-day Sabbath are little different—they have hundreds of divisions mostly based upon doctrine.

If we look at the history of religious groups, we see that church organizations most frequently produce much material expounding their doctrinal position and why they are the group that God is using the most. They build headquarters of their administrators and scholars. They build colleges to train ministers who will teach their doctrines.

Producing Bible translations, Bible commentaries and Bible concordances are rarely ever done by church groups. These things are most frequently done by individuals, small groups, or even inter-denominational groups.

Bibles for the People, History

The Catholic Church, with its hundreds of years of history, millions of

members, and vast budget for scholars has done little to put the Bible in the hand of the common man. In 405 A.D., Jerome completed his Latin Vulgate translation from the Hebrew and Greek—a largely solo effort that was later made "the only acceptable Bible" for over a thousand years.

The first English-language Catholic Bible, the Douay-Rheims was completed in 1609, again, largely the work of individuals—not a major effort by the scholars of the church. The Douay-Rheims was translated from the Latin Vulgate, not from the Hebrew and Greek. It was largely an effort to give Catholics something to read instead of the numerous English-language Bibles produced in the 1500's by the Protestant reformers. It was not until 1970, after it had published millions of pages of official material on every conceivable doctrinal subject over the centuries, that the Catholic Church employed numerous scholars to produce an English translation directly from the Greek and Hebrew—the New American Bible.

While the 1611 King James Version was produced by the best scholars of the Church of England at the request of the King, its purpose was also to produce an "authorized Bible" so that members of the Church of England would stop reading the many other Bibles produced by Protestant reformers (some of which had footnotes suggesting that the Pope was "the Beast", etc.). The KJV contained many alterations from the Greek and Hebrew to help support church hierarchies (for more details, request *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?*). The Geneva Bible, produced by families who were exiled from England for their religious beliefs, was still in common use for nearly 200 years alongside the KJV. With its "men are responsible only to God" outlook, the Geneva Bible was the favorite of many of the men responsible for the American Revolution.

With the exception of Noah Webster's Bible in 1833, no new major translations of the Bible into English were begun until the late 1800s when many more ancient Hebrew and Greek texts were being discovered. The Revised Standard Version was begun by the Church of England. In my view, the RSV fixed some KJV mistakes, but

introduced others. The work was eventually passed to multi-denominational committees and several different versions were produced. Young produced a translation in 1862 and Darby in 1884.

The 1900s sparked a large number of translations, mostly by independent Bible teachers: Alford, Beck, Fenton, Goodspeed, Knox, Lamsa, Moffatt, Montgomery, Norlie, Phillips, Rieu, Rotherham, Weymouth and Williams. Some parts of these Bibles made the Word plain as no other translation had before, others clouded it with the translator's personal ideas.

In any event, these translations spurred the scholarly community to produce more Bibles—all by interdenominational teams of scholars: the Amplified Bible, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, the New Jerusalem Bible, the New King James Version and the New Living Translation. A lot more could be written on this subject, but the overwhelming trend is clear: **church organizations produce doctrinal statements designed to keep members learning from them, while individuals and interdenominational teams produce Bibles designed to help people learn from God.**

Bibles Commentaries and Helps

Bible commentaries are important secondary teaching tools. When a person is trying to understand a Bible verse, a commentary provides historical and linguistic background and sometimes alternative meanings. There really is no clear dividing line between “study Bibles” which may contain commentary on nearly every verse and “Bible Commentaries” which contain commentary and also quote part or even all of the Bible text.

Like the Bible translations, the majority and the best commentaries were produced by individuals or interdenominational teams. While religious denominations sometimes produce commentaries, they are rarely used outside of that denomination.

Technical Bible helps are again very similar. Has a major denomination used their resources to produce an exhaustive concordance of the Bible? No, but both Strong and Young did. Do the big Church groups produce the popular Hebrew and Geek Lexicons?

Or do we remember Vine, Thayer, Friberg, Brown, Driver, Briggs, etc. Who produced the Online Bible, the widely circulated free computer Bible? Not a big denomination, but Larry Pierce of Canada. The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, over 1,000,000 scripture references, was the work of Jerome H. Smith. Mostly individuals and non-denominational groups have worked to make Bibles and Bible helps for computers and the Internet.

A Few Groups That Have Produced Their Own Bible

A very few religious denominations have produced their own Bible version. The Jehovah's Witnesses have the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. My very brief study of it showed that some common translation errors had been fixed (it eliminated the word “deacon”), but it also contained inventions to support the organization's doctrines, such as the insertion of the word “Jehovah” over two hundred times in the New Testament to translate the Greek *theos* (“God”) or *kurios* (“Lord”).

The Assemblies of Yahweh of Bethel, Pennsylvania have also produced their own Bible, *The Sacred Scriptures*. Similarly, it has some (not as many) traditional Bible errors fixed, but also uses *Yahweh* and *Elohim* in the New Testament based on what they think might have been in “original Hebrew” manuscripts—not on any known manuscript.

Messianic Jewish Groups frequently use *The Jewish New Testament* and *The Jewish New Testament Commentary* by David H. Stern. These books, however, are not sponsored by any one group, but mostly the work of Mr Stern. While this writer does not agree with everything in them, they certainly contain much information not found in many Christian translations.

More than one time I have seen Christian commentators try to wrestle with a difficult Greek phrase, only to find this book explain that it is a translation of a Jewish idiom with a clear specific meaning. This matching pair of books provides a very convenient way to get an additional perspective when studying the Bible—all one need do is look up the verses in question in the Bible and/or the commentary. It

has excellent cross references which refer the reader to the proper verse when a particular expression occurs many times but is explained only once in the commentary.

More importantly, the Jewish New Testament and Commentary can be purchased from numerous Christian bookstores. There are literally hundreds of references to it on the Internet. All this is true, even though the Jewish New Testament was self-published and does not agree with mainstream theology, either Jewish or Christian .

What Will Sabbatarians Do?

This writer believes that Sabbatarians could learn a lot from the example of the Jewish New Testament. **Sabbatarians have a lot of truth that the rest of the world needs.** But so much of that truth is contained in booklets produced by church organizations that clearly represent themselves to be the “one” or at least the “main” true church. This greatly discourages new believers who are seeking knowledge from a variety of groups.

For example, Ellen G. White produced a Bible commentary, but it is very difficult to read through it unless one is completely convinced that she was a prophetess and that the Seventh Day Adventist Church is “the Church”.

Furthermore, most Sabbatarian literature is only available by contacting the group that produced it—it is not popular enough to be sold in Christian book stores, and its authors do not permit free copying or distribution on the Internet.

A Bible and a commentary need to be produced that contains the many things that Christian Sabbatarians have learned. With the breakup of the Church of God groups, the amount of new learning and study seems to be greater than ever, but the ability to distribute that knowledge seems to be even more remote than ever. This Bible and commentary need to include multiple points of view when necessary—encouraging people to do additional research and make up their own minds on difficult issues.

Similarly, an index, topical Bible, or at least a set of scripture references need to be published that link together important concepts like the Sabbath, the Feast days, clean meats, the fact

that the soul can die, etc. Many existing Bible helps do not chain important scriptures together because the writers of the books did not understand the importance of the scriptures. For example, when clean or unclean food is mentioned in the New Testament, very few existing references will tie in Genesis 7:2, 8 and 8:20 which clearly show that clean meats were in existence before Moses. New Testament references to Holy Days are seldom linked to other scriptures. There are thousands of other similar types of references that need to be presented in a concise form to honest Bible seekers.

Do Other Groups Want the Sabbatharians' Knowledge?

If people in other church groups have not been interested in Sabbatharians' literature, why would they be interested in their Bible and commentaries?

That is a good question. But I think it has good answers. There are thousands of groups that produce a few books or tracts on a variety of subjects. There are very few that produce a complete Bible and commentary. Such a work shows that one has considered all Scripture, not simply put a few scriptures together to make a few unusual conclusions. When studying, I check a number of translations—even some produced by groups that I largely do not agree with—just to see if there is another point of view on a scripture. A Bible and commentary with substantially different, yet biblical information will be sought after by many independent Bible students.

At this point, I do not know of any Bible and commentary that has been produced from a Christian Sabbatharian perspective. I think it would be welcomed by many—especially if it did not treat all non-Sabbatarians like unbelievers. This is a vital point. I will explain below.

Do Other Groups Want the Sabbatharian's Knowledge?

A friend wrote to me and stated that if I knew of any church where all of the spiritual gifts were in operation as described in the New Testament, that he would go there. This friend does a lot of doctrinal study. Many feel that if they can just understand the truth of God a little better, then He will grant

them spiritual gifts. But after thinking of how to answer, I realized that I think I have seen most of the spiritual gifts of the Bible in operation, but never all in one place. Why not?

Sharing All Spiritual Gifts

Let me start with Sabbatarian groups. I believe that many in the independent Sabbatarian groups have the gift of knowledge. They know a lot more Bible truth than many people in general Christian groups. But do they attempt to visit other groups and share their knowledge? Usually not.

Usually they spend much time trying to gain more knowledge. Their services primarily consist of conveying knowledge and there is little motivation to pursue other spiritual gifts. People who pursue knowledge that is not even particularly useful to anyone are quite acceptable to these groups. Other groups that are lacking in knowledge are usually regarded as unbelievers. After all, there are many scriptures that show that false knowledge is from Satan.

But now let us talk about non-Sabbatarian groups that have the gift of faith. Some smuggle Bibles or preach the gospel in countries where it is dangerous or illegal. Some teach the sixth commandment to mothers about to abort their children even though a human court has ordered them to leave. These people know the scripture: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

They also know the scripture: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, **therefore the world hates you.** Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also" (John 15:19-20).

People in these groups honor those who have a ministry that suffers persecution—even when it might be possible to do the same ministry a different way and avoid persecution. Many look at other groups that are not being persecuted and say, "How can they be true Christians?"

Other groups seeking to recapture the environment of the first century

church emphasize speaking in tongues. They know Acts 2:4: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." They know that Paul said: "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all" (1Cor 14:18).

While some of their "tongue speaking" may be inspired of God and its interpretation may be a clear revelation from God, most of these groups will also be happy with hundreds of people who speak in tongues by the hour and never have any interpreted revelation from God. Some groups emphasize speaking in tongues so much that they will not accept someone else as a believer unless they speak in tongues.

We could discuss other groups that are centered around teaching, healing, prophesying, or many other gifts. Some groups actually concentrate on more than one gift. But the general trend is to find these four points:

1. The group concentrates on a few gift(s).
2. Most people in the group tend to pursue the same gift(s).
3. The people are quite accepting of variant forms of the gift—even false forms that are contrary to Scripture or so obscure that they are useful to no one.
4. The group tends to look down on others who do not share their gifts, and to consider them unbelievers.

The solution, obviously, is for each group to be more willing to learn from the others and to do less condemning of the others. **Anyone who studies the history of believers at all soon realizes that there is no one group that has had the same set of doctrines and practices for 1900 years.** These things have varied greatly, yet Christ said he would always have His Church (Matt 16:18).

Brethren who want to begin to learn and experience the spiritual gifts in other groups will have to learn to let go of their organization and its doctrinal statement and practices. The need to prove everything from the Scriptures is still there, but the need to prove everything by "what my group teaches" or by "what I have always done in the past" must go away.

First Steps on a Long Road

A new good quality Bible translation,

commentary, and other Bible helps cannot be produced in one or two years. But they can be produced in 10 to 20 years. By contrast, most of the “church of God” ministers are over 50 years old, some quite a bit older. In 10 to 20 years, nearly all of them will be retired. Because the size of these groups keeps dropping, most are scrambling to pay their existing older ministry and are not training or hiring new ones. When group leaders die, the group frequently breaks up and most of their literature ceases to be published. Almost none of it is in bookstores or libraries.

But a good quality Bible, commentary and other helps that do not represent a particular denomination are likely to be sold in bookstores—even if they do not represent traditional views. The Jewish New Testament, previously mentioned in this article, did exactly that. An Internet presence will also certainly be important.

But it is still more important to produce few books that people anywhere can use in their daily Bible study, that they can take to group Bible studies, and that they can give each other—books that do not tell them to join a human organization, but help them understand what the Bible is saying to them.

Sabbatarians have studied and learned a lot of things. That knowledge needs to be preserved in a way that others can learn when they are ready.

Please read the accompanying article at right about the *Holy Scriptures Version* and associated Bible helps. The other front-page article also speaks of the direction of *Servants' News* and *Shelter in the Word*. Finally, the article on Bible history in this *Shelter in the Word* is something that every believer today should know. 

— Norman Edwards

Project for a Decade: The Holy Scriptures Version

The first article about *The Holy Scriptures Version* appeared in the Nov/Dec 2000 issue, page 13. Since then, I have spent some time studying and praying about how the Bible was transmitted and translated through the centuries—and what needs to be done now.

It quickly became obvious that we owe a lot to many individuals who made it their life's work to try to provide an accurate translation of the Bible for the common believer. This was almost always done by individuals and small groups, only rarely by governments or large churches.

The early Bible translations of the 1500s and 1600s contained many inaccuracies—partly due to the lack of understanding of ancient Hebrew and Greek at that time, and partly because the translator's work was colored by traditional “Christian” doctrines that did not come from the Bible. Today, with a much greater access to ancient Bible manuscripts and other documents to help verify the meaning of ancient words, the number of language errors has been reduced greatly. Thousands of skilled linguists have written extensively on this subject.

However, the progress in reducing translation errors due to doctrinal bias has been slower. Indeed, many Bible translators have studied language more than they have studied doctrine from the Bible. As an example, most modern Bible translations still translate the one Greek word *diakonos* as “servant”, “deacon” and “minister” in various places not because the language implies they should, but because they assume that the church has always had the latter two “offices” and that those who buy Bibles will want to find those offices in there.

The intent of *The Holy Scriptures Version* is to use the basic text of the King James Version (which used the basic text of Tyndale's version) with the following modifications:

1. Modernized English. This part has largely already been done, though suggestions are still welcome.

2. Corrections based on the best language studies. Some of this has been done, but there is a lot more to do. When comparing translations, there are verses where many seem to struggle, producing something that is rather unclear and hard to understand in relation to the verses before and after it.

Then, one Bible or commentary will have an extensive historic or linguistic note on the verse, and will produce a translation that is both understandable and that fits the context. This is probably the translation that *The Holy Scriptures* should use—or at least note in its commentary.

3. Corrections based on believing the Bible as opposed to believing Christian or Jewish tradition. This is where *The Holy Scriptures* should be very different. Many other Bible translations have been very successful in point 1 and reasonably successful in point 2. But it is very easy to rely on old assumptions without knowing it. Church of God brethren who have lived and studied the Bible much of their lives without the desire to conform to traditional Christian teaching should be able to see things that so many others do not.

A Believer's Bible

While Rabon Vincent is committed to be the editor of this project, it is not intended to be the work of one man. It should reflect the best of what hundreds or thousands of sincere believers have learned and practiced. While *The Holy Scriptures* will have only one reading for each verse, the next project will be to produce a matching commentary that will discuss a variety of readings when they are possible. It will even include explanations of why some common translations are probably wrong.

A brief 10-page version of the commentary was sent with the initial version

of *The Holy Scriptures*. But as is usually the case with commentaries, it will eventually grow to be larger than the Bible and may be split into multiple volumes.

He is seeking as many people who would like to help with whatever gifts that they have. Over a dozen people have already helped to make the first edition a success. Now, people are needed to pray for the project, to make translation suggestions, help edit for printing, layout pages, proof read, help pay expenses and many other things.

We hope that those who send in suggestions will cite concordances, lexicons and other Bible helps to explain their understanding. Please do not write: "I think this verse should say that" with no explanation why.

Hopefully, many will pray for the project. Those wishing to help directly can contact Rabon Vincent Jr at 324 E Albion St, Avilla, Indiana 46710-9434, e-mail: rabon007@ligtel.com.

The Physical Plan

The very first copies of the Bible were distributed in loose-leaf notebooks. After an initial set of improvements and corrections were made, Rabon had 200 copies printed at about \$10 each. A 10-page Introduction and Commentary was written—which barely begins to cover the existing differences between the HSV and KJV. At this writing, about 135 HSVs have been sent to individuals who have requested them—only 65 remain.

Rabon will continue to add explanations for the existing HSV translations to the Commentary. He will also ask for the input from *Servants' News* readers and other believers. Ideas suggested will be covered in his regular column, *Rightly Distributing the Word of Truth*. This will reduce the need to republish the commentary so often. Nevertheless, about every year, depending on how much work has been done and how much money is available, the HSV and its commentary will be repub-

lished—hopefully to a broader audience each time.

The HSV Bible is already a very readable Bible that is significantly better than the KJV in overall accuracy. It is very useful to people with or without a "Church of God" background, though it might be difficult for some people to figure out why it is different to the KJV in some places. The commentary should be much better after the next publication or two.

When both of these items are to the point where they would be understandable and useful to people outside of the "Church of God" background, an effort will be made to make this Bible and Commentary available to many more people. If 2500 copies are printed, they will cost only \$5 each. If 4000 are printed, only \$4 each.

Procuring an ISBN (International Standard Book Number), obtaining a Library of Congress call number and getting the Bible ready for publication simply requires a little work by people knowledgeable of these things. Libraries will generally accept and add books to their stacks if they have the proper numbers and seem to be of interest to patrons. (If nobody ever checks them out, they get removed.) Bible software vendors have already expressed interest in adding the HSV to their software packages—they like Bibles that are free to distribute and already in a computer format.

Speaking of "free", it has been Rabon's intention that this Bible be offered free of charge. It was the way that the first century Gospel was distributed, and offering it free prevents the temptation from someone working on it to try to write what is popular to turn it into a money-maker. It is hoped that its solid translations and non-denominational approach will cause it to become known by word of mouth among many seventh-day groups—just as the Jewish New Testament became known among many seventh-day

groups (though mostly messianic Jewish).

If God is pleased with this translation, we hope that He will make a way for it to reach the general Christian population—through bookstores and other common outlets. If a major publisher wanted to publish the book, it would cost little and they would have access to most bookstores.

But major publishers usually require a large degree of control over the publication and would probably be opposed to a significant number of copies given away for free. Also, most Christian bookstores are locked into contracts regarding from whom they can buy books, so it is not usually possible to walk up to a store and ask them to sell (or give away) a particular book.

Probably the most likely way to get the book into many people's hands would be through book distributors. They are a middle man that operates between publishers and the stores. A distributor does **not** print books, but will typically buy so many already printed copies of a book and place it in certain stores. If the books do not sell, we would have to buy them back from the distributor.

The free aspect of the books could be maintained by simply including a note on the inside of the book saying that if you could not afford to buy it, a copy would be sent free of charge, but that it might take several months to arrive (bulk mailing them two months would save a lot of money). Most people who have the money will buy the book now rather than wait such a long time.

After the Bible and Commentary are being used by thousands of people, a concordance, a topical or cross-reference Bible, and other helps can be produced.

Question of Qualifications

Will anybody want a Bible that is produced by people who do not have many academic degrees? There is no doubt that the "lack of scholarly qualifications" will deter

some people from buying it. For others, a non-scholarly work will be an advantage. There are a great many Bibles available that have been produced by religious scholars, containing ideas that are popular among them. Many of these ideas are right. But when a wrong idea is well-entrenched among the scholarly community, it does not come out easy—not

when, in their view, “the best minds” teach it. It is hard for them to see how they could all be wrong.

A Bible produced from the standpoint of “What did God really say and what should we really do?” will be different. Today many are seeking God, realizing that “traditional Christian religion” has not always worked. I have prayed

that God would send a person(s) with the appropriate degrees to work on this Bible if it would be best for it; and to not send any if it would be best done that way.

I am looking forward to this greater study of the Bible and to producing some books that will help people better understand God for years to come. 

— Norman Edwards

“Truckers Study” from page 2

over that line, he said. You have no idea of the trauma of divorce until you have been through it.

We covered wide-ranging topics and I won’t try to cover them all. They were interested in the concept of living the Christian life, about not answering kind for kind, but answering belligerent fellow-truckers with a blessing so that they don’t become like them. As one trucker said, “Answer not a fool according to his folly”.

They spoke of how they must rely on God daily to get them out of jams, to help them with making ends meet on their modest wages, and how God always seems to get them through even when the numbers don’t add up.

These men were not Bible scholars today (some truckers really know their way around the Scriptures), but I did see three men striving to live their lives as Jesus would have them live, and this was evident in the way they spoke of their families, their walk of faith, and their attempts to walk as He walked.

I mentioned to them how refreshing it is to meet people who understand the sanctity of marriage and family and their dedication to their convictions. It was a wonderful way to start my week.

When you see a trucker on the road, think of some of these men that you read about in this column. So many of them are hard-working, dedicated folks trying to earn an honest living in the only way they know how. And they can be very lonely and homesick.

March 11, 2001

In today’s Bible Study, I spent the first hour or so talking to one driver who just happened to come into the driver’s lounge and he mostly wanted to talk about the company he drives for and how he came to work for them.

We were joined later by another driver from Wyoming, and I soon learned that I woefully misjudged the first driver. He was more than just a pleasant, friendly person. He was also a man who knew his way around the Bible and was eager to discuss and share. First impressions can truly be deceiving.

During the past few days I have been thinking about the cry of Jesus as He was dying: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” Why did God forsake Him? And why sometimes does God seem to forsake us, and why is it that sometimes our prayers don’t go any higher than the ceiling, and we can feel it? The drivers came up with a couple of good answers: 1. our sins can separate us from God, 2. sometimes Satan can hinder our prayers, as he did one time when Daniel prayed and it took three weeks to get an answer, and, 3. sometimes God wants us to be patient and doesn’t answer right away.

It became immediately evident that I was dealing with two men with a depth of maturity.

I added that Jesus, as our high priest, was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. This way He can understand the feeling of our infirmities, He understands what it is like to be a human being, including what it is like to be cut off from God. When the sins of mankind were placed on Him, he was at that point cut off from God, so he even understands the suffering that sins bring even though He Himself never sinned.

We discussed also the role of the priest in both the Old Testament and New, and that the Scriptures say that we are a royal priesthood. That said, does not our “priesthood” imply that we should be mediators before God for others, even for non-believers?

And we talked about becoming

more like Jesus Christ and coming to understand His mind and His thought processes, using how He acted toward and dealt with Judas as an example of His mercy and patience.

March 18, 2001

We run into some wonderful folks at the truck stop. This was the third week in a row that we had men dedicated to coming to know God better and walking the walk sincerely.

Before the study there was a driver napping in the lounge. We invited him to stay, but he politely declined. He said he used to be a Christian, but was discouraged about scandals involving certain religious leaders in the evangelical world. It was the typical “there can’t be a God because Christians are so bad” mentality, but he just couldn’t seem to see it that way. Still, it was a reminder that people do watch us, and like David in the matter of Bathsheba, we can bring shame not only on ourselves, but also on the Name that we represent.

[People still ask me, “Why won’t you work with this Christian leader? Maybe he has not publicly acknowledged and repented of his well-known sins, but look at all the good he is doing!” They need to realize that “all the good” is counterbalanced by “all the bad” that occurs when people quietly give up on God and the Bible because they see well-accepted “Christian leaders” who do not practice what they preach. — NSE]

A number of topics were of interest today, but most notable were matters of end-time things. Difficulties in understanding the book of Revelation were on the table. I hold to the classic COG concept that Matthew 24 is a template through which we can more clearly understand Revelation, so we studied that chapter. Of concern was

how to keep from being deceived by the false prophet and beast, so we addressed that in the light of Jesus' words. It is evident that many will be deceived, but the elect will understand.

We looked at Deuteronomy 13 where we see that false prophets do not have a message consistent with Scripture, that their message is to follow other gods and not to keep God's laws. Jesus says that the truth will set us free. We must understand what the Scriptures say so that we can spot truth from error. In the final analysis, we must allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in such matters.

Also, we should not obsess over end time things, for the instructions of Matthew 24 and 25 are to keep at our jobs, make sure there is oil in our lamps, multiply our talents, and help those in need.

One of the men mentioned the commercialization of Christmas and how he wonders if there is a connection between the words "Santa" and "Satan". I mentioned that I don't keep Christmas because Christ wasn't born then. One of the men started to nod his head vigorously. "That's right. He was born in the fall of the year."

Finally, we talked about how to study the Bible, which was important to one of the men who seems to be rather new to his faith. One of the men advised him to commit to "talking to God", as he put it, for 15 minutes a day, and promised that this would grow to a couple of hours a day as he comes to know God better. God will then open up his mind to understand the scriptures more fully.

Because he has some trouble understanding the King James Version, I suggested using a modern translation along side the KJV and use both at the same time. I was pleased to be able to give him a modern translation and a KJV.

Finally, I mentioned how the New Testament cannot be fully understood without the Old. I used the scripture "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us" (1Cor 5:7) as an example, pointing out that we cannot understand the fullness of that statement without understanding the Passover of the Old Testament. This was an opportunity to explain the Passover celebration in the context of Christianity, and how the Jewish Passover parallels the events

leading up to the crucifixion and the significance behind that sacrifice.

One final note. Many of us early in our Christian walk had experiences where we were trying to find a scripture, and lo and behold, the Bible would happen to fall open to that scripture as soon as we cracked the Book open. Personally, I had it happen many times during my first forays into the Scriptures, but haven't had it happen to me in years. One of the men today (the one I perceive as being the newest) commented that this was happening to him today during our study, and it happened more than once. Encouraging indeed.

[A parent has to do so much for a child when he is young. When a child is struggling with something that he might barely be able to complete in a long time, his face will suddenly light up when he and his dad steps in and does it for him in an instant. As the Child grows, dad may stop stepping in, and let the child struggle through the process. It may not be nearly as exciting to the child, but he is going about the important process of maturing and growing.]

Similarly, God tends to do much more for us when we are "young believers". It is exciting, and people may be saddened when the exciting intervention from God decreases. But our purpose is to "grow in grace and knowledge", not to grow in exciting intervention from God. —NSE]

March 25, 2001

Ten—count them—ten truck drivers today! This was a new record.

A crowd that size can be a little more cumbersome. There is something to be said for the intimacy of a smaller group, but we do what we must do.

First, I covered the concept of freedom as it relates to "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us". The passover lamb of Exodus 12 symbolized Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, and we discussed some of the parallels between them.

One of the drivers mentioned that he was at a funeral once of a man who was killed driving while intoxicated and took others with him. He was a notorious member of the community, and at the funeral service the preacher made the comment that he could think

of nothing good to say about the man, implying the man's destination as eternal damnation in the nether regions.

So I took this as an opportunity to talk about the mercy of God, the resurrections, the unpardonable sin, and the prodigal son (when he was "a long way off" the father ran to meet him). We saw how "it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment" than for the people in Jesus' day and discussed how that could be. Clearly, there is a degree of tolerance for some whom we might consider to be terribly wicked that would not be afforded to certain religious types, and the context indicates that the tolerance is because they were blinded in this life. Revelation 20, of course, clarifies how the thing plays out.

Out of the group of 10 drivers, none objected to this teaching and some seemed to appreciate it. God's mercy is certainly without limits, but of course, as the last verses of Revelation 20 indicate, some will still reject God and be thrown into the lake of fire. So seeds were planted and hope was given.

April 1, 2001

An old friend from previous studies showed up today, someone it was good to see again. We also had a truck driver and his wife.

Normally, I like to let the guests talk about whatever they are interested in, but they had no particular subjects in mind, so I went to a prepared study on the unpardonable sin, which is a rather frequent question.

About an hour into the study another driver joined us who had forgotten to "spring forward". He recently read the book "The Prayer of Jabez", which is based on 1 Chronicles 4:9-10. Jabez's prayer is sandwiched in the middle of a long line of genealogies. The prayer is a simple, short prayer that can be taken as an example of an effective prayer. Here was a man who was praying for things that were all God's will. We could say that perhaps a bit much is made of this short passage in 1 Chronicles, but on the other hand, God includes it in his word for some reason. In any case, this little book on the prayer of Jabez is beginning to get some attention.

Although today's study was not terribly exciting, it served the purpose of

providing a place for people to gather to study God's word together.

April 22, 2001

We had a family of three, a husband and wife team, and Matt, who has been a regular attendee and has become a friend.

As is common, we started with one topic and ended up in an entirely different direction. I chose the story in the Gospels about the paralytic whose friends removed the roof tiles and lowered him into Jesus' presence for healing. This was done as a conversation starter, and after we worked our way through the story, the conversation turned to other things.

It turns out that the father in the family of three was once a pastor, but he drives now so he can earn a living. It was evident that both he and his wife have studied their Bibles thoroughly, and he gave a lecture on tithing (which another trucker brought up) and the law. His presentation would have been very well received in many of our own congregations. He was well familiar with the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28, and that the role of the law is not to save, but to fulfill God's expectations of us. In short, the law is good for us.

I discussed the passage in Ephesians 2 that we are saved by grace, but pointed out that too often people stop quoting at verse 9. Verse 10 is a critical verse that says we are created for good works. In other words, God has expectations of us.

We also touched on Romans 5 and 6, which discusses issues related to walking in newness of life.

After the Bible study, as I was packing up my things, a ragged-looking character came in and sat down. "Are you the reverend?" he wanted to know. His dad was a preacher, he said, and he beat his kids and his wife all the time. I asked him why he thought his dad did that. I could tell by the way he was saying things that he did not mean to be confrontational, but had something on his mind that he wanted to unload. This observation was correct.

He lost his wife nine months ago, and although he did not have a drinking problem before this, he has spent the last nine months wandering around the country and drunk, trying to run

away and drown his hurt. He realizes this has not helped the situation. We spent an hour talking, and he is searching for answers in a spiritual context as he should, but is just now coming to terms with his grief. I gave him some literature on grieving and a Bible, but he complained that he couldn't read the small print because he lost his glasses after one of his drunken bouts.

Then I remembered that a lady in our congregation gave me a large print Bible to give away at the truck stop, so I pulled it out, asked him if the print was readable, and it worked for him. I told him it was his, and asked him to read it every day, starting with the gospels. It is the message of Jesus Christ that he needs now. He at first couldn't believe that I was just going to give him the Bible, but when he realized the gift was for real, tears began to come down his cheeks. This was the third time in our discussion that this rough-hewn man from Wyoming burst into tears, the first two being when he was talking about his wife's death. I have never seen anyone who was so touched and moved to receive a Bible.

He emphasized he did not want any money, that he had enough money. He said he was now ready to go back to the trucking company that he drove for before his wife's death and get back to work. I offered to pray with him there, but he was uncomfortable with a public prayer of that type, so I promised to pray for him privately at home and encouraged him to do the same.

April 29, 2001

We had seven truck drivers today, some of whom were very well versed in the Bible. First I reviewed a few scriptures that indicate that the church in its early years relied heavily on the Old Testament—that these in fact were the Holy Scriptures referred to in the New Testament. Then I turned to Acts 2 and we began a discussion on Pentecost, what the word "Pentecost" means, and that this was a direct reference to Leviticus 23 and the Feast of Weeks. I then tied in Passover with a New Testament application and made the point that these Feasts of the Lord point to Jesus Christ. They seemed genuinely interested in this.

We then got into myriad other sub-

jects including law and grace, the fact that God has expectations of us, and even though works won't save us, there are things that we need to be doing if we claim to be followers of Jesus Christ.

Two of the drivers were a husband and wife team, and she is hungry for the Bible. She took notes throughout the study, and it was rewarding to see the banter back and forth as others gave her advice on Bible translations and study helps.

I was reminded today of principles of evangelism and discipling which are useful to review from time to time. We have the choice of teaching the truths we understand that few others do in either a positive or a confrontational way. For example, the Holy Days can be presented as a wonderful way to come to know God and his plan more fully, or we can pull out dozens of proof texts and beat people over the head with how their days are wrong and ours are right. The word of God is called a sword, but too many use it as a club and beat people over the head with it. Frankly, for people who love God's word and are sincerely seeking Him, the positive approach is exponentially more effective.

Besides, I'm tired of theological food fights.

Tape offering: The Church of God Kansas City, has two messages that we would like to share. Rick Frazee shows us what Jesus really meant when he said, "**The truth will set you free**". On side two, Lenny Cacchio discusses "**Lesson from Judas**".

The Church of God Midwest, Heartland Church of God, and Church of God Kansas City met for a special fellowship Sabbath on March 10. We have on tape the messages from that day's services. In Steve Miller's message, "**God's Nature Revealed through the 23rd Psalm**", learn how the names and nature of God are magnified through this most famous of Psalms. Chuck Beyer's message, "**What Are Your Values?**" discusses the values of society versus Biblical values.

If you would like a copy of any of these messages, please send your request to me.

— Lenny Cacchio, L_cacchio@yahoo.com
705 NE Bryant Drive,
Lee's Summit, MO 64086



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.

Feast Site Questions

LETTER: April 5, 2001
Dear Norman,
[Paragraphs about another issue removed.]

Jim and I are considering the possibility of traveling to the Feast site in Chadron, Nebraska. We have a couple of questions about it, since we have never been to one of your Feast sites. What is your format for Bible studies? Do you follow a typical Worldwide format, with shorter sermons and time for discussion; a Messianic Jewish format where at least 1/4 of the time is spent on saying Hebrew blessings (mostly at the beginning) during each service; or something in between? The reason we ask about this is because we heard that some Messianic Jews we know from here are thinking about maybe going to Chadron, and they are very big on the Hebrew blessings, which we kind of consider to be a waste of time (we prefer actual bible study, not just blessings, music, and a little time spent discussing the Torah portion from commentaries).

The other question we have right now is about other Jewish traditions connected with the Feast. We have nothing against having a sukkah, and even feel that it is a good reminder at the Feast (as long as it is not decorated with fruit and paper chains, etc., like a Christmas tree). We are not anti-Jewish or anti-Messianic Jewish. We just do not accept their traditions unless we can prove from the Bible that they are correct, or unless we can prove that they are not of pagan origin, like so many of them are. That brings us to the lulav. We know that some of the Feast sites have a tradition of marching around waving the lulav, etc., which we feel is of pagan origin (and we believe we can prove it). As Jim told me, we don't have to participate in anything like that if it occurs, and that is true. I guess I just like to know ahead of time what to plan for, if we definitely decide to go to Chadron.

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer our questions, and I hope you and your family have a very blessed Passover week.

Sincerely,

— Jim & Mindy Diller, Colorado

RESPONSE: The only plans that I had for Hebrew blessings were those said at the optional Kiddush—partaking of symbolic bread and wine—which are less than a minute long. This has never been part of the main service at the Feast as most brethren do not choose to participate in it. I feel that everything in a service should be done for edification (1Cor 14:5,26). Blessings in a language that most of the brethren do not understand does not edify them.

On the other hand, for the people who do understand them, I would certainly try to make a room and a time available for them to do them. There is certainly nothing wrong with singing or reciting blessings in Hebrew—it is like singing memorized songs in English. The people should be able to do what edifies them at the Feast, but they should not be there with a mission to convert others to their form of worship.

I am in agreement with you on your approach to Jewish tradition. I think some are from God, some are clearly pagan, and some I really do not know about. I have never made lulavs (or is it lulavim?) a part of the Feast and if someone else has brought them to our Feast sites, I have no specific memory of it. I know the scriptures that the lulav tradition are based upon, but I have not checked into the history of this or the possible pagan connections. It might make an interesting segment of a Bible study at the Feast. I would not make any effort to discourage people who wanted to wave lulavs unless I was thoroughly convinced that it was a pagan practice.

— NSE

Sabbath in New Testament

LETTER: Mar 23, 2001

Recently I have noticed a number of statements in *SN* regarding fellowship with non-Sabbatarians and the lack of Sabbath pounding in the apostolic writings (the NT). First, let me say that I am not profoundly dis-

agreeing with the down-playing of the Sabbath as a measure for fellowship. The Adventist/Armstrongist use of Ex 31/Ezek 20 in this regard holds some problematic aspects. However, some of the points made in *SN* in this regard fail to take into account the cultural situation into which the NT was written. Studies into the writings of Josephus, Philo, and (in our times) Bacchiocchi are especially useful in this regard.

An examination of history shows that seventh-day Sabbath observance was extremely widespread in the Roman world at the time. This included not only Jews and Gentile God-fearers (cf Acts 13) (as well as, perhaps, some informed members of the northern Israelite tribes), but also full-blown pagans. Between the spread of Jewish/OT culture and pagan traditions about Saturday being “unlucky”, knowledge and practice of the Sabbath institution to one degree or another was essentially a given. People all through the Empire knew of it, much as most in Western culture today know about Christmas or Easter regardless of their religious persuasion. Hence, the apostles, etc., did not need to specifically “teach” it, anymore than someone today would need to “teach” Christmas.

In the recent *SN*, it was said that passages like 1 Timothy 1 do not reference Sabbath breaking, while indeed referencing the other nine. In actual fact, though, it is referenced; terms like “profane” and “unholy,” objectively viewed, would include very directly violation of the Sabbath (cf Lev. 19:1ff; Ezek 20). And given the almost certain intent, in 1 Tim 1 at least, to directly allude to the Decalogue, such a view of those and similar terms seems the likely intent.

This is not to say that the Sabbath is indeed THE ultimate “test commandment”. If someone truly does not recognize the requirement of seventh day Sabbath observance, then even as all of us have probably at one time been sincerely wrong or lacking in our obedience to God (e.g., Pentecost), non-Sabbatarians might also be sincerely wrong but not automatically to be declared “profane” or “unholy” in their standing before God and Christ. 1 John 3 discusses having

confidence before God because "our heart does not condemn us." If an individual is upholding what he/she knows as God's will, then in his/her heart he/she is "keeping the commandments of God". Under the grace of Christ, ignorance can be an excuse. Even now, no doubt each of us has some error in their walk before God to which they are oblivious. And given the widespread corruption of Christianity today, such an error regarding the Sabbath would be especially understandable.

Another cultural factor to be considered is the effect of this widespread observance or knowledge of the seventh day Sabbath in civil society, compounded by Saturday's "unlucky" image in many people's eyes. All of this would combine to make Sabbath observance far easier than one might think for slaves and soldiers, much like Sunday observance in past times in our own culture. A devout pagan might not even try to work his Christian slave on the Sabbath out of reverence to Saturn. And as for soldiers, recall that the military apparatus of the time included far less bureaucracy than ours today (just look at the size of the Pentagon!). There would have been far less routine paperwork or house-keeping. The weapons of the time involved far less maintenance than our modern arms—no disassembly and cleaning of rifles or deep mechanical maintenance of vehicles or weapons systems. And what commander would really demand that sort of preparation on an "unlucky" day? And as for such 24/7 work of guard duty or actual combat, the OT does not seem to hold such unavoidable activities as violative of the Sabbath (cf. Neh 13 and—though arguable—Josh 6)

I hope this input will be helpful.

— Lee T. Walker, MO

RESPONSE: Thank you very much for your writing on this subject. You have helped me better understand why there is so little about the Sabbath in the New Testament—Saturday work was probably not an issue. However, the Romans obviously did not keep the Sabbath the same way the Pharisees did with all of their Sabbath restrictions. However, since Christ preached against some of those restrictions, it is likely that the Christians had a more relaxed Sabbath observance. Is it possible that the Romans observed Saturday in a manner similar to the Christians? If so, then how is the Sabbath a "sign of God's people" if the Romans were keeping it as well as the Christians?

God obviously knew what was being written in the New Testament and could have inspired somebody to write clearly about the Sabbath in the lists of commandments in the New Testament. Since He does not impute sin to people who are truly blind (John 9:41), he may have caused the New Testament writers not to write much about the Sabbath so that it would not be such a difficulty during the hundreds of years when church-men taught that it has been changed to Sunday. Whatever the case may be, we know when the Sabbath is today, we are not blinded, and have no excuse not to do it.

— NSE

Ark of the Covenant

LETTER:

June 28, 2000

Dear Norm,

According to J. H. Allen, the author of *Judah's Sceptre & Joseph's Birthright*, page 229, When Jeremiah went to Ireland with the Princess, he also took a harp, the Lia Fail Stone of Destiny and the Ark.

It must be somewhere in the "Isles".

— EK, Pennsylvania

RESPONSE: Even if J.H. Allen's sources are right, a lot has happened since that time. The stone moved several times—it was even stolen once—so where might the ark be? I have heard many "I know where the ark is" stories, some very believable, others not. At the Sabbath service I attend, one man showed a portion of a video of a rabbi involved with reconstructing all of the instruments of the Temple so that they would be ready for service. He said that they would not be building an ark because they knew where the original one was.

Part of the reason that there may be so many ark stories is that it appears two were made to begin with. Bezaleel made an ark (Ex 37:1-9); and Moses was commanded to make another one into which he put the 10 commandments (Deut 10:1-5). It seems that this latter ark survives into the era of the kings (2Ch 5:10) and the altar Bezaleel made survived also (2Chr 1:5). I cannot be certain what happened to Bezaleel's ark.

If the Jews again begin to offer sacrifices, it will certainly have a prophetic meaning. And there will certainly be many opinions about what that prophet-

ic meaning is. But it is even more wonderful to know that we can have meaning and serve God in our lives now, whether or not the ark is ever found or Christ returns in our life-time.

— NSE

What are Aboth and Niddah?

LETTER:

April 23, 2001

In the Nov/Dec 2000 issue of *Servants' News* (page 10), reference was made to "Aboth 1:5" and "Niddah 4.1". What are "Aboth" and "Niddah"? Thanks for any information you can provide!

— J.R., West Virginia

RESPONSE:

Aboth (Hebrew for "Fathers") and *Niddah* (Hebrew for "Menstruant") are the names of two of the names of tractates in the Mishnah, probably the single most important book of Jewish teaching, written around 200 A.D. It is about the size of the Bible. The better-known Jewish Talmud contains the Mishnah and additional commentary several times the size of the Mishnah. The Talmud was written over the next couple centuries.

I believe that these books contain a mixture of truth and error, like the religious writings of so many other serious groups (including Sabbatarians). The Jews will say that much of these writings are from oral tradition given to Moses. I would think that some might actually be, but many obviously are from a much later time. (For example, the Mishnah speaks of Samaritans and many other peoples that did not exist at the time of Moses.)

The Mishnah was quoted by the author of that article, Linda White, to establish the Jewish Custom during the first century. I think it is probably accurate in these matters—as long as there would not be some compelling reason to change it. I have found some of the Talmud references to Christians and Christianity to be inaccurate.

English translations of the Mishnah and Talmud are available on CD-Rom from www.davka.com. Bible and Jewish bookstores will have them as hard-bound books. You will need close to \$100 if you plan any kind of purchase—they cost more because they are not widely published like the Bible. Rabbis read the works in Hebrew, and most English-speaking Jews do not read them at all,

but read other works that summarize their contents.

— NSE

Finding Old Books

LETTER: April 9, 2001

Mr Edwards, just wondering if you might help me. I have a book titled *A Bible Reading for the Home Fireside, and the Bible Made Easy*, seventh edition by A.N. Dugger. But it does not have a printed date. Could you have any way of knowing when it was written? Thanks for being so helpful as we have written you before & appreciate your kindness.

— M & G Burgess, West Virginia

RESPONSE: The used book section of www.amazon.com had a 5th edition published in 1919. Another site, www.bn.com had two books listed, but they were gone when I checked. The seventh edition must be a few years later than the fifth edition. The book is also posted here:

<http://giveshare.org/churchhistory/instructor/INSTRUCT0.html#TOC> but no date is given.

Another source of used books is www.half.com. The Internet has really made it easy to find, buy or sell used books. For people without home access, libraries can usually do the job.

— NSE

The Hope of Israel

LETTER: April 30, 2000

Dear Norm,

I just wanted to alert your readers to be careful about the newsletter from the United Hebrew Congregations in Picayune, MS called The Hope of Israel. It teaches about a coming Messiah, but rejects Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

Notice on page 8 of the Dec 1999 issue, "Anytime we refer to The Holy Scriptures we are referring to what is commonly called the Old Testament. However, we consider it to be the only Testament or Covenant."

Also, page 9, #7 under policy statement, "United Hebrew Congregations does not believe that Scripture requires the shedding of blood for salvation, but that salvation is based on repentance, and a humble and contrite spirit of the individual before the Ancient of Days." Would Servants' News please comment on this?

— [Name Withheld]

RESPONSE: Thank you for letting us know about this group's teaching. I believe that this group has made some effort to try to "convert" CoG brethren away from Jesus and the New Testament, though I am not aware that they are having any great success at it. Paul said, "For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you" (1Cor 11:19). To the extent that they challenge mature believers and help them to study and know why they believe what they believe, they may be helpful. But I certainly would not help them do their work. When it comes to confusing a new believer, the Bible is a little more specific: "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me [Christ] to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt 18:6).

How will our Father deal with people who do not believe in the New Testament and do not believe that they need a Savior for sin? There are Old Testament verses, which if read by themselves, talk about forgiveness of sin and do not mention a Savior, so they have some basis for their thinking. In the "parable of the minas" (or "pounds"), a man had some problems serving Christ and did nothing with what Christ gave him. Christ did not judge the man out of scripture that he did not believe, but out of what he did believe (Luke 19:20-23). The unfaithful servant did not even do what he knew to be right. If these people believe it is possible to live a righteous and love-filled life without Jesus, then let them see how well they can do it.

Christ, in the judgement, will tell the difference between a sincere error, and someone who deliberately opposed Him.

— NSE

Nature of Christ and Antichrist

LETTER: December 15, 2000

Dear Norm,

There is a certain ministry (that affects many ex-COG members) preaching that Christ was 100% flesh. Some teach that Christ was 100% human and 100% God. How can Christ be all flesh when the Bible says that God was His Father? What is the Bible definition of antichrist?

— Anonymous

RESPONSE: When people ask me questions about the nature of God, I like to think about children arguing about where their dad works: "He works for Mr Baldwin, Dad and I went to his house one time." "No, he works for Davis Electric—I saw the sign on the door when Mom picked him up from work." "No," said another child, "he works for Davis & Heston Companies, I have his business card right here!" They are all right, but none really understands the whole picture. Adults probably understand the who picture: Mr Baldwin is his supervisor, Davis & Heston Companies is a larger group of companies. "Dad" does work for all of them, but he does not work 33% of his time for each of the three—nor are all three the same thing. They are different aspects of the same thing. Mr Baldwin may give him assignments; he works in the Davis Electric building; but Davis & Heston Companies pays him. A young child may have a very difficult time with this.

Now when we, as mere people, try to completely understand and explain the nature of God and Christ, we too may have a lack of understanding. We have some clear statements from the Bible: "I [Christ] and My Father are one" (John 10:30). "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). "...Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (Matt 1:16). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The first two scriptures indicate that Christ is God and therefore a spirit, the last two indicate he was born of flesh and is therefore flesh.

Trying to assign a "percentage of God" and a "percentage of man" to Christ is pointless—there were aspects of him that were completely like a man and other aspects that were completely like God. He was tempted like a person, but without sin like God (Heb 4:15). We must realize that we cannot specifically define what a "person" (here) is: "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1Cor 2:11). It does not make sense to try to define a believer as a certain percent "flesh", a certain percent "spirit of man" and a certain percent "spirit of God". In all my studies on eternal judg-

ment, I could not find any place where the Bible says that we will be asked to explain the nature of God in our judgement. But we will be asked a lot about how we obeyed God and how we treated our neighbors.

What does the Bible say about “antichrist”?

The answer is fairly easy. There are only four verses that contain the word, and they are all in two letters of John. Many prophetic teachers have written many books on “The Antichrist” and have frequently said he is a single, end-time individual, probably the same as the “false christs” (Matt 24:5, 24), the “man of sin” (2Thes 2:3) and the “beast” or “false prophet” in Revelation. Some probably will tie in the prophecies of Daniel. But what do the four references to “antichrist” say?

“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now *many antichrists* have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us” (1Jn 2:18-19). This verse clearly states there were many antichrists at that time—which simply means many people against Christ. At one time, they must have appeared to be in the church, because they “went out from among us”.

The same thought continues for three more verses and we get more information: “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. **Whoever** denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also” (1Jn 2:22-23). This seems to be a good definition right here: an antichrist is “whoever” (can be more than one) denies the Father and the Son. It also states that the antichrist is a liar—meaning that he knows the truth—at least intellectually—he is not simply deceived.

Bible translations vary considerably on their use of an article in these verses. Some will say “**the** antichrist”, others “**an** antichrist” and some just “antichrist”. If we look in the original Greek, the definite article (similar to “the”) is used in all but 1Jn 2:18. Yet many translators leave it out. Why? Because the Greek article does not real-

ly mean “the one and only” like the English “the” does when used with a proper name. If I say, “I talked to Bill Gates about my computer problems”, and you say, “Do you mean **the** Bill Gates?”, you are asking the specific famous “Bill Gates”, and the word “the” indicates that. It is clear to everyone that there would be only one “Bill Gates” that would qualify for a “yes” answer. But suppose I were to ask, “Did you hang up on the salesman?” I am not talking about a one and only salesman, but just the one you were dealing with right now. If I ask, “Did you ship the package?” It does not mean that is the only package I will ever want shipped, but I am just referring to a specific package. Similarly, “the antichrist” does not mean “the one and only, but **describes** the person who is opposing Christ—whether there are one or a thousand of them.

“And **every spirit** that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world” (1Jn 4:3). Again we see more than one, “every spirit”, and that they were already there in the time of John.

“For **many deceivers** have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2Jn 1:7). Again, this reference starts out plural—there is more than one antichrist. It adds the detail that those who do not confess Jesus Christ as “coming in the flesh” are an antichrist. This relates back to the original question.

We simply have to accept this statement as we find it. If someone claims that Christ was **not** flesh—that He was a spirit without a body or something like that, then they would be an antichrist. But if one claims that Jesus was “100% flesh”, and another says he was “100% God and 100% flesh”, and another says he was 50% each, I will not be in a hurry to label any “antichrists”. I believe that many congregations have been split up and even wars have been fought over minor points of the nature of God and it has accomplished almost nothing. People write down hundreds or thousands of scriptures and think they have it all worked out and spiritually they say “I

am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev 3:17).

—NSE

Women Leaders

LETTER:

Feb 1, 2001

Both the current *Journal* and the *Servants' News* both have articles about women participating more in services. I think there is a trend in this direction. New ideas in what Paul really meant and new studies in the linguistics have emerged. Even our little fellowship group who seemed to me so far off the mainstream seems up for the idea.

What will this mean for CoGs? I like women. I enjoy talking to them and listening to them. But I'm somewhat apprehensive that the CoGs will become like the religions around about where women have taken the place of men and... there are no more men. And without the men they sort of lose the family.

In the Jewish reformed and Conservative synagogues, the women have taken over the Bema or equivalent pulpit and they are every bit good as men. Women rabbis give sermons, they read Hebrew, but they do so over a room that is largely empty of men most of the time.

I visit a Seventh Day Adventist group here in Reston. They have small groups which meet, but they are largely devoid of men. One hears of large Protestant churches where men wait in the cars while the women go in.

I heard a Messianic leader speak once and he said that **if women wanted men to develop into leaders, they would not be leaders themselves**. He had the concept that men leaders and women leaders just don't grow at the same time. Can we apply what he said to CoGs? Will the CoG of the future be mostly women and fewer and fewer men? We'll see

We had a situation at the feast this year that I only heard about. We had a feast leader who was all for what many us, is a new role for women. I don't know what exactly she did (read or give a study), but the feast leader, who was an enthusiastic supporter of this new role, just sort of thrust her onto the meeting. Well, most of the people had other ideas and just left the room. Wouldn't it have been better if he asked the audience permission first? That way they would have had an

Continued on page 27

"Response Page Results" from page 1

For a couple of years I have been praying, studying and to some degree struggling with the future of the "Church of God" groups as well as the future of *Servants' News* and *Shelter in the Word*. It has been very clear to me that the hierarchical church model does not work—especially when there are numerous similar hierarchies all insisting that they are "the one God is using". The free flow of Internet information also makes hierarchies much more difficult to run.

But when I considered the many independent Sabbatarian congregations, I did not see a great success record either. Some groups continuously argued doctrine or frequently broke up. Few seemed successful in any kind of evangelism among new people. Even my own efforts at evangelism seemed to be rather unsuccessful. There are only about 40 *Shelter in the Word* subscribers who do not have a "Church of God" background. Only four people regularly attend our local congregation as a result of our yellow-pages line in Sabbath-Observing Churches section.

But during the past year, I have seen a number of local independent congregations gain stability and begin to work effectively. I have seen more interaction between former-WCG members, other Sabbatarians, and non-denominational Sunday keepers. I have seen them learn from each other and have seen local evangelism work.

So why hasn't our local evangelism born much fruit? I think I have found the reason—read on.

One day, somebody asked me for a booklet on the Holy Days. I have not written one and could not think of one that I could completely recommend. Other people asked about other literature that was biblically sound but that would be acceptable to people who did not want to get involved with a denomination or church organization. I did not have an answer for them.

During this same time, I was looking at the survey responses and seeing that "biblical articles" were always the highest priority of the readers. In the final survey results accompanying this

article, 866 people said biblical articles were "very important" to them. A little bit of extra study (not apparent from the results below) showed that most of the people who did not list biblical articles as "very important" were responded negatively to most of the other questions—they were interested mostly in the news and letters columns. If there was any clear counsel from the brethren who subscribe, it was to continuing publishing biblical articles.

The two items next most often regarded as "very important" were "doctrinal articles on the CoG controversies" (Passover, Pentecost, etc.) with 731, and then "letters" (713) which often deal with doctrinal subjects. In "fourth place", was writing new basic literature with 651 saying it was "very important".

The issue became clear. If it is my spiritual gift to write biblical articles and to find and publish the articles of others, then that is what I should be doing. I can help to fulfill the great need for biblical non-denominational literature. Local evangelism, and many other spiritual gifts are important, but Christ distributes gifts throughout the body and we cannot all do everything—or even half of everything.

Shelter in the Word was intended to be an evangelism tool, but only 449 subscribers said that producing it was "very important"—the third lowest of all questions. Its early issues contained many basic articles for individuals just becoming acquainted with the Bible. There is a need for a magazine like that, but there are probably many others more gifted than myself in creating it. I will keep publishing *Shelter in the Word* because I believe it is necessary to learn how to teach people with no knowledge of the "Church of God" groups—*Shelter in the Word* does not mention them. But **I am changing the focus of *Shelter in the Word* to serve the serious non-denominational Bible student** who knows his way around the Bible, is not afraid of a Strong's concordance number, etc.

It was clear that "church group news" and "analysis of other groups" was important, but less important than Bible articles. For now, I will continue these sections, but I will probably spend less time searching for news, and most-

ly print those things that are sent to me or major issues that are very important. I will no longer try to cover every split of every group. They are no longer as traumatic as they used to be: most former-WCG members have been through one or more church splits by now, and have dozens of friends who have been through many different splits. Everyone is much calmer about them. *The Journal, News of the Churches of God*, is a much more thorough source of CoG news (ask us for a free copy).

Christian activist articles received a slightly less enthusiastic response. I firmly believe that there are many positive things that believers could be doing now, but doing them is not everyone's gift. I certainly have no great experience with them, and so will bring them up only when I have a definite reason for so doing.

The item upon which subscribers were most divided was point "e"—analyzing the writings of Herbert Armstrong. (For mathematicians, its response had the highest standard deviation.) Approximately equal numbers of subscribers were in favor of it as were opposed to it, with about a fourth of the people in the middle. Many hand-written comments appeared on the response pages, some encouraging us to keep the Herbert Armstrong analysis—that their life was greatly helped because of it.

Others said it was a complete waste of time or the one thing that made them want to discontinue their subscription. While we may still have some letters or short news items on this subject, we will try to publish any major items as separate literature, only for those who want it.

Question "m", about "assisting others", was poorly worded and some wrote that they did not understand it. Even though it was rated the lowest of all the questions, I do think that I can give up helping people who are starting a new independent group and are asking for help. I talk to someone who is starting a new group about once per month.

The survey said nothing about *The Holy Scriptures Version* of the Bible and Commentary (see lead article, page 1), but I knew little about it when the survey was first published. I believe *The Holy Scriptures Version*

and its associated Commentary will fulfill the need for Bible teaching, both for the advanced person and the new person.

While there was nothing on this survey about improving our Internet sites, my own experience has clearly shown me that it is very important. The Internet is the ideal place to give away free literature, and Internet search engines can often give as good access to a small site as they do to a large site. Several people have volunteered to help me with the Internet sites, and I have most of an overall plan written. I will be helping to implement it as I

have time.

Several very good sources of literature (booklets and tracts) have found us and would like us to print them or put them on the Internet. I simply have not had time to read through all the literature and prepare it for printing. (I do not like to send out literature that I have not read!) Hopefully, there will be time to complete this.

I intend to continue to work in this ministry full-time for many years. However, for the past few months we have had to use our diminishing "savings" to continue supporting the ministry and our family. Many, including

my own family, have suggested that I look for a good computer job (my previous field of work) and continue the ministry as time is available. However, it is obvious to me that working part time in this ministry would barely be enough time to respond to the mail—it would be very difficult to write anything new.

I would appreciate any constructive suggestions that anyone may have about any of the things mentioned in this article.

May the Eternal strengthen all of us and help all of us to better serve Him. 📖

— Norman Edwards

**"Feast of Tabernacles Sites
2001" from page 13**

This is a fare that Brenda Hogg has contracted with American Airlines, so Brenda must make the reservation for you. Brenda can also get discounted air from other U.S. cities with rates depending on the departure city.

These rates also include a three-night **pre-paid** hotel/condo stay. The three-night hotel/condo stay can be *any* hotel/condo either in Honolulu or Lihue including your festival rooming. You are allowed one free stopover in Honolulu for this fare. Please call Brenda Hogg at 972-488-1997 or at Brenda@brenda.org for more information.

International

Collingwood, Ontario, Canada

The Canadian Church of God is hosting this site. Call 416-492-8651 or 905-831-6308 for details.

Tenby, England

This year's Festival of Tabernacles sponsored by the Churches of God, UK will be held in Tenby, Pembrokeshire in south Wales, at the Leisure Centre (Marsh Road/Clicketts Lane).

An accommodation brochure may be obtained from: Tourist Information

Centre, The Croft, Tenby, Pembrokeshire, Wales. Tel: 01834-842404.

Any further queries about travel/accommodation may be sent to Gerald Kirby: Tel: 01490-460414. Other queries to: James McBride 01526-861217, e-mail: coguk@aol.com.

Jerusalem, Israel

Christian Renewal Ministries International presents Sukkot 2001, a non-denominational feast site dedicated to bringing all people together in worshipping God. Speaking emphasizes the Hebrew Roots of Christianity.

Contact CMRI, P.O. Box 111 Auburn, WA 98071; 253-839-6489. 📖

**"Letters & Responses"
from page 25**

opportunity to "act with one accord". If there is objection to it and people are going to just leave, what good does it do to just force it?

— Rod Koozmin, VA

RESPONSE: I understand that there are books that claim that there are poor translations and disagreements among manuscripts in some of the verses where Paul "puts restrictions on women". I have not studied them yet, so I don't have a firm opinion one way or the other.

I think it is important to realize that the major emphasis of the New Testament is on people doing what God, by His Spirit, has given them the ability to do. There is not much (though some) emphasis on whether the person is black or white, male or female, bond or free,

young or old, etc.

The people who should teach in a service are the people who have a gift to teach. If all the people that teach in a service are middle-aged white men, there is no need to try to have some people of another race teach, some younger men teach, some older men teach or some women teach. If God gifts some of these people to teach, they should not be restrained. But to think that a congregation must be gender or ethnic balanced, I think is a mistake.

The scriptures obviously show a great majority of male teachers, and the people who seem to want to teach in Church of God fellowships are mostly men. However, the Bible shows that when someone fails to do what God asks of them, He finds someone else. If God finds women to do jobs initially given to men, who will say, "No"?

If a man believes that it is biblically wrong for him to listen to a woman teach the Bible (whether she is teaching truth or error), then he should not do it. However, I have been amazed to find men listening for hours to a man teach whom they believe is largely in error, but will walk out of the room where a woman is teaching just on the possibility that there might be some error.

While this subject has been debated a lot, I have found that it has not been a practical problem in many groups. The main place it is a problem is where either somebody wants to talk about it and will not get off the subject, or where somebody wants to do as you described in your letter—surprise their audience, and it does not go too well.

May God give us wisdom and understanding of His word in these things.

— NSE 📖

Partial Literature List

All items are free upon request. All back issues of *Servants' News* are available as well as a complete **Literature List** and a **Literature Subject Index**.

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 ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip.

Items New This Issue:

Mature Literature

Starting a Local Congregation, 40 pages by Norman Edwards. This paper has been five years in the making. Its original title was *Starting a Sabbath Service*, but it covers aspects of a congregation that go outside the service: how and why to organize a congregation, utilizing spiritual gifts, teaching, avoiding arguments, music and praise, speaking in tongues, prophesying, role of women, dress, formal organization, baptism, weddings, funerals, statements of beliefs, naming a group, finding a place to meet, local evangelism and more.

Basic Literature

Scriptures About the Sabbath, 2 page tract by

Norman Edwards. Old and New Testament verses about the Sabbath with only 20 sentences of commentary. Good for teaching the Sabbath to those who believe in the Bible but are not already opinionated about the Sabbath.

Miscellaneous Items of Limited Interest

Bible Sabbath Musicians Association Membership Questionnaire, 3 pages by Robin Todd. All you need to join.

March 14, 1980 Letter to Rod Meredith from Herbert Armstrong, 4 pages. HWA explains why he did not want Meredith to be head of the Church—not faulting him for specific sins, but because Meredith was too "position conscious". (But did not HWA frequently claim to be the human head of all God's work worldwide?).

Items Introduced in the Previous Issue:

Basic Literature

The Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution, 10 pages. The Apostle Paul knew his rights under the law of his day as he traveled and taught Christ (Acts 16:37-40; 22:25-30; 25:11,16). These documents can help us know ours.

The Holy Scriptures, 400 pages, adapted by Rabon Vincent. The KJV Bible with Old English removed and some translation errors fixed. (The Bibles are being printed and should be shipped two weeks after you receive this. If you requested it before, you do not need to request it again.)

Living Room Church of God Directory Seventh Edition, 22 pages, edited by Robert Bodkin. Just updated, this is the final version (it will be only an Internet site in the future). A good list for those who are traveling or helping

friends find an independent congregation.

Learning from the Proverbs, 12 pages by Duane Sholly. Helpful to people just reading through Proverbs or to those making a thorough study.

Mature Literature

Is Disfellowshipping a Christian Practice?, 12 pages by Arlan Weight. A gentle summary of Church of God disfellowshipping practices covering many related scriptures.

Study Resources & Information

Ambassador Report: Should Church of God Brethren Read it?, 10 pages by Eric Snow with comments by Norman Edwards. Two views for those trying to decide.

History Research Projects, 12 pages, by Craig White. This new greatly expanded version gives information on British Israelism and the biblical identity of nations.

Highly Recommended Items Listed Every Issue:

Mature Literature

Assembling on the Sabbath by Norman 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 Edwards, 10 pages. Introduction to the Biblical and Hebrew calendars (beginning of months, years, postponements etc.)

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.

What Does the Bible Say About Eternal Judgment? by Norman Edwards, 83 pages. What happens to people after they die? What about "bad" people? "Good" people? Unbelievers? Diligent believers? Lax believers? Read the many scriptures that answer these questions.

Study Resources and Information Freedom Biblical Information Center Catalog by Wayne Schatzle, 12 pages.

Free sources of literature and tapes.

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

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. 24 pages.

Servants' News Statement of Receipts and Expenses, 2 pages.

Servants' News Literature List, 24 pages.

Servants' News Literature Subject Index, 51 pages. All articles & literature by subject.

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International brethren will receive literature more quickly by writing or e-mailing the nearest address on page 2.