Servants' NEWS

Vol. 7, No. 3 *A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be* **May/June 2001**

Living in the Times of the Fourth Beast

by Toli Bohonik

The prophet Daniel was given a special understanding of kingdoms and empires. He lived at the extraordinary juncture of three world-ruling empires. He watched the destruction of his own beloved nation of Judah by the sole superpower of his day, and he lived on to see a third empire rise to dominate the world landscape.

Judah, Babylon, and the Medes and Persians were the key global players during Daniel's lifetime. Daniel watched his beloved Judah destroyed by Babylon, and later watched the Babylonian empire wane in power and fall to the Medes and Persians.

The Kingdom of Judah lasted from c. 922 to 587 BC; in July 587 BC the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. Judah was then under Babylonian rule from 587 to 539 BC. It was at this time that Daniel came to prominence within Babylon. Babylon fell to Persia in 539 BC. Daniel continued in a position of influence for a number of years after Babylon's fall. Judah remained under Persian dominance until 332 BC.

Daniel's time was a unique period of empire building. New empires rose and old empires faltered and fell. Huge armies and enormous egos were fielded in the visible forefront, and behind the scenes powerful angels and dark demons wrestled for dominance. The Lord used all of this to bring about His will. And He used Daniel to tell His people what was going to happen geopolitically right up until the end of the age.

Much of what the Lord tells us in the book of Daniel has to do with a mysterious "fourth beast". In chapter 7 the Lord tells us the "fourth beast" would dominate the kingdoms of this world right up until the return of Jesus Christ.

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Building Effective Congregations

by Norman Edwards

Over five years ago, I finished writing How Does the Eternal Govern Truth Humans?—a study of the Bible teaching on government. This paper showed the errors of the common hierarchical method of governing churches, but I hoped to write another paper, maybe 20 pages, covering what I had learned about organizing small local congregations. As time went by, I kept learning new things and expanding the paper. The result is the 60-page paper included with this issue. If you cannot read it all, I encourage you to look at the Table of contents and read the sections that would most apply to your situation.

The need for new local congregations now appears to be greater than ever. Doctrinal difficulties and scandals with large church organizations are appearing frequently, both on the mainstream news and individual Internet pages. As the big churches lose credibility, the interest in home fellowships and independent congregations surges—both in the Sabbatarian community and elsewhere.

The lines of doctrinal distinction are also blurring. Books of 30 years ago used to talk about **only hundreds** of Christian denominations. Now, many **thousands** of different groups with different beliefs are on the Internet. If one does searches on traditional Church of God doctrines, one finds many groups that teach them in all different combinations. There are Sunday-observing groups that keep the Holy Days. Some Sabbath-keepers keep

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Truckers Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo.
#79-81

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.

May 13, 2001

Today we had a family of three—a husband, wife, and their 15-year-old son. Another trucker who was in the lounge when I arrived decided to stay for the Bible study, and ended up staying the full two hours and said he would come again if he is passing through.

I was fascinated by this family and their depth of understanding and dedication. I began with a short talk about Pentecost, which is designed to introduce the Holy Days, and perceived immediately that they were way ahead of me. They had studied this subject previously and had picked up on some curious wording that indicates that the Holy Days are for all time. They also understood that the days outline God's plan and all point in one way or another to Jesus Christ. So we were able to talk about Passover, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles and be on the same wavelength about them.

The wife of the family was able to lend some wisdom to the lone driver relative to dealing with stress ("you don't want to have less stress, you want to ask God to help you handle and learn from the stress"). She related how trials help us grow and trust God more fully, and mentioned that they had lost a son who contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion, but how this trial helped them appreciate each other and our loving Father even more.

In fact, it was almost uncanny that this woman brought up two other subjects that the first driver and I discussed privately before the family arrived having to do with personal issues, giving possible solutions to his questions and concerns. She had no way of knowing that he and I had talked about them before and didn't even know that they were a concern of his. I watched the other truck driver's facial expression, then told the lady that she had no way of knowing this,

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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 web site (www.servantsnews.com). Thus the 4 options are: **1.** snail mail only; **2.** snail mail and link to web site by e-mail; **3.** link to web site sent by e-mail; **4.** PDF file sent by e-mail.

Please contact info@servantsnews.com if you wish to change your subscription option.

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 7, No. 3 **May/June 2001**

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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Notice: *The people listed above do not necessarily endorse every article in this newsletter.*

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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.

Denver Seminar: Starting a Local Congregation

Everyone is invited to a Seminar, Lunch and Service on the Sabbath of **December 29, 2001**. **Norman Edwards** will present the seminar ***Starting a Local Congregation*** and will include Bible scriptures and practical suggestions how believers in Christ can worship together without the dogma, distractions and overhead frequently associated with corporate churches. The seminar will be advertised in the Denver, Colo. area. Schedule: 10:30 a.m. Seminar, 12:30 Lunch, 2:00 p.m. Service; questions and fellowship afterward. The location will be the Bethany Christian Fellowship, 7070 S Broadway, Englewood, Colo. Contact: Howard Naasz, 303-799-6179, e-mail: hnaasz@aol.com.

Eugene Oregon New Home Fellowship

A Sabbath Fellowship will begin meeting every week at 11:00 a.m. at the home of Adam Miller III in Eugene, Oregon. Bring your Bible and favorite hymns or praise music for study and singing. For more information, call Adam at 541-688-6556 or e-mail adsymil@hotmail.com.

Steven Collins 2002 Seminar

History Research Projects is pleased to announce that Steven Collins and Art Braidic are coming to Australia and New Zealand in June of 2002 to present a series of lectures on the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and End-Time Prophecies.

Those of you who have read Steven Collins' current book on this subject will also be delighted to know that a new and expanded set of **four** books will be available early in 2002 covering in much greater historic detail the history of Israel and the migration of the Lost Ten Tribes into Europe. They will contain extensively researched new historical information and many charts, photographs and illustrations to complement the information presented in each of the four books. Some of this new information was gained from extensive private libraries containing rare books from the 17th and 18th centuries that have only recently become available to historians. All this information will form part of the presentations that Steven Collins will make when he comes to Australia and New Zealand in 2002.

Art Braidic is a Church of God elder with years of experience at public speaking. He is the author of several booklets such as *The Historical Jesus*, *The Truth About Christmas*, and is co-author of *Twelve Keys to Understanding Revelation* as well as the comprehensive work titled *The 144,000*. He has also given powerful presentations on prophecy, the Mark of the Beast and such like on his television programme.

The two presenters complement each other with Collins' presentation primarily focused on bringing new information on the "lost" tribes of Israel. As usual, the lecture series will be free of charge but any financial support to ensure the success of this initiative will be greatly appreciated and gratefully accepted. Mr. Collins' older book, *Lost Tribes of Israel—Found*, is available now for AUS$35.00 including postage. Please make all support cheques payable to: **History Research Projects**, GPO Box 864, Sydney 2001 Australia.

— Craig White, surfer1@tpg.com.au

[The older book can also be ordered for $20 postpaid from Steven Collins, PO Box 88735, Sioux Falls, SD 57109; 605-361-5069. The new book prices will be announced based on final printing costs. (I do not endorse every historical or prophetic detail taught in these seminars or books, but I am happy to see this independent study and dissemination of information.) — NSE]

Correction:

The correct e-mail address for George Burdick, author of the article *It Has Disabled the Spiritual Lives of Many* on pages 8 and 10 of the Jan/Feb 2001 *Servants' News* should be:
Rev21v4@att.net *(not "ev21v4@att.net")*

Jewish Tribe Returns Home after 2600 Years

*[This article was written by **For Zion's Sake Ministry**, P.O.B. 1429 Jerusalem, Israel 91013; e-mail: forzion@netvision.net.il. This is not a British-Israel teaching ministry. The article shows that there is a general awareness that the lost 10 tribes did not all return to Judah. I believe the majority of the ten tribes are in the English-speaking nations and Western Europe, but some, like the ones mentioned below, are still scattered throughout the world. —NSE]*

Thirty-seven members of the Bnei Menashe [sons of Manasseh] tribe in India—believed to be descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes—arrived in Israel on Friday. The new arrivals, many of whom have relatives in Israel among the 450 Bnei Menashe who have arrived within the last five years, were brought to Israel under the auspices of the Jerusalem-based Amishav organization. Amishav is dedicated to locating descendants of the Lost Tribes and returning them to the Jewish people. "This is a historic moment for the

Jewish people," said Amishav founder and chairman Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, who has devoted his life to finding and assisting the descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. "After a lengthy and difficult separation, the Bnei Menashe are being reunited with the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. This is a triumph of faith. Their return to Zion marks the closing of a historical circle."

The Bnei Menashe, with a rich oral tradition tracing themselves back to the Israelite tribe of Menashe, continue to practice many uniquely Jewish customs. About 3,500 Bnei Menashe decided to formally return to the Jewish people about 30 years ago, and began living a fully Jewish life to the best of their ability in accordance with Jewish law. Rabbi Avichail learned of their existence about 20 years ago, and began to investigate their claims to Jewish ancestry. After making several visits there and carefully studying their claims and the relevant history, Rabbi Avichail consulted with leading rabbinical authorities and concluded that there is convincing evidence linking the Bnei Menashe with the Jewish people. Among the evidence, Rabbi Avichail notes their ancient tradition speaking of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; their custom of circumcising male children on the 8th day after birth; and their sacrificial ceremony on an altar reminiscent of the Jewish Temple in which the Hebrew Biblical name of G-d, Mount Sinai, Mount Moriah and Mount Zion are mentioned.

Feast of Tabernacles Info

[The number of Christian Groups interested in the Feast of Tabernacles continues to grow. I received the following e-mail. The author, Charity Dell, apparently has no Church of God connection—and neither do most of the sources mentioned. — NSE]

Here follows a list of wonderful resources that you can use for Sukkot celebrations and planning. This list can be e-mailed, faxed, printed out and photocopied for anyone's use:

Great Jewish Web Sites:

www.ou.org/chayim/sukkot/default.htm
www.vjholidays.com/sukkot
www.joi.org/celebrate/sukkot
www.jewish.com/search/Holidays/Sukkot
www.jewishappleseed.org
aish.com/holidays/sukkot/last/main.html

Great Christian Web Sites:

www.hebroots.org
www.annieshomepage.com/tabernacles.html
www.amfi.org
www.biblicalholidays.com/tabernacles.htm

In addition, there are dozens of wonderful Messianic Jewish web sites on Sukkot—you can link to most of these by going to: www.messianic.com

[some information deleted]

Two Scholarly Books to Read about Sukkot:

The Story of Sukkot: The Setting, Shaping and Sequel of the Biblical Feast of Tabernacles. Hakan Ulfgard. J.C.B.Mohr, 1998. ISBN 3161470176

The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods. Jefferey L. Rubenstein. (Brown Judaic Studies 302) Brown University, 1995. ISBN 0-7885-0130-5

— Charity Dell, JubilateDeo@ureach.com

Bible Sabbath Association

[The following is printed exactly as it was sent to me. The Scriptures do not give any example of God's work going undone due to lack of money, "even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel" (1Cor 9:14). Leaders of ministries that are short of money ought to ask, "Does God really want me to do this work?" Brethren who are not supporting any evangelism, but who could, ought to ask, "What work should I be supporting?" These are the kinds of questions we will be asked when we are judged (1Cor 3:11–15; 2Cor 5:10). — NSE]

The Bible Sabbath Association (BSA) is launching a campaign to raise funds to advance the aims and goals of the BSA. Such a fund drive is needed to defray the expenses for our various activities and projects. Foremost among these is the printing of the updated BSA directory. Another feature of our work is the BSA lending library and which also includes the sale of literature, books, videos and audiotapes. Funds are needed to insure that we can acquire and keep in stock quality material to make available to the public.

Donations, gifts and membership fees enable the Association to publish and mail *The Sabbath Sentinel* as free subscription. We would like to expand our subscription base and make this magazine more available internationally. With the increasing costs of postage such an ambitious effort becomes prohibitive because it is subject to the availability of means. It is hoped that by increasing our financial base we will be enabled us to meet this objective.

The BSA's participation in the Coalition for Religious Freedom in the workplace to represent the interests of Sabbathkeepers before government officials is an endeavor worthy of wide support. One of the fringe benefits of our participation in this coalition is having a supportive relationship with the legal counsel of the SDA church. The BSA representing all Sabbatarian groups and the SDA church as the largest Sabbatarian body are allied as the sole representatives of Sabbathkeepers in this coalition. Because of this the BSA is in a position to assist our members with various legal questions that come up periodically and which we can anticipate will be more frequent.

All BSA activities are dependent on the administrative offices—the "nuts and bolts" of the Association to carry out the various services and duties of the BSA office managers. This also includes the work involved in the editorial services of TSS and BSA literature. The time, energy and expenses associated with such work continue to increase. To continue such services for our membership and the public interests we must continue to find ways to increase our membership and financial base.

The BSA scholarship fund is always in need of contributions for its annual essay contest. This enables the association to help award worthy and needy students in their scholastic endeavors. This also encourages our young people in their faithfulness to the Sabbath truth. A percentage of funds generated from this initiative will help keep this going.

The BSA's efforts to advance the Sabbath truth and encouraging co-operation among Sabbath-keepers are the greater purpose for which we seek support. Encouraging Sabbath-keepers to embrace the ideals, aims and goals of our association is the most worthy of all causes for which we solicit support. The BSA is the only organization of its kind that exists to advance the Sabbath truth on a non-denominational, nonsectarian basis.

Pursuant to this effort we are making available coin folders that can be easily filled, periodically, with spare change, (dimes and quarters). If you would like to contribute and help in this effort please write or e-mail to:

— Dr. Sidney L. Davis, Jr.
The Bible Sabbath Association
Box 1213, North Chicago, IL 60064
E-mail: president@biblesabbath.org
http://www.biblesabbath.org

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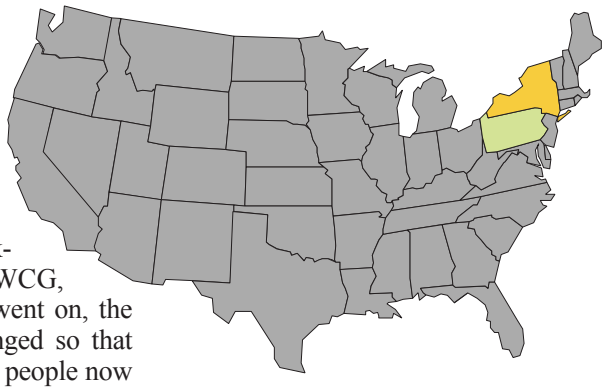
Small Groups and Evangelism

Long Island, New York



The Long Island COG Fellowship has been meeting since the early nineties. In 1993, 32 members regularly attended. Nick Viola, the leader of the fellowship, then approached the Global Church of God about becoming one of their congregations. Dave Pack was sent to meet with the group. After a few meetings together, it was clear that neither the independent study format nor the T-shirt and jeans worn by Nick (and most of the fellowship) fit the GCG image. The GCG headquarters told Nick it was best if he quit meetings, disband, and tell his group to just send tithes to the GCG. After having built up the GCG to the congregation, their refusal to accept them so disheartened the group that Nick says they gradually dispersed.

[I was working for the GCG headquarters at this time and remember hearing about this from the office—I thought it was sad that the GCG could not work with Nick Viola, but I had no idea that the group broke up. — NSE]

Later, the group got together again with people from various COG backgrounds including the WCG, CGI and GCG. As time went on, the original membership changed so that most of the ten to fourteen people now attending have no "Church of God" background. Yet, they are now keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days as well as learning other truths. In fact, two new ladies are presently being counseled for baptism.

When asked how the fellowship has been able to reach and attract so many people without a COG background, Nick replied that it is personal contacts and evangelism, people reaching out to other people.

Comment: This writer recalls Ron Dart of Christian Educational Ministries mentioning several times that even though the WCG spent hundreds of millions of dollars on TV, radio, and advertising, nevertheless about *one half* of new members came as a result of personal evangelism, a member bringing someone else into the church.

The Long Island Fellowship Sabbath home meeting hosts are taking on a sabbatical so the fellowship presently meets three or four times a month for an extended Friday night bible study. The study is completely interactive, anyone is free to speak on a pre-determined broad subject. The members feel very strongly that yes, iron does sharpen iron. The group also believes in testimonies from its members showing that we are living epistles of Christ living in us and that much of Christianity is showing by example. Nick also mentioned he feels it is important to establish in prospective members *why* God is there before getting into a lot of do's and don't's.

Their meetings start with group prayer. Nick felt this is an important and especially-rewarding part of their study. The group prayers last as long as fifteen minutes and bring a welcome feeling of peace to start the meeting.

The fellowship is presently working on setting up a web site. They are also looking at the Sky Angel cable network as a possibility for an outreach program.

Visitors are welcome. Some without a COG background have come 200 miles. Contact: LICOGF, PO Box 396, N Massapequa, NY 11758; www.licogf.com e-mail: lichurchofgodfellowship@juno.com

— "One Third Century In CoGs"

Summary of *Small Groups & Evangelism* Articles

Issue Date	Name of Group	Contact Person	City & State
Jan/Feb 2000	(unnamed)	Carolyn Adreeser	Vero Beach, FL
	COG 7th/Sabbath Day	Tom Justus	Springdale, AR
	(unnamed)	Richard Fox	Nashville, TN
Mar/Apr 2000	COG Miami	Tony Fontao	Miami, FL
	COG New Mexico	John Shavers	Albuquerque, NM
	Heartland Fellowship	Len Newbert	Middletown, OH
May/Jun 2000	(unnamed)	Neil Carson	Grant, FL
	Midlands COG	Ralph Hanahan	Columbia, SC
	(unnamed)	Wes Gordon	Tulsa, OK
Jul/Aug 2000	Active Bible COG	Michael Lineacre	Chicago, IL
	(unnamed)	Marc Amino	Mesa, AZ
	(unnamed)	Karen Brinkley	Linthicum, MD
Sep/Oct 2000	(unnamed)	John Canter	Fairfax, VA
	COG Berean Fellowship	Hal Geiger	Milwaukee, WI
	(unnamed)	Kim Snyder	Livonia, MI
Nov/Dec 2000	COG Downers Grove	Ken Svehla	Downers Grove, IL
	(unnamed)	Laura Lee	Bismark, ND
Jan/Feb 2001	(none)		
Mar/Apr 2001	(none)		
May/Jun 2001	Long Island COG Fellowship	Nick Viola	Long Island, NY
	Family Sabbath Keepers	Ken Kitzke	Delmont, PA

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National Unlicensed Church Conference

Report

by Norman Edwards

I attended the National Unlicensed Church Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 15 to 18. It was sponsored by the Mercy Seat Christian Church, at the Zoofari Conference Center. The main speaker was Peter Kershaw of Heal Our Land Ministries (208 E College Suite 304, Branson, Missouri 65616; 417-337-7533, www.hushmoney.org).

Attendance was well over 200 with about a third raising their hands to identify themselves as "church pastors". Most were Sunday-observing, but I also found some Seventh Day Adventist and Church of God Seventh Day brethren there. They tended to be an "activist" group with many involved in anti-abortion efforts, home-schooling and other conservative causes. A few had been arrested dozens of times for standing outside abortion clinics attempting to talk young mothers out of killing their babies. But they also had a string of names of children who are alive today because of their efforts—and the names of some mothers who listened to their message and are raising their once-doomed child by biblical principles.

I found the people quite friendly and very committed to what they were doing. I freely acknowledged that I was from an independent Sabbath-observing congregation and did not feel that anyone disdained me for being "jewish" or a "legalist".

This report will summarize what I believe to be some of the more significant parts of the conference. A complete set of professionally made tapes of the conference is available from Heal Our Land Ministries (see the end of this article). A written syllabus is also included with the tapes. A list of the sessions is found on this page.

Historic Sessions

The first four sessions covered the history of church-state relationships—largely corresponding to Peter Kershaw's book, *In Caesar's Grip*. There were many historical quotes showing the great extent that freedom of religion played in the founding of the United States of America. England still had a "state church", the Anglican church, of which the King was the head. There were many other denominations in England at the time, persecuted to varying degrees by the King. The King insisted that all preachers in America be licensed by the king—and put some to death for refusing licenses.

These independent preachers saw themselves involved in a giant Matthew 18 process (Matt 18:15–17). They read Romans 13 that told them civil authorities are empowered by God. But they also read verse 3 which states "for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil" and realized that they were being terrorized for good works, not for evil works. Seeing this situation, they followed Matthew 18 and wrote to King George of England, expressing their grievances in papers called "remonstrances". Then they proceeded to the next step and asked other witnesses to write with them. The King almost never directly responded to these. The difficulty was with the King, not the British people—the Declaration of Independence refers to them as "British brethren" in its next to last paragraph.

The final step in Matthew 18 is to take an issue "to the church". A church is an "assembly". To which assembly should this issue go? The Declaration of Independence is the final step of the Matthew 18 process. It avoids all mention of the British Parliament and the Church of England. The Americans did not believe that they could get a fair hearing there. The Declaration of Independence contains numerous complaints about the King dissolving any American attempt to form assemblies. The last paragraph summarizes the whole issue by stating:

> We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appeal-

Conference Schedule

All sessions presented by Peter Kershaw unless noted.

Sunday, April 15 (evening):

Economic Solutions (on the Federal Reserve & money problems)

Monday, April 16:

The Unlicensed Clergy: America's True *Founding Fathers*
Christ Or Caesar: Who Is the Church's Sovereign? part 1: *The Church Gagged,* part 2: *The Erastians*
WWJ, Inc. (what would Jesus incorporate?)
With that 501c3, you even get a free muzzle! (Problems with IRS tax exempt status)
Are Marriage Licenses Biblical? by Ralph Ovadal
Unlicensing the State-Church: an overview
Dissolution of a State-Church and Organizing a Free-Church
Questions and Answers (What went wrong with the Indianapolis Baptist Temple?, etc.)

Tuesday, April 17:

The Free-Church and Banking: banking without an EIN.
The Free-Church and Taxes: being non-taxable vs. being tax-exempt.
Social Security: Contrary to God's Way by Matt Trewhella
Jurisdiction and Verbal Obfuscation: jurisdictional traps, various ways government agencies presume jurisdiction, and language to avoid
Zoning Out Christianity by Eric Hovind
The Free-Church and Assets
Organizational Documents, and Methods For Avoiding Disputes and Litigation
Questions and Answers (Should a church be organized as a corporation sole?, etc.)

> ing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown…

The final step in the process was taking the issues to "the church" or "assembly", in this case, "the Representatives of the United States of America… **Assembled**". Their authority for making this decision was an appeal directly to God, "the Supreme Judge of the world". At this same time, many of the founding fathers also gave up their efforts to reform the Anglican Church and resigned from it.

The saying "we have no King but Jesus" was popular during the American Revolution. They were not saying it lightly, as Christians today might. The King they had rejected in order to follow Christ had armies and was sending them after his opponents. Many suffered and died to create a government where there were no human kings controlling the state or church organizations. (Today, many Christians are afraid to place their church congregation directly under Christ and trust His protection, even when there is no immediate persecution for doing so—they prefer a state-granted incorporation because the state promises them liability protection and other benefits).

The Constitution was not an effort to create a Godless state. Nearly all the writings of the founding fathers mention God as the source of individual rights. Rather, the constitution was an effort to make sure that the state did not impose a certain religion upon its citizens and to be sure that no church organization used the power of the state. The First Amendment states:

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

It was "establishments of religion" that were not to be involved with government. Individual rights to assemble, speak, publish and petition the government were recognized here—the very things that King George refused to grant the American preachers before the Revolution.

Most of the state churches and big denominations of Europe were "incorporated" churches. They had received a corporate charter from the state government to own property and conduct business in the name of their church. After the Revolution, most citizens of the USA were not interested in government created and controlled corporations—either for churches or business, so they were few in number. Churches simply operated as churches—local congregations being a part of the greater body of Christ. The state of Virginia went as far as passing a law against church incorporation, which remains to this day. It is not until the 1900s that churches began to incorporate on a large scale.

Today most churches are incorporated, and they apply to the Internal Revenue Service for "Tax exempt Status". We should not be surprised. This is the method of doing "church business" that is taught by nearly all law schools and religious seminaries. Nor should we be surprised that the number of lawsuits against churches has grown incredibly during the past century. Courts do not have Jurisdiction over free churches, that is, over churches that have not asked the state for permission to operate. But courts automatically have jurisdiction over corporations—including church corporations. Corporations must hire licensed attorneys to represent them.

The issues of advantages verses disadvantages of incorporation and "tax exempt status" are quite often poorly represented by attorneys. Many of them do not even know how churches can operate as churches. The issue of what is the right way to carry out the work of the Living God is even more important.

Kershaw's Lectures on Unlicensing Churches

Most of the rest of Peter Kershaw's lectures covered the technical methods one can use to create a new free-church and terminate a corporate church. Some of the information is covered in our free paper, *Starting a Local Congregation*. For those serious about changing the form of their local congregation, this is probably the most important part of the conference. The issues of preparing church documents, avoiding taxes, opening bank accounts, handling assets and other important issues were all handled in detail. This is a place where "a little knowledge can be dangerous", so we will not attempt to cover it here. But to those who are at all interested in changing their form of church organization, this author highly recommends that they obtain Peter Kershaw's material (see the end of this section), or consult the more extensive list in our paper *Starting a Local Congregation*.

Kershaw on Lawyers

In one of the question and answer sessions, someone asked Peter Kershaw about the use of lawyers. The Constitution gives citizens the right to represent themselves in court, but today many people wonder what was so important about that. If they get involved in a court case, are not they more interested in the government providing a lawyer to help them? They might be, but we are seeing history repeating itself. The framers of the constitution included the ability for people to represent themselves, but also the right to have counsel. This was a reaction to some English courts where a "professional" was appointed to represent the accused, but who often was more concerned about carrying out government policy than helping the person he represented. Those early Americans suffered due to these unjust practices and wanted to make sure that an individual could represent himself, rather than suffer at the hands of some uncaring representative.

Today, most people are unaware that licensed attorneys are **first,** officers of the court; **second,** representatives of the public good; and **third**, representatives of their clients. Even though the client pays the bill, attorneys do not have to always have their clients interests first. It is not illegal for a judge and attorneys on a case to get together and decide that one of their clients might be right in his case, but that deciding in his favor would be

against the public good, so they will work together to make sure that client loses the case. It is more and more common for judges to tell the accused that they **must** be represented by a licensed attorney, when that is simply not so. But if the accused does not know his rights, the court is not required to inform him.

In the 1700s, the legal system recognized "counselors", "advocates" and others who helped in courts, but who were not licensed attorneys. These positions have largely disappeared from modern courts (without Americans paying much attention). Today, there is a growing body of "paralegal" workers (of which Peter Kershaw is one) who help people with legal matters and help them represent themselves in court when necessary. They are not attorneys and are not officers of the court or responsible for "public good". Paralegals frequently have to fight off attacks from lawyers and governments claiming that they are "practicing law without a license", but they have defended themselves well and there is now some case history in their favor.

It is especially important for free churches to be careful when hiring a licensed attorney. Hiring an officer of the court may be considered giving jurisdiction to the court.

Are Marriage Licenses Biblical?

Ralph Ovadal gave a very interesting presentation from the viewpoint of "what honors God and what is right?" Marriages were frequently handled by contracts or simply recorded in family Bibles during the early years of this country. State laws still recognize such marriages, but if everyone stops using them, they may eventually be repealed.

When the state asks couples to fill out forms and take tests to obtain a marriage license, the couples cannot help but believe that when the state approves them, they are ready to be married. In reality, the entire emphasis should be upon "does God think you are ready to be married?"

The state has no righteous purpose in determining who gets a marriage license. Spouse beaters, criminals, habitual divorcees, homosexuals and people with other serious problems all can get licenses. Wisconsin marriages are still considered valid by the state even if the wrong forms were used or if wrong information was supplied on them. Nevertheless, the state collects a fee of $49.50 for each marriage, primarily to require social security numbers and medical tests designed for people who live a promiscuous life style. While the authority of the state is not now exceptionally oppressive, with no resistance, will it continue to grow?

Furthermore, when couples have trouble in their marriages, they frequently turn to the state who gave them their licenses—which is also more than happy to give them divorces. If people saw that their marriage was an agreement between man, wife and God, they would be much slower to consider a divorce.

Marriage licenses do easily take care of each spouse's legal rights to the other's property, insurance benefits, government benefits, inheritance, etc. All of these things can be done without a license, but more work may be required. A couple should not bypass a marriage license without learning about these things. On the other hand, once a marriage license has been obtained, there is no way to rescind it—the state remains a part of the marriage forever.

Mr. Ovadal and others at the conference spoke of successful marriages where no license was involved. They recommended keeping records signed by witnesses, putting pictures and articles in the newspaper, legally changing the woman's name, and recording the marriage with the county recorder.

Social Security, Contrary to God's Way

Mark Trewhella made this presentation, which in some ways resembled the one on marriage licenses. He read from the scriptures about children's responsibility to take care of parents, and of the churches responsibility to take care of those in need. He pointed out how the Government taxes hard working people to the point where they are poor, then gets all the glory for providing for the old and infirm. People look to the state for sustenance, rather than their families and God.

Mr. Trewhella went as far as saying that Social Security is a religion. Many people have far more trust in that system than they do in God. People dependent upon their checks will do almost anything not to lose them.

One case was related for a church member who had her baby in a hospital and then wanted to leave without obtaining a social security number for the infant. The nurse in charge could not understand why anyone would not want to be a part of this wonderful system and said that they would not let the baby leave the hospital until the parents filled out the form. The father asked the hospital employee to "please state the precise terms of this kidnapping so I can begin negotiating for my child's release"—they were on their way in a few minutes.

The Social Security system destroys the lives of many. People who have a hard time meeting others are not forced to interact, so many spend the last 20 years of their lives collecting government checks that take care of their physical needs, but leave them completely lonely. Others collect a $500 check every month, spend it on drugs and alcohol in a few days, and then starve or steal until the next check comes—and die at age 40. The government is unable to provide love, Biblical teaching and the power of Christ to these millions.

Mr. Trewhella encouraged his listeners not to be harsh or judgmental upon those that do participate in the system. Many cannot avoid paying into it, and some do not know how to go on living without it. The important point is that we should recognize it as contrary to God's way, avoid participating in it when possible, and work towards its elimination. It took years to grow and it will take years to undo peacefully. Gradually raising the benefit age, and allowing individuals to opt out of the system for their lifetime would be a start. Christians supporting the needy most go hand in hand with it.

Mr. Trewhella said that he hopes to "die on the field of battle" (of Christian duty), but that if he does live to be old and infirm, he believes his eight children will be able to take care of him.

Economic Solutions

A separate "mini-conference" was

held on Sunday night, before the main conference. Most of the people attending were the same.

Peter Kershaw related several personal accounts of how he went to restaurants or hotels, thanked the workers there for the good service, but then told them that he did not have any money to pay for it. They became somewhat irate, and asked the usual questions about any credit cards, debit cards, checks, friends who would pay, etc. He went on to explain that he had some Federal Reserve Notes that he would be willing to give them in exchange for the service, but that those Notes did not have any real value. Their only use was the fact that he had found some people who were willing to accept them in place of money, so perhaps the hotel and restaurant people could find someone who would take them, too.

By this time, he was usually talking to restaurant and hotel managers. Frequently, a crowd had gathered to see what would happen to this man who had no money. The demands to be paid continued as well as the rejections of these Federal Reserve Notes that Peter was offering. Sometimes there were threats to call the police. Sometimes, someone asked to see one of these valueless Federal Reserve Notes that Mr. Kershaw was offering.

So he would pull some of the Federal Reserve Notes out of his wallet. People were shocked when they saw the Notes—they looked just like the "money" in their own wallet. Some of the employees even compared them with a magnifying glass. Yes, they looked the same—just like the Federal Reserve Notes in your wallet! The problem is, most people do not know that Federal Reserve Notes are not money and do not have any real value—they are just commonly accepted. If one reads the Note, it simply says "THIS NOTE IS LEGAL TENDER FOR ALL DEBTS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE"—it cannot be redeemed for gold, silver or anything of value. Yes, the Hotels and restaurants usually agreed to accept the Federal Reserve Notes—some even forgave Mr. Kershaw's bill for teaching them a valuable lesson.

The Bible teaches us:

> You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you (Deut 25:15).

The weights and measures referred to in this scripture were used to weigh and measure the products sold, such as grain, oil, wool, etc. But standard weights were also used to weigh quantities of silver and gold—used as money (Gen 23:16; Jer 32:9). Indeed, the same Hebrew word, *keceph,* is used hundreds of times in the Bible both for "money" and for "silver". The priests had a standard "shekel" (weight) of money by which other merchants could check their weights (Ex 30:13, etc.). God wanted people to earn money by just labor, not by some kind of cheating scheme like buying with a set of light money weights (paying too little) and selling with a set of heavy money weights (charging too much) (Deut 25:13).

Using gold, silver or any other real, easily divisible commodity for money was fair as long as it was measured justly. This has been done for millennia. During the past few hundred years, after the invention of paper, sometimes people preferred to deposit their gold or silver in a guarded warehouse, which would issue a paper receipt. People found that it was more convenient to trade the receipts than to actually carry the heavy gold or silver around. These receipts were the first paper money—redeemable for gold or silver—and the warehouses, primarily in Europe, were the first banks.

But some evil warehouse men found that they could get things for themselves by issuing bogus receipts for gold that they did not have. They looked exactly like the genuine receipts, so people accepted them. As long as everybody did not try all at once to collect their gold from the warehouse, the system still appeared to work, though the warehouse men were unjustly profiting at the expense of others. In some of the worst cases, the warehouse men actually took much of

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Will the Hearers or the Doers of the Law Be Justified?

For decades, the Church of God groups preached that individuals would suffer for their personal sins, but that our nation would also be punished for its national sins. Numerous scriptures show that to be the case. But did we ever ask, "Who is responsible for stopping and correcting our national sins?"

In countries where the people have the ultimate authority to elect leaders, are not **all** the people collectively responsible for the national policies? Yet many "Church of God" groups taught that Christians should not be involved in voting or attempting to influence legislation. This means that each new person who accepted their entire message was one more person who would no longer influence the nation for its good. Even if 99% of the country became "Church of God" members and therefore refrained from any influence on government, then the remaining 1% would be the only ones to vote and run the country, and nearly all of our sinful national policies would remain! Is that what God wants?

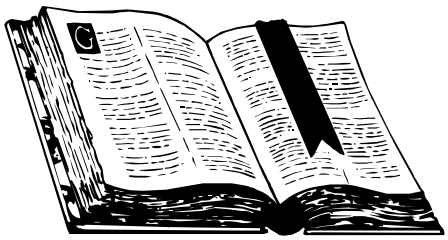
Some will say, "Our government is so corrupt that an individual cannot do anything". If that is true, how can God hold **anyone** responsible for our national sins? If we regard a nation as all individuals who can do nothing, they are all guiltless for its sins. If we regard a nation as a group of individuals who all have a little responsibility for its national sins, then we expect each person to do what little they can to remove the nation's sins. That may include voting, writing letters, or getting involved in some action to promote righteous laws and principles. (Obviously, Christians should **not** become part of the typical corrupt political practices of using government to obtain power and money for oneself or one's organizations. That probably means that one cannot join the biggest political organizations—in general, they do not have Godly solutions for the nation anyway.)

What will God say about the punishment for our national sins in the judgment? Will God commend His people who were preaching and hearing about what needed to be done—**hoping that unbelievers would hear their message and do it?** Can only unbelievers govern? Or will God commend His people who were **doing** what needed to be done? If he punishes the nation, will it be for lack of preaching or lack of doing?

"For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Rom 2:13). — NSE

Rightly Distributing the Word of Truth

by Rabon Vincent



Why does the HSV (*Holy Scriptures Version*) use the word "distributing" where the KJV uses the word "dividing" in 2Tim 2:15?

Many translations translate the Greek word *orthotomeo* (Strong's Concordance # 3718) to the English phrase "rightly dividing". While appropriate and technically accurate, it does not give a sense of the use of this Greek phrase. Occurring only once in the Bible, it comes from the root words *tomoteros* (Strong's # 5114) and *orthos* (Strong's # 3717). The word *tomoteros* means to cut sharply and cleanly with a single stroke as opposed to hacking off uneven bits here and there. The word *orthos* means upright, straight, level or even. The phrase *orthotomeo* would then be literally translated as "evenly cutting". However, the use of this phrase here seems to imply an ***apportionment*** of "the word of truth" because the following verse, which is a continuance of the same thought, says to "shun profane and vain babblings". This verse and verse 14, which precedes the phrase, clearly show that what the author is referring to is what has been *coming out of the mouths* of those who teach.

To use the phrase as it would more likely occur in everyday speech, one needs only picture a guest at a dinner table who might be hoping that the pot roast be "evenly divided" to see that what he really intends by the phrase is "evenly distributed". Furthermore, by looking at the only Biblical use of the word tomoteros, which is found in Heb. 4:12, it can be seen that this word is also used to show a "separating for distribution" like the body from the spirit (*cf.* Eccl 12:7).

Why does the HSV sometimes translate the Greek word *daimonion* as "devils" (i.e. Matt. 10:8) and other times as "demons" (i.e. Matt. 12:24)?

This was an oversight of the first edition. The original intent was to translate the Greek words *daimonion* (Strong's # 1140) and *diabolos* (Strong's # 1228) demon(s) and devil, respectively. The English word *demon* is derived from the Greek word *daimon* (Strong's # 1142) and, since the modern word conveys an identical meaning, it is appropriate to use the modern derivative. The next edition of the HSV should have these Greek words translated more appropriately.

***In the end of* the Sabbath?**

LETTER: Matthew 28:1, KJV, states: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to **dawn** toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."

The Church of God (Seventh Day) literature teaches that "dawn" really means sunset on the Sabbath. I never really liked that explanation. Ralph Woodrow, who no longer believes in three days and three nights (4th day sundown to Sabbath sundown), has written that to solve the problem of "in the end of the Sabbath" and "dawn", "in the end of the Sabbath" should be placed at the end of Matt 27:66. Thus, setting the watch would occur in the end of the High Day Sabbath (Thursday), and the tomb visit would be Sunday morning. This seems to be correct to me, in that it also solves the number of tomb visits question, but unlike Woodrow, I believe it does no harm to the "3 days and 3 nights position".

— Paul Adams

RESPONSE: The first edition of the HSV followed the KJV with the reading: "In the end of the Sabbath". Nevertheless, after more thorough research (and just days before receiving your letter) the HSV has been revised to read: "And after the Sabbath". Future printings of the HSV will reflect this revision. The Greek words that the KJV renders as "In the end of" are *de* (Strong's # 1161) and *opse* (Strong's # 3796). Matthew 28:1 is the only verse in which they occur together. The Greek word *de* is a primary participle meaning "but", "and" or "also", while *opse* is from the similar (and more common) opiso, which is translated in the KJV as "after" (22 times), "back" (seven times), "behind" (six times) and "follow" (once). These words and their compounds seem to always be referring to "following" or "coming after". Therefore, it is appropriate (and fitting with Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1 and John 20:1) to translate these Greek words as "and after".

As to your reference to Ralph Woodrow, I am not acquainted with him. However, this is not the first time that I have heard of people who believe that Christ's references to "three days and three nights" somehow do not mean he was in the grave for 72 hours.

One argument suggests that what Jesus meant by "in the heart of the earth" was Jerusalem. In other words, Jesus meant that He would be in Jerusalem three days and three nights from the time of His riding the burro (Luke 19:35–37) until His resurrection. What this argument fails to take into account is that our Savior said: "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the great fish's belly…" This is a very important reference because one needs only to look at Jonah 2:2 to see that Jonah considered the belly of the fish to be a grave ("hell" comes from the Greek *sheol meaning "*grave"). It most certainly would have been his grave if he hadn't repented! I doubt that anyone would try to say that Christ was unaware of, or had forgotten this verse.

I hope this answers your concerns regarding this verse. Thank you for your important observations.

Romans 3:27 Correction

LETTER: I thank you greatly for the HSV, which I received a couple of days ago. I have had a chance now to flick through it. I like the layout (i.e. six columns facing you at once) and I think this will facilitate easier referencing, should this be similar to any new revisions. Flicking through Ro-

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Purpose of Prophecy—Prophets for Profit?

When we read prophecy, there is a natural desire to want to understand it exactly. Daniel had this desire. Notice the conclusion of his book, Daniel 12:8-13:

8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

9 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.

10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. **None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.**

11 "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

12 "Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days **you will rise** to receive your allotted inheritance" (NIV).

When some people read the above statements, the first thing they want to know about are the 1290 days and the 1335 days. But the important message here is that some *righteous* people, like Daniel, would not understand it in this life, but would receive their reward when they rise at the resurrection. Also, it plainly says that "**None of the wicked will understand".** If we want to understand, should not we be more concerned about removing wickedness from our own lives? Furthermore, if none of the wicked will understand, could the explanation of these prophecies be revealed in some mass-advertised books and videos? If the material advertised below really imparts "a complete understanding of the prophetic moment in which we live", then it seems like the wicked could understand for about 47 dollars.

While the writer of the advert below sounds like he knows what he is talking about, notice the phrase "for the first time". How can this author **be sure** that nobody else has understood prophecy before he has? Cannot God reveal it to whom He chooses? If he means that this is the first time that he has understood these prophecies, that probably means that the author has no track record of verifiably correct previous prophetic interpretation. All he will have is what hundreds of other prophecy teachers have—a plausible explanation of past and future events that fit Bible prophecies, but no real proof that God has granted him prophetic understanding.

While it is possible that we might learn something from someone selling their prophetic interpretation, do we want to encourage people to make money this way? Does God really teach people prophecy with all the various marketing gimmicks in this ad—claiming the price is one third off, but still charging much more than it costs to duplicate videos?

Also, please realize that it is not likely that a completely accurate explanation of Bible prophecy will ever appear in a free publication like *Servants' News*. The "wicked" can use the Internet and/or subscribe to free publications. But we will certainly never claim to have a complete explanation of Bible prophecy. Thousands have done so in the past, and all failed to some degree. But we encourage everyone to read Bible prophecy and know what it says. We publish articles, like the previous one by Toli Bohonik, that offer possible explanations. But we encourage every believer to ask God to give him or her the understanding that they need. "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy" (1Cor 14:1).

While God does warn His people about coming disasters, He does not counsel them to be diligent to study prophecy to interpret the time of the end. He tells them to be ready.

Please read the following Bible verses on the subject:

2 Peter 3:10–11

Luke 21:34–36

Matt 24:42–47

(Note: the word *watch* in the last two scriptures does not mean to "watch world events", but to watch one's personal life.) 🕮

— Norman Edwards

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— Ken Klein Productions

"Living in the Times of the Fourth Beast" from page 1

We are living in the times of the fourth beast.

A Necessary Telling of History

The Lord wanted Daniel's times documented. He wanted the story of Judah's fall and the rise of these two gentile empires preserved for all future generations.

In Daniel's day, the nation of Judah was the major remaining repository of the knowledge of the true God. Her sister nation, Israel, had long since gone into captivity. Israel had sinned beyond the point of physical redemption. So, years before, the Lord allowed the nation of Israel to be destroyed and taken captive by the ancient nation of Assyria. Judah was left alone to perpetuate the religion of YHVH (the name of the true God). Judah, all alone, continued the traditions and maintained the lovely culture that the God of Abraham had given to both Israel and Judah through Moses. (Unfortunately, they also added their own traditions, which sometimes were contrary to the teachings of God—Matt 15:6.)

History tells us that the ten tribes of Israel have remained lost, that the tribe of Judah has struggled to maintain it's identity amidst scattering and persecution, and that the fourth beast has dominated the civilized world up until this very day. The lost ten tribes of Israel and persecuted Judah have been forced to live under the dominion of the fourth beast.

The enigmatic fourth beast is first introduced in Daniel 7. The story starts as a vision of a great stomping beast with iron teeth, which devours everything in its path. The fourth beast was to be a world-ruling empire that would dominate geopolitics during the entire Christian era and was to last in some form until the return of Jesus Christ.

The fourth beast would be ruling this earth when our Lord comes a second time.

A Time of Visions and Dreams

Daniel wrote during a time of visions and dreams. Along with grand empires and armies, Daniel's age was one of visions and dreams. The book of Daniel describes many of these in detail.

The dreams start in chapter 2 of Daniel. Here we read King Nebuchadnezzar's dream about a great statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, with belly and thighs of bronze, with legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and partly of clay. In Daniel 4 is another dream. It too is Nebuchadnezzar's. His second dream is of a strong tree that stands in the midst of the earth and grows high as the heavens. Then in chapter 5 there is a vision, not a dream, in which a hand writes unknown letters on a palace wall. The hand was telling Babylonian King Belshazzar that he was about to lose his kingdom.

Two gentile Babylonian kings experience the first three dreams and visions in the book of Daniel. The remainder of the visions and dreams in the book are Daniel's. In the second half of the book, in chapter seven through chapter twelve, we read one after another of Daniel's visions and dreams.

God chose to speak to Daniel, the same way that God has spoken to virtually all of His prophets, by visions and dreams. There is a consistency in the way our Lord works. Daniel was beloved by God, and as God often does, He showed His love by giving one of His servants special gifts and special revelations. It was by God's divine power that Daniel wrote about the world ruling empires that would last through to the end of the age.

Daniel's understanding of dreams and prophecy was not a matter of his own brilliance, Daniel's understanding came from the Lord, Daniel 2:20–23:

> Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's demand."

Four Empires — Four Beasts

There are many ideas about Daniel's fourth beast—what empires and nations comprise its body and its many horns. Even today, it is cloaked in mystery and controversy. We have had well over 2,000 years to figure out who it was and who it is, and yet the Christian community can't seem to agree on the identity of this terrible fourth beast.

It has not been easy to figure out.

In the seventh chapter of Daniel we read a summary of the four kingdoms that would dominate the world right up until the return of Jesus Christ. There are only four kingdoms. The first three kingdoms are described in a relatively few short verses, five verses to be exact. Most of the seventh chapter is spent explaining the fourth beast; this is the longest description of the fourth beast in all of the scriptures.

So, who is the fourth beast?

The fourth beast is most unique. It is most terrible. It is the most enigmatic. And it dominates the world for the longest period of time, the entire Christian era, almost 2,000 years.

It is also unique in that it has many horns, it has 11 horns to be exact. Ten grow out from the original beast and then a smaller eleventh horn grows up amongst the other ten, and dominates, "plucks up" three of the other horns.

The fourth beast consists of:

- the original beast
- the first three horns
- the little horn
- the seven remaining horns

Who is the original beast? Who are the three horns? Who is the little horn? And who are the other seven horns? This author will give his view of all these things in this article.

Different Interpretations

Different Christian denominations interpret Daniel's vision of the fourth beast very differently. Each denomination tends to interpret the fourth beast in a manner that makes it look as though they are not a part of this beast. It's an ugly beast and it is not something that Christians knowingly want to be a part of.

There is a Protestant interpretation of Daniel, there is a Catholic interpretation of Daniel, there is an Adventist interpretation of Daniel, and there is a Church of God interpretation of Daniel. Most of us are familiar with how our own denomination interprets the fourth beast. The Seventh Day Adventists and the Churches of God have

generally adopted a Protestant interpretation of the fourth beast.

But to correctly interpret history and to understand the identity of the fourth beast, one has to step back from Protestant, Catholic, Adventist, Church of God, and any other denominational interpretation.

So let's take step back, let's take a fresh look at history, and let's see how this fourth beast fits the patterns of the rise and fall of kingdoms described in modern history books. We need to compare history to Daniel's prophecies. Let's take a fresh non-partisan look and see which nations fit the description of the fourth beast.

Starting at the End

But first let's confirm when all of this ends. It all ends when the Lord sets up His kingdom and all four of these beasts no longer exist. This is important because it will firmly fix in our minds that only four beasts exist prior to our Lord's return. As some distant point in the future the saints will take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever and ever. That is still ahead of us, Daniel 7:16–18:

> I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: "Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

If Daniel 7:18 is true, which it is, then **today** we are still living in the times of the fourth beast.

History Starts in Babylon

In Daniel chapter 7, we read that the first beast of Daniel's dream is a lion. This lion represents the empire of Babylon. It is important to note that God starts the clock of prophecy with the kingdom of Babylon; in a very real sense our Lord begins history with the kingdom of Babylon. It was the empire that Daniel was most familiar with. At its height it was ruled by Daniel's friend, king Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BC. Babylon is the first of four empires that was to rule until the coming of our Lord.

The Lord inspired Daniel to devote only one verse to Babylon. There are entire chapters that deal almost exclusively with Babylon, but not here in the seventh chapter—this is the chapter of the fourth beast. Babylon is described in just one short verse, Daniel 7:4.

> The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

The second of the four empires was the Medes and the Persians. Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians in 539 BC. Again, Daniel spends only one verse describing the Medes and Persians. They are described as a bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth. Chapter eight describes this empire in additional detail, but in chapter seven there is only one verse allotted to them, Daniel 7:5:

> And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

The third empire is the Greeks. Again, in the eighth chapter of Daniel there is another longer vision that describes the Greek empire, but here in chapter seven there is only one verse. Alexander the Great conquered Persia in 332 BC. He later died in Babylon in 323 BC. After his death Alexander's empire was divided into four parts by four of his generals, Daniel 7:6:

> After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

In Daniel 7:7 we begin to read about the terrible fourth beast.

The Times of the Fourth Beast

The fourth beast is an extraordinary beast with no name. The first three kingdoms are each individually named in the eighth chapter of Daniel, but nowhere are the nations that comprise the fourth beast named. That is left to future generations to figure out and name. The timing of the rise and fall of this fourth beast is also left to future generations to discern.

Why aren't the nations named? Daniel wrote his book at a time when these nations had not formed and had no names. Rome would not rise to prominence for another 400 years. Daniel 7:7–8:

> After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.
>
> I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words

The Roman Empire slowly rose to dominate the world after the Greek Empire was broken into four parts. During the second and third centuries BC, Rome increased in power. It took time for the empire to form; there were long periods of wars, unrest, and instability. It took almost three centuries for Rome to become a notable empire.

By the first century BC Rome had achieved beastly dominance. It devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled all the other beasts that came before it, i.e. the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians, and the Greeks. The early empire was strong from about 31 BC to 192 AD. During this time Rome was "dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong". Then Rome slipped into a period of decline. The first era of decline lasted from 192 to 284 AD.

Rome continued it's political and social decline after 284 AD, it was a steeper decline lasting another 250 years. The city of Rome was sacked in 455 AD by the Vandals. The traditional end of the Roman empire came in 476 AD when the last Western emperor was defeated at Revenna.

The grandeur of Rome came to an end and, as far as this author can see, the original fourth beast was dead.

The Three Horns of the Middle Ages

In Daniel 7:8 we read that there are ten horns that grow out of the beast, that a little horn comes up among the ten, and somehow the little horn overpowers the first three horns.

> I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, com-

> ing up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words (Dan 7:8).

Who were the first three horns? Who was the little horn? And who are the last seven horns? To figure it out, all you have to do is look at a map of Europe in about 600 AD.

The first three horns are the three major kingdoms that took the place of Rome and dominated Europe throughout the Middle Ages. All three were heavily controlled by a little horn, the Papacy. The Popes have been men with physical "eyes" and "mouths" that have spoken many "pompous words"—claiming to be the head of the church and the high priest on earth—positions claimed by Christ (Eph 5:23, Heb 3:1).

The first horn in the prophecy seems to be the kingdom of the Franks. The Franks were Germanic peoples that first settled near the Rhine. They dominated Central Europe, the territories of France and Germany, from 481 to 886. The greatest Frankish king was Charles the Great, i.e. Charlemagne, who ruled between 771 and 814. In time the Frankish kingdom became the Holy Roman Empire. From the 1200's onward the Holy Roman Empire lost most of its influence and power and the Holy Roman emperors became simply German Kings with limited authority.

The second horn that grew out of the Roman Empire apparently was the Byzantine Empire. It included Eastern Europe, Greece, Asia Minor, and North Africa. It lasted from 527 to 1453. Justinian was the first great ruler in the West, from 527 to 565. In 1054 the Eastern Church split with the Papacy. The Byzantine empire began a long period of decline in about 1050.

The third horn probably was the kingdom of the Visigoths in Spain, from 466 to 711. At the time it wasn't called Spain. The Visigoths had traveled through Europe and settled in what has become modern day Spain. In 587 the Visigoth king Reccared converted to Catholicism. His conversion accelerated the Romanization of the Visigoths and the Catholic Clergy soon come to dominate the Visigoth monarchy. The Moslem conquest of the Visigoth empire began in 711. It took centuries to defeat the Moslems and for Christian Spain to emerge.

The Little Horn

These three kingdoms were heavily controlled by the little horn, the Papacy. For centuries the Papacy had no secular territory, yet it wielded enormous political power. In 756 King Pepin, a Frankish king, gave the Papacy lands in central Italy. It was an illegal act that made the Papacy a temporal power. The Papacy continued to garner political power for the next 400 years. It was a very brutal and corrupt period of history. The power of the Papacy was dealt a death blow in the early 1500's by the Protestant Reformation.

At this point it is important to make a distinction between the Papacy and the Catholic Church. The little horn was the Papacy and not the Catholic Church. The two are not the same. For some 1,260 years the Papacy wielded both religious and secular authority, spoke pompous words, changed times and laws, and executed thousands of saints.

Throughout these years most of the Christian world was Catholic; people generally belonged to the one universal church—that was all they knew. Many Christians, i.e. saints, tried to follow Jesus and whatever parts of the Bible they could learn—they had relatively little do with the Papal hierarchy.

If you look at a map of Europe during the early Middle Ages you will see that Kingdom of the Franks, the Byzantine Empire, and the Visigoth Empire covers virtually all of Europe. In Italy you will see the Papal States.

The Middle Ages was the time of the first three horns and the Papacy.

The Beast Is Slain

Daniel 7:11–12 tells us:

> I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

The "slain" beast was probably the original Roman Empire, destroyed in 476 AD. Much was indeed "given to the burning flame". It left behind the "other beasts", the first three horns and later the seven horns.

The "other beasts" were to continue on until the return of Jesus Christ (Daniel 7:12). The lives of the last seven kingdoms were to be prolonged for "a season and a time". These nations rose to power after the Protestant Reformation, after about 1500's, and continue to this day.

How long is "a season and a time"? A prophetic "time" is frequently regarded as 360 years. A "season" is one fourth of a year, so might a prophetic "season" be one fourth of a "time" or 90 years? That would mean that these seven horns were to continue for $90 + 360 = 450$ years. Apparently, these seven world powers were to continue 450 years after the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. The next two sections will contain an idea of when these 450 years might begin and end.

This section of Daniel 7 ends with verse 14, where Daniel explains that after the seven horns have their one chance at empire the Lord will return, and Jesus is given "dominion and glory and a kingdom". Daniel 7:13–14:

> I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.
>
> Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

But this dream is still hard to understand. So an angel was asked to help out.

An Angelic Explanation

Daniel was so moved by this vision that in his dream he walked up to an angel and asked the angel to explain the meaning of the fourth beast. So the angel goes on to repeat that there will be four beasts who will rule until the end of time. At the end of the age the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever and ever, Daniel 7:16–18:

> I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to

me the interpretation of these things:

'Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

But this explanation wasn't good enough for Daniel. The angel then continues to explain in greater detail, Daniel 7:19:

Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet.

In verses 20–22 Daniel retells his dream, especially the part about the small horn.

And the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom (Dan 7:20–22).

The angel goes on to provide additional details. In verse 23 the angel tells Daniel there will be ten "kings". The angel describes the Papacy by saying "another shall arise after them". The Papacy was to subdue the first three major kingdoms of the Middle Ages, i.e. the Franks, the Byzantine Empire, and the kingdom of the Visigoths.

"Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.

The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings" (Dan 7:23–24).

The saints were given into the hand of the Papacy for a "time and times and half a time". A "time" is 360 years in prophecy, so three and one half times equates to 3½ × 360 = 1,260 years.

The Christian Church was largely persecuted until the conversion of Roman Emperor Constantine in 312 AD. It had been led by an assortment of bishops, only some of which thought they needed to look to one specific bishop as their human leader. But after his conversion, Constantine made Christianity the state religion of Rome, and by the time of the Council of Nicea, in 325 AD, he effectively took control of the visible church. The Roman Catholic Church—led by the Bishop of Rome, or Pope—began its long existence. From that point in time, church and state were united to some degree, and together they persecuted the saints for 1,260 years. That persecution came to an end with the Protestant Reformation in the mid 1500's. If you add 325 AD and 1,260 years, it gives the date 1585 AD.

What Happened in 1585 AD?

Pope Gregory XIII died that year. He was the last Catholic pope to effectively resist the Protestant Reformation. He exhausted the Papal treasury establishing schools in numerous countries, expanding the power of the Jesuits and bringing a few political leaders back into the Catholic fold. While the Catholic Encyclopedia lists the **next** Pope, Sixtus V, as the last "counter-reformation" Pope, Sixtus V's major accomplishment was rebuilding the Papal treasury and protecting the Papal States—he did very little to slow the flood of Protestantism.

Also, Pope Gregory XIII accomplished one other very essential step to close the end of an era. Three years before he died, in 1582, he accepted long-overdue calendar reform—what we now call the Gregorian Calendar. Up till then, the calendar in use by the church (and therefore the western world) had been the Julian Calendar. The Julian Calendar assumed that a year (the time required for the earth to orbit the sun) is exactly 365¼ days. That figure is about 11 minutes too long. After 1,500 years of the Julian Calendar, the seasons of the year (astronomical solstices and equinoxes) were beginning ten days later in the year than they were when the calendar was set up. Gregory XIII removed 10 days from the calendar in 1582 and accepted the rule to miss a leap year in years divisible by 100—except in centuries divisible by 400. This "Gregorian Calendar" has continued in use, unaltered, by nearly all the civilized world today.

In 1582 the Protestant Reformation was well underway and some countries ignored Pope Gregory's calendar reform. It took over 100 years for it to be universally accepted. Nevertheless, the scientific correctness of his decree was eventually accepted everywhere. But the days when kings would obey Rome simply because she was Rome were ending, and the true Church was free to begin rebuilding. The Church needed freedom to grow; it had to come out from under the control of the Papacy. That freedom came with the Protestant Reformation and the rise of modern Protestant empires.

He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time (Dan 7:25).

The Papacy used the Julian Calendar throughout all but the last three of the 1,260 years—it was neither an accurate solar calendar, nor was it useful for determining the Feasts of the Bible (Lev 23). The restoration of an accurate solar calendar made calculations of Hebrew Calendar dates much simpler and more stable. During most of those same 1,260 years, the Papacy forbade the translation of the Bible into native languages. They did not teach the laws of the Bible as much as they taught their own doctrines and laws. The many Bible translations of

Daniel 7:18

It interesting to note that the King James and other versions say "the saints of the Most High shall **take** the Kingdom". The same Aramaic word (*Strong's Concordance* #6902) is used in Daniel 5:31 where "Darius the Median **took** the kingdom" (KJV). Is there a Parallel between the way that Darius took the Kingdom from Babylon and the way that the Saints will take it in the time of the end? Darius dammed the river and marched his troops under the "invincible walls". That Babylon was taken without a fight. This may be a topic for another article. — *NSE*

the 1500s, and the people who were not afraid to read them, restored the knowledge of much Biblical truth.

The Court in Heaven

The 1,260 years of killing were stopped by the Court that was called into session in heaven. It appears the Lord calls a Heavenly Court whenever it is time for major changes on this earth. The Protestant Reformation was the direct result of such a Heavenly Court, the success of the Protestant Reformation seems to have come as a direct result of a decree by this Heavenly Court.

This Heavenly Court also took away the dominion of the Papacy **forever**. It appears that the Papacy will never again have the power it once had during the Middle Ages. **That "horn" of the beast does not rise again.** While some Popes and/or their aides might like to be world powers, while some people might want to believe that they are controlling nations behind the scenes, this prophetic understanding indicates that the Papacy will never again become a world-ruling power. It will remain but a bit player on the world scene.

> But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever (Dan 7:26).

Once again we read that the kingdoms of this world are to be given to the people of God, the saints of the Most High, and they will rule the kingdom forever and ever. But this is after our modern time, when the seven horns have had their chance at empire, and the power of the Papacy has been destroyed. Daniel 7:27–28 states:

> Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him. This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.

If we add the 450 years of a "season and a time" (Dan 7:12) to 1585 AD, that comes to 2035 AD—a little over 2,000 years after the death of Christ. Is 2035 AD an exact date that we can count on? Maybe not. God frequently states prophecies in symbolic or flexible terms because He adjusts his judgments to people's obedience (Jer 18:7–10). Jonah prophesied that Nineveh would fall in 40 days (Jon 3:4), but the people repented and Nineveh's destruction came in 40 years instead. Since God has not promised us the exact meaning of a "season and a time", He is free to make it fit His purpose. Some prophetic times must be shortened (Matt 24:22)—but we may not know exactly how much they will be shortened. We can know that God's ultimate plans are sure without knowing the exact timing or details.

The Modern Era and the Seven Horns

The story of modern Europe and America is the story of the rise of the great modern empires. It is also the story of the last seven horns. The seven horns are the seven major empires that have ruled since the time of the Protestant Reformation. These seven modern empires have taken the place of the Papacy and the first three horns of the Middle Ages.

Here is the author's list of the seven largest modern Amero-European empires since the time of Martin Luther, the mid 1500's. It would be too time consuming to go through the history of these seven nations, but they each had a turn at empire over the past 450 years. They are:

Austria-Hungary — under the Hapsburgs
Spain — under Philip II
France — under Napoleon
Great Britain — under Queen Victoria
Italy — under Mussolini
Germany — under Kaiser Wilhelm II & Hitler
The United States after World War II

Each of these nations have had a significant empire during the past 450 years. The main religion of these empires has been both Catholic and Protestant. Even so, all of the rulers of these empires were secular rulers—they were not put in place or ruled by the Catholic church. In fact, during our modern times the most powerful nations of the fourth beast have been Protestant.

The fourth beast does not consist solely of Catholic empires, as some have claimed, rather it consists of both Catholic and Protestant nations. These European empires, all descended from the Roman Empire and will dominate geopolitics until Jesus returns. They all used Christian principles. Russia, China, or mid-eastern powers cannot become the dominant world power by this understanding.

The fourth beast is European and North American, and it lasts until Jesus Christ returns.

Today there is one "superpower", one "hyperpower", and that is the United States of America. She continues in the tradition of Rome. Since the USA is the dominant world power of our day she must be part of the fourth beast. European global dominance is continued by the USA, whose origins are in the European nations.

Here are four points to keep in mind regarding the seven horns of our modern age:

1. The fourth beast began with the Roman Empire and then it grew ten horns. The peoples that would comprise the fourth beast were all in place at the time of Rome's fall. If you read Daniel's descriptions of the rise of the Medes and Persians, and the rise of the Greeks, you see the same thing. In each case the "horns" associated with each empire existed during that empire.

The same is true for the ten horns of the fourth beast. The people of the ten horns were geographically in place in 476 AD when Rome fell. These people eventually became the modern nations of Europe. Again, the fourth beast is the period of European dominance of the world.

2. There were to be seven horns after the first three were plucked up. There were to be seven European empires. There have been more than seven European empires these past 450 years. Did I choose the correct seven?

We are looking for seven modern nations of Europe that have had significant empires. We have more then seven choices, but the other choices have not been as great as those listed above. The other smaller empires include the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Portugal. They all had empires, but their empires were much smaller then those of the other seven.

3. The seven European nations have taken turns at empire. They have gotten one chance at a modern empire, and that is all. They will not get a sec-

ond chance. That is consistent with what happened to Babylon, the Medes and the Persians, and the Greeks. They too had only one chance at empire. They exist today, but they are all relatively weak nations.

If these seven have only one chance at empire, then England's sun has set. Germany will not rise again. The French will remain politically weak. The Spanish might continue to make good wine, but they shall continue to be economically depressed. And on it goes. None of these seven nations will ever again rise to prominence!

The kingdom of the fourth beast has been partly strong and partly weak. That is true today. Most of these nations have been plagued by wealthy individuals and corporations seeking their own profit above the good of their countries. Most of the nations of Europe have been similarly weak. Generally there has been one dominant empire and the other empires have played secondary roles, acting together to counterbalance the dominant power.

Today the United States is the sole superpower. The United States is currently having her one chance at empire. It will be her only chance. If the United States is the seventh horn, then she is the last empire before the return of Jesus Christ.

4. Other empires have existed throughout the times of the fourth beast, but the empires of the fourth beast have always been dominant. Other empires have threatened Europe over the years, i.e. the Ottoman empire and the Russian Empire, but Europeans have always maintained dominance.

The fourth beast is Amero-european, so neither the Russians nor the Chinese will ever dominate the modern world. Europe/USA will be dominant until the Lord returns. Other nations have risen and threatened European power, but no other nation has risen and taken away the fourth beast's power.

The United States of America may well be the last of the seven European empires. We came out of Europe and we are comprised of all the various European nationalities that existed before we became a nation.

How Does it All End?

So how does Amero-european dominance end? What happens to the seventh horn, the United States? What will usher in the return of Jesus Christ?

Daniel's seventh chapter doesn't give us the answers to these questions. Other prophecies tell us more. But Daniel 7 does tell that we are living in the times of the fourth beast. 🕮

"Rightly Distributing the Word of Truth" from page 10

mans, I noticed 3:27 where the reader must be confused that "glorification is excluded by belief in the law".

Anyway, I thank you and if I can help further, please write.

— Paul Pells

RESPONSE: You have made an excellent point regarding Romans 3:27 and after further review of this passage it has been corrected to read: "by the law of faith".

While the Greek word *nomos* does occur in the passage, the first edition of the HSV mistakenly rearranged the word order to a reading that was questionable. I thank you very much for your careful observation. Future editions of the HSV will reflect this correction. — R.V.

Hebrews 10:34, "Synagogue" in James 2:2

LETTER: Hebrews 10:34 appears to have a manuscript issue because the KJV and related versions say "my chains". The ASV, RSV, Darby and Latin Vulgate have "those in chains". The Byzantine text has an extra Greek word for "my" here and others do not. It makes more sense that the people had their goods confiscated for having compassion on a variety of those in prison, not just the writer of Hebrews. If you do not want to change the HSV reading, you should at least note this as an alternate reading.

Also, I think I mentioned this before, but the KJV & HSV have "assembly" in James 2:2 where the Greek reads sunagoge, which is everywhere else rendered "synagogue".

— Norm Edwards

RESPONSE: Excellent points. After further review, I have noted the alternate reading for Heb 10:34 in the Notes and Commentary and corrected the HSV to read "synagogue" in James 2:2.

Acts 8:37 Is Probably a Later Addition

LETTER: Based on the preponderance of evidence, I would have to agree with Philip Comfort that Acts 8:37 was not in the original [text]. It is not in the majority text and it is not in Scholz or Aland/Black.

— Wily Elder

RESPONSE: Aye, there's the rub! This is probably the most difficult area to deal with in translating/version work. When some texts have a large block of text that others don't, what do you do? I try to look at whether it was more probable that it was intentionally left out of some of the texts or intentionally inserted into some of texts. Is there a stronger motive for inserting or deleting this verse?

It appears to me that the doctrine of baptizing infants (who can neither believe nor repent) is brought into serious question by this and other verses (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:13, Acts 18:8, Acts 19:4–5). Where there are other verses that concur and there are other ancient texts that have the same reading and there is no conflict with other scriptures, I tend to accept the RT.

Finally, the verse is logical because it answers the question set forth in verse 36, which otherwise would be answered only by the actions of verse 38.

For all of these reasons, I have left the verse in the HSV but will note the alternate reading in the Notes and Commentary. — R.V. 🕮

Ask Your Help

Please send concise descriptions of potential translation improvements that you have studied to Rabon Vincent Jr, 324 E Albion St, Avilla, Indiana 46710-9434; e-mail: rabon007@ligtel.com. Please understand that whatever you send may be edited and printed in this column and/or the Holy Scriptures Commentary. We cannot be responsible for returning manuscripts.

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Who Is Toli Bohonik?

LETTER: May 22, 2001

Hi Norm,

Who is "Toli Bohonik"? What is his background? Could you fill us in a bit perhaps in the next *Servants' News*? It always makes things more interesting if you know a bit about the author.

Thanks,

— Beve, Quebec

RESPONSE: Toli began reading Worldwide Church of God literature at age 13 in 1962 and began attending it in 1968. In 1978, he married Candi Hamilton who had attended the WCG since age 8. Both graduated from Ambassador College. They left the WCG for the Global Church of God in 1994, then attended the UCG-IA in 1995. They have three children who have a commitment to following Christ and keeping "Church of God" practices.

Toli has spent a lot of time studying the Bible, history, and the teachings of various groups. He has an approach similar to mine in that he believes that when we look to find what God has done during the past 2,000 years, we must look at much of Christianity, not just seventh day groups. We believe God works through very imperfect groups of people—including ours.

Toli presently attends the Church of God Seventh Day, congregation Bethel (a messianic Jewish format) and the UCG-IA in the Seattle, Washington area. He visits other congregations as time allows.

— NSE

Thanks for Dave Pack Article

LETTER: June 16, 2001

Hi Norm,

Could you let me know how I can find the Ambassador Report archives? My wife and I are very interested. I started to read them this spring and now can't find them.

I do want to personally thank you for the article you wrote about Dave Pack in your *Servants' News*. I was working as the head of Ministerial Services for Dave Pack at Restored Church of God and someone sent in a copy of the article. I read it and realized that what you were describing was what I too had seen as well; and I began to wonder what I got my family and myself into. The end of August / early September I resigned. Again, thank you!

If you want more information you may call me at [numbers removed] or read my resignation letter which I sent to the members at: web.raex.com/~shep/bill/munsonletter.html.

Thanks,

— Thomas Munson

RESPONSE: Ambassador Report archives are now available at:

http://apollo.spaceports.com/~truth

This is part of the "Painful Truth" site which is very negative and hosts a lot of atheist stuff. I hope to make the Ambassador Report information available on my own web site someday.

I was glad to be of help concerning Dave Pack. A number of people complain about the "negative" writing that sometimes appears in *Servants' News*, but sometimes it is a life-saver for some people. Several people from Dave Pack's group told me they were greatly helped by the Jan/Feb 2000 article (see page 20). It saved them from many more frustrating months or years of learning that not everyone who claims to be "God's minister" is God's minister.

I have considered taking your resignation letter and letters from many other people and making a thick document exposing him, but I do not believe it would be worth the time. The whole issue revolves around people who have already decided that some man is "God's representative" and that questioning his actions would be like "questioning God". When a person's mind is set like that, a two-page letter or a 100-page book of evidence against the leader does not matter. People with **faith in a man** will not normally listen to anything against their leader. Only when they perceive a problem with the leader on their own will they sometimes listen to another's evidence against him. (Sometimes, God simply opens their mind to see the problems.)

David Pack is very diligent to "do the work", but he has greatly expanded the erroneous idea I saw used in the WCG and GCG: "whatever I do **for the work** is all right with God, God's law doesn't matter—the end will justify the means." This idea is unbiblical. Now that he no longer has any man that he must report to, he acts completely without restraint. People who work with him see this after a year or two and leave. It is funny, but in one way Mr. Pack and I both perform the same service for many former WCG members: We both teach against hierarchical government. I teach from the Bible and scriptures, Dave teaches by the experience he gives people.

Unfortunately, people away from his headquarters who primarily only hear his sermons and read his booklets may not see the problem for years. I frequently pray that these people will have an encounter with their leader and be able to see him as he really is.

— NSE

Subscriber Turns Whites Out

LETTER: May 29, 2001

Dear David Heslin [*Servants' News*, Australia],

Reading through your *Servants' News*, I have to point out that your magazine is used by people who are unaware of God's truth within scripture. I can't and will not agree with Linda Hardy White, as a woman myself, and aim to obey the teaching of God, not man or woman. If Jesus Christ wanted any of the Mary's to become preachers, Christ would have inspired the apostles to write about it in God's true word, the Bible. When Judas betrayed Christ to be put on death on a tree, why didn't the true apostles select one of the

Mary's to replace Judas? Question "why". Think.

Also, reading your news reports, one seems that many church brethren are always trying to put down a brother. I always wonder. Do they pray or do they study?

I think Linda Hardy White wants to adopt or bring in the religion of Protestantism like the Worldwide Church of God. I was reading about a long standing Church of God member, stating there was a person before Adam. Craig White, a South African born, states that after the floods of Noah, the Aboriginal Peoples were the first to land on Australian soil. Was Craig White in the ark with Noah? I think these people like to be heard. Please cancel my *Servants' News*.

— Australia

RESPONSE: I think it would be safe to say that you have been offended by what you have read in *Servants' News*. The Bible mentions at least two ways that a person can become "offended". Sometimes it is other people who do it, and Christ is unhappy with that:

> Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones" (Luke 17:1–2).

Other times, we can become offended by what Christ does:

> And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me (Matt 11:6).

When we are offended at some man's or woman's teaching, it may be from either one of the above two causes: they are teaching error that offends us, or they are teaching truth that we don't understand yet and that offends us. Important issues like the ten commandments and the death of Christ can be clearly understood from the scripture and we should reject people who teach against the simple scriptural teaching. When we ask questions about Mary teaching, or who were the first people to come to Australia, we must realize that the Bible does not say much one way or the other. There is nothing wrong with theorizing about history, as long as it is clearly labeled as "theory" and those who look for support for it are honest. Historical theories frequently give rise to additional investigations, archeology, translations, etc. If new findings support old theories, they may eventually be considered fact; but if not, then the old theories should be honestly discarded.

Gal 6:1 indicates that spiritual people should attempt to restore those who are sinning. If someone's writing offends you, you can go to them directly as in Matthew 18:15–17. If you can not reach them via the addresses or e-mail provided in *Servants' News*, then please send the letter directly to us, and we will make sure that it is forwarded to them.

> Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them (Psalm 119:165, KJV).

— NSE

WCG to Pay Reparations?

LETTER: Dec 25, 2000

Greetings Norman Edwards:

I received a copy of HWA's member letter dated March 30, 1970, asking the brethren to take out loans and send the money into "the work". The letter also states that HWA said he put "our airplanes up for sale". I want to thank you for responding to Myra McQueen's request to help The Bible Expositor's project here in Arcadia, California.

In your comment to Myra, you said, "I am not interested in obtaining any of the WCG's money"! Neither are we, Mr. Edwards— that's not our goal. All we want to do is, if possible, "convict" the present leadership of the WCG that many people have suffered "serious loss" due to the deliberate lies and abuse by the former leaders and that **some**, not all, of the proceeds should be considered as "reparations" for those defrauded in the most egregious ways! Needless to say, this will not be an easy thing to do. We're hoping that any legal action can be avoided. But if unavoidable, it will be necessary for us to make our case with facts, not fantasy. Hence, any ideas you might have which can be sent to us which could be backed up by facts, would be deeply appreciated. Once again, this is not a "vengeance hate" project.

RESPONSE: I think that the present WCG leadership would agree that members were abused in the past, but probably not agree that they are continuing to abuse the members in the present. They used many lying tactics to gradually subvert the WCG membership away from some of the truth that they had. They would go into church areas and tell the local leadership that they were not sure of everything they wrote in the "God Is…" booklet and would like their honest input. Then those who honestly disagreed with it would, after a couple weeks, find themselves off of the local speaking schedules. The WCG still seems to have no love for those who have left her. Their present members can visit other churches (or pagan temples) as much as they want without problems, but are frequently disciplined if they visit another Church of God group and then come back to the WCG and talk about it.

I do not think you will be able to get the WCG to voluntarily give up anything. You will have to go to court.

LETTER: The church's property escrows (including Ambassador College) are scheduled to close in late January and $100,000,000.00, more or less, will be in the church coffers. We have no way of knowing whether Stan Rader is still involved in "the work" but we suspect he is and that's bad new for everybody! We received a phone call from a minister by the name of Dave Pack a few months ago and he told us Rader was still drawing $250,000.00 in retirement. If true, you can be sure Rader is still involved and will have some kind of a vested interest in the $100,000,000.00.

RESPONSE: Dave Pack has told people that I was planning to sue him—which is a complete invention on his part. I have heard dozens of others complain that he has invented things about them. He is not a reliable witness. Why should anyone worry about whether Stan Rader will get some of the money or not? If you hired an attorney and won a big judgment, your attorney would get a big chunk of it. Is it somehow more or less righteous for Stan Rader, Joe Tkach, Herbert Armstrong or anyone else to squander the money? I remember Stan Rader being asked about the extravagant lifestyle that he and Herbert Armstrong led, during the 1979 receivership crisis. He said that the members knew about it and loved it—that it was a type of the Millennium. At the time, I knew that was not Biblical—New Testament leaders never did anything like that. **But I did nothing** about it because this was "my church" and I was going to defend it.

LETTER: If legal action is the only possible remedy, we will need people with "standing" to initiate the court action. Most former members of the WCG have been in kind of a "crisis shock" since separating from "mother church" and might not want to get involved. We set the stage in our last three issues of The Bible Expositor with one last

issue to come which should impress upon the present leaders of the WCG to acknowledge their responsibility in this matter. Legal action would be the last possible course of action on our part and, if absolute necessary, we hope it would be more than just a futile exercise in harassment.

RESPONSE: Please realize that you are not the first person to try to recover money from the WCG in this way, and that there are literally hundreds of cases like this for people trying to recover money from other churches and charities. Also, please realize that there are statutes of limitation for collecting debts. They vary from state to state and for type of debt, but if you had a clear promissory note that said someone owed you $100,000,000, but you could not show that you had made any efforts to collect it for 30 years, you would probably be unable to collect it now. Since WCG members have no such clear instruments, but are simply going to have to claim that they are owed money somehow, a court is going to ask, "why haven't you been trying to collect this before?" It will simply see the complaints as "the WCG has money and you want some."

LETTER: At court, we would ask a judge to restrain (a temporary injunction) the church from using the funds until notices could be placed in newspapers throughout the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia-Philippines seeking those former members who have not been repaid loans and who may have lost their homes or farms by so doing. Remember, Armstrong said "it was a serious recession" when he asked for the money. Was it also a "serious recession" for those who borrowed, put their homesteads up for collateral, and may have been unable to repay due to that recession? Also, any who have suffered serious loss due to the healing doctrine which was promoted, but hypocritically ignored, by the leaders at their whim and caprice. These notices would be placed for at least one week in any one newspaper. A reasonable period of time would be imposed (30–60 days) in order for the people to respond. In addition, any ex-members who have suffered serious loss in other ways not mentioned above. Naturally, the respondents would have to have documentation of some kind (witnesses, letters, testimony, etc.), to verify their losses.

RESPONSE: Courts have long held, and I believe rightly so, that when someone sends money to a church or charity to further their purpose, that that money has been given and cannot be recovered. Otherwise, churches and charities could never spend the money they receive—they would have to hold it in an account in case the giver ever wanted it back. The only exception to this is if the money were given for a specific purpose and it was not used for that purpose. The reality of the WCG is that nearly all of the money was given "unrestricted", no specific purpose was stated. What little had a purpose attached ("building fund", for example), the WCG easily spent more than that amount of money in that area, so it is almost impossible to recover money on these grounds. Besides, these kinds of records usually do not need to be kept for more than 7 years—so such a suit is no longer possible.

I believe that if a court were willing to take on this issue that it would be an utter violation of freedom of religion. If a person believes that they should give all of their money to do "God's work", or if they believe they should trust God for healing rather than seek medical help, the state should not interfere. I think the WCG leaders will have to answer in God's judgment for preaching what they did not practice, but I do not think the courts of this world should be the ones to decide whether a church's doctrines are valid. If a church organization were to physically threaten people, then the state should intervene. But if an organization is teaching false doctrine, it should be the responsibility of the members to see it and leave. It should also be the responsibility of righteous people to minister to those oppressed by cults and help them out of them. Those of us who have been through this should have the love to help others still in the same difficulty.

LETTER: That's why we appreciate anything you folks could do for us in the way of any creative ideas or material facts you might have in your archives like the member letter to the brethren dated March 30, 1970, which you were so kind to send us. Once again, thanks! The packet you sent me several months ago is outstanding and I appreciate the mini-article on my PT article which HWA used for his book, *Mystery of he Ages*! It really did happen that way, believe it or not!

With Kind Regards and Christian Love,

— Bernard H. Kelly, Calif., bhkell@juno.com

RESPONSE: I appreciate your efforts to tell the truth about the past. So many long-time WCG ministers will not tell the truth about the past. The reason they usually give is that it would cause some people to "give up on God and lose out on salvation". In reality, telling the truth would cause some people to "give up on the CoG leaders", and then they would lose out on some income".

"For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mark 4:22–23).

I think trying to collect money from the WCG is a spiritual mistake. The whole lesson we should have learned is that doing the work of God is not about money—it wasn't then and it isn't now. We mistakenly gave huge amounts of money thinking we were doing the work of God. If we did it in faith, we should have no regrets about it. But now we can see that rather than believing the false assurances from these men that our "staying in their church" would take us to the "place of safety" and the Kingdom, we should have been reading our Bibles and looking to God.

Today, we need to concentrate on the spiritual recovery of former WCG members. They do not need the WCG's money—they are not going to take it into the Kingdom of God. But unfortunately, far too many people who entrusted their spiritual life to the WCG for many years are now simply entrusting it to a different group (be it large or small). They desperately need to understand that they are first a believer—apart from any organization—and that secondarily they meet with other believers to learn and to work together to preach the Gospel.

If you believe that God has stirred you up to cause the WCG to pay this money, then pursue it diligently. But I do not believe He wants me to do it, nor can I recommend that path to anyone else.

— NSE

More on WCG Reparations

LETTER: Dec 27,2000

Greetings Norm Edwards:

Thanks for your reply!

I absolutely agree with you that courts shouldn't take on issues that would "utterly violate" the freedom of religion. Further, I agree that courts shouldn't decide if church doctrines are valid. Lastly, you are absolutely correct in saying that, "Doing the work of God is not about money".

Norm, we are talking about Biblical examples of "Reparations" not the "returning of tithe and offerings"! These reparations would be the kind that Jesus Christ sanctioned, applauded and praised (Luke 19:1–9). You recall that the Japanese paid "reparations" to the Korean woman they used as "comfort woman" (sex slaves) for their troops in World War II. You recall, the U.S. government paid "reparations" (I believe $10,000 ea.) to Japanese who were held at "detention camps" here in California during the entire period of World War II.

RESPONSE: You have well illustrated the difference between situations like the above that deserve reparations and the WCG. When Zaccheus (Luke 19) overtaxed people, they probably knew it, but what could they do? He had the power of Rome, and they were Israelite subjects. The Korean women and the detained Japanese knew they were being forced against their will as soon as it happened, but there was nothing that they could do.

Whereas, most WCG brethren wanted to pay their tithes, avoid doctors and do other things and had no idea that they were "wronged" until many years later. Some of them, to this day, believe that they were blessed for paying several tithes and avoiding doctors—and that may be true in many cases. I also know that some church members went bankrupt and got sick or died of a disease that could have been medically treated. The WCG never promised that **they** would give health or prosperity based on members obedience, they promised that God would, and they had examples of where it happened (and concluded that the people who suffered must have been sinning). But can anyone sue someone based upon how God performs?

LETTER: The concept would be to pay "reparations"—a valid principle of which the world knows and respects. What we would ask you and others is to "funnel" names of people you know who might be candidates for these reparations. Let me give you an example of such a person who might receive "reparations" from the Worldwide Church of God.

In or around 1970, a couple living in Big Sandy were visited personally by Roderick Meredith and told they were living in "sin"! The local minister had previously told these older people they could live as "brother and sister" if they wouldn't spread it around in the local churches and just "keep their mouths shut" because their D&R situation was "problematic"—meaning it really hadn't been completely ruled on. But Meredith came to town, heard about their "problematic" situation, and decided to interfere and go over the head of the local Minister who had handled the situation prudently and wisely. Meredith was, "third in the Universe", you know, and just had to "exercise authority"!

These were kind, old, veteran members of the church and were sensitive! "Heinrich Himler" Meredith blustered in and gave them an ultimatum consistent with his "SS" storm trooper mentality! A few days later, the older confused gentlemen committed suicide by locking himself in his running garaged car with a hose attached to the exhaust pipe stuck through one of the cars windows. The old lady was devastated as were their children!

RESPONSE: I don't know anything about this incident, but if it is true, it is indeed awful. Nevertheless, I am not sure that the WCG would be responsible if its employee was acting beyond the scope of his instructions. Even so, he was giving religions advice, not physically forcing or threatening somebody. If an abortion doctor came to God and then asked me if I think God would want him to quit his job, I would say, "yes". Suppose that he has trouble finding another job, falls behind on his payments, loses his house, and is divorced by his wife. Suppose he gives up on God. Should he be able to sue me for reparations because I gave him advice that turned out "bad", in his view?

I do not think courts should make these kinds of religious decisions.

LETTER: Another candidate for "reparations" would be the young man I discussed in the June 9th issue of The Expositor! He was the victim of the first sanctioned divorce among two graduates of Ambassador College. As such, he lost his house, his wife, his children, and his job! All because GTA was having an affair with his Falcon Jet stewardess and wanted to divorce his wife! Ted needed a "precedent" first! He got it! Next Ted needed a precedent among the ministry! He got it with Raymond McNair's shameful debacle using 1 Corinthians 7, and Deut. 7, along with Ezra's so called example as mentioned in the July 31 issue of the Expositor! It was GTA who orchestrated the laughable 1974 D&R Ministerial Conference and truly "screwed up" the church. It all came out in the Leona McNair "libel" trial of 1984.

Norm, I could go on and on! Our mission is not to have Tithes & Offerings returned! It is rather to have **biblically sanctioned reparations** exacted upon an acknowledged **corrupt church** in the same way that reparations were exacted on a corrupt Japanese government and an act by the US Government which may have been unconstitutional! What we are asking you to do is to "funnel" any names of people to us, right now, who you know might be candidates for legal, righteous, and for them, **needed Reparations!**

In the meantime, please send us the cost of putting an ad in your publication for this purpose. It would also be OK with us for you to reproduce part or all of the Expositor's last three (and fourth to come out soon) issues which sets the stage for our action if action is ultimately needed!

With Kind Regards,

— Bernard H. Kelly, bhkell@juno.com
The Bible Expositor,
130 W Huntington Dr # 120,
Arcadia, CA 91007-3025;
626-446-5211 x120

RESPONSE: I do not accept ads, but anyone who wants can contact you, above.

Restitution or reparations are certainly taught in the Bible, but usually the individual who caused the damage pays them. In a few cases, the **families** have paid for the sins of the fathers, and sometimes **nations** pay for past national sins. In the case of the Worldwide Church of God, we have a corporation. The Bible has no laws for **corporations**. When Mr. Armstrong left all of the wealth of the Worldwide Church of God in a corporation, it was like sticking all of the money in an envelope, giving it to Joseph Tkach and saying, "play keep-away!" Whoever holds the envelope controls the money and everyone else chases him. In reality, whoever controls the corporation controls the money.

Herbert Armstrong is dead, his family does not have his wealth, and the WCG no longer teaches his doctrines. The offending ministers that you named are not part of the WCG and do not presently possess any significant part of its wealth (or wealth of their own as far as I know). Joe Tkach, Jr. can honestly say that he was opposed to many of the WCG's teachings and methods during the 60s and 70s.

Reparations are supposed to punish the person who has to pay them and reward the person who received them.

Those that you are suggesting do not do either one. While Joe Tkach, Jr. may have caused problems of his own, he did not cause the ones you described here. It is probably too late to do any good for the people who suffered as you described.

It might have helped them to have $100,000 right after the abuse occurred—it would have given them a way to start a new life. But those who suffered, who are still alive, and who have found a way to continue will probably not be helped with a sudden windfall of money. Such things frequently cause people to lose friends rather than gain them.

If there is any lesson that we can learn from this, I think it is to work diligently to try to help other people who are in hierarchical religions. We can still get to them in time to make a big difference in their lives.

— NSE

The Holy Scriptures Bible

LETTER: June 27, 2001

I received the materials you sent and am busy reading. Very good articles. I found an article about The Holy Scriptures Bible version that you will be offering free. As you know, I am disabled and can't afford to buy a new Bible. The two I have been using have fallen apart from age and use. It would be nice to have a Bible in one piece that I can take with me to meetings without having to take the rubber bands off of to open and having parts of it falling all over the place. I had hoped to get them both repaired, or better yet, find a way to do it myself but they may be too far gone for even that. It would be so helpful to have one that stays together.

I like what was explained about Rabon Vincent trying to clarify the various translations.

If it is possible, could I be considered for receiving a hard copy of one of these Bibles? I feel badly that I can't pay anything but I do refer people to your site. If I ever do have a spare few dollars, I will send them to you. You are operating a valuable site and service. If only more people could, and would, listen.

Thank you,

— Alice, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Besqa@earthlink.net

RESPONSE: Thank you very much for asking. After spending some time studying about the many people who worked hard, and others who died trying to make the scriptures available to everyone to read, I am glad to send a Bible to someone who is having a difficult time obtaining one. The Holy Scriptures Version is not the best of bindings, but it should last as long as any other paperback book. At this time, I feel it is one of the best translations available for general reading. I am glad that others are making it possible to give away this Bible.

— NSE 🕮

Response Page Survey Results

(These results were intended to accompany the page 1 article last issue, but were accidentally left out.)

1,129 people completed the survey portion, but not everyone answered all questions. These are the responses received:

	Number of people who said this was: **"Very important to me"**	Number of people who said this was: **"Less important, but I read it"**	Number of people who said this was: **"Not important"**	
a.	558	424	132	Stories of independent groups' local evangelism, including Truckers Bible studies.
b.	589	407	124	Reporting on Church of God group news (future events calendar and stories of previous events).
c.	713	339	75	Publishing and answering of subscriber letters on a variety of subjects.
d.	599	342	175	Analysis of current Church of God groups' practice and policy (government, cooperation, etc.)
e.	396	312	395	Analysis of Herbert Armstrong and past Worldwide Church of God teachings and practice.
f.	599	364	133	Articles on how we can work together with other groups to preach the Gospel.
g.	731	284	109	Doctrinal articles on typical CoG controversies (Passover, Pentecost, calendars, sacred names, etc.).
h.	866	223	40	Biblical articles on other subjects (eternal judgement, Holy Days, music, difficult scriptures, etc.)
i.	485	475	140	Christian "activist" articles: helping the needy, visiting prisoners, Christian martyrs, voting, juries, etc.
j.	498	441	141	Provide indexes and copies of other's Bible-related writings. (We already have about 100 documents which we have printed, put in our index and offer freely. There are hundreds more we could sift though and make available.)
k.	449	378	256	Publication of *Shelter in the Word*—our magazine for those with no Church of God background.
l.	651	371	363	A new basic literature series: booklets that are mostly scriptures about one subject with additional explanation as necessary. Examples: *What Does the Bible Say About Law? … Salvation?, etc.*
m.	*249*	*371*	*363*	Assist others in starting independent groups (results may not be in SN, but this still takes my time).

435 people estimated the number of non-CoG Sabbatarian groups near them. The average was **4.5 groups.**

467 people indicated that they had visited groups near them. The **average number of groups visited was 1.5.**

"Truckers Study" from page 2

but that she was an answer to a prayer.

Their son was an amazing young man with insight into several issues that I must work into a message some time relative to waiting on God to work things out in His own way rather than trying to work them out on our own. His short message was about the story of Jacob and Esau, and how God might have worked things out had Jacob not taken it upon himself to steal Esau's birthright.

I came home encouraged today in seeing how God seems to be working with people one on one. There are some people to whom God is a daily reality and who strive to walk with him in all they do.

May 27, 2001

Today was a little unusual in it being Pentecost, and we were joined today by David Antion who was in Kansas City as our guest this weekend.

Two truck drivers attended as well. We had a friendly discussion on a number of topics, but the real value of these studies is in providing a place for the drivers to go and talk about what is on their minds. Although we talked about a number of different topics, one of the men had an insight into 1 Corinthians 11 that I found to be interesting. I had just given a brief discussion on the Holy Days and how they point to God's plan. He read through part of the chapter and then came to verse 29 and read, "he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." His belief here is the term "Lord's body" refers to the church, and his belief that there are not more healings because we do not allow ourselves to properly discern the spiritual gifts in the Body of Christ, and therefore are not tuned into who might have the gift of healing. It's interesting to me that this somewhat fits the context of the verse because 1 Corinthians 12, the very next chapter, is about spiritual gifts.

One of our drivers today goes to a "freewill" Baptist church, and while I didn't ask the other, it appeared to me that he is of Pentecostal background based upon some the things he believes relative to religious practice and his take on spiritual gifts. His speech was salted with terms such as "the Lord told me to do this," and "the Lord told me to do that." I asked how the Lord talks to him, and he admitted that he doesn't hear an audible voice, but thoughts come into his mind and he tries to follow it. His problem is in discerning whether the thought is really from God or if it is just himself.

The main benefit of today's study was to provide a place for these men to talk and fellowship. I also hope that we were able to plant a few seeds relative to the Holy Days and encouragement to pray, study, and coming to know God better.

[1 Corinthians 11:27 states that "whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord". This sounds more like being guilty of His death. But verse 29 could indeed be referring to our failure to see what His Body (the church?) is doing now. I have met others who understand this verse this way. Also, I hope that the man attending this study and the many other Christians who say "the Lord told me to do this" will learn to discern when God is speaking to them and when He is not. I have seen a lot of foolish things done by people who thought God was speaking to them when He was not. — NSE]

June 17, 2001

It is well to remember Paul's comment that one man sows and another reaps. At last week's study, Arlo told me, a fellow mentioned that someone (we don't know who) had introduced him to the Sabbath and he could see the sense of it. He quizzed Arlo about it and of course he couldn't have picked a better man. So our modest truck stop ministry was in the position of watering someone else's planting. As I think back, we have had at least a half dozen instances over the past four years where this has happened.

In addition, Arlo has the habit of leaving booklets and pamphlets lying around with his phone number on them, and one made its way to a lady in Hays, Kansas. He received a call this week from her, and she mentioned that she discovered the Sabbath about four years ago and asked if we could provide her with locations of Sabbath keeping churches in her area.

And today, we had a driver with whom we have visited a number of times and with whom we have discussed the Sabbath a number of times, and he asked if we could provide him a directory of Sabbath keeping groups. We are going to direct him to the Bible Sabbath Association for the information he needs.

I mention these three instances because they illustrate that things take time, but in fact fruit is borne in due time. We have pretty much decided that we are going to mention the Sabbath every week in the sense of putting it on the table and offer more information if there is an interest—not in the sense of beating people over the head with it, but just seeing if the soil is fertile.

It is interesting that one of the drivers today had a book with him entitled "If you want to walk on water, then you've got to get out of the boat", by John Orthberg. He read excerpts from it, and it is based on the premise that we need to step out on faith as Peter did even if it means getting out of our comfort zones. Sometimes we need to get out of our comfort zones in our approach to evangelism. It's a book I intend to buy.

Today's contingent consisted of five truck drivers, one wife of a driver plus their two small children, and another small daughter of another driver. We talked through a number of items, including faith and healing, and we also touched on prophecy. Prophecy is an area I once thought I knew inside out, but I now know better than to be dogmatic about it. These days I emphasize the fact of Jesus Christ's return and the good news that follows. While acknowledging the tribulation, I remind people that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of a sound mind. The world is in need of hope, and we have the words of hope to share.

— Lenny Cacchio
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"National Unlicensed Church Conference" from page 9

the gold and silver entrusted to them and moved it to a secret location, so that when their system collapsed, they would still have the real wealth.

The United States started out using real gold and silver as money. Banks began to issue notes, which were promises to pay upon demand in gold or silver. As the the number of institutions issuing notes grew, so did the number of bogus, worthless notes—they might be traded many times as money until someone tried to return them to the issuing institution and found that it did not exist, or had no precious metals to back up its note. Eventually the government of the United States of America began to issue gold and silver certificates—bills fully redeemable for precious metal.

But our economic situation today is far worse than any of the situations we have described here. There is **no gold or silver** to back **any** of the bills put into circulation today. The Federal Reserve is a private organization that has never been audited. It pays no taxes. It issues its Federal Reserve Notes according to its own rules, and lends to banks and governments bogus dollars which it creates from nothing—just like the bogus receipts from the evil warehouse men of old.

Even though news reports often talk about Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan "cutting interest rates to stimulate the economy" or "raising interest rates to prevent inflation", they never seem to make the point that he is not an elected official, and not responsible to the USA government in any way. The Federal Reserve Board members are appointed by the US President, but it is a private organization and its actions are not subject to review by anyone. It came into existence from what was claimed to be a "routine banking bill" passed in 1913 as most congressmen were leaving for a break.

Yet much of the trillions of dollars of "national debt" supposedly owed by this country originated as interest owed on Federal Reserve loans—money the Federal Reserve created out of thin air, simply by making accounting entries.

Article 1, section 8 of The Federal Constitution states that Congress has the right "To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures". We have given this right away to a private group of people who have no supervision and have never been audited. The Bible says, "a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children" (Prv 13:22). What are we doing as a nation when we leave our children and their children trillions of dollars of debt that they must repay in high taxes? If any group is allowed to create money from nothing, should not it be our own government, rather than a private organization that enriches itself and impoverishes the nation by collecting interest for lending money it never had?

The problems with the Federal Reserve are more complex than this simple description, but the principles here are quite true. This evil continues because most people (I was one for decades), either do not know anything about it or are afraid to try to do anything about it. All too many wealthy and government people profit from the present evil system, so very few openly oppose it.

In both Old and New Testaments, the Bible commands believers to make just judgments. The people, the ultimate governing body of the USA, sit in judgment of their leaders when they vote, when they write letters to them, when they write letters to publications, and when they speak to others who will do the same. We must learn to follow God, and not fear men.

> You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's (Deut 1:17) .

As believers, we do not have to feel that we have failed if we do not eliminate the Federal Reserve in ten years—or even in our lifetime. But it is very important that each Christian make righteous decisions with whatever resources and governing abilities he or she has—and to teach future generations to do the same. God will certainly judge us based upon what we do. 🕮

For More Information

More information is available on operating churches without incorporation and IRS filings from Heal Our Land Ministries, 208 E College Suite 304, Branson, Missouri 65616; 417-337-7533; www.hushmoney.org. The book, *In Caesar's Grip* ($20) covers the historical aspects. A complete set of conference tapes and a syllabus costs $250, and are very helpful for setting up a free church.

"Small Groups & Evangelism" from page 5

Delmont, (Pittsburgh) Penn.

The Family Sabbath Keepers are a small fellowship of about four households, with some occasional visitors. Their background has been the WCG and the CGI. They were meeting with a larger group, but because of the distance and time involved, decided about a year ago to have their own fellowship.

They meet Sabbaths at 1:30 p.m. The meeting place alternates every week so all the households are able to serve as hosts. The meetings are very interactive, anyone can volunteer to pick a topic, lead a discussion, or make a presentation. The formal part of the meeting lasts about two hours. A potluck lunch follows. Then fellowship and enjoying each others company can go well into the evening.

Although Ken Kitzke is considered the Elder, he emphasized the group does not want one person running things. Instead they want a close relationship, with everyone using their various spiritual gifts, with everyone making a contribution. Ken feels the secret is involvement, not to be served, but to have something to give others.

One of the fun things they do as a small fellowship is visiting other groups. They have gone as far as Morgantown, West Virginia and Akron, Ohio on their visits..

Ken would be glad to hear from you. His number is (724) 468-8076 or e-mail at LawstSheep@aol.com. Another contact person would be his son, Timothy Kitzke at (412) 826-1811.

— "One Third Century In CoGs"

"Building Effective Congregations" from page 1

Christmas and Easter. Some of those groups may be Trinitarian, others not. Some believe in Heaven or Hell, others in a Resurrection. Many did not learn the truths from Church of God groups.

Most Church of God groups would like to continue the Worldwide Church of God's mission to do a big work, and warn the world and see the end come. But today's reality is that most people have never heard of the WCG, the world leaders HWA talked to are nearly all dead, and no Church of God group has even one tenth the media impact that the WCG did at its height. Furthermore, almost every current Church of God group has shrunk in size from what it once was.

I mailed the letter at right to a number of Church of God groups last year and received only three responses. I would think that this is a very important issue that most leaders would want to be able to explain to themselves and their members. If they are not "warning the world" now, then what are they doing? Many smaller and independent groups need to ask themselves the same questions: "What are we doing?" "What is our mission?" I have heard Sunday-keepers say that "I believe we should worship on Saturday, but I cannot find any independent Sabbath-observing congregation that preaches the gospel, helps the poor, serves in their community or does anything else where I can dedicate myself to serve God."

Anyone who knows history must acknowledge that God has used Sunday-keepers to copy the Bible manuscripts, translate the Bible into English, produce the first exhaustive concordance, print millions of Bibles and send them throughout the world, produce nations with freedom of religion, etc. We can speculate on whether these people had God's Spirit, but it is not our job to judge. Nevertheless, we can take a look at all that God has done and realize that Sabbath-keepers are only a part of the plan that God is working out. We can ask Him to show us how we should fit into His plan, so we can see His true purpose for us.

I would appreciate any other answers to the letter at right, or thoughts on the topics raised in this brief article. 🕮

Servants' News, PO Box 107, Perry, Michigan, 48872-0107, USA
April 25, 2000

Dear Leader in a Hierarchical Church Organization,

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I am sending this letter to Church of God leaders who are attempting to continue the work of Herbert Armstrong. If you have answers to the following questions, I will gladly publish your entire response in *Servants' News* (up to 3,000 words)—even if you send a previously written article that answers these questions. After Pentecost, I intend to publish lists of groups that *did* and *did not* respond to this letter—both in *Servants' News* and in *The Journal.*

1. Do not the members in your own church organization prove that the Eternal does not always govern from the top down? For the past 20 years of his life, Herbert Armstrong taught that any problems "at the top" of the church government would be cleaned up by God Himself. Yet, Herbert Armstrong appointed Joseph Tkach, who appointed his son, who reversed much of the truth that Herbert Armstrong taught. Herbert Armstrong's appointees never told former WCG ministers or members which was the "right group" to join. No group has any "signs" that make it obviously "the one": no miracles like the early apostles, no annual new-convert growth over 10%, no media outreach anything like the WCG. Your group may claim to be the only *one* following Herbert Armstrong correctly, but it was your ministers and members who where able to think for themselves, study the Scriptures and *decide to join*. They were not commanded from the "top down", but they disobeyed the man appointed by Herbert Armstrong.

2. There are members who left the WCG, joined another WCG split-off group, then joined your group. Are not these members proof that these other split-off groups are part of the Church of God and therefore brethren? Does your group automatically rebaptize or discipline former WCG members who attended another split-off group before joining yours? Or do you welcome them with open arms? I think it is wonderful to welcome them. But if you consider people in other groups *as brethren,* then why don't you encourage your members to fellowship with *these brethren*, share joint activities and services, etc.? Why do you continue the sectarianism that Paul spoke against? (1Cor 1:10–17; 3:1–10.) How do you explain this to the new converts that come to your group? If your group is truly and obviously doing the most significant work of God now, would not the intermixing of brethren cause more of them to see your group and begin to attend it? Or are you afraid that your members will continue to check your teaching against Scripture as they did when they left the WCG—and might see problems with your group?

3. Is it <u>possible</u> that Christ <u>intended</u> to end Herbert Armstrong's work? Nearly every group that tries to continue his work is splitting and shrinking. HWA has been dead for 14 years—almost no teenagers remember seeing him alive; the world leaders he visited are out of office. In another 14 years, most former-WCG ministers will be retired or deceased, and most of the adults who heard HWA prophesy "these things will happen in your lifetime" during the 40's, 50's and 60's will be deceased.

Eternal judgment is one of the six basic doctrines (Heb 6:1–2). Paul told believers: "For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,** that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2Cor 5:10). He also said: "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged" (1Cor 11:31). I am not your judge; you do not have to answer these questions to me. **But if you cannot answer these questions to your own members and the members of other groups, how will you answer Christ?** It is easy for a person to think he is right when he is surrounded by people who agree with him. I know; I worked for the WCG for 18 years. It is much more difficult when one must answer questions from others who disagree. The New Testament shows Christ and His Apostles spent much time answering difficult questions from Pharisees, heretics and sometimes brethren. What will you do?

Sincerely,

Norman S. Edwards

"News From Local Congregations" from page 4

Kansas City Teen and Young Adult Retreat

It is time again for the annual Teen and Young Adult Retreat! This year's retreat, sponsored by the Church of God, Kansas City, will be **December 27–30** at the Salvation Army Camp and Conference Center in Kansas City, Missouri. The cost will remain $25.00 per person.

The conference center provides a gym for volleyball and basketball and a game room with pool, table tennis and foosball. Activities off the conference center grounds will include bowling and laser tag. The retreat will end Saturday night with the traditional pizza party, dance and lock-in, followed by breakfast and check-out the next morning.

If you want to attend this year's retreat, please contact Paula Frazee for a registration form by December 10 (see the end of the article).

All **meals and bedding will be provided.** You will need to bring personal items, towels and clothing. Do not forget your Bible and appropriate clothing for Sabbath Services. You also need to bring an item for *Show and Tell* that says something about yourself to use for one of the activities.

As always, this retreat is open to any teen or young adult from **any** of the churches of God. In past years, we have had 30 to 70 young people attend. Nearly everyone meets some old friends, and makes some new ones. We are looking forward to seeing you again this year.

— Paula Frazee
3201 North Union, Independence, Missouri 64050; Tel: 816-461-3252
E-mail: pjcrim@aol.com

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

The Passover Controversy by Sanford Beattie, 40 pages An explanation of the Old Testament Passover and difficulties with Fred Coulter's first book, *The Christian Passover*.

Basic Literature

A New Life by Norman Edwards, 2 page tract. Basic message of repentance from sin, baptism and a new life in Christ.

Wake Up To God! by Norman Edwards, 2 page tract. Scriptures for believers in distress who want to be stirred to grow in grace and knowledge.

Study Resources and Information

"Free Church" Article Reprints, 50 pages. Articles about avoiding church incorporation from Linden Baptist Church, Indiana; New Testament Baptist Church, Cape Coral, Florida; and The Rutherford Institute, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Interdependent-Interactive, Church of God, Sabbath Services, Bible Studies, and Open Fellowship, Plus This Newsletter by Laura Lee, 24 pages. News and articles from Bismark, North Dakota.

Sound Systems for Services by Norman Edwards, 14 pages. Determine what kind of sound equipment you need and know how to use it-even with a limited budget. Useful to the novice as well as the experienced "sound-person".

Highly Recommended Items Listed Every Issue:

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.)

God, I've Got a Problem, by Morris Kerry. Bible help for the depressed, tempted, guilty, worried, lonely, afraid, bored, disappointed, bitter, doubtful, proud and dying.

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 Edwards, 64 pages. How the KJV translators altered Scriptures about government to please King James and a biblical analysis of governing today's congregations.

Starting a Local Congregation by Norman Edwards, 62 pages. A scriptural and physical basis for starting or improving a local congregation.

What Does the Bible Say About Eternal Judgment? by Norman Edwards, 83 pages. This is one of the six basic doctrines in Hebrews 6:1-2, but it is not frequently taught in our day.

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. Variety of Bible info.

The Journal: News of the Churches of God edited by Dixon Cartwright. One free sample issue. The best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups.

***Servants' News* Statement of Receipts and Expenses,** 2 pages. About our finances.

***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.