

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 8, No. 5 A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be Sept/Oct 2002

Hastings Feast 2002: Blessings from God

by Norman Edwards

In our Feast 2002 we “ate before the Lord our God” and “learned to fear the Lord our God always” (Deut 14:22-23 — see front-page article in Jan/Feb 2002 issue for the Feast 2002 plans). The Feast plans were never completed. Prior to the Feast, I was almost completely unable to work

due to a swollen sore throat that almost stopped me from breathing numerous times. I think there were some things that God wanted me to learn, and I hope I learned them. But also, the time I had hoped to spend Feast planning was taken up by the sore throat. I was not able to organize the meals or other events in any significant way before the Feast. Fortu-

nately a couple of brethren decided to call me to tell me that they were coming early to help.

I recovered about three days before the Feast, rented a truck, and loaded up the audio-visual equipment. On Thursday afternoon my wife, one son and I went to Sam’s Club and

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Keep the Feast in 2003!

Our Feast of Tabernacles 2003 will be at Manville Camp/Retreat Center in Manville, Illinois, Friday night, October 10, through Saturday October 18. I have not visited the camp yet, but Terry Williams has. Please see his adjoining article. The cost for eight days food and lodging will be about \$250 per person, with some kind of discount for children.

The exact cost will be figured after the menus are finalized—we hope to make it a real feast! The camp cook will supervise the meals, but we will help serve. Numerous Bible studies and family activities are being planned—including the recording of another original song! Anyone who would like to help in the planning is welcome. — NSE

Manville Camp

by Terry Williams

This is a strikingly beautiful campsite which is located in the lovely north central plains of Illinois. The site is about 110 miles southwest of Chicago. Manville Camp/Retreat Center is blanketed by large, sprawling country farmland off Illinois Route 17. The facility is impressive, immaculate and bright. The camp’s entry is uplifting, organized and refreshing. You receive a very positive

Feast 2002 Reports from Other Sites

Lake Texhoma, Oklahoma

This was the sixth feast at Lake Texhoma, OK. and continues to be more uplifting every year.

The annual fish fry and “Dallas Knights” barbershop show were big hits. The decorations were beautiful, the special music praiseworthy and the Sabbath school classes second to none. A new activity “Getting to know you” proved entertaining and profitable for all and will become regular feast fare.

The concern and care shown for each other and anointings were two notable aspects of this Feast.

Along that line, I was thinking about the F.O.T. 2003 already and it came to mind that it represents the Kingdom of God. And, that that kingdom will usher in a time of healing; of our land and nation, our minds and bodies and our families and marriages. We hope to promote seminars along

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● Manville Camp Tabernacle

impression as you drive toward the main lodge area.

The proprietor, Larry Wright, a minister of the Church of the Nazarene, was

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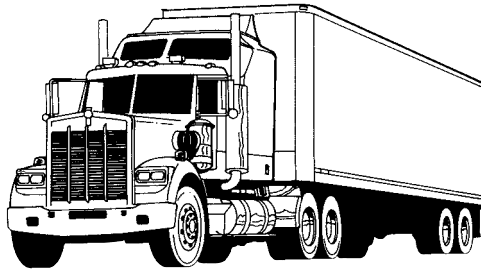
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Trucker's Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo.
#106-109



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.

August 11, 2002

Our eight truckers today included a husband and wife team who had visited us a few weeks ago.

It was hard to keep the discussion on track, not in the sense of poor subject matter but of the tendency of one driver to filibuster. Occasionally this happens, and I must tactfully find a way to jump in and get other people into the conversation. It becomes difficult when the talker never seems to take a breath, and when a breath is taken it is a quick one in the middle of a sentence. But we managed.

[This is an utterly valuable skill that any who hope to teach in a group setting need to learn: to tactfully show someone that they are taking up too much time and/or getting away from the intended purpose of a meeting. With a little practice and the Spirit of God, one does not need a dictatorship to preserve order. — NSE]

One topic discussed today was the perpendicular pronoun ("I"). King Saul had a problem with this, as did Lucifer, and so did the Pharisee of Luke 18. We all want to be the center of our own little universes, yet we do not want to take responsibility for our own actions. God, when He introduced himself to Moses at the burning bush, called himself "I Am", which at least implies that He is the self-existent one, the true center of the universe and who should also be at the center of our being.

One of the men was relatively new to Christianity, but eager to learn. He had a question about tongues, and his understanding is similar to mine, but others in the room take a more charismatic approach to it. We were able to disagree on this without mutually dis-fellowshipping each other, if you know what I mean. The real question the man had, though, was his concern that if the charismatics are correct, then what about his salvation? Must one have this "baptism of the Holy Ghost" in order to be saved? We reviewed the scriptures in Acts

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E-mail subscriptions also available

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

You can also receive an e-mail notification for when the latest issue is available on the website (www.servantsnews.com). Thus the four options are:

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3. link to website sent by e-mail;
4. PDF file sent by e-mail.

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Servants' NEWS

Vol. 8, No. 5

Sept/Oct 2002

The purpose of Church Bible Teaching Ministry is to continue the work of the Church that was started by Jesus Christ (Yeshua the Messiah) and His Apostles in the first century. This work involves expounding the truth of the Bible by means of preaching, teaching, writing and music as well as taking positive action to help and serve other believers and all people of the world. CBTM and those people who work within it are just a few of many parts of the Church, which is the body of Christ. *Servants' News* is a publication of CBTM.

The gospel should be given freely—you may copy this newsletter and give it to others. CBTM has nothing to sell, but is supported by free-will offerings of individuals. We do not have IRS 501(c)(3) status, but Churches are tax exempt without this status (see IRS Publ. 557, Nov 1999 ed., p. 15). Please make offerings to *Church Bible Teaching Ministry* or send via PayPal to info@cbtm.info.

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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.

UCG Places Doctrinal Study Papers Online

UCG's doctrinal papers are available at the following page:

<http://www.ucg.org/papers/index.html>

Titles presently include: Blessing of Little Children, Covenants, Divine Healing, Exodus 34:22 and the Calendar, Godly Governance, Hebrew Calendar Summary, Hebrew Calendar Doctrinal Statement, Keeping Passover at Home, Last Great Day, Passover of Exodus 12 (Appendix), Pentecost and Its Observance, Night To Be Much Observed, Jury Duty, Lost Tribes of Israel, Marrying Outside the Church, Should Christians Observe New Moons?, Swearing, Tithing on Net Income, Third Tithe

Only a few of the CoGs post such papers—I wish they all would.

— Craig White, surfer1@tpg.com.au

Free Ten Commandments Calendar for 2003

The Churches of God Ten Commandments Calendars are in and ready to ship. They feature a commandment (full text) in lieu of a picture for each month. November and December feature the first great commandment verse, and second.

The seventh day is correctly identified as the Sabbath. Moon phases and times are shown in great detail, with tables from the U.S. Naval Observatory in back of calendar. All holy days are shown.

To receive a free calendar contact James D. Ussery at: djussery@tiagris.com or call toll free 1-877-586-1851 or snail mail: James D. Ussery, P.O. Box 1291, Big Sandy, TX 75755.

Or, contact Theda E. Horton by e-mail at tehorton@swbell.net.

The Ten Commandments Calendar

was compiled by Theda E. Horton especially for the Churches of God which keep the Commandments and Holy Days of God the Creator, the Word, who became Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Scriptures are from the Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible. The calendar is produced and funded by individual contributions to the Ten Commandments Calendar Association. **The calendars are freely given!**

New Church of God News

Giving & Sharing announces a new, free, publication, *Church of God News*, to begin in January, 2003. Plans are to publish it ten times a year, on the Internet at www.giveshare.org/news, and in print.

To subscribe to the Internet notification version, send an e-mail to info@giveshare.org. If you do not have Internet access, you can subscribe to the printed version by writing to: Giving & Sharing, PO Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849.

We need regular news reporters who will submit articles every month, as well as special reports from many Church of God groups. Please submit news articles of your group's activities. Deadline for each issue is the 15th of the preceding month.

E-mail articles to Steve Kieler at: editor@giveshare.org.

Church of God News will contain: church events, special meetings, youth camps, youth activities, Feast sites, seminars, special speakers, news of new publications, summaries of important articles and noteworthy sermons, new booklets, weddings, births, baptisms, deaths, ordinations, etc.

News will **not** contain: paid advertisements, doctrinal arguments, personal attacks, nor negative articles attacking traditional Church of God doctrines.

We want to discover what the Churches of God are doing right, not advertise what they are doing wrong. Our purpose for the new publication is to inform and edify (Ephesians 4:12), to stimulate and exhort (Hebrews 10:24-25), and unify (Ephesians 4:3).

May we count on your regular news article contributions?

— Richard C. Nickels,
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[Adding another independent Sabatarian publication is a good thing—Church of God groups have suffered in the past from having only one source of news. This “only good news” approach may be preferred by new believers—anxious to learn what they can, but not ready to help solve the problems.

However, it is important to realize that much of the Bible contains mistakes of men and women and the means whereby God and His servants corrected them. — NSE]

Historic Mich. Group Moves

After meeting 20 years in the same location, Yahweh's House of Prayer will begin meeting every Sabbath in the Church of the Brethren building at the corner of St. Joseph and Sunfield Highway in Sunfield Township.

The Sabbath and Feast-keeping roots of this group go back to the teaching of Nora Bush beginning in 1925—they never were a part of the WCG.

Contact: 517-649-8636; PO Box 1, Muliken, Michigan 48861.

Help for Divorce Troubles

At the Feast this year it was discovered that approximately 80% of the people were affected by divorce in their immediate family. We have dealt with the preventative side of the problem at Help Line but it was determined that those traumatized by divorce were in need of assistance.

Help Line, a service to provide encouragement, counselling, and compassion in the areas of addictions, family or personal and spiritual problems, has added staff to assist persons dealing with divorce or its aftermath.

You may request material, personal contact or both regarding your needs. There is no cost to you and everything is confidential. Contact:

— Steven and Suzanne Kieler
2193 Sheker Drive, Fort Dodge, IA
50501; Phone: 515-576-5743,
sskieler@juno.com

Shrinking WCG, No Free PT

According to the August 2002 *World-wide News*, page 28., *The Plain Truth* magazine, free for over 50 years, will now have a subscription price even for WCG members. *The Plain Truth* is now published by Plain Truth Ministries, which will no longer be subsidized by the WCG and will have totally separate financial statements.

The article went on to show that at the end of May 2002, the WCG had consumed \$1,000,000 of reserves in spite of receiving \$1.3 million from the sale of the Orr SEP campus and receiving \$1.4 million from Legacy Corporation's withdrawal from the purchase of the Pasadena Campus. For the first five months of 2002, they had only \$11.2 million of regular income for \$14.9 million of expense.

With Legacy Corporation out of the picture, the WCG will be attempting to develop and sell parts of the campus themselves. Because the Ambassador Auditorium has always cost more to maintain than it has produced in revenues, finding a buyer for it may not be possible. Most commercial auditoriums have about twice as many seats—and can sell twice as many tickets.

The Ambassador Auditorium Committee (Alice Coulombe, chairwoman) has been formed to try to find a way to preserve it. Now, demolishing the Am-

bassador Auditorium is being openly discussed by the WCG leadership.

Many former-WCG brethren may find the thought of the destruction of Ambassador Auditorium upsetting. After all, many of us contributed financially to its construction. I personally attended services and some concerts there for many years. Many people saw it as a "house for God" or a symbol of God's way of doing things.

This was probably a mistake: "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation" (Heb 9:11). Nice buildings are nice, but the Church is the people, not a building, and God wants us to look to Him, not a building. For more about this, ask us for Al Van Dyk's short article on Church Buildings (order code CHUBIL).

— Norman Edwards

Needed: An Honest Attorney in Southern California

P. F. Lazor is in need of an honest attorney to help him overturn a fraudulent murder conviction, for which he has spent nearly 30 years in California state prison, now in Lancaster. (Apparently, Lazor had no criminal record prior to this conviction. He had repeatedly asked police for protection from John Alfred, a man who had twice attacked him. Finally Alfred broke into Lazor's bedroom with a meat cleaver and attempted to strike Lazor, whereupon Lazor shot him, then called police and an ambulance, but Alfred died later.)

P.F. Lazor believes he knows the right legal approach to take and has a friend who will pay the attorney's fees. He needs to find an honest attorney who is primarily interested in seeing justice done and who will see the case through. Many readers may think that sounds simple enough—are not there thousands of attorneys listed in any major city's *Yellow Pages*? There are. But finding an attorney who will take a difficult case and one who will do everything he can to win it are two completely different matters. This is especially true in criminal cases where there is no money to divide if the case is won. Of course, attorneys work hard in civil cases where their compensation is based on a percentage of the money that they win.

Most Americans do not realize that even though they are paying an attorney, the attorney is not legally bound to put their client's interests first. Attorneys are first responsible as "officers of the court", secondarily responsible to the "public good" and thirdly responsible to their clients. It is lawful for a judge and a group of attorneys to get together and reason like this: if we grant this motion that will result in the release of this man whom we believe is innocent, then a lot of people whom we believe really are guilty will try the same procedure and some of them might get released also, which would be contrary to the 'public good'. So we are better off not to grant this motion to anyone, and leave the innocent man in jail." This is an oversimplification, but things like this actually happen. It is a rare attorney who will stand up for his client, and risk possible disbarment for going against the decisions of judges and other attorneys.

Even worse than this problem, many attorneys simply see a prisoner who is able to pay as an easy source of money. They can simply file a few documents, and if nothing is accomplished, so what? The prisoner's only recourse is to sue the lawyer—and finding a honest lawyer who will do that is probably even more difficult than finding one to take the original case. Lawyers tend not to want to accept mal-practice suits against other lawyers because they are all members of the Bar Association. Probably most lawyers collect some fees for cases where they know they have not done a good job—so why should they help to prosecute their colleagues for doing the same thing? No wonder God laments:

No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity (Is 59:4).

We realize that most prisoners claim that they are wrongly convicted, and that only some of those stories are true. Dozens of prisoners have written to *Servants' News* and *Shelter in the Word* asking for literature and help of various kinds. We have supplied the literature, but simply do not have time to verify that their stories are legitimate and that their requests are reasonable. **We hope that others who have time will take a greater interest in helping and visiting prisoners (Matt 25:36).**

P. F. Lazor does his best to keep the

Sabbath in prison. He has had contact with us and other Sabbatarian ministries for years. He has been a song-writer all his life and found us through Sabbatarian songwriter friends.

Anyone wishing to help him can contact Church Bible Teaching Ministry, or write to him directly:

P. F. Lazor C73842, 44750 60th Street West, Lancaster, CA 93536

— NSE

Matthew 18:15-17 Works!

Because this problem has been solved, we will invent some names to tell the story. However, the lesson should be helpful to everyone. It started when Sam taught some things at a Feast and Jim disagreed with them. Jim, following Matthew 18, decided to “go to his brother”. He tried to contact Sam several times via e-mail, but when he received neither response nor “returned” e-mail, he concluded that Sam was refusing to answer him. He concluded that he would no longer treat him as a brother, but first involved other witnesses—he sent copies of his e-mails to other believers.

At least two of the men who received these copies strongly encouraged Jim to make sure that Sam really had received his e-mails. Upon more investigation, it was found that Sam had changed e-mail addresses and that mail sent to his old address was being neither forwarded nor returned—he knew nothing of the several e-mails. This is one reason why the Bible speaks of establishing events in the testimony of at least two witnesses: **communication mistakes happen**. Even when people speak face to face, they do not always understand each other correctly. Something as important as deciding who we treat as a believer should not be a process easily subject to error.

In Bible times, most human interactions were on a local basis—face to face communication and hand-delivered written messages were common. But with modern travel and communications, we frequently have dealings with people hundreds of miles away. We must realize that e-mail, telephones and even postal mail are not always perfect—a computer error may cause either system to fail consistently for quite a while until it is detected.

We can learn from civil governments that have established things like Regis-

tered Mail and “return receipt” capabilities which can make a person much more sure that his communication is being received. This writer has witnessed other instances where great problems have occurred among believers due to simple miscommunication.

When Christ rules the earth, will all communications be handled by angels and operate perfectly? That is possible. But if God does everything for us, I do not think we will learn very much. It is more likely that He will teach people to develop good communications systems and to treat their neighbors as they would want to be treated. We need to be “slow to anger”, especially when someone might not even be hearing or understanding us.

When the Jim, in our story, found out that his e-mails were not received, he sent a letter of apology to Sam and to all the witnesses who received the complaint. That was the best thing to do in this circumstance, but it would be better to avoid the mistakes.

— NSE

Gerald Waterhouse Dies

Gerald Waterhouse passed away September 4, 2002 at age 76. He had suffered various health problems for several years. He was buried at the National Cemetery in Florence, South Carolina.

Mr. Waterhouse graduated from Ambassador College in 1956 and was heavily involved in starting new churches during the 50s and early 60s—some in international areas. In 1966, he began the first of 11 worldwide tours where he would speak to combined groups of WCG members. He was noted for stirring members to visualize the Kingdom of God and to press on toward it. He was quite entertaining, but also known for speaking two or three hours at a time. Nevertheless, this writer did not mind the long sermons and remembers being inspired by him during those years.

During the troubled late 70s and early 80s of the WCG, his message turned more toward the government of God and heavily emphasized the apostleship of Herbert Armstrong and dogmatically stated that Mr. Armstrong would not die until Christ returned. When Joseph Tkach, Sr. became the head of the WCG in 1986, Mr. Waterhouse continued to preach the government message, but

then emphasized how Mr. Tkach was in God’s plans all along. As doctrines began to change in the late 80s and early 90s, Mr. Waterhouse continued to preach some of the changes, even though some contradicted what he had preached for decades.

This writer remembers talking to him privately in the Good Earth Restaurant in Pasadena, and found that even in that environment he still faithfully supported the current administration.

Diligence, support and powerful speaking are good valuable personal assets. Unfortunately, the WCG sometimes emphasized “following the government” (human leaders) over truthfulness, consistency, and apologizing for mistakes. If Mr. Waterhouse ever apologized for the failed prophetic messages he gave, this writer has no information about it.

We cannot know what was in anyone’s mind nor how God views it. We can all be happy to know that God will judge each one of us in perfection, and take care of us in the best way possible when he raises us from the dead.

May we all appreciate the good things that we received from Gerald Waterhouse, and may we learn from his mistakes and not repeat them.

— NSE

Free Computer Bible

If you have a computer, you might want to take a peek at:

<http://www.e-sword.net>

I downloaded their free Bible before the Feast and, to me, it seems head and shoulders above other free Bible programs I’ve come across. Interesting quotes such as:

Without payment you have received; without payment you are to give. (Mat 10:8, ISV)

Religious truth is captive in a small number of little manuscripts which guard the common treasures, instead of expanding them. Let us break the seal which binds these holy things; let us give wings to truth that it may fly with the Word, no longer prepared at vast expense, but multitudes everlastingly by a machine which never wearies to every soul which enters life. — Johann Gutenberg (first man to print the Bible).

Eliminating Biblical illiteracy... one download at a time.

— Glen Leslie 

Another Opinion on Hierarchical Government

● Test [prove] all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Thes 5:21–23)

by Don Smith

I came into WCG in 1968 and left in 1994 and just moved next door, becoming a member of United Church of God, an International Association at its beginning.

During the Feast of Tabernacles I was asked a question pointed toward God's Government. At first I thought the Scriptures had little to say on the matter of government—boy, was I wrong! Soon I could see the workings of politics within the local church. When United started in Cincinnati we had full power over the local church. Soon the power was taken from the Local elders, but we still controlled the tithe. But that was soon to go, when the minister, one Sabbath after services, asked for a vote as to whether to keep control of the tithe, or have us send it to headquarters. The brethren voted away their control! I was soon in trouble for being critical of what was going on, and was trying to keep the church independent of the corporation.

I was getting fed up with the control that was moving in. I was listening to other ministers' tapes and reading their material, and soon decided to go with Fred Coulter after the Feast that year. But I didn't last that long; God convicted me and made me ask myself why I was going to waste my time going to the UCG Feast of Tabernacles. About the time I decided to leave UCG the minister asked for another vote, as to whether we remain an independent corporation, or come under the corporate blanket of UCG-AIA. Over half voted for the UCG. I didn't even vote, having already decided to leave. And did.

[The fact that the ministers ask the members to vote on these changes shows one of two things: 1) They believe the members have some authority and so they must ask them

to voluntarily give it up. Or, 2) They do not believe the members have any authority, but they are asking them to vote anyway so as not to offend them. If the leaders did not believe members had any authority and were not fearful of losing members, they would simply make the changes "on the authority of God" and trust God to keep His members together and their organization funded. —NSE]

The majority of us in the Church of God came out of the world or a world church, making our concept of Churches and Church government, the same as the world's; we had no idea as to how God rules—and most still don't! Christ revealed God's type of government to His Apostles and they had trouble with government in the Churches of God.

So many of the brethren are bad-mouthing HWA and the WCG over the wrongs that took place. **As for myself, I thank God for putting me there, and for the ample portion of truth and error I experienced. Now I am able to discern between the two. I must say, "experience is a great teacher".**

When WCG splintered I went to the UCG Cincinnati congregation; we had the control of our tithe and decided how much would go to the headquarters. This gave us control of our local church. But pressure was applied and the church voted away their power! I left, for I'd learnt I could walk.

Who can Disfellowship?

If each congregation belonging to a corporation would hold total control over their church congregation as well as have a voice in the government—and not give it to the corporation—the governing body of the corporation would walk softly.

Disfellowshipping should be the responsibility of the brethren of each congregation or fellowship group—even to the removal of the minister. This act does not remove anyone from God's Church.

Brethren who put themselves in a corporate church and under the authority of a man or a council, are not under the authority of God's government, but

that of men! **The men in positions of authority in the corporate body, have authority only in the matters of corporate body. The only authority they have over the brethren is the ability to remove them from the corporate body—not from God's Church.**

Independent Church of God groups have full authority to remove ministers, or any other member from their group, deciding as a group. The minister alone has no such power.

Only One Head—Christ

God allowed Satan to use HWA to build the WCG and instill the same Pope-ish government in his [HWA's] Church. And God set many brethren of His Church within this power structure of Satan, in order to teach them by experience—a hard teacher. God did use HWA to teach, but his teachings were a mixture of good and evil. When Mr. Armstrong died, God allowed Satan to bring down the corporate structure (WCG), it had fulfilled God's purpose. The Church of God members that were once in a corporation, were now on their own—they would have to decide for themselves! They were no longer spoon fed by the ministers of the corporate hierarchy—unless they decided to follow another man!

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Phil 2:12–13).

Ministers along with other members of the corporate Churches who believe that they or any other man is the head of God's Church under Christ, do err. By our considering the created thing all around us we can know this is not true; have you ever seen any multi-headed creature? I have not.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse (Rom 1:20).

The Church of God is the body of Christ—and the Scriptures state that

He is the head of the Church. Giving all of these different men authority over all of these different Church congregations, would make it a multi-headed monster! God's Church has only one head—no more; anything having more than one head is a freak or a deformed monster!

All of us who were under HWA's authority put ourselves there mistakenly thinking that he was doing God's work and it made him a great servant of God. But was he? Only God knows; God also uses Satan (Job 2; 1Kngs 22:20-22), but what does that make him?

Corporate heads of "Churches of God", do not allow the ministers in their hire to teach anything that they have not okayed. This is in fact saying, "I/we are the head of this church, you take orders from us—not from God or His word!!!" You know what? They are right, it is his/their corporation, not God's Church.

Corporate "ministers" believing they are physical heads and have the rule over God's Churches, are deceiving themselves!

Deception more Likely in Corporate Setting

When any man points out a truth or error to anyone in God's Church, he is pointing out a truth of God and if it draws that person away from the corporation, it is not taking away from God's Church. But it in fact is directing them toward God and away from a man's rule.

As a whole we were deceived by Satan the Devil while in WCG. When you are deceived, you don't know it! Because HWA taught us much truth of God, we believed he could do no

wrong! He lived high on the hog, but had a kind of fellowship with peons—and we ate it up! Our tithes and offerings were what built the colleges and supported Mr. Armstrong's world travel. Being a part of all this made us feel important, turning our attention away from those who were living in near poverty, somehow seeing it as good to suffer for the wealth of the work!

But when our eyes were opened, many became bitter toward God! God did not deceive them—Satan did! Even to this day as I read in *The Journal* and *Servants' News*, there are those who are yet deceived by Satan's lies, even to say that HWA taught the whole truth of God, and do not discern the Scriptures correctly, quoting many scriptures out of context!

There are yet so many who turn to a minister wanting to know if this is true or that is true, taking their answer as gospel! The Scriptures tell us to work out things pertaining to our salvation ourselves.

Test [prove] all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Thes 5:21-23).

We cannot prove the things of God by the words of men. We prove the things of God by the Scriptures and following the lead of His Holy Spirit.

Did you ever notice that when someone has been put out of the church, the rest of the brethren are commanded to not have any contact with them? If they do, they too will be put out of the church?

Why do the leaders of their church do this? It is because they do not want

you to hear the disfellowshipped person's side of the matter! Did you ever hear about anyone in any of the corporate Churches of God being able to take a dispute to the whole Church? I have not, even though this is what the Scriptures say to do (Matt 18:15-17). Or have you ever heard of a corporate Church of God minister being put out of the Church by the congregation? No, for the brethren have no authority in that corporation. Now if the brethren are the body of Christ and that body is His Church; and the Scriptures are the word of God, and they say that the church body has the authority to put out any brethren who cause dissent, then the minister is not above any other member of the body. Do the Scriptures speak of the ministers of Satan?

How Our Group Works

I am with a fellowship group that receives tapes from Fred Coulter. Fred also pays for our hall rental. We count ourselves as part of the Christian Biblical Church of God.

We have an open door policy and welcome any who choose to come to our services. We have one ordained elder. **But we as a group have the power to put out any whom we decide can cause problems that we cannot solve, and can ask them to leave.** The brethren can go and come as they choose, it is between them and God. We also fellowship with other fellowship groups of CBCG. We are all free to express our own understanding of scriptures without the fear of being put out of the group. ☞

— Don Smith
knothead53@earthlink.net

"Hastings Feast 2002: Blessings from God" from page 1

Gordon's Food Service. We bought food until the stores closed—nearly filling the truck, but not quite getting everything we needed. It was pouring down rain—making it difficult to get cardboard boxes from the store to the truck without ruining them. My son and I went to the Feast site that night and unloaded the frozen and refrigerated things into the walk-in freezer and refrigerator.

The next morning, some help had arrived, and we went about the business of setting up the kitchen and hall. This included running wires between buildings so that the sound from our services could be sent to our kitchen staff as well as a telephone which was used to connect a small group in Canada. The rest of the food and supplies were unloaded, but there was not a definite menu planned.

Through the great co-operation of many people, and the blessing of God, we were ready for our first meeting

Friday night, and the meals on the Sabbath were wonderful. I could begin to start thanking individual people, but I would not know when to stop, because nearly everyone helped in some necessary way.

This must be very similar to the way it was when Israel left Egypt. Moses led the way, God protected them, but the people had to tend to the many individual duties moving themselves, their animals and their belongings. Moses could not tend to every mishap along the way. But when peo-

ple work willingly, the job gets done.

God did His part—we had rain two days before the Feast and the day after, but none during the Feast. This was important, since one had to walk outside between cabins, rest rooms, services and dining hall. He also supplied us with people able to plan and supervise the meals, and workers willing to do the jobs. Nearly everyone agreed that the food was excellent—the brethren really enjoyed getting to know each other during the preparation, eating, and cleaning up. Only a comparatively small amount of additional food and supplies were needed.

While we were not completely self-sufficient, it was encouraging to know that there were no non-Feast people working full-time to serve us. This is looking forward to the time when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isa 11:9). Everyone will keep the Feast and there will be no group of people who have to work through the Feast to serve others.

Even most of our recreation took place on campus. While several recreational opportunities were available, floor hockey in the camp gym turned out to be the young people’s favorite. The talent show went so well that most of the people present requested copies of the video made of it—some wanted to show it to their friends. (This is somewhat of a contrast to a few other Feast talent shows I have witnessed where people were trying to forget them.) A Karaoke night was also well received.

Time for Thanks Recorded at the Feast

But in many ways, the highlight of this Feast, and what made it unique was the time we took during services to write down all of the things for which the members were thankful. That list was later distilled into a shorter list, then written into verse by a variety of people, then put to music. A good half of this work was done by those in their teens and early 20s.

The song was then printed, recorded and played for the congregation. They learned it by listening, and after several practices we recorded everyone in the congregation who wanted to sing along. Later, we added harmony parts,

violin, cello, vibes, chimes and a guitar solo. This was in addition to background accompaniment of piano, guitar, bass and drums. One of the teenagers did the final mix-down, and then CDs were produced for everyone at the Feast—thanks to a borrowed mass CD-burner.

The name of the song is *Time for Thanks*. The CD also includes another song recorded at the Feast. *Run With Patience* was written and sung by Darrell and Dustin West. The third track is an interactive study on “God’s Love” given by Terry Williams with a few ending comments by Norman Edwards.

the brethren really enjoyed getting to know each other during the preparation, eating, and cleaning up

We would like to provide a copy of the CD to anyone who wants to listen to it. However, we do not have a mass CD duplicator. (A good used one that prints on the CD costs about \$1,000). We hope that those who ask for one will help with costs if they can. It is possible we could borrow a duplicator, but we still need to buy the CDs and pay for shipping. In any case, we will accept and keep track of requests for this CD and send them as we are able.

Evidence of Mature Believers

In the process of working on the recordings, I was not able to attend all of the Bible studies presented by other teachers at our Feast. Some of the prophetic concepts presented were new and many of the brethren listening did not agree with them. Evidence of spiritual maturity abounded. It seems that nearly all of the brethren **avoided** the three major signs of immaturity in group Bible study:

1. Accepting a new teaching without question.
2. Getting angry with the teacher.
3. Walking out and refusing to communicate.

Instead, they went to the Scriptures and peaceably showed where they believed the teaching to be incorrect. The teachers and all the brethren

learned a lot from this process. Nearly everyone continued to talk to each other and get along with each other after the study had concluded.

It does seem that many independent believers are coming to grips with the fact that we just do not all have the same knowledge of God and His way. That does not mean that there is “contradictory truth” or that God teaches contradictory things. It means that much spiritual knowledge exists that we do not have. Christ taught His apostles for 3 years, but all we have is the New Testament which one can read in a few days. He reveals truth by His Spirit and through His prophets, but there are a great many false prophets and false teachers and people who think they have a revelation by the Spirit which they do not.

Many of the Epistles are corrections to believers. Their writers did not say, “because you had these errors in the past, you were not part of the church.” Nor did they say, anyone who does not accept all of our correction as soon as they hear it is no longer a believer. Rather, everyone was encouraged to repent of sin and to change to accept truth. Only the deliberately deceitful or sinful were told to leave the congregations.

Today we do not have apostles—so all believers do not agree on everything. But we can still all want to be teachable, all want to know, all be willing to change when we are wrong, and all work together on that basis.

Also, one individual visited our Feast, who had been known to cause some difficulties for other brethren in the past. A few thought he should be asked to leave, but others tried to get to know him to see if he needed help—and to see if he was in any way dangerous. Seeing that there was no present problem, no action was taken and no difficulties occurred. When God’s people repent, they need to be accepted into His Church.

The 2002 Feast of Tabernacles at Hastings also included several examples of people helping each other when it was needed—fixing cars, helping the sick, etc. There were probably many more I did not know about. God knows about them all. I think we are all greatly looking forward to the Feast in 2003. 📖

Lying and Intentionally Deceptive Practices

by Laura Lee

I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love (Pslm 119:163, KJV).
Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue (Pslm 120:2, KJV).

These... things doth the Lord hate... A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood (Prv 6:16-17, KJV).

He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool (Prv 10:18, KJV).

The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment (Prv 12:19, KJV).

Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight (Prv 12:22, KJV).

The righteous hate what is false, but the wicked bring shame and disgrace (Prv 13:5, NIV).

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death (KJV, Prv 21:6).

That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord (Isa 30:9, KJV).

Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit (Jer 7:8, KJV).

The above scriptures have been included in this article to show how God views lying lips and deception. Quite frankly, these scriptures are only a very few of the many scriptures which cover this subject and are found throughout the pages of God's word the Bible. One doesn't have to look too far or too hard to see and understand how God views lying and deception.

We are all sinners, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23) and "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom 5:12, KJV). With this in mind, I do understand that all people through ignorance of God's law have sinned.

This article is not about those who are ignorant about God's law, but about those who have been caught red-handed lying and deceiving other people and have been confronted with it one on one. This article is about those, who when they are caught in this practice of lies and deceit, seem not at all sorry for it. Rather, they

Continued on page 23

Taking It to the Church

by Norman Edwards

One of the "problems" with independent congregations is dealing with "trouble-makers" that go from one congregation to the next. A globe-spanning hierarchical church simply disfellowships them, and then they are not welcome in any of their congregations. (The negative side of this is lack of recourse for members who are unjustly disfellowshipped.) But when someone is adversely affecting multiple, local congregations, Matthew 18:15-17 requires this kind of unfortunate negative publicity. Both Laura Lee and I have "gone to" Myra McQueen trying to get her to change. I have spoken with her family and they are all too familiar with her difficulties, but have also been unsuccessful in getting her to change.

The last step, of course, is to "take it to the church". I do not think that people need to treat Mary "like a heathen and a publican", but they may not want to spend a lot of time answering her questions. I have spent many hours doing this, and she makes great sense at times, and other times seems to simply forget much of what I said as well as other facts that do not agree with her views. As you can see from the enclosed letter, she faults me for not exposing the untruths of the leaders of the WCG and its offshoots—something I have done!

In this case, I do not think we are dealing with a "wolf" among the sheep, but a sheep that is experiencing a certain amount of difficulty and getting in the way of a lot of other sheep. In order to be as fair as possible to her, on July 10th, I sent her a copy of this article and said: "Do you have any reasons why I should not print the following article? Are there any errors in it that you feel need to be corrected?"

The response that she gave me is printed at the bottom of this page. ♦

Myra McQueen's Letter to Norman Edwards

July 13, 2002

As far as "catching liars" did you also catch Flurry? or HWA? or RCM? or GTA? and these are your leaders-not God!

How about Josiah? (2Chr 35:22), and Jeremiah? (Jer 38:27) or Jacob? (Gen 27) or David? (1Sam 21) and these men did it in service to God and His people. I do not see God in your perverted leadership and I will fight it as long as God gives me the strength!!!

So print whatever you want and see how

many more corrupt leaders will take down what is left of the church that has become the Dragon's "whore". God is not supporting HWA or any of his corrupt doctrines—and you of all people should know that by now. Because the church has rejected God for Armstrongism and Judaism, He has rejected the church (Hos 8:12; Ezk 39:23-24).

You can do what you like with my name. But rest assured that God will save His Name from the perverted leaderships of the scattered churches that continue to lead away

His people from real truth as revealed by God only (John 16:13). I did not start this fight because it was popular or even what I preferred. But somehow a negligent leadership has gotten control of God's people and the apostasy is progressive to the degree of now having more than 500 differing groups. Is Christ now divided?? What happened to unity in the Spirit such as was in the Apostolic church??

Thanks,

— Myra



We print a representative sampling of our mail—both positive and negative. We do not include names unless we are fairly sure that the writer would not object.

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

Love Neighbor As Self

LETTER: Sept. 12, 2000
Dear Norm and Team,

Thanks loads for SN and SW. The front page articles in SN are not only very interesting, but very true. We have learned the hard way, after leaving the WCG, that many who call themselves teachers do not teach the necessary truth. Also they include some error. Some of these “teachers” left WCG, but they took WCG with them.

We would like to see someone write a comprehensive paper on agape and how it should work in all of the saints.

Of the Trucker’s Bible Study, the idea I get most is steering people to the Bible, then questioning some of their old beliefs.

— Ed Armstrong, Utah

RESPONSE: We have received some articles on love, and hope to make them available to *Servants’ News* readers.

You are very right about the Trucker’s Bible Study. Some people will say, “It doesn’t bear any real fruit.” What they mean is that it does not collect a lot of people into an organization. But each person who can be taught to think about their life, and to look to God and the Bible in spite of personal convenience or past beliefs, will go far toward doing the work of God.

— NSE

Likes Government Paper

LETTER: April 29, 2002
Hello Norman,

Many thanks for your paper & other material on church government. It has been very enlightening for me and I am studying now as I have never done for years. I think it amazing I have missed this **Plain Truth** for all these years. I suppose I took so much for granted. I also read David Medici’s paper on the infringement of copyright by H.W.A. He also put in a lot of research into this. I have attended the F.O.T. the last two years at Chatsworth in England and met him there.

Please pass on my regards to him.

Thank you again for all your help.

— Joe Graham, United Kingdom

RESPONSE: Thank you for your encouragement. I had no idea how this paper would change my life or the lives of so many others when I began the research on it.

— NSE

Congregation of Mixed CoG and Non-CoG Brethren

LETTER: August 5, 2002

The group I am with are people out of different denominations and several are from the church of God. I enjoy going. They seem to know a lot of the same things. I have spent years questioning and researching and it’s nice to be with people who are truly searching and trying to do what they feel God would want them to do (they celebrate the Feast) and they discuss the Hebrew meanings. I think the elder was in Worldwide but there was a falling out. He broke away from them and stuck with the old way [doctrines] but studied deeper into the Hebrew and the tribes scattered and going back to the Hebrew name of Jesus and Yahweh.

The people I’m with are seekers of truth and feel there is a lot of false religion out there. They have been persecuted by “the [Worldwide] church” because of refusing Sunday, Easter and Christmas. They celebrate the feasts and they use the Hebrew name of Jesus and God (Yahweh). I just started Sabbath for the first time last month. When I found this group, I had done a lot of research and stopped going to church because no one could understand why I chose not to celebrate Easter or Christmas and wanted to do Passover, and I was persecuted by lots who say they are Christian.

Pastor’s children in my area would tell their parents about my children at their school—how we don’t celebrate the holidays and they would tell their children to tell mine I was lying to them and we are going to hell

because we don’t. Needless to say I was pretty upset over them judging me and my children after I’d spent countless hours and many prayers to find what **God** wanted me to do or not to do.

I found an antique book right after that happened at a book store. The book was dated 1890. It was called the *Baptist Standard Manual*. It was used in the USA for many years and the book stated that my Welsh baptist brothers and sisters were killed by the Roman Monk Austin for not celebrating Easter and mixing with the pagan Roman way—Christmas. This book showed me that my own Baptist ancestors were killed for not mixing and here we have Baptists who do what their brothers and sisters died for not doing.

I’ve personally suffered a lot of persecution and have always felt that everyone has a right to believe what they choose and I should be free to do the same and have never persecuted anyone for celebrating Easter or Christmas. But for some reason when people find out I don’t, they start asking questions and I tell them honestly the research I’ve done and people always seem to get angry. I had been asking for God to lead me to the right group that I could feel comfortable with (cause I have been to them all!) and a month ago I found this group. They just moved right up the road from me and I live in a country area (farming, cows, fields, etc.). I truly feel God brought us all together and that there are many out there just like us (looking).

Most of the group I am with left their old churches because of searching and seeing things they personally didn’t feel comfortable doing and feeling a need to not celebrate Holidays and Sunday, thus questioning and then suffering persecution. I know I have never been more happy in all the years I have spent researching. This group has taught me a lot. They all don’t believe the same things but they all agree in that we all have a lot to learn and we try to help each other and discuss things. We all agree on the Sabbath and that Christianity adopted Paganism. We agree to the Hebrew names. Its really nice to be in a place with people like myself who

have been persecuted and have felt there was nowhere to go and be what I felt God wanted me to be. Its a breath of fresh air to be around those who accept me and feel the same way. I look forward to getting your magazine. I noticed you celebrate the feasts.

I'm not sure exactly what your group believes, but we have free tapes and books if you're interested. The books are on false religion, mixing with paganism, etc.

Thanks much,

— Nancy Wright

RESPONSE: Thank you for your story. It is wonderful to see that it is God who leads people to truth, not always through a church group. But it certainly is good to fellowship with other believers (Heb 10:25). I hope that you continue to fellowship, even if you disagree on some things. There are so many advantages in sharing study and personal trials in an open environment.

It is sad that so many Sunday-keeping brethren persecute Sabbatarians so badly—especially when they do not even want to see the scriptures that convince us to do it. I think there are many Sunday-keeping brethren who love God and want to obey, but keep Sunday out of ignorance. If they are willing to follow God and not tradition, they frequently come to understand the Sabbath and other truths.

I will send you some additional literature that you will probably find helpful.

— NSE

Lincoln Owned Slaves?

LETTER:

May 1, 2002

Dear Brother Edwards,

I enjoy reading *Servants' News* and can relate to many problems of those who are wondering about which religious group—if any—they should join. You are doing a great service in presenting facts about the choices available.

I did notice some statements in the issue that arrived today (Nov/Dec 2001 issue of *Servants' News*) on which you might wish to check. The errors are historical, not theological.

You are right in saying that the Emancipation Proclamation did not bring immediate freedom to any slave; it applied only to those who were in parts of the USA still in rebellion.

Lee did own slaves at the time of the Civil War, but (and I must say this from memory) he provided that when he died, they would be

free. Of course, the end of the war brought this to pass sooner.

But the statement that both Lincoln and Grant owned slaves is incorrect. In his Pigeon Creek, Indiana and New Salem, Illinois days, he was too poor to own any, even if he had wanted to. In Springfield, Illinois, he was a rather well-to-do attorney, but Illinois was a free state. The house in which he, Mary, and their boys lived, though commodious, had no room for slaves, and the yard was too small for him to need help.

Grant, whose life was spent mostly in Ohio and Galena, Illinois, lived only for a short time in Missouri, a slave state.

Keep up the good work you are doing! Blessings to you and your staff!

— Eugene Lincoln, Maryland

FROM DEBBIE SASH (THE MAIN SOURCE OF NORM'S INFO):

In response to a letter published in *Servant's News* in regards to statements printed in the Nov/Dec 2001 issue of the same publication concerning the War Between the States; Eugene Lincoln was correct when he pointed out that Abraham Lincoln did not own slaves. However, Lincoln's wife's family was from Kentucky and they did own slaves, and as Kentucky was a border state, they were permitted to keep their slaves throughout the war.

However, the writer is incorrect in his statements that Ulysses S. Grant did not own slaves during the war and that Robert E. Lee owned slaves and that Lee planned to free his slaves at his death. Lee had no slaves to set free. It was, in fact, a different General from an earlier American war for independence who gets credit for this noble act. George Washington was the one whose will provided for the freeing of his slaves at his death.

In regards to Grant, I will quote from the book by James and Walter Kennedy titled *The South Was Right*, the authors Kennedy cite as their source *The Gray Book* written shortly after World War I by the Sons of Confederate Veterans, "...the Yankee general Ulysses S. Grant's wife held personal slaves at the beginning of the war. The Gray Book reveals that Grant's slaves were freed, not by Lincoln's proclamation, but by the Thirteenth Amendment passed after the end of the war." Robert E. Lee was opposed to slavery and was one among several Confederate generals who were not slave owners, including Joseph

Johnston, and J.E.B. Stuart among others.

Norm, in his comments about the war, was pointing out the hypocrisy of some of those in the North and the misrepresentation of some of those in the South. We should all remember that those who win the war get to write the history and most of the history traditionally taught in our schools about the War Between the States is heavily slanted toward the Northern point of view. The point of Norm's comments, however, was not to argue over who owned slaves, when did they own them, how long did they own them, and when did they set them free, but what was the cause of the war. It was, as Norm pointed out, about states' rights as well as money, jealousy, power, and sectionalism. State rights was the issue that divided this country almost from its inception. There were those who supported a strong central government and others who wanted to maintain a constitutional republic where the power stayed in the hands of the people.

It was the end of the War Between the States when we first witness the move from the Original Constitutional Republic to an ever increasing centralist Federal Government. Furthermore, the Federal Government and its emissaries conducted themselves poorly during the conflict, and they inflicted uncalled for and unwarranted cruelty and destruction on not only those whom they considered their enemies but their own citizenry as well. The atrocities committed in the state of Missouri are well-documented. Few people are aware that most of the state of Missouri, a border state, lived under martial law for most of the war and that the people of the state had most of their constitutional rights suspended, including the freedom of press. As Norm pointed out we should ask ourselves "how did that happen?" rather than pretending that it could not happen again. In this nation, we have had one of the rare opportunities in history to make greater choices in how we live our lives, which is, in fact, the greatest privilege granted to us by our creator God. He gave us the guidelines on how to conduct our lives, but then he left us free to choose. He exhorts us in Deuteronomy 31:19 to choose life so that we and our children may live.

No one would argue that slavery was a good thing and that it was an institution which wealthy southerners should have been allowed to maintain. However, the

issue was not about slavery. It was about whether the Federal Government had the right to force states to pass or rescind laws regarding practices in their states not specifically addressed in the Constitution. It was up to the individual states and the citizens of those states to abolish the institution of slavery. As a result of the conflict, people of the South, in large part, lost their right to choose how they govern themselves and so did the rest of us. You might ask yourselves, what will be the issue that brings you in conflict with the Federal Government; your religious beliefs, your stand on abortion, or perhaps your exercising of your freedom of speech. Think about it. It is best summed up in the words of Thomas Jefferson "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

— Debbie Sash, Eldon, MO

[Thanks to Debbie for correcting my mistake about Lincoln owning slaves and adding additional information. There was a large "abolitionist" movement to abolish slavery in the North, and to a lesser degree in the South, within the churches. Had the churches done their job more quickly, or had the North leaders been slower to go to war, the War Between the States might have been avoided. The South was right about states rights, they were wrong about slavery. The South probably could have avoided the war if most of the individual states abolished slavery — NSE]

Encouragement So Important

LETTER: September 17, 2002

Although we enjoy your newsletters very much there is no hurry [in reference to an e-mail explaining why they were late]. Sometimes these kinds of seeming disasters are used by God to show us the need to slow down and smell the roses and let Him do the work.

We had a great Sabbath day and Atonement as well. God provided us company. Now that does not seem so great to most but it does for us who have been pretty much house bound because of my husband's spinal stenosis and general back degeneration with constant pain which has kept him from doing very much traveling for more than an hour. So we have not been able to get to whatever fellowship meetings we could in the past and this has been going on for over six months. I do not drive anymore due to poor eyesight and none of you want me to be try-

ing either. I can read and write and do computer work OK for now but if I have to decipher signs at fast speeds I cannot read them until I am nearly on top of them. You do not want to know the string of eye ailments so I won't bore you with the details. Suffice it to say that we are all suffering in more ways than we can count. But God has promised to see us through to the end.

A very dear friend and his wife, both long standing members of the body of Christ, came to spend the afternoon with us, and, as I think personally that Atonement is one of the most difficult days to get through by oneself, it made the day a delight. We had not seen them for over six months so we spent the day discussing our favorite subject of the deep things of God the Father and His Son Jesus the Christ. It is so difficult to discuss these deep issues with anyone else except the brethren so it was a joy to have them with us. We did not even get to the tapes we had planned to listen to but relaxed and just enjoyed the time in fellowship.

So take your time and get first things done first. I am working on re-editing a book that will likely take me the better part of two years to complete but when it is done I believe it will be a worthy piece of work and it will benefit truth-seeking scholars who have not had access to it for many reasons. This work takes my mind off the horrors of this world's collapse and my own worries and stresses. Even if I do not get it completed in the days allotted to me then it still will be a great benefit to me and others as well. Our lives have had to slow way down and that is OK. It helps us focus on the really important spiritual things of God the way he wants us to view them.

It sounds like you need to try delegating some of your work load to someone else if that is possible. We do need to be learning how to work together if we are going to be doing that for all of eternity.

We are not going to be able to go to any of the Feast sites until Ken has his back surgically corrected if that is going to be a possibility. But we are going to listen to the services of UCM's Sevierville site by phone hookup if we can make it work right. We also have Fred Coulter's Feast tapes and possibly some material by Mordakhai Joseph to whom we have been listening during the past year. You have helped us to understand and keep the motto of Proverbs 24:6 and 11:14 which says there is safety in a multitude of counselors. We have widened our perspective by listening to as many of the basic Apostolic Christian, or as Alan Knight defines us, "Primitive Christian" groups as we can find

who are non-hierarchical and are not into some of the funny doctrines that are being argued about these days. This bickering will have to cease if we are to work together for all eternity—that is for sure. As I have learned today we each have one piece of the final puzzle and in order for any of us to see the composite picture as God sees it, we will have to communicate and co-operate with others of the Faith once delivered in order to receive the information on the piece of the puzzle they hold. If we continue to bicker and fight, we are in fact discrediting each other's puzzle piece as invalid. Without it the whole picture does not get revealed. Maybe this is what God is waiting for—us to understand this and begin to open our hearts to others of like minds. Now I am not talking about false teachers or false doctrines, but about those with the truth who are not wanting to communicate with others of their kind for one silly reason or another. If God is truly leading a person by the Holy Spirit they will be wanting to know the whole picture and will seek out their brother and sister for their pieces of the overall puzzle. This is the first step in faith to seek, knock and then it will be revealed.

Thank you for your work in helping us to find each other. With love until we can meet in person,

— Charlotte Grantham, Columbus, Ohio

RESPONSE: Thank you for letting me share this letter. I hope it will encourage people to be an encouragement to the brethren. If a person is alone and does not know anyone to encourage, they can use our Local Servants Directory to find people, either near or far. I think it is wonderful that you are still working on your book and answering Bible questions from Alan Ruth's web site—even with your eye difficulties.

— NSE

Appology to Fred Coulter

LETTER: [see May/June issue, page 15–16] Norm,

You promised to print a retraction concerning Fred Coulter. I hope you will honor this. And I request that you publish the letter in its entirety without dissecting it with your "getting the last word" commentaries.

RESPONSE: I have gone to great efforts in the past to print letters or articles without intervening like this. It takes much more time to use footnotes or refer backwards in some other way. I am far behind in issue production as it is. Please realize

that I at least do publish many of the letters that correct me. When I write to other church groups, which I have numerous times, I almost never get a response, and have never had a group publish a corrective letter that I wrote. I would be happy to have them publish my letter in its entirety and comment however they would like. (I would be glad if Mr. Coulter would print a one-page letter on what I think is wrong with his Passover book, letting him respond anyway he likes.)

LETTER: Firstly, "name withheld from Florida" is either lying or didn't listen to the tapes he heard. After listening to over 100 taped teachings of Fred's I have never once heard him suggest that there would be a secret rapture or resurrection 3½ years before Christ returns. **Never.** This is a falsehood and I feel you should be corrected for publishing unsubstantiated malicious gossip, especially as you indicated elsewhere that you are familiar with what Fred teaches. Neither is "divine protection" emphasized. The coming martyrdom of the saints is mentioned way more often, the time when we will stand for God and against the Beast.

Now I will clarify the Sea of Glass "doctrine", which is, in fact, not a doctrine, but a most likely scenario. As the Church was born on Pentecost, so most likely will it be with the Family of God. All eyes will see the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. This is Christ and the angels on the sea of glass. It will appear as though there is a second sun in the heavens coming closer and closer to the earth eventually settling in orbit over Jerusalem. On Pentecost we will rise up to meet Him. The wedding supper will take place there, not on a decimated earth. Rewards and assignments will be given. We return to the earth on Trumpets. Incidentally a minister whom you praise teaches this as well. His name is Ron Dart.

RESPONSE: I am sorry about my mistaken explanation of Mr. Coulter's "sea of glass" doctrine. At the time I answered that letter, I had been dealing with other groups that were teaching that only their members would meet Christ at His return. I realize that Revelation does mention people in Heaven—that some say they are literal and others say they are symbolic. I have not studied the matter thoroughly, nor do I feel I have any divine prophetic understanding on the subject. If Christ returns at Pentecost and takes believers to heaven, I have no

objections.

LETTER: Fred **never ever** suggests that the Christian Biblical Church of God is the only true Church. I find your suggestions of "deliberately deceptive", "arrogant", etc. profoundly offensive.

RESPONSE: I did not say these things about Mr. Coulter, but was talking about the problem with Christian prophetic teachers in general. Notice the plural form of my words: "That does not mean that all such prophets are deliberately deceptive—they may completely believe their prophecies. *Some* are arrogant enough to think that everything *they* teach is truth and if *their* prophecy was not true, that God would stop *them* from teaching it." About five years ago, somebody sent me a copy of one of Mr. Coulter's tapes where he was referring to my teaching and said something like, "If God raises up a teacher, is that teacher going to teach error? So if there are teachers teaching error, are they from God?" He went on to explain how he believed his teachings were from God. I think the reality is that even Peter, Paul and other men made and taught mistakes (the Bible records them), even though they were sent from God. I seek God for my teaching, but false ideas from my past and my own failings most certainly cause me to teach error at times.

LETTER: I know you know better, so you might want to consider if these words might apply to yourself. Your statement that "Fred needs to realize that God will still love him... if he admits these mistakes" is profoundly deceptive and cynical.

RESPONSE: I did not mean it in this way at all. I see how much of Mr. Coulter's life has been wrapped up in studying and writing on the Passover and I realize that it would be incredibly difficult for him to change. Yet my own study, and the study of almost everyone else I know who studied the issue independently (using the Bible, rather than WCG literature, Jewish sources or Fred Coulter's book) produces results different than Fred's.

LETTER: You say this with full knowledge of Fred's primary emphasis on teaching the Love of God. He is criticized by many for teaching too much about love.

RESPONSE: I think Fred's emphasis on the love of God is very good—I know of other groups who derived their own doctrinal statement on love from him.

LETTER: What you have done is shameful. What is it that has angered you so much

about Fred? Why the hostility? Is it because Fred has taught against hierarchy since 1980, long before you, and has actualized it in reality, not just on paper?

RESPONSE: I am not at all angry at Fred, but I think there are areas where he and his ministry should grow. I am glad that he got started in 1980. Somebody showed me his *Harmony of the Gospels* in the early 80s and I wished I had read it then, rather than ignoring it because he was no longer in the WCG—I had a lot to learn!

LETTER: Is it because of the maturity of his teachings? Or is it because he didn't want to have the Feast sites advertised in your paper? I would suggest that the reason for this is because we want to be left in peace to harmoniously worship God and observe His Feasts. Also, if God wants someone to participate in our fellowship groups he will lead them there. He did this with me. I was travelling from Canada to your feast site and God stopped us at the border, leading to my staying in Canada and observing the Feast with the Christian Biblical Church of God. I had only discovered CBCG a few weeks prior to this. God worked it all out. I thank Him without ceasing for this.

RESPONSE: It is easy for me to leave his Feast sites out of my publication. Other groups, such as the Philadelphia Church of God have also requested this, and I do it. But in general, most of the non-hierarchical groups are glad to list their Feasts in my publications, *The Journal*, etc. I agree that God shows people where he wants them to go for the Feast—like He did for you. But I have also heard of hundreds of cases where people have found Feasts and fellowship through *Servants' News* and other Sabbatarian publications. I understand that broad publication sometimes causes "difficult" individuals to attend a Feast, but I think mature believers with years of sound teaching should be able to handle these "difficult" cases, just as Jesus and the apostles did.

LETTER: You accuse him of dishonesty because he would not accept your "correction" regarding the Passover and get into one of your letter writing campaigns. How dare he, eh?

RESPONSE: When I first talked to him about his Passover book, he said, "I've never had anyone shoot it down". So I thought he would be interested in someone who took many hours to document the difficulties.

LETTER: Norm, you are so uncertain about the Passover that you keep it twice. I

don't see how you can exalt yourself regarding this. Do you keep two Pentecosts, etc.? Prove that from the Bible to your readers.

RESPONSE: I do not keep Passover or Pentecost twice—and have never taught that. I am not sure why you say that.

LETTER: You have exalted and appointed yourself not to be a loving, compassionate, encouraging teacher, but to be the critic of the Churches of God. Beating down and discouraging those who are not in your camp.

RESPONSE: I want to be a loving, compassionate, encouraging teacher, and I am sorry that I have not always been that. I will try to do better. On the other hand, I have always published names and addresses of other groups, and have never tried to stop others from reading their teachings (Christian Biblical Church of God, P.O. Box 1442, Hollister, California 95024-1442, e-mail: FredCoulter@cbcg.org, phone: 831-637-1875). I never try to stop mature believers from comparing my teachings to those of others.

LETTER: You also promote the ecumenical, "Lets all just put aside our doctrinal differences and errors and just get along". If you're looking for a social club or wanna play church then that sounds just fine.

RESPONSE: I think Romans 14 and Revelation 2–3 show that believers can get along even though they have doctrinal differences. However, the fact that I write about others' teachings should be proof that I do think doctrine is important. I believe we are all personally responsible to Christ for what we do—both in learning new truth, and in sharing the truth that we already have.

LETTER: You dissect people's letters with your smart-alec "I get the last word" commentaries. And you do it all with a nervous laugh and a smile.

RESPONSE: You are welcome to watch me answer a letter sometime. I frequently struggle and pray about the best thing to say.

LETTER: Your voting "doctrine" ends up turning the glorious resurrection into what sounds like a complete carnal bring-down. According to you, sometime after the resurrection those who have chosen not to vote will be held up in contempt and shamed by the Sons of God. What a downer. In that light, imagine what it will be like concerning the weightier matters of the law and our real sins.

RESPONSE: The weightier matters of the law are "justice, mercy and faith" (Matt 23:23). The Bible frequently faults

the government of ancient Israel for its lack of justice—as it prophetically faults our governments today. *What Does the Bible Say About Eternal Judgment?* gives dozens of scriptures showing how all men will be judged—even believers. [See the next letter in this issue for more detail on this.]

LETTER: Your presumptuousness and arrogance in assigning yourself as the one who corrects all the Churches of God is sad. I hope that you can genuinely accept correction. I mean genuinely, not your usual "thank you for your correction" line as you turn around and continue exalting yourself. You even shame your readership by upbraiding them for accepting your freely offered paper without making an offering to cover costs.

RESPONSE: I do not remember doing this, but Paul did it: "I robbed other churches, taking wages *from them* to minister to you" (2Cor 11:8).

LETTER: And you go to a channeler and presumptuously suggest that you didn't think God wanted you to cast out a demon that day. Then you subtly emphasize the eye contact the demon made with you. Wow, you must be so spiritual for the demon to do that. These are just some examples of where your message is more in what you infer than what you actually say.

RESPONSE: Maybe other Sabbatarian believers would cast out that demon. If so, I would be glad to help them find that channeler's travel schedule so they can do it. I am relatively new to working with demons, but the Bible says that believers have power over them. However, here are times when casting out demons does little good:

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. (Luke 11:24–26).

If a person leaves their mind "swept clean" and does not fill it with truth, then a demon can return with others. This channeler was not seeking truth or deliverance from his demon, he wanted the demon. Casting it out would probably cause it to return with others. But if there is any believer with more knowledge and experience in this area, I would be

glad to talk to them about it.

LETTER: Brethren: Be healed from the pain of the past abuses. Grieve and ask for healing. You do not have to be blown and buffeted about by every wind of doctrine. There are profound teachers of God's Word out there. Mature teachers of God's Graduate school. We and our past corporate associations have been vomited up from the Body. Repent and return to God. Beseech Him for guidance and He will honor your humble requests. Do not let anybody ever come between you and the Father again. I wish Gods blessing on you all.

— James Meister, 130 Ellershouse Road, Ellershouse, NS, Canada B0N 1L0

RESPONSE: Thank you for writing. We all grow from letters like this. I hope other publications will be more willing to run longer letters that are critical of their teaching. Let me say that I have met many individuals who have spent a few years almost exclusively studying and attending with Fred Coulter. At first they thought he had the right understanding of nearly everything. Later, through their own study, they began to see a few things differently than he. You may well follow a similar path. Christ works with us as He sees best—often working through imperfect human instruments. I regard you, Fred Coulter, and many others as brethren, even though we have some disagreements. We need a balance between admonishing each other, and teaching other people the basic principles of Christ.

May God bless you.

— NSE

To Vote or Not to Vote, the Six-Page Question

ROBERT: September 7, 2002

Norm, This letter is written with total disgust in response to the comments that were made in the "Letters and Responses" section of the May/June 2002 *Servants' News* entitled "Christians Must Participate". I haven't had time to reply due to work issues and also I think this issue came a bit late in a pack with two others.

MARCIA GUNDERSON'S ORIGINAL LETTER OF MAY 25, 2002: *This is the first time I have written concerning a published article. I just read your article "Christ leaving us an example". I fully agree; my philosophy is if you don't vote you have no right to complain about what the government does*

and I do complain, sometimes calling and voicing my concern. I don't do this often enough however, but I try.

Keep up the good work I enjoy your paper very much.

— Marcia Gunderson, Wisconsin

NORM'S TO MARCIA: I agree that people should not complain if they do not vote, but I am wondering how Christians who do not vote will explain it in the Judgment.

ROBERT: That is pretty raw, Norm. Who set you and Marcia up to judge God's people?

NORM'S RESPONSE: I do not think either one of us are judging God's people. Marcia is just giving her opinion, which I believe is based upon Matt 18:15–17. If we do not like what our leaders are doing, we should go to them and tell them **before** we complain to others. This includes writing letters and, where applicable, voting. She is just saying people should take action rather than just talk—she is not saying that they forfeit some legal right due to non-voting.

I am not judging non-voters, but simply stating that after studying the Bible and our government, I cannot figure out how I, or most other brethren will explain non-voting in the Judgment. But you and other non-voters may well have a good explanation. Possibly, a traveling evangelist may not live in anyone place long enough to vote—his preaching may be more important than voting to God.

ROBERT: How will you explain in the judgment supporting the unrighteous decisions made by these unconverted and conniving politicians you have supported?

NORM'S RESPONSE: The command to form local governments in Deut 16:18–20 says nothing about conversion—there were few people with the Spirit of God then. However, they were required to do what is just. This, unfortunately, rules out most candidates today, who seem to be willing to compromise almost anything to get elected. I have voted for candidates from the Constitution Party (www.constitutionparty.org), Libertarian Party as well as independents. I cannot guarantee that none of them were “conniving”, but they had good records, the best I could determine. Do I think these candidates will win? Probably not. But the more votes they receive, the more others will be forced to pay attention to them. If the 50% or more of Americans who do not vote tried to look for honest leaders (rather than just pick from one of the two mainstream leaders

with big budgets), we would have more honest leaders.

ROBERT: If voting is truly a right, then not voting is also a right. Who are you to judge?

NORM'S RESPONSE: Non-voting certainly is a right. By not voting, a person says that they accept whatever result is determined by the people who do vote. I do not think those voting have chosen very many good leaders in my life time, so I want to do my part to change that.

ROBERT: Further, who are you or Marcia to dictate? The idea that your voting somehow makes you superior to another or your rights greater than another's makes your voting a self-righteous act. How will you explain that in the judgment? (Setting aside the fact that there is no condemnation for the people of God, in spite of the teachings of so many self-appointed teachers in their self-proclaimed groups).

NORM'S RESPONSE: Neither of our letters said we were better than anyone else for voting, and Scripture commands that we do not try to compare ourselves to each other to figure out who is best (Luke 22:24–27; 2Cor 10:2)

ROBERT: Apart from that, how do you, Norm, a man who has avoided incorporating under the laws of the land to avoid having the government dictate what you can or cannot say in your newsletter, justify also wanting the right to tell that same government what to do by the act of voting? Sounds like a double standard to me. Either incorporate and vote or don't incorporate so you can be independent and do not get involved in trying to run the government. Sounds like you want to have your cake and eat it too.

NORM'S RESPONSE: If we were in a monarchy or dictatorship where no God-given rights were recognized by the state, then I would agree with you—it would be best to avoid governments altogether. But many God-fearing men (along with opportunists and criminals) bled and died to establish a government that is to be “of the people, by the people, and for the people”, and that was not permitted to make any law “respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”. The whole point of our government is to serve the people and to stay out of religion (crimes committed by individuals in the name of religion are still crimes). There is no legal or any biblical principle saying that freedom of religion is dependent upon not voting. Rather, it is more likely that freedom of religion will be lost because

Christians do not vote or actively work to preserve it.

NORM TO MARCIA: God told the Israelites to make local governments (Deut 16:18–20).

ROBERT: God intended Ancient Israel to be a Theocracy, where God was the head of all the Governments. Did it work?

NORM'S RESPONSE: Yes, it worked while people still remembered how they had become a free people: “Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.” Notice that after Joshua died, there was no “replacement”, but “elders” governed the land. This was not a theocracy in the sense that the priests ruled the land. Each family was given their own land. When there were conflicts, they went to local judges (Ex 21:6, 22; 22:8–9; Deut 16:18–20; 19:17–20; 21:2). Only if the local judges could not solve the problem were national leaders, including priests and Levites consulted (Deut 16:8–17; 17:8–13).

ROBERT: There is no comparison between God's intent for Ancient Israel and the governments of modern nations. The comparison is ludicrous.

NORM'S RESPONSE: I realize that the biblical basis for our government is not taught in most American history books. But if one reads the writings of many of the men of that time, it is very evident that they were looking to the Bible (and also other political philosophy) for a means in which to govern. Why were oaths taken on a Bible and conclude with the phrase “so help me God”? (Deut 6:13). Our nation, like ancient Israel, was never perfect. Even when Israel followed God, Achan sinned (Josh 7). But as ancient Israel forgot God and wanted a man to rule over them, so our nation is no longer looking to God as the founding fathers did, but looking to big government for their needs and protection.

I would be interested in your thoughts about what the Bible says, if anything, about civil government today. The New Testament certainly says little about how to do it, and **if the Old Testament government principles are not valid, then how can God hold any nation responsible for national sins?** What is wrong with letting the murderer and thief go free and putting the believer in jail if God says nothing? If Romans 13 is the

only guide, do not secular states then have God-given powers to do whatever they see best? I do not think so. Revelation chapters 16–18 show that God will hold Babylon responsible for corrupt governing. She will know—even if some Church of God members do not—that God gave righteous principles for governing in the Old Testament, and that she did not follow them.

Furthermore, we must ask, as did many Christian settlers in many different countries, how is a community of Christians to govern itself? Even today, if a group of Christians on a ship became marooned on a deserted island, could they govern themselves? Would they have to find a non-believer to rule over them? If there was theft, rape or murder among them, how should they determine who is guilty and how to punish them? If the offenders claim to repent and ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus every time they are caught, should they just let them have destroyed the entire group?

I have asked several Sabbatarian non-voters questions like the above, and the answer is virtually always: “that is an unrealistic situation”, or “God would reveal what to do”. They will trust believers to build or fix their house, car and appliances, to teach them doctrine, to perform medical procedures upon them—but they do not believe that believers are capable of governing. But if we reject human hierarchical government over the church, we also should reject it over the state. So what do we replace it with? I think we use the Old Testament principles, without those things requiring priests, Levites, and the temple—which we do not have today.

ROBERT: The USA is not a Theocracy, never was and never will be, which may come as a shock to some of your readers who subscribe to religious right beliefs.

NORM'S RESPONSE: Was ancient Israel or the USA a **theocracy**? That greatly depends upon which definition of theocracy one uses. I consulted several dictionaries. One definition is a “government by officials who are regarded as divinely guided”. This does not apply to ancient Israel—neither the priests nor the prophets were in charge of the whole government and God did not always guide them—he allowed them to become corrupt. The USA is not this kind of theocracy either; there is no requirement for leaders to profess divine

guidance. However, the former WCG and some of its offshoots are this kind of theocracy—their leader’s decisions are considered to always be from God, even when they are illogical or obviously contrary to Scripture.

An ancient definition of the word theocracy is given in Easton’s Bible Dictionary:

theocracy—a word first used by Josephus to denote that the Jews were under the direct government of God himself. The nation was in all things subject to the will of their invisible King. All the people were the servants of Jehovah, who ruled over their public and private affairs, communicating to them his will through the medium of the prophets. They were the subjects of a heavenly, not of an earthly, king. They were Jehovah’s own subjects, ruled directly by him.

If a Theocracy requires its people to individually and collectively implement the will of God, then I think that fits ancient Israel, and to a large degree the USA. God did not even tell Israel to have a police force or a standing army, but made people individually responsible for dealing with blasphemy (Deut 13), attacks on women (Deut 22:23–26), murder (Deut 19:12), poor people (Deut 15), etc.

ROBERT: Jesus is not, was not, and will not be an American. Just as the Kingdom of God is not, never was, and will not be a democracy. Nor does God favor one political party over another.

NORM'S RESPONSE: I agree that Jesus is not an American. I do not know how other countries’ governments work, but if the people are responsible to govern, I think they should do as much as they can to govern according to the system that God gave in the Bible. He promised other nations would look up to Israel if they would follow His laws (Deut 6:4). I am not sure how the government in the Kingdom of God will work; it will be different with many perfect children of God ruling. But for now, mostly a lot of unconverted people need to be governed—much like ancient Israel. Obviously, God does not favor any one “political party” more than he favored the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots and other parties in Jesus day. He wants those who govern to do what is just and right, whether they are in a party or not. Unfortunately, most people in political

parties seek power and benefits for their party—a terrible problem in the USA.

ROBERT: Norm, most Christians are involved in most other aspects of our governments: they pay taxes. They use emergency services, public roads, public schools, state parks, etc. Some of them actually work for the government for businesses that do mostly government contracts. Most follow government laws, even if they disagree.

We, as Christians, are told to obey the ruling authorities. Nowhere are we told to participate in their governments. Rather we are warned to keep ourselves unspotted from worldly pursuits. The taxes and use of services and even employment are a necessary part of living in the present age, voting and participating in the garbage that is prevalent in the worldly governments around us is not. We are told to pray for our worldly leaders, Why? I, for one, do not equate “pray for” with “vote for”.

NORM'S RESPONSE: You agree that government services are a necessary part of living. I agree. I want the county government to maintain and plow the road past my house. A necessary part of that is finding a man to be in charge of the county road crews. Suppose that two men are running for the office of county road commissioner. One has a bright smile, a warm handshake and promises to fix every street in the county next year with no additional taxes. The other candidate is noted for carrying around a lot of paperwork and says that based on previous years reports, it will take 2 to 3 years to fix every street without additional taxes (depending on how hard the winters are), but has a plan to fix the most used streets first. Does God expect someone to flip a coin to decide who will be the next road commissioner? Should Christians pray and expect God’s choice to miraculously appear? Should a State government or Federal politician who never drives in the county appoint its road commissioner? Or should the people of that county be allowed to choose the commissioner—hopefully having the discernment to know that the man with all of the paperwork is probably being more truthful?

You said that there is nothing wrong with Christians working for governments. Some counties appoint their road commissioners and others elect them. Is it a sin to do that job only where an election is required? Would it be OK to run if there were no opponent? If it is all

right for a Christian to run, is it all right to vote?

In the New Testament, the Romans controlled the government and the Jews had no responsibility for it. Praying was all they could do. Today, we can pray, and write and vote!

NORM TO MARCIA: *If Christians are preparing to rule with Christ (Rev 20:4), should not they be involved in the decision-making aspects of governments? This is especially true in countries like the USA where the people, as a whole, are the highest level of government.*

ROBERT: What a load of... manure. You do your readers a disservice by that comment. Have you studied American Government beyond the high school propaganda level? The Government for, of and by the people is long, long, gone... if it ever really existed. The freedoms we have in the USA are by the grace of God because of a promise to Abraham, not the will of man, and man has used and abused those freedoms. Why do you think God created a nation with the kind of freedom we have? At least with the illusion of freedom we have... try not paying your property tax for a few years if you think you own your own home. Or try fighting the principle of Eminent Domain. Your freedom is an illusion. So is your vote. Tell me, if the people are the highest level why is George Bush, who lost the national popular vote, the President of the United States?

NORM'S RESPONSE: These are all good questions that deserve answers. I will be the first one to say that we were not completely free to begin with and that we have lost much of the freedoms that we have. I will certainly give credit to God to Abraham's righteousness for what we have, but I can also say, beyond doubt, that God implemented these things through men who believed that God wanted freedom, and who worked hard to achieve it. Today, we seem to have many Christians who believe freedom is not worth physically working to maintain or improve. Many use their understanding of prophecy to "prove" that nothing will get better until Christ returns. I am glad that the founding fathers had no such prophetic understanding.

You mentioned property tax and Eminent Domain; a man could not lose his land for these things when our country was founded. I am not an expert in land rights, but I have talked to people who are. It is my understanding that the

average land "Title" of today gives the state the ownership and the person the use of the land, and it is through that basis that taxes, regulations, and Eminent Domain are enforced upon land. Homesteads, land claims and land patents where no title is involved can sometimes still defeat these government intrusions—I have heard of people today who have done just that. It is also possible for a local congregation (one that is really a "church" and not a corporation) to avoid these things. Most courts, when directly challenged on the issue, will agree that they simply do not have jurisdiction over real churches. I know of some Christian groups that are trying to learn about these things and teach others, and I think that is better than just saying "nothing can be done".

George Bush is President because he was elected by the electors originally specified in Article 2, Section 1 of the Constitution and modified by amendments 12 and 23. The USA has never elected a president by popular vote. However, the electors' votes are determined by the people. If enough people feel that the president should be elected by direct popular vote, the constitution could be amended to change that.

ROBERT: Also, you seem to state elsewhere that you believe in the conspiracy of a group of men who control or attempt to control everything... what use is your vote against these unseen men?

NORM'S RESPONSE: I would love to vote for any leader who would propose a law, probably a constitutional amendment that would give a severe (maybe even death) penalty for running for any public office without disclosing all the organizations and societies of which the candidate is a member. I think most of the people who are working to corrupt our government are members of various secret organizations. Many have sworn a life allegiance to them. There are bills proposed to make such things treason, but there have not been enough votes to pass them. There are numerous other branches of government that need to be abolished and loopholes that need to be closed that would greatly reduce the influence of evil forces in our government. All they need is a legislator to sponsor the bill, and enough votes.

ROBERT: One further point. We of the COGs cannot even seem to rule ourselves in His Church, what business do we have in try-

ing to run a carnal government? Learn to rule our own "home" and maybe then we have a right to go try to tell others how to run theirs. We are supposed to be learning to run our "government" under God's rule, what part of God's rule are you learning trying to run these worldly governments?

NORM'S RESPONSE: Unfortunately, I have to agree that many in the CoGs seem to know little about how to run their church government or secular governments. That has really bothered me, since we claimed to be "in training to rule with Christ". After spending some years studying government from the Bible, I hope that I have been a help to people starting local congregations, as well as doing their part in secular governments.

A lot of the issues that come up in secular governments, are the same that come up in church governments. One issue is arranging for people to go to each other and solve their dispute before going to court (Matt 5:25; 18:15-17). Lawyers, corrupt as some may be, have been doing this for years, but Church of God brethren still have a great tendency to "run to the minister" when someone offends them, rather than "going to their brother."

In addition, both governments and churches deal with marriage problems, juvenile delinquents, the poor, people who pretend to be poor but just want a hand-out, etc. Both need to find good leaders and provide ways to make sure they continue to do what they are supposed to, and that they use the money given them for its intended purpose. The Christian can learn many lessons from both church and secular governance.

NORM TO MARCIA: *Many people believe that the Bible shows God will punish the Western democracies for their national sins.*

ROBERT: So you do not? Do you believe that there is going to be a government of God on earth? If so, what governments will it replace? Why? If you believe that there is going to be a government of God on earth, will His punishment fall only in the western "democracies"? What worldly government will survive under the rule of Christ?

NORM'S RESPONSE: I do not feel that the Church of God prophecy writers have a good enough track record in predicting events for me to say "I believe" their prophetic scenario. I have not had time to study all the prophetic books and see if God shows me anything from them. Since many church of God

brethren do believe that God will send the Western democracies (Israel) into captivity again, I am simply asking them why they would not bear equal responsibility for the national sins, if they have done nothing to oppose them.

Does this mean that we, believers, are partly responsible for the abortions (murders) in our society? Notice what God says about murder:

Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. **The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him** to put him to death, and afterward **the hands of all the people**. So **you shall put away the evil from among you** (Deut 17:6–7).

God gave all the people a responsibility to put away murder and evil from the land (see Deut 35:10–34 for more details). Today, these verses in Deuteronomy are not our national laws, so we cannot live by them directly. The ancient Israelites did promise to obey them (Ex 24:7; Josh 24:22). However, we have a representative government, which makes us responsible voting for men or women to represent our understanding of what is right, and for communicating with our existing representatives, whether we voted for them or not, what we believe is right for them to do. To the extent that this part of our national law is consistent with the Bible teaching to be a witness against murderers and to put away evil from among us, we should express this view to our leaders.

NORM TO MARCIA: *If “not voting” is the righteous thing to do, then will God spare the Christians along with the 50% of the apathetic electorate that typically do not vote?*

ROBERT: Norm, that is an idiotic statement. The 50% of the apathetic electorate that do not vote are not Christians. Why do you equate them with God’s people? Do you no longer believe in the Elect? Or do you now subscribe to Ron Dart’s unbiblical view that everyone who professes Christ is a Christian?

NORM’S RESPONSE: I believe that Christians are the people who have the Spirit of God (Rom 8:9). I believe I and many WCG members were Christians even when we regularly broke the second commandment by idolizing a man—we did not know we were doing it. Sim-

ilarly, I believe there are Christians who break the Sabbath—but God accepts them because they do not know. God knows who are His and why He sometimes withholds truth—God did not even make it possible for most Christians throughout history to have access to a Bible or a concordance. But many scriptures show that not everyone who claims to be a Christian actually is one.

The question I am asking above is: If God is going to send our nation into captivity because of our **national** sins, and if all He expects of Christians (in this regard) is “to stay out of the government and **not vote**”, then should all of the non-Christians who do “not vote” be delivered from the national judgment on the same basis? Will God blame all of our national sins on our elected leaders? They will claim that they were just doing what the people elected them to do (which is partly true). Will God lay our national sins only at the feet of people who voted for the bad leaders? Or will he also blame those who did not vote—who made no effort to implement just laws and elect good leaders? How, then, are Christians who did not vote any less responsible?

I know that God will judge in righteousness, but I do not know what He will do. I have a collection of over 25 scriptures where God promises physical deliverance from specific trials to some believers, and about 25 more scriptures where he says that some believers will suffer and die. I know that He will do the best thing for me—and you—and all who are His.

NORM TO MARCIA: *Or will God spare only those people who voted for honest candidates and just laws, and then punish those who voted for evil?*

ROBERT: Norm, how can you possibly know a candidate is honest and which laws are just? Why do you think that there are so many laws, some conflicting with each other, some plugging loopholes in other laws, some made to benefit a select few? Last I checked you are no lawyer, how can you possibly understand the ramifications of the complex double dealing language in the proposals worldly leaders are constantly coming up with as “better” laws?

NORM’S RESPONSE: Again, good questions. It is much easier to prove a candidate “dishonest” than it is honest. One easy way to prove them dishonest is to see what they promise during one election,

and then see what they do in office. Very few candidates ever keep their promises or make any effort to explain why their promises could not be kept—they count on people not paying attention. Another way is looking for promises that obviously don’t work: eliminating poverty with hand-out programs, making streets safe through gun control, eliminating drug problems by cutting off the supply; raising living standards through wage and price controls, etc. Many programs such as these have clear histories of failures in nearly every country where they were tried, but the dishonest politicians keep promoting them. There are some candidates who clearly say that we should eliminate most of our laws and branches of government. While I cannot prove they are perfectly honest, they are honest about this big issue.

I agree that we have huge numbers of conflicting and confusing laws, and that Christians should vote for people working to eliminate them. One of the biggest deceptions of today is that if there is a problem, the way to solve it is to produce a massive federal program. The only sure thing that does is cost money.

How can a believer possibly understand all these messy conflicting laws? Even police and district attorneys do not know all the laws that they are supposed to enforce. The believer cannot know everything, but that does not stop him from learning about the most important things. This process can be greatly helped by the sound biblical principle of working together. There are some lawyers who believe the system is corrupt and who are working for its simplification and helping individuals learn to navigate the maze themselves. There are many others who study the law without a law degree and write their findings and help others to understand it.

Computer searching and cross referencing has now given the individual a much greater access to law than was possible 30 years ago. At that time, law school, law journals and other lawyers were the only way that lawyers could have knowledge of some laws. Indexes were often cumbersome and difficult to use. Today, many computer searches of laws are available to lawyers and citizens alike. Also, computers are often used to consolidate a law and all its amendments so an individual can read it. “Hyper-links” sometimes provide defin-

itions of “legal-eeze” so an unfamiliar person can find out with a mouse-click.

Not all laws are difficult to figure out. Some are straightforward and obviously good, some are straightforward and obviously bad. Some are deliberately mistitled, like the recent “Patriot Act”, which greatly eroded constitutional freedom and is now, thankfully, being challenged in the courts.

ROBERT: Also, based on your statement above, show me where in the Bible it says that your candidates are righteous and their opponents are evil. Please show me that!

NORM'S RESPONSE: I did not say my candidates are righteous and the others are evil. I just asked a question to encourage people to think about what God might do. But if we are going to learn to be kings and priests, it will certainly help us to presently learn to discern, by the Spirit of God, good from evil men. We are not deciding their eternal fate, just learning to apply God's word and then being one vote among thousands. **The Bible makes a great effort to point out which Kings of Israel were righteous and which were evil.** Paul tells Christians that they should be able to judge others rightly:

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! (1Cor 6:1-6)

ROBERT: Dean Wheelock has written an excellent article on law in the latest “Hebrew Roots”, not that I agree with everything he wrote in that article, but his way of explaining law makes a lot of sense. You and your readers should send for a copy.

NORM'S RESPONSE: Thanks for mentioning the article. I have not read it yet.

ROBERT: Norm, it is impossible for you to know who or what you are voting for in this

society. Or whether it is for the ultimate good or even whether it is even just. What hypocrisy! What arrogance! All that you are doing by voting is projecting your opinions and beliefs onto someone who may or may not genuinely hold those beliefs and opinions.

NORM'S RESPONSE: In an ultimate sense, you are right, I do not know the heart of any other man. But that does not stop us from rendering a judgment, as Paul instructed the Corinthians (1Cor 6:1-6 quoted above). God has not commanded us to co-operate only with perfect human leaders, whether they be church leaders or secular leaders. God told ancient Israel to choose leaders (Deut 1:13; 16:18-20) and also told them how to find good (not perfect) leaders for their congregations (Acts 6; 1Tim 3, Titus 1). I have no delusions that a government is going to be righteous just because I and thousands of other Christians help choose it. But it is not arrogant to do what God said. Just as there were degrees of righteousness among the Kings of Israel, so I can try to find the most righteous man running for an office. If I think none are righteous, I can usually do a write-in vote for someone whom I believe to be a qualified righteous person. Only by a miracle would a write-in be elected, but every vote that is not for a mainstream corrupt candidate is a message that I disagree with the current government. Whereas with non-voting, it is not possible to tell the difference between disagreement with the current government and apathy.

ROBERT: You are also dictating to others how they should live, which is really none of your business.

NORM'S RESPONSE: I don't understand. Are you saying that God does not want the country to have any laws? Or you saying that only unbelievers are competent to make laws? Are you saying that whether or not my local school teaches homosexuality as a “valid life style” or the level of my property tax is none of my business?

ROBERT: Our business is how we need to live.

NORM'S RESPONSE: I agree. We first need to learn to take care of ourselves and obey God in our lives. But we do not live alone. The biggest problems we have in our churches and communities are not generally caused while somebody is working or living alone. They are caused when people interact with

each other.

When several children are playing together, and they are trying to decide what game to play, how would you teach them? Would you say that the biggest kid should always make the other kids play what he wants? Would you encourage them to let each child have a turn in deciding the game? Would you encourage them to vote on which game to play? Would you say that none has any right to tell the other what to do, so they should not play a game? I think the lesson is clear that whenever there are people working together, there often needs to be a way to resolve differences. That is government.

NORM TO MARCIA: *Will then God give the non-voters the same judgment as the corrupt minority that did vote?*

ROBERT: If by this you mean the carnal voters and carnal non-voters, yes, they both will have the same judgment... but isn't voting, ultimately, a carnal act? Think about that. What spiritual principle is applied by your voting? It is not a spiritual thing, but a carnal desire to somehow be the one in control. Voting is an illusion of control over an uncontrollable world. In addition, it fosters disagreements and disunity... **my** party, **my** candidate... **my** opinion... is better than yours. Where is the humility? Where is the glory to God in that?

NORM'S RESPONSE: More great questions!

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! (Pslm 133:1.)

The basic approach of the unconverted is, “What's in it for me?” Jesus taught: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends” (John 15:13). I agree with you that most politics today is **my** this and **my** that. But each Christian voter should make decisions based upon what is good for everyone, from his understanding of the Bible. Wanting to vote for the most righteous laws and candidates that one can find today is no more carnal than wanting to rule with Christ in the Kingdom. The issue is not that it is bad to make laws or decisions for groups of people, the question is whether those laws are made for the benefit of the decision-makers or for the good of everyone. The difference between today's voting and Millennial ruling is that if we make a mistake today, it has only a small affect on the world. Whereas to rule with Christ in His Kingdom, we must be

beyond the mistake stage.

ROBERT: And in addition to that, you and Marcia have added: **My** rights are greater than your rights because I VOTE! Poppycock! (And yes I know what that word means!)

NORM'S RESPONSE: I am sorry that we appeared to say that. That is not what we meant.

NORM TO MARCIA: *After all, the technical effect of non-voting is to affirm the decisions of those who do vote. Whereas, voting for a "third party candidate who stands for righteous principles, no matter how little chance of winning he may have, adds to the permanent record of people who disagree with the way a country is being run.*

ROBERT: The technical effect of not voting may or may not affirm the decisions of those who do vote, but voting, and especially voting for a third party candidate, is an exercise in futility.

NORM'S RESPONSE: American history shows several "third parties" that came into existence and elected candidates in numerous offices. Some ended up replacing one of the "mainstream" parties of their day. Some of these parties started suddenly, another started small and gradually achieved more votes until they won. With so little significant difference between the two major parties today, third party votes would seem more important than ever.

ROBERT: In addition, you have no idea just whether a candidate subscribes to "righteous principles" or just talks the talk to get elected.

NORM'S RESPONSE: The practice of electing candidates who have served well in a lower office to a more important office is good. Voters should check to see what a candidate did in a previous office before voting them into a more important office. Unfortunately, most voters make up their mind from the candidate's commercials.

Even so, limited terms allows voters to reject a candidates with bad fruit during their first term and to re-elect a candidates with good fruit.

ROBERT: God's will is done, not Marcia's and Norm's.

NORM'S RESPONSE: Does this mean that if God wants a certain person into office, that He prefers to do it by influencing the votes of only unbelievers? The Scriptures frequently show that God's will is a reaction to man's will.

God wanted to be Israel's king, but He listened to the people and gave them a human king (1Sam 8). Jeremiah

18:7–10, Jonah 3:4–10 and other verses show that God changes His plans based on what nations do.

ROBERT: Does God want you doing futile things? Is that what you want on your "permanent record"? That you participated in an ultimately futile and useless process in a vain attempt to voice your opinion? Some permanent record!

NORM'S RESPONSE: I spent 18 years of my life programming computers for the WCG, developing what I hoped would be the software that would produce a powerful end-time witness, and maybe even organize things in the "place of safety" and maybe give us a good start into the millennium. If one just looks at software, that turned out to be a futile thing—it will never be used for anything again. But if one looks at God's investment in me, it is wonderful. I learned a lot about how to analyze situations, determine the facts and make something work. I learned to work with people, teach them and direct the work of others. I learned to love serving God and working with other people who wanted to do the same. I got married and started a family. I did not do these things perfectly (didn't save myself by doing them), but I am not ashamed of them being on my record. I didn't vote then, and I didn't read the Bible as much as I do now.

Learning to discern the best laws and candidates is a similar experience. I have no illusion that it will create a human government of lasting, eternal value. We are all dust and that is how we will end. But learning the difference between good laws and bad laws, learning how to let people make decisions so they can learn, but prevent them from destroying themselves or others in the process is a valuable thing—both for raising children, and for governing people.

But I am quite willing to learn. I would like to know the things that you have on your permanent record that are clearly not "futile". I might be able to learn some of them, also.

ROBERT: You may have started out well, Norm, refusing to incorporate so that you could be independent of governmental interference so that you would have the freedom to write, why do you now wish to go back into its captivity?

NORM'S RESPONSE: If you can explain how voting to promote a better future for myself and others is going into captivity, I will gladly stop.

ROBERT: If you want to vote, then do so. If someone doesn't want to vote, you have no right to judge them. That is not exercising a right, but exercising abuse. If you do vote, you have no right to deny others any of their rights, including their freedom of speech. There are other ways than by voting to let the leaders of this world know of your displeasure with their actions.

NORM'S RESPONSE: I think I finally am understanding your complaint **and I am sorry**. I did not mean to say that if you do not vote, you should not have freedom of speech or be able to petition the government for redress of grievances. I actually think that sending numerous letters, e-mails and phone calls to appropriate governments has **far more of an effect than voting for some issues. I would certainly encourage this, whether a person votes or not.**

ROBERT: While I believe that it is necessary to respond to you first on this issue, because of the lag time in responses through your public newsletter you may also see this posted on forums in the future as an open letter to you at a later date.

You may use my name.

— Robert Knarr

AKA: Uglykitchenguy@yahoo.com

NORM'S RESPONSE: Thank you. I am sending you this e-mail so you can post it with my responses.

For a long time, I believed the WCG teaching that nothing of value could be done, so why bother. Yet when one compares life in the 1300s with life in the 1600s, after the Protestant reformation, one sees that things improved greatly because men struggled for it. More improvement is seen from the 1600s to the 1800s, with freedom of religion established in many places. It has been in the 1900s where some issues (such as racial equality) have gotten better, but personal freedom has been greatly eroded in favor of big government.

Before anyone says, "nothing can be done" one ought to at least make an effort to find out what has been done, what is being done, and what can possibly be done in the future.

Since I spent 20 years believing that civil governing was not my responsibility, I will endeavor to be patient with others who may need a number of years to study the subject and come to a better understanding of it.

— NSE 

*"Feast 2002 Reports from Other Sites"
from page 1*

these lines.

— Steve Kieler, 2193 Sheker Dr.
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San Antonio, Texas

The Churches of God Outreach Ministries sponsored a Feast of Tabernacles in San Antonio, Texas; hosted by the Church of God, San Antonio.

In Leviticus 23, verse 34, God states: "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD.'" Then He elaborates further in Leviticus 23, verses 40–41: "'And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.'"

So, throughout the ages, the Feast of Tabernacles has been celebrated! Our Father and His Son had to be so pleased with His Feast of Tabernacles held at San Antonio, Texas this year of 2002. "God's Family Reunion" as it could be called, was celebrated with love, rejoicing, and family caring. Attendees were always being directed, from the pulpit, to rejoice at "God's Holy Party", that this is a Family Affair, to believe that "what makes God happy, should make us happy, and that the Feast is only eight days, but memories (made here) last forever".

The amount of love and caring shown to each other this year was just fantastic! Not just from those who were the speakers and volunteers, but from the general run of attendees. There was a continuous fellowship attained both at the planned activities, but the outside lunches, dinners, and activities were always blessed by others offering rides, meals—everyone seemed to be so attuned to others wishes and needs.

We were also blessed by many excellent sermons, beautiful special

music, and activities that were unsurpassed. The attendance was up this year, hovering close to 200 each day and 310 were shown as being registered. The speakers who brought the messages each day all seemed to be God-inspired, since most of their sermons were working close to the same theme. Those who blessed us with the messages and words of God were: Julian Cruz, Lawrence Gregory, Tom Williams, Steve Andrews, David Hope, Dan Johnson, Fred Porter, Matthew Steel, and Tim Hall.

Each day began with a Scripture reading from the youngsters. There was one baptism this year, Rick Ory, who joined us in the family of God. The special music this year was just that—special! The music provided was both varied and performed by a myriad of different persons. The Fun Show was about the same, very diversified and multi-talented. It's always amazing to me how many of God's family are blessed with special talents.

Our thanks to all the speakers, teachers, musicians, volunteers, and photographers who gave of their Feast time to make the time better for everyone. A special thanks to Julian and Ofie Cruz and their congregation there in San Antonio, for all their hard work and effort.

The Feast in San Antonio this year was as expected: Tremendous!!! What else could we expect God's Holy Party to be?

You may listen to Feast online sermons by going to www.churchofgodsa.com.

— Rosy Halley

Clearwater, Florida

During September 20–28, 2002, another delightful, spiritually rewarding Feast of Tabernacles and Great Last Day in Clearwater, Florida occurred with brethren of God's Church, known more by its publishing name—the Church Outreach Program (COP) with an address of P.O. Box 6111, Elgin, IL 60121.

The commanded holy convocations, or public meetings, for the First and Eighth Day both took place in Clearwater Beach at the Harborview Center and the Bellevue Biltmore Resort, respectively. On the Feast of Tabernacles General Pastor Robert Roenspies, COP's featured speaker,

gave some introductory comments explaining why our Father the Great God commands His people to rejoice and to love one another before Him for all seven days of God's Feast of Tabernacles.

This Feast pictures the loving, joyful, anniversary celebration, in advance, of the marriage of God's prepared/readied Bride, Firstfruits, Church to the Groom, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The Lamb's marriage to His Bride will occur exactly as God had planned and had so inspired it to be written within His Word; it will be a marvelous witness to all. Additionally, it was explained specifically who (Zech 14:16–19) during the Great Last Day will not, and cannot, come up to keep God's Feast of Tabernacles.

On the Eighth Day, picturing the Great Last Day, Robert Roenspies explained how God's entire true plan of salvation for mankind could be depicted as the "greatest love story ever told". God loves His children and is looking forward to dwelling with them forever. He explained how God really knew what He was doing all along with His true Plan of Salvation—that God really does have it all taken care of—that every human being will be in the Kingdom of God forever. God will receive all of the glory for working out His entire perfect loving Plan of Salvation. The Great Day is coming when the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God (Rev 21:3).

This means that all would indeed in that Great Last Day rejoice with our Father the Great God, Jesus Christ, and His Bride along with all of the good angels. However, additional clarification was also provided explaining how the Great Last Day also included God's destruction of those who cannot, and will not, come up to keep God's commanded Feast of Tabernacles. This is no game!

Despite minimal impact from Hurricane/Tropical Storm Isidore, the brethren were still able to enjoy unique dining on the 107-foot Starlite Princess, a three-deck Paddle Wheel Riverboat, on relatively smooth inland waters, as well as an outdoor Church-

sponsored picnic, a trip to Honeymoon Island and lots of family-style get-togethers. Throughout God's entire eight-day Festival period, excited brethren from around the country, learning and growing together in unity, were found fellowshiping, rejoicing, loving one another and talking about God's wonderful true loving plan of salvation, which included the new understanding of Zechariah 14:16-19. It was a peaceful time of rejoicing by all!

— John Gordon (603-889-1958)
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Rocheport, Missouri

HalleluYAH!

The Feast of Tabernacles at Rocheport was just wonderful! Yahweh provided perfect weather, fine messages and hundreds of joyous brethren.

We enjoyed special activities such as a walk in the woods focusing on edible wild plants, Wiener roast, Hay ride, Auction of religious and fun items, Children's activity day, Ladies Meeting, Bicycle ride in the Katy Trail State Park, Special Music service and Baptism.

Of course we also had services and Bible studies every day.

One of our dear brothers, Ron Kehl, died during the feast and I just got word that a new baby boy was born to one of the sisters on 10-3-02. Isaiah is the new son of John and Adriana Dupus of Rocheport, MO. May Yahweh bless him. May Yahweh also comfort sister Opal Kehl.

The theme of the Feast was "**Create in Me a Clean Heart**".

We started out with a message exhorting us to be joyous at the feast as commanded by Yahweh:

Yahweh tells us **what attitude to have** at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Deuteronomy 16:13-15: "You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. And you shall **rejoice** in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates.

Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to Yahweh your Elohim in the place which Yahweh chooses, because Yahweh your Elohim will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that **you surely rejoice.**"

At the Feast of Tabernacles our Master Yahshua said, John 7:38: "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, from within him will flow rivers of living water."

He may have been alluding to the joy of Yahweh's Feast of Tabernacles.

Or he may have been talking about the last Great Day which the Jews call Simchat Torah—the rejoicing in the Torah. Old, dignified Rabbis get up and dance for joy with the Torah scroll. This is when the annual cycle of reading Torah begins again. (Torah is the books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).

So, when Yahweh says, Isaiah 65:14: "Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart..." and, Zechariah 10:7 "Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as if with wine. Yes, their children shall see it and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in Yahweh," we can understand that joy is part of being a child of Yahweh.

Our attitude plays a big part in our Feast and in our life. Solomon wrote, Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he..." We might translate that scripture "**Our attitude is really what we are.**"

The wonderful thing about this truth is that **we can control our attitude.** Psalms 33:21: "For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. With Yahweh's spirit we can have joy at **any** time. This important decision is ours to make. Proverbs 4:23 "Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life."

Cathy and I have been keeping Yahweh's feasts for 40 years and they keep getting better and better! One of the reasons they get better is because we have learned that **our attitude** is the biggest factor in what kind of a Feast we have.

We pray that Yahweh grant you the wisdom to Have an attitude of joy at Yahweh's Feasts and in your life. This

is indeed a blessing. It can make all the difference.

— Tom and Cathy Schattke
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Salt Spring, British Columbia

Just a short report from our Feast site on Salt Spring Island, BC. 30 feast goers enjoyed beautiful sunny weather all 8 days at the Cusheon Lake Resort. We actually met in a Succoth, a three-sided tent facing the lake. We had CD music of praise and worship that was inspiring.

The messages fitted the occasion followed by interactive participation. On Tuesday, we took a ferry from Vesuvius to Vancouver Island to the small community of Ladysmith, where the group participated in a work project of removing large rocks to create a 25-foot sand and gravel path to low tide for kyackers. We also painted the front of the local food bank building. It's too bad the church has not been doing things like this for the past 40 or more years. This would have been a great way for us to leave a legacy for this world. It was fun and it was great to work together as a team. It did rain as we left the site for home. It was a feast to remember.

— Ed and Nancy Oettel

Gananoque, Ontario

Between 35-50 persons attended with beautiful weather. The meeting room was within the hotel where pretty much everybody stayed. Besides live sermonettes we had a daily video teaching from Fred Coulter. Most people were there for the whole Feast, although some were splitting it between several sites and groups. It was profound to hear people's stories, how they had suffered abuse at the hands of the hirelings, and the different range of the human experience in sharing the sufferings of Christ.

The Christian Biblical Church of God has given itself a nickname, "the no-hassle, recycled, last resort Church of God". Due recognition was given to the fact that there are many different teachers and fellowships that God is working through (given without hypocrisy). The Love of God and the gracious presence of His Spirit was overwhelming, almost beyond comprehension. The hope and vision given

by Fred's teaching was "mind blowing". What a God of Love we have. As I had not observed the Feast in over 10 years I had forgotten about what it is like to come down from the Feast, especially the exposure to so much of God's Loving Spirit. I felt a little empty at first, but after seeing some brethren today, the third day after arriving home, I feel great. I wish the Love of God on all His Children.

Both myself and my friend Tony intended to go to Hastings, Michigan, but ended up coming to this site because we were not allowed into the U.S. due to increased "security". It has been 11 years since I observed a Feast and this was wonderful. It was so different than WCG. The emphasis was on learning to love God and the brethren, instead of consuming physical stuff. The meetings consisted of the

most mature spiritual teachings I have ever encountered in my Christian life. I have never been in a more honest, authentic loving Christian environment in my life.

I read with disappointment the letters you published about Fred Coulter in your most recent issue. The writer's representation of the teachings was not accurate (rapture, sea of glass, etc.). And it is far from a one-man work as I assume would also be true about your *Church Bible Teaching Ministry*, although you are the one and only elder at this time.

— James Meister, Canada

[See the letter and response on page 12 of this issue apologizing for mistakes about Fred Coulter's teachings. My reference to Mr. Coulter's work being a "one-man work"

comes from facts such as you stated, that the main message of each day of the Feast consisted of a video tape by Mr. Coulter. I think he has a lot of good teaching, but it is also important for others to develop their teaching ability.

Our site had three men who gave main messages in services, and several others who have given main messages in prior years, but did not this year. Nearly everyone in the congregation spoke to the group at some time during the interactive parts of the Feast services. Nevertheless, I think much of Mr. Coulter's teaching is very valuable and many teachers in the non-aligned congregations have learned from him—and elsewhere.

— NSEJ 

"Lying and Intentionally Deceptive Practices" from page 9

want to continue in this, which shows an action of non-repentance.

In this case, the excuse made was "if the other person knew who I was, then they would not give me any information or tell me what I want to know". To them, it seems to be justification for their lies and deceptions.

Personally I do not see any reason to lie or deceive people in a manner that can, does and will hurt other people.

I personally do not take it lightly when I find I have been lied to intentionally or deceived in some way. Such a practice as this among God's people can cause others to make wrong choices at times or to believe things which are not true. When such practices begin to affect those around us, I can no longer, and will no longer stand silently and watch.

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa 58:1, KJV).

This article is also not being written so that you will disfellowship or stop speaking to another person. Just because I was unable to get across to the following people that such practices are wrong according to God does

not mean that someone else will fail. So it is with this in mind that I say the following:

We have caught the following people lying and deceiving the people of God. We have proof. We do not and will not go along with the practice of disfellowshipping, or not speaking to the following people. Instead we should all be willing to help those who have gone off course and bring them back to the correct course, keeping in mind that God and only God draws people to Him; however those things we do and say to try to point people toward God are important and should be done.

So with this said, please practice love and mercy towards those who intentionally try to hurt us, yet also at the same time taking steps to protect others from being hurt by such practices. It is for this reason we publicly post this to our newsletter and to our website. The list that follows will be posted on our website. Go to <http://darwinlauralee.150m.com> and enter the site, click on "Newsletter Articles", and then click on "Deceptive Practices" at the top of the page.

The following e-mail addresses are being used by a woman named Myra McQueen of 300 South Moore Street, Sulphur Springs, TX 75482:

lane921@hotmail.com — Mary Lane

lane921@hotmail.com — Misty Green
myron_rose@hotmail.com — Myron Rose (1101 Fitch St., Apt. 305, Odessa, TX 79761)

JakeHarmina@hotmail.com

— Jake Harmina


I have reason to believe she probably uses other addresses besides these. These are the ones I have evidence to connect her with. She uses these e-mail and snail mail addresses to misrepresent herself as someone she is not in various ways. I believe Myra is a very talented person, and should be encouraged to use her talents for a good purpose, rather than in this manner.

The following e-mail address is being used by a person who is passing himself/herself off as Richard Nickels, but who is not Richard Nickels:

youweremislead@cfl.rr.com

This is **not** Richard Nickels' e-mail address.

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another (Eph 4:25, KJV).

[Norman Edwards sent a copy of this article to Myra McQueen and her response is printed at the bottom of page 8 below the main article.] 

"Truckers Study" from page 2

and 1 Corinthians that refer to tongues, and my reading in my New King James leads me to believe that these were simply foreign languages, but even more importantly, we read 1 Corinthians 13, which plainly says that tongues and all these other gifts are worthless without love.

He raised similar questions about baptism—must one be baptized to be saved? Why would one not want to be baptized? The Bible says to do it and also explains what baptism means (Romans 6). We are baptized not for God's sake but for our own, for it is a meaningful ceremony from our point of view.

I ended today by reminding everyone to ask for God's mercy on us and our nation, even as Moses asked for the same for Israel. God relented from destroying the people at Moses' request. We should also pray the same.

[The Bible clearly shows that speaking in tongues was a gift that not everyone had (1Cor 12:29-30). However, baptism was something that everyone could do—no gift was required. Furthermore, the use of tongues in services was to be limited to those that were interpreted (1Cor 14:27). But I see no difficulty with brethren who believe they are speaking "in the tongues of angels" (1Cor 13:1) or speaking "mysteries... in the spirit" (1Cor 14:2), as long as it is not contrary to other scriptures.

— NSE/

August 25, 2002

Today's Bible study was non-eventful, but with two important lessons. We had four truck drivers, several of whom knew their Bibles quite well. One of the men had a bit of a habit that I found interesting. I would make a comment about something, and he would disagree. Then he would explain it in his way, which was essentially what I said only in different words. This happened several times. I didn't take this as malicious. I took it as an inability to listen.

One thing I have noticed time and again is how these men do not tend to identify themselves by their denominations. One man today said that he attends a Baptist church, but he defines himself as a "believer". Another defined himself as a son of God, and a third said he doesn't care what church he attends as long as the Bible is the center of its beliefs.

I look forward to my next opportunity to attend the truck stop.

[At some Christian meetings, one can see massive "earth-shaking" changes in the lives of some of the people involved. That is good and right.

Other times, the Bible studies simply provide a place for believers to share their existing faith in God in the trucker's world that is otherwise dominated by trucks, schedules, sex and

entertainment. Some drivers are forbidden by rules—maybe monitored by satellite—to drive even one mile off of their route to attend a Bible study. But they are allowed to rest at a truck stop. A truck stop Bible study is just what they need.]

September 8, 2002

We had a good Bible study today. Four men joined me who are sincerely searching for God, one of whom was a repeat customer.

Because we are into the Holy Day season and many are aware of Rosh Hoshana, I gave an introduction of sorts to the Holy Days with a special emphasis on Trumpets and the return of Christ. I doubt that any of the men heard anything like this before and seemed to have an interest. The discussion led to one on the millennium and how there is a resurrection at the end of the thousand years.

Today's study was a bit short because some of the men had to check on loads, but I joined one of the men in the restaurant later for a cup of coffee, and two of the other men joined us again as well. One fellow is Australian. He used to run a club in the Outback and then moved into radio broadcasting. While visiting this coun-

try some time back to study American radio, he was hired by the station. He spent some time in Europe with Armed Forces Radio, and after returning to the states became #1 in Arbitron ratings in Savannah, Georgia. But a falling out with the station manager and the low pay led him to truck driving where he is now. He and his wife are both truck drivers and used to team together, but in a bad business deal they ended up with two trucks and a need to have them both on the road, so for a while they will be driving separately.

He feels that in the past he was like the wheat that fell on thorny ground. He grew with enthusiasm, but was distracted by the things of this world which choked the word. He's determined to have things different this time around. An interesting fellow.

One of the truck drivers lamented that years ago there was more respect for the "Sabbath", by which he meant Sunday. It was a time dedicated to God. "If you didn't buy it on Saturday, you had to wait until Monday".

Another trucker challenged him. Which day is really the Sabbath? In his view Saturday should be a time set aside for family and Sunday set aside for the Lord. We had a brief discussion about which day is the Sabbath according to the Bible, which planted a seed that came up later down in the restaurant. I hope they look into it more.

Remember the men and women who are in the transportation industry. They are the lifeblood of our economy, yet they live difficult and dangerous lives.

September 15, 2002

The Bible study began today with three guests, with more joining later.

I was going to cover the Day of Atonement and the meaning behind it, but there was really a more important issue that needed to be discussed. One of the ladies today is a drifter who relayed to us a rather detailed story of her rough life, including how she just recently had her winter clothes and extra money stolen from her, that she had nothing to eat for two days, and that she was dying of cancer, but that she is searching for God. Currently she is hitching rides to see the country. Frankly, I didn't believe her story, but I figured if she was hungry I would



Any Sabbath-Observing Trucking Companies?



Hi,

I was looking on the internet for truck driving opportunities, when I checked for Sabbath keepers relating to the trucking industry. I came across articles relating to the Sabbath, and wondered if you knew of a company that observes the 7th day Sabbath, not expecting their drivers to work that day?

Thank you for honestly addressing the Sabbath.

Sincerely,

— John Bryant
jlbryant@peoplepc.com

I do not know of any such companies, but maybe some of our readers do. It seems that any trucking company that gladly allows drivers to observe the Sabbath would be of interest—even if its management are not Sabbath keepers themselves. We would print a news item about such companies if they would like, or just forward the information to John Bryant if that is preferred. Let us hear from you!

— NSE

“Truckers Study” from previous page

buy her something to eat. Lying or not, if she was hungry, then she was hungry. I told her that after the study I would get her something at the restaurant.

We do see drifters occasionally, and the problem we run into is determining whether they are telling the truth about their situation. But even if we can't get to the real truth, hunger is hunger, and that need should be taken care of. A gift of a Bible doesn't hurt either.

The Bible study itself focused on coming to know God and having an intimate relationship with him, what some have called the “Abba, Father” relationship. In many ancient societies (and modern ones as far as that goes) the father was not intimately involved with his children. The father was an authority figure, yet Jesus depicted the Father/Son relationship as one of a close bond. “Abba” is akin to “Daddy”! Modern culture has done its best to belittle men and ridicule fathers. I was struck not long ago while watching reruns of the old “Leave it to Beaver” series how the father of the family was kind, wise, yet firm without being overbearing. Compare that to Homer Simpson.

That concludes our Trucker's studies until after the Feast of Tabernacles. We do have coverage for next week, and everything will be fine.

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

Determining the best way to help others is an important issue for everyone who serves Jesus Christ. Jesus fed and healed thousands of people. Some of them thanked Him and listened to His teachings, but others did not. We may not be able to discern the true intent of individuals as quickly as He did, but if we do find someone coming to us for a continual “handout”, we can realize that Jesus did not provide continual free food to anybody, and then we can answer as He answered:

Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him” (John 6:26–27).

—NSE

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"Manville Camp" from page 1

very open to our spiritual beliefs. He was quite anxious to have us attend his site in October 2003. One of the main meeting rooms is a facility of 1820 sq. ft., with a stage, piano, PA system and projection screen. There is a gas-log fireplace. The hall is heated and air-conditioned.

The camp has a full service dining hall that seats 250. The kitchen is modern with an automatic commercial dish washer. Also, there is a separate chapel/conference center that seats 175. It is heated and air-conditioned.

The camp has a mix of private and dormitory rooms. Each dormitory style rooms can sleep 10 to 12 people with a total capacity of 264. There are 15 motel style rooms. The grounds have 30-40 single family cabins which are privately owned. Five of these private cabins are available for our use. They feature 2 bedrooms, living area, kitchenette and a bathroom with showers. There are 20 RV spaces and tent sites.

Possible off-site housing includes a Super-8 Motel and a Holiday Inn in Streator about 12 miles north of the



● Manville Camp – more information and pictures at www.manvillecamp.com

campground. Shopping and other essential services are available there.

The tabernacle building is large with a very high ceiling and a large stage. It could seat as many as 1,100, but can be set up for smaller groups. It is heated and air-conditioned.

There is an indoor gym with basketball, volleyball and floor-hockey. Craft

and game rooms are also present. Outdoor sports fields for football, soccer and baseball are also present.

Nearly all of the structures are within easy walking distance. Yet there are surrounding acres of woods for those who want to go exploring. The camp has everything we need for a wonderful Feast. ☺

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.

Mature Literature

Assembling on the Sabbath by Norman Edwards, 16 pages. An exposition of the scriptures regarding our need to fellowship on the Sabbath and how to do it.

Biblical Calendar Basics by Norman Edwards, 26 pages. Explanation of Biblical and Hebrew calendars (beginning of months, years, postponements etc.)

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

How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans? by Norman S. Edwards, 34

pages. How the KJV translators altered Scriptures about government to please King James and an analysis of what the Bible says about how we should govern in today's congregations.

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

Study Resources and Information

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

Free sources of literature and tapes.

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

The Journal: News of the Churches of God edited by Dixon Cartwright. One free sample issue. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups. 24 pages.

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

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