

Servants' NEWS

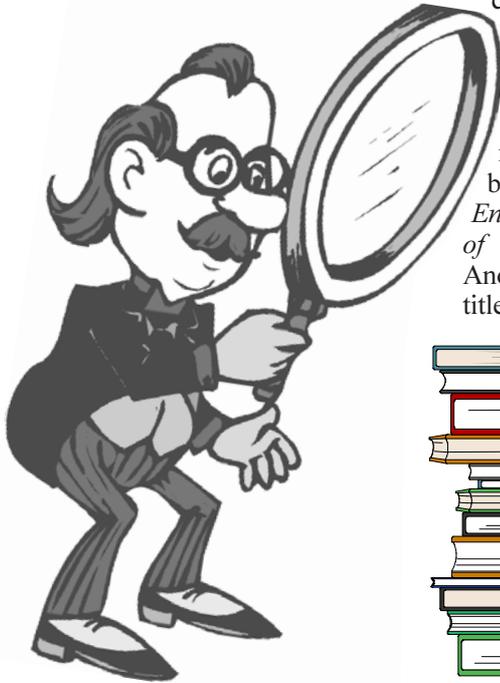
Vol. 5, No. 4

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

Jul/Aug 1999

Lost Books of the Bible?

Most "Church of God" brethren have long realized that there is often a big difference between the truth of God and commonly taught Christian doctrine. Indeed, many Bible truths are not commonly taught, and many commonly taught doctrines are not in the Bible.



However, just because a doctrine is not commonly taught, does not mean it is true. As brethren begin to accept their responsibility directly to Christ for what they believe and do, they may come across books that may seem to be on a par with the Bible. Some have internal claims of divine inspiration and have been copied by some of the same scribes who copied the Bible.

Indeed, in the "Religion" section of the local mall bookstore, right next various Bible translations, sits a book called *Forbidden Mysteries of Enoch: Fallen Angels and the Origins of Evil* by Elizabeth Claire Prophet. Another nearby book on the shelf is titled *The Lost Books of the Bible and the forgotten books of Eden*.

These are two of many books on the market right now that promise to reveal secrets to the reader that have been purportedly somehow lost or even "suppressed" by religious authorities down through the ages.

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Our Weekly Sabbath Rest: A Reminder of Our Rest from Sin

by John Eastman

When I was in the Worldwide Church of God, I kept the Sabbath because it was commanded by God, and I felt like it was a family day that should be spent with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. I found myself wanting to say more positive things about the Sabbath day, but I couldn't seem to explain it any further. When I left the membership of the

Worldwide Church of God (although I kept the faith), I had friends try to convince me that you don't have to keep the Sabbath at all. They would tell me that the Sabbath is not commanded because there is no specific "holy" time. They would also argue that the Sabbath day did not "fit" with the other nine commandments because it was not a moral law.

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"But... They Helped Me"

One of the greatest difficulties that a believer may face in their spiritual life is this:

I have discovered that the Bible teacher or organization that greatly helped me is teaching a false doctrine or is involved in a major sin. The problem has been brought to their attention, but they are not really changing. I can see from the Bible that their actions are not right, but I know that they helped me.

This is indeed a difficult trial for many believers. Reactions vary considerably. We will discuss some of them in a few paragraphs. But first, let us realize that the Bible speaks of those who provide some help to believers, yet imperfectly.

1. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees in the temple and synagogues were the main source of knowledge of the Word of God, but Jesus cautioned

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After 32: *Shelter in the Word* included!

After *Shelter in the Word*, Feast of Tabernacles Supplement included!

Truckers' Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo., #22-27



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The Truckers' 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.

June 6, 1999: One trucker came today. Although baptized as a child, he seems to have had only a passing interest in the Bible, but wanted to find a church to attend.

He related an experience he had in his new hometown (Atlanta). He has a problem finding a church where he is comfortable. At his previous home he was accustomed to attending a church in more casual clothing. When visiting churches dressed in that way, he feels like people are staring at him and has been approached about dressing more formally, which he is not inclined to do.

We reviewed Romans 14, which is about not offending one's brother (in chapter 14 the issue at hand in vegetarianism), but the principle is to be tolerant in minor areas that are not a matter of salvation. He has three choices to choose from:

1. Attend nowhere.
2. Wear a coat and tie.
3. Find a church where he doesn't have to wear a coat and tie.

In other words, respect the culture of the church you are attending.

Because he did not own a Bible, I gave him two different translations and suggested he read the Bible through. I also gave him several pieces of literature including the first lesson of a correspondence course. Finally, we discussed that the Bible is how God talks to us, and prayer is how we talk to God. The Bible explains God's purpose for creating mankind, and paints a picture of a glorious future.

July 11, 1999: We had three truckers today, two men and a woman. All of them are interested in things of the Bible, but none were well-grounded in the Word. One tip-off is their inability to find scriptures. I always bring a stack of Bibles with me that are published by the same company, so that in the event that people can't find the scriptural reference, I can tell them what page it is on.

Since they didn't have much in the way of questions or experiences that they wanted to share, I launched into essentially a sermon on Psalm 8, Hebrews 2, and God's purpose for creating mankind. I shared with them the meaning of the gospel, which contains the essential understanding of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, but also that he will return and set up the Kingdom of God on this earth. We reviewed Luke 4, Isaiah 61, and Isaiah 2.

Finally, we went through Revelation 20, which speaks of the millennium and the first and second resurrections. Each of them took with them a copy of CEM's "Second Chance" study, which I had placed on a table along with other literature and tapes. They seemed to want more information on this, as it is something none of them had ever heard before.

Afterwards one of the gentleman stayed and talked about an hour with me about studying the Bible (KJV vs NIV and Bible study tools), and also wanted advice about personal issues related to employment. It is certainly rewarding to be able to help people, especially those who are new to Biblical understanding.

July 25, 1999: Thankfully we have an air conditioned facility with today's temperature hitting 100 degrees.

We had two truckers today. One was a repeat who came looking for Arlo.

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Servants' News is one of many ministries of the spiritual Church of God. We believe that the Bible contains the foundation of knowledge about our Creator and that He is actively working through people today. Our focus is to help and teach Sabbath-keeping brethren who believe Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah, but we realize that the Eternal works with many groups and individuals.

We believe the gospel should be given freely—you may copy this newsletter and give it to others. Servants' News has nothing to sell and has no financial ties with other groups, but is supported by those who personally decide to help this ministry. We do not have IRS tax exempt status, but church groups are exempt without this status (see IRS Publ. 557, p. 16, col. 1).

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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.

Need a Few More Hymnals

We still have a few outstanding requests for the old purple WCG hymnal (Dwight Armstrong songs). If you know of extra hymnals not being used, please send them to us and we will send them on to those who have requested them. Let us help our brethren praise the Eternal in the way they best understand. — NSE

Church Assorted Flavors Website

The Assorted Flavors 7th Day Sabbatarians Directory has moved due to ISP change. If you have book marked it please take note of the new URL:

<http://travel.to/Assorted-Flavors>

If you link this address it will always take you to the current location.

— Mary Lois Bierman

CGI Hymnal Music on the Net

The new Church of God, International hymnal music is on the internet. The web address is

<http://home.fuse.net/rust/hymnal.html>

Most internet browsers are equipped to handle the MIDI file format for the music, but if you have any problems, please let me know. If you have already ordered a set of Burgundy Hymnal Tapes, they will be arriving soon. Hope you enjoy the music.

—Vivian E. Rust
krust@fuse.net

Arkansas Non-Aligned Group

You are welcome to come worship with a non-aligned Church of God group in Russellville, Arkansas at 10 a.m. each Sabbath at the United Rubberworkers' Union Hall on Weir Road. For more information contact Gary Petit at 501-669-2659 or Rick Mars at 501-967-6680.

— Charles Green

Large Format Hymnal Available

I hope you enjoy my hymnal, "Songs for the Family of God". I am having large (216×279 mm) spiral-bound copies made; they won't be as beautifully printed as the small ones, but they will be good for those who want a book to open flat, or for those who need large print. They are \$12 each (plus 7% tax for Ohio residents), including shipping, and should be ready July 1, 1999.

I will try to make a CD. It will take some time, both to record and to finance—it costs several thousands of dollars to produce. When it is ready, I will publicize it.

Because of the wording in one article about the hymnal, some of you sent for a "sample copy". I am now sending out the real thing! **One hymnal, post-paid is \$6.00.** Two to 20 hymnals are \$5.00 each. (Ohio residents add 7% sales tax).

— Mark Graham; PO Box 770261
Lakewood, Oh 44107-0019
216-529-1380; magraham@bw.edu

New Sabbatarian Singles Address

The Sabbatarian Singles List has a new address: 37 East 30th St.; Bayonne, NJ 07002. Write to get the July update if you are interested.

— Michelle Ward
Kheryn@aol.com

Long-Time Elder Stan Bass Dies

Stanley Bass, former Regional Pastor of the Caribbean, died on August 2, 1999 after a long struggle with cancer. During his later years, Mr. Bass taught at Ambassador University in Big Sandy until his retirement when the University closed. Mr. Bass was buried on August 6. Dave Orban, Pastor in Big Sandy requested prayers for his widow, Millie Bass.

Cards may be sent to Millicent Bass, 300 N. Lexington Dr., Big Sandy, TX 75755. Phone 903-636-4286.

— Mike Harkins

Big Sandy Campus Sale Is Off

Worldwide Church of God Pastor General, Joseph Tkach, Jr., announced August 21 that the planned sale of the former Ambassador College, Big Sandy, Texas campus will not take place. The group attempting to purchase the school was not able to arrange the anticipated financing. Mr. Tkach said that his organization had made secondary plans for this event, but did not say what those plans were. He also announced that his 1999 budget had counted on the sale of the campus, and that there would probably be a major shortfall at the end of the year.

As a philosophical editor's note: Growing entities seek to save money so they can buy assets to increase the scope of their work. Dying entities sell or use up existing assets to pay current expenses. Let all of us pray that we may see the Eternal's purpose, and to yield a 30, 60 or 100 fold harvest for Him (Matt 13:23). — Norman Edwards

Open Letter from WCGR #5

Greetings and great hope from the Worldwide Church of God, Restored!

We send greetings to all the faithful around the world. God bless all of you for your courage in standing for the faith once delivered. We continue to hear from our friends and brethren. We appreciate your prayers, your encouragement, and your financial offerings. Thank you so very much.

Based on recent events, the Worldwide Church of God, Restored has come to an important decision. The decision is based on the words of Mr. Tkach that were written in response to our community. Two particular

statements are relevant:

1) Mr. Tkach stated that if “members create division in the church by persisting in teaching or promoting things that are contrary to church doctrine... then the church has the duty to rescind their membership.”

2) Mr. Tkach also states, “The Worldwide Church of God welcomes Sabbath-keepers to be full members of the church. We only expect them not to teach that Sabbath-keeping is commanded for Christians, because the Bible teaches that it isn’t.”

Mr. Tkach’s words are an indictment against himself. He has effectively demanded his own resignation. By his own criteria he has disqualified himself as the Pastor General. Mr. Tkach has presided over a truly historic division. Certainly the largest division of any religious organization in decades. Mr. Tkach has demanded that any faith which embraces the Sabbath be hidden. There is no such thing as a hidden faith.

Therefore:

We no longer recognize Mr. Tkach as our Pastor General. He has betrayed the faith that was once delivered to him. He has betrayed those he has led. He has openly and officially declared that we cannot keep our faith unless we hide it.

Further, we will no longer offer any portion of our tithes and offerings to Mr. Tkach. Our community will not offer any support to those who have openly and officially attacked the faith and practice of the original church and the Apostles.

Sincerely,

—A Community of Believers in the
Worldwide Church of God, Restored
805-527-2810; wcsr@juno.com

[What started on Pentecost this year as the WCGR “third alternative”—staying in the WCG, but meeting separately and keeping old WCG doctrines—has now become a church group. Our previous commentary on this group indicated that it was not likely to last long. “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Nevertheless, it is good that people are making a conscious decision to attend the group that they firmly understand to be teaching the truth of the Bible. This is so much better than studying a group’s doctrines at the beginning, joining it, and then going along with whatever they teach. Servants’ News readers might want to

encourage friends who have been in the WCG all these years but skeptical of the “new doctrines” to contact this group. It would be a good “first step”.—NSE]

Origin of Nations Forum

History Research Projects, publisher of “Origins of Nations” magazine, distributor of many fine books and which also runs seminars on historical/prophetic subjects, invites you to subscribe to a free e-mail discussion forum. Just click on: www.onelist.com/community/origin, answer a few questions, and away you go!

The forum values any positive and uplifting discussion or news on: identity of the world’s nations and peoples, lost tribes of Israel, prophecy, world news, anthropology, human cultures, genetics, Genesis 10 research and such like.

Positive, well-thought out and quality discussions are sought after.

Extreme, radical, silly or attacking e-mails are not permitted.

So please go right ahead and subscribe and don’t forget to tell your friends about it. It should be fun.

— Craig White

Australian Lectures Successful

The Australian lecture tour on *The Lost Tribes of Israel—Found* was a resounding success.

The author is a founder member of the Sydney UCG, member of the History Research Projects organizing committee and is a solicitor with the Commonwealth Government.

For the second year running History Research Projects (Publisher of the Origins of Nations magazine, GPO Box 864, Sydney, Australia 2001) with the cooperation of the UCG in Australia has presented a highly successful lecture series dealing with the identity of Israel in the modern world and related topics. Last year Dr. Rick Sherrod toured Australia and New Zealand under the sponsorship of HRP presenting lectures in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland on the identity of modern Israel.

This year the series was continued with UCG Pastor Melvin Rhodes and another UCG member who prefers not to be named in print, giving presentations. The lectures were again devised to build bridges between the many CoG groups and advertised to the general

public as an evangelizing opportunity. The topics presented by Melvin Rhodes included talks on “Daniel 7—an overview of world history”, “The Multitude of Nations—the free world’s first line of defense”, “Decolonization and its consequences” and “European Unity—past and present”.

The other lecturer spoke on “The Call, Purpose and History of Israel up to the captivity”, “The migrations of Israel from the captivity to North West Europe”, “The promises to the Patriarchs” and “Jacob’s Trouble”.

The attendances at the various venues compared favorably with those achieved last year though in Sydney the attendance was down a little. The attendances at the most popular sessions were Brisbane: 145, Sydney: 125, Melbourne: 120 and Auckland, New Zealand: 53. In Sydney the lower numbers from last year were mainly due to a UCG service being conducted in a nearby city. However, at the Sydney lectures there were in attendance members of no fewer than 8 CoG groups and the other sites reported similar attendance patterns with CoG members very happy with the opportunity to meet up with old friends from other groups or independent members they had not seen for quite a while and who would only meet under a neutral umbrella.

As further evidence of bridge-building with other like-minded CoGs, an elder with the Global Church of God, Rob Barnett, acted as an MC for one of the four sessions in the Sydney conference. Those attending included members of WCG still pursuing the faith as well as members of the public completely new to this essential information. During the course of the lectures a great deal of free literature from UCG was taken up by non UCG attendees and free literature from other CoG groups was also available and much taken.

Sample copies of various well-researched books on the subject (including Steven Collins’ book) and various maps and other objects of interest were displayed.

While History Research Projects and the independent organizing committee raised the lion’s share of the funds to cover expenses, a great deal of thanks goes to the congregations pastored by Melvin Rhodes, Ann Arbor and Lansing, Michigan, for meeting the cost

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of Mr. Rhode's return airfares to Australia. Thanks also go to the UCG Council of Elders for allowing Mr. Rhodes the opportunity to speak at these lectures and both the Australian National Council and New Zealand

Board for their overwhelming support. Both Melvin Rhodes and Dr. Lewis were enthusiastically received at all venues with very positive feedback on the content of the talks and the riveting speaking of both.

So successful has this lecture format

been over the past two years that HRP and the organizing committee are already up and running on the year 2000 lecture series and are thinking of making it a pre-Olympic event and have several speakers in mind.

—Murray Allatt ☐

World News of Note

New JPS Bible with Hebrew

The Jewish Publication Society has at last published their Tanakh/Hebrew Scriptures with the English and the Hebrew text! This has been so long overdue. The English has been out for years and it is an excellent "modern" translation, and this edition has many improvements and corrections even of this fine English translation.

Even for those who are not fluent in Hebrew, it is easy to learn the alphabet and begin picking out words. So nice to have both Hebrew and English in an elegant page design. Amazon.com book store lists it for \$69.95, it should be available from most other religious bookstores. The price looks high, but not considering what you are getting.

— James Tabor

Ron Wyatt Dies

Ron Wyatt was known as a Bible explorer and adventurer. He claimed to have found the Ark of the covenant, Noah's Ark, the original site of Sodom and Gomorrah, and many other Biblically-related sites. He had a museum in Tennessee and sold books and videos about his finds.

In 1994, I was beginning to look for truth at sources other than the WCG and saw a message recommending Wyatt's videos on a computer forum. I read their advertising literature which seemed quite convincing. His description of Noah's Ark matched those of other explorers who have claimed to visit it.

One claim I had trouble with. Wyatt claimed that he was walking in Jerusalem with a member of the Israel Antiquities Authority and a voice told them where the Ark of the Covenant was located. The Antiquities authority person supposedly told Wyatt that he would get approval for him to dig immediately. Wyatt supposedly found the ark and gave

many proofs, but kept it hidden until "the Lord told him to reveal it to the world."

Does God tell people things like this? Maybe. But the first step of proving a questionable story is to look for something that can be independently verified—something that is independent of the storyteller. I contacted Ron Wyatt's organization and asked the name of the man from the Israeli Antiquities Authority.

Nobody could remember his name. They asked Wyatt for me and he could not remember, but said that nearly the whole Antiquities department changed personnel shortly after that, so he probably did not work there any more anyway. They encouraged me to order the video and I would be convinced, as well as able to "participate in the blessing". Wow! Two people on earth who know the location of the Ark and one forgets who the other one is. And now that one is dead.

This becomes more and more like a cheap TV suspense show! *Is all hope lost? Or will some new person arise whom Wyatt told the secret location on his deathbed? How much will his video cost?* It is sad that some people throw truth to the wind and use people's sincere interest in the Eternal and history just to make a few dollars. They may justify it by saying "many people turned to God because of our stories", but God does not need lies to support His way.

— Norman Edwards

Malachi Martin Dies at 78

The Famous Roman Catholic Author, Malachi Martin died in New York City on July 27, 1999 following a stroke. Martin became a Jesuit (an elite order of the Catholic church) in 1939 and was ordained a priest in 1954. He served in Rome from 1958 to 1964, carrying out many high-level missions. He was released from his Jesuit vows by pope

Paul VI in 1964.

Martin was the author of 16 books, the earlier ones being scholarly, and the later ones exposing misconduct and plots within the Catholic Church. His most famous books include *Hostage to the Devil*, *The Final Conclave*, *Vatican*, *The Jesuits* and *The Keys of This Blood*. His last published book is *Windswept House: A Vatican Novel*. It is officially fiction, but other Catholic insiders confirmed it to be largely reality.

Martin was still at work on another book which promised to be even more controversial: *Primacy: How the Institutional Roman Catholic Church became a Creature of the New World Order*. It was to cover a breakdown in the power shifts in the Vatican—loss of power in the papacy, the rise of political power in new places.

Some of what Martin revealed about the Catholic Church can be proven to be true. But when he revealed future plans of the Vatican, some have speculated that they are also true and have wondered why Martin has not been silenced. Others believe that Martin is revealing only plans that the Catholic Church wants outsiders to know.

Servants' News does not have an answer to that puzzle. Many conspiracy theory sources insist that the Catholic Church is controlling "the New World Order". On the other hand, **Michael Turner's** research (available from Mykeltturner@airmail.net) indicates that the Catholic Church has their own agenda apart from the New World Order:

I don't dwell on the supposed New World Order (black helicopters, gun control, etc.), but do comment on it and point out how it won't come into being as planned—and is in fact just about to collapse. I've studied the NWO for years (even before I came in the church) and know all about it and its history and finally came to the conclusion a few years back that the NWO is nothing but the UK/US's ("Israel's") attempt to run the world according to their

desires. (This is why it is so important to know who Israel is.) So what I focus on is what has been here before and is supposed to come back one more time: the OLD World Order—the one that carried crosses while killing our former brethren in the name of God—not in the name of some Teutonic god while carrying a swastika or a New Age god carrying crystals.

There is no doubt that Satan as well as men conspire to gain power and wealth for themselves. But these plans are rarely written down and never “officially confirmed” by conspirators. Even if someone defects from a conspiracy group with tapes or writings of their plans, it is still usually not possible to prove that the records of these plans are true until the deeds are actually done. Of course, conspirators are free to change their plans at any time without telling anybody. They often “leak” false plans to the press to confuse the whole issue. It is better to pay more attention to real events—who is actually doing what—than it is to listen to someone tell you what they “know” someone is going to do. It is better to live a righteous life, and trust the Eternal for deliverance, than it is to panic about a conspiracy. Take action only when there is something that you really know and something that you can really do something about.

— Norman Edwards

Need for God Preached to Congress

Darrell Scott is the father of Rachel Joy Scott, one of the students murdered at Littleton, Colorado’s Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. Mr. Scott’s son, Craig, miraculously survived the massacre, but witnessed as two of his friends were shot to death in the school library. On May 27th, Mr. Scott testified in Washington, DC before the Subcommittee on Crime of the House Judiciary Committee. Following is his statement:

Since the dawn of creation there have been both good and evil in the hearts of men and of women. We all contain the seeds of kindness or the seeds of violence.

The death of my wonderful daughter Rachel Joy Scott, and the deaths of that heroic teacher and the other children who died, must not be in vain. Their

blood cries out for answers.

The first recorded act of violence was when Cain slew his brother Abel out in the field. The villain was not the club he used. Neither was it the NCA, the National Club Association. The true killer was Cain and the reason for the murder could only be found in Cain’s heart.

In the days that followed the Columbine tragedy, I was amazed at how quickly fingers began to be pointed at groups such as the NRA. **I am not a member of the NRA. I am not a hunter. I do not even own a gun.** I am not here to represent or defend the NRA, because I don’t believe that they are responsible for my daughter’s death. Therefore, I do not believe that they need to be defended. If I believed they had anything to do with Rachel’s murder, I would be their strongest opponent.

I am here today to declare that Columbine **was not just a tragedy, it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look at where the real blame lies.** Much of that blame lies here in this room [the congress building]. Much of that blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves.

I wrote a poem just four nights ago that expresses my feelings best. This was written way before I knew I would be speaking here today:

Your laws ignore our deepest needs,
Your words are empty air,
You've stripped away our heritage,
You've outlawed simple prayer,
Now gunshots fill our classrooms,
And precious children die,
You seek for answers everywhere,
And ask the question, “Why?”
You regulate restrictive laws,
Through legislative creed,
And yet you fail to understand,
That God is what we need!

Men and women are three-part beings. We all consist of body, soul, and spirit. When we refuse to acknowledge a third part of our makeup, we create a void that allows evil, prejudice, and hatred to rush in and wreak havoc. Spiritual influences were present within our educational systems for most of our nation’s history. Many of our major colleges began as theological seminaries. This is a historic fact.

What has happened to us as a nation? We have refused to honor God and in doing so, we open the doors to hatred

and violence.

And when something as terrible as Columbine’s tragedy occurs, politicians immediately look for a scapegoat such as the NRA. They immediately seek to pass more restrictive laws that continue to erode away our personal and private liberties.

We do not need more restrictive laws. Eric and Dylan would not have been stopped by metal detectors. No amount of gun laws can stop someone who spends months planning this type of massacre.

The real villain lies within our own hearts. Political posturing and restrictive legislation are not the answers.

The young people of our nation hold the key. There is a spiritual awakening taking place that will not be squelched!

We do not need more religion. We do not need more gaudy television evangelists spewing out verbal religious garbage. We do not need more million-dollar church buildings built while people with basic needs are being ignored.

We do need a change of heart and a humble acknowledgment that this nation was founded on the principle of simple trust in God.

As my son Craig lay under that table in the school library and saw his two friends murdered before his very eyes, he **did not hesitate to pray in school.** I defy any law or politician to deny him that right!

I challenge every young person in America and around the world to realize that on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School, prayer was brought back to our schools. Do not let the many prayers offered by those students be in vain.

Dare to move into the new millennium with a sacred disregard for legislation that violates your conscience and denies your God-given right to communicate with Him.

To those of you who would point your finger at the NRA, I give to you a sincere challenge: Dare to examine your own heart before you cast the first stone!

My daughter’s death will not be in vain. The young people of this country will not allow that to happen.

— Darrell Scott

[Big changes in society are often achieved by convicted young people, not old people who have studied it all and “know what is best”. —NSE]

"But They Helped Me" from page 1

the hearers not to follow the corrupt practices of some of the leaders (Acts 15:21; Matt 23:2-7)

2. Paul explained that some preach Christ out of **envy, rivalry and selfish ambition**, but he rejoiced in all of that (Phil 1:14-18). Obviously, it will be hard for the believers who learn about Christ through those preaching for selfish motives. When those believers eventually discover the true motives, they will be facing the very problem that this article is about.

3. Apollos traveled around teaching that Jesus was the Christ, but did not understand that people should be baptized in His name and receive the Holy Spirit. This story has a happy ending in that Priscilla and Aquilla later taught Apollos the rest of the Gospel, and Paul had them baptized and laid hands on them that they might receive the spirit (Acts 18:24-19:6).

4. Many people, including this writer, have been greatly helped by the book of Proverbs. Yet what happened to Solomon, the writer of this book of great wisdom? "So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, 'Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant'" (1Kngs 11:9-11)

5. Even the Apostles were not perfect teachers. On the night before Christ died, His Apostles were still discussing who among them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Even after they had received the Holy Spirit, Barnabas had a dispute with Paul (Acts 15:39) and Paul had to correct Peter (Gal 2:11).

Reactions to the Problem

So what do people do when they realize that the teacher or group that greatly helped them is also involved in sin or doctrinal error?

1. Some simply begin to deny that the problems exist—refuse to learn any more about them or talk about them.

2. Others completely excuse the

problems, saying that people have no right to question the personal sins or doctrinal teachings of "the ones God has called to do such a great Work".

3. Another common approach is for an individual to reject the teacher or organization with the known sin or doctrinal error, and immediately look for a new organization or teacher and then put complete confidence in them.

4. Even more extreme, but not uncommon, is the rejection of some or all of the Bible.

5. Lastly, we would not be complete if we did not mention the "**depressed muddle**": many people continue on listening to the same teacher, fellowshiping with the same group—occasionally visiting other groups or hearing other teachers, but with much less enthusiasm than before. Their thinking may be something like this: "If our leaders have this much trouble, what chance is there of me straightening out my life? But I can't abandon the people who helped me."

"Count It All Joy" in this Trial!

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (Jms 1:2-4).

But how can one be joyful when a major source of one's religious teaching is now in doubt? How can we be joyful when a person or group whom we esteemed to be of God now has known sins or doctrinal error? Because there are four major lessons that we can learn from this trial that we might not learn any other way!

1. **Trust the Eternal, not men or their organizations.** While nearly every believer thinks their faith is not in men, it is amazing to see what some do when their leader or church group comes upon difficult times. Paul had to teach the Corinthians not to align themselves with a particular teacher: "Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1Cor 1:12-13).

2. **Remain forever humble about the Bible truth that we do have.** It is so easy to begin believing that we listen to

the teachers with the most truth, or attend the group that is "doing the work". Problems with teachers and groups teach us that it is Christ who does the work through men, not men who do the work of Christ. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1Cor 10:12).

3. **Appreciate good however it comes to us.** We can be thankful for a little or a lot of helpful teaching that we received. Even though it is upsetting when we realize we were taught error for many years, there is little value in holding anger. Be thankful and never forget the positive effect of the good things that you were able to learn.

4. **Have empathy for others who remain in other groups with errors and sins that are obvious to you—these groups helped them.** It is so easy to have patience and forgiveness for the problems with our own teachers and organizations, but quickly condemn them in others. There are probably millions of people who attend groups with erroneous doctrines and/or sinful leaders, but know that they were helped in one or more of life's crises and brought to God by that group. Can you expect a person who was redeemed from drug addiction by a Sunday-keeping group to completely reject that group as "unGodly" when he or she begins to learn about the Sabbath? Or will they say: "but... they helped me"?

We must judge other groups and teachers with the same judgment we would want ours to be judged (Matt 7:2). Christ said that His disciples would be known by their love for each other (John 13:35). If a person believes they have experienced Godly love in a certain group, it is hard for them (and us) to accept that there might also be sin or error present.

So What Do I Do Now?

Look to Christ as your spiritual guide, not any man. He will take care of you no matter how many different teachers you learn from or how many different groups you fellowship with. Rejoice as you learn the four lessons, above. You can reject wrong leadership, while remaining friends with the brethren. This article cannot begin to tell you what to do in your specific situation. Christ knows what you should do. Ask Him.

— Norman Edwards





**Letters
& Responses**

We print a representative sampling of our mail—both positive and negative. We do not include names unless we are fairly sure that the writer would not object. To avoid any difficulty, writers should specify how much of their name and address they would like us to print.

Appreciates SN

LETTER: October 22, 1998
Mr. Edwards,

I am enclosing a small donation in thanks for your sending us the *Servants' News* so faithfully. In these scattered times, it is most difficult to follow God's flock.

Thanks once again for your wonderful concern for God's people and your knowledge God has blessed you with.

—KD, Texas

RESPONSE: Thank you for your kind words. We receive quite a few letters similar to this that are very encouraging to us, but we do not print most of them as the many similar letters would be of little value to our readers. Nevertheless, we are printing this one so our readers realize that we receive short and complimentary letters as well as long and sometimes critical ones.

—NSE

Amazed at So Many Truth Teachers

LETTER: May 24, 1999
Dear Mr. Edwards,

The reason I write this letter to you is that we, my wife and I, were very much surprised by the article on the front page of *The Journal* of April 30, 1999.

We have a subscription on this magazine for more than three years. Most probably they send it to us by boat mail, for we receive it usually a month or so after it has been published. This time, we received it rather early. It really is amazing to read that so many organizations teach WCG-like doctrines.

This year, we hope to celebrate our 27th Feast of Tabernacles. But we do not know yet where. Now since we have read the above-mentioned articles, we think that there will be much more possibilities for us to go for the Feast than we knew up till now. So consequently we would be very

pleased to receive from you the *Servants' News*, with all the possible Feast sites.

— F & A Steinfort, The Netherlands

RESPONSE: Many people, including myself, were amazed to find so many other similar groups. Nearly all historians (including Sabbatarian historians) who try to trace the "true church" through the ages agree that there was not consistency of doctrine—doctrine varied through the years. If the Eternal allowed doctrine to vary through the ages, what would stop Him from letting doctrine vary among different groups right now? This was obviously the case in the first century when Revelation 2 and 3 were written.

If there is any lesson that we can learn from this, it is that we ought to be doing the works of Christ—serving others and preaching the Gospel, rather than wasting time declaring our own group to be the "one True Church", "most true Church", "Philadelphian Church", etc.

—NSE

Working Together in the Philippines

LETTER: August 1, 1999
Mr Edwards:

Sorry for responding this very late. Actually I really want to give you some feedback but encountered some technical problem with my computer. It took me months before it was repaired and it's only now that I am able to use it again (at last!).

Actually I was able to get the number of Mr Cesar Lumbuan thru a friend and was able to talk to him and have it requested. I have known Cesar way back during the "Global" days (and actually had a chance of working with him during feast activities!). I am quite surprised that he is also one of your subscribers and now your representative!

He informed me however that he is yet to received all his copies and I requested instead "Triumph and Trouble of the Churches of God" by Alan Ruth.

Luckily, I was able to get all the title thru Mr Ike Gabuyo. He lent me his copies and I was able to have it photocopied.

My wife and I are now regularly attending the fellowship in Shalom and they seem doing very well especially with Y2K information dissemination.

In the afternoon of Sabbath, we also met with the fellowship in Mandaluyong with Mr Ike Gabuyo (Laguna) for Bible studies and also conduct Bible seminar with new brethren. We are also planning

with Ike to established a local church of God library and is now soliciting old churches of God publications. That's why I am also coordinating with Cesar if we can borrow all sets of your publications and have it duplicated for the library.

Regards,

— Raul Hipe, Manila, Philippines

RESPONSE: I believe Cesar Lumbuan now has his complete set of literature. It is nice to see so many of you working together. It has been our experience that areas outside the United States have been quicker to see the problems with splitting up into so many Sabbatarian groups. In areas where there are fewer Sabbatarians and where transportation is more difficult, people quickly realize that if each person joins the splinter group that they think is best, they may each end up in a different group! Fortunately, many have had the wisdom to do what you do and meet together using literature from many groups.

Fortunately, church group "headquarters" in the United States are fairly tolerant of different groups meeting together internationally—they will still send them literature and not disfellowship them for attending together. I think most groups understand the problem. Also, the groups receive very little money from most international areas, so they will not feel an economic impact if some of their international subscribers switch to another group. Furthermore, some organizations count entire local international congregations as their own, even though many there consider themselves members of other groups—this makes it look like the organization has a "big international work". I hope these statements are not offensive, but I have seen these things happen in my years of working for corporate churches. For whatever the reason, we can rejoice in the fact that most international brethren are free to meet with and work together with brethren not in their group.

—NSE

SN & SW in the Philippines

LETTER: August 12, 1999
Dear Norman,

We really appreciate your *Servants' News* and *Shelter in the Word*. Most of the articles are very timely with our situations today. It's good to know people like you are trying to bind churches of God all over the world. I'm sure someday most if not all will be awoken to what you are doing. Cesar Lumbuan is doing a very good job. And for that reason someone was attracted to our group (a longtime WCG member) and begin attending with us. He found

your articles very fair and balanced.

Today we are preparing for the feast of Tabernacles. We do our practices at Cardona's family, providing us food to eat.

Thank you,

— Maraming Salamat, Philippines

RESPONSE: Thank you for the encouragement. I have no idea how long our ministry will continue or who will awaken to it. Most of the history of the world shows that God has not given all people the same amount of understanding of truth. The Eternal may make a way for us to share our understanding with a great many other people, or He may decide that the time is not now. He may decide to use someone else with more understanding to be a great teacher.

We need to thank the Eternal for what He has given us, and walk through whichever doors He opens for us. I hope you have a wonderful Feast.

— NSE

Cancel Servants' News

LETTER: June 30, 1999
Dear Mr. Edwards,

It is with regret that I ask you to cancel my subscription to the *Servants' News*. Whereas, I formerly enjoyed the SN, lately I have noticed that the content of it has deteriorated into that of a gossip paper. One or another of the churches of God is always being trashed, or some person such as Mr. Herbert Armstrong, who is dead and has no recourse with which to defend himself. Global has not escaped criticism, nor has UCGAIA, Mr. Meredith, COGAIC, Mr. Hulme, etc. I feel that trashing Churches or the ministry is of little value. Gossip about the various Churches of God isn't witnessing to the world a warning nor is it "feeding God's sheep". I feel depressed after reading such negative things. I feel that printing positive things about the churches would be of more value and much more encouraging and uplifting.

You did have a good thing going at one time. I pray that *Servants' News* will change its script and be more positive and uplifting in the future. However, I do like "*Shelter in the Word*". Please don't let it become a gossip rag like *Servants' News* has. I assume that since I am canceling *Servants' News*, the "*Shelter in the Word*" will stop coming also.

— Deloris Hoffman, Iowa

RESPONSE: No! We will be glad to send only *Shelter in the Word*. It does not contain anything specifically about "Church of God" groups. We have received several phone calls,

Jul/Aug 1999

letters and e-mails that are similar to your letter. Some have requested to receive only *Shelter in the Word* and we will gladly comply.

We realize that writing or reading about the problems of teachers and groups is not pleasant. It is depressing to us, as well as to you. It would be easier if we wrote about only positive things. However, we do not believe we are a "gossip rag"—we believe everything we have printed to be true and clearly established by documentation or at least two witnesses. If there is a specific point that you do not think we have sufficiently proven, let us know and we will better document it. (If we tried to publish all relevant documentation of every point, that would only make these depressing articles many times longer.)

So why don't we just ignore the problems and only talk about positive things? Our reading of the Bible shows us that the Eternal spends a lot of time explaining the faults of various individuals and groups of people—

from the sin of Adam and Eve (Gen 3) to the problems with the seven churches (Rev 2-3). The Bible gives an evaluation of every King of Israel. The gospels talk about the sins and mistakes of the apostles. Paul and John name brethren who became false teachers and brethren who left the faith.

We have written about the problems of "Church of God" groups and leaders not because we want to see them fail, but because we believe many are on a path toward failure and we want to see them succeed. We realize that reading both good and bad news about God's people is not something we are used to. The WCG printed basically only good news about themselves in their own publications and members were highly discouraged from reading other publications. It was easy to believe that everything was going great. Now and then a person, minister or entire congregation would simply "disappear without a trace",

Summary of Rector/plagiarism Letters

We received quite a few letters about plagiarism and Jim Rector. They fell into four categories:

1. Thanks for exposing the sin of stealing another's work (plagiarism), whether it be among corporate or independent teachers.
2. The truth of God belongs to God and the principle of plagiarism is man's law and is therefore irrelevant for Bible teachers.
3. Plagiarism is wrong but Jim Rector said he has repented so we should drop the subject.
4. We have already printed too much on about Rector/plagiarism so quit it.

We realize that the last point has some wisdom. Rather than include several pages of letters we will print only this box. According to Matthew 18, we originally tried to make this a private matter with Jim Rector. When he would not fully acknowledge the problem to those brethren affected, we took other witnesses, then finally brought it to the church. We respect individuals' rights to make their own decisions about this matter. We hoped Jim would keep his promise to produce an accurate list of which of his tapes are plagiarized, but as far as we know, he has not. This makes it very difficult for those still desiring to study his material.

We think it is only fair to warn those who continue to duplicate Jim Rector's tapes (even if just giving them away) that the legal articles we read on plagiarism indicate that such duplication would constitute being an "accessory to plagiarism". It is unlikely

that any of the publishers of the works Jim copied from would sue as the cost of such a suit would probably be greater than the amount of money they would recover. (However, if they did sue, they would probably name every person they could find that was involved in the production of tapes—courts often allow plaintiffs to collect from defendants based on their ability to pay, not on their share of the plagiarism. Wealthy people or those with their own businesses might end up paying most of the damages.)

Some of our letters indicated that brethren believe they should "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29) and disregard "man's law" if Bible truth is being taught. We think there are ways to teach the necessary truths without breaking man's law, and that we should not cause such offense unnecessarily.

For those trying to avoid the copying of plagiarized tapes, please realize that our lists in the last issue were incomplete. There are many more tapes which we believe are plagiarized, but we did not find the original sources. We have not had anyone report any additional sources, nor has anyone claimed that any of our sources were in error. We would like to point out an error that we did not catch until after publication. We mistakenly stated that the three tape set *A Passion for Fulness* (July 1, 8, 15, 1995) was plagiarized from a book by the same name by Jack Hayford. Actually, only the **title** of the book was used for this series. Some of the **contents** of Hayford's book were read onto a previous Rector tape, *A Passion for God* (December 10, 1994).

— NSE

but since almost nobody talked about these things, they were easy to forget.

But ignoring problems rarely makes them go away. Exposing them sometimes does help them go away. Several times, church groups have reversed an unfair policy or decision when a story was written about it in *the Journal, Servants' News*, or some other publication. In addition, church groups that used to largely ignore certain doctrinal questions have addressed them when other publications wrote about them.

The history of mankind, either from the Bible or secular sources, is not a long, pretty story. It is the story of many people trying to get what they can for themselves, and a few trying to help others live together in peace (Matt 5:9). The help of the latter is not always appreciated.

Even though we believe it is necessary to write about some "Church of God" problems to help those involved in them, we realize that some are not involved in them, or if they are, can do very little about them. We encourage people in those situations to skip the articles that do not interest them.

Thank you for your letter.

— NSE

Guts to Write About It All

LETTER: August 24, 1999
Hi Norm:

I like men who have the guts to write about the good, the bad, and the ugly. Donation enclosed.

— Rich Trecek, California

RESPONSE: Learning to deal righteously when people disagree a very difficult thing. I have not mastered it, but I think I have learned. The easiest approaches are to avoid the conflict and say nothing to the person, or to go to the person in anger and hate. Paul's advice was good: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal 6:1).

— NSE

In Different Levels of Growth

LETTER: August 5, 1999
Dear Norm,

Thanks for your tireless efforts in research and writing to provide for the wake-up of ex-WCG people and others. I was in the Worldwide Church of God for 25 years. Your writings in *Servants' News* have helped me a great deal in understanding how many of us made an idol of Mr. HWA. We were duped by the hierarchy system; and fleeced by it as well.

As I was leaving in 1995, I would get

mad if anyone said anything negative about Mr. HWA or his lieutenants. We are not all at the same grade in growth and many of us are still in kindergarten in Christian growth...still wanting milk.

Some of the write-ins (letters) still reflect a deceived and immature attitude. People need to check into things and not be naïve as I was. There are plenty of material sources to back up what you are saying, Norm! HWA and WCG made lots of mistakes. The Bible records mistakes of others who were kings and leaders in the Old Testament for our **learning**.

Please keep on keeping on what you are doing Norm. We all need truth, which I believe you are publishing. This is showing the love of God to our scattered brethren. I feel the same as you do about HWA and WCG and am thankful for the truth we did learn. However, we were kept in kindergarten (pay and pray) too long. Thank God... He let it break up. Now we can move into the first grade. God bless you all.

— CD, Mississippi

RESPONSE: Thank you for the encouragement. It took me years to slowly understand the major scriptural problems with the WCG and Herbert Armstrong. I have now met many other people who understood these things years or decades before I did, as well as those who came to understand them after I did. God is still working with most of us.

— NSE

Comments on Beyersdorfer Letter

LETTER: August 15, 1999
Dear Norm,

I really enjoyed your excellent responses to Karl Beyersdorfer in the latest SN. Not only was there a double-mindedness by HWA as you noted in the responses, but it is plain that such double-mindedness has rubbed off on even apparently otherwise sincere people such as Karl.

Not too surprising since this has been a deep-rooted systemic problem of the HWA legacy from at least the 1940s (an early edition of the US & Britain in Prophecy booklet). There simply is no justifiable excuse for plagiarism in the United States of America since 1790. Before God there has never been a good excuse to present another's material as one's own original material and inspiration. That is **Plain Untruth**.

The "early ministers" allowed this cancer to take root within them. This happened by their constant exposure to the increasingly domineering and overbearing "leadership" of a man who, especially after the death of his wife in 1967, just had to "be right" (we all have to fight this tendency;

and we must overcome it!). Their spiritual immune systems were weakened over time by HWA's constant pressure and their willingness to compromise with it.

Karl's excuses for HWA, et al, in this regard are just that: excuses, **unjustifiable excuses**.

The "its ok if **we** do it" cancer can be very contagious! We must strengthen our spiritual immune systems by **not** compromising with sin or by allowing any unscriptural leadership to dominate us (see 2Cor 11:19-20). (My reference to 1967, above, as at least one watershed year is per the testimony of Ellis Stewart in his answer to my article on *The Incredible Human Potential* book by HWA in *The Journal*, September, 1997).

[Personal paragraphs deleted]

Some further information on plagiarism: I just viewed a few nights ago part of a PBS presentation on copyright law. The law professor made some significant statements thereunto appertaining (I've obviously heard/read a lot of "law-speak"!).

The professor gave the general approach of law to plagiarism: You **cannot** copyright an idea; you **can** copyright the **expression** of an idea.

Also, an example of a recent case of plagiarism (noted either on this presentation, or on another one recently): a well-known romance novelist was recently successfully sued (and she subsequently admitted the fact) for copying about ten words out of one paragraph from another novelist's book and using those words in one of her paragraphs and utilizing a similar structure and overall content for her own paragraph. (**We're talking about parts of just one paragraph here!**)

Herbert Armstrong did more than just copy the structure of JH Allen's whole book. He copied concepts and even examples with the same words and sometimes very little difference in content.

So, once again, HWA would have easily been shown to be a plagiarist, a fraud, and a liar in any challenge to the copyright for his book, *The US & Britain in Prophecy*.

And, before God, he would be a thief and a liar for taking and passing off another's work as his own, since he did not just use the same very general concept, but copied structure, words, and content, and did not give proper credit—and claimed inspiration from God and bragged often of God's special election of him as an apostle and as the Elijah to come (Covetousness probably enters in all this as well). (See pages 9,10, 24,157,251,289-291 of *Mystery of the Ages*, PCG paperback edition).

Despite whatever good **God accom-**

plished through HWA and faithful brethren; despite whatever talents and abilities HWA did indeed possess; he was a false prophet, a fraud, and an exploiter of brethren and co-workers.

Lastly, Karl: why did you not touch upon the issue of HWA's extravagant lifestyle of the last two to three decades of his life? Nor did you touch the subject of his extortionist co-worker letters with their often eternal life threatening messages. You did not deal with the several plain examples of his date-settings for the end-time events that clearly mark him biblically as a false prophet (Deut 22:23) and hence as one not to take too seriously for that reason alone!

— Bruce Lyon, California

RESPONSE: Your points are well made. I think Herbert Armstrong did most of the things you accuse him of, though I am not sure how aware he was of what he was doing and therefore cannot judge his heart. He did many good things along with the bad (see letter in box). The best I can tell, he was surrounded by men who nearly always agreed with him for the last 20 years of his life. Those who would challenge his actions from the scriptures rarely ever had a chance to do so. "Better a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more" (Eccl 4:13). Mr. Armstrong did not have the "iron sharpening iron" that so many of us enjoy. Yet he continually claimed sole and complete responsibility for his organizations—and the entire Work of God on Earth for that matter. An all-wise God who can look directly on the heart will be required to judge him. Halleluia! We have one!

— NSE

Dealing with Depression, Negativism

LETTER: August 12, 1999
Dear Mr. Edwards,

Hello. I decided to write you a letter. This time instead of calling... Also, considering the effort of sending me some older issues (which are great).

I'm the one who called and expressed my feelings about the "negativity" surrounding Mr. Armstrong. I'd cancelled my subscription, but would like to cancel my "cancel". I just changed my mind. (And as the saying goes, a woman has the right to do that!) I just decided that I'm in a very negative state of mind, due to my "separation", and a major depression I've battled for years.

So reading about Mr. HWA fed into the depression, and I noticed an angry spirit rise from me. I thought of all the years

growing up in "the Church" (and due to rebellion, out of "the Church") and just cried—all in the name of deception. It just instilled mistrust in all human beings. It also makes me angry with someone God did use. I just feel we should "lay him down to rest" (excuse pun).

I would like very much to continue receiving *Servants' News*, but I may just by-pass any negativity concerning Mr. Armstrong—or any minister for that matter. I feel we need all the positive, uplifting, and healing words to enable us to be shining lights in this dark world. It is my greatest desire. For me, negativity equates depression equates spiritual defeat..

I appreciate your note, and I just wanted to say I acted hastily! The *Servants' News* outweighs the bad, because of the good... So please continue to do fine work. God bless you and your family.

— PR, North Carolina

RESPONSE: I have also struggled with depression in dealing with so many problems in the church groups. But if I am going to teach others about God, I realized that I cannot blindly give them old WCG teachings and proclaim them all "truth" *because* Mr. Armstrong said they were. I can teach the good things that he taught that I can prove from a Bible. I can add other things that I have learned from the Bible. I may not know as much as I used to think I knew, but what I do know I can discuss with anyone who believes the Bible

— NSE

Let Christ Judge

LETTER: June 25, 1999
Dear Norman,

I agree with Richard Nickels—I know Mr. Herbert Armstrong was not perfect, but I wish you would quit beating up on him. Mr. Armstrong is the one (by the broadcast

Radio Church of God
Box 111
Pasadena, California

Palm Springs, 12/12/58

I have just noticed, in going over letters written in the Letter Answering Department, a tendency which—as this reminds me—most of us have unconsciously followed.

It is the habit of speaking of salvation *only* in terms of "living out a life of OBE-DIENCE to God." We seem to have a tendency to speak only and solely of OBEDI-ENCE—*commandment keeping!*

We seldom mention that *experience* of CONVERSION—utter SURRENDER, total REPENTANCE, *accepting Christ* in living FAITH as personal Saviour, and receiving the HOLY SPIRIT.

We do not seem to stress sufficiently CHRIST as SAVIOUR—faith in Him, and then HIS faith in us (living faith which is inseparable from obedience). We must remember that the orthodox fundamental worldly churches and evangelists stress almost solely just CHRIST, and FAITH in Him, and accepting Him as personal Saviour. Our more or less general omission of this leads many automatically to assume we preach a gospel of EARNING salvation by WORKS. To a world accustomed to hearing almost altogether about Christ and a "born-again experience" (which of course they do not understand), we put ourselves and God's TRUTH in a wrong light. Instead of speaking of being CONVERTED—CHANGED—by real repentance, surrender, FAITH in CHRIST, and receiving God's Holy Spirit, we speak of "coming into the TRUTH." A man may "come into the TRUTH"—that is, let a certain amount of truth into his *mind*, and still be totally unconverted. We must not lead people to gather that we believe only in Commandment keeping (which to them means SATURDAY-keeping) and EARNING salvation by WORKS.

We must stress the WHOLE TRUTH more—repentance, surrender, CHRIST AS SAVIOUR, being CHANGED by God's Spirit as God's GIFT, by GRACE, following our conforming to His conditions of repentance and FAITH IN CHRIST—the CHANGE from carnality to Spiritual-mindedness—being BEGOTTEN—and THEN the overcoming and enduring and GROWING life of obedience and living faith, with Christ living HIS LIFE in us. Let's not leave CHRIST and GRACE out of our speech and letters.

With love, in Jesus' name,
Herbert W. Armstrong

on the radio or Plain Truth) where we learned about the true Sabbath and Holy Days and true doctrines. God uses imperfect humans to call others.

True religion is between the individual and God and Christ and Holy Scriptures. Sometimes we need someone to point us in the right direction—it's a life long process.

I'm glad my mother heard Mr. Armstrong in 1945. She was baptized in 1951 on a summer baptizing tour. Some people, especially in other countries and (even here) know about the Sabbath and Holy Days and never heard of Mr. Armstrong or Worldwide Church of God. Yet, even so, I think Mr. Armstrong made a significant contribution in the Church of God history. Let Christ and God judge what he did and did not do perfectly.

I think it is time to get on with life and keep on keeping on. Stick to the truth—to the Holy Scriptures and not let others tell us what it says, but ask God to help us to understand what He wants us to know. Keep up the excellent work.

— Judy Averill, NC

RESPONSE: The reason we bring up Herbert Armstrong is because there are so many groups that base their entire operation on his Work. The main stated reason that we have some separate church organizations is that each one claims to be following Herbert Armstrong better than the next. The Eternal will certainly judge Mr. Armstrong in righteousness—and be understanding of mistakes that he did not know he was making. But if I can reach leaders of organizations and other brethren today and show them where Mr. Armstrong departed from the Scriptures and the trouble that such departure caused, I believe I should do it.

When Mr. Armstrong was alive, I had far too much trust in his explanation of the Bible. I did not search the scriptures as I should. Therefore, I never felt compelled to go to him or his staff about a Bible issue. But today, I feel compelled to write about areas where our past practice departs from the Scripture, so that leaders and brethren who are alive now can do what they can to correct it.

—NSE

Thankful for Honest HWA Writing

LETTER: August 5, 1999
Dear Norm and *Servants' News*,

Thank you very much for explaining your future goals for your publications.

We are so glad for your honesty with what Herbert W. Armstrong did and did not do. We had to quit two churches of God who want to mix the "upholding of HWA" with the gospel of Christ. It just does not mix! I know you and others have to walk a fine line to

reach more brethren, but we do not have to honor anyone but Christ and God in our worship. So when you choose to be honest with HWA's historical legacy, no matter the flak you receive, we are very thankful.

—Paul and Barbara Morris, Texas

RESPONSE: Thank you for your short letter. It is nice when encouraging letters more than balance out negative and "cancel my subscription letters".

— NSE

HWA: 19 Million Christians in 1928

LETTER: July June 19, 1999
Hi Norman,

Thanks for sending me down the missing page of the HWA article, it helped make sense of the remaining pages.

I noticed several articles that I would like to obtain copies of. May I order them from you directly? [literature request deleted]

Also I would be interested to learn of any information or articles on the Message of the Third angel.

I have a copy of the article in the Oct 1928 Bible Advocate in which Herbert describes what he believes are the 19 million or so Christians alive in 1928! (Go figure.) I am also intrigued that this 3rd angels message was a big issue for COG7 at that time, so when the article British Israel was read by Dugger and he commented in the oft quoted letter on the Train July 28 1929, the title of the article is "Third Angel's Message and British Israel." p406 soft cover Autobiography.

I ponder if the (in)famous comment "you surely are right," was more on the Third Angel's message than on the BI issue? Don't of course have any way of proving otherwise. However I noticed in an article by Ralph Orr in a WWN, that the manuscript copy had a number of pages (about 20?) removed and replaced with newer material and no mention the third angel's message in the 'modified' version. (one of the HWA personal papers collection).

If you have any information or can suggest some other sources, I would gladly follow it up. Thanks for your time.

Regards,

— David W. Jenkins, Coolaroo, Australia
100033.2431@compuserve.com

RESPONSE: I do not have any more information about the documents that you mentioned. Richard Nickels (888-687-5191) might. I am quite aware that the Seventh Day Adventists placed great importance on the "Third Angel's Message", but that doctrine was very early dropped by Herbert Armstrong.

You will get our literature much faster if you write to the Australia address on Page 2 of *Servants' News*. Please do that.

I find it very interesting that Herbert Armstrong estimated that there were so many Christians in 1928. He was obviously counting many groups, probably Sunday-keepers too. His writing would not have been accepted by hardly anyone if he dogmatically claimed that some tiny group of dozens or hundreds were the only Christians in the world at the time. Usually, it is not until groups grow large and powerful that they begin to claim they are the only true church.

— NSE

Facts Are Only Way to Cut Through

LETTER: July June 21, 1999
Hi Norm,

I am writing to request some literature. I would first like to give you some background on myself. I attend a small fellowship group in Toronto, Ontario (approx. 25-30 people). We used to be a CGI group until the split a few years back. I have been receiving *Servants' News* for a few years now and am glad that this magazine is able to provide so much different information. We have a common acquaintance [name withheld]. He was attending our group and speaking on a monthly basis until recently as he has become very involved in a charismatic movement (the Vineyard Movement). I miss him and am concerned but we all have to find our way in our relationship with God so all I can do now is pray for his well being. He really helped me to break out of the bondage I held from organizations. I was never in Worldwide so I cannot say I was held in chains physically but my mind was and I consider even the CGI to be a cult, in fact any organized religion is a cult. Your magazine has also helped to give me information to deprogram the myths I held onto. Even people in my group want to be an organization for the benefit of tax receipts, order, money, etc. and do not see that you cannot serve God and mammon at the same time. When you need the government to recognize you as a church then it is just another copy of the beast system that started thousands of years ago.

I used to think that we should move on and forget all this Armstrong "bashing" as some detractors call it but I realize that information is the only way to de-mythologize something and I thank you for continuing to provide it. I am free but there are many who are not free physically, mentally, or spiritually, and that is why I am writing this request. I would like to have this information handy in case someone needs help in facing reality in

the future and facts are the only way to cut through propaganda.

I would request the last few back issues you did on Herbert Armstrong as I no longer have them and I would also like the three critiques you offer in the Jan/Feb.99 issue, as well as Did Christ Reorganize the Church, and Biblical Calendar Basics. I believe God has allowed us to be scattered in His mercy to preserve His Church and help us all come into a personal relationship with Him because He does not share His glory with men, organizations or anything else.

It is all about Jesus Christ alone. Thank you, God bless, and keep up the good work.

Your brother in Christ,

— RN, Canada

RESPONSE: Thank you for your letter. I will gladly send you all of the requested literature. God certainly uses people at different ways and at different times. But I think there are many who have a very one-sided perspective of the WCG and Herbert Armstrong. The best people to reach them with the good as well as the bad are friends whom they trust.

—NSE

True Perspective Important

LETTER: April 7, 1999
Dear Norm and Marleen,

I thought your December issue chronicling Herbert Armstrong's mistakes and dubious tactics was very worthwhile reading. It certainly helps to back up and get an objective sixty-year perspective rather than a six-day perspective so often given in the co-worker letters. I think the right attitude we all need is to try to have a true perspective of what happened. It's very difficult and sometimes means we have to **admit we might have been wrong**. Thank you so much for all the research you put into this series of articles. Here's a donation to help with the costs.

—John Sash, Missouri

RESPONSE: Admitting we have been wrong is a hard thing to do. It is even harder when so much of our religious life was based on the concept that we were in the "one true church" and if we continued to be members in good standing, we would go to the "place of safety" and then the Kingdom of God. It is also difficult to look at the bad from our past when there was also so much good. To help others with this difficulty, we have included the article, *But... They Helped Me*, in this current issue.

—NSE

Where Do We Go From Here?

LETTER: April 13, 1999

Perhaps the considerable time and dedication...obsessive?...and the diligent research which went into the project aimed at denigrating Mr. Armstrong could have been put to better use following the advice in Phil 3:13...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before...

Where do we go from here, and how do we get there?

—Beth Linehan, WI

RESPONSE: The effort was put into the Herbert Armstrong research so that the many people trying to re-create his Work could see it for what it was, not in the rose-colored glasses they were used to viewing it. However, you are right, we must go on. Our article in the May-June issue, *Where are You on the Field?* covered some of this topic. Our coming article on eternal judgment will cover the big priorities of all people, especially believers. How we get where we should go is up to the Eternal, and each one of us!

—NSE

"Where Are You on the Field?"

LETTER: August 7, 1999

I just finished reading Norman Edwards' article in *Servants' News*, May/June issue (*Where are You on the Field*). I think it does an excellent job of putting us humans in perspective to God. If you think about why we are here (I think most of us would agree we are basically here to learn) why would doctrine be the most important thing in our relationships. I have been saying for some time that on a scale of 1 to 100, 100 being total understanding and Godly character that all of humanity (athiest, pagan, protestant, catholic and Sabbath keeper) fall in around 1 or 2 on that scale. So why condemn each other? Good job Norman! Humbly keep up the good work!

RESPONSE: There are times when I really need such encouragement. It is hard to spend long hours trying to dig out the truth about something only to have people say essentially: "We would rather not know the truth about that." But we all must be patient with each other. I can remember times when I did not want to hear the truth about something.

—NSE

Many Ministries Falling Apart

LETTER: June 9, 1999

Dear Norm,

Just a short letter to say thank you for

continuing to use my articles in your publication, and to share with you that I am praying for you in the huge task of the work that you are involved in. May God continue to bless your efforts.

I was reading some of the letters that people send you and you can see the attacks. I can only imagine the ones you might get that try to rip your guts out. I have had experience with this in the past with some of what I have been involved with—it is not easy to get those kinds of letters. My prayers have been for you that God will give you the strength to endure through the work that you are doing. It was years before God taught me not to become offended at these kinds of attacks. And to have the workload to deal with the amount of people you are dealing with—the only way you will be able to endure all of this is by the grace of God. I have increased my prayers for you. May He continue to give you that grace to walk in His love and not become offended. This way we will stay in focus.

There has been so many ministries falling apart. You can prove from the scriptures that God says that He will take a toll on those who stand in His temple as leaders and don't do it the right way. Scripture says that this will increase before Christ returns—by that I mean it will increase with the toll that God says he is going to take on the leadership. Ezekiel 34 is a good scripture that relates to this.

It sure seems to be taking place. Those leaders that have been exposed in the last few years—I don't believe that it has all been accident. God is moving to take a toll on the leadership. There are many places that God will give us leeway, but standing in His Temple and bringing defilement is one area that no leeway is given. In the Old Testament, many different sins were forgiven, like the case with David with adultery and murder. But the defilement of the ministry was not forgiven. David was afraid of God when He struck Uzza dead for defiling the ministry. 2Sam 6:9. It's a good thing for David that he never touched the Ark.

1Cor 3:16-17 is another scripture that shows his anger of the leadership defiling God's temple. So many in the leadership take this so lightly. I have warned those who minister about these **scriptural facts** of defiling God's Temple, and they take it like it's just throwing a cigarette on the sidewalk. They do not understand the danger! If they did, they would understand **why** Paul said he walked in fear and trembling—1Cor 2:3.

And judgment will be stricter with those who were teachers! (James 3:1). Norm, when you put all these scriptures together,

it makes me tremble. But so few who are giving sermons or writing articles seem to have this **fear** that God says we should have. They are so confident of their own wisdom that they often bring it into God's temple to defile it. God cannot allow this, the toll will be taken, His Word says so. Just because they are not dropping dead they way Uzza did, when he tried to do a good work for God with the hand of the flesh—still, God will deal strictly with these matters because of the position they are placing themselves in as teachers! If they knew the danger they were in and the judgement they are going to have to face, many would drop their position immediately. But ignorance is no excuse. God says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge".

I know of no other scriptural warnings that are more binding to those in leadership positions right now than these.

I believe that God will continue to take his toll in these matters as He moves to refine His Church and get it ready for the wedding. I pray that those in leadership positions will give heed to these scriptural warnings. God will not play games. So many in leadership positions act as if God is not watching. May we give heed to these scriptural warnings that can save our lives. And do it the way Paul told Timothy: "Take heed to yourself and to your teachings, hold to that, for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1Tim 4:16, RSV).

Thanks once again for the continued work and the task you are doing in trying to serve so many of God's people. I really look forward to reading *Servants' News* each time it comes. May God continue to fill you with His Grace.

— Tommy Willis, Louisiana

RESPONSE: Thank you for the prayer and encouragement. I am not sure that I can say for certain that sins related to the priesthood bring a more powerful punishment than adultery or other such sins. Both Samuel's sons and Eli's sons abused their offices and did not die instantly. Whereas, four of David's children died (Bathsheba's first born, Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah) because of David's sin. Nevertheless, the other scriptures you bring out about the seriousness of sins toward God's temple (His people) are very serious. Far too many leaders believe that as long as they are "doing God's work", God will accept whatever they do to "protect His work"—which sometimes results in sinning against others. God is better than that. He wants His work done His way. He does not need us to sin against others in order to do His work.

— NSE

Germany in Prophecy

[This letter is in response to an article in the Philadelphia Trumpet. Since that publication rarely prints letters opposed to its views, Mr. Turner wrote his response to other Sabbatarian publications.]

LETTER: October 22, 1998
Greetings,

This is in response to the article *Winston S. Churchill—The Watchman* by Gerald Flurry, in which he states:

He faced reality and spoke the truth in a dangerous world... That is the mark of a great leader! They always tell the truth, no matter how hard it is to accept!...

It would behoove each one of you to drop everything and prove what I am telling you today!...

Our greatest challenge is to accept the truth. Can you? Can I?...

We didn't denazify Germany after WW2, and they are back on the world scene. The ugly factions are about to get control again...

We must face facts and draw true conclusions from them.

Now using the above criteria and "proving what he is telling me today," I can't help but come to the conclusion that Gerald Flurry is neither a watchman nor does he have "the mark of a great leader" because he is **not** telling the truth when it comes to Germany. He is not "facing reality" nor "facing facts and drawing true conclusions from them." Gerald Flurry is obviously trying to equate himself with Winston Churchill since he relentlessly harps on about Nazis.

The facts are that: yes, Germany didn't denazify—but neither has the US, UK or other countries. Every country has moles and warts on the body politic. And the neo-Nazi dirtbags did worse than expected in the recent German elections (especially in **Bavaria!**) and are divided into competing factions.

Gerald Flurry would do well to take off his Nazi-colored glasses and reread HWA's Dec. '48 PT article about the UN conference in which he pinpoints a particular party started by the Catholic church that will become the vehicle for the revival of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. It would also be beneficial to reread the articles "Franz Josef Strauss Makes His Bid" (PT, Sept '79) and "Where is West Germany Headed?" (PT, Sept '84).

What these articles point out is in **complete disagreement** and in **stark contrast** with what Gerald Flurry says and predicts will happen in Germany. Yes, the PT also pointed to the Nazis coming back, but this

showed the confusion in the WCG about which path Germany would take—which in my opinion, is from one ditch ("the evil twisted cross") to the other ("the holy x'tian cross"), they just haven't made it to the other...yet. But Bavaria is already there—ready to show the way!

Gerald Flurry would do well to heed his own words: "Our greatest challenge is to accept the truth. Can you? **Can I?**"

Philia...

— Michael Turner, Texas

RESPONSE: Thanks for the letter. Most Americans know little or nothing about the governments or political parties in other countries. If such things make the major news at all, it is usually only a few seconds of some "old guys" shaking hands and a bunch of people cheering, and it is over before the average person can learn the names of the people involved and what they stand for. If someone who seems like they know what they are talking about tells an American that the Nazi party is about to take over Germany—or that the Catholics are about to take over Germany—there is a good chance that the American will believe them. We have been somewhat amazed at how many "prophecy teachers" simply claim that world events are matching their prophetic teaching—even though they are not.

We cannot judge the hearts of these teachers, but it appears that many claim to have a detailed understanding of world events in prophecy even though they have never heard directly from the Eternal nor used the Bible to predict even one single world event in advance. The purpose of their dogmatic prophetic claims seems more to hang on to followers who are uneasy about the future. People need to learn to build a confidence and trust in the Eternal to deliver them from difficulties, not to have confidence in a church organization that may well never have successfully prophesied anything.

No one has enough time or capability to read all of the important news about every important place on earth. First we should study the prophecies of scripture so we know what they say, then we should pay attention to what is going on around us so that we can possibly match it to scripture, and thirdly, we should pray and ask the Eternal to reveal the meaning of those prophecies that we need to understand now. During the past 2000 years, most people believed that they were living near the time of the end. Think about all of the wasted energy that went into analyzing end-time prophecies to make them come out to 200 A.D., 400 A.D., 700 A.D., 1000 A.D., 1500 A.D., and even 1944 A.D., 1948 A.D. and 1972 A.D. None of those end-time sce-

narios worked out.

This does not mean that we should not study prophecy, but it means that we should do it in proper perspective. We will be eternally judged by what we do in this life—how we honor God and how we treat others. But there is no scripture that says we will be judged according to our prophetic understanding. And it is quite possible that we may individually die before “the end” comes.

—NSE

Is Y2K a Judgment?

LETTER: March 23, 1999
Dear Norman,

I always look forward to receiving the *Servants' News*. Thanks so much for your “labor of love”.

Have read several articles on the Y2K. So many tell us that it will be a major disaster. One reason I believe it will be, this great nation has gotten so far from our Most High God. In one way or the other, He will punish the rebellious. So much sin abounds. Love of many has grown cold.

[Literature request omitted] May all of you be richly blessed everyday.

—MB, Georgia

RESPONSE: Y2K is certainly a judgment in that many organizations put short term profits ahead of the long-term good of everyone—and will reap the consequences not preparing their computers for Y2K earlier. However, some people who were primarily responsible for such failure to prepare have resigned from the organizations that will suffer and now work at places that are Y2K-ready. On the other hand, other people will suffer in Y2K who knew nothing about it until it was too late. This is the normal way of most sins: those who commit them often suffer because of them, but sometimes they appear to escape, and often others not involved with the sin suffer, too.

However, I believe there are many greater evils in our nation than failure to prepare for Y2K. Will God use Y2K to punish certain people for other sins? Will He use it to punish the whole nation or the World? I cannot point to a specific prophecy on this, but I believe that Y2K will get most of the world's attention. However, I do not know whether it will be a “judgment” upon those who misuse computers to control and take unfair advantage of people (big government and business) or whether it will be a catalyst that causes big governments to enact martial law or go to war—thereby punishing mankind in general.

—NSE

Bread & Wine More Than Once

LETTER: June 30, 1999

Dear Norman Edwards;

I am interested in receiving any back issues of the *Servants' News* beginning with the September 1998 issue that you can send to me. I have read parts of a couple of issues at a friend's home and would like to begin receiving it at my home [address removed]. I am e-mailing you from my friend's computer.

I also would like to know what your belief is pertaining to taking bread and wine more than once a year. Please send a response to this question to me at the home address given above. Thank you for your help in these matters. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

— Jennifer Leagan, Tennessee

RESPONSE: We always keep all back issues of *Servants' News* in stock. The Jan/Feb and March/April 1997 issues contain articles giving much of my understanding about taking bread and wine more than once per year. It is good to understand the Bible and live by what it says. But the scriptures on judgment all show we will be judged on how we treat our neighbors, not on how we explain complex doctrines. Do not let this be a “stumbling block” either way.

—NSE

Comments on Fringes Letter

LETTER: June 20, 1999

Dear Norm,

Thanks again for the SN. As always, I devour it.

I had to respond to the letter of Kay Rea [Mar-Apr 1999, page 14] on wearing tassels and fringes (Numbers 15:38-40), and I remember bringing up this subject some time ago at the Walkerton Fellowship. Your answer to this question was adequate, however, for what its worth, here is the answer I gave then:

The custom of wearing tassels and/or fringes was common among the pagans, and the Israelites, as always, wanted to be like their neighbors.

Now God said (paraphrased), “...okay, you can wear them, however, they were to put a blue thread in their tassel and to look at it to remind themselves that they were God's commandment-keeping people. Moreover, they were to wear them throughout their generations (verse 38).

Obviously, the custom of wearing tassels has gone out of vogue. So, the question for Christians is, do we have to wear tassels with a blue thread, today?

Yes, we do. Jesus said so, Matt 17:18, “...not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law, until all is fulfilled (accomplished).”

Here is another example of how Christ raised the letter of the law to a higher spiritual plane. The purpose of the blue thread, again, was to remind the Israelite of the commandments. Now, notice John 14:15-17, 26, “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever...” (verse 26) “...But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Today, the New Covenant Christian is reminded of the Law through the Holy Spirit. Let's abide in that.

Ron Fry, Indiana

RESPONSE: Thanks for your additional explanation. I think your scripture is well-used here. If some still want to wear the fringes and believe it helps them, I am not opposed to it, but I agree that an active Holy Spirit is a much more powerful reminder than a fringe.

—NSE

Different Church Background

LETTER: June 2, 1999

Dear Mr. Edwards,

I read the recent edition thoroughly though I was never a member or adherent of HWA or any COG. I listened to CGI tapes for three years between 7th Day Adventist membership (8 years) and Messianic congregation (4 years) misled by a divorced plagiarist who “divorced” us when insufficient money for him persisted. It turns out our “church” was incorporated in his name alone.

Thanks for dealing with Jim Rector in your usual exhaustive fashion. I am so glad he repents. As you know, Ellen White was also a non-original rewriter, still called “The Pen of Inspiration” and the “Spirit of Prophecy” by thousands. **Why cannot the exhorters among us humble the old man enough to focus on truth itself?** The Jews credit the sages and rabbis interminably on all Bible commentary—a man must memorize Talmud and Mishnah material which minutely identifies each contributor, in order to lead or teach. Perhaps, legalists that they may be, they have constructed an elaborate bridge over the pitfall of pride: self-aggrandizement.

Your emphasis on getting your message yourself is much needed. There is an analogy to cooking and eating here, to be examined. Spiritual nourishment can be processed by someone else's recipes which

then must be acknowledged, or a more healthful diet of unprocessed food can be followed—raw! Most of us will need and select some of each—prepared dishes and salads convenience food or fruit eaten in hand. What do we blame for our sickness? The cook? The additives? I'm sure you can meditate on this and write it better than I.

I appreciate you as a constant source of helpful material, as a stimulus to in-depth analysis and thorough coverage.

— Margaret Beasley, Oklahoma

RESPONSE: Thank you for the explanation of the groups you were in. It is important to realize that we are not the only group with church leadership problems. On the other hand, it is important to realize that if the sins and problems of other groups look so bad to us that we want nothing to do with them, other people may look at the sins and problems in our groups and decide that they want nothing to do with us!

It is amazing. There are probably few if any "Church of God" members who are offended at me for printing your letter with the problems of the various groups you attended. I doubt any of our readers would insist that you must go back and be loyal to one of the groups that you attended. Yet some of those same people **would be offended** by someone printing the truth about problems in their group. Also, some would insist that brethren should stay in their group in spite of the problems. It is simply too easy to have a different standard for our own group and other groups.

— NSE

Mixing Old and New Covenants?

LETTER: June 27, 1999
Dear Norman Edwards,

Please do not send me anymore of **Servants' News**. I do not agree with what you are printing in your paper.

It seems like you are mixing the old covenant of the nation of Israel and the new covenant of Paul's letters to the Gentiles. The two don't mix.

The Gentiles according to Paul are under grace. The Jews will have their seven years what is left of the Prophecy in the tribulation.

— Ivar Redland, Minnesota

RESPONSE: This is an interesting theory, but not very Biblical. Christ's prophecy in Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation all overlap with the prophecies of Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, etc. The two are not separate.

Furthermore, we can be certain that Paul and many other Jewish converts lived both under the New Covenant and under the Old Testament law at the same time. How? When Paul was accused by the Jewish lead-

ers, they could not find any provable charges to bring against him (Acts 25:7). If he had been violating their law, they could have brought such charges. Paul was still allowed to participate in physical temple rituals (Acts 21:26). To do this, he must have continued to keep the Sabbath, Holy Days, purity laws, and many other laws that required a person to be "cut off" from Israel if they failed to do them. Later, Paul clearly states: "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans..." (Acts 28:17).

Indeed, the Temple, its sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood ended in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed. But many teachings given by the Eternal in the Old Testament continue in force. It contains extensive stories that show how the Eternal works with nations and individuals. A person can do much to love God and his neighbor as himself with only the New Testament. But using both Old and New together is so much better.

— NSE

Learn From Our Brother's Mistakes

LETTER: June 2, 1999
Dear Servants News Staff,

I have needed to do this for quite some time, I hope the money will help. I know that many of us are very appreciative for all your efforts on the papers you produce.

There are many times I would love to write a letter to the editor and tell you that I agree with this or that. There are times too that I want to write because someone has written in to you to argue or belittle all that you are doing. I am so thankful that I can receive your paper. I always try to devour it immediately.

I wish all of God's people could be open minded enough to stop beating up some of the old subjects and start working on some new ones. Many people just want to harp on the doctrine or decisions of this organization or that. It is totally unnecessary and a complete waste of time.

I believe we should watch what happens to our brothers in other organizations, but I believe only from the point of view to **learn how to handle ourselves**. We should always have compassion because Christ wants us to learn to love one another and forgive. There are so many hostile elements out there and we brethren need to take care of each other. Whenever we think we need to be, we need to remember to strive towards love and leave behind resentments and fear. It's hard for me to do but I have a feeling

from the word of my God that He wants us to grow up. We fall so easily towards immature behaviors and selfish ambitions.

Your endeavors go noticed. May God bless you in all that you do and thank you so much for giving me something to think about.

— Jackie Sena, Utah

RESPONSE: Thanks for your encouragement. We hope your attitude is contagious.

— NSE

Need the Internet? Go To The Library!

LETTER: January 10, 1999
Dear Servants News,

Please continue to send *Servants' News* to me, and if I missed last month's issue please send it to me. [Personal comment deleted]. Some time ago, there was an article in *Servants' News* about a Living Room Church Directory organization. I wrote to the address but don't know if they are still in existence or at that address. If you know of a source of living room churches in the Oklahoma City area, would you please send it to me?

I do not have a computer or access to one, so I can't just look in the internet. Please don't suggest that I buy one—I'm a single woman with a low income. I see in the *Servants' News*, it always assumes every reader has a computer or works with computers.

— PS, Oklahoma

RESPONSE: We will certainly send you the Living Room Church of God directory. We realize that **most** *Servants' News* subscribers do not have computers. We regularly receive suggestions that we save money and distribute our publications only, or primarily by e-mail. We do not accept them as this would reduce our service to most of our subscribers.

We do list e-mail addresses and websites for many things as they are convenient for brethren with computers. But if there is ever something you would like to access and cannot because you do not have a computer, please write us and let us know. Also, **please realize that most libraries have free internet access available to patrons and, if they are not busy, will show you how to use it.**

— NSE

Sacred Names Doctrine Based on Theory, Not Facts

LETTER: July 14, 1999
Dear Norm,

Here is another attempt to disprove the Sacred Name doctrine. Hopefully it is concise and to the point.

God is Pagan!

Letters from your readers refer to God as "Yahweh". Supposedly Yahweh's name has been replaced with "Elohim", or its translation: "God". Has there been a massive tainting of the Bible? Sacred Name proponents teach that we should only use "Yahweh" when speaking or writing about the Lord or God.

The purpose of this letter is to explain the fundamental error in the Sacred Name doctrine.

Scholars in the 1800's developed the Documentary Theory of the Bible. They noticed that some chapters in the Bible use "YHWH" ("Jehovah" or "Yahweh"). These chapters became known as the "J" documents. Other chapters use Elohim or God. These became known as "E" documents. According to the theory, priests wrote some of the Bible. These parts were dubbed "P" documents. Supposedly some of these writers substituted YHWH's name with pagan names.

Those promoting the Sacred Name doctrine quote scholarly books in order to prove that the Bible has been tainted. These books present "facts" derived from the Documentary Theory of the Bible. Sacred Name proponents believe these "facts" support their doctrine. **"Facts" created from a theory must not be used to prove doctrine.**

This is the basic error.

Go to the library: examine each book which is quoted by the Sacred Name proponents; read the entire context; read the premises set forth by each author in order to determine his philosophy. Use the inter-library loan system to get the books if necessary. You will see that each quote comes from a book, which is based upon the Documentary Theory of the Old Testament. Why must they use these books? No other evidence exists!

If you cannot prove "YHWH" ("Yahweh") has been deleted and replaced by "Elohim", "El" or other names, then you cannot prove that the Bible has been tainted.

— Bill Bartholomew, California

RESPONSE: Thank you for this explanation. We have seen other people quote from similar scholarly books to "prove" some doctrine or historic point and came to the same realization: Scholars who advocate the Documentary Hypothesis do not believe the Bible was given by God as it claims to be, but was concocted by many different men. Why prove any doctrinal point from theories of men who do not even believe the Bible contains the Word of God?

We would also like to point out that there is no single "Sacred Name Doctrine",

but hundreds of groups with many variations of doctrine. Some who exclusively use Sacred Names **do not** claim that the Bible has been altered, but say that the Creator has many titles used in the Bible, but one name, "YHWH". Furthermore, there are some Sacred Name users who simply believe that "Yahweh" is a much better rendering of the Hebrew "YHWH" than "Lord". They accept those who use other names for the Creator and I accept the name they feel is best. I do not have difficulty with them following their conviction, even though I believe it is not necessary. "For whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23).

— NSE

Validity of Christ & New Testament

LETTER:

August 4, 1999

Dear Norman,

I consider it a privilege, to have known you, met with you at the Calendar Conference in Dallas some years back, and even to see a letter or two of mine or of like-minds, show up in print in your *Servants' News*. I have been continuing to scan issues over the past several years, but see no more letters that question the validity of the Catholic created New Testament. Either people want to stay on the 'easy' path, where "Christianity is Bliss", or the questions became too hard to answer. To help save you some expense, you can remove our name from your mailing list. In parting I will pose 5 more easy questions:

1. If there was a son of God, where was he prior to the alleged dwelling on earth?
2. Where is he now?
3. Comparing 33½ years to the length of eternity, what was the sacrifice?
4. If they were both One, who did the dying, and who did the resurrecting, who prayed to who, and how can one be eternal and also be dead three days, and if he wasn't really dead, once again: Where's the sacrifice? Check the first commandment again.
5. In John 3:16- Who did God give his son to, any way?

P.S. Now even the Arch Bishop of Canterbury (2nd only to the Pope) has serious doubts.

— Mr. and Mrs. Bob Rose, TX

RESPONSE: Thanks for letting me know, we will gladly discontinue your subscription.

In the last couple of years, we have received almost no letters questioning the validity of the New Testament. **Most people I know who rejected the New Testament a few years back have now either rejected the Old Testament, too, or have reex-**

amined their beliefs and are again learning about God from the whole Bible.

The Bishop at Rome **gradually** gained preeminence over the Bishops in other areas. The central, hierarchical Catholic Church as we know it today did not exist when the scriptures were canonized. If the "Catholic Church" was clever enough to write the New Testament and convince or bully most people into accepting that it was a first-century document, why did not they put their own doctrines in it? They could have easily added a few clear verses about Sunday observance, church authority, Peter buried in Rome, praying to Mary, the trinity, etc. But they did not. There were enough copies of the early NT manuscripts in so many different places that only gradual, very minor changes were possible.

You mentioned the Archbishop of Canterbury as being second beneath the Pope—I think the various other "Orthodox" branches (not to mention the Protestants) would see their groups' leader as more important—these groups contain many millions. The Christian world has never been as unified (either for good or evil) as most people think.

To answer your numbered questions:

1. I think you want me to say that Christ was in heaven with the Father, but this is a question of much religious debate and I would rather explain why it does not have to be answered. Where was my son before he was born? Science shows that his ova existed in his mother since she was born. Did my son exist in me beforehand? Yes, but probably only for days. For most of history, people have not even known this much. Yet, people have appreciated their sons for millennia, without knowing exactly where they came from. Similarly, I do not have to know exactly where Christ was before His human life in order to appreciate what He did then and where He is now.

2. The Son is now at the right hand of God (Heb 10:12).

3. There is a valuable lesson in comparing Jesus' or anybody's lifetime with eternity. How much of a sacrifice is it to live the Eternal's way? Yet most people seem to want to live "their 70 years" their own way no matter what it does for their eternity. The whole purpose of human existence is to try people's hearts before they are given eternal life (Deut 8:2, Jer 17:10). To be beaten and die on the cross required only about 1/12,000th of Jesus human life—even a smaller fraction of your longer life. But would you volunteer to undergo a similar punishment today if you knew it would give you eternal life? Would you be able to stick it out, or would you give in to the pain part

way through and say “forget eternal life, just let me out of this?” I am not about to say I would do any better. Even though Christ’s stay on Earth was short, and His suffering very short compared to eternity, when it is put in personal terms, it is a great sacrifice for one who deserved no punishment.

4. Check Genesis 2:24: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become (one) flesh”. The Hebrew here for “one” is *echad*, the same word used in Deut 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” Husbands and wives are sometimes one flesh, at other times two. They do some things as one unit, other things as two. The Father and Son are one in purpose—as opposed to pagan gods which compete and fight with each other. To answer your questions: The Son died. The Father raised the Son. The Son prayed to the Father. The Son (was not) eternal while He was a human. When He was dead for three days, He was as dead as any other human, and His suffering was every bit as real as your suffering would be if you died this way. It was more difficult in that He did nothing to deserve it, and was deserted by His friends and the Father. Would you find the story of salvation through Jesus more acceptable if He lived for millions of years as a human and suffered for thousands of years? Compared to eternity, does any fixed number of years mean anything?

5. Your last question is typical of people who are having trouble accepting the truth of the Bible. There is a tendency to think that: “as long as I can keep asking questions that don’t have apparent answers, I am not responsible for obeying the Scripture (or the part I don’t like)”. If you will check an English dictionary, you will find many definitions for the word “give” (or many definitions for the original Greek word *didomi*). Definition 1 in my *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* says “to make a present of (give a doll to a child)”. In this sense, there must be someone to receive it. Definition 13a says “to suffer the loss of: sacrifice”. There may or may not be a direct receiver of the action. If I give my time to write an article, am I giving it to someone specific? If I don’t know exactly who is going to read the article, who did I “give my time” to? To know the purpose of what the Father gave, all you need to do is read the entire verse:

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that (whoever) believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Please don’t let language syntax questions prevent you from understanding what

the Bible says. At some point, either in this life or after the resurrection, I believe that you will shown beyond doubt what Jesus (Yahshua) has done for you, and I hope you will accept it.

— NSE

Bible Not Limited By Translators

LETTER:

June 28, 1999

Mr. Edwards,

I don’t know if you read my letters anymore. But as I received the Dec. *Servants’ News*, I ran across a statement that I have heard frequently from the ministry—as well as scholars and historians: “The Bible...was originally written to a people who lived thousands of years ago and spoke a different language. We have to rely on translators, and ...historians”, etc. etc. This statement tells me first of all that you have no idea of the scope and power of God’s grace and His Spirit. (and I’m not saying this only to you).

We limit God when we decide He has to reveal Himself through the devices of men. We limit his power and sovereignty. God’s Word is Forever (Psa 119:152). It is the only source of real truth (John 14:6, 17:17 and 18:37) It expresses the mind of Christ as He is now. And the reason we don’t apply it to us now—is we don’t see the reality of God in our lives.

If you are of the Body of Christ He reveals Himself in you through that Word. The Holy Spirit is not limited by “translators” or “historians”. It is only limited by that awesome mind of Christ—which can do anything, to anyone, at anytime, in any place, and good will be the result.

Do you think God had nothing to do with the KJV of the Bible? After all, He is the Creator of all language. But the “pure” language He gives to “the chosen” is “truth”. His Holy Spirit is the amplified version of the Bible and the written Word is the first line of defense against the powers of darkness, (Matt 4:4) written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That is what is written in your heart in Heb 8:10 and 10:16. (not just the ten commandments). Christ refers to the Psalms as part of the law in John 10:34-35. If the Psalms are part of the law that is written in our hearts, then the whole word is written in our hearts—making the image of Christ (Rom 10:4).

— Myra McQueen, Texas

RESPONSE: Yes, either I or someone else still reads most of your letters. I believe that God does guide the translation of the King James and other Bibles and can cause the men involved to do anything that He wants. However, I can show beyond any doubt that

He did allow **some error** to be inserted into the various translations. If you claim that the KJV Bible is 100% correct, then that means that all of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts have numerous errors.

Yes, I believe that people can be led to understand the true meaning of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit in spite of scribal and translation errors. You, as well as others regularly write to me about understandings of scriptures, supposedly given through the Spirit, that differ from what I understand from my resources. But can I write an article stating that “this must be the meaning of that scripture because the Holy Spirit revealed it to Myra McQueen?” What do I do if someone else writes me that the Holy Spirit revealed a contradictory understanding of the same verse to them?

This is not a hypothetical question—it really happens. I have letters and articles from many different people indicating that the Holy Spirit has revealed the true meaning of *chodesh* (“new moon”), *ben ha arbayim* (“between the evenings”) or some other Hebrew or Greek word. The same happens with specific verses like Josh 5:11 or Psalm 81:3. But these “Spirit-revealed meanings” differ.

When people claim to have a revelation of the Spirit, we must check it against the Bible. It is our “first line of defense” as you say. If we believe we have an understanding of what the Bible says on a certain point, then we should live by it. But if the Eternal does not give us an understanding on a specific issue, then we should not take our own best thoughts on the subject and claim they are inspired of the Holy Spirit.

When I stated that the Bible was written to people who lived thousands of years ago, I meant that terms like *chodesh* and *ben ha arbayim* were indisputably understood by the people of that time, but may be disputed today. If there is no clear way to check inspiration of the Holy Spirit against the clear meaning of the Scripture, then that inspiration is primarily useful only to the ones who are so inspired.

Even though people are destroyed due to a lack of knowledge (Hos 4:6), there is an even more important issue: **what they do with the knowledge they have**. People will be judged based on how they use the knowledge that they do have (Luke 12:47-48; Jam 4:17; Rom 2:14-15). While “Church of God” groups tend to have more truth than many other groups, they also have a tendency to focus too much on learning truth and not enough on doing and sharing what they know.

—NSE

Glad to Receive Back SN Issues

LETTER:

June 27, 1999

Hello Servants w/News,

Thank you. Not only did you respond and respond quickly but in large measure as well. I was only expecting to be placed back on your mailer, not receive past newsletters I'd missed in between. The materials came just as I was finishing my fifth round of chemo therapy. This particular chemo gets me down (as in hard) for about a week following treatment. It's unbelievable what that stuff does. Anyway, having the large number of SN's to read will certainly help get me through it, has all ready.

There was a small note attached to the newsletters received. I do not know if the note was directly or personally from Mr. Edwards but I presume it was. The note concludes with "May the Eternal deliver you from cancer, or show you clearly why you have it." I could not ask for more.

Keep on keeping on, and may you do more good than you even realize.

— Forrest Reed, Kansas
forreed@hotmail.com

RESPONSE: Yes, the *Servants' News* note was from me. If you have access to the Internet, it would probably be worthwhile looking into some alternative cancer therapies. Obviously, there are many phonies, but I have seen some simple ones that appear to provide very good results. Some, as simple as eating a diet of raw seeds, can be done in conjunction with whatever treatments you may be having. Far too much of today's medicine is based on economics, not on real healing. Maybe one thing that the Eternal wants us to learn is to look to him to help us find truth, rather than to rely on paid "experts".

— NSE

Rebuttal to GTA Comments

LETTER:

June 22, 1999

I want to write in rebuttal to your constant negativism and judgmental attitude about Garner Ted Armstrong. Who hasn't made mistakes? Look at Noah, who got drunk. So drunk, he didn't know that his grandson committed homosexual activities on him. Look at Lot, Righteous Lot who lived around sin every day, who got drunk after Sodom and Gomorrah was totally destroyed, and his daughters committed incest with him. Look at Abraham, who lied about Sarah or David a man after God's own heart, who committed murder and coveted another mans wife. and even committed adultery. Who do you think you are, except a man. Look and read about all of God's people in the Bible. Your idea of per-

fectionism and what God wants us to be is totally different. Your lack of love, and forgiveness shows what fruit that your organization and others like you are doing. Do you think you are any different any Gerald Flurry or as that matters William Dankenbring?

Your judgmental attitude shows what type of person you really are. Evidently you haven't heard any of GTA's impassioned sermons in the past several years, or that matters. You don't know what he has gone through, the many, many tears he has shed, You who have so right with your hypocritical judgmental attitudes. You who have it so right, picking and picking, picking at this doctrine and that doctrine, with your calendar disputations, and fringes on garments and etc. I applaud Alex Nicholson of Nova Scotia with his letter to you.

You say that you forgive GTA, but you show your real side in your continual garbage. Garbage in and garbage out. You think you have the right to expose anything and everything about any person no matter how many times a person has got on their knees and as cried out to Almighty God for forgiveness. You say, "well he has done this and that you will be judged with the judgment that you have meted", Mr. Norman Edwards. You bring up slop, and garbage that was in a sewer and have wallowed in the slop trough like a pig.

— James Parkhill, Roswell, NM

RESPONSE: Thank you for bringing these Biblical examples to mind. In each case, we see where a "man of God" made a mistake one or two times. That mistake is recorded, and a punishment from the Eternal is often recorded with it (remember Lot's wife). None of these men in the scriptures whom you mentioned are an example of continual sin. 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 explain that Church leaders should not be those known for continual sin. How many "stirring" sermons a leader might give or how many tears he has cried repenting is not an issue in these chapters. If these chapters should not be used to show us leaders who are disqualified, than I do not know why they are in the Bible. As far as I know, I have never heard a Garner Ted Armstrong supporter try to explain why these verses are in the Bible.

I would rather teach the Bible. I don't like working in the slop trough, but it is part of a farmer's job some time. From the Pharisees, to the Popes, to Protestant leaders, to Sabbatarian leaders, the name of the Eternal has been greatly blasphemed because people continue to revere leaders who can give stirring religious messages, but who did not practice what they preach.

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

— NSE

Interesting Religious Background

LETTER:

August 10, 1999

Thank you very much for the subscription.

You asked about my religious background, well here it goes. As a child my parents sent my brother and I on a Tabernacle Baptist Church bus that would come around the house on Altus Air Force Base in Altus, OK. I guess as most children do I would go down to the altar every Sunday and "accept" Christ. I think the Lord understands children in this way. After we moved to Tennessee, where I live now, I did not attend church at all. I started dating my now husband (who I had no idea who he was even though we went to the same somewhat small high school and had some of the same friends, our first date was a blind date, God sure works in mysterious ways, huh?). After dating for 3 months we decided we wanted to get married and it was then that he told me that we could not get married unless I accepted Christ, he had been saved since he was a child. So, he took me to a church that his family went to which was a First Assembly of God church. After the preacher invited those down to the front to accept Christ I went and a lady came to pray for me. She spoke in tongues the whole time and scared me to death. I was even looking behind me to find a door out, needless to say I did not accept Christ at that time. On our way home that day I cried all the way. Chris (my boyfriend at the time and my husband of 11 years) tried to comfort me as best as he could. This type of church is the only church that he had gone to growing up and he didn't realize it would upset me so.

After explaining to me what had happened and that the lady was very wrong in what she did, we went back again to the church and I accept the Lord. Since then we have attended churches of this nature, Pentecostal, Charismatic. There came a time about 5 years ago that we got very disheartened and to be honest disgusted with the way these churches were acting. So we decided to try some of the main stream denominations and we did. We tried Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian; if it was considered Christian we tried it. All in all what we have found is churches that are more interested in numbers, money and pointing fingers. We did not see much love, true fellowship, and especially true Bible study. So my husband and I decided to

stop attending an organized church and study at home. We live in a very small area and there are plenty of churches, but we have tried them all. I know that a church is not suppose to be perfect, but what I have seen and heard truly bordered on ridiculous. When you attend a church service on a Sunday night and there are only 6 people in attendance including you and your spouse and you are all saved and the preacher gets up and preaches on salvation, something is wrong. This type of experience has happened more than once in our quest for a church.

As far as what I believe, I believe the Bible, God's Holy Word. I know that we are all human and we will disagree, but we should be able to study together and learn what God wants us to learn. So, for now we have decided to do our studying at home. I love the Lord with all my heart and I know that I am not perfect, and I could even have wrong ideas about churches, but from what I have seen in my area, God can't be too pleased.

I do not belong to any one denomination (to be honest I think they are unscriptural anyway). I am a child of God and saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. I am seeking truth where I can find it beginning with the Word of God first and then to other men and women of God. I am not bitter in anyway about my church experiences, I do wish I could find a fellowship that would put their energies into actually studying the Bible. What churches are feeding their flock right now I fear will not get them through the end times to come. Well, I hope this helps you understand my religious background as you requested. If you have anymore questions or comments, do not hesitate to ask. I love talking about the Lord any chance I get. Thank you so much for sending the publication that I requested.

— Melissa Barker, Tennessee

RESPONSE: Thank you for this explanation. If you would allow us to print it, I think many readers would find it interesting. — NSE

NEXT LETTER BY THE SAME PERSON:

August 18, 1999

Hello in the Name of the Lord!!!

I just received my first issues of *Servants' News* and *Shelter in the Word* two days ago. I have read through several articles and skimmed through the rest for now, I intend to read each one. I must say that you put out a lot of information and teaching, I really like that. I know nothing about the organization of churches you belong to, of which I became very confused while reading about them. It sounds like you might just need to start over. I guess this comes from the fact that I do not ascribe myself to any

one denomination. I feel like as true Christians we should seek God's face in all things and study the scriptures for as much as we can get until His return. From what I have been able to gather from your articles, you are also trying to do the same.

I sent to you a run down of my religious background per your request a couple of days ago and I hope that you've had time to read it. If I had to choose a particular denomination that I have been a part of the most in the past it would be the Charismatic or Pentecostal denomination. So, to see your articles on this group was very good. In fact, my own mother-in-law is the television production manager for Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Fort Worth, TX. and has been for several years.

In closing, I would like to let you know that I would very much like to keep receiving your publications and I look forward to reading them. May God Bless You, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

In Christ's Name,

—Melissa Barker, Tennessee

RESPONSE: Thank you for reading and commenting. I hope to print this letter of yours also. It is very helpful to hear a sincere "outsider's opinion". The groups which have split off of the Worldwide Church of God have been largely to themselves for decades. Arguments and ideas that we repeat often enough to ourselves sound so good, until someone asks simple questions that we never thought to ask. We are sending you some more literature that we hope you will find helpful.

— NSE

Y2K Not So Bad?

LETTER: July 20, 1999

Dear Norm and Pam,

While I was in a large traditional Christian bookstore on Woodward near where I live (Dickson's), I ran into a display of books dealing with the Y2K issue.

There was a very interesting one by a well-known anti-cultist, Dave Hunt, called "Y2K: A reasoned Response to Mass Hysteria" (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1999). It is a book you should consider buying or borrowing because it means it may be best to pull back some from the relatively hardline position you've upheld on the subject. While I wouldn't say it will be a mere "speed bump," it might not be bad enough to even inflict a recession on the USA if this book's reasoned arguments are correct. You may wish to bring it to your readers' attention for "the other side," because it runs some interesting figures about how quick fixes and automated solutions exist that can much more quickly solve problems than

(say) Gary North says when dealing with millions of lines of code. The embedded chip problem may also be badly overblown. This is a book worth hunting down, to say the least. One wouldn't want to end up in a minor version of the mess HWA did in 1972, namely, finding people complaining about making major financial decisions based on predictions in *The Servants' News* that don't pan out, without (ahem) some "plausible deniability." I'm well aware you don't agree with (say) the extreme position that Gary North and other alarmists uphold, and you try to low key things, a typical aspect of the SN style on almost all subjects when you write. But I think there are reasons to at least bring the "optimists" case forward in your publication as a protective measure against the inevitable carping that may break forth in early January if indeed nothing close to economic chaos occurs.

Sincerely,

— Eric Snow, Michigan
snoweric@pilot.msu.edu

RESPONSE: I have not read the specific book you have mentioned, but I have read a number of writings stating that Y2K will not be a major problem. These writings tend to follow the lines of the book you describe. They talk about automated methods of fixing the problems. They talk about successful tests. They talk about creative ways to recover from problems or bypass them. All of these things are true and I believe them. What they don't talk about is concrete statistics like: "90% of USA powerplants have been tested by setting their computers to Dec 31, 1999 and all of them worked correctly through the flip-over into 2000". The reason is that nobody has any such statistics that are based on reality. It has been shown that the NERC statistics are compiled from "pre-written" reports that were sent from NERC to the utilities and then returned. Furthermore, utilities can be listed as "compliant with exceptions", and do not have to state exactly what the exceptions are. Anybody who wants to honestly write reports saying "Y2K will not be a problem" would have to know how many power plants are compliant and exactly what these "exceptions" are. Unless they have access to some secret, marvelously positive data that nobody else has, then they have no good reason to blindly claim that "all will go well".

Not all industries have been like the power industry—some appear better off, some appear worse. But there are precious few industries where all of the major companies are announcing that they are compliant right now. I have read about corporations or government agencies

which announce that all of their mission critical systems are compliant—and then been amazed to see what they listed as “non-mission-critical”: safety systems, security systems, telephones, climate control, etc. Can you really run a business in the North in the winter without heat or telephones? Is **anyone** filing reports or keeping stats on “non-mission-critical” systems? Is there any standard definition of a “non-mission-critical” system?

My own research from several sources indicates that a person whose job is primarily preparing a company or agency for Y2K is twice as likely to be storing personal emergency supplies as the average man on the street. If Y2K is not going to be a problem in this country, wouldn't you think that the computer people who are doing the work would be the least likely to store personal supplies?

The situation with Servants' News and Shelter in the Word will not be anything like the situation with Herbert Armstrong and his tribulation in 1972/1975. Herbert Armstrong's authority for his predictions was **his interpretation of Bible prophecy**. He was like so many hundreds of others who added up numbers and words from the Bible and predicted the return of Christ in their own lifetime. Armstrong had many other failed predictions in the 30s, 40s and 50s, but most of his followers (like myself) were not wise enough to locate and read about these failures, but blindly believed Herbert Armstrong because he did teach so many good things and because he was the head of such a “big work”. Herbert Armstrong never claimed that the Eternal spoke to him or in some way specifically revealed these prophecies to him. But he did tell people they should physically plan for it—so many did not financially plan for the future, did not make needed repairs to houses & equipment, skipped needed dental work, etc. Mr. Armstrong also told people to send all the money they could to his work, rather than buying things for themselves that they wouldn't be able to enjoy in a few years because of the Tribulation.

My advice for getting ready for Y2K is not based on any specific Bible prophecy—only the clear Biblical truth that the Eternal often has allowed sudden disaster to come upon nations that do not obey Him. I advise them to use their money as they best see fit to prepare for themselves and for others—in ways which will not be a complete loss even if Y2K does not significantly affect them. I do not advise foolish financial decisions or imply that people will be spared by God if they send money to me (or any other ministry). I am not asking them to do anything

that I am not doing myself. Did Herbert Armstrong sell his house or expensive furnishings in the late 60s because he would not need them in the tribulation? No.

My writing about what will happen in the year 2000 is based solidly on over 25 years of computer programming with both mainframes and PCs. Large software systems that are thoroughly tested still usually have a few bugs when placed in production. If these bugs turn out to be serious and not immediately correctable, the solution is usually to revert back to the previous version of the software. Getting the world's software ready for year 2000 is the largest software project **ever**, as well as the greatest hardware testing effort **ever**. Unfortunately, there will be no “previous version” to revert to when Y2K problems occur. Those in charge of computers will have to either fix them, replace them, or shut them down. If only a few percent of computers fail, it will still be a major impact on the USA and the rest of the world.

Eric, you seem to be recommending that I print some stuff saying “Y2K won't be all that bad” to protect myself in case it isn't. That is not what *Servants' News* is about. I do not write things to protect myself from future complaints so *Servants' News* can continue. I don't write articles based on what I think people would like to hear. When I wrote articles on Passover, Herbert Armstrong, and other subjects, I thought that people would discontinue their subscriptions because of what I wrote—and some did. I write because I believe God has given me understanding in certain areas and that I am supposed to share it with others. If I am shown to be wrong in some **major** way, then I will stop my publication. If I can no longer take care of my family from what I receive for publishing, then I will have to stop it or cut it back drastically. But I am going to write the truth as I understand it, not some mumbo-jumbo stuff that I can use to claim “I was right” no matter what happens. This practice is one of the major problems with political institutions and corporate religion that has created the mess we are in today.

— NSE

NEXT LETTER BY THE SAME PERSON:

August 8, 1999

Dear Norm,

I give you credit for being willing to take a strong stand, and let the chips fall where they do. Hence, I understand why you don't wish to “hedge” yourself, or give ambiguous advice that's on both sides of the fence. However, I do believe you may run into this problem come January of 2000. If Y2K turns out to be the proverbial “speed bump,” at least within the U.S., some may email

you and complain about spending (say) \$1000 on a (now almost) useless generator or stockpile of food based on what the “Servants' News” or “Shelter in the Word” published. I assume you would reply, well, based on my professional judgment at the time, that seemed to be a wise precaution and good insurance, but I admit it was a mistake based on current events, etc., etc. I understand the differences you make between HWA and 1972 and your own advice about Y2K.

One difference may not be as great as you believe, in that I doubt it was HWA himself who said to (say) not get dental work done because the end is nigh, or sell your house, etc., but people let themselves get worked up and nobody in the paid ministry stopped them from doing these things (or perhaps, actively encouraged them). Some people may do more drastic things based on what is in the *Servants' News* or *Shelter in the Word* than you would want them to, such as moving to a remote rural area.

But given the above, I would like you to join me in making some predictions about the year 2000. It's my prediction now that the American unemployment rate will not exceed 8% in that year, and no more than 1-2% of the electrical grid will be down for more than a week due to the Y2K bug in the U.S. I'd like to hear your specific predictions of how bad things will be. If we believe Gary North (and I know you need not agree with him at all), it will be far worse than the Great Depression. If we all are going to have to become subsistence farmers again, then the unemployment rate in his scenario will surely exceed 75%. So, do you believe, for example, it will rise to (say) the Great Depression's height of 25%? The reason why in part I'm feeling confident is that the Detroit Edison Spokesman in a recent Detroit News article really wasn't hedging any. He merely said we expect to have power, but there will be extra personnel on hand in case anything does happen. It was definitely a less hedged statement than (say) the one you quoted from Consumers Power in the *SN* or *Shelter in the Word*. This article was interesting for showing how much money various large Michigan Corporations were spending on Y2K, such as GM was spending \$600 million, Consumers Energy \$30 million, and Detroit Edison, \$65 million. Ford was spending something like \$400 million.

I know not all of what Gary North has said has proven true. For example, he was predicting that since 99 means “end of run” in older main frames, we would start having crashes in late 1998 of various state government or business computers because

of when their fiscal years ended and started. Needless to say, nothing happened that I've noticed.

It's not that I haven't done some preparation myself, such as buying a lot of canned food from Aldi's beyond what I normally have. I bought a kerosene heater for about \$100 and even a cheap inverter for about \$40. (That's an interesting gadget—I never heard of them before they were mentioned in the Shelter in the Word article on Y2K). It's not as if, as you yourself observe, this stuff is by any means useless. For example, if the power goes out in winter for any reason, Y2K or not, it would be good to have a source of heat independent of a utility since I know the natural gas furnace in my house has a blower and thermostat powered by electricity. If the power goes out, regardless of what natural gas I have, there's no heat besides the old ghetto trick of leaving the oven open and on. But, despite I've made some preparations (alas! going into debt to do so, due to my dismal self-inflicted financial situation), I've become more convinced that not many more are necessary.

So, again, I understand where you're coming from, and that you have professional expertise in this area I most certainly don't have. But, then again, I'm reminded of the thesis of John Henry Newman's "The Idea of a University," which describes how people who are experts in various areas tend to take their expertise or professional discipline's principles into areas where they are inapplicable or incorrect. The solution, for him, was to set up a situation where the experts are gathered together into one institution where their tendencies to outrun their boundaries are restrained by the experts in other fields catching them, and serving and checks and balances. In the field of medicine, for example, there are reasons to believe the experts don't always get things right. We shall see if this proves to be true about Y2K as well.

Sincerely,

— Eric Snow, Michigan
snoweric@pilot.msu.edu

RESPONSE: Herbert Armstrong did accept, even encourage, people to take out loans on their homes and send it into "the work". He encouraged people who could not give to loan "the Work" money, then later asked them to turn it into a gift. He did discourage people from buying things for themselves because the "tribulation would be here in a few years, anyway". You are right that his ministers probably went beyond what he said, and I don't know how much he knew about it. If Mr. Armstrong were aware that his ministers were scaring members into

greater contributions with prophetic statements, then he is responsible for not restraining them. I do not have that problem because I do not have ministers whom I control in any way. If you walk up to someone, hand them a *Shelter in the Word*, say, "Y2K is going to be bad, buy this \$10,000 generator or freeze"—that person should be able to tell that you are representing yourself and not me.

I think your Y2K preparations are quite sound. They take care of your basic needs. You are single, flexible, and could go somewhere else for a while if necessary (to an area that is not experiencing as many problems if your area is). A person with his own supply of food would probably be welcome in a number of households or relief places. I would not encourage you to buy all kinds of expensive stuff to power your house—that is expensive for one person.

Gary North was predicting mainframe problems due to false "end of files" in 1999. This is where his lack of computer expertise is a factor. There have been such glitches, and there are likely to be more on 9/9/99. However, most of these never reach the public. The kinds of programs that would fail are "batch" systems that run overnight, not "online" systems. What happens? The programmers immediately get to work on the problem and fix it—it is not too difficult. They may be a day late putting statements in the mail, but they do not have to tell anybody.

All of the truly difficult problems will not hit until very close to 2000 where there simply is not room in some systems to adequately store the date. Also, some date calculations will fail, producing negative numbers or erroneous numbers. These are many times harder to fix than the "end of file" problem. Also, you must realize that most automated decisions that have major impact are based on *present* or *past*, not *future* events—which always have some uncertainty. This is especially true with embedded chips. Powerplants are rarely automatically shut down or accounts are rarely automatically closed because of something *planned* to take place some number of days into the future. But if an automated fire protection system erroneously concludes that none of its heat sensors have returned a reading for the past 100 years, it may turn on the sprinklers everywhere. This could be messy and expensive.

Problems are occurring, though. I have experienced more banking and billing errors in the last 2 years than I have in the last 20. In one case, \$10,000s of dollars were added to my account, only to be taken out a few days later. When I have called to correct errors, the overworked-sounding customer service people sometimes knew the exact nature of the

problem even before I told them who I was or what I was calling about. This is a sure sign of a computer problem where some aspect of processing was consistently wrong for a large number of people.

It does not make sense to me to make predictions of unemployment or grid operational percentages. Nobody has the data. Right now, I believe the high employment now is partly due to people and governments getting ready for Y2K. Because of the seriousness, businesses are going into savings, if necessary, to buy extra supplies and make sure that necessary work is done. This high employment could continue into 2000 to fix Y2K problems, or it could backfire—much depends upon government policy and the attitude of people (largely steered by TV).

There is no doubt that many people will buy generators and other things that they will not use. On the other hand, there are people who have used their Y2K generators during summer power outages. Last night, we were out of the inexpensive health-food soup that we buy in Lansing. So, we pulled some out of the Y2K supply, and will more than replenish it next time we are at the store. We can get it nearby, but it costs more. Having extra supplies can be a money saver at times. I think there is a high likelihood of other disasters during the next few years, for which Y2K preparations will be very helpful.

— NSE

Leave WCG, Find New Information

LETTER:

July 8, 1999

Dear Norm,

[paragraph about e-mail address deleted]

In answer to your question, my husband was baptized in 1974 and I in 1981. Prior to our baptism into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit I was a Methodist who was merely sprinkled and he was an atheistic Catholic dabbling in Rosecrucian. We just left the 'New Worldwide Church of God' because we realize that what is finally being said and that took a while to understand because of the innuendos and deceits and finger pointing, that Joe Jr. is not only not the true head of the church, but is espousing the same lies that the Methodist church was trying to convince me were true. God is not a trinity, the law is not done away so we Christians can just do as we please, the holy days and the true 7th day Sabbath are sanctified and set apart for our purpose and everything found in the Bible is true and inspired of God as is, without embellishment from mankind. We have returned to the KJV as the best English translation that we have and have left this church led by Satan to be

a part of a growing number of Living Room Churches of God. **We** are happier in our worship than for many years in the corporate system. I finally understand thanks to your web site what the real and true meaning of Nicolaitanes is and many other things. I do wish to be placed on your regular mailing list and I have received some of the back issues that you have promised especially the issues pertaining to HWA.

Please see the attachments to see a letter forwarded to me that I am personally sending to many of my church friends. Mr. Joe is not going to allow Sabbath keeping (many think he will relent and permit them to worship freely, but this letter proves otherwise) for very much longer and so there will be many more of us who will need healing. It [the attachment] was forwarded to me regarding the meeting that took place in early June with the so-called underground WCGers of about 100 or so brothers and sisters with Joe Tkach Jr. asking to be permitted to worship God freely during the Holy Days and Sabbaths, but Joe's original remarks were sympathetic, but later he dis-fellowshipped them all with no apologies, He said that their statement of beliefs was vile to him. So much for loyalty and truth.

Mr. Fred Coulter has been sending me care packages of healing after I learned of him on your web site. His material has been a God send and we thank him profusely. I downloaded nearly all of your articles and although some may be not quite right doctrinally, Carl Franklin's articles were well done. My only request is that the authors always put page numbers on them as we can't edit most of them and to copy them is a nightmare when the document is a long one.

I did not realize there was a controversy of Sacred Names, but after reading Carl's work I see some are stuck on this to the point of not seeing the love of that God whose names they cherish so much. Let's look at the forest not just the trees. For us who have just left WCG, the idea of getting bogged down in non basic doctrine is a time wasting effort. Let us just realize that there are more important fish to fry and time is surely running out. We thank God everyday that our eyes are now open and our lamps are being trimmed and hopefully we have enough oil to get us through this next few years of bad news.

Fred has brought to our attention how fast the world is coming together to form a one world religion and one world government. Another web site although not put out by Sabbatarians is worth looking into. It is the URL address: <http://watch.pair.com>. Nearly all of the secret societies and other organizations one needs to be aware of are

listed on that site with reports of their more recent activities. I am sick to death of the UCG, GCG, and other CoG infighting and one sided thinking that they are better when in fact they all have much repenting to do. God is on time and the bridegroom nears his return. Be ready I pray and thank you for your efforts. Another site that helped us when we were starving to death, was the site in Stewarton Scotland. It is at URL www.mplc.co.uk/eduweb/sites/sbs777. Mr. Loughran is somewhat in need of learning some things, but the basics he does have down and is good for the high school educated person. He does not get into the intellectual eschatology and other philosophical debates and teaches on the basics as found in the Bible, KJV. If one stops worrying about all the "cemetery" (seminary) education and their big words and gets to the basics of the Bible as taught by the Holy Spirit then one can get back on track. Most of these seminary trained people, including Ambassador graduates) do not show that they are being led by the Holy Spirit and let their ego and vanity lead the sheep astray. And if they are not being led by God's Holy Spirit they are dead and in need of a real cemetery. How can the dead lead the living?

Thank you for your efforts in bringing us a wide array of ideas that among them can be found the truth and when you see that someone is abusing the truth, you have the courage to black list them as you did with one of your people recently. I have not kept up with the politics or the Who's Who of the several Churches of God and do not need to know other than to know who is telling what God wants us to hear and not what they want us to hear.

Thank you again,
— Charlotte A. Grantham, Ohio
(soon to be dis-fellowshipped, I suppose we quit so they can't fire us.)

RESPONSE: Thank you for sharing your story. It is good that you are seeing your own responsibility to find and do the Eternal's will in your life, rather than let the leader of one Church organization do it for you. However, we are sure that you are finding that once you begin looking at many sources, you will see that some conflict with others, and some turn out to be not quite reliable all of the time. (I can't endorse every source that you mentioned.) Nevertheless, you are better off with a mind open to hard-to-find truth, than one locked into certain error.

— NSE

NEXT LETTER BY THE SAME PERSON:
July 31, 1999

Dear Norm,
Sure I am glad that you thought my

thoughts worthy of publication. We received a letter from Joe [Tkach] before this group met with them concerning the keeping of the Sabbath and Holy Days and told me when asked a WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) question. I asked if Jesus were to come back today which day would he keep as a worship day, Saturday or Sunday? He replied that (I am paraphrasing here) he hoped he would not shock me when he said that Jesus would surely keep Sunday since that was the day that everyone else in this society is keeping. I was not only shocked and angry, but the light began to dawn right then and there and I refused to go back to that organization. We quit paying our offerings to them and began keeping Sabbath Day worship at home. So far, although several understand the importance of this move, have not joined us. We pray that they too will make that move, but it is in God's hands.

But yes you may certainly publish the letter and if you like this follow-up message to you. And I do thank you for sending us to Fred. His tapes and literature are just what the confused brethren need, to heal.

When our Lord and Master returns, we can be assured that all of these little splinters will be put back together again as long as they continue in their faith to God and Jesus Christ. This had to be done in order to protect us as it was allowed in the early Church when they fled Jerusalem and went to the uttermost parts of the world taking their way of life with them.

Thank you for your work also, God will bless you as you continue in His will.

Love in Jesus Christ.
— Charlotte and Ken Grantham, Ohio

RESPONSE: Thank you for sharing your story. I know Fred Coulter (PO Box 1442; Hollister, California 95024-1442; 831-637-1875) deeply studies the Bible for his writings and speaking in a way that most corporate church leaders do not. I don't agree with all of his conclusions, but then he does not agree with all of mine either. I would hope that Mr. Coulter would work with other independent Sabbatarians more. He specifically asked me not to list his Feast sites in *Servants' News*—he seems to discourage those in his group from fellowshiping with those that have doctrinal differences. But at least he does not "dis-fellowship" people for studying other things. Fred Coulter has certainly helped many people who have left the WCG.

No teacher is perfect, and I believe that the Eternal steers the people who are seeking Him to the teachers that are strong in what they need at the time.

—NSE ☞

"Lost Books" from page 1

Is this true? Have Christians and Jews been victims of censorship of true Scripture inspired by the Eternal? Is the Old Testament an incomplete document, which would be improved by the addition of the Book of Enoch and others like it which purport to be written by the patriarchs and prophets? Does the New Testament contain just a fraction of the authentic, divinely-inspired material available about the life and teachings of Jesus and the acts of His Apostles both before and after His death?

A number of articles and tapes circulating in Sabbatarian circles in recent years have begun making strong claims for some of what are called the "Non-Canonical Books". Sermons and writings use material from some of these books to "prove" various doctrinal, prophetic, and historical points. Have you wondered if you should investigate these claims, perhaps buy a number of these books for your own theological library?

It is not our intent in this article to cover the topic of how the current collection of 66 books in our Bible were chosen and "canonized", as that is a complex topic in itself. The word "canon" is derived from a Greek word related to the concept of a *measuring stick*. There are a certain set of books which have been almost universally recognized over the past 2,000 years as being authentic writings, inspired by God Himself, of the patriarchs, prophets, Apostles of Jesus, or their immediate co-workers. This set has become the "canon"—the *measuring stick*—against which other writings are evaluated. If such writings are at variance with the content of those "canonical books", they are evaluated as not being worthy being considered "inspired by God" in the same way. We may cover in a future issue of *Servants' News* or *Shelter in the Word* the process whereby the current canon of scripture was arrived at.

In this article, we offer a brief

overview of this class of "non-canonical" literature so that you may understand some of the issues involved in this question. We are not suggesting you should avoid these books, or be ignorant of their existence and contents. But we will provide an evaluation of the contents of some which you may wish to take into consideration if you study other literature based on these non-canonical books.

Non-canonical books are typically divided into two large categories:

Pseudepigrapha and *Apocrypha*

The Pseudepigrapha

This word is derived from the Greek words "pseudes" (false) and "epigraphien" (to inscribe). It means those writings which are attributed falsely to a famous person. There is a collection of writings, mostly dated from 200 BC to 200 AD, which, by their titles, appear to be written by patriarchs or prophets or Apostles. But almost all scholars admit that these names were "assumed" by the real authors to give credibility to their writings. This does not mean that all scholars agree that the material in the books was not inspired by God. For there is in some circles the notion that this using of a "pseudonym" in ancient times was acceptable practice, and that perhaps God even approved of it.

The Apocrypha

This word comes from a Greek word meaning "hidden". It is particularly used to describe a collection of books written in Hebrew or Aramaic from about 300 BC to 100 AD, and included in some Bibles, including Catholic versions of the Bible, as a supplement to the Old Testament. These books were never accepted as "canonical" by the Jews, but were popular as supplementary reading in many Jewish circles outside of Palestine. And although they are included in some Christian Bibles, it is usually noted in the accompanying commentary that they were not accepted as of the same level of "inspiration" as the canonical books. Rather, they are included for other reasons, such as providing historical details of the period between the time of the Book of Malachi and the birth of Jesus. For instance, the first and second books of Maccabees are considered by most scholars to be accurate historical accounts.

In addition to the "special" use of the

word Apocrypha to designate those books mentioned above, the word is also used in a broad way to cover a wide variety of non-canonical books that purport to consist of hidden information not found in the canonical books.

Some sample titles of Old Testament pseudepigraphical or apocryphal books are:

First Esdras, Fourth Ezra, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Prayer of Azariah, Daniel and Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasseh, Maccabees 1-4, Psalm 151, The Book of Jubilees, The Books of Adam and Eve, The Martyrdom of Isaiah, various versions of a "Book of Enoch", The Apocalypse of Adam, The Testament of Abraham, The Book of Jasher.

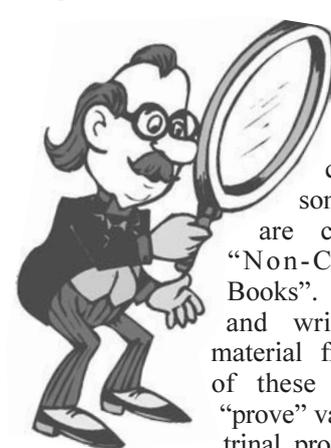
New Testament non-canonical "gospels" include ones purportedly written by Thomas (including one called the "Infancy Gospel of Thomas" which claims to reveal stories about the youth of Jesus), James, Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus, Bartholomew, Peter and Philip.

New Testament "Apocalypses" (books claiming to be prophetic revelations) include those purporting to be attached to famous New Testament people like Peter, Paul, James, Stephen, Thomas, and Mary the mother of Jesus.

The Book of Jasher

One particularly popular book in some Sabbatarian circles in recent years is the *Book of Jasher*. It would appear from the articles and sermons which quote this book that its popularity has been particularly related to the way in which it purports to add details to the obscure Biblical reference in Genesis about the "sons of God" who took wives of the "daughters of men". The *Book of Jasher* boldly describes this in great detail as the actual physical intercourse between supernatural beings—fallen angels—and human women.

The Book of Jasher was some months ago used by a Sabbatarian teacher to establish some historical points that could never be derived from the Biblical chronology. The same teacher has also used the book to speculate on the issue of the Genesis story mentioned above. As a result, a number of people have written rebuttals questioning the validity of using the Book of Jasher.



Below we share some excerpts from one such article, "The Book of Jasher Debunked", by Loyd Hohertz. If you find this topic of interest and wish to read the entire article, you may contact him at: Loyd Hohertz; 1479 Valencia Ave.; Pasadena, CA 91104.

Following are a few other interesting statements made by the Book of Jasher:

1. An angel tells Enoch that he is to be taken to heaven to rule over the sons of God (Jasher 3:23).

2. The Book of Jasher states that Abraham was reared by Noah and Shem for many years and yet for a while he worshipped the sun as God (Jasher 9:11-14).

3. The builders of the Tower of Babel shot arrows from its top and all the arrows fell back covered with blood. So they said, "Surely we have slain all those that are in heaven" (Jasher 9:29).

4. Abraham placed meat in front of his father's idols thinking perhaps they might eat (Jasher 11:29).

5. During the time that Abraham was on his way to sacrifice Isaac, Satan turns himself into a large brook and almost drowns Abraham and Isaac (Jasher 13:34)...

7. Rebecca marries Isaac when she is only ten years old (Jasher 24:39). God directed Abraham's servant in finding Rebecca as a bride for Isaac, and the entire episode [in the Bible] depicts her as a grown woman (Genesis 24). Nowhere in the Bible do you find God promoting child marriages!

8. Animals are described that, from the middle down, are the shape of men, but the top half, are like bears and other animals. Some had tails that reached from their upper back to the ground (Jasher 36:32)...

15. During the time that the Egyptians were killing the male Israelite newborns, the Israelite women were delivering their babies in the fields. The Israelite women would leave their male babies in the field, and God took care of them. God gave the babies a rock in each hand. From the one rock they sucked milk, from the other rock they sucked honey. God ordered the earth to receive the babies until they

were full grown, at which time they returned to their families (Jasher 67:54-59)...

20. When the Egyptians locked their doors to keep the insects and beasts out, God ordered the Sulanath which was in the sea, to come up and go into Egypt. This animal took the roofs off the houses and with its 15 foot long arms removed the locks and bolts from the door so the beasts and insects could come into the houses.

21. The Israelites fight the Egyptians and give them a severe beating before crossing the Red Sea (Jasher 81:17). This is completely contrary to the Bible (Exodus 14:10-14)...

These are only some of the "gems" to be found in the Book of Jasher. A close scrutiny reveals that most of the statements in the Book of Jasher are fraudulent, and additionally many of them are ridiculous, absurd, ludicrous, and preposterous. And, most of its statements that seem plausible, based upon a superficial reading, can easily be disproved with a conscientious comparison with those from the Bible. Under these circumstances, why would anyone be tempted to accept on blind faith any statements from the Book of Jasher that might appear credible, even if they cannot readily be disproved by the Bible? Why are some people so willing to ignore the simple statements of the Bible and its overall character structure and yet are so willing to eagerly and fervently grasp onto *deceptive*, confusing, and surreal pagan fables?

So, is Jasher a book of priceless knowledge and insight that is necessary reading in order to fully understand the Bible, as proclaimed by *Prophecy Flash* [a Sabbatarian newsletter available from PO Box 292; Altadena, CA 91003] or is it a pseudospiritual book that misleads, distorts, perverts, and prevents proper understanding of the Bible? It is very important to know which is the truth!

The Book of Enoch

Another popular book among some in

COG circles is *The Book of Enoch the Prophet*. Again, this book also contains a description of the "fallen angels" marrying human women and bearing evil offspring. And it appears that this is one of the primary reasons some use it as documentation. Unfortunately, many such authors and speakers then take the topic one step further and declare that these offspring were the ancestors of one or more racial groups on earth today, usually including Jews and Blacks.

We are quite aware that Jude 1:14 quotes a prophecy of Enoch and that this prophecy is recorded in the *Book of Enoch*. Also, Old Testament events involving Enoch are nearly all described in great detail in the non-canonical book. But are these signs of legitimacy, or are these signs that someone was going out of their way to try to make this book "look legitimate"?

On the other hand, there are sections of the *Book of Enoch* that do not parallel any biblical account—and they do appear **very different** from any Bible passages. Judge for yourself from the following sample passages and compare them to your knowledge of the Bible:

³ A cloud then snatched me [Enoch] up, and the wind raised me up at the extremity of the heavens.

⁴ There I saw another vision; I saw the habitations and couches of the saints. There my eyes beheld their habitations with the angels, and their couches with the holy ones. They were entreating, supplicating, and praying for the sons of men; while righteousness like water flowed before them, and mercy like dew was scattered over the earth. And thus shall it be with them for ever and for ever (Enoch 39:3-4).

The following is an excerpt from a totally contrived symbolic "prediction" of the history of the world, supposedly given to Enoch, covering the time from Adam to Christ, using the symbolism of cows and other animals. The translator of the version from which we quote supplied the supposed "Biblical" references in parenthesis, below, to "validate" this "vision". Quoting from "Enoch", chapter 84:

¹ After this I saw another dream, and explained it all to thee, my son. Enoch arose and said to his son

Mathusalah: To thee, my son, will I speak. Hear my word; and incline thine ear to the visionary dream of thy father. Before I married thy mother Edna, I saw a vision on my bed; ² And beheld a cow sprung forth from the earth [cattle a symbol of mankind—Ezek. 34:22]; ³ And this cow was white [white=righteous—Rev. 19:8] ⁴ And afterwards a female heifer sprung forth; and with it another heifer; one of them was black and one was red. ⁵ The black heifer then struck the red one, and pursued it over the earth [Cain killed Abel]. ⁶ From that period I could see nothing more of the red heifer; but the black one increased in bulk, and a female heifer came with him [Cain married Sister Aswan]. ⁷ After this I saw that many cows proceeded forth, resembling him and following after him. ⁸ The first female young one also went out in the presence of the first cow; and sought the red heifer; but found him not. ⁹ And she lamented with a great lamentation, while she was seeking him. ¹⁰ Then I looked until that first cow came to her, from which time she became silent, and ceased to lament. ¹¹ Afterwards she calved another white cow [Seth]. ¹² And again calved many cows and black heifers. ¹³ In my sleep also I perceived a white bull, which in like manner grew, and became a large white bull. ¹⁴ After him many white cows came forth, resembling him. ¹⁵ And they began to calve many other white cows, which resembled them and followed each other [Noah's family] (Enoch 84:1–15).

Chapter 85:

¹ Again I looked with my eyes, while sleeping, and surveyed heaven above. ² And behold a single star fell from heaven (fallen angels). ³ Which being raised up, ate and fed among those cows. ⁴ After that, I perceived other large and black cows; and beheld all of them changed their stalls and pastures, while their young began to lament one with another. Again I looked in my vision and surveyed heaven; when behold I saw many stars which descended, and projected themselves from heaven

to where the first star was (Gen. 6:1-6). ⁵ Into the midst of those young ones; while the cows were with them, feeding in the midst of them. ⁶ I looked and observed them; when behold, they all protruded their parts of shame like horses, and began to ascend the young cows, all of whom became pregnant, and brought forth elephants, camels and asses. ⁷ At these all the cows were alarmed and terrified; when they began biting with their teeth, swallowing and striking with their horns. ⁸ They began also to devour the cows; and behold all the children of the earth trembled, shook with terror at them, and suddenly fled away (Enoch 25:1–8).

This kind of nonsense goes on for ten more pages. There is no attempt to “interpret” the dream. It is just left to the reader to do what the translator did—be amazed at how “accurate” the prediction was. **We leave it to our readers to evaluate how this compares with the predictive visions in the Bible**, and whether or not this book was actually written as anciently as it claims to be.

Here is a description of the birth of Noah, from near the end of the book:

¹ After days, my son Mathusalah took a wife for his son Lamech (Lk. 3:36-38). ² She became pregnant by him, and brought forth a child, the flesh of which was white as snow and red as a rose; the hair of whose head was white like wool, and long; and whose eyes ere beautiful. When he opened them, he illuminated the whole house, like the sun; the whole house abounded in light. ³ And when he was taken from the hand of the midwife, opening also his mouth, he spoke of the Lord of righteousness. Then Lamech his father was afraid of him; and flying away came to his own father Mathusalah, and said: I have begotten a son, a changed son. He is not human; but resembling the offspring of the angels of heaven, is of a different nature from ours, being altogether unlike to us. ⁴ His eyes are bright as the rays of the sun; his countenance glorious, and he looks not as if he belonged to me, but to the angels.

Infancy Gospel of Thomas

The kind of fabulous yet pointless claims made above for Noah at his birth also show up in some of the New Testament non-canonical books. Here are some samples from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas:

The stories of Thomas the Israelite, the Philosopher, concerning the works of the Childhood of the Lord.

I. I, Thomas the Israelite, tell unto you, even all the brethren that are of the Gentiles, to make known unto you the works of the childhood of our Lord Jesus Christ and his mighty deeds, even all that he did when he was born in our land: whereof the beginning is thus:

II. ¹ This little child Jesus when he was five years old was playing at the ford of a brook: and he gathered together the waters that flowed there into pools, and made them straightway clean, and commanded them by his word alone. ² And having made soft clay, he fashioned thereof twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when he did these things (or made them). And there were also many other little children playing with him.

³ And a certain Jew when he saw what Jesus did, playing upon the Sabbath day, departed straightway and told his father Joseph: Lo, thy child is at the brook, and he hath taken clay and fashioned twelve little birds, and hath polluted the Sabbath day. ⁴ And Joseph came to the place and saw: and cried out to him, saying: Wherefore doest thou these things on the Sabbath, which it is not lawful to do? But Jesus clapped his hands together and cried out to the sparrows and said to them: Go! and the sparrows took their flight and went away chirping. ⁵ and when the Jews saw it they were amazed, and departed and told their chief men that which they had seen Jesus do.

III. ¹ But the son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Joseph; and he took a branch of a willow and dispersed the waters which Jesus had gathered together. ² And when Jesus saw what was done, he was wroth and said unto

him: O evil, ungodly, and foolish one, what hurt did the pools and the waters do thee? behold, now also thou shalt be withered like a tree, and shalt not bear leaves, neither root, nor fruit. ³ And straightway that lad withered up wholly, but Jesus departed and went unto Joseph's house. But the parents of him that was withered took him up, bewailing his youth, and brought him to Joseph, and accused him 'for that thou hast such a child which doeth such deeds.'

IV. ¹ After that again he went through the village, and a child ran and dashed against his shoulder. And Jesus was provoked and said unto him: Thou shalt not finish thy course (lit. go all thy way). And immediately he fell down and died. But certain when they saw what was done said: Whence was this young child born, for that every word of his is an accomplished work? And the parents of him that was dead came unto Joseph, and blamed him, saying: Thou that hast such a child canst not dwell with us in the village: or do thou teach him to bless and not to curse: for he slayeth our children.

V. ¹ And Joseph called the young child apart and admonished him, saying: Wherefore doest thou such things, that these suffer and hate us and persecute us? But Jesus said: I know that these thy words are not thine: nevertheless for thy sake I will hold my peace: but they shall bear their punishment. And straightway they that accused him were smitten with blindness. ² And they that saw it were sore afraid and perplexed, and said concerning him that every word which he spake whether it were good or bad, was a deed, and became a marvel. And when they (he ?) saw that Jesus had so done, Joseph arose and took hold upon his ear and wrung it sore. ³ And the young child was wroth and said unto him: It sufficeth thee (or them) to seek and not to find, and verily thou hast done unwisely: knowest thou not that I am thine? vex me not.

Do these passages from this "lost book of the Bible" line up with what you know of the character of Jesus Christ? Or do they paint Jesus as a carnal person

who has to "get back at his enemies"? Does the Bible indicate Jesus drew great attention to himself with miracles as a youngster? Or did he shun public miracles until his "time had come"? (John 2:4).

The Gospel of Thomas

The *Gospel of Thomas* is another non-canonical book (unrelated to the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* described above). This purported "gospel" is unlike the canonical Gospels—it does not give a chronological description of the life of Jesus. It rather claims to be a collection of His sayings. Some are the same or similar to sayings in the canonical Gospels. But there are a number which are either at variance with what is said in those Gospels, present a much different view of the thinking of Jesus, or are almost ridiculously obscure, with no attempt to give any kind of meaning to the parables offered.

Sample excerpts from the *Gospel of Thomas*:

⁷ Jesus said, "Lucky is the lion that the human will eat, so that the lion becomes human. And foul is the human that the lion will eat, and the lion still will become human."

¹² The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you are going to leave us. Who will be our leader?" Jesus said to them, "No matter where you are you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being."

¹³ Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to something and tell me what I am like."

Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a just messenger."

Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher."

Thomas said to him, "Teacher, my mouth is utterly unable to say what you are like."

Jesus said, "I am not your teacher. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have tended."

And he took him, and withdrew, and spoke three sayings to him. When Thomas came back to his friends they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?"

Thomas said to them, "If I tell you one of the sayings he spoke to me, you will pick up rocks and stone me, and fire will come from the rocks and devour you."

¹⁸ The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us, how will our end come?"

Jesus said, "Have you found the beginning, then, that you are looking for the end? You see, the end will be where the beginning is.

Congratulations to the one who stands at the beginning: that one will know the end and will not taste death."

²² Jesus saw some babies nursing. He said to his disciples, "These nursing babies are like those who enter the kingdom."

They said to him, "Then shall we enter the kingdom as babies?"

Jesus said to them, "When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you will enter [the kingdom]."

The Bible does contain many deep parables and analogies of Jesus, but the meaning is nearly always explained, either in context or elsewhere. The above stories seem like a combination of Mystery Religion ideas, oriental philosophy and wild human imagination written down and falsely labeled truth.

Book of Tobit

There are so many of these pseudepigraphical and apocryphal books that we cannot possibly give excerpts from even a small percentage of them. So in conclusion, here is one sample from the Book of Tobit which is part of the Apocrypha.

¹ Now as they proceeded on their way they came at evening to the Tigris river and camped there. ² Then the young man went down to wash himself. A fish leaped up from the river and would have swallowed the

young man; ³ and the angel said to him, "Catch the fish." So the young man seized the fish and threw it up on the land. ⁴ Then the angel said to him, "Cut open the fish and take the heart and liver and gall and put them away safely." ⁵ So the young man did as the angel told him; and they roasted and ate the fish.

And they both continued on their way until they came near to Ecbatana. ⁶ Then the young man said to the angel, "Brother Azarias, of what use is the liver and heart and gall of the fish?" ⁷ He replied, "As for the heart and liver, if a demon or evil spirit gives trouble to any one, you make a smoke from these before the man or woman, and that person will never be troubled again. ⁸ And as for the gall, anoint with it a man who has white films in his eyes, and he will be cured."

There is nothing here about the power of God to defeat the evil spirit, only a ritual. Occult and witchcraft books are full of these kinds of recipes—but not the Bible!

Common Problems with Most

Some people will still say, "the Bible contains many things that are miraculous or hard to understand, so why shouldn't we look at these other books with miracles and things 'hard to understand'?" The answer lies in the purpose of these "deep" and miraculous things. The Bible always has the underlying purpose to teach people to love the Eternal and love their neighbor.

Pseudepigraphical and Apocryphal books nearly always deviate from the Bible in one or more of these ways:

1. Many contain astounding "miracles" that seem to do nothing but make a big show. There is no effort to show that the miracles convict people of the power of the Eternal, as the miracles delivering Israel from Egypt did. There is no record that people repented because of these miracles, as many did with the miracles of Christ. Nor is there symbolic content to the miracles such as the apostle's miraculous catch of fish (they were to become miraculous fishers of men).

2. Many purport to reveal elabo-

rate details about the spirit world—what scholars refer to as an extensive *angelology* and *demonology*—which are not in the Bible. However, the authors usually claim no authority from the Eternal to teach this information, nor do they deal with the clear scriptures in the Bible that tell us **not to seek after these things** (Lev 20:6; Deut 18:10–11; Isa 8:19; Jer 10:2).

3. Many contain long, drawn-out metaphors or dreams or visions with no apparent purpose, either in clarifying the work of God among mankind, or teaching a useful lesson. These often do not even have an "interpretation" offered in the book itself. These are often incredibly similar in nature to long, drawn-out dreams and visions that one can read in today's Charismatic literature. There are few stories of these kinds of extensive dreams and visions changing anyone's life for the better or predicting the future in any kind of helpful way. (Why might someone go to such an effort to produce a long writing if they know that it may not be from God? The answer is that "big lies" often have more credibility than little ones. An investment scam with a fancy building and lots of employees is likely to attract a lot more money than one man working from a rented office. As people tend to believe that a "business that big must be legitimate", so they tend to believe that "a book that long must be legitimate".)

4. Many cover extravagant details about matters covered only sparsely in the Bible—with no real purpose to the details outside of satisfying curiosity. It is easy to suspect that someone specifically wrote these topics to stir the interest of those who know the Bible—to make people want to read the book they had concocted.

5. The Bible clearly teaches that God is not a respecter of persons—that He will judge the small and the great based on what they do with their life, not on who they are or what "special knowledge" they have. False religion usually teaches the opposite and this comes out in many of the Pseudepigraphical and Apocryphal books. They tend to teach that certain people, often by knowing certain secret things, have power (often claimed to be of God) that others do not have. They tend to have an "us vs them",

"good guys versus bad guys" mentality. Indeed, many Bible teachers claim that Israel were God's "good guys" in the Old Testament and that "Christians" are the "good guys" in the New Testament. But notice what the Bible says:

"Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them [other nations] out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you" (Deut 9:4).

"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:3)

Conclusion

Even with these problems some believers still may find themselves attracted by these "hidden books". Why? Some possible reasons:

1. A curiosity to know details about Biblical events and characters not provided in scripture
2. A desire to "know things" that most other brethren do not
3. A desire to support a doctrinal idea that cannot be established from the Bible alone

While there may be some merit to some of these points, these are probably not things that will make our lives sufficiently better or affect how we will be judged later. Please read the articles on Eternal Judgment in future issues.

— Pam Dewey & Norman Edwards 

"Truckers' Study" from page 2

He related that the last time he was through, the Bible study was the best that he had attended. Since that time he has done some research and has become convinced that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. Arlo came by as we were closing up, and they were able to talk a while.

This trucker is now in the process of selling all his equipment and plans to move to Saudi Arabia to "make tents". He feels a call to mission work. He doesn't know what he is going to do specifically in Saudi Arabia, but is just going to "show up". He fully realizes the "challenges" of that nation, even life threatening challenges, but says he's not afraid. Arlo cautioned him to praying and fasting over this, but not to have his mind made up before praying and fasting. Otherwise the prayer and fast won't do any good.

The bulk of the Bible study was a challenge. This trucker had some distorted views of the roles of men and women and on child discipline that I frankly found repulsive. So did the other trucker who, when he left, was obviously distressed. I turned to a number of scriptures familiar to us all regarding the obligation men have to love their wives, and while God does tell wives to submit to their husbands and that man is head of the wife, God also tells men to love their wives, and that godly leadership is not to "rule over" as the gentiles do. And never is there justification scripturally for a woman to remain in an abusive situation.

I ended by reading Proverbs 31, which the other trucker seemed to appreciate.

We run into all kinds of strange ideas. The disappointing thing about today is that a budding Sabbath keeper has some of these attitudes, and the other trucker had to hear such things.

August 8, 1999: Today's was one of the more rewarding Bible studies, and I wonder how God will use it.

We had one trucker, who is from Mississippi. As often happens, he wanted to relate the story that led to his walk with God. Such stories are usually interesting, and I always enjoy hearing them. His relates to a childhood baptism, a road through hippy and rock culture, drug abuse, and potential suicide (one day while under the influence he traded his truck for a gun, and to this day doesn't

know if his intent was to kill himself or someone else), and a plea to God for a miracle. Just after that prayer his sister found him and deposited him in an Christian-run institution, who dried him out from drugs and gave him Bible-based teachings. This was in July 1998. Today he brought in a well-used and marked-up Bible.

He mentioned how he felt like Satan had sifted him as wheat, but even as Jesus had prayed that Peter's faith would fail not, he knows that God was watching out for him. He then referred to the rest of the verse: "When you are converted strengthen your brethren", and related his feelings of inadequacy on how to fulfill this. He feels like he is not a teacher, etc. We went through 1 Corinthians 12 and discussed spiritual gifts, and that each of us has unique gifts that God is willing to use.

It became obvious as the Bible study progressed that he had a profound love for the Scriptures. He could turn back and forth in his well-marked Bible to scriptures we all know, but which I can only locate with a concordance, and he seemed to have a grasp of their meaning. I made it a point to tell him before we adjourned that he had some gifts that he didn't recognize in himself, such as knowledge and possibly even teaching. How hard it is sometimes to see our own gifts that others can often see clearly.

The conversation turned to a friend of his who was going to be baptized as a Seventh Day Adventist, and he expressed his dismay about someone going back to the ritualistic law and the Old Testament. Needless to say this was an opportunity that I couldn't pass up. I told him that I am not an SDA, but I agree with much of what they teach, including the seventh-day Sabbath. He stated that Christians keep Sunday in honor of the resurrection, and that the specific day isn't important anyway, but only that there should be a day of worship.

I asked him what day of the week we should worship God, and he said every day. I then asked him which day of the week we should rest, according to the Bible. The answer of course is the seventh day, which he knows. We should worship God every day, but rest on the seventh. He also seemed to absorb the concept that it is impossible to get three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. We discussed the concept of law from a Hebrew perspective (Torah is teaching or instruc-

tion in the Hebrew mind while to the European mind it is restricting of freedom). I pointed out that the ten commandments are a great law of freedom. What if everyone kept just one of those laws? What a great world it would be! However, the law doesn't save you: it is merely a standard of conduct.

We read Jeremiah 31:31 and context, which relates that in the new covenant the law is written on our hearts and becomes a part of our very being. A Christian would never think of stealing or killing or cursing God, and the Sabbath is a part of that same law, a day each week to celebrate freedom. I told him that I had some literature with me on the Sabbath, and if he wanted it, I would give it to him after the study.

In thinking through his conversation, I can only wonder what transpired beforehand to lead him to want to talk about the Sabbath. Apparently his SDA friend had told him some things about how Sunday came to be the day. He said someone had told him that church changed to Sunday later, and that he saw the Sabbath throughout the New Testament. But more than that, I wonder if his friend asked him some questions he couldn't answer, and whether he really is wondering about the Sabbath question. He mentioned at least twice that keeping the Sabbath would be difficult because it would cost him his job and he would have to depend on others for support. God wouldn't want that, would he?

The conversation went to other areas, and after the study was concluded, he asked me for the literature on the Sabbath, which I was delighted to give him.

I wonder where this will lead and how God's hand is and will be involved in the man's journey, and whether the seeds that are planted will grow. And I wonder if I'll learn of what road this man takes.

August 29, 1999: We had five people join us today. One of them was not a trucker, but someone who was on a tour bus that had made a stop. He heard our announcement and joined us. Before he had finished telling us his story, tears were running down my cheeks.

The gentleman came to this country 13 years ago from Ethiopia. He was the son of an Orthodox priest, and a teenager when Haile Selassie was deposed and the communists took over the country. He told us of death squads and betrayals,

being taken to jail by former friends, of the subversion of the YMCA by atheist/communist philosophy, of tortures inflicted in the prison. He remembers hearing his father awaken at 3AM, who then cried out to God asking how such could happen to his country.

It was in prison that he finally cried out to God for answers. Although nominally Christian, he had an experience that led to a conviction, and his life has been dedicated to God ever since. It was at this time that a religious revival began to take shape in his country.

After things calmed down a bit, he received a scholarship in India, and from there ended up in the United States.

After hearing him speak, it is obvious how we take for granted what we have in this country. Unfortunately he had to leave early to get back on his tour bus. It's certainly a story I'll never

forget.

The other four participants today were actually two couples, one of whom was at one time a church pastor. All four have been students of the Bible for many years, and we had a mature discussion on many topics, including being a light, how to impact the culture around us, sharing one's faith with others, church splits (these are not unique to the Churches of God - quite the contrary), and what about all those who never had a chance in this life? There was food for thought all around today.

Afterwards both couples mentioned how they miss having a place to "go to church" while they are on the road and expressed appreciation for the chance to get together with other Bible believers. That comment (and the story of the Ethiopian) was well worth the price of admission today.

September 5, 1999: Today marked the two-year anniversary of these studies, and maybe what happened today was more than time and chance.

I was not able to be there due to a camping trip, but Arlo relayed the story, and it was an encouraging one indeed. His truckers today were a husband and wife driving team from Texas. They were using a Messianic Jewish Bible (Old and New Testaments). And these people are trying to become Sabbath keepers. In fact that is all they wanted to talk about.

They are familiar with Herbert Armstrong and his US and Britain in Prophecy book, and have friends in the United Church of God. This is one of those days when I wish I could have been there, if for no other reason than to listen in and to be a part of the experience.

Arlo is going to send them more literature and information by mail.

In thinking back over the past couple of months, I am struck by the interest several truckers have had in the Sabbath, to some extent by our prodding, but in at least two instances (this being the second) someone had planted a seed before us, and we were allowed to water it. It is humbling beyond description to see the hand of God working in a very real way with people whom we see face to face. We ask your prayers that we can continue to use the truck stop and that God will continue to use the Bible study to teach people about him.

— Lenny Cacchio

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[Even though I have said it before, I will say again that I believe these truckers studies contain valuable lessons with how to reach others with the Gospel. Sometimes they are extremely encouraging for all involved. At other times, there are problems to overcome. But it is quite possible to see that two men with donated time, a donated room and some donated literature are able to help many to personally seek the Bible and Christ's direction in their life. The help provided will have lasting value—it is not pointing the students to any one group or teacher. Everyone has different gifts—we cannot all teach truckers. But we can realize that it is possible for us to be effective in serving others without great expense or a big organization. —NSE]

Break Room Bible Study

For a comfortable, informal, neutral spot to listen to Ron Dart's Sunday morning *Born To Win* broadcast, my musician buddy who owns the resort where we live has been providing his maintenance shop breakroom. It has become a regular occurrence every Sunday. We had originally tried forming a Sabbath gathering but ran into several conflicts and more or less gave up on it. We would find ourselves in the shop at 9:30 am listening to Born to Win. Mike V., my musician buddy, has become very fond of Ron Dart's manner of addressing topics, now the shop bench is covered with Dart tapes. There are several of the "regular" resort residents who are also frequenting our sessions. This past two weeks the captain of the Lodge of the Four Seasons cruise boat who works with Mike has been sitting in with us.

There is something more inviting to people who are uncomfortable in regular church formats, to be able to be in an environment that lets them feel comfortable participating in what is usually a spectator sport in other church sponsored studies or services. I know that all who have attended in our garage sessions haven't attended church in years, but definitely possess a zeal for inquiring into the deeper things of God and life. Many of their questions may come off sounding ignorant or stupid in a church setting, but there on the stools in the shop, the questions and the comprehension just seems to flow.

A nice facility is nice, but I've seen a lot happen in the old shop building this summer!

—Paul Kleiss, (Originally posted on the CEM forum.)

The Bible does contain commands for the Eternal's people to assemble together on the Sabbath. But I do not know of any verse that says Sabbath assemblies are the primary place to "teach truth". Their are Scriptures that support the concept of teaching truth during our normal daily labor. —NSE

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut 6:6-7).

Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name (Mal 3:16).

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one (Col 4:6).

"Sabbath a Reminder" from page 1

The following is some new information that I have come to understand about the Sabbath. My first understanding regards the word "rest" in Hebrews 3:11; 3:18; 4:1-3, 8, 10. These verses have the same word "rest" eight different times, which is defined in Strong's Greek Dictionary as "*a place of rest*" (#2663 and #2664). However, in Hebrews 4:9 there is another and different word "rest". Here the word "rest" is defined as "*a Sabbath day rest*" (#4520 and #4521). The verse reads, "there remains therefore a rest for the people of God". I believe the true rendition of this verse is, "there remains therefore a Sabbath day rest for the people of God". This distinction shows there is still a keeping of a Sabbath day for God's people today.

For 27 years I felt the Sabbath had a richer and deeper meaning, but God had not yet revealed its full meaning to me until now. I did a further Bible study about the words "place of rest" and "Sabbath day rest", and I discovered the true purpose of the Sabbath day. The words "rest" in Hebrews 3 and 4 mean a rest from sin through Jesus Christ in us, empowering us to stop sinning. As we physically keep the Sabbath day and as we allow Christ to dwell in us, we are resting from sin. Christ told his disciples in Matt 11:28, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". King David wrote, "Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him... and He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light... Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him" (Ps 37:5-7).

Just as the seven annual Feast Days are a shadow of God's plan for salvation of mankind, the Sabbath day is a shadow of Christ living in us and giving us rest from sin. We keep the weekly Sabbath because we need a weekly reminder that Christ gives us rest from sin. When we rest on the Sabbath day from our physical works, we picture a rest in Jesus Christ from the works of the law. As we come to this new understanding, we rejoice in keeping the Sabbath because it means keeping the spirit of the Sabbath law and resting spiritually from the works of the law through Christ's grace. "It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and

from your fear and the hard bondage (*bondage of sin*) in which you were made to serve..." (Isa 14:3) God is more interested in our spiritual condition than our physical condition. God even mentions that if your hand or your eye causes you to sin, you are to remove them. Therefore, keeping the Sabbath day is much more than a physical rest, it is God's command and desire that we rest spiritually from sin.

The Sabbath day is our work of faith ("faith without works is dead", Jas 2:20) pointing to Christ in us and giving us this rest. In Heb 3 and 4, the Israelites did not go into the place of rest because they did not have the needed faith. We also need the faith of Christ so we can enter into His spiritual place of rest. God promises rest to those who are faithful, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'" (Rev 14:12-13). Resting from our labors is Christ giving us rest from sin, and the works are the fruits of God's spirit. The Sabbath day was part of the physical law of the Old Covenant, but today we are in the New Covenant and under the "spirit of the law" (Christ's laws are written in our hearts). This means that keeping the Sabbath day pictures Christ enabling us to keep the spiritual law of God.

In Heb 4:8, the Bible states, "For if Joshua had given them rest, then He (*Jesus Christ*) would not afterward have spoken of another day". This means that when Joshua delivered the people to the promised land for physical rest, God still reserved for Himself another day for spiritual rest. What is this other day of rest? I believe Christ is this spiritual day of rest and that the Sabbath day pictures this. In Isa 11:10, the Bible states, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people, for the gentiles shall seek Him, *and His resting place shall be glorious*". The rest from sin that Jesus gives us is truly glorious. This verse describes the promised millenium found in Isa 11:1-10 and Rev 4:20. This 1,000 year millenium rest pictures a "day of rest" in Jesus Christ. Likewise, the Sabbath day pictures the 1,000 year millenium rest (2Pet 3:8, "with the Lord one day is as a

Not the Hearers but the Doers

Some Protestant groups also teach that the Sabbath symbolizes "rest from sin in Christ", But most see no value in keeping the Sabbath today. It is interesting that many of these same Protestant groups admit that they have difficulties with their members being too secular—not diligent to live Christ-like lives. The Eternal obviously knows best.

He knows that men and women need a **whole day** every week to forget about their work and focus on what Christ has done for them in the past and what He wants them to do in the future. —NSE

thousand years") when Christ offers spiritual and physical rest to the entire world. "For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, in returning and rest you shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa 30:15). In Isaiah, God is offering rest in Christ and salvation to those who turn from their sins.

Although all the commandments are important and linked together, I would think the Sabbath day is the greatest because without the Sabbath day (which pictures Christ in us) you would not be able to keep the other Nine. When we rest on the Sabbath day, we are acting out Jesus Christ living in us and empowering us to keep all of God's commands. The Sabbath day is our physical rest picturing Christ giving us spiritual rest from sin. Therefore, the Sabbath day is a shadow (Col. 2:16-17) that reveals the whole entire salvation of Jesus Christ. It portrays God the Father sending Christ to save us from sin, it is about grace, it is about faith, it is about salvation through Jesus Christ, it is about the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Sabbath is a far greater, powerful, and inspiring commandment than I ever realized. The Sabbath pictures Christ living in us and giving us "rest" from our sins! In conclusion, let all of us give God thanks and praise for this wonderful and exciting understanding!

(For more information about which day God commands as His Sabbath day, read the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17.) 

