

# Servants' NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 2    A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be    February 1996

## WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD: CRISIS AND LESSONS

By **Samuele Bacchiocchi**

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The Worldwide Church of God (WCG) has lost about 50,000 members and 500 pastors during this past year as a result of doctrinal changes in such areas as Sabbath keeping, holy days, distinction between clean and unclean meats, and tithing. The church's top administrators introduced these changes to bring their church more in line with the Protestant mainstream. Enormous financial losses have followed, causing the suspension of the church's telecast, *The World Tomorrow*, the reduction in circulation of their outreach magazine, *The Plain Truth*, from seven million to less than half-a-million, and a substantial drop in enrollment at their Ambassador University in Big Sandy, Texas. The campus of Ambassador College with its famous auditorium, located in a prestigious section of Pasadena, has been put up for sale.

A group of ministers and elders of the WCG who could not in good conscience preach the new teachings convened in Indianapolis on April 30-May 2, 1995 and formed the United Church of God (UCG). David Hulme, former presenter of the telecast *The World Tomorrow*, was chosen as interim Chairman of the Board. About 20,000 former WCG members have already joined the newly formed United Church of God, and their number is growing daily.

These rapid developments, which have so dramatically weakened and

divided the Worldwide Church of God, give rise to two questions: (1) What factors contributed to this sudden split in the WCG? (2) What lessons can we Seventh-day Adventists learn from the sad experience of a church that has shared with us such beliefs as the Sabbath, clean and unclean meats, and the importance of obedience to God's law?

To find answers, I contacted some of the leaders of the newly formed United Church of God. During this past year it has been my privilege to become acquainted with most of their pastors, since they called me from across the country to order supplies of my three Sabbath books to meet the chal-

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## Church of God— Adventist!

The conventional Church of God view of Church history goes something like this: in the 1860s, the "good guys," the Church of God, and the "bad guys," the Seventh-day Adventists, separated over the issue of the validity of Ellen G. White's visions, and the name for the Church. Since that time, the theory goes, there has been little interaction between the Church of God (COG) and the Seventh-day Adventists (SDA). Since the 1930s, SDA's have become more and more Protestant in doctrine and practice, while the COG has largely remained steadfast to its distinctive doctrines.

While there is some validity to the above general statements, there have also been notable exceptions. In actual-

ity, the history of the Church of God and Seventh-day Adventists has been intertwined throughout the last 150 years. We in the Church of God have much more in common with SDA's than has been generally believed. By recognizing our common past, we should realize that we should work together in the present and in the future.

This commonality was brought to light in December, 1995, when SDA Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi released his book, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*. In his article, "How I Came to Accept the Holy Days," Dr. Bacchiocchi said he was surprised to find that "In every [SDA] church in which I presented my seminars during the latter half of 1995, I met some fellow believers who had been studying, and in some cases observing privately the annual Feasts. In fact,

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# Action Taken at Church of God, International Meeting in Dallas

Thirty-five ministers of the Church of God, International met in Dallas for a conference February 9, 10, and 11. The conference was organized independently of the Tyler headquarters after repeated requests for a conference were refused. Local congregation hosts and brethren were welcome at the conference, with an average of about 100 attending each meeting.

In addition, eight letters of support for the process were read from ministers who could not attend, including letters from England, Australia and Canada.

The initial Friday night session was used to determine the conference rules of order and agenda. Each session began and ended with three men each separately leading in prayer. A few times, when the debate grew heated, the conference stopped for prayer. Every minister was

given 12 minutes to address the conference and every host 6 minutes. A spokesman's club timing light was used—a lot of men spoke into the red light (time is up), but none received the buzzer (30 seconds overtime). Everyone was allowed to ask questions during an open "question and answer" session.

The main purpose of the conference was to determine what to do about the bad name that the Church of God, International and the Church as a whole are receiving from the activities of Garner Ted Armstrong since the Tyler board of directors has not decided to remove him.

Vance Stinson and Mark Armstrong spoke for 12 minutes each on behalf of CGI headquarters. Stinson read six letters that opposed the conference and Mark Armstrong explained why he felt only his

father could make the CGI broadcasts. They left shortly after speaking.

After much discussion, the final Sunday morning session was devoted to drafting the statement which appears on **page 4**. It was signed by all ministers present—68% of the total CGI field ministry. Though the document does not specify action if the recommendations are not accepted, members discussed forming a new "international" group or working as locally autonomous congregations.

The Dallas conference is available on tape for \$15 (15 audio tapes) or \$75 (12 video tapes) from Betty Martin, DFW Church, 7415 Hillstart Circle, Dallas, TX 75217. Call 800-687-0150 for more information.

Just prior to the conference, seven CGI ministers and 3 other members were able to see the Robertson video. The ministers were Chuck Beyer, Topeka, Kansas; Bill Fowler, Wichita, Kansas; Ian Hufton, Tyler Texas; Jim Ingle, Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri; Tom Justus, Springdale, Arkansas; Gary Porter, Pocatello, Idaho; Bill Rollins, Des Moines, Iowa. The minister that we spoke with confirmed that the video was as the Robertson suit alleges. Since the attorneys for CGI are paid with the tithe-money from the members, CGI members may have legal rights to see any of the information in the attorney's files, including the video tape. They may contact CGI's attorney's: **J. Shelby Sharpe, Dean Spurlock and Kimberly D. Norris; 2400 Bank One Tower, Fort Worth, TX 76102; 817-338-4900.**

Court documents may be obtained by contacting Brad Burger, District County Court House, 100 N. Broadway, Tyler, TX 75702, telephone: 903-535-0613.

In a related matter, Ian Hufton was fired from his job as CGI mailing manager on January 22. The reason given was his supposedly unbearable management style, but we found this reason in conflict with the facts that within the last year he had been placed on the executive committee, appointed co-pastor of the Tyler congregation, and made director of the "Camp Challenge" program. From our perspective, it appears that the firing was directly related to the letters sent out to the ministry and others by Ian and Thalia Hufton. (We printed Thalia's letter in our January Issue.) Rosy Halley, another long-time CGI employee was also fired. 

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*Servants News* is published monthly by *Friends of the Brethren*. Subscriptions are free to individuals interested in obeying their Creator as described in the Bible. We believe His law is the basis for living a life that is pleasing to Him in harmony with our neighbors. We believe the holy spirit gives us the power to live such a life as long as we continually repent of our sins and accept the salvation provided through our Messiah and Savior. We believe in living "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Deut 8:3).

We believe the gospel should be given freely: you may copy any or all of this publication and give it to others. Friends of the Brethren is financed by donations and has no ties with any of the other organizations listed in this publication.

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Most scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

We sabbatarians have been fighting amongst each other for a long time. You would think that we were greater enemies than Satan. To overcome these problems, we need to put into practice the Law of God, express the fruits of the Spirit and the beattitudes.

Co-operation and assisting one another should be the order of the day. I am certain that we will be able to reach some kind of co-operation without having to merge Church organisations (unless this was wanted and that is unlikely at this stage. It is quite natural to want to maintain one's sense of identity and history without amalgamating).

First, there is the psychological barrier which needs to be surmounted - certainly at grass-roots level initially. Second, there needs to be a certain amount of 'seeding' of the idea amongst the laymembership, ministry and leadership. Finally, the leadership should adopt approaches and policies which will lead to agreements on how to work together. Accusing one another of being 'Laodicean' or whatever, is totally unnecessary. Whatever 'era' or 'branch' of the Church of God we represent, we should act as brothers and sisters—not treat each others as enemies. Satan, the world and our own nature are enough enemies with which to contend in this life.

Following are some ideas, which, if put in place, will ensure a high level of co-operation and harmony.

### Goals and Objectives

1. Seek peace (Matt 5:9; Gal 5:22).
2. Undertake a bigger Work than otherwise able to do.
3. Get to know the brethren.
4. Assist in 'sewing' together the scattered bits 'n' pieces of the Church.

### I. Action at the Laymember Level

#### A. General Matters

1. Hold in-home Bible studies to break down the myths and suspicions that have persisted between the groups (see attached guidelines).
2. Visit each other's churches regularly.
3. Place each others literature in local church libraries, even if they do differ in minor areas. In this way the psychological barriers between groups may be broken down.
4. Subscribe to each other's magazines.
5. Make an effort to get to know

# A Proposal: Intersabbatarian Cooperation

by Craig White

brethren of other groups and to invite them to dinner.

#### B. Modern Communications

1. If you administer a local church's WWW page, create a link to other sabbatarian pages.
2. If you administer a forum, regularly advertise other sabbatarian forums.

### II. Action at the Elder & Pastor Levels

#### A. General Matters.

1. Continually remind the brethren in sermons and conversations that they are NOT the one and only true Church—but a mere 'branch' of the Church of God. Just one administration among many.
2. Encourage opening and closing prayers as well as sermonette presenters to mention the other Churches.
3. Mention the needs of other Churches and the need for prayers of their sick during the announcement segment.

#### B. Keeping the Lines of Communication Open

1. Organise some joint FOT sites. If there is 'middle management' opposition to the plan, simply ignore them and plough ahead, knowing that this is the will of God. If a joint site cannot be agreed upon, then sites close to each other should be sought. Then members should be encouraged to visit each others sites for services; ministers should give sermons in each others sites; and joint socials should be organised.
2. Organise joint summer camps for teenagers and singles.
3. Encourage members and ministers to visit each others churches.
4. Occasionally give sermons in each others churches. This will gently erase any thoughts of exclusivism from the minds of the remnants of those who may still hold to this premise.
5. Organise joint weekend socials.

### III. Action at the Leadership Level

#### A. General Matters.

1. Create a link connection from your WWW page to other sabbatarian WWW

pages to increase the likelihood of people 'visiting' other sabbatarian WWW sites and it will assist in eliminating exclusivism.

2. Regularly reprint some articles from each others magazines, in their own magazines.

3. Organise annual meetings of the leaders of these groups to break down the misunderstandings and suspicion that arises from a lack of communication.

4. Openly report in detail any meetings or visits with other groups at services and in the publications.

5. Where booklets on a given subject or doctrine have already been published by another group and it is identical in core belief to your Church's belief on the subject, try and make arrangements to publish that booklet (with their permission) for your usage. This will prevent the wasting of funds on researching and typesetting booklets.

#### B. Keep Open Lines of Communication

1. Create a mechanism to iron out problems. Regular meetings would allay the suspicions and gossip which arises when communication is not occurring.

2. Add a clause to the constitution of you Church which states that you will attempt to explore peace and harmony with other groups. This will help prevent extremists from slowly but surely foisting exclusivism upon the membership again.

#### C. Creating Means for Affiliations

1. Congregations and pastors wishing autonomy or holding to a few doctrinal differences should be encouraged to stay with the main body but 'affiliate'. The ?CG constitution(s) should have a clause permitting such congregations to affiliate. One may label these 'outer' conference churches and they would not be permitted a vote at the general conference of elders.

2. Other smaller groups which may wish to affiliate/associate/confederate with ?CG should be encouraged to do so. No policies or hard-and-fast rule should be in place. Each case should be treated on its merits or individual circumstance. For instance, one Church may wish to adopt the name 'United' when affiliating, while another would like to retain its name; another may opt for XXXX Church of God (affiliate of United Church of God) or whatever.

3. Together we could undertake a big

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Letter from the conference of ministers of

## THE CHURCH OF GOD, INTERNATIONAL

To the Board of Directors,

Our first Field Ministers conference in Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas, was convened openly and honestly with the awareness of and invitations to all ministers, hosts, Ministerial Council and board members to attend.

We trust and believe that responsible minded men, led by the Holy Spirit, will respectfully consider these following recommendation for implementing Godly reforms in the Church of God, International. We prayerfully submit them from the ministers signed below.

Recommendations:

1. Because of our love and concern for Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong, we ask that he take a Sabbatical, during which time he attain professional counseling to help with his sexual related problems. Re-instatement to his evangelical duties would commence with majority concurrence of the CGI Ministry and the newly elected Board referred to in the following point.

2. As a result of a no-confidence vote in the present Board of Directors, we recommend an amendment to the constitution and bylaws that will enable the reconstitution of the Board of Directors. This new Board would consist of members recommended from the church and selected by the full Ministry of the Church of God, International.

We appeal to the good intentions of the Board Members to promptly act in leading the church in the right way at this critical time in our church history.

We request you to receive this letter in the spirit in which it is sent—an alive branch with Christian love and hope for an improved progressive church of spiritual power.

Respectfully,  
In Christ's Service,

Michael Anderson	Michael Linacre
Charles Beyer	Frank Mrang
Desmond Burke	James McBride
Julian Cruz	Howard Naasz
Pat Dennis	Gary Porter
Floyd Dodson	Bill Rollins
Scott Erickson	Frank Scherich
Fill Faith	Robert Simmons
Bill Fowler	Loren Stuart
Charles Fulton	Ken Svehla
Jon Garnant	James Ussery
Lawrence Gregory	E. B. Vance
Jeff Henderson	Virgil Velasquez
Ian Hufton	Bill Watson
Jim Ingle	Darryll Watson
Tom Justus	Tom Whitson
Alan Kendall	Tom Williams
Gerald Kirby	

## Why Does *Servants' News* Report on Another Man's Problems?

**LETTER:** February 7, 1996  
Dear Editors of *Servants' News*:

After receiving your newsletter yesterday, I read your article "New Future for CGI Congregations" and I have a couple of questions I wonder if you would answer for me?

If the sins of G. T. Armstrong are to be spoken of, is it Norman Edwards responsibility to do it?

**RESPONSE:** From a Biblical perspective it is the responsibility of the elders of his congregation. When a man was involved in a sexual sin, Paul instructed the congregation "when you are gathered together" to put him out (1Cor 5:4). The CGI board of directors has obtained a copy of the video tape through the legal discovery process. They legally can remove Garner Ted Armstrong from all CGI functions. However, most of them are his long-time friends or relatives and they have not done this job. Therefore, it is left to individual congregations to decide whether they will continue to support a man who has disqualified himself from the ministry according to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We are not attempting to make this decision for them, but to convey accurate information so they may decide themselves (indeed as many of them have).

**LETTER:** Mr. Edwards states in the article that he and others spoke with "4 witnesses" about the subject of the contents of a tape revealing G.T. Armstrong's wrong-doings.

My question:

Does that make N. Edwards a "true" witness or judge of the matter or in anyway put him in authority to write or speak on the subject to hundreds if not thousands of people?

**RESPONSE:** Paul was not a direct eye-witness to the man's sin, but it was "commonly reported" (1Cor 5:1, KJV) to him. Yet, he wrote it for billions of people to read. In our present difficulty, not even G.T. Armstrong disputes that he was with Suerae Robertson on July 15, 1995 and that a video tape was made. After personally speaking with four (now five) eye-witnesses of the video tape, and finding them all in complete agreement on certain key facts, we simply reported those facts, as similar facts were reported to the Apostle Paul.

**LETTER:** God's Word shows that the witnesses are to give testimony and then cast their "stones" first. Deut 17:7.

I believe John 8 shows a woman caught in the very act of adultery and Jesus saying, (v. 7) "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." (And these were scribes and Pharisees—supposedly "law-keepers.")

**RESPONSE:** *Servant's News* will not be "casting stones." We will not be testifying in the legal proceedings against Garner Ted Armstrong nor will we be involved in any action that the Church of God, International might take. Anyone involved in these processes will obviously need to see the video tape and other evidence for themselves.

In John 8, there was no mention of witnesses being present nor was the male adulterer present. To put one to death and not the other would be a great breach of justice (Lev 20:10, Deut 22:22). If only the man escaped or the witnesses refused to identify him, this would be a situation not specifically covered by the law. Deuteronomy 17:8-12 and other scriptures give authorization to make judgments not covered specifically by the law, but based upon its principles. Our understanding of our Savior's attitude here is that if we don't have enough evidence for a conviction, then we should not force it—we all need mercy at some time. We have heard stories of G. T. Armstrong's difficulties for years, but they were usually difficult to independently verify, so we have said nothing. This one is a complete case and easy to verify.

**LETTER:** Anyone who is not an actual eyewitness is just not a "true" witness and that if he/she then speaks or writes about the incident to the detriment of another, would he/she not be called a "false witness"? Not that what he or she is saying is a lie necessarily, but that he or she is just not a witness to the incident. Does not man's "nature" show after two persons tell a story, it changes in the telling?

Also, if my memory serves me correctly, does not the Almighty Creator condemn a "false witness" as much as one who would commit adultery? Ex 20:14,16.

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# Oh, How I Love Your Law!

## Part Four

**“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, *With the statutes and judgements.* Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” —Malachi 4:4-6**

The above passage is clearly set in the time of the end—“the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” We are to remember the laws that the Eternal gave to Moses. While our Savior fulfilled the sacrificial portions of this law, the need for us to understand the wonderful principles involved is greater than ever.

The last three articles in this series dealt with the laws found in Exodus 20 through 23. **This article will examine the principles in Leviticus 19.** If people believe that the Old Testament law contains only “do’s and don’ts”, and says nothing about attitudes, they need to read this chapter. The law is holy (Rom 7:12). It was the “stony heart” of the people that prevented them from keeping the law and needed to be changed (Ezk 11:17-21).

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.’ Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the LORD your God” (Lev 19:1-4).

This is a very concise summary of what is required to be “holy.” It is not emphasized in traditional Christian literature because it contains a reference to the Sabbaths. We see here a summary of three of the “ten commandments” (or “ten words” as it is in Hebrew). We are to love the Eternal (spiritual), to love our parents (physical), and to keep the Sabbath (take

physical time to learn spiritual things). We should not start down the path to false religion; we should not make “molded gods”—even if we do not worship them.

“And if you offer a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD, you shall offer it of your own free will. It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination. It shall not be accepted. Therefore everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the hallowed offering of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people” (Lev 19:5-8).

While we do not offer “peace offerings,” we can learn a great deal about serving the Eternal from the old covenant peace offering (details are in Leviticus 3). The peace offering was to be completely voluntary—no one could command another to do it. The offering could be cattle, sheep or goats, and either male or female—whatever the offeror had or could afford. The priests assisted in removing and burning the inedible parts, but the offeror was free to eat of it on the first and second day. Before refrigeration, cooked meat would spoil after a few days and the Eternal did not want any upset stomachs or sickness associated with offerings to Him.

Similarly, when we serve the Eternal in some way today, we personally should make the decision to do it. We have a wide variety of services to pick from, but

we should choose something that we can do and that fits within the constraints the Bible imposes. Finally, we should not make our service to the Eternal offensive—by doing something that would leave a “bad taste” in another’s mouth.

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God” (Lev 19:9-10).

Some people have mistakenly believed that the Old Testament system for taking care of the poor was handled through a third-tithe paid in the third year (Deut 14:28-29, 26:12). While this tithe was certainly intended to help the poor “get back on their feet” in the third year, it obviously could not be the main sustenance of the poor. If a person becomes poor in the “first year,” does he get nothing to eat until the third year? The verses quoted above and others like them show that the poor were to be taken care of in ways other than through third tithe. They were invited to share in the harvest of the others by gathering the gleanings—those fruits that would require the most time to pick. It would be enough to feed the poor, but difficult enough that they would be motivated to not stay poor.

Our modern welfare and assistance systems tend to give cash to the poor with

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no work involved at all. This writer has often seen people buying expensive convenience foods with food stamps—foods that I could not afford to purchase for my family on a regular basis. If our modern assistance systems provided “gleanings” (food that was imperfect but edible) from supermarkets to the poor, we might find many more people desiring to get off of the welfare rolls.

“You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another” (Lev 19:11).

More of the “ten commandments” are stated here. We see a command to not “deal falsely” as well as to not lie. What is the difference between the two? For example, a man may say to his neighbor, “If you let me use your oxen to plow my field today, I’ll give you an axe.” If, after he finishes plowing, he says “I did not say when I would give you the axe—I will instruct my family to give it to you the day I die,” he has not lied. He has “deal falsely” and deceived his neighbor who thought he should receive the axe right away as payment.

“And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD [I am YHVH]” (Lev 19:12).

Even though lying and false dealing are forbidden, a special curse is pronounced on those that swear falsely by His name (Zech 5:3-4). Our Savior taught that we should always tell the truth and not “swear” at all (Matt 5:33-37, Jms 5:12). But in the old covenant, largely unconverted Israelites were encouraged to swear truthfully by His name (Deut 6:13, 10:20; Jer 12:16). Also, there are numerous commands to “call upon” or praise His name (1Chr 16:8; Pslm 99:6; 105:1; 113:1; 148:5,13; Is 12:4; Joel 2:26; Rom 15:9; Rev 15:4). Seeing all these commands to say His name, the question arises, “What is His name?”

Leviticus 19:12 answers with “I am YHVH” (In Hebrew יהוה). The next question is how do we pronounce יהוה? In an effort to avoid the death penalty for blaspheming this name (Lev 24:16), the Jews have ceased pronouncing it. Since the original Hebrew manuscripts do not preserve all pronunciation, they do not give us a complete answer. We have received several extensive, well-researched papers, each putting forth a different pronunciation: Yahweh, Jehova,

Yehova, Yehowa, Ee-ah-o-ah, etc. We hope to study this issue in much greater detail and write on it in the future.

“You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning” (Lev 19:13, NRSV).

This is a broad spiritual principle far beyond “You shall not steal.” It forbids profiting from one’s neighbor by any deceitful or threatening practice. It is followed up by a specific example, if a man works for you, you pay him right away—you do not work out some elaborate scheme to pay him later and benefit from interest earned on “his money.”

It is amazing how much of today’s advertising is devoted into tricking or defrauding people into buying something that they do not need or that is worth much less than its apparent value.

“You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the LORD [I am YHVH]” (Lev 19:14).

This is a stern admonition to not take advantage of people’s handicaps. The deaf would not know that he had been cursed and the blind would not know who put the stumbling block before him, but the Eternal would know and would take action. The same principle is found in Exodus 22:22-23 when He promises to hear the cry of the widows and fatherless.

“You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. But in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor” (Lev 19:15)

People often say, “when I get a position of authority in the Kingdom, I will certainly judge this way.” But how many people, when they have little amounts of authority now, really judge this way? If a wealthy family arrives late to a crowded service, will the ushers set up a new now of chairs just for them? But if a poor family had arrived instead, might they be told to sit in the scattered empty seats that are available? Problems of this nature certainly occurred in the first century (James 2:2-5).

Even worse, this writer has seen instances where wealthy people with doctrinal differences have been allowed to continue attending a congregation where poor people with the same doctrinal differences have been cast out. Similarly, wealthy men, divorcing and remarrying,

seem to gain the blessing of their congregations’ leadership much faster than men that contribute little.

Our national legal systems are also full of such problems. In many cases, the man that can afford the best lawyer wins. But the reverse also happens—10 men may all commit the same trespass, but only the ones that have money to pay damages will be taken to court.

“You shall not go about as a tale-bearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD” (Lev 19:16 NKJV). “...**You shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor...**” (NRSV and Tanakh).

The first part of this verse is a command to not tell stories about others that we do not know are true. The subject here is justice. If everyone in a town has heard the false rumor, “John is a thief,” it will be very difficult for him to get a fair trial if he is actually accused of the crime. Our modern nations face the same problem through televised coverage of crimes designed to attract a large viewing audience—not to tell the truth.

The last part of the verse condemns any contract or agreement where one party would profit by the death of someone. Our societies allow people to take out million-dollar insurance policies on spouses and other relatives with themselves as beneficiaries. How many people have been slain so someone could collect?

How many businesses are built around profiting from the death of others? How many weapons manufacturers are not simply in business to help defend their country, but to also supply their instruments of human destruction to anyone in the world that will pay the price? Have large weapons manufacturers actually encouraged other nations to go to war?

Our great Father, in his wisdom, knew that if people were allowed to profit from the deaths of others, there would be a temptation to “encourage” those deaths. He therefore forbade agreements where a person would profit from another’s death.

Also, this scripture would seem to apply to profiting from the grief caused by a neighbor’s death. How many undertakers grow rich convincing grieving people to spend much more than necessary on funerals? There are other businesses based on making money from the grieving. A

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“Law” from page 6

friend once told me about a book he had read on getting rich from real estate. The book advocated reading obituary columns and offering to buy the property of the deceased. Since many older people own their homes outright and are not aware of increasing property values, they may agree to sell them in their time of grief for much less than their actual value. Such practices certainly violate the spirit of this law and the previous verses commanding that we not defraud our neighbors.

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him” (Lev 19:17).

**Yes, it is here! An Old Testament command of how to think—not merely how to act.** The latter part of the verse is essentially the same as Matthew 18:15. If we have a disagreement against someone, we should go to them about it—preventing ourselves from harboring anger and showing them their sin (if there is any).

“You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself:** I am the LORD [I am YHVH]” (Lev 19:18).

Yes, the **“golden rule” is found in the Old Testament!** It is later defined as “the second great commandment” (Matt 22:38-39). It comes with a command not to take vengeance or bear grudges. This single command, if obeyed with the right spirit, would bring peace to mankind.

“You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you” (Lev 19:19).

While whole books have been written on this and related verses, our general understanding is that the Eternal’s creation should be preserved. If all cattle were allowed to randomly interbreed, the different varieties that the Eternal created would all be lost. Farmers know that when an accidental cross-breed occurs, several generations of careful breeding are required to integrate the offspring of the “half-breed” back into the primary herds. The same is true for plants.

Does this verse apply to inter-racial marriages? That is a subject of much debate. This verse may seem to indicate to some that men should not intermarry to

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## Laws About Sexual Relations Between People Not Married to Each Other

Modern court rooms spend thousands of hours and millions of dollars trying to determine who was at fault in disputed sexual situations. Did the man force the woman? Did the man seduce the woman? Did the woman seduce the man? Did one or both of the parties promise to marry the other then later refuse? Is someone simply trying to use the incident to extort money from the other? Courts examine the evidence of psychological evaluations, testimony of friends, “character witnesses,” etc. Yet when all is said and done, most sexual acts are performed privately by two individuals and they are the only ones who really know what happened—in court, it is his word against hers.

The Eternal, in his wisdom, gave laws governing how these situations should be consistently handled. Righteous people, knowing the law, could avoid situations that might lead to trouble. In order to understand these laws, we also need to understand a few important points about how society operated during that time.

1. Nobody “performed weddings.” You can search from Genesis to Revelation and never find a priest or minister performing a wedding. There are feasts after the wedding, but the example we find is: “Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her...” (Gen 24:67).

2. Betrothal was an important agreement. Once two people were promised to each other (usually by parents), the marriage was considered a fact—not yet consummated.

3. People could become slaves for up to seven years if they became poor by financial mismanagement or could not pay a judgement against them (Lev 25:47, Ex 22:3).

4. Men could have more than one wife. While numerous scriptures show that this is not an optimal condition, it was allowed by the Eternal. Hence, a married man involved in another sexual relationship could be required to take on the woman as a second wife. Hence, the marital status of the man was not as important as the marital status of the woman.

5. Kidnapping received the death penalty (Ex 21:16). A man who forcibly abducted or detained a woman would be executed before any sex-related issues came to trial.

This table summarizes the Biblical instructions in dealing with a sexual relationship between a man and a woman when there are no other provable crimes.

	Free Woman	Slave Woman
<b>Sex with an un-betrothed woman</b>	The man must pay the “bride price,” but the woman’s father decides if the marriage will take place. If they marry, he may never divorce her. (Ex 22:16-17; Deut 22:28-29.) <i>This discourages uncommitted sex (the couple could be “stuck” for life) as well as sex with the intent to force a marriage (the father could say “no”, but the man would still have to pay).</i>	Her master may take her to be his wife without anyone’s consent. If he does, he must treat her as a full wife or let her go. If he does not take her, he must deal with her like a free daughter (Ex 21:7-11). <i>Since there was no one to protect a slave woman from the unrighteous sexual advances of her master, the law emphasizes his duty to treat her as his wife, not his whore.</i>
<b>Sex with a betrothed woman by a man other than her fiancée</b>	If the event took place in the country where no one could hear the woman scream, the man is put to death. If it takes place in the city, man and woman are put to death (Deut 22:23-27). <i>From this law men must realize that they should never be alone with a betrothed woman in the country. If she seduces him or lies about him, he could die for it. In the city, both are at risk.</i>	The man must offer a public offering. An inquiry was made with possible additional punishment, but there was no death penalty (Lev 19:20-22). <i>This prevents a woman from being put to death if her master forces her to be a prostitute. It discourages customers who would not want public offerings or inquiries. If slave women were exempt from death but men were not, men could be falsely condemned too easily.</i>
<b>Sex with a married woman</b>	If a man and married woman (slave or free) <b>are discovered</b> committing adultery, both are put to death (Deut 22:22). <i>Those discovering the act will hear the woman scream if she is resisting. If there are no witnesses, nothing is done. Married women will not have the physical evidence that a virgin would.</i>	

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the point where the races that the Eternal created disappear. Historically, this has not been a major problem in that people lived primarily among others of the same race and travel was restricted to the speed of man and his animals. Today, the opportunity for interracial marriage has increased many times. If we reached the point where one third of the marriages in the world were between people of different races, the racial strains as we know them would be effectively gone in 200 years.

“If a man has sexual relations with a woman who is a slave, designated for another man but not ransomed or given her freedom, an inquiry shall be held. They shall not be put to death, since she has not been freed” (Lev 19:20 NRSV).

“And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering. The priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed. And the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven him” (Lev 19:21-22).

To some, this law may seem greatly unfair. But when understood with the related laws (Ex 21:7-11, 22:16-17, Deut 22:22-29), it all makes sense. When we compare it to what happens in sexually related cases in modern courtrooms, the Eternal’s wisdom shines out like a bright light. See the box on page 7 for details.

“When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. It shall not be eaten. But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD [shall be set apart for rejoicing in the LORD — NRSV]. And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the LORD [I am YHVH] your God” (Lev 19:23-25).

The first part of this law is simply good farming practice. Fruit trees produce little the first few years and many farmers remove any fruit that sets the first few years so the trees will make bigger trunks and roots. In the fourth year, the fruit was used to give thanks for the many profitable years to come.

“You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD [I am YHVH]” (Lev 19:26-28).

All those things were practices of other people in Palestine. The Eternal did not want his people to seek anything from false gods, nor did he want them to do those things just to “fit in.”

“Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness” (Lev 19:29).

If a man was too poor to take care of his family (or so evil that he would not take care of them), he could sell his children (Ex 21:7). Hopefully, the person that bought them would take better care of them. At least the daughters would not have to work as prostitutes—something that is all too common in the Orient. This writer read a rather disgusting article about some newly formed East European nations, lacking in industry and in need of western currency. They recruited their own young women and sent them to work as prostitutes in western nations. They need this law!

“You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD” (Lev 19:30).

What is this command doing in the middle of all of these prohibitions against false religion? If people would hear the law read every Sabbath and reverence the Eternal, they would not have all of the other problems described in this chapter!

“Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD [I am YHVH] your God” (Lev 19:31).

Today, our Western nations are full of astrologers, spiritualists, palm readers, psychics and many others claiming to be able to predict the world’s or your personal future. This command to simply ignore them is the best advice a person could ever get about them.

“You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD [I am YHVH]” (Lev 19:32)

The practice of honoring older people has been lost in most Western nations.

This does not mean that all people must obey commands from anyone substantially older than they are, but it does mean we should honor and listen to people that have lived a great many more years than we have.

“And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him.

**But the stranger** who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and **you shall love him as yourself**; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD [I am YHVH] your God” (Lev 19:33-34).

Another spiritual command! In verse 18, the Eternal asked us to love our neighbor (fellow Israelites) as ourselves, and here He has commanded us to love the stranger (Gentiles) as ourselves! These are commands that require the power and spirit of the Eternal to carry out.

“You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin.” (Lev 19:35-36a).

Businesses should be honest about what they are selling and its price! This problem is still with us—and it has been automated! A 1995 investigation of stores with electronic checkout equipment found that nearly 10 percent of daily sale items were not being properly charged to customers. In almost all cases, the charged price was higher than the advertised sale price. When the error was pointed out to store management, corrections often took many days. We still need honest scales, weights, measures, and computers!

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD [I am YHVH]” (Lev 19:36a-37).

As the Eternal physically brought Israel out of the land of Egypt, so he desires to take each one of us out of our sins. Therefore, we should study and observe all that he tells us.

The most commonly repeated phrase in this section is, “I am YHVH.” We would like to study that more in the future—probably in a separate article.

There are still several chapters dealing with similar laws that we can apply in our lives today. We will cover them in future installments.

—Norman S. Edwards

**"Crisis" from page 1**

lence of the anti-sabbatarian stance adopted by their former leaders in the WCG. I also received several invitations to share my research about the Sabbath at various of their rallies across the country. For May 28-29, 1995 I was invited to deliver several lectures at the well-attended "Jubilee 95: Friends of the Sabbath" convention, held at the picturesque Dana Point Hotel Resort in California. For December 24-27 I was invited again to a similar Sabbath conference held in San Antonio, Texas. For 1996 I have been invited to speak at six Sabbath conferences, three in the USA and three overseas, in Australia, England and Mexico. In spite of an admission fee of \$50.00 per person, the convention halls were full to capacity and stayed full through the last meeting.

In all my years of speaking around the world, I have never seen an audience so receptive and eager to deepen their understanding and experience of the Sabbath. A man told me at the San Antonio Sabbath Conference: "I have observed the Sabbath for thirty years and I would have never thought that I would fly across the country and pay to listen to lectures on the Sabbath. But now that the Sabbath is being challenged by our church leaders, I want to know more about its validity and value for my life." Sometimes it takes a crisis to cause us to reexamine the basis of our beliefs.

These personal contacts have given me the opportunity not only to gather information for this article, but also to appreciate the sincerity and commitment of pastors who lost their employment and of members who were disfellowshipped, all of them for choosing to remain true to their beliefs. While listening to their heart-rending stories of families split by the new teachings, I have often wondered what would happen to our church if our General Conference leaders were to promote abandoning such fundamental beliefs as the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the Spirit of prophecy, and biblical authority. What percentage of our Seventh-day Adventist pastors and members would rather be fired or be disfellowshipped than compromise their beliefs? No one can tell. But we can resolve to prevent

such a thing from happening by learning from the experience of the Worldwide Church of God.

***What Led to the Split***

To understand what led to the split in the WCG, it is important to know the church's origin as well as some of its recent developments. The WCG was founded by Herbert W. Armstrong. He had been ordained in 1931 in the Church of God (7th Day), where he served until 1937, when he established his own independent church, known at first as the Radio Church of God. Mr. Armstrong commenced publishing *The Plain Truth* magazine, and in 1947 he founded Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, to which he also moved the church headquarters.

Unlike the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church, who believed in a democratic form of church government, Mr. Armstrong believed in a hierarchical form of church government, in which he directly dictated the beliefs, practices and programs of the WCG until his death on January 16, 1986. The church is still governed in a hierarchical manner.

Before his death, Mr. Armstrong himself chose Joseph W. Tkach as his successor as Pastor General, bypassing several close assistants who had aspired to the position. Mr. Tkach himself died recently, on Sabbath, September 23, 1995, at age 68. He had appointed his son, Joseph Tkach, Jr., to succeed him. Incidentally, Joseph Tkach, Jr. and two of his close associates, have requested to meet with me here at Andrews University. I will endeavor to submit to *ADVENTIST REVIEW* a brief report of this meeting which is scheduled for April 29, 1996.

For four or five years after his accession in 1986 the senior Mr. Tkach enjoyed overwhelming support from the leaders and members. But by 1992 signs of change began to appear. Gradually Mr. Armstrong's publications, especially his opus magnum, *Mystery of the Ages*, were withdrawn from circulation. The new leadership modified the church's prophetic emphasis and adopted a more mainstream Protestant approach. Similarly, the emphasis on obedience to God's commandments shifted to the accep-

tance of salvation by grace, irrespective of works of obedience. In late 1994 began the assault on the Sabbath, holy days, distinction between clean and unclean meats, and tithing.

Regarding the Sabbath, Joe Tkach, Jr., whom his father had appointed to preside over the ministry, asserted in a study paper, published on February 14, 1995, that "The question is, Does God tell his new covenant people to rest on the seventh day? The answer is no, He doesn't." Evidently the young Tkach had adopted the popular view that the New Covenant releases us from the obligation to observe God's commandments.

Informed sources believe that these doctrinal changes were influenced by the so-called "Azusa Pacific University theologians," men whom the church had sponsored through graduate degrees in theology and biblical studies, mostly at Azusa Pacific University. The WCG needed qualified teachers to gain accreditation for their Ambassador University. Some of these young theologians became part of Joseph W. Tkach's administrative cabinet. Their avowed goal was to lead their church into the evangelical mainstream by doing away with beliefs such as Sabbath keeping which they considered as vestiges of the Old Covenant.

At first, church loyalists preferred to think that their Pastor General, Joseph W. Tkach, was unaware of the "New Theology" promoted by his administrative cabinet. Many others, however, recognized that the young "Azusa Pacific University theologians" were exerting an enormous influence on the senior Tkach. All doubts were finally resolved in December, 1994, when Joseph W. Tkach videotaped a sermon which was played in virtually all WCG congregations in early January, 1995. In that sermon, Tkach made it clear that he had embraced the new theology and was now prepared to enforce it by firing and/or disfellowshipping recalcitrant pastors and church members.

***Lessons to Be Learned***

After reflecting on the events that have split the Worldwide Church of God, causing irreparable damage to its

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financial, educational and organizational structures worldwide, I feel that as Seventh-day Adventists—a people who also keep the Sabbath and who are preparing for Jesus' second advent—we can learn four important lessons from this traumatic experience.

**Danger of Hierarchical Structure.** A first lesson to be learned from the experience of the WCG is that there is great danger in a hierarchical form of church government in which the decision-making process rests in the hands of a few administrators. Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach exercised almost pontifical authority in the WCG. A small administrative cabinet advised him, but ultimately he dictated what ministers ought to preach and what members ought to practice. Such an autocratic form of church government does not allow for any meaningful participation by the laity and clergy in the government of the church, and it rejects any type of dissent.

Several former ministers of the WCG informed me that they repeatedly requested Mr. Tkach to convene a ministerial council to discuss the doctrinal changes, but their request was rejected. Such autocratic policy can only alienate members and undermine the leadership's credibility. The strength of a church organization is measured by the degree of consensus and conviction among its members. These cannot be dictated from the top down; they must grow from the bottom up through involvement in the decision-making process.

The current hierarchical structure of the WCG reminds us of the Seventh-day Adventist administrative structure at the turn of the century. At that time a few General Conference leaders exercised what Ellen G. White called "kingly power." Largely as a result of her timely counsels, the 1901 General Conference session effected a much-needed reorganization which, among other things, allowed wider representation in the General Conference executive committee.

Church administrators will always be tempted to consolidate their power in order to facilitate the implementation of their policies and programs. This was one of the issues hotly debat-

ed at the just-concluded 56th General Conference session. History teaches us that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. To protect our leaders from the corrupting influence of too much power, it is imperative to preserve our current representative system of church government, with all its checks and balances.

**Influence of Liberal Theologians.** A second lesson to be learned from the recent experience of the WCG is that it takes only a few liberal theologians, placed in key positions, to influence doctrinal changes that can prove divisive to a church. According to informed sources, three key liberal theologians ("Azusa Pacific University theologians") close to Pastor General Tkach advised him to implement doctrinal changes.

The influence of liberal theologians who question the authority of the Bible and the validity of their denominational beliefs is felt in practically every denomination, including the Seventh-day Adventist church. This is part of the price churches are paying today for promoting higher education. To receive accreditation for their church-related colleges and universities, younger churches especially have to sponsor qualified students to earn graduate degrees in institutions of higher learning where humanism, secularism and higher criticism prevail. When exposed to these ideologies daily for several years, it is difficult for anyone to remain unscathed. So it is not surprising that some of the promising young people sent out by their churches to earn degrees in such institutions return with liberal views which are not compatible with their churches' teachings.

The solution to the problem is not in doing away with higher education. There is no merit in ignorance. Rather, the solution is to ensure that those who serve in academic institutions or administrative positions are committed to the beliefs and standards of the church they serve. People who during their graduate studies have become critical or even cynical of the beliefs of their church cannot and should not serve in their church. To fulfill their church's expectations would require them to be untrue to their conscience and beliefs; teaching divergent beliefs

would be unfair to the church that pays their salaries.

**Change Requires Consensus.** A third lesson to be learned from the recent experience of the WCG is that proposed doctrinal changes should be widely discussed and examined and adopted only with the broad support of the membership. Doctrinal changes dictated by one or a few, against the will of the majority, can split a church and destroy its credibility.

It is not surprising that some WCG theologians have questioned some of their beliefs and have worked hard to change them. Unfortunately, they went about doing so the wrong way, by dictating doctrinal changes from the top down rather than by achieving gradual consensus from the bottom up, from the rank and file of their membership. Furthermore, in their desire to purge the church of undesirable beliefs, they went too far by adopting a dispensationalist view which rejects such legitimate Old Testament institutions as the Sabbath, tithing, and the distinction between clean and unclean meats.

In my association with pastors and members of the newly formed UCG, I have sensed that they are open to a reexamination of their doctrinal beliefs. In fact, many of them have urged me to research the annual feasts of Israel in Scripture and history, and share with them the finding of my investigation, whether favorable or unfavorable to their position. I accepted the challenge and last December I shared with them the conclusions of my book *GOD'S FESTIVALS IN SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY* at the San Antonio's Sabbath conference, recently reported in the *Adventist Review*. The text of the lecture was posted few days ago. This example serves to show that there is considerable openness on the part of former members and pastors of WCG to reexamine some of their beliefs, but they want this to be done in an open and democratic way in which delegated pastors and members can participate.

Changes in doctrinal beliefs cannot be dictated by a few without splitting the church. Imagine what would happen if our General Conference president had authority unilaterally to

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some of them have been observing the Feasts privately for many years." Further, Bacchiocchi found support for observing the Holy Days in the writings of Ellen G. White herself! In her book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Mrs. White devoted an entire chapter to "The Annual Feasts." She wrote, "Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them. As the children of Israel celebrated the deliverance that God had wrought for their fathers, and His miraculous preservation of them during their journeying from Egypt, so should we gratefully call to mind the various ways he has devised for bringing us out from the world, and from the darkness of error, into the precious light of His grace and truth," *The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 540-541.

In the late 1980s, I observed the Feast of Tabernacles with a small group in northern Arkansas. We were surprised to read in a local newspaper that a group of SDA's were likewise observing the Festival nearby. Until Dr. Bacchiocchi's recent revelation, I was not aware of how prevalent Holy Day observance was among SDA's.

Holy Day teachings among Adventists are not of recent origin. Greenbury G. Rupert (1847-1922), was an SDA minister for thirty years, including several years as a missionary in South America. He was President of the Oklahoma SDA Conference, covering five states, at the time he left the Adventists at, or before, 1902. Rupert had known Ellen G. White personally for forty years, but was led to break with SDA's when he published books contrary to official SDA teaching. As told in my book, *Six Papers on the History of the Church of God*, Rupert's doctrines were in many ways similar to those of Herbert W. Armstrong. He observed the Holy Days, eschewed unclean meats, held to the Church name, "Church of God," with local autonomy, rejected Christmas, Easter, and other pagan holidays, believed in tithing, Church eras, emphasized Bible prophecy in his preaching, and that the United States was part of Israel. It just so happens that Pasadena, California,

figured prominently in the ministry of both Rupert and Herbert W. Armstrong. Persistent rumors remain that piles of Rupert's magazine, *The Remnant of Israel*, were found in Armstrong's basement and desk at the time of his death. Many Bible teachings extant in the offshoots of the Worldwide Church of God today, appear to be derived from the SDA's through Rupert and then, Armstrong.

But, there is more! A.N. Dugger (1886-1975), the most noted Church of God, Seventh Day, leader of the 20th Century, was no doubt an avid reader of G.G. Rupert. Dugger and C.O. Dodd co-authored the famous Church history, *A History of the True Religion*, which was first published in its present form in 1936, but written in parts in the late 1920s. When relating the formation of the Church of God in the 1860s, Dugger, in his book, referred to the original Church of God paper in Michigan as *Remnant of Israel*. Actually, the name of the paper, founded by Gilbert Cranmer, was *Hope of Israel*. Since Dugger was so familiar with Rupert's material, he mistakenly confused the names of Rupert's magazine with the COG magazine. The *Hope of Israel* was later moved to Iowa and then Stanberry, Missouri, and its name was changed to *The Bible Advocate*. In 1914, Dugger became the editor. In the previous year, 1913, G.G. Rupert wrote several articles in *The Bible Advocate*, which supported the Annual Holy Days. Both A.N. Dugger and Herbert W. Armstrong were strongly influenced by former SDA G.G. Rupert.

Besides the Annual Holy Days, Anglo-Israelism has been a distinctive issue in the Church of God. In 1929, two years before his ordination, Herbert Armstrong wrote an extensive paper on British Israel, demonstrating the United States and British identity as Manasseh and Ephraim. He submitted it to A.N. Dugger, then editor of *The Bible Advocate*. Dugger wrote to Armstrong on July 28, 1929, stating, "I have seen no work near its equal in clearness and completeness. You surely are right, and while I cannot use it in the paper at the present you may be assured that your labor has surely not been in vane [sic.]" Dugger had obvi-

ously read other material on this subject prior to receiving Armstrong's paper. He personally agreed with the Anglo-Israel doctrine. Since Rupert had long been an advocate of identifying America and Britain as part of Israel, it is quite likely that Dugger had read Rupert's Anglo-Israel material before he read Armstrong's paper.

Yet, there is another line that likewise shows doctrinal ties between the Church of God and Seventh-day Adventists. Raymond Cole was one of the original Ambassador College students in 1947. He became an evangelist in Armstrong's Church, leaving in 1974 to form his own Church of God, *The Eternal*. Cole's mother was the niece of Merritt Dickinson (ca. 1864), a prominent Church of God, Seventh Day minister. It just so happens that Dickinson was practically a next door neighbor of Ellen and James White in Michigan. Merritt Dickinson married Ida Nichols, an SDA colporteur (seller of religious books). Ida may have been the daughter of the famous SDA minister J.H. Nichols, who preached the first Sabbath sermon west of the Rocky Mountains, at Santa Rosa, California, in 1862. Apparently through self-study, Dickinson came to believe in Anglo-Israelism. In 1912, Dugger admitted to Dickinson that his Anglo-Israel ideas were true, but said that he couldn't get anywhere preaching that doctrine. In 1919, Dickinson published a series of articles in *The Bible Advocate*, later published as a tract, which stated that England is Ephraim, and the United States is Manasseh.

The intertwining trail of history linking Adventists with the Church of God, has many branches. About the early 1930s, A.H. Britten, a former SDA, founded a group in Western Australia, which today is known as "The Remnant Church of God." They observe the Holy Days, and appear to have very similar doctrines to those of us in the Church of God. Further research may or may not reveal connections of this remnant group with Rupert.

Even today, some Church of God groups claim to be the one and only true Church. They feel they have a corner on the Truth of the Almighty. They

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look with scorn on SDA's and other COG groups. The understanding that diverse groups of people in recent times have preserved God's Truth should inspire us, and humble us. God has a scattered people, the proverbial 7,000 that have not bowed the knee to Baal. It is up to Him to regather His people. In the meantime, we should appreciate, and co-operate as much as possible, with brethren in many scattered groups who hold the same basic Truths of the Bible as we do. We have a common past. We should work together in the present and the future.

When someone asks me what Church I belong to, I generally say, "Church of God." Many of us are aware that Herbert W. Armstrong was an ordained minister of the Church of God, Seventh Day. Few know that

prior to 1923, the Church of God, Seventh Day, was officially known as "Church of God (Adventist)." Our roots to Adventists do not end in the 1850s and 1860s, but were also strongly developed in the period of 1902-1929, when ex-SDA Rupert's Remnant of Israel flourished.

In the late 1800s, the major Adventist preachers were anti-Trinitarians.

By 1931, SDA's had fully accepted the Trinity doctrine. Whereas in the mid 1900s, many SDA's were against the observation of Christmas and Easter, today many Adventists accept the pagan holidays. In the SDA Church, as well as the Church of God, there has been a struggle between the forces of liberalism and conservatism. Samuel Bacchiocchi's book on the role of women in the Church (he shows that

the Bible forbids ordination of female elders) has resulted in his being banned from speaking at almost all SDA universities. Bacchiocchi condemns the observation of pagan holidays, and now is a supporter of the annual Holy Days. Let us extend the right hand of fellowship to those in the Seventh Day Adventist Church who are fighting the same battle for Truth that we are fighting. Let us remember that we have a common history. Truly you could call us, "Church of God—Adventist."

—Richard C. Nickels

(Author of *Six Papers on the History of the Church of God*, and *History of the Seventh Day Church of God*. These and other materials may be obtained from Giving & Sharing, PO Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849.)

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impose the ordination of women on all Seventh-day Adventist churches around the world, irrespective of the conviction of our members. The result would be very similar to what has happened in the WCG. Our representative form of church government has made it possible for the issue to be debated and voted by all the delegates attending the last two General Conference sessions.

Yet even our Adventist system needs some fine tuning. A simple majority of 51% is hardly sufficient to approve the adoption or rejection of an important policy. To adopt a divisive policy rejected by 49% of the membership means to split the church down the middle. Changes that impinge on fundamental biblical beliefs should have the support of a vast majority. A church's strength depends on its doctrinal cohesiveness. A church divided on important doctrinal or policy matters no longer represents the unity of the body of Christ. Her identity is blurred, her mission weakened, and her credibility destroyed. To a large extent this is what has happened to the WCG.

Dangers Arise Within. A fourth lesson to be learned from the recent experience of the WCG is perhaps the most sobering of all: the greatest dangers to a church arise from within itself. No pressures strictly from outside have brought the present turmoil in the

WCG. No civil power or rival religion has dealt her this blow. The damage has come from within the church. Could such a thing happen to our church as well?

Ellen G. White noted, "We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world" (Selected Messages, 1:122). In recent memory some of our own best and brightest have challenged our teachings on the sanctuary, on prophetic interpretation, and on the Spirit of prophecy.

The experience of the Worldwide Church of God should serve as a warning to Seventh-day Adventists. We can learn these valuable lessons and prevent such painful trauma in our own church. We must avoid the dangers of concentrating too much power in the hands of a few and of allowing influential liberal voices to shape our policies and doctrinal understandings and mold the emerging generation of young Seventh-day Adventists. We must insist on broad consensus for doctrinal changes and for policies that would imply such changes. And we must remember that our greatest dangers come from within.

If we learn these lessons, we can protect our church from divisive influences and work together to fulfill our global mission. 

**"Cooperation" from page 3**

Work again. These 'affiliates' would primarily be associated with the ?CG to jointly do the Work. Any doctrinal differences should be handled separately.

*D. Handling doctrinal differences with affiliates*

1. Meet to discuss and even research the issue if there are enough resources available.

2. Where agreement cannot be reached, peaceably agree to disagree.

3. In some cases, agree to publish, in the Churches newsletters, both sides for discussion by all spirit-led Christians for possible prayer and fasting until a solution may be found.

4. In 'not essential for salvation' cases perhaps even publish a booklet with both viewpoints.

Certainly, an agreement of sorts should be signed between the parties concerning the above.

**Outcomes**

1. Greater peace and harmony.

2. Ability to perform a big Work again.

3. Growth in love toward other Sab-batarians.

In the end all groups that co-operate will be winners with a bigger Work being undertaken, more members, misunderstandings corrected and new friends.

Our tarnished images would improve, the sense of rivalry will diminish and above all we will please our Father. 

# Beware of “Friendly” Visits

The November-December issue of the Global Church of God *Ministerial Journal* contained an interesting article entitled “Protecting the Flock” (pp 5-6). The author was “Staff,” but its content was obviously approved by the leadership there. We prefix quotes from the *Ministerial Journal* With **MJ**: and our writing with **SN**:

**MJ**: These *wolves in sheep’s clothing* may be friendly, hospitable and seemingly harmless souls who aren’t hurting anyone. But in private conversations with others—like the steady dripping of a faucet—they quietly question the need for continuing the Work of warning Israel and the world of the coming Great Tribulation and announcing the Good News of the Kingdom of God as a witness to all nations.

They have no use for the Church’s organizational structure and ministry. These arguments are used to justify their most important objection of all, tithing!

These persons are skillful in reaching the most susceptible among the brethren—those who do not yet know how to answer or defend themselves. Some can become confused, and their faith weakened or destroyed, before the problem is ever brought to the attention of the thinly-stretched ministry.

**SN**: The scriptures indicate it is the job of leaders to teach people so that they are not blown by “every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:13-15; Col 2:4-8). Indeed, brethren are commanded to “judge” between true and false doctrine (1Cor 14:29). Most of the GCG brethren have been attending Sabbath services for 10 to 20 years—they should be well-grounded in the scriptures.

The above quote is the only section of the article that instructs the readers on how to recognize a wolf. Apparently, anyone who questions tithing is to be considered a wolf. It is obvious that the New Testament teachers were to be supported by the brethren (Matt 10:10, Luke 10:7, 1Cor 9:7-18, 1Tim 5:17-18). Yet, there are many questions about tithing that most organizations have never answered. When discussing ministerial support, why does our Savior and Paul make statements like “the laborer is worthy of his hire” and “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads

out the grain” (Deut 25:4), but **never once** refer to any Old Testament tithing scriptures? How could Paul claim to teach the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:7), yet not teach the same people to tithe to the “ministry”? (Acts 20:34-35, 18:3; 2Cor 11:9; 1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:8-9) Since there was no massive broadcast or publishing work at the time, why was there not enough tithe from somewhere to pay Paul’s salary and expenses? Why are there references to taking up collections for the poor, but nothing about spending third tithe? (1Cor 16:1-4, Rom 15:26, 2Cor 8)

There are Biblical and historical answers to some of these questions and many other scriptures on the subject of tithing. Nevertheless, if you ask these questions, it appears that it might cause you to be classified as a “wolf.” If a leader suspects you are a “wolf,” how will you be treated? The article continues two paragraphs later:

**MJ**: Once a wolf is discovered among the flock, we need to handle the matter with the utmost tact and care lest the sheep think we are the bad guys instead of the wolf. And others in and out of Global will hear the false accusation that the ministry here is “harsh and lording it over the people.”

**SN**: We note a great emphasis here on looking good in the eyes of other people, not on searching the scriptures to make a sound judgment. The possibility that a member might be correct in his or her Biblical understanding is not even considered.

## **MJ: Ferreting Out Wolves**

Here are some helpful hints in handling a potential problem:

1) We are not “wolf hunters” or police investigators, yet we need to be aware of what is going on in our area’s congregations and video groups. *Pray for discernment!*

2) We must not act on hearsay or rumor. Be sure of the facts.

**SN**: The above advice is very good, but the conclusion of the article seems to advocate a covert spy mission rather than brotherly discussion.

**MJ**: 3) Invite the person to dinner, out for coffee or visit privately on a

friendly basis. Inquire about his beliefs in a non-threatening way. Let him talk while you listen. Make no *final* decision at the first meeting. If your suspicions are confirmed, take the matter to the area or regional pastor for advice on what to do next. The pastor may have you handle the matter or take over for you.

4) Keep the matter confidential! Do not tell others about the problem, including other ministers, unless they really need to know.

5) Keep your emotions under control. The ideal resolution of the matter is to gain the person by helping him come to understand his error [apparently, members are **always** wrong —SN]. Failing that, an amicable separation from the congregation is highly desirable.

6) Keep every part of the process on a friendly basis as much as lies within your power. A peaceful departure is important not only for the sake of the membership but also for those not yet with us.

7) Marking an individual should be done only as a last resort and after consultation with the regional pastor.

## **Shepherds Must Defend the Flock**

It is important that the Church of God be protected from those who wish to cause division. How it is done reflects on our ability to make peace.

Most of these cases can be handled without fuss and flying feathers. A public rhubarb creates enemies and destroys innocent ones.

Blessed are the peacemakers!

**SN**: This article emphasizes looking good in man’s eyes in order to maximize existing membership and to attract new members. Only a few years ago, these same methods were used to “put out” WCG members that disagreed with “headquarters doctrine.” Some of those “put out” by the WCG are now Global ministers and members. We hope that they will all learn to avoid the unscriptural practice of private disfellowshipment. Biblical examples involve “the church” (Matt 18:17) “when you are gathered together” (1Cor 5:4). It was Diotrephes who cast out men by his own authority alone (3Jn 9-10). We hope the GCG will realize that members who will be teachers in the Kingdom need to be able to study without fear.

## Update: Feast '96: Non-Aligned!

A number of responses have been received that show interest as well as input. The responses of interest received so far generally fall into three regions: the Northeast, somewhere where there is water, sand and sun and thirdly, scattered in the Midwest and West. We hope to have a solid list of sites in the next issue or two of *Servants' News*. We have also heard from some small groups that are interested but already have plans. We hope to publicize locations of all recommendable open feast sites soon.

Regarding input, we have had one concern expressed overwhelmingly that we would like to address here. To quote one response, "I am a bit concerned about the messages that we might receive. There are all kinds of ideas out there now even in the church of God. Your ideas about the question and answers afterwards seem like a good one and could be a welcome addition."

I think most of us come from a background of attending the feast with messages that were fairly predictable because they would pretty much fall

down the party line. With our growth in understanding recently, we might be pretty much appalled at the error if we were to go back fifteen years.

I can probably guarantee that error will be presented at our non-aligned sites. But a question has been asked, "Do you prefer officially sanctioned error over the error you might here from a non-official source?" In the officially sanctioned forum, you may get severely disciplined for questioning the error. Whereas in the non-official forum that we are trying to create, the error can be challenged and hopefully many more will learn deeper truth.

We need to realize that we should no longer be babes in Christ. We should be mature enough to handle error in a Christian way. Someone suggested that we should officially get some big names involved as that would make the non-aligned endeavor more reputable. We pretty much disagree with that line of thinking. We do not have anything against the individual "big names" but that does away with the whole idea of being non-aligned. So called "big names" are welcome to join us and contribute but will not be leaned upon or exploited to draw numbers. A number of these names applaud what we are

doing and hope that it is successful.

We are intending to exercise a small degree of control over the speaking schedule at the sites we directly sponsor as other non-aligned Feast sites have occasionally done in the past. As organizers we need to organize the schedule. Anyone with something worthwhile to say will be allowed to speak, schedule permitting. Obviously, someone is going to have to be the judge of what is worthwhile. Some guidelines will be drafted to guide individuals in determining what is worthwhile. This is a high-priority area where we are looking for solid input.

We hope that some concerns have been answered. If anyone is interested and/or has any input they wish to pass on, by all means, please do. Once again, contact us via any of the following methods:

Feast '96: Non-Aligned!  
510 Gillespie Street  
Locust Grove, Oklahoma 74352

Phone: 918-479-8111  
Fax: 918-479-8555  
Email: PHMF81A@Prodigy.com

—Norman A. Brumm, III

### "Problems" from page 4

**RESPONSE:** We do not understand how you classify any witness that is not an "eye witness" as a "false witness." If that is true, then much of the Bible is a "false witness." Paul did not "eye witness" the sin of the man in 1 Corinthians 5. He was not present at the last meal with our Savior, yet he quotes his words (1Cor 11:23-26). The writer of Acts does not speak of himself as being present until Acts 16:10. Are all of these people "false witnesses"? Should these men be punished for writing about things they did not personally see? **NO!** A false witness is one that is **false**—a teller of **untrue** things.

**LETTER:** My last question to you:

Where is the love that is of God? Is it to your readers? Or to G.T. Armstrong?

I wonder how our Savior would have handled the situation. Jn 8:7. Is it not strange that that Spirit that He is, is supposed to be in each of us? At least those he calls His own? The fruits do tell the story, do they not? Matt 7:20.

I'm sure you must have answers to these questions, I hope they are the right ones.

Sincerely,

—D. L., California

**RESPONSE:** Our Savior was very kind to individuals caught up in sin, but seeking to repent. His response to hypocritical religious leaders that pretended to be righteous was not so kind.

"Therefore, whatever they [bad religious leaders] tell you to observe, that observe and do [they can teach truth!], but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men.... For you [the bad leaders] travel land and sea to win one proselyte [they do a work!], and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.... For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.... For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:3-5, 15, 25, 27).

"If you [bad leaders] were blind, you

would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains" (John 9:41). People who preach the truth are accountable to live by it.

Where is the love? We love Garner Ted Armstrong and want him to have eternal life. It is more important for him to personally live a righteous life than it is to preach truth to the entire world (Matt 7:21-25). Also, we love the brethren and those yet to be called. They should be taught by a teacher who lives what he preaches and does not give occasion for the unconverted to blaspheme the Eternal (2Sam 12:14).

Thank you for your letter. We are sure others had similar questions.

—Norman S. Edwards

### Correction to Previous CGI Article

The January, 1996, *Servants' News* reported that minister Tom Justus of Springdale, Arkansas resigned from the CGI board of directors. Actually, he resigned from the CGI Ministerial Council. Also, on January 9th, Jon Garnant of Flemington, NJ resigned from the Ministerial Council.

Letters  
& Responses

We print a representative sampling of our mail—both positive and negative. We do not include names unless we are fairly sure that the writer would not object. To avoid any difficulty, writers should specify how much of their name and address they would like us to print. We include our response to each letter in this type-style. We have selected a title for each letter for easy reference. If writers supply their own title, we will be happy to use it.

We deleted the letter section from the last issue in order to keep the total weight under 2 ounces so it could be mailed first class. We still have many more fine letters to print!

**Seeking Literature in Kenya**

**LETTER:** November, 1995

Dear Sir or Madam,

Greetings to you. First, I would like to thank God who has made it possible for me to write this letter. I am applying for the *Servants News* for the first time. The main purpose I would like this literature is to learn more about God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Thank you.  
Your friend,

—P K., Nyeri, Kenya

**Response:** We will be glad to send you the information we have available. We realize that some of *Servants' News* will be about congregations far away from you and may not be of much use. However, if you find the Biblical articles helpful, we will keep sending the *Servants' News*. Please let us know.

Please let us know a little more about the people you meet with. [In a later response the writer stated he is a Sabbath-keeper. He probably found out about us through Churchlight Magazine, a publication with some African circulation.]

—NSE

**Sermon Tapes Available in U.K.**

**LETTER:** November 23, 1995

Dear Mr. Edwards,

It was extremely pleasant to talk with you a few evenings ago. It can get pretty

lonely over here in Scotland with so few people willing to talk with anyone who is not in Worldwide, Global or United.

As I explained on the phone I am now Fred Coulter's rep in this country and am trying to build up an audio tape mailing list to supply those brethren who have, or are contemplating, leaving Worldwide but are uncertain about joining one of the larger breakaway groups.

To this end it would be a great help if you could run an advert in your *Servants' News* magazine which would inform those in the United Kingdom that they can have a weekly audio tape sent to their home by writing to:

**Christian Biblical Church of God  
P.O. Box 7357  
Kilmarnock  
Ayrshire, Scotland  
KA3 2LA**

With kindest regards,

—Trevor Smith

**Response:** We are sorry to take so long to print this letter. We have only a dozen or so subscribers in the United Kingdom, but others may be contacted by friends in the USA that see your letter. Your offer to give something to people that want it without "strings attached" is a good example for others.

—NSE

**Can We Agree to Disagree?**

**LETTER:** November, 1995

Dear Mr. Edwards,

The *Servants News* is always a welcome arrival at my house. There is something, however, that it magnifies in each issue, some more than others, and that is contention. Although my life has been blessed these past years from the knowledge of God's truth, I simply can't believe the amount of bickering that goes on. Whether it pertains to the right way to observe days, when to observe days, other people, new and old organizations, there appears to be nothing that is safe from criticism.

Your Sept-Oct 95 issue is a good example, proper church government plus critical comments about a Church of God organization (of which I'm not a member) that is still new. It's all quite wearisome! Granted certain essentials of the faith cannot be ignored but aren't there many that we can sort of agree to disagree on?

Sincerely,

—D.C., New York

**Response:** Yes, we should be able to disagree with each other on points of doc-

trine and still regard each other as brethren. Paul explains this in Romans 14: some people in the congregation were vegetarians. Paul, being trained of the Messiah for three years could certainly have answered this question, but he chooses to simply teach tolerance instead.

Our approach from *Servants' News* is that all humans and human organizations have some error. We should all be free to listen to a variety of teachers and live according to our understanding of the scriptures. **The division enters when people try to claim that the Eternal blesses their organization or leader above all others (1Cor 3). Leaders often encourage this kind of thinking to keep their following and their income.** People like the security of thinking they are in "the one right" or "the most right" church organization.

Years ago I considered it wrong to publicly say anything against the leaders or teaching of my church organization because I believed that "God would correct the leaders from the top." I have now come to see, from both the many Bible examples and church history—especially the last 10 years of church history, that the Eternal often lets leaders do what they want—to see what His people will do (Deut 13:3, 1Cor 11:18-19). The scriptures clearly show that church leaders will try to deceive people (Acts 20:29-30; 2Cor 2:17, 4:2, 11:12-15; 1Tim 4:1-3, 2Tim 4:3-4, Tit 1:9-11, et.al.). We should point out factual events (not rumors or speculation) that are being used to deceive the brethren.

Also, please see the following letter in this February, 1996, issue for a more in-depth answer to this question.

—NSE

**Obedience with Love**

**LETTER:** June 24, 1995

Dear Friends,

Thanks for your kind response of June 12. We're thoroughly enjoying your April & May news letters, the letters & responses as well!

As regards our celebration of the Sabbath, we have observed it faithful as we can, being on our own for 16 years this November. Our Heavenly Father has blessed us with our needs & our good health, & our personal covenant with Him, through repentance & baptism, has never been broken, nor will any fool & his organization dare steal it away. We have a personal relationship with Yahweh, God, our Father, & His Son, Jesus, (Yahshua), our

**Continued on page 16**

**"Letters" from page 15**

Messiah, Mediator, High Priest & King, & that's love! A personal love that cannot be broken or lost! It was the hardest experience but the best experience, being kicked out years ago! I can see God's Hand in it much more now looking back. We had to let go of HWA's coat-tails, & study to show ourselves approved, & we definitely had some work to do! There's so much more to learn, so much more to do! You ask if we were involved in preaching the Gospel? I believe every converted person is living the Gospel, reaching out to others, every day of their lives, & recharging themselves in private worship every 24 hour Sabbath Day! Anything less is living 3rd-class rather than 1st-class!

In Rom 13 Paul says, Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loves another has fulfilled the law. The Torah is still there, always will be; it's in our intent: Do we do it because we have to, or because we desire to? I studied it once. The N.T. hammers away at the missing ingredient. We Christians are encouraged to put on love (Col 3:14), follow after love (1Cor 14:1), abound in love (Phil 1:9), continue in love (Heb 13:1), increase in love (1Thes 3:12), be fervent in love (1Pet 4:8), be consistent in love (Phil 2:2), provoke each other to love (Heb 10:24) be sincere in love (2Cor 8:8), walk in love (Eph 5:2), be united in love (Col 2:2), forbearing each other in love (Eph 4:2), speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15), our love growing in knowledge & judgement (Phil 1:9), love with faithfulness (Eph 6:23), keep ourselves in love (1Jn 4:16), etc.

God does not forget our work and labor if they are in love! (Heb 6:10.)

Obviously, we all fall short in showing the love of God in our day-to-day activities and that is why we all tend to emphasize to one degree or another and hold up other things as measures of spirituality! Because we're so inadequate in expressing the character & nature of Jesus Christ in our daily lives, we over-emphasize technical obedience to religious activities, or legal requirements, or spiritual experiences (like speaking in languages?), or dedication to a church organization! In these I suppose we think we can attain some measurable, observable, degree of success?! As a minister from the Church of God said, "We put ritual ahead of relationship!" (We must put on the full armor!!)

So here we are, celebrating the Sabbath by closing our two small businesses on Friday night & Saturday, as usual, & resting, studying, sharing, &

rejoicing with each other, corresponding with friends & celebrating, worshipping our God is our pre-eminent duty—not with idols, whether they be stone or organizational, but in spirit & in truth! (Ex 20:4-6) (John 4:23)

William Barclay said, There are in this world only two kinds of people: those who are continually thinking of their rights, & those who are continually thinking of their duties. I believe our duty is to love! And we are busy practicing our duty as best we can! Please continue your newsletter, we are your friends!

In Christian love,

—J.B., B.C., Canada

**Response:** I agree with most everything that you have said. Even though the Worldwide Church of God may have spent today's equivalent of a billion dollars preaching the gospel through print and electronic media, the single biggest source of new members were friends and family of existing members. Living a righteous life is certainly teaching the Bible.

On the other hand, the scriptures also show the need for preachers to travel and teach (Rom 10:14-15). I personally learned many Bible truths from the WCG's broadcasts and magazines. So did thousands of others. We need not worry about using too many different ways to preach the Gospel. Our Saviour said we would not be finished before he returned (Matt 10:23).

—NSE

**Staying at Home to Study**

**LETTER:** November 26, 1995  
Dear Mr. Edwards:

I am truly enjoying your help by sending the *Servants' News*. I am still very confused since leaving the WCG. So many are after me to join up with this one or another and you make me feel that it is all right for me to stay alone and study some more. So far, I have not had one of the off shoots that really appeals to me. May I have a copy of the following? [Literature list removed].

Also, if you check the other side of this sheet, you will see that my latest issue came in pretty bad condition. I thought they had dropped it in some waste water. The front sheet was equally soiled. I am enclosing a donation to help you for I am sure all of this material is not cost-free and it is a help to so many in need of support and help. Thank you,

—V.C.B., Napa, CA

**Response:** We should assemble

together with other believers (Heb 10:25). However, if we are not sure where the Eternal wants us to assemble, then it may make sense to stay home and study on the Sabbath until you determine where you should assemble. It is important to realize that we do not have to find "the one right group." We need to find a place where we can grow and where we can serve others. You have heard: "Iron sharpens iron..." (Prov 27:17). Our article, *Assembling on the Sabbath*, is designed to help with these decisions.

We are sorry about the condition of your newsletter. One or two percent of our newsletters seemed to be greatly damaged in the mail when we sent them without envelopes. We are now sending them with envelopes. If you ever need a replacement or duplicate copy of an issue, please let us know.

—NSE

**Good From All These Changes?**

**LETTER:** July 25, 1995  
Dear Sirs:

I just wanted to write and tell you that I appreciate your small paper. There are a lot of articles that give food for thought and study. I have been a baptized member of the Worldwide Church of God since November 1984. Before that I was a subscriber to *The Plain Truth* since 1963. I took the Bible lessons as well as reading the many books and pamphlets that were written by Herbert W Armstrong and others as well. I will state that I learned a lot and became an avid Bible student.

Recently I have been concerned by all the new changes, that have taken place within the WCG. While I realize that changes do take place in almost every type of church organization that exists, some of these changes have been radically different from the original doctrine. Although I realize that some of the changes, were for the better, I cannot agree with everything. I just cannot agree that you can do away with God's law. How can God's law be written in our hearts if we don't practice them?

However traumatic this has been, though, it has made people dig in and study their Bibles to find out if these things are so. Could it be that something good came out of all the new changes? It certainly could be thought of as a test as to whether we will follow God or man.

Again I wish to complement you on the *Servants' News*. I find the articles interest-

**Continued on page 17**

**"Letters" from page 16**

ing and challenging. Please accept my wishes for your continued success. Please accept the small contribution I am sending to help with printing costs.

Sincerely, your servant in Jesus Christ;

—D. H., Iowa

**Response:** Yes, we certainly believe that the whole reason the Eternal allowed the massive doctrinal changes at the Worldwide Church of God was so He could see who was really following scripture and who was following a man or an organization. Some of the groups that departed from the WCG are trying to continue the policy of "truth comes from headquarters." With so many people studying their Bible and seeking to reprove every doctrine, they are generating far more Bible questions than ever before. Most headquarters' doctrinal teams simply cannot keep up with the questions being sent to them.

We think this trend of increasing Bible study is wonderful and we hope that it keeps up. Certainly some people will misunderstand the scriptures and some incorrect interpretations will be made. But we feel it is better that a man understand 50% of the truth of scripture and have his foundation firmly rooted in scriptures that he knows, than to hear 75% of the truth of scripture via the teachings of an organization, but be unable to prove any of it. What will happen to the latter person when his organization changes doctrines or disappears?

—NSE

**Glad to See So Much Available**

**LETTER:** July 6, 1995

Dear Norman,

Since talking to you about two months ago I have received two more of your *Servants' News*. Thank you for your efforts. Enclosed is [amount withheld] to help pay for your continued efforts.

Please send me the articles by [literature withheld] that you mentioned. Also please send me any of your own articles.

It's very interesting to read names of people we knew years ago surfacing here & there.

Although we have all gone thru considerable pain & anguish in this time of crisis, it is exciting to see such an abundance of scriptural subjects to study & to learn. I thank God for all He gives us.

Sincerely,

—H.O., North Carolina

**Response:** Thank you for your encouragement. We have found that there are a great many brethren that have been studying for many years. We hope to share much more of their work as we can get to it.

—NSE

**Growth from Doctrinal Discussion**

**LETTER:** August 24, 1995

Dear Friends, Mr & Mrs Norman Edwards,

Please send us the article How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans? We need to read that article. As of now we are still attending the Global Church of God and find that the leaders are striving to teach and preach truth. The *Servants' News* has been a blessing to us and we want to encourage you to consider continuing your doctrinally-oriented Bible research. We want to grow in understanding and wisdom but do not have the expertise to search out many subject. It will be wonderful when we can all discuss doctrines openly with love and not be separated in so many little cliques within each organization. It seemed that with us over the past few years we became more & more of an outsider-not fitting into any of the little groups. We only want to study God's word in truth.

Please accept the enclosed gift to help with the *Servants' News*.

Our love,

—M.B., South Carolina

**Response:** We are encouraged by your letter and have found many others that feel this way. They want to study and learn. They want to talk to the Eternal's people wherever they may be. They are willing to accept differences. They are not interested in belonging to the biggest, best, or most powerful organization.

May the Eternal strengthen and teach all of us through the power of His spirit!

—NSE

**God Is In Control of Everything**

**LETTER:** August 18, 1995

Dear Friends,

Thank you so very much for all your hard work and efforts to help God's people see the truth!

God is in control of everything that is happening in the times that we are living in! God has his purpose in what is taking place with his people! It is now our time of trials and testing, to prove to our great God and Creator that we love him and will follow his voice in this spiritual time of confusion that he is allowing. Satan can only

do what God allows him to do!

Please use this small amount of monies to help others to understand the truth that comes only from God!

In Brotherly love

—K.J., California

**Response:** While it may seem that your point is overly simple (God is in control of everything), it has been too often forgotten. People have stopped praying, become atheists, and even committed suicide because of the things that have happened over the past four years. Most people have absolutely no control of who becomes the leader of their church organization. They may lose their job or their friends because of it, but these are trials from which He has promised to make a way of escape (1Cor 10:13).

We must continue to live our lives in the most righteous way we can and not be dismayed at what our Father is allowing to happen.

—NSE

**Was Timothy an Elder?**

**LETTER:** November 29, 1995

Dear Friends,

Thanks so much for *Servants' News*. Dale & I really receive much spiritual nourishment from it. Norm, your Assembling on the Sabbath was so good. I learned so much more about the synagogues, etc. and how they were structured, and also how to get a group to assemble on the Sabbath without a lot of confusion. I do have a question, though. It seems to make sense that elders means older men, but what about Timothy? Paul had him do ministerial work, and he was young. And Timothy was to go and appoint elders in every city, etc., so he seemed to be in authority somewhat because Paul sent him. Anyway, someone told me that they didn't believe elders meant older men because Timothy wasn't old.

Anyway, I would like to request some literature from you. [literature request deleted] Thanks for all your hard work.

Your friends,

—R.S., California

**Response:** As far as we can tell, Timothy is never called an "elder" in scripture. Many commentaries assume he was an elder because he is told to "do the work of an evangelist" or because they assume that "elder" was a title like "bishop," "minister," "deacon," etc. These ideas of church offices and positions are taken from the early "church fathers" in the sec-

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ond and third centuries, not from the Bible. Our free article, How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?, goes into the subject in more detail.

The use of the term "elder" (Hebrew *zaqen*, Greek *presbuteros*) is used consistently throughout the Bible. It refers to older, wiser men that often performed governing and judging functions in both civil and religious matters. The New Testament congregations did not undo 2000 years of historic meaning of this word to create a new "church office." We find no scripture that gives the qualifications of an elder (Titus 1 gives the qualifications of an "overseer") because it is simply a state that one grows into. We find that elders were appointed to do certain things, but we never find any ceremony of laying on of hands that made a person an elder.

While some say that Timothy was less than 25 years old, we would be interested in seeing evidence for such a claim. One clue that we have is when Paul tells him, "Let no one despise your youth" (1Tim 4:12). My research indicates that this is a comparative term and primarily means he was much younger than Paul and many of the other men he was dealing with. Older people still occasionally call me "young man" and I'll be 40 this year.

—NSE

**Let No Man Take Your Crown**

**LETTER:** December 5, 1995

Dear Norman,

Greetings my friend. I hope you & your family are doing well & that the inspiration of God through His holy spirit is guiding your service in the right direction.

I recently cut off all ties with United & have concluded that I will never join an organized man-made church calling itself The Church of God, again!

United is quickly turning out to be a copy of the WCG before Tkach with a top-down government intact. I can no longer submit to men who do not follow Christ nor can I make a church an idol, denying God. When so-called ministers of God required you to worship them, obey them, follow them & be controlled by them, you know something is dead wrong.

When ministers deny you access to God, when they do not edify you, nor encourage you to obey Him, when they deny you fellowship with God's people who are not under their control, when you are not allowed to have in-home Bible study groups without their divine pres-

ence, nor allowed to read other's literature nor listen to other's tapes, something is dead wrong!

If we allow these wolves in sheep's clothing to dominate us, lord over us, control us & lead us into the slaughter house, then something is dead wrong!

What is dead wrong is that we have given up our spiritual calling, salvation & entrance into God's holy kingdom & divine family because we chose to follow men & church rather than Christ, our King & God our Father!

May the Lord Jesus Christ help us & strengthen us to follow him, obey him, love him & be glorified by him as the Father has willed.

Sincerely,

—A.G., New Jersey

**Response:** Not everyone finds as much difficulty as you have with the local congregations of "church organizations." Nevertheless, we personally know of examples where every problem that you mention has occurred.

Each person is going to be judged by what they do and say, not by what their "church organization," "congregation" or family does (2Cor 5:10; Matt 12:36-37; 16:27; Gal 6:4-5; Deut 24:16; Ezk 18:20). We respect your decision to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12)—to serve where you can serve best. May the Eternal bless you and help you to share your knowledge and zeal with many others.

—NSE

**True Names of Father and Son**

**LETTER:** January 10, 1996

Hi Norm,

I know this isn't much, but every little bit helps! Keep up the Great Work that you are producing. I pray that our Father-Creator in Heaven will bless all the hard work that you are giving to the Scattered Flock! [Literature request removed.]

Question: I sent for some information from *The House of Yahweh* in Abilene, Texas, and I would like your advice on the issue of God's True Name and Jesus Christ's True name that we should use when praying to God or Yahweh and asking all in Jesus Christ's name Yahshua our Messiah.

Thank you Norm,

—K. J. , Salinas, CA

**Response:** Thank you for your encouragement. I have spent some time studying various "sacred name" groups and doctrines and have concluded, like so

many others, are a mixture of truth and error. Some groups believe that unless you pronounce these names exactly like they do, you do not have salvation. They consider any other names for the Father and Son to be blasphemy. Other groups occasionally use what they believe are the original names of these two, but are very tolerant of those that do not. I hope to do more research, but I will briefly summarize what I have learned so far:

1. The Hebrew YHVH, usually translated "the LORD" in the King James really is a name, just like you have a name. Scriptures like Psalm 135:3 show that we are supposed to both praise Him and praise His Name. Explanations such as "praising His names means to simply praise what He stands for" do not make sense in the light of the numerous scriptures on the subject.

2. The Jews, in an effort not to profane His name, have not regularly pronounced it for centuries. They use the word HaShem ("the name") or Adonai ("Lord" or "Sovereign") instead. The exact pronunciation of YHVH is disputed and I have not studied the many widely varying explanations in detail. I know of several that have been researched to a great degree. I think Bible translators would have done better to put YHVH in the Bible rather than "the Lord," since "the Lord" sounds like a title and does not imply any kind of name at all.

3. We do not have to know how to pronounce this name in order to have a relationship with Him. Consider Exodus 6:3: "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty [*El Shaddai*], but by My name LORD [YHVH] I was not known to them." Abraham was righteous and did not use this name. Nevertheless, we should not ignore truth that He gives us.

4. While the meaning of YHVH is in some dispute, most agree that it means Eternal or Ever-living One. We use this word in our writing since it probably conveys the Hebrew meaning accurately. We will probably change to a transliteration of YHVH if we ever reach a conclusion on how to pronounce it.

5. We are told to pray in our Savior's name which is something like *Yeshua*, *Yashua* or *Yehosha* in Hebrew. There are quite a few theories on this one as well, though the possible pronunciations vary much less than those put forth for YHVH.

6. Several sources document that many names in our Bible come from false

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religions. For example, some will show that "Jesus" comes from the Greek god "Zeus," not from the Hebrew *Yeshua*. I need to do more study in this area.

7. If Hebrew pronunciations of the Eternal's name are important, why don't we find them in the New Testament? Indeed, we find the Greek *Theos* for "God" and *Iesous* for Jesus. The answer given by many "sacred name" proponents is that most of the New Testament was originally written in Hebrew then later translated into Greek where the divine names were dropped out by translators that had lost the knowledge of this truth. I have seen some good evidence of this theory, though I have not completely proven it to myself.

When I pray, I use the closest thing I know to being the correct name, but I am not confident enough in its correctness to mention it here. We must also remember, that many people through the centuries have had little or no access to Hebrew and Greek Scriptures of any kind and God used them. I think this is an important subject, but I do not think we should let it overshadow the many other important scriptural issues regarding how we live our lives.

—NSE

**"The Trinity Re-Examined"****LETTER:**

January 10, 1996

Dear Norm:

I have been intending to write you since the Feast, but haven't seemed to find the time or the words. However, after reading the article, *The Trinity Re-Examined* by Gregory H. Richardson [December 1995, p. 2], I was moved to write.

First, let me say that this is an intriguing article and brings to our attention some information that rings true. That is, that the words of Matthew 28:19-20, "...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost..." may be spurious. I would like to see a more in-depth article with more proof that this is so. For instance, I notice in every movie that has a Catholic background, everything is done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This is **the** phrase that is continually on their lips usually spoken in Latin and with the sign of the cross. Can we trace this back to its origins? If these words are spurious, there will be ample proof that it is so. But we will have to dig to get the information. even an embellishment of the refer-

ences given in the article would help.

However, Mr. Richardson's idea that, "for the serious student of the Bible, no such proof is really necessary" is a misconception. The serious student of the Bible would absolutely require just such proof from outside sources that these words are spurious before he would strike them from the Bible.

We must remember that we are dealing with the words of God. If these words are in the original language then we must have positive proof that they are not God's words. Also, Mr. Richardson's idea that, "every biblical concept used to establish doctrine must be corroborated: In the mouth of two or three witnesses" is not correct when applied to the words of God. This concept is applicable to the words of humans in their relationships with one another. A perusal of the scriptures which Mr. Richardson used to back up his concept will show this to be true. God does not need to tell us two or three times in order for us to accept something. As only one example, the foot washing service which we perform at the Passover Feast is mentioned by only one of the Gospel writers and only one time did he mention this act of Christ. Would Mr. Richardson use this concept with this doctrine of the Church?

This same erroneous concept is used by Fred Coulter in his book, *The Christian Passover* where he would strip several verses from the sixteenth chapter of Deuteronomy because he thinks that they are the only verses which do not support an early 14th passover. But we do not eliminate words from the Bible, especially in its original languages unless it can be proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that they have been put there spuriously. Rather, we seek to coordinate the words of God in His Holy Word.

It should be noted that tens of thousands were baptized by the ministers of Worldwide "...in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ." This is no proof that they were correct, but it does point out how these scriptures **can** be misunderstood by putting all the instructions of these verses about the act of baptism together.

I must admit, however, that from time to time I have thought about these words and wondered how they could be understood. We have seen proof that the Jews have eliminated certain passages from the Old Testament that referred to the coming Messiah. We have the Septuagint to prove this. We have the spurious passage in I

John [5:7-8] as mentioned in the article. We have ample proof that this took place. Now it seems that a case can be made for Matthew 28:19-20. But we must make an honest effort to show that this is true. This is not a case where we have a great deal of movement in our logic. We are dealing with something which is concrete. Either these are the words of God, or they are not. Hopefully we will see more on this subject in a later issue of Servants' News.

I hope that this finds the Edwards family in good health. We enjoy reading each issue of your newsletter. Keep up the good work, and let me know your thoughts on the above issue.

Sincerely,

—Juan R. Rains  
PO Box 1082  
Andrews, NC 28901

**Response:** I agree with nearly every thing you said. We should be very, very careful when we say we feel the original language texts of the Bible are in error. I believe this happens, but it is rare.

The concept of needing two or three different scriptures to prove a point is also unbiblical. Most of the stories of the patriarchs are only recorded in one place—should we doubt them?

I had noticed some of these statements when we decided to print the article and I hoped to call Mr. Richardson, but other concerns took priority and I did not. We printed the article because it made a point that I had rarely seen elsewhere.

I would like to write more on this issue after I have done some additional study. During this month, additional archaeology projects are going on in Israel that may unearth more ancient manuscripts. Finding some first century copies of New Testament books would solve a great many things but probably shake the foundations of many established religious groups. That is something to pray for!

—NSE

**Will You Be Counted Worthy...?****LETTER:**

January 18, 1995

Dear Norman,

Thank you for publishing the study on Luke 21:36, "Will You be Counted Worthy to Escape?" in the Dec '95 *Servants' News*. I have had thoughts along these same lines for some time and asked myself and others, "Should we not be ready to die for the gospel of Christ—are we better than the apostles?" I was not able, however, to bring the scriptures

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together that supported my feelings. Keep up the good work of printing clear, concise studies of God's word.

I know God is using your ministry to enlighten the path for many of His sheep.

Your friend,

—T. W., Strawn, TX

**Response:** Thank you for the positive words. I had not studied the issue in such detail until Donald Flowers sent the article.

—NSE

## Godly Unity Questions

Dear Norman,

...We know you have said you do not always agree 100% with every article you print in *Servants' News*, and we don't either, but PLEASE comment on the article on [Godly] Unity by Norman Brumm, III [November 1995 SN]. We cannot come to an agreement with him on what Godly unity and political oneness have to do with keeping 1 Pet 3:8-9 AND Phil 2:2-3. Please help us understand. We are in a situation now where our group is not in unity because we don't all agree on certain doctrinal issues and most of all on government issues (church government that is). We still love each other—we treat each other with kindness and respect. But it does cause us to NOT be like minded! Why? Our opinion is, carnal human beings have a hard time accepting anything new that they didn't think of first. Especially if you are labeled with an office of authority (minister, pastor, evangelist, etc.). When someone discovers a new truth that can be scripturally proven to be sound, why don't we have the first reaction of saying, "Yes, that's an interesting concept, let's all study this and see if it is true according to God's word." That represents true godly unity, doesn't it? Isn't that what the church is for — a place where we can be together and study God's word so we can grow in truth and knowledge? [The squelching of] new truths ... before anyone has a chance to prove them true or false, has been the downfall of God's church for MANY years, has it not?

In all sincerity and love, how does Norman Brumm, III, manage to fellowship with a group of brethren in God's Church and have unity and like-mindedness when some are keeping the Passover on the 14th and some on the 15th, some are keeping the postponements and some are not, some are keeping Pentecost on Sunday and some on Monday? This seems like total confusion! Where is the unity? We are to keep His Feasts at the

appointed times (Lev 23:4). Shouldn't these matters be discussed and let God's word be the final authority on the matter?

God says to be like minded, being of one accord (Phil 2:2-3). We should be studying all knowledge and truths, new or basic doctrine, and proving them from God's word. If something is not scripturally sound, show your Godly love to one another, discuss it with each other and especially the one who brought the new truth to you.

We agree there are some things that are not critical to our salvation that we can be in disagreement with and not cause disunity. For example, make-up - some may wear it - some may choose not to wear it. Where the place of safety is is another example. These haven't been causes of disunity for our group thus far.

God tells us not to follow men and to prove all things. That makes us more noble in character (Acts 17:11)....

In Christian love,  
M.C., Riverside, CA

**Response:** Thank you for letter. I hope you don't mind, but Norm Edwards passed your letter on to me, as the author of the Godly Unity article, and asked if I would respond.

I believe that I understand where you are coming from. I come from the mentality that I addressed as being wrong — "If someone brings in some other doctrine that disagrees with the official line, he's out of here lest he destroy our unity." You state that you are in a situation that is not in unity because of disagreement on doctrinal issues. I feel that your opinion as to why is right on target. People who approach things from a carnal point of view will never reach godly unity (see 1 Cor 3).

But, isn't doctrine where the truth is? You said that some things are not critical to our salvation. Where do you draw the line? Where do I draw the line? What if these lines are in different locations?

Your explanation of a process whereby a group finds truth is absolutely marvelous. That does make us more noble in character.

You asked about unity with two different Passovers. What if a group exists as you describe? They get together every Sabbath and have wonderful fellowship and Bible studies. One winter, they tackle the issue of Passover. They all study together week after week with the attitude of "let's see if it is true according to God's word." The odds are, especially if they had no previous Passover background, that some of them come to a different conclusion than the rest and are very convicted of it. Both sides will also say, "We are to keep

his feasts at the appointed times" (Lev 23:4). Is it right for them to split up into two different groups and no longer fellowship with each other because of this disagreement? Or would it be better for them to stay together and continue fellowshiping and studying and when the Passover event arrived for them to then split up, observe it the way each deemed best and then come back together again?

How could I fellowship with a group like this? Actually, it is wonderful. Some in our group felt strongly to observe the Passover at home. Others felt that getting together in the traditional church of God way was the best. Still, others kept it on a different day and others felt very strongly to do the lamb ceremony (without the sacrificing part). The next day, we all got together and were all very genuine when we asked how each others' Passover went. We all observed the Passover, yet in different ways. Is when and how you keep Passover a point of salvation? In some ways yes and in some ways no. In our situation, we felt that it was not. We differed but we still had godly unity, were like minded and were "all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, pitiful, courteous" (I Pet 3:8). We weren't perfect, we had to keep our attitudes in check but it still worked. I learned a tremendous amount about unity from this experience. The same should work for Pentecost and many other matters.

Paul wrote of this subject in Romans 14. Apparently, the Romans were having pretty much the same problems regarding unity. Yet, what was his conclusion? "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" (Rom 14:17-19, NIV). It might be very worthwhile for your group to conduct a Bible Study on Romans 14 if you haven't done that already.

I asked an old acquaintance where he and his family stood regarding the church situation. His response is one of the best that I have heard.

"My family stands with Christ's Body, wherever its individual parts are found. We are against no one except the adversary and his cohorts. We regularly fellowship, in and out of congregational services, with brethren from both sides of this matter. In other words, we have NO part of this man-made fracture and refuse to reject even the

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# Good Questions on Nicolaitanism

We received a few good questions about our articles on church government [several issues] and on Nicolaitanism [November 1995]. The letter below included many of the questions, so we have reprinted the entire letter and response.

Thank you for your letter of December 12, 1995. You asked many good questions. I feel I can answer most of them. I value your letter as it is one of the few constructive criticisms that we have received. I will repeat your letter and respond to it:

*I recently wrote to you asking you to remove my name from your mailing list because I simply could not agree with either your ideas or your attitude.*

*You have a friend who insists that you are a reasonable man and that it is unfair for me to disagree with you without being specific about the disagreement. He is right about the last part; I hope he is right about the first part as well. In any case, here is where I disagree with you.*

*In the Servants' News, Sept-Oct, 1995, page 3, there is an article which advocates that we each start our own church. I suppose that then each of the people who attend with us would eventually go off and start their own church, and so on. This is anarchy and confusion. God is not the author of confusions (1 Cor 14:33).*

The article did not suggest that everyone "start their own church" but that people who are spiritually ready make themselves available to teach those that will listen. The article quotes Acts 8:1,4 which shows that nearly all the Jerusalem brethren were scattered and went everywhere preaching the Gospel. We find it interesting that you quote 1 Corinthians 14:33, a passage about conducting worship services. Please read verse 26 and see that each of the brethren had a part in the services—was that confusion? See verse 29 where it says that two or three prophets were to speak, and the others were to judge. This is an obvious reference to scriptures like Deuteronomy 13 and Isaiah 8:20 where we are told to

judge whether prophets are true or false. People need to be able to hear speakers and judge from the scriptures whether their message is true or not.

The "confusion" that Paul says to avoid is not preventing a diversity of opinions to be spoken, but in requiring that the prophets speak one at a time (verses 30-32). While we should not try to cause division, a certain amount of division is allowed among the body so our father may know who is seeking him (1 Cor 11:17-19, Deut 13:3). If we look at the history of Sabbath-keepers, we find a diversity of governments and doctrines. Look at Revelation 2 and 3. There are seven congregations all with different problems and doctrines. We can label all of that "confusion" or we can accept our Savior's leadership over His Body. (We should not be too shocked—He also allows us to grow up in a world that is about as confused as one could imagine.)

*Under this system how would we obey (or are you afraid of the word "obey?") the instruction in 1 Cor. 1:10 that we "all speak the same thing?" Where would be the central clearing house for our ideas? Who would tell us when we were wrong? Who would give them the authority to do so? How would we know that their idea was any better than our own? If we continued to disagree with them then we would not be speaking the same thing. If we yielded to their ideas, would that not give them rulership over us?*

I certainly believe in obeying our Father in heaven. There are primarily two words translated "obey" in the New Testament. The one that means "obey an authoritative command" is *hupakouo*, and is used in the sense of obeying the Eternal or obeying scripture. There is no command to give such allegiance to men. The other word, *peitho*, has a meaning of "being persuaded" or "cooperating with." This is the word used in Hebrews 13:17. However, there are plenty of Sabbath-keeping organizations that I could join and each of their leaders would command me to obey them. Is only one of these organizations right and are all the others sinners? Do we have a choice about which one we will attend? Do we have to choose a

man to "be under" or can we submit directly to the authority of our Savior?

Please read all of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. Paul is not talking about division caused by individual teachers expounding the scriptures differently, but is talking about the very situation we described above. People were saying "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos." They were setting themselves up as followers of men rather than submitting directly to the guidance of the holy spirit which is what brings us into all truth (John 16:13). Romans 14 shows that there may be people with wrong doctrines but we can still fellowship with them and we should try not to offend them.

There is no doubt that a human organization can enforce "unity" by telling its ministers and members to either speak the headquarters point of view or get out. Ephesians 4:3-6 shows that our unity is through the holy spirit and mentions, one body, one baptism, one Father, one hope and one faith—but it does not mention one human leader. Later in verse 15 and in chapter 5:23 we see that "Christ is the head of the church." How many people can our Messiah manage? Just one human leader? Or just the heads of a few big organizations? We think he can manage thousands or millions of scattered congregations much better than any human organization could ever do it.

Who will tell us when we are wrong? "...For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Heb 13:5-6). Herbert Armstrong taught Pentecost as being Sivan 6 in his early years, always Monday beginning in the 40's, and always Sunday beginning in the 70's. He must have been wrong at least two of the times. Does following a man always tell us when we are wrong? Or is it just more comfortable to be wrong with a big group of people? If a person studies the scripture and cannot agree with the leader of his congregation, he should not cause those that are weak in the faith to stumble, but he should have his faith to himself and act according to his convictions (Rom 14:22-23).

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How do we know when to stay with a specific congregation and when to leave? The problem is most often taken care of for you. If you sincerely live your convictions and talk about them when asked (not pushing them on others), people less interested in seeking the truth will usually want to put you out of their assembly (John 9:22, 16:2, 3Jn 9-10). It is interesting that we find no instruction at all in the New Testament for the true believers to depart from the synagogues—they were put out. In some cases, we find reasons why we should leave (2Ths 3:6, 1Tim 6:5, Rev 2:2).

*Rulership over you is what you seem to be trying to avoid at all cost. You appear to want everybody to be a chief, with nobody to be indians.*

To the contrary, there is One Chief, and all the rest are "indians."

*At this point I must address the rhetoric that has proliferated about the Nicolaitans and the misconceptions about who they were and what they did that Jesus hated. C. J. Milosh, in his article on Nicolaitanism, says, "Two Greek root words are brought together to form 'Nicolaitan': NICO and LAOS. 'Nico' means to conquer or bind. 'Laos' means the 'the common people.' 'Lait' (as in the central section of NICO - 'LAIT' - AN) is a form of 'laos.' The modern term, 'laity,' was formed by simply adding a 'y.'" (emphasis his.)*

*Up to this point, all the sources I checked agreed. However, then C. J. Milosh takes a quantum leap into his own agenda, as do J. H. Allen and all the others who obviously have a problem with authority figures.*

*To continue quoting Mr. Milosh: "Now, for there to be a LAITY there must be a CLERGY. The 'Clergy' is the elite ruling class, as contrasted with the 'laity' which is the common class. Hence, we now understand that the thing Jesus Christ hates and detests is the spirit of clergy/laity (i.e., class society with one ruling over another)." (Again, emphasis his.)*

*I have a question: Where is the word "clergy" in the word "Nicolaitan?" The "conquering" I can see; the "people" I can see. But I don't see anything in the word*

*"Nicolaitan" that has anything to do with "clergy" or that the "clergy" are the ones doing the conquering.*

We looked at some of the source material that C. J. Milosh cites and we are ordering some more of it. We would like to publish another article on the subject. C. J. Milosh applied the definition of "conquering the people" to what has happened throughout much of church history—a small group of "clergy" has ruled over the "laity," often for their own benefit. Most "Church of God" groups have inherited the concept of an "ordained ministry" from the Catholic and Protestant churches, not from the Bible. Please read our articles *How Does The Eternal Govern Through Humans?* and *Assembling on the Sabbath* for a detailed explanation.

*Another question: How can we "now understand that the thing Jesus Christ hates and detests is the spirit of clergy/laity (i.e., class society with one ruling over another)?" Did Jesus Christ hate Himself? (Rev 12:5; 19:15).*

*Did Jesus Christ hate the Thyatirans? Revelation 2:26-27 says that if the Thyatirans overcome He will give them power over the nations and that they will rule with a rod of iron. Overcoming doesn't sound like a viable goal if the reward for doing it is something Jesus hates. But then, since Jesus is the one giving the reward and the reward is something He hates, then He is the one that is confused. And I don't believe that for a minute!*

The Scriptures you cite refer to perfect spirit beings ruling over men, not fallible human beings. There is a big difference! We are not in the Millennium! Our father does not guarantee that "Church leaders" will be infallible (though some have claimed that). Herbert Armstrong diligently taught much truth for over 50 years, but his last letter appointed a man that oversaw the reversal of most of that teaching. Did the members have the authority to leave teaching they recognized from the Bible to be false? Did a "minister" have to tell them it was all right to leave? How many "ministers" preached (and are still preaching) that members must stay in their organization "no matter what"? Please read Ezekiel 34 to see how our

Father is against the shepherds that feed themselves and not their flocks.

*The truth of the matter is that Jesus does not hate strong rulership. What Jesus hates is rebellious attitudes and those who refuse to be ruled. Heb 13:7 says, "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you..." This means that those who speak the word of God to us also have rule over us. They have the authority to tell us when we are not conducting our lives according to that word of God and to teach us how to obey.*

If two ministers, one from the GCG and one from the UCG each came to your house, spoke "the word of God to you," and then told you to tithe to their headquarters, which one would you obey? The doctrines or the organizations have only minor differences. Neither claims to be the "one and only True Church." If you chose one organization based on its doctrinal teaching, what would you do if the other organization told you that you, as a "lay member" are not qualified to make such a fine doctrinal distinction? Is it not your own decision whom you will obey?

The Greek word used for "rule" in Hebrews 13:7 is *hegemoai* and is more often translated "count" or "think" and here means "leaders" or "those that must give account." The sense of obeying "day-to-day commands" does not exist in the Greek text. Consider Moffatt's translation of the same verse: "Remember your leaders, the men who spoke the word of God to you; look back upon the close of their career, and copy their faith."

*1 Pet 2:18 says: "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh." Of course it's easier to submit to the good and gentle master and most of us want life to be as easy as possible. But God says that if the master is harsh, submit to him anyway.*

This command is for men who were physical servants to submit to their physical masters. This system was supported by the Old Testament (Ex 21:2, Ex 22:3), though it was misused. This verse has nothing to do with spiritual leaders that were completely forbidden

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to "lord it over" their brethren (Luke 22:25-26).

*Heb 13:17 carries instructions of great significance to all of us. I will break it down into three sections:*

A. "Obey those who rule over you and be submissive..." We are to obey and be submissive. To obey is an action. To be submissive is an attitude of mind. Both our actions and our attitudes must be in tune with God's will.

The Greek *peitho* ("obey") is usually translated "persuade" or "trust"—it contains the idea of becoming friends, cooperating. The Greek *pietharcho*, used for obeying the Eternal or kings (Acts 5:29, Tit 3:1) was not used here. The Greek *hegemoai* ("rule") is more often translated "count" or "think" as we stated above." The Greek *hupotasso*, ("submit") is the same word used for "people submitting to civil authority" and members "submitting to each other" (Rom 13:1-5, 1Cor 16:16, Eph 5:21, 1Pet 5:5). If *hupotasso* meant "under absolute authority," how could the believers be "under absolute authority" to each other? Rotherham translates this section "Be yielding unto them who are guiding you and submit yourselves..." 1 Corinthians 11:3 unmistakably tells us "... the head of every Man is Christ..."

B. "...for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account..." Those who have rule over us are responsible for what they say and do to us. And if they deliberately mistreat us, then Hebrews 10:31 takes effect.

You are certainly right about leaders being judged for mistreating the brethren (Jms 3:1). But why did you leave the WCG? Because we are told to determine when a teacher is teaching falsely and to leave (2Ths 3:6, 1Tim 6:5). If a teacher misleads us, is all the responsibility upon him, or do we bear some also? Seven times, the letters to the churches tell us that "him who overcomes" will be rewarded. 1 Corinthians 3:12-17 shows that "each ones' work" will be tested. Numerous parables of our Savior show the importance of individual actions and deeds. When the kings of Israel disobeyed the Scriptures and encouraged the people to follow them, who went into captivity? Just the king or

the entire nation? If a "minister" tells a person that he can (or should) divorce his or her spouse, does that eliminate the scriptural obligations to one's family? (I am not saying every divorce is wrong, but I have seen some very creative reasoning by ministers eager to please a well-liked member.)

C. "...Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." (emphasis mine.) Who will it be unprofitable for? Not the ones who have rule over us, they have to account to God. To refuse to obey and be submissive would be unprofitable for us. Period. Paragraph.

We should cooperate as much as possible with our leadership and it is a blessing to us. Our Savior certainly has established many different spiritual gifts in his assembly (Rom 12:6-8, 1Cor 12:7-11, 28-31, Eph 4:11-15). We can work with brethren even if they do not understand every doctrine as we do. I have personally attended with a variety of Sabbath-keeping groups and have encouraged others to do the same. If we cannot cooperate with our fellow-laborers, it is not likely we will bear much fruit. I have certainly met people that tend to offend every leader and group that they meet with—that attitude is certainly unprofitable for them.

Problems also arise when men set themselves up as being spiritually "over" other men and then command obedience to themselves. The article to which you objected, *Preach the Gospel in Your City for Only \$400 Per Year*, was an effort to encourage teaching of the truth regardless of organizational lines. If we had more of that approach and less fighting over who was going to be "in authority over the members," members would be much more effective.

*Incidentally, Hebrews 13:24 says, "Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints." So much for not having a difference between "those who rule over you" and "the saints," in other words, "the people."*

The Greek for "rule" is again *hegemoai*. Moffatt translates this verse

"Salute all your leaders and all the saints." Paul mentions the leaders separately here because he was just talking about them. If you look at the end of all of Paul's epistles, you see he greets (or "salutes"—same Greek word *aspazomai*) a great variety of named individuals, congregations, and "the saints" or "the brethren." Sometimes his list is long (Rom 16), Sometimes it is very short (Gal 6:18). We cannot conclude that his purpose in these diverse endings was to establish some individuals or groups as "over" others in authority. This Scripture in Hebrews is the only place where he specifically, separately mentions "leaders" and "the saints."

This simple greeting cannot be used to establish the Catholic and Protestant doctrine of "clergy" placed over the "laity" through "ordination." While the "laying on of hands" is taught in the Bible, the doctrine of ordination does not exist there.

Hands were laid on people to accomplish specific tasks, not to make them a "deacon" or "minister" for life (Acts 6:5-6, 13:2-3). Hands were laid on Stephen so he could serve widows, but in the very next verses he is performing great miracles and powerfully preaching to the heads of the civil government (Acts 6:5-7:60). If you look up the word "ordain" in Young's Analytical Concordance, you will find 13 different Greek words translated to this single English word—and all of those Greek words have another meaning and are usually **not** translated "ordain." To a Greek reader, there is no word for "ordain" in the Bible. Please read our free article, *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?*, for a full explanation.

*Now for what it was about the Nicolaitans that Jesus hated. The Nicolaitans did indeed try to conquer God's people, but not by harsh rule. They tried to destroy God's people by getting them to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. The Amplified Bible calls them "those corrupters of the people" (Rev 2:15).*

*The NRSV Harper Study Bible, note on Rev 2:6: "The Nicolaitans*

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**Why do some English Bible scriptures seem to support a ministerial hierarchy? What does the original say? Please read *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans? ...and find out!***

**"Nicolaitanism" from page 23**

were a heretical group tolerated by the church of Pergamum (v.15), but rejected by the church at Ephesus. They stressed Christian liberty to such an extent that they allowed for gross immorality and idolatry." This doesn't sound like harsh rule to me.

The NIV Study Bible, Note on Rev 2:6: "Nicolaitans. A heretical sect within the church that had worked out a compromise with the pagan society. They apparently taught that spiritual liberty gave them sufficient leeway to practice idolatry and immorality. Tradition identifies them with Nicholas, the proselyte of Antioch who was one of the first seven deacons in the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:5), though the evidence is merely circumstantial. A similar group at Pergamum held the teaching of Balaam (vv. 14-15), and some at Thyatira were followers of the woman Jezebel (V.20). From their heretical tendencies it would appear that all three groups were Nicolaitans."

The Living Bible, footnote on Rev 2:6: "Nicolaitans, when translated from Greek to Hebrew, becomes Balaamites; followers of the man who induced the Israelites to fall by lust. (See Revelation 2:14 and Numbers 31:15, 16)"

The New Bible Dictionary, published by Erdmans, reprinted 1979, page 886: "NICHOLAS, NICOLAITANS. Nicholas of Antioch (Acts 6:5) is supposed to have given his name to a group in the early Church who sought to work out a compromise with paganism, to enable Christians to take part without embarrassment in some of the social and religious activities of the close-knit society in which they found themselves. It is possible that the term Nicolaitan is a Graecized form of Heb. Balaam, and therefore allegorical, the policy of the sect being likened to that of the Old Testament corrupter of Israel (Nu. xxii). In that case the Nicolaitans are to be identified with the groups attacked by Peter (2Pet 2:15), Jude (verse 11), and John (Rev 2:14 and possibly 2:20-23), for their advocacy within the Church of pagan sexual laxity. References in Irenaeus, Clement, and Tertulian suggest that

the group hardened into a Gnostic sect traceable as far as AD 200."

The Bible Almanac, Edited by Packer, Tenney & White, Copyright 1980 by Thomas Nelson Publishers, Page 537: "Nicolaitans. John focused on a more extreme form of Gnosticism rampant throughout the first-century church (1 and 2 John; Rev. 2:6, 14, 15). These were Nicolaitans. Supporters of this deadly doctrine claimed that, since their bodies were physical (and therefore evil), only what their spirits did was important. So they felt free to indulge in indiscriminate sexual relationships, to eat food which had been offered to idols, and to do anything they pleased with their bodies.

"...Irenaeus, Tertullian, and other church fathers denounced the Nicolaitans along with the Gnostics. Irenaeus reported that the sect was named for Nicolaos, a deacon of the first Nicolaitan community, who indulged in adultery."

Now this sounds much more like what Jesus would hate. There were similar articles in The Jamieson, Fausset, Brown 1 Volume Commentary on the Whole Bible; the Smith Bible Dictionary and other sources. This is what I believe and why I cannot agree with you Mr. Edwards.

We realize that most Bible helps probably give an explanation similar to the above. They essentially say that the doctrine of the Nicolaitans is the same as the doctrine of Balaam. We have trouble with this for three reasons:

1. Balaam means "not of the people"—not the same as "conqueror of the people."

2. If there were no significant difference between the Nicolaitan and Balaam doctrines, why would John have been inspired to use separate words? These are very specific messages about problems within the congregations. People cannot repent of an error unless they know what it is. Balaam's error is well documented in scripture (Num 31:16, 2Pet 2:15, Jude 11, Rev 2:14), and everyone agrees that Balaam deceived people to sin and depart from the truth. There is no explanation of the Nicolaitan doctrine in the Bible. One of the above reference works admits that

the connection to Nicholas in Acts is circumstantial. It appears that the nature of the Nicolaitan doctrine has been preserved in the meaning of the word.

3. Most "Bible scholars"—including Bible translators—support the traditional church government even though it is not in the Bible. Your last reference above mentions "Nicolaos, a deacon." The author probably knows better, but feels safe "keeping with tradition." What is the Greek word for "deacon"? *Diakonos*. What is the Greek word for "minister"? *Diakonos*. How do nearly all church congregations establish separate positions of "minister" and "deacon" when there is only one Greek word? These "offices" existed in the Church of England when the KJV Bible was translated. The translators were subject to King James who wanted to maintain traditional ecclesiastical control of the church. They arbitrarily wrote "deacon" some places and "minister" in other places and nearly every Bible translator has followed that lead. But if you ask a person that speaks Greek, he will tell you that there is no difference in the original text. The Greek *diakonos* is also translated "servant" a number of times—that is its real meaning. Where would traditional "church government" be with neither "ministers" nor "deacons" in the Bible?

Similarly, it is not surprising that we see Bible commentaries and helps ignoring the meaning of "Nicolaitan." Which church congregation would recommend a book that condemns their church government?

*Having gone through some really bad marriages, I understand the pain of having to submit to a harsh ruler. If I had been willing to leave the Church over government or because of harsh, unfair or even abusive treatment by ministers and brethren, I would have left the Worldwide Church of God twenty years ago. Or eighteen years ago. Or fifteen years ago. But I did not.*

It is good to suffer for righteousness sake, but not for our own mistakes (Matthew 5:10). I recently spoke with a Wisconsin man who had been studying his Bible in the 1970's and learned about the Sabbath and many other truths. I cannot remember who baptized him, but please remember that Herbert

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**"Nicolaitanism" from page 24**

Armstrong was baptized by a Baptist minister. Later he found out about the WCG correspondence course and took several lessons. When he asked for a visit from their ministry, he could not believe their arrogance—nothing like the "servants" described in the scriptures. Because he would not obey them, they stopped sending the correspondence course but he continued to study on his own. Others began to study with them and now they have a 100-person congregation which believes most of the same doctrines that you and I do. He considers members of the WCG and offshoots as brethren, but he told me that he was thankful that the Eternal spared him from all of that human government.

Also, I have spoken with a former head of the WCG ministry who admitted that there were members that were put out for completely unjust reasons and never welcomed back. Are these disfellowshipped people, or my Wisconsin friend going to be without reward because they were never a part of a certain corporation? Were there certain years when the Eternal required membership in a certain corporation? When did they begin? When did they end?

*I left the Worldwide Church of God because they wanted to take God's Plan of Salvation away from me and that was just too precious to lose. I see a core of ministers that have left that organization for the same reason I did. Some of these men have been hurt as much or more than I and others like me. In any case, they have all been humbled and have shown the incredible courage and strength of character to admit where they were wrong and have asked for a chance to rebuild and continue with God's work. They will make mistakes. They are human. But I don't want to refuse them this chance and by doing that, cut my own chances short.*

I am happy to see that you knew you could choose a different congregation when you felt the leaders of your former congregation were departing from the scriptures. I do not believe, however, that the WCG leaders could "take God's Plan of Salvation away" from you or anyone else. I believe there are still converted people in that organization—

some are mixed up about government and think they must wait for "God to clean it up." Others have seen that some of the changes are good and are still looking into the changes with which they disagree. Still others may know of no other Sabbath-keeping organization where they can attend and feel their local pastor is still feeding them.

There is only one spiritual organism, the Ekklesia, or "Church." However, as we see in Revelation 2 and 3, there are different groups that can vary greatly in their spiritual effectiveness and fruit that they bear—yet they are all part of His Body. We have to leave groups where good fruit cannot be born (2Ths 3:6, 1Tim 6:5). It is good to see several hundred leaders stand up in 1995 and change jobs to continue teaching the doctrines in which they believe. But we must not forget that 10,000's of brethren made a change before they did. Many of these brethren, by the power of the holy spirit—not by "top-down authority" saw the "new teaching" for what it was. If our congregations had not been structured in a top-down fashion, but along the line of the Synagogue government in which our Savior and the Apostles participated, these brethren could have stood up and refuted the non-Biblical teaching. We might have avoided some of the rending of congregations that occurred.

It is important that you realize the Messiah is our ultimate shepherd. He will "never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb 13:5). "Not that we [Paul and Timothy] have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand" (2Cor 1:24). This verse shows that it is a great help to have good leaders, but that they do not control our salvation. "...But the just shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4).

*The Biblical Bill of Rights is very short. We can choose life, Deut. 30:19. We can choose whom we will serve, Josh 24:15. We can choose whether to marry or remain single, 1 Cor 7:8. That's about it. But the rewards of choosing to go God's way are enormous.*

You have mentioned some Biblically-supported choices. We just need to read the Scriptures a little more to see how much our Great Father Offers us: "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14). We are told to ask

our Father (not the human leadership) for spiritual gifts (1Cor 12:31; 14:39). Are there any specific examples of "just members" making any "big decisions" in the congregation? "I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted [Greek tasso is usually translated "appointed"] themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1Cor 16:15). Apollos started teaching of his own accord (Acts 18:24-28).

I do not think that brethren should be continually boasting of their spiritual gifts and fighting for authority over each other. That is the way of Satan. Authority is to be used to help and serve others, not to gain for ourselves. If we have the power of the holy spirit in our lives, we have all the power we need. We do not have to put ourselves "over" other men.

The WCG did teach that God is testing us now to see if we will follow imperfect human authority—then He will know that we will follow His perfect authority. However the Bible does not teach that. It teaches we must "study to show ourselves approved" (2Tim 2:15) and "obey God rather than men"—even if they are (as the High Priest was) the recognized religious leaders of our day (Acts 5:17, 29).

Thank you for writing and reading.  
—Norman S. Edwards

**Traveling Teacher's Itinerary:**

Jim Rector will be traveling to visit scattered congregations and brethren this coming March. His planned itinerary at press time:

- 3/9 Albuquerque, New Mexico (Lon Lacey will be present, also).
- 3/12 Arizona (probably Cottonwood—schedule still being arranged.)
- 3/15 Las Vegas, Nevada, evening meeting.
- 3/16 Long Beach, California, afternoon meeting at the Ramada Inn.

Jim Rector has been teaching scattered brethren for a number of years through his cassette sermon and printed literature program. He has encouraged them to study the scriptures and be personally responsible for their spiritual growth. Anyone interested can call 903-792-1352.

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**“Letters” from page 20**

most radical elements of both persuasions. Norm, until later notice, [my wife] and I will no longer embrace or reject specific fellowships of our brethren to the exclusion of others. It’s that simple. If you find us fellowshiping with, financially supporting, defending, or collaborating with a group of our brethren and you take that as evidence that we reject another group of brethren, you would be incorrect. Hope that answers your question.”

Some issues simply present logistical problems for unity. Obviously, if people think that the Sabbath is on Sunday, then unity isn’t even a question. Church governance can separate a group if people can’t

agree on how to operate the group. Paul and Barnabas split up because of a contention they could not settle. Sometimes it has to be done, but it is better to work out grievances if possible. Even separate, Paul and Barnabas considered each other brethren.

“We should be studying all knowledge and truths, new or basic doctrine, and proving them from God’s Word” is easy to say, but it makes it sound like everything is black and white. However, there is much that isn’t black and white in God’s Word. We all understand God’s word from different perspectives and angles. Can we tolerate these differences? If we can, then we are a good ways toward achieving godly unity. I guess the message here could be

summed up in two words: tolerate and accommodate.

I feel that if you still love each other and treat each other with kindness and respect that that is a tremendous foundation on which to build. I feel very strongly that seeing eye to eye on every point without the foundation that you have is merely political oneness. Godly unity in this human realm does allow diversity. I would like your group to be strongly encouraged by your foundation and open willingness to allow the Word of God to direct your steps. Your group may have more godly unity than one may realize. It is okay if some come up with different conclusions.

—Norman A. Brumm, III

## Literature List

All items are free. New items are highlighted with shading. All back issues of *Servants’ News* are available.

### Mature Literature

- The Apple of God’s Eye** by Jim Rector, 13 pages. God’s love for us is far greater than we imagine and we often take it for granted.
- Assembling on the Sabbath** by Norman S. Edwards, 16 pages. An exposition of the scriptures regarding our need to fellowship on the Sabbath and how to do it.
- A Call to Arms** by Jim Rector, 16 pages. Lessons for today from Revelation 2-3 including the oppressive doctrine of the Nicolaitans and the doctrine of Balaam.
- Biblical Calendar Basics** by Norman S. Edwards, 10 pages. Introduction to the issues about the Biblical and Hebrew calendars (beginning of months, years, postponements etc.)
- Does the New Covenant Do Away with the Letter of the Law?** by Eric V. Snow. 32 pages. A “must read” for those who feel it does.
- Did Christ Reorganize the Church?** by Herbert W. Armstrong in 1939, 8 pages. Very different than his later approach: Christ never set up a hierarchical government.
- The Heart of the Matter** by Jim Rector, 31 pages. Our calling is to spiritual growth, not just attendance, socializing, politeness or legalism.
- How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?** by Norman S. Edwards, 34 pages. How the KJV translators altered Scriptures about government to please King James and an analysis of what the Bible says about how we should govern in today’s congregations.
- Just What Does the New Covenant Do?** by Joseph Chunko, 18 pages. Explanation of the difference between the law, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

- The Letter to the Galatians, a Paraphrase with Built-in Commentary** by John McCauley. 18 pages. Lively vernacular paraphrase with some notes on book of Galatians.
- The Worldwide Church of God Splits: Their Triumphs and Troubles** by Alan Ruth, 56 pages. Facts and analysis of the last 20 years of church history.

### Basic Literature

- The Bible Sabbath: Seventh Day or First Day?** (From the Bible Sabbath Association) 2 pages. Basic Sabbath tract.
- God’s Purpose for Your Life** by Fred McGovarin, 40 pages, half-size booklet. A “first booklet” for people just becoming interested in the Truth. It introduces Hebrew names (Yahweh and Yashua) for God and Jesus.
- The Resurrection of Christ—Is It a Fact?** by Don Hudgel. 2 page tract for those skeptical of the Bible & resurrection.

### Study Resources and Information

- Barnabas Ministries Mission Statement** by Alan Ruth. 2 pages.
- A Church of God Ministry Order Form** by Lon Lacey & friends. 1 page. Free literature on nature of God & Satan, Biblical law, prophecy, history, church government, etc.
- Commonwealth Publishing Order Form** by Kirk Gearhart. 6 pages. Religious books, including Darrell W. Condor’s.
- Friends of the Brethren Statement of Income and Expenses**, 2 pages. (Automatically sent to contributors)
- Giving and Sharing Order Form** by Richard Nickels. 3 pages. Has many excellent free items, low prices on hard-to-find religious books, and fine literature on floppy disk.
- History Research Projects Order Form** by Craig White. 6 pages. Hard-to-find books on the origins of nations.
- In Transition** One free sample issue of 16 page newspaper. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups.
- The Sabbath Sentinel** One free sample issue of 16 page glossy magazine—doctrinal & human interest articles. With Bible Sabbath Association order form: Sabbath books & tracts.

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