

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 7

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

August 1996

Dealing With Doctrinal Difference: Toleration, Separation or Forced Conversion?

This is a question that has been asked by Bible-believers for centuries. Many different answers have been offered—producing a great variety of results. The table at the bottom of this page summarizes those results. But what does the Bible say about it? How can we know when to tolerate other's beliefs, when to separate from them, and when (if ever)

we should try to force others to believe like we do?

Currently, this issue seems to be on the minds of many "Christians"—from the Pope in Rome, to the leaders of Protestant denominations, to the small "living room" congregations. The question is: If our Savior came preaching "one God" and "love your neighbor as

yourself", why can't we all get along? (Mark 12:31-33.)

For those seeking the Eternal with their whole heart, the answers do not always come easily. The Bible is a big book that contains much more than "love your neighbor." We now have 2000 years of sometimes doubtful copying, interpre-

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Three Ways of Dealing With Other Groups and Doctrinal

Group Purpose	1) Tolerate Others With Some Different Beliefs	2) Separate From Others With Different Beliefs	3) Force Others to Accept Your Beliefs
Groups seeking to promote and increase membership in a human organization usually make toleration/separation decisions for the wrong reasons:	Truth suffers when toleration is politically motivated. Invariably, some groups will be less diligent about following some biblical truths. Teaching sinks to the lowest common denominator of doctrines upon which nearly all groups already agree.	Politically motivated groups sometimes separate from other groups for self protection. Leaders may be afraid that their members will see truth, changed lives, or success in other groups and are fearful of losing members to them.	Throughout history, most persecutions and many wars have arisen from this "solution." Many millions have been killed and other millions forced to flee. Any "religious unity" achieved in this manner is always temporary.
Brethren seeking to live righteous lives, to learn from each other and to teach unbelievers, are more likely to make decisions for the right reasons:	Toleration allows more people to work together to share their spiritual gifts in caring for local congregations and preaching the Gospel. When the spirit is leading, people will learn truth from each other, rather than losing truth they already have.	The scripture mandates separation from people with a wrong spirit, who are openly sinning or who are continually teaching error. Separations are never joyful and the door should always be left open for reconciliation if necessary changes are made.	This combination should never happen. People that realize that most of true religion is personally doing right and rejecting evil must also realize that true religion cannot be forced on anyone.

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CHILDREN—the Forgotten Victims

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NEWS

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Servants' News is published monthly except for combined March/April and September/October issues. Subscriptions are free to people interested in obeying their Creator as described in the Bible. We believe His law is the basis for living a life pleasing to Him and living at peace 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, accept the salvation provided through our Savior and strive to live "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Deut 8:3).

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

In the past 25 years, the two largest Sabbatarian organizations in America—the Seventh Day Adventists and the Worldwide Church of God—have experienced a lot of turmoil. Many members and ministers felt they had to leave these organizations—or found themselves expelled involuntarily. Such folks have often found themselves ostracized by their former "brothers and sisters" still in the organization. Some have remained "unattached" to any organization after their experience, others have joined "offshoots" which reorganized outside the "parent" organization. For most, this has been a traumatic time in their lives. They had often built their whole lifestyle around their church and its activities.

While dealing with their own pain and confusion, both doctrinally and socially, many have forgotten to look closely within their own family to observe how all this has affected their children. Children are often the **forgotten victims** in all this. They probably do not understand all the doctrinal issues at hand that brought about the turmoil—but their lives are just as disrupted. They may have lost contact with many of their friends whose families are still in the organization. Their sense of security and order in their lives can suffer greatly. They may feel they have no one to talk to in order to "work through" their own confusion and grief.

If you have gone through one or more of these times of organizational turmoil, we urge you to take time to sit down with your children, listen to their thoughts and feelings about the situation, and reassure them as much as you are able.

We have one daughter, Ramona Leiter, age 25. She was only 7 years old when we were "disfellowshipped" from the Worldwide Church of God over issues of loyalty to church government. As a home-schooled child, **all** of her friends were in that organization except for a few neighborhood playmates. She lost **all** of those church friends. Ten years later, at age 17, it happened again, as we left the Church of God International. This time we weren't formally "disfellowshipped", but the effect was just the same. Those still in the organization wanted nothing to do with us if we were not going to remain loyal to it. So once again she was estranged from many friends.

Only recently did we think to talk to her in depth about her feelings during those difficult times. We asked her to write down some thoughts on her church experiences to share with parents and children who have been through the same experience—or are just now at that very point. Her whole story is posted on our Internet website (Worldwide Web address: <http://youall.com/oasis/>). Here are excerpts of two revealing comments she made about the events immediately surrounding our departure from the two organizations. Perhaps her feelings may reflect those of other children who have been through this trauma.

"As far as the events surrounding my parents leaving Worldwide [in 1978], I remember distinctly how it affected them emotionally (especially how depressed my mom was) and I remember listening to the phone conversations that provided behind-the-scenes information of what was going on at the headquarters at Pasadena—at age seven I could practically quote the latest scuttlebutt. And frankly I cannot say the actual leaving of the church distressed me personally, but the events leading up to it and the emotional drain on the family that lasted well over a year was certainly enough to bring an end to my innocence—this was nobody's fault for other things going on in my life (extended family and playmate problems) were also turning my little world upside down as well—not a happy time!

"...My feelings towards leaving [the CGI in 1988] were ones of relief. The previous few years had been filled —Continued on Page 4

God Works in Spite of...

Hierarchies

I Samuel 8 clearly shows that hierarchies are not God's choice or preference. Yet, what is the "rest of the story"?

Many of us are familiar with the story of the children of Israel when they were not content to be different from the surrounding nations in matters of governance. One of the last judges was a prophet by the name of Samuel. As he was getting up in years, he made his sons, Joel and Abijah, judges over Israel. As the story goes, his sons were corrupt. The people knew that and were not pleased with Samuel's sons. So they said to Samuel, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:1-5).

That request really bothered Samuel so he went to God about it. God told him, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them" (vs. 6-9).

God made a couple of things rather clear. First, Israel had been rejecting Yahweh and serving other gods ever since leaving Egypt. Secondly, their action of desiring a king and its associated hierarchy was simply another example of rejecting Yahweh and serving other gods—in other words, idolatry.

We know that the first is indeed the case by noticing that their history is summed up in the last verse of the book of Judges, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (21:25). Some church leaders have used this as proof that there should be a hierarchy. But those who do so are not being honest

with scripture or their audience. All that this scripture says is that they were rejecting God and his instruction and doing what they thought was right. Later, when the hierarchy was firmly established, we find most of the people were still evil—usually because they were following an evil king.

As ancient Israel wanted a visible man to be their king (under God, of course); so some modern-day brethren want a visible man to be "head of their church" (under God, of course). It may be hard for them to believe that an invisible God can achieve his purpose working separately through thousands of human beings. It is also much easier to please (and to manipulate) a human than it is God. So today, we hear people saying "we have to all get behind one man so a work can be done."

Regarding Israel's wishes, God did tell Samuel to grant their request along with many warnings (I Sam 8:10-17). We need not elaborate on all of these warnings, but one does need to consider them all in conjunction with any known hierarchies, be they national or religious. Once the oppression and corruption becomes widespread, the final warning is significant, being, "And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day" (v. 18).

In other words, **once they reaped the consequences of the hierarchy, he will not hear them** no matter how loudly they cry out, proclaim fasts or whatever else they, or we, may do. Nevertheless, Israel wanted a king. So God said, "Heed their voice, and make them a king" (v. 22).

God does let us do what is right in our own eyes, doesn't he? He tells us what is good and what is bad. He then leaves it up to us to determine if we are going to listen, learn and do what is pleasing to him. So, in our religious

and church life, what if we choose some of the bad things, like hierarchy (idolatry) for instance? Does he abandon us and no longer work with us?

"The Rest of the Story"

Once you choose a hierarchy does God leave you to whatever end you achieve? The answer is: Yes and No—it depends. We need to continue with the rest of the story of Samuel, Israel and the setting up of the king (idolatry) in I Samuel 12.

"Now Samuel said to all Israel: "Indeed I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you" (v. 1). Samuel then proceeds to witness against the people that he partook not in any of the politics that a hierarchy will typically do. The people confirmed his statements. Samuel then explained that it was Yahweh and not some king who delivered Israel from Egypt and many other enemies. The reason deliverance was needed each time was because "they forgot the LORD their God" (vs. 2-9). Now that the Ammonites had just been on their doorstep, they wanted a human king instead of their divine king (vs. 10-12).

"Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the LORD has set a king over you" (v. 13). God has given them the hierarchy they wanted. So, does God work through hierarchies even though it is a form of idolatry? The following two verses describe the Yes and No part.

"If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against

your fathers" (vs. 14-15).

No matter what we choose to do in our lives, it all boils down to one thing, doesn't it? We must always obey God and his commandments, for if we don't, he will be against us. It is very important to note in the above verses that obedience to a hierarchy **does not replace** obedience to God. People are accountable for doing what is right, whether the hierarchy is preaching truth or not. **Granted, a hierarchy is not pleasing to God, but if that's what you find yourself in, you can still be worked with by God.** He will work with you in spite of any hierarchies provided you are not caught up in its idolatries. However, once the hierarchy you are involved with starts participating in taking, cheating, oppressing and bribes, i.e., universal corruption (see v. 3), God will be against it.

Today, we have a choice whether we will associate with a hierarchy or not. If a certain system that you are involved with is hierarchical and you don't see it that way, it would stand to reason that God will continue to work with you. It should be the same even if you know its hierarchical nature but feel that it does not disobey the voice of God and rebel against his commandments. There may be a number of factors that influence whether or not you work within a hierarchical system. In some cases, it may be the only Sabbath fellowship available or it may be the only place that other family members agree to go. But if you know that a hierarchical system is largely corrupt, you should definitely leave, for God will be against it.

How long will it take for God to take definitive action against such a corrupt hierarchy? The northern kingdom of Israel was sent into captivity more than

200 years after their first unrighteous king. The southern kingdom of Judah lasted over 300 years before going into captivity. In the meantime, God did send prophets with messages of fearing, serving and obeying God. Just because he is patient and long-suffering doesn't mean that he is not against it.

Even though God said he would not forsake the Israelites if they and their hierarchy continued to obey him, the message regarding hierarchies is quite clear. Notice the conclusion to this matter. Samuel showed the people an extremely unusual miracle to show that God was indeed speaking through him. The people, realizing the situation said, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves" (v. 19). They knew that it was evil and a sin to have asked for a king. Samuel confirmed that with a stern warning, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.... For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people" (v. 20, 22).

Yes, hierarchies are evil and a sin for it is strictly a form of idolatry. But because God is jealous for his name's sake and extends to us much mercy, he will tolerate and still work with and through us in spite of even seemingly good hierarchies that choose to put away corruption and seek to fear, serve and obey him.

We are given vivid examples of three men, Saul, David and Solomon, who, while specifically chosen by God, fell to the clutches of the evils and corruption of hierarchies. It appears that

only David was able to repent of his part of the evil. God will continue to use whatever is at his disposal to effect his will, whether it is Satan, a heathen nation or even an idolatrous hierarchy.

What is Our Duty?

So, for those of us who are part of the church of God, but not aligned with any human organization, what is our duty regarding hierarchies and the people who follow them? What was Samuel's reply regarding his part in all of this? "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you" (vs. 23-24). Samuel's part was to not forsake them as well. In fact, he was to pray for them and continue to instruct them.

We, like Samuel, also, need to set the example of a righteous life and to pray for those following hierarchies and, as time and place allows, instruct them as to the good and the right way, including the Bible teaching on the subject of hierarchies. We, of course, need to do more than just preach "the gospel of anti-hierarchy". We need to bear spiritual fruit of our own, otherwise, why should anyone heed us? Once they see that God does work and that much fruit is born outside of a hierarchy, they will be able to make the right decision for themselves.

Yes, God does still work where he chooses in spite of hierarchies, but he does conclude with a strong warning which applies to all of us: "But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king" (v. 25).

—Norman A. Brumm, III

"Children" from page 2

with disappointments and politics and backstabbing. To finally be rid of all that was very liberating. I also felt more free in my relationship with the Lord- and perhaps held myself accountable for my walk with the Lord."

In Matthew 18:6, Jesus spoke to His disciples about the small child He sat in their midst:

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone

were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

The word translated "offend" here implies the act of causing a person "to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey." Unfortunately, many children and teens are **so traumatized by** the confusion in many of the Churches of God in recent years that they are turned off—not only to "organized religion," but to the idea of even caring about God and the way of life of the Bible. Leaders of church organizations may have much more to answer

for in the judgement than they know! Let's be sure as parents **we** do not offend our little ones during these times of trial. We can't shield them from disappointments, but we can help them understand that their pain is not caused by God but by human decisions and fallibility.

If you realize that you have not really done all you could to understand how the events in your life may have affected your children, take time right now to begin talking—and really **lis-**

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We print the following letter from Wesley B. Webster to the Global Church of God (GCG) because it is a specific, real example of the kind of difficulty that occurs in hierarchical organizations. We are not trying to single out any one organization or individual as any more or less righteous than any other. We have knowledge of similar occurrences in a great variety of organizations, but this one is particularly well documented. We probably do not agree with all of Webster's doctrinal positions, but his **specific reason for resigning** is a very real problem that affects thousands of brethren in nearly every hierarchical organization.

Mr Webster did not resign from the GCG because he spent many hours discussing the Scriptures with the leadership and they could not come to a resolution. To the contrary, he had a hard time starting any meaningful doctrinal discussions with his organizations' headquarters. When he did find someone to talk about it, he often felt like he was simply being appeased. If a minister, a man paid to teach truth by his organization, has this much trouble with doctrinal questions, how much trouble will a "less important" member have?

In short, Webster resigned because "church doctrine" seemed to be far more important than the Bible. Yet most hierarchical organizations claim that their

Resignation Exposes Hierarchical Problem

doctrines come right out of the Bible. Why does this problem occur? Why aren't the organizations anxious to discuss any serious doctrinal differences so they can help people see their error or so they may correct or improve their organization's teaching?

Unfortunately, nearly all hierarchical organizations believe that truth comes into "the church" from the "top"—through the organization's leader. Yet, the organization's leader is often too busy administrating, speaking, writing, and/or broadcasting to have much time for in-depth Bible study. Headquarters personnel "under him" are not at liberty to admit that someone else might have discovered some truth, until the leader approves it. So letters to headquarters with obvious error get answered; but the ones that might contain new Biblical knowledge wait, and wait... and wait. And the writers are expected to remain silent about what they have learned.

The problem is further complicated by the common hierarchical organization belief that "God works primarily through us." The reasoning goes like

this: "Since we are the true Church of God, then our doctrines must be acceptable to Him and are probably nearly all correct." With such a belief, it

seems more important to teach existing doctrine than it does to Biblically support it. But if you would ask a group how they **know** that they are the true church of God, they might answer that they "are the group who is 'doing the work' and has all the correct Biblical doctrines."

The truth is that we will be individually judged by our words and deeds (Matt 12:36, Rom 2:6). Some doctrinal issues, such as the state of the Earth before Adam and Eve were created, are mostly academic. We should be able to get along with brethren who have widely differing views of these kinds of issues. Other doctrines affect how we live on a daily basis. We must realize that there is no scripture that excuses our sins simply because we were following our organization's doctrinal statement or our leader's teaching. We are responsible for our understanding of the scriptures "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (Jms 4:17). Organizations who do not have time to study a doctrinal issue would be better off to quote this verse, than to tell brethren to "follow them" and receive a "stricter judgment" (Jms 3:1).

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August 11, 1996

"as taught by Herbert Armstrong prior to 1986." When I first heard Carl McNair make this statement as the position of Global, I was greatly disappointed because when I joined Global, the issue was not Herbert Armstrong; the issue was the truth of God's Word. My commitment as a minister of Jesus Christ is to teach the doctrines as they are in the Bible. The truth of God's word does not need any support from man, it is the authoritative Word of God. When I joined Global, I believed the organization was committed to making the Bible the foundation of all its beliefs. Prior to joining the Global's ministry, I discussed some doctrinal concerns I had to make sure past errors would not be continued in this organization. These errors included the teaching that Interracial Marriage was a sin, and that there was such thing as "physical sin."

Dear Dr. Meredith:

Please accept my resignation from the Global Church of God. I herewith resign from all positions I currently hold in the Global Church of God in this country and in Guyana, Trinidad and Barbados, including my membership in any corporate structures of the Global Church of God.

I submit my resignation at this time because I now see that Global will not submit to the truth of the Bible in all situations. In Global, there is too much emphasis on what Herbert Armstrong said in contrast to emphasizing what the word of God says. The booklet "When Should You Follow Church Government" is a classic example of this point. The booklet is 45 pages in length, and Mr. Armstrong's name is mentioned 62 times. From this, one clearly gathers that Mr. Armstrong's words are thought of as authoritative in Global and esteemed liked the words of Christ.

I did not join the Global Church of God to preach the doctrines

When I spoke to you on the phone, I was given the assurance that these false teachings would not be continued in Global. However, I now feel your verbal assurances were aimed at appeasing me, more than a sincere agreement with my position. I have submitted papers to Global on interracial marriage and the doctrine of physical sin. I have also submitted papers on whether or not Herbert Armstrong was the end time Elijah, and the meaning of being born again. Global has never seen fit to send me a personal written response to any of

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tation, translation, and history that we must use to understand the originally inspired writing. The Hebrew and Greek of the original writings is not the same language as the Hebrew and Greek of today. Linguistic scientists and archeologists continue to bring us new, relevant information about what these ancient texts meant. But the information is so vast that no one can know it all. From all of this, doctrinal disagreements arise.

We have the promise of the holy spirit leading us into truth (John 14:26, 16:13; 1Cor 2:10; 1Jn 2:27). We also have the warning of many false spirits that are "not of God" (1Tim 4:1; 2Tim 3:13; 1Jn 4:1; 2Jn 7). For every teacher claiming to teach a certain truth revealed by the holy spirit, it seems that there are several others teaching it differently—also claiming revelation by the holy spirit. We can be personally convicted of truth taught to us by the holy spirit, but if we are to expound this knowledge to others, we must be able to show that it agrees with scripture. When we listen to the teaching of others, we must check it against the scriptures (Deut 13:1-3; Isa 8:20; 2Tim 3:15-17).

Again, we are back to the technical problems of understanding exactly what the Bible says. For example, no matter how "filled with the spirit" a person is, he or she cannot justify keeping Easter based on Acts 12:4 (KJV) since the Greek word there clearly means "Passover." Yet many sincere people unknowingly make that mistake. But most doctrinal controversies are much more complex than this one. With this background, it is not amazing to see such great doctrinal diversity among so many people who all claim to be diligently searching for the truth.

We simply do not have access to the original 12 apostles or other witnesses who learned directly from our Savior. We cannot ask them what they meant when they wrote this or that scripture. While many human organizations claim to be a continuation of the apostolic church and therefore "have the truth," the history of every one of these organizations will show that they have made some changes in their beliefs. If they will admit to errors in the past, how can they assure us that they have no errors now?

We are each individually responsible for verifying each "truth" that we learn in the pages of the Bible. Whether we learn truth directly from the holy spirit, from a converted friend, or from a ministry of some nature, we are still responsible for verifying it in the Bible. There is so much

to learn, that all brethren are not going to learn and study the same things at the same time. We must realize that growing in grace and knowledge takes time and that some are going to be stronger than others in that process (Rom 15:1).

So, how should we deal with doctrinal diversity? Should we fellowship with just any people who believe in the Bible or call themselves Christian? Should we join a big ecumenical movement? Should we diligently seek the truth while shunning everyone who does not believe exactly like we do? Or, should we try to force others to see the truth as we see it?

Can People Be Forced Into Faith?

While we might laugh at the idea of forcing people to believe, it is amazing how many people are unaware that this has been the major method of dealing with doctrinal difference throughout history.

Even since Constantine made "Christianity" the Roman state religion in the 300's AD, a variety of temporal governments have made their military and economic resources available to enforce Roman Catholic doctrine. From the late 1100's until well into the 1800's, the Roman Catholic "Inquisition" continued with varying degrees of viciousness. People were killed, tortured, banished, or stripped of material possessions in an effort to stamp out "heresy." The death toll runs into the millions, yet the Roman Church has never issued an apology. The offices of the inquisition (located in the Palace of Inquisition adjacent to the Vatican) have continuously existed to this day, though renamed in 1967 to "Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith."

A great many people escaped the Inquisition and gained a certain amount of religious freedom by joining one of the groups spawned by the protestant reformation of the 1500's. But only a few years later those groups often persecuted Sabbatarians, fundamentalists, Jews and other "independents." One such group, the Puritans, fled to North America to escape persecution by the Church of England. They went on to persecute everyone who was not a Puritan.

Even to this day, there are some religious groups in the Western world who believe God wants them to enforce their beliefs on others. A lot of this thinking comes from the false idea that we are to implement a physical Kingdom of God now. Some try to do it via legislation and economic pressure, others secretly attempt to catch, try, convict, and stone-to death witches, adulterers, homosexuals and oth-

ers. While these groups are few and far between, brethren need to be very careful to avoid them—some actually keep the Sabbath and the holy days and, to the outside world, might look very similar to us.

These persecutors often justify their actions based on the punishments administered under Moses or on beatings and hair-pulling by Nehemiah for breaking the Sabbath and marrying foreign women (Neh 13). They also used scriptures showing where righteous ways will be enforced in the Millennium (Isa 2:4, 11:9, 45:23; Zech 14:18). However, **they fail to note that our Savior never gave any command to his disciples to force his teaching on others.** Rather, He said that the Father had to draw people and they would willingly come (John 6:37,44). He said that his servants would not fight, but angels would deliver them when necessary (John 18:36; Matt 26:51-54; Acts 5:19; 12:11;). If a brother has a grievance against others that cannot be settled within the congregation, the only recourse is separation from the congregation—not to physically punish him or her (Mat 18:15-17).

Can People Be Tricked Into Truth?

The very idea of "tricking people into truth" sounds contradictory, but we can find examples of religions attempting to deceive people in order to gain or retain members. This idea is in some ways better and in some ways worse than forcing people. It is better than forcing people in that people can recognize the deception and leave it without being executed. It is more sinister than forcing, in that people might accept a lie thinking that they are accepting truth. Certainly the Eternal does not want anyone tricked into following him, but wants us to seek him with our whole heart (Deut 4:29).

Members of the Worldwide Church of God over the last 10 years may remember how changes were introduced slowly so people would not notice. For years they taught that God was a family, consisting of a Father and Son, and worked through the power of the holy spirit. Little by little, things began to change: the "oneness of the Godhead" was emphasized more; Jesus was declared to be 100% man and 100% God; they said they would no longer denounce the Trinity doctrine as "pagan"; then they said God "has a family" not "is a family"; then they began to say that the Father and Son were separate but still "one"; then they decided to call the Father and Son hypostasies; then it was discovered that the holy spirit talked sometimes and

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Choosing Music for Group Worship:

When brethren from differing backgrounds begin to fellowship with each other, finding music that everyone knows and/or likes becomes a difficult task. It is even harder at annual Festivals when brethren come together from a greater variety of past experience.

The following questions and answers should help make music a blessing rather than a point of division in our meetings.

Q: Shouldn't we just sing the Psalms of the Bible, rather than contemporary songs composed by others?

A: Paul admonished the Ephesians and the Colossians to rejoice with "Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual songs." [Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16] It is hard to know exactly how he defined these three types of music, but obviously they were singing more than just the Old Testament Psalms. And it is likely that "spiritual songs" were more contemporary pieces of music created by the believers themselves. If we limit ourselves only to the Psalms, the name of our Savior, which will be proclaimed in great choirs in heaven as seen in the Book of Revelation, will have little place in our worship music.

Q: Wouldn't that problem be resolved by just putting the words of the New Testament to music?

A: This would certainly be a very good idea. In fact, there are many such songs available. But if we even limit our songs to just the whole Bible, are we not ignoring the five commands to sing new songs to the Eternal? (Pslm 33:3, 96:1, 98:1, 149:1; Isa 42:10.) Our Father is continuing to do great deeds for which we should praise him. It is still wonderful to praise Him for opening the Red Sea for the ancient Israelites. It is wonderful to tell about the life of Jesus. But Jesus is still alive, and still rescuing people! The Lord deserves to also be praised in song for

what He is doing now. **Q: Must we judge the spiritual and doctrinal standing of composers before we use their words or music? Can God inspire music and words in the mind of someone who does not embrace all the doctrines we hold dear?**

A: The translators of the King James Bible were Anglican theologians. They kept neither the Sabbath nor the Biblical Holy Days... and they were staunch trinitarians! Yet most Sabbatarians consider this translation to be inspired and preserved by God. If we can believe He inspired the translation of the Scriptures by non-Sabbath-keepers, can we believe that He can inspire similar people to write simple praise and worship words and music?

There are accounts in the Old Testament of non-Israelites who praised God in truth. Look at the eloquent words of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:1-3:

Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

Even in modern times, many members of the Worldwide Church of God have loved the music composed by Mr. Dwight Armstrong. Yet Dwight Armstrong was never a member of his brother Herbert's denomination, never accepted all the doctrines held dear by that church. He was simply commissioned by his brother to compose music.

In light of this, it would seem more sensible to evaluate hymns and spiritual

songs on their own merits, rather than try to get into the mind and heart of their composers. Is the message of the song true and Biblically accurate? Does the music itself also uplift and inspire? Then you might want to consider including it.

Q: Must we avoid any music used and appreciated by those in denominations which have doctrines we don't accept, so that we don't "imitate" them in error?

A: Again, most of these same denominations use and revere the King James Bible. They also use many other translations, concordances and other Bible helps that we use. This fact does not prevent us from using those same works. Also, most of these groups actually **do** preach many **true** doctrines. We do not avoid preaching truth just because they do, too! Why avoid true lyrics that are in songs they may use? The real issue should be the **message** of the song. **Of course** we should avoid any lyrics that perpetuate the doctrinal errors we see in those denominations.

Q: What if singing even certain doctrinally correct songs brings up memories of one's past participation in false religious practices, and defiles the conscience?

A: This is an entirely different issue. In this case the individual must make a personal evaluation of his own circumstances, and act accordingly. But it would be good to remember the tolerance admonished by Paul among those who have different standards in some areas. For instance, vegetarians and meat eaters are encouraged to respect each other's decision (Rom 14).

If a song defiles your conscience, then don't sing it. But try not to judge the hearts or motives of those whose consciences it **doesn't** defile. If the person standing next to you refuses to sing a song, do not judge him for his decision either!

Q: Should a group decide not to sing any songs that might make one or more members uncomfortable?

A: This needs to be prayerfully considered.
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therefore might not be an impersonal force (my telephone answering machine talks, I wonder if its a hypostasis); and then, after several more announcements and a couple of rewrites of their *God IS ...* booklet, they were teaching the Trinity doctrine in much the same way that other Protestant churches do.

When WCG members asked their leaders for reassurance that they were not becoming Protestants, they were sometimes told that these statements were not really "changes," but "clarifications" of what the church had always believed. Michael Feazel and the other men who introduced these incremental changes had degrees from Protestant theological institutions and were well acquainted with the Trinity doctrine when they started their changes. We have a hard time believing that they did not know where they were going when they set out. Thousands of people gradually accepted the Trinity doctrine from that teaching.

A much larger scale act of trickery seems to be going on right now. On May 25, 1995, Pope John Paul II published his Encyclical entitled *Ut Unum Sint* or "That They May Be One." It is a 103-section document that addresses the issue of the Ecumenical movement—unity with other Christian groups. While most of the document is a lot of nice-sounding words, the ultimate goal is unity for all Christians. Quoting from the Papal Encyclical:

...In recent times, he [the Lord of Ages] has begun to bestow more generously upon divided Christians remorse over their divisions and a longing for unity. Everywhere, large numbers have felt the impulse of this grace, and among our separated brethren also *there increases from day to day a movement, fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the restoration of unity among all Christians.* Taking part in this movement, which is called ecumenical, are those who invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior... (sec 7)

...In effect, this unity bestowed by the Holy Spirit does not merely consist in the gathering of people as a collection of individuals. It is a unity constituted by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments and hierarchical communion.... To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the [Catholic] Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan for all eter-

nity... (sec 9).

It is very clear that this unity is not going to be some new religious organization made up of all the others, but it will be a process where other Christians rejoin the Catholic Church:

...The [Second Vatican] Council states that the Church of Christ "subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with

If over 90% of the Sunday-keeping Trinitarian churches form a politically active alliance, what persecution might be brought upon Sabbath-keepers and non-Trinitarians?

him," and at the same time acknowledges that "many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside her visible structure. these elements, however, as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism towards Catholic Unity... (Sec 10).

Do the Catholics plan to alter their doctrines to make them more acceptable to the other Christian groups? Will they require the other groups to accept the authority of the Pope? We again quote the Papal Encyclical:

...Here is not a question of altering the deposit of faith [accumulated Catholic doctrine], changing the meaning of dogmas, eliminating essential words from them, accommodating truth to the preferences of a particular age, or suppressing certain articles of the *Creed* under the false pretext that they are no longer understood today. The unity willed by God can be attained only by the adherence of all to the content of revealed faith in its entirety... (sec 18).

The Catholic Church, both in her *praxis* and in her solemn documents, holds that the communion of the particular Churches with the Church of Rome, and of their Bishops with the Bishop of Rome, is—in God's plan—an essential requisite of full and visible communion. Indeed full communion, of which the Eucharist is the highest sacramental manifestation, needs to be visibly expressed in a ministry in which all the Bishops recognize that they are united in Christ and all the faithful find confirmation for their faith. The first part

of the Acts of the Apostles presents Peter as the one who speaks in the name of the apostolic group and who serves the unity of the community all the while respecting the authority of James, the head of the Church in Jerusalem. This function of Peter must continue in the Church so that under her sole Head, who is Jesus Christ, she may be visibly present in the world as the communion of all his disciples.

Do not many of those involved in ecumenism today feel a need for such a ministry?... (sec 97.)

The last quotation has slightly obscure language, but the "ministry" that ecumenicalists supposedly "feel a need for" is the need for a leader over them all—the Pope.

Obviously, the Protestant groups want nothing to do with this, right? Wrong! Many groups seem to be latching on to the 90+ nice-sounding sections and ignoring the sections we quoted. On March 29, 1994 a joint document was published, entitled *Evangelicals and Catholics Together, The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium*. The document was endorsed immediately by Pat Robertson, Charles Colson, and a number of other American evangelicals. Jack Van Impe, other televangelists and leaders of other evangelical groups have endorsed it since. While the document contains many good paragraphs about opposing abortion, pornography, new-age movements, and general Godlessness in society, it also makes it clear that supporters shall no longer proselyte (try to win converts from) each other's congregations. (During the last 50 years, Catholics have lost a lot of members to evangelical organizations, whereas the reverse is not true.) While the document stated that it did not begin to resolve their doctrinal disputes, it did list some of them in rather mild language. But if resolution is to come, how it will come is clear:

...Evangelicals hold that the Catholic Church has gone beyond Scripture, adding teachings and practices that detract from or compromise the Gospel of God's saving grace in Christ. Catholics, in turn, hold that such teachings and practices are grounded in Scripture and belong to the fullness of God's revelation. Their rejection, Catholics say, results in a truncated and reduced understanding of the Christian reality (sec III, second to last paragraph).

While this document on the surface seems to give the evangelicals help in their crusade against the Godless, secular influences in the world, it is also a big step

closer to a single, state-supported "Christian" religion. If over 90% of the Sunday-keeping, Trinitarian churches form a politically active alliance, what persecution might be brought upon Sabbath-keepers and non-Trinitarians?

While many members of the Catholic and the Evangelical churches will have a certain amount of increased peace and harmony because of the Ecumenical movement, there is no doubt that the end of this matter will be in favor of the Catholic leadership. In our mind, there is no question that the above documents were written to help stop the "conversion" of Catholics to other branches of Christianity and to prepare for an eventual "Christian merger"—back to the Catholic fold. Some people will probably be tricked into believing that there is no significant difference between Catholicism and Evangelicalism (or between Catholicism and plain Bible teaching).

Should Everyone Tolerate Everything Everywhere?

We have seen the errors of trying to force or "trick" people into believing a certain way. Should we take the opposite approach and simply assemble with everyone who calls themselves "Christian?"

When the Apostle Paul traveled to preach the Gospel, he seemed to be willing to speak almost anywhere: at synagogues, at schools, to angry mobs, to pagan assemblies, etc. His policy was to "become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some (1Cor 9:22). While he obviously kept the Sabbath, there is no doubt that he spoke on other days as well. However, he was doing this in his role as an apostle—reaching out to teach others. We are not all apostles (1Cor 12:29). The scriptures do recommend certain standards for fellowship:

So there remains a Sabbath-keeping for God's people (Heb 4:9, JNT)

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.... Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed (2Jn 7,9-10, KJV).

It is essential that brethren meet on the Sabbath and that they believe that our Savior lived his life as a human. Obviously, it would be difficult to meet

with people who cannot agree on which day to meet! Furthermore, if people do not understand the basic nature of the sacrifice of our Savior, little can be accomplished.

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself (1Tim 6:3-5).

We cannot meet with people who continually argue about things. If there is too much emphasis on arguments and not enough on good things, then our fellowship suffers. Also, we should not meet with someone who is trying to get rich from his religion. Obviously, this would apply to someone who is coming to a congregation for the purpose of recruiting customers or employees. Might it also apply to religious leaders that insist on living like kings? It is important to note that we may not be able to remove these people from our group, instead we may have to "withdraw ourselves."

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you (2Thes 3:6-8).

These verses carry a very similar message to those in Timothy. You cannot meet with people in a contentious spirit, or that seem to be interested primarily in money.

For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And **from such people turn away!** For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of

the truth (2Tim 3:2-7).

This verse says that we should not meet with people who are obviously unrighteous and do not really believe in the power of their religion. The examples in 1Cor 5:1-13, Matt 18:15-17, Eph 5:11, and other places show that people continuing to live in open sin must be asked to leave our congregations.

Finally, we find a lot of information for how to conduct our services and use spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 through 14. It will be difficult for people to meet together on a regular basis if they do not agree to conduct services according to this manner. Unfortunately, too many congregations still copy the "top down" Catholic-Protestant form of service, rather than the participative synagogue form used in the first century.

In summary, if some people are causing the work of a congregation to be ineffective and the problem cannot be resolved by talking about it, then it is probably necessary to break up a congregation. Sometimes, people create unresolvable problems so they can separate and "get a piece of the congregation for themselves." Even if they fool the people into believing their disagreement is genuine, they will not fool the Great Righteous Judge. Their deeds will not go unpunished.

What Differences Can We Tolerate?

The scriptures contain no long list of doctrines that we must accept in order to be considered brethren. Hebrews 6:1-2 contains 6 doctrines which nearly all Bible-believers accept, though their application may vary. Many of the doctrines that currently divide Sabbath-keepers do not have to. The nature of the Father and his Son, the Biblical calendar, the time of Passover and Pentecost, and a host of other issues do not need to divide brethren. They may need to keep holy days at different times, but they can still meet together on the Sabbath. We must realize that we are a long way removed from the first century when there were apostles and many others who were directly trained by our Messiah.

Today, many groups think they must hold all doctrines in common in order to fellowship. (Often, anyone who believes differently than they do is considered to be "in error" and is therefore "Laodicean" or "unconverted"). But we have clear examples of a few doctrinal differences in the New Testament, and we never find congregations dividing over the issue.

In Acts 15, some brethren believed it was necessary to circumcise Gentiles after

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Go To The Feast

In Leviticus 23, the Eternal talks about his Sabbaths. He starts with the weekly Sabbath and then includes the seven annual Sabbaths: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles and others. The Feast of Tabernacles is just a few weeks away. Let us see what the Eternal says about it:

Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, (Lev 23:39-42).

There are certainly many concerns involved with Feast attendance: time off from work, children missing school, family members that do not attend. But our Father is strong enough to provide for his people. The ancient Israelites had concerns, too. If they all went to the Feast, could the other nations come and plunder their farms and homes?

For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; **neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year** (Ex 34:24).

If ancient Israel could have faith they would be protected from invading armies, we should have faith that we can receive protection from bosses, school administrators, and family members. Studying and striving to learn and do the Eternal's will is the most important thing in our lives. We must not make our decisions based on pleasing ourselves, our work-mates or the members of our congregation. Nor should we take this decision lightly. If we seek our Father, His holy spirit will lead us in the way that we should go.

—L. G. Goff & Norman Edwards

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the manner of Moses in order for them to have salvation. We could compare this to some teaching today where people say it is necessary to keep Passover according to their standard in order to have salvation. These are **not** unimportant issues. Yet the people were meeting together in spite of their difference on circumcision. Even years later there were people who did not accept this Jerusalem decision but were still meeting with the others (Tit 1:10).

The issue of whether or not to eat meat that had been offered to idols was also a "hot one" of the day. The people were very concerned about violating the second commandment. In Acts 15:29 they asked the Gentiles not to eat such meat, but in 1 Corinthians 8 Paul says idols are really nothing and it is all right as long as it does not offend others. There is no mention of separate meetings or not considering each other brethren. How many groups are separate today because they consider another group's symbols, practices or name for the Father or Son to be idolatrous? It may be that the Eternal would prefer that they change, but their error is in ignorance. We can still do what we know to be right and can still fellowship with them—we will be judged for our own actions, not for theirs.

Romans 14 covers a dispute over whether people should eat meat at all. This, again, is a big issue that would come up every time the congregation had a meal together. Some people obviously believed it was wrong to eat meat. Paul could have told them the truth of the matter and insisted that they have "unity" on this point, but he told them to respect each other's differences.

We do not even need to agree on use of money in order to meet together. Paul worked with the Corinthians even though he did not accept any money from them (1Cor 9:18, 2Cor 11:8).

We should not tolerate different doctrinal beliefs because truth is relative or because one idea is as good as another. We tolerate diverse doctrines because we know that we are not all at the same point in understanding and because it is important that "each be fully convinced in his own mind." For example: if we believe the scriptures indicate it is wrong for us to eat at a restaurant on the Sabbath when other arrangements are possible, knowing other Sabbath-keepers do it does not make it "right" for us to do.

The advantage of tolerating a diversity of doctrines is that it increases the number of people with which to fellowship and

congregations can be more local. If there are 200 Sabbath-keepers in a small state, but they are divided up into 20 groups, there will be only about 10 members in each group and brethren will have to drive all over the state for services each Sabbath. If there were only two groups, each group could have four different meeting places in the state and there would still be about 25 people in each group. Sabbath driving time would be greatly reduced and a much better nucleus of spiritual gifts would be available in each group.

If you feel you must separate, it should not be because "we believe this and they believe that." You should be able to state some tangible, practical benefit of separation. As an example, supposing there are a group of believers in an area, but half of them speak English and half of them speak Spanish and their translator has moved away and the Eternal has not granted them the gift of tongues. Splitting the group will allow everyone to understand all of each service, rather than requiring people to sit through talking that they do not understand. It will be a much better environment in which to invite new people. They will be able to understand all of the service, too.

Conclusion

We should be joyful to live in a time when others do not try to force their religion on us—it may not always be this way. We need to be on guard, however, for those who might try to trick us into accepting beliefs not based on the Scripture. Obviously, we should not use forceful or deceitful methods ourselves. We need to "work while it is day" (John 9:4). There are so many people who need to be reached with the basic message of the Bible that we must not let ourselves be consumed with divisions over complex doctrines. We should tolerate other's doctrines so we can work together and learn from each other, not so we can be personally lax or unfaithful to our understanding of the Scripture. If we must separate from other brethren, it should be for the benefit of all involved, not to grab power for a few. These decisions require wisdom.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.... But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy (Jms 1:5, 3:17).

—Norman S. Edwards

Local Congregations



FRIENDS OF THE SABBATH UNLEASHED IN AUSTRALIA!

A report on the Friends of the Sabbath conference held in Sydney, Australia, 5-8 July 1996

It was all over in a flash! All the hard work, sweat, trials and energy paid off for the first ever inter-Sabbatarian conference to be held in Australia as well as the first ever Friends of the Sabbath to be held outside of the USA. The Friday night session was held in the Chatswood Seventh Day Adventist Church with almost 300 in attendance. The rest of the conference was held in the Revesby Workers' Club. Attendance on the Sabbath was about 330; on the Sunday about 270; and 170 on the Monday (a surprise for a work day as we expected only about 80 to turn up).

There were presentations by 16 speakers, the keynote speaker being Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, Professor of History and Theology at Andrews University. Other speakers were Richard Nickels, President of the Bible Sabbath Association; John Merritt, founder of Friends of the Sabbath; Larry Walker, pastor of a UCG congregation in the USA and proponent of inter-Sabbatarian dialogue; David Currie, one of the Presidents of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Australia; Bruce Dean, pastor of the Sydney-Wollongong UCG congregation and David Hill, President of the Seventh Day Baptists in Australia. All-in-all, they represented about 7 different Sabbatarian denominations.

Topics included "I call you friends" by Larry Walker; "The Bible Sabbath Association and Giving & Sharing" by Richard Nickels; "The Seventh Day Men" by Leon Lyell; "From Sunday to Sabbath" by Dan Gayman; "Britain's Sabbath Keeping Celtic Church" by David Currie; "How I came to accept the Holy Days" by Dr Bacchiocchi; "Holy Day Parallels" by David Hill and "200 Years of Sabbath keeping in Australia"

by Bruce Dean.

Dan Gayman's talks excited the audience due to his incredibly energetic and powerful presentations. His talk on how and why his Church switched from Sunday to Sabbath was viewed as one of the highlights by most in attendance. Dan Gayman may be contacted at his office in Missouri on (417) 432-3119. His story is simply amazing.

The room adjacent to the hall was set aside for literature distribution. The room became a place for people to mix and socialise across corporate boundaries.

Laymembers from about 10 different groups attended plus greetings to the conference from Calvin Burrell, President of the Church of God (seventh day), the local Christian Biblical Church of God, the Remnant Church of God, Central Highlands Church of God and others were read out. All Australian States and Territories were represented (with the exception of the Northern Territory) plus New Zealand.

At the end of the conference it was announced that conferences would be held in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane late March-early April next year which was welcomed by the delegates. The conferences are planned for around late March. A National Committee is now being established to oversight the local committees that will be organising next year's conferences.

Media attention was exceptional: A sizable and balanced article appeared on page 3 of one of the largest circulation newspapers in Australia, the "Sydney Morning Herald", prior to the conference which generated at least three radio talk-back shows to discuss the topic. Articles also appeared in the "Sun Herald". The Adventist "Record" magazine which is circulated to tens of thousands of Adventists in Australia and the South Pacific had a full page article on the conference. On the Sunday night during the conference, Dr. Gordon Moyes interviewed Dr. Bacchiocchi for

an hour on the "Sunday Night Live" show which is Australia's most popular religious radio program. The next morning he was interviewed live on the popular channel 9 "Today" show. Both he and Richard Nickels were interviewed on 2BL Radio National, heard coast-to-coast.

Audio and video tapes (in PAL format) of the conference are available. These tapes are ideal for personal study & evangelism, in-home Bible study groups, church libraries.

For further information write to: Australian Friends of the Sabbath, GPO Box 864, Sydney 2001. Or ring (61) 2 9745 2964. In the USA they will be available from Friends of the Sabbath, 27068 La Paz, #500, Laguna Hills, CA 92656 (the videos will be available in both PAL and NTSC [USA] format).

—Craig Martin White

New Sabbath History Newsletter

A new newsletter was launched at the Australian *Friends of the Sabbath* conference held in Sydney in early July. "Sabbath History" focuses on the history of Sabbatarian groups over the centuries. Articles in the current edition include: "The Seventh Day Men" by Leon Lyell; "Church of God (Adventist)" by Richard Nickels; "John Traske"; "Columba of Iona - Sabbatarian and keeper of the Stone" by John D Keyser and "Sabbatarian Material and Resources Available" compiled by Craig White. Future editions will have articles on the Church of God in Chile, Britain's Amazing Celtic Church, the Nazarenes, Peter Waldo and so forth. A subscription is available by writing to the Editor and Publisher, Mr. Leon Lyell, PO Box 206, Bundoora, Victoria, Australia 3083. Subscription price for the newsletter is only \$18.00 (Australian dollars) per annum. The newsletter will be published quarterly and will be about 24-30 pages per issue. Please make cheques out to Leon Lyell.

Far-Reaching Insights at Friends of the Sabbath Conference

The *Sabbath Facts of Life Seminar* was held August 3-5 in Tacoma Washington. The seminar consisted of a Sabbath service and 14 presentations. Attendance was over 300 on the Sabbath but less than 100 for some Monday sessions. Rather than cover all the conference, I will cover those items that I feel are of most interest to our readers. Anyone desiring to hear all or part of the conference for themselves may request tapes from *Friends of the Sabbath* at 27068 La Paz, #500, Laguna Hills, CA 92656, 714-362-3087.

People came from a great variety of church organizations and non-aligned congregations. Some members came from an independent Charismatic congregation with no historic connections to Seventh Day Adventists, Worldwide Church of God, Church of God Seventh Day, or any of their split-off groups. Did they shout, fall over in the aisles and preach heresy? In a brief interview I found that they take the Bible, especially 1 Corinthians 12-14 very seriously. When someone speaks in tongues, someone interprets, when they pray for healing, people do not fall over backwards, but often get well. If someone has a dream or a vision to tell, they judge whether or not it is according to Scripture. They realize that not every person has every gift—nor do all speak in tongues. They keep the Sabbath, keep the holy days, and do not believe that God is a Trinity. They, like nearly everyone there, agreed that there was much to be learned from each other.

Calvin Burell, of the Church of God Seventh Day gave a powerful presentation entitled *Sabbath letter; Sabbath Spirit*. He gave his understanding of what it means to keep the Sabbath. Also, he encouraged everyone to do what they believed the Bible teaches on the Sabbath and to spend less time showing how other groups are keeping the Sabbath incorrectly.

Samuele Bacchiocchi gave his fine presentation, *My Search for the Sabbath at Vatican University*, explaining how he was the first non-Catholic graduate from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. With his big smile and colorful Italian accent, he explained how he convinced some of his professors that

Sunday-keeping began after the time of the 12 apostles, not during their ministries. This presentation was given in previous Friends of the Sabbath conferences, but he always includes a few fresh details each time. In addition, he presented *Seven Ways That the Sabbath Gives Us the Peace of Christ in our lives*.

Ken Westby, the conference organizer, presented *The Mysterious Seven-Day Cycle*, an explanation of startling discoveries in the field of Chronobiology—the study of natural timing in living things. Chronobiologists have discovered periodic cycles in living things with 5 durations: less than a day, daily, weekly, monthly, and annual. The less-than-a-day cycles do not correspond to events on the calendar, so we will not discuss them further. The daily cycles seem to be synchronized with the rising and setting of the sun, but are not completely controlled by it. People put in artificial environments where light and dark cycles are shifted to 21 or 27 hours will still have a 24-hour internal cycle. Body temperature, blood pressure, sleeping, waking and cell division operate in daily cycles. Scientists explain this cycle as something built into life forms from many generations of 24-hour days.

The monthly and yearly cycles are thought to be somehow controlled by the orbits of the moon around the earth and the earth around the sun. Human menstrual cycles are the most prominent monthly occurrence. Seasonal depression, sexual drive, and susceptibility to certain diseases seem to run on an annual cycle in many living things.

Now for the amazing one! Immune responses, blood and urine chemicals, blood pressure, heartbeat, coping hormones and other biological phenomena all have seven-day cycles. While the initial reaction was that these were conditioned from our 7-day week, these cycles are also found in plants and animals that do not know what day it is. Some chronobiologists believe that mankind arrived at a 7-day week historically to match our 7-day body rhythms. Indeed, attempts to implement different lengths of a week in France in 1793 and Russia in 1929 utterly failed.

But how much more sensible is it to understand that our Creator made his creation to work around the 7-day cycle that He established for all mankind (Mark 2:27).

Rabbi Daniel Lapin presented *The*

Impact of God's Law upon Society and Culture. Mr. Lapin is an orthodox Jew and has his own nationally syndicated radio program, *The Rabbi's Round Table*, originating from Seattle's KVI radio. He believed that most conflict in American society is essentially between "people who think God gave us a system of rules to govern man and those who do not think so." Jews, Christians and some of other religions that follow moral principles are the main contributors to our societies, and that the others drag it down. He pointed out the difference in voting records between people who have children—and are thinking about the future—and those who do not. One example he gave was the economic theories of John M. Keynes that encouraged government deficit spending—he was a homosexual and his theory only worked for one generation.

Mr. Lapin further explained how the illegitimacy rate is tightly correlated with violent crime and poverty. Young people raised knowing that their father did not care enough about them to stay at home are often angry at society, have a hard time accepting the authority of a boss to keep a job—sometimes turning into violent criminals. He said that the complaints of disproportionate numbers of blacks and minorities in jails fail to note that these proportions of people in jail are a near exact match with the illegitimacy rate: 30% for whites and 70% for blacks. The solution to this is not more prisons or government programs, but a belief in the instructions that God gives us for how to live.

Mr. Lapin also spoke about his wife who home-schools their seven children and some of his customs for keeping the Sabbath.

Doug Dolly, founder of a Seattle area Messianic Jewish fellowship presented *The Sabbath, a Messianic Memorial*. While some Messianic Jewish congregations are similar to Protestant churches with a few Jewish trappings, this group seems to be very careful to "live by every word of God" and has beliefs similar to Church of God groups, though they also make use of some Jewish oral tradition. Mr. Dolly explained how the Sabbath is a living, continual memorial in time to the Messiah's salvation acts, and is prophetic of the Messiah's coming Kingdom of Peace.

John Christopher spoke on *Church*

Continued on page 24

Just what is the “Commandment of Christ”? Are you sure you know? Many in God’s Church today need this vital information, so read carefully

the following simple, yet powerful, message that Christ wants all His followers to fully understand.

In John 15:12, Christ gave “His” commandment to the apostles, “...to love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus went on to say, “Greater love has no one than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” This theme is repeated in I John 3:16: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

We read in Philippians 2:5 that we must put on the mind of Christ. The great law of God teaches us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus said in Luke 6:40 that every disciple who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

Do we love our own flesh and blood more than our neighbor? If we do, we sin. James 2:9 reads, “If you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” We must learn to love as Jesus taught in Matthew 5:43-48, loving our enemy as much as ourselves. God has never told me face to face that He loves me. Yet I know that He does because He called me to be one of His sons. Actions speak louder than words. The written word is an action, it is non-vocal communication between two beings, the writer and the reader. The Holy Scriptures explain God’s love for us in writing (someone had to do the writing—the action) set forth by the prophets and the apostles as well as other writers. The actions of these men were divinely inspired by God’s Holy Spirit, so you see the word of God in print as action God took to communicate His love for us.

God also communicates His love by the action of answering prayers. He wants only the good things for His children; therefore, if we pray according to His will, we shall have those things we desire. Taking this all into consideration, we see God shows us His love by His actions (works). James 2:16 indicates that professing love is inadequate without proving it by your works.

The Commandment of Christ

Most of our problems are brought on by a lack of love. The problems we see in the Church today often stem from misunderstandings about trivial matters of such little importance. How can we consider ourselves “true Christians” if we are so willing to yield ourselves to Satan’s devices? Are we not deceiving ourselves? Instead of conquering our problem in love and exhortation of one another, we have weakened and given in, and seek to find a carnal solution. Love is the strength by which we overcome.

While it is true that God and Christ have a special relationship, they wish to share that very special relationship with us. That we can become a part of the God family is the fullness of this—when we marry Christ at His second coming. Faith and love share a common characteristic; they both must be put to work. Talking isn’t enough. We should all be willing to lay down our lives for each other (I John 3:18). Then the love of God could be perfected in us. Christ set the example when He laid down His life for His friends. He said we should be willing to do the same (John 15:13). Christ also commanded that we have just such love for one another, as stated in verse 12: “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Love: A Life or Death Matter

How deep is your love for the brethren? Would you die for even the least of them? Have we in some way become complacent in our duty as Christians? Here is a different look at a very important fruit of the Spirit, so important that Paul called it “the greatest.” Love is the strength by which we overcome. Remember, love covers a multitude of sins. Therefore, if we are deeply concerned for one another, we will exhort each other to overcome our weaknesses, and in the process, help and support each other.

Love All as Yourself

Christ literally commanded us to become as our Father in heaven (Matt

5:48). As James 2:9 instructs, we are to show no partiality to anyone, but are to love friend, enemy, wife, mom, dad, brother, and sister all the same. Paul commanded that we put on the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5). Jesus loved the men that scourged Him and put Him on the stake so much that He asked God to forgive them for their actions. Imagine how much love it took, what deep understanding He must have had, to be able to do this.

God loves us all the same. He is not a respecter of persons. He loves each of us (His begotten sons) just as much as He loved Jesus Christ. How can we know this? Well, I hope that we already know that God does not violate the ten commandments. How could God command us to love our neighbor as ourselves and He Himself not practice this principle? Is God prejudiced?

We are hindered by trivial things of this life. Husbands and wives are often arguing over matters of no importance. The ministers are having to continually preach sermons about problem marriages. The real problem is lack of love, for if we follow Paul’s advice and lay aside the weight of this world and grow in deep concern for one another, these problems would disappear. Satan uses the small differences as a point to keep us off balance (prejudices, grudge bearing, ill feelings, etc.). We must be on guard and notice right away when a confrontation is building, and use love to overcome the problem.

Do we love our own flesh and blood (self, spouse, children, etc.) more than others? There has been a great deal of emphasis placed on the family in the past years. There is a very good reason for doing so: the society we live in today is falling apart because of neglect of the family. Yet it is drawing our personal families closer together, causing us to miss the big picture, namely “love your neighbor as yourself.” The word “as” is a small but important word, similar to “if.” Webster defines “as”: equal or in like manner. In John 3:16, an important bit of information leaps out at you if you are sensitive to God’s Spirit

leading you. Christ communicated His love for us by dying for our sins. We must lay aside the trivial things of this life and concentrate on the work God is doing. Husbands and wives must lay down petty arguments and pull together.

Satan's Wall of Prejudice

Satan is a very powerful spirit being with a mind vastly superior to mortal man. He uses his crafty ways to keep the people of this world deceived. When one is called of God and accepts His calling, and becomes a baptized member of God's Church, he begins an awesome job of overcoming Satan's influence. For until their calling, Satan has had them in his system (world) pumping "prejudice" into their minds. The degree of prejudice varies in each individual, depending on many factors in the complex nature of the human mind.

Each time one's trust in another is compromised (through lies), another brick is added to a wall. This wall separates the minds of individuals, preventing a deep love for one another. The newly called Christian must begin tearing down this wall Satan has built in his mind. The new Christian must now learn to love all people as he loves himself, and must also learn how to properly love himself. He must no

longer love his physical mother, father, wife, or children more than he loves even his enemies.

It seems natural to love one's own flesh and blood more than loving strangers or enemies. This has caused all the violence and wars that have plagued mankind for the past six thousand years. Once one is converted, he must put on the mind of Christ. The Bible teaches that God shows no partiality to any man; He loves us all the same, converted or not. God realizes the potential of human beings; after all, He did create them, and He has a master plan for reproducing Himself through them.

In this modern society in which we live, one tends to become caught up in the very process of sustaining life. A job is very important for this reason, as well as other reasons, and is time consuming, usually taking a third or more of one's available hours. For this reason, one might tend to place a higher value on his material possessions than he should. It

seems that language has its role in this, as one tends to say, "my house, my car, my this, my that." Knowing that God owns it all and has temporarily loaned these things to us during our lives, since we are only pilgrims in this world in this life, makes material possessions seem less important.

Love is the universal language, coming directly from God. Any interaction between intelligent beings that is less than love is wrong. Love is pure and simple, always helping, and never harming. When one is "out of sync" with love, it seems as though it hurts to get "in sync", but it is for one's own good to accept correction, thus realigning himself with the truth (God). Take Christmas, for example: when one learns that this custom is from other religions and not taught in the Bible, at first it is shocking and leaves one dumbfounded. It seems so right to the human mind to involve oneself in the "good will toward men" and tradition of gift giving. After all, Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. But this is not an excuse to take part in celebrations of other religions (Jer 10:2). Pray to the Father that we may be filled with the kind of love that He and Jesus have for all men, even enemies.

—Hari Merman, P.O. Box 942, Marana, AZ 85653-0942

Moving Reminder

Please remember to use our new address and phone numbers when corresponding with us. Thank you.

Servants' News

P.O. Box 220

Charlotte, Michigan 48813

Tel.: 517-543-5544

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"Children" from page 4
tening—to them about these issues. And don't make it a one-time thing. A child going through a death in the family or a divorce needs a lot of emotional support. Leaving a church organization can be almost as traumatic as these life stresses, for both children and adults. Keep the lines of communication about these issues open to your children until you are sure their healing is complete.

Here is how Ramona now feels about her childhood and teenage experiences with changing churches:

"One of the main things I have learned is that if things go wrong at your church and you leave it, to not leave God in the process. Often our relationship with God consists of going to services, and maybe a little prayer and/or Bible study. So if we give up on church, we think it's a package deal,

and give up on God (this is a problem for people of all ages). Well, God is not religion. He is all-powerful, He sent His son to die for us, and wants to be Lord of our life. He doesn't want just one day a week, He wants all of it. That's when the changes for the better can begin to happen in us.

If you have been hurt by your experiences, why not pray to God. He can help you begin to heal. Ask Him for guidance as to what scriptures in the Bible might be helpful to you. Most of all, realize you are not alone in what you have been through."

All children are different, and deal with stress and grief and confusion in different ways. But adults and children can grow spiritually strong through adversity. Beyond talking with their children, if there is one hint I would

give to parents about how to help their children "come out the other side" of this experience spiritually healed it is this: Your children will very likely mirror how you ultimately deal with this time in your life. If you remain bitter, they likely will also. If you wallow in depression indefinitely, they may also. If you are permanently fearful of further rejection, and avoid finding new fellowship opportunities among believers, they may become "hermits," too. But if you allow the Lord to heal your hurts, your children will likely receive healing also. And if you trust Him to lead you into His perfect will for your life as an active member in His true Body... there is a good chance your children will be there with you, serving Him.

Let's not let our children be the "forgotten victims!"

—Pam Dewey

Encouragement For the “Stay-at-Home Church of God”

This article begins with a well-written letter representing what may be the largest group to leave the Worldwide Church of God. The article then closes with some encouragement to those who find themselves in this situation. Many of these people are nearly all alone. Some feel they are “through with organized religion.” If you know someone who might benefit from this article, please share it with them.

July 15, 1996

To: United Church of God
Global Church of God
Christian Educational Ministries
Church of God International
Church of the Great God
Servants' News
Giving and Sharing Newsletter

From: Jim and Barbara Damiano,
Members of the “Stay at
Home” COG

Dear Ministers and Brethren of ours,

I finally decided to break down and write to all of you at the same time with what I feel is a representative understanding and opinion amongst the MANY of us out here in the “Stay at Home” Church of God. I have been sending individual letters to individual ministers in some of these organizations over the course of the last year and my letters have been ignored, no acknowledgment being given whatsoever. I have sent “letters to the editor” to some of the publications, one letter in one publication having been published in a greatly edited form, and the others ignored. The point of writing these letters was to try to inform you all about the thinking and understanding that prevents Barbara and me in particular, and many of the “Stay at Home” people in general (judging from the comments of those with whom I've shared the letters) from attending and becoming members of any organization which has been established since the apostasy in Worldwide began. My central purpose is to URGE you to give some thought and attention to this matter and to consider some sort of instructional response in your publications for our benefit and edification, that we might be helped to seriously deal with our current understanding, should that understanding be in error.

By your own admission, the numbers of people you may be dealing with here in the “Stay at Home” Church of God are quite substantial. By all estimates, it can be approximated that anywhere from 10,000 (conservative low estimate) to 40,000 people (moderate high estimate) are in our situation. And this does not include the numbers of God's people who remain in Worldwide due to (1) their inability to resolve some of the issues I raise, as well as (2) a distorted understanding in the area of “government”. So they continue to hang on and suffer. Be aware, that this group's tithes, regular offerings, and Holy Day offerings are building and building and building in bank accounts all over the country and the world. And even if we are only talking about 10,000 people altogether, the dollar amounts that are becoming built up must be STAGGERING. The potential human resource available is STAGGERING as well.

I personally receive tapes and publications from all of the above organizations, and many other sources as well. In some of the above mentioned organization's taped sermons and literature, we in the “Stay at Home” Church of God are increasingly berated as “selfish”, “hard-hearted”, and even “rebellious”, especially for not “seeing the light” and joining the particular organization which is the origin of the message. We are supposed to have “shopped around” the various Church of God organizations much like we were in the process of buying a car, and come to the obvious conclusion that that particular organization whose tape we are currently listening to, or publication we are currently reading, is THE one with which God is working THE MOST, and that we should take the obvious step of joining that organization by deciding the matter for ourselves based on the results of our “shop-

ping” survey. Well, I just want to let you all know that many of us who are in this situation do not make a decision to “join” a “ Church of God” like we would be shopping for a car. We are not out there evaluating what you all have to offer or observing what you are doing as a work and then deciding for ourselves where we belong and joining, thus giving our total energies and allegiance to your particular organization. Let me say, however, that your presentations and arguments making the case for membership in your particular organization are compelling and sound good. And if God left it totally up to us, then it would be a very difficult choice indeed. But that's the whole point, we don't believe God has left it up to us. We don't believe we could make that decision any more than we could have made the decision to become members of the Worldwide Church of God 26 years ago.

I think many of our friends who are with United, Global, or one of the others, know how we feel about attending services with any organization on a Sabbath or Holy Day, but they may not really understand. I am reminded of a few individuals in particular who just can't figure out what keeps us away from services and what the “big deal” is about attending. What, after all IS the big deal? I mean, despite the fact that it has been so wonderfully peaceful to not be in a turbulent cauldron of controversy with so many “brethren” these last few years, not a few of whom tend to have a rather substantial “chip on their shoulder”, whose driving inner force is political gain, fueled by destroying the reputation of others while they climb their respective ladders...and despite the fact that we have been able to really ENJOY and observe the Sabbath as I believe it was meant to be enjoyed and observed. Yes, despite even those things, I sadly

have to admit that the fellowship of congregating and singing and praying together in worship of God, we do sometimes miss very much. So what is the "big deal"? Why don't we just go to services already?

Well, to put those issues into perspective for ourselves once again, **I have to say that the "big deal" has to do with our personal relationship to God, and what, in that personal relationship we have with Him, pleases or does not please Him. That's our big deal, and has always been. There is no other issue for us in this question.**

Unfortunately, it seems that this is very difficult for many people to understand. It's only after many multiple and varied arguments from every angle conceivable, which people use to try to convince us that we should indeed join the "Church of their choice", and having us respond with the same old "broken-record" response ("It's what pleases or displeases God that makes the difference to us as to what we do") that finally they either hear what we are saying, or go off in desperation mumbling to themselves because they have chosen to not hear or understand.

Perhaps it's largely our fault for not explaining it better. I mean these people are relatively intelligent, and we tried to make our presented reason clear. It was numerous conversations over periods of many weeks and months, as we reiterated the same conceptual objection over and over that I think some may finally have gotten it. Out of the blue, someone called me a few weeks ago and told me that I should be willing to drive the 50 miles or so and get down to Portsmouth on the Sabbath. I told him:

"We should love to but we are very concerned that God would not want us to be members of and formally involved in this manner with any organization's worship service on His Sabbath or Holy Day and we just would not feel right doing so unless He made it unmistakably clear to us that He actually did approve that we attend with that organization."

He then mentioned that "I was needed" in that I was an Ambassador graduate and that my experience in the local Church could be utilized in Portsmouth, to which I replied:

"I understand, but I am very concerned that it would not be God's will that I do so, and I believe that God is perfectly capable of guiding us clearly to do so if it were His will, as He

has guided us so many times in the past events of our lives, small and great. After all, He absolutely, unmistakably, and miraculously guided us to the Worldwide Church of God over 26 years ago, guided us miraculously in so very many events and trials in those 26 years, finally miraculously guided us OUT of the WCG, and guides us with wonderful and miraculous acts of His love to this very day."

He then brought up the fact that I was missing many great messages, to which I replied:

"I agree, and I do miss those live sermons, some of which are truly inspiring, but the most important thing in my mind with respect to this issue is that God want me to attend with, worship with, and become a member of this group, and I believe that He is most able to unambiguously point us in that clear direction."

After this, he hit me with the fact that I should fellowship with all the people down there and that it was not good to be alone, so I should indeed come, to which I said:

"I understand, and believe me, we do get lonely at times, but the heart of the matter is whether God would be pleased or displeased if I were to do this thing, and frankly He hasn't let us know yet. In all the miracles He has done for us even since we've left WCG, He has yet to address this question about membership in or even visiting with any Church organization. We are waiting on Him for His guidance in this matter just like He has given in the past drawing us to and ultimately away from the WCG and in many other matters of life."

To which he said.....to which I replied....etc., etc., etc. And so it has been with him who has joined one of the current Church of God organizations, and with many others who just don't seem to hear what I am saying.

Perhaps I should have used other approaches or analogies to better explain ourselves, like the following:

- In my 25 years in the Worldwide Church of God, it was like I was "married" and then spent the last few years of the marriage in increasing misery and torture. The inevitable divorce was very bitter and ugly and it hurt very much. Frankly, I wouldn't be very quick to remarry, and when I did, I'd want to be VERY sure of what I

was doing. I'd want God to be leading and guiding both of us and to be a part of everything related to this new marriage. Why, even in real life, my wife and I dated for three years, then became engaged for a period of one more year before we actually did marry. I take long-term commitment VERY seriously.

- For those of us who are converted, Church organizations and their governmental structures have no authority or legitimacy over us except it be ordained and commissioned by God. That is, unless that organization's existence, work, purpose, and organizational hierarchy is definitely approved by God (as Worldwide under Mr. HWA was), then I feel I have no justification for voluntarily "joining" and placing myself under that government. "I am not my own, but am bought with a price ...". The style of government which the organization practices is irrelevant with respect to this question.
- My membership in the WCG was like having been inducted by the President of the United States (God) into the United States Army (The Church of God) and having been assigned to a particular unit (WCG) within the Army. Over the course of time, even though our unit totally fragmented, fractured, and ultimately disbanded itself because many in the unit:
 - (1) abandoned their positions,
 - (2) decided to do other things and went AWOL
 - (3) followed the treasonous leadership of the unit who decided to join the enemy or otherwise disregarded the original orders they were given by the President of the United States who was their ultimate commander-in-chief.

I still do not consider myself free to decide when to join another unit, and which unit to join until I receive updated orders from my Commander-in-Chief, even though I am essentially a soldier without a unit in which to function.

- If I cannot be sure **GOD started** these other organizations (United, Global, CGI, CEM) as I was confident that God **started** the organization under Mr. HWA, how can I be confident God wants me to be a part of them? I maintain that the only way I can have any assurance is that God must show us as He did in the past. Can we decide for ourselves that we are now too grown-up and mature for such guid-

ance from God? That we don't need God's intervention, and so can decide this matter on our own? My God is the same God who called me and miraculously and unambiguously guided me to WCG 26 years ago.

- Going to services on a Sabbath or a Holy Day with its attendant singing together, worshipping together, giving of offerings to that organization in recognition of God's involvement in their work, and praying together along with the congregation, ie. participating in every way and yet not becoming a member is akin, to my way of thinking, as would be "sleeping around" with a number of sexual partners without giving those partners any solid commitment. Intercourse of this nature without a marital commitment is "fornication" and "whoredom" to me. And without a clear choice for a mate being evident in my mind, such intercourse with each of these individuals would be totally inappropriate. This analogy is not very far fetched when one considers that God often described Israel's involvement with the pagan religions around them in this manner.

And this last explanation is very important:

- I feel that if I attend a worship service on a Sabbath with an organization, it is an implicit admission on my part that God **IS** working through that organization, because after all, we **as an organization** are communing with God in worship via that Sabbath service. But if I admit that fact by my participation, then I would feel OBLIGED to join that organization and support it fully. However, given that there are multiple organizations with whom God could now be working (UCG, GCG etc..) How could I unilaterally make that determination? Only God could tell me if He were working with **one** or **many** organizations, and if with many, which of those He would want me to commit myself to and fully support, ie. become a member of. We could not be divided in our commitment, could we? I don't think that's how God has ever wanted us to be with our commitment to His work.

So these kinds of explanations go on and on, trying to get people to understand that it really comes down to God's will, pleasing God, and the direction that God leads. We never seemed to have any problem with God's leadership in the many matters related to our membership in WCG years ago, and in the many per-

sonal needs of our lives in the years we were in WCG. Why should it be so strange to believe that we need to await God's hand in these times, and in so important a matter as "which of the organizations He wants us to worship with on the Sabbath and to officially have a part in by becoming a member thus giving them our wholehearted support"?

Funny, I wrote heartfelt letters to Mr. Waterhouse, Mr. Franks, and Mr. Hulme (of United) and to Mr. Meredith (of Global), all of whom I respect very highly. I know they received the letters, but sadly have neglected to answer or even acknowledge them. And it has been over a year now. In those letters, I asked for help for myself and my wife, and for the many thousands of us in similar circumstances scattered literally all over the world. I simply wanted these learned and experienced men to help Barbara and me, and the 10 to 40 thousands of those like us, with the issues of conscience I have raised. The fact that I have had no acknowledgment or response indicates to me that perhaps the issues I raise cannot be answered. In which case, the only logical and prudent course of action for us is to do exactly what we are currently doing, waiting on God to show us His will in the matter. These ministers and organizations thus have no basis upon which to condemn our reluctance in joining with their organizations by calling us "selfish" or "rebellious". Unless or until they can present some clear and definitive doctrinal and Biblically sound reasoning on the matter, perhaps they should reserve judgment.

Sincerely,
Jim and Barbara Damiano, Members
SAH-COG (New Hampshire)

Dear Jim and Barbara,

Your assessment of the problems with the various Sabbath-keeping groups is very good. My guess is that over 50,000 people have left the WCG and have not joined any particular splinter group. This does represent a great pool of human resources—many people who know much Biblical truth and could be teaching it to others. I am sure that some church organizations look at it as a pool of potential tithe-payers, but we find no Biblical example of seeking members just for their money.

We agree that there is a lot of confu-

sion due to many similar groups claiming to be the "right one." It seems all are trying to woo Ambassador College graduates, "Elders," "Deacons" and other "stable members." Yet, very few of them are willing to answer hard questions such as those in your letter. But how can they answer them?

Most of these groups are seeking to build an organization much like the one Herbert Armstrong built. They want their members to be loyal to their organization. Yet, we must ask the obvious question: If loyalty to an organization is so important, why did the Eternal let the

If we look at the early church, we see that groups are sometimes broken up so that more work can be done!

WCG do an "about face" on so many of its doctrines? Why did He make it necessary, apparently, for so many faithful brethren to leave what they were taught **was the one true church?**

Your letter mentions that you did not have any problems with the WCG leadership years ago. My personal experience was similar. But back then, I (and probably you) did not ask any tough doctrinal questions like you are doing now. Not everyone had such an easy experience in the WCG. Many thousands of members were disfellowshipped for simply asking questions or even lesser things. Others suffered greatly due to the misuse of power. (I personally know a couple who were assured by a counseling minister that they should marry after only two dates. Why? After their marriage they found out that their minister had a bet with another minister on who would perform the most weddings. This false foundation caused them trouble for many years.)

Nevertheless, a lot of truth was taught to a lot of people in the Worldwide Church of God. You believe you were miraculously put there. So do I and so do many others. But if there is anything that we can learn from the WCG breakup, it is that we were far too dependent on the organization, and not on our Savior, the Head of the *Ekklesia*—His Body of believers. While your analogy of being married to the WCG certainly fits the way many of us felt (myself included), it is not Biblical.

A big part of the reason we considered the WCG the "one true Church" was because we did not know of any other Sabbath-keeping groups where the Eternal might be working—though very few of us ever looked. We thought

we were called into the WCG to “pay, pray, stay and obey ‘til its time to flee away.” We thought the organization and its leaders were responsible for “doing the work.” We failed to note the scriptures that say “every man” is given spiritual gifts (Rom 12:5-8, 1Cor 12:4-7, 1Pet 4:10). We should have been thinking of ourselves as the bride of **our Messiah** and looking to His written and spoken word for leadership. It is this organizational dependence that caused so many people to have so much hurt when the WCG broke up.

But if we look at the early Jerusalem church, we see that groups are sometimes broken up so more work can be done. At first, the Jerusalem brethren were “continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart...” (Acts 2:46). But later, a persecution arose and all the brethren, **except** the apostles had to leave Jerusalem. “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

We agree with you in that we should seek to serve where the Eternal wants you to serve and not to just “try out churches” until you find one to your liking. We believe that asking Him to show us His will for our lives should be the main way of determining where we will fellowship. But He does not always answer these requests right away. It is possible that the group with which you will fellowshiping on the Sabbath has not formed yet.

Maybe He is waiting for **you** to be ready to help start it!

However, you should not feel “promiscuous” by attending Sabbath services with a variety of groups. As a matter of fact, we are commanded in 1 Corinthians 1 and 3 not to align ourself with some specific teacher. Furthermore, we see that both our Messiah and Paul traveled to and spoke in numerous synagogues. Sometimes they were well-received and sometimes they were thrown out. But they were probably “members” of only one, if any. And they did not worry about “lending their support” by attending a synagogue whose members did not accept the Messiah. We are commanded to attend Sabbath services so we can fellowship with other brethren of like mind (Heb 10:25), not to demonstrate our alignment for a human organization.

1 Corinthians 3 goes on to show that each man (not each group or each minister) will receive a reward based on the work that he does. If we are to be a light to the world, we cannot hide under a bushel (Matt 5:15). If we have learned truth and have the ability to teach it to others, we cannot “bury it in the sand” (Matt 25:14-30).

When some people are faced with the fact that they might be responsible to do more than just serve in a physical way, their initial reaction is “I cannot do that, I do not have any ministerial training.” The answer is “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”

(Phil 4:13). Ministerial training did not seem to make much difference when the test came upon the WCG. Thousands of members studied their Bibles then left the WCG before their ministers did. Some ministers refused to make doctrinal commitments until a paycheck was assured. When it comes to bearing spiritual fruit, organizations are nothing—our Savior is **everything**. If there is any doubt in your mind, please read **every word** of these verses of John 15:1-8:

¹ I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

—Norman S. Edwards

“Resignation” from page 5

my papers.

I heard that the born again issue was discussed at a council of elders meeting, and later I noticed that the correct understanding was briefly elucidated in a World Ahead article. But I was never given a personal response, and I'm sure most members and ministers continue to hold the wrong understanding of what it means to be “born of water.”

Likewise, though you have verbally agreed that interracial marriage is not a sin, most members still think it is, and Global has done nothing to correct the understanding of the general membership.

On the issue of physical sin, Carl McNair wrote a brief piece in a ministerial journal in support of Mr. Armstrong's incorrect teaching. I called him on the phone and spoke about it and let him know that I disagreed with his position and proved my point scripturally. Carl told me that I could teach what I believe, but would not acknowledge that Mr. Armstrong made a mistake.

I recently received a letter from Carl McNair that shows me his lack of commitment to the word of God in deference to protecting the memory of Herbert Armstrong. I am attaching a copy of my reply to Carl McNair's letter for your benefit, though I doubt you will make any changes.

In addition to the papers I have written, there are additional doctrinal errors in Global, including hierarchical government, calendar postponements, and the doctrine of British Israelism. I will not take the time in this resignation to prove your errors to you on these points. In any case, I know others have already submitted papers to you on these issues, and you continue to teach error in spite of the fact that you have been shown otherwise in the word of God.

I bear no ill will toward you or the Global Church of God, and I pray God will grant you repentance. As with Worldwide, financial problems should be an indicator that something is doctrinally and administratively wrong. Sadly, you seem eager to blame the membership for the current problems and show no sign of looking inwardly to see if you are doing something wrong.

Please understand that you have my full support and cooperation in turning over all Church assets and in making this transition as smooth as possible.

Sincerely,

Wesley B. Webster
75462.2411@CompuServe.COM

cc: Carl McNair, Colin Adair, David Pack, George Brittlebank, Laurus Alfred, Tyrone Yarde, Ramsumair Sookram

Getting To Know Christ

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD. Jer 9:23-24

Many believers know a great deal about Jesus Christ, but how many of us can boast that we understand and know Him as the Lord who exercises loving kindness, justice and righteousness on earth this very day?

Before any real Spiritual growth can take place in believers, we must come to understand our relationship with God and how we fit into the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

Indeed, the very purpose of giving the Holy Spirit to us is so we may understand this relationship. "Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God" (I Cor 2:12).

The Apostle Paul understood this relationship and spoke often of it in his efforts to help us comprehend the things freely given to us. "This is what I have asked God for you; that you will be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love, and that you will have the rich experience of knowing Christ with real certainty and clear understanding. For God's secret plan—now at last made known—is Christ Himself. In Him lie hidden all the mighty untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2-3 LB).

Read Eph 1:17-22, where Paul prayed for us that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give us two things; first, a spirit of wisdom and second, a spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him. (Remember now, that all the untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ and this mystery is being revealed now.)

Why does He want us to have this wisdom and revealing? It is so that we may know, by experience, why we are called and what is our inheritance and finally what is His power in us who "Believe in Jesus Christ."

Let's consider these things in the light

of our life here and now.

Do you know why you are now called of God? John 15:16 says, "You did not choose Me I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father, in My name, He may give it to you." We are appointed to bear fruit, hired to work, called to produce. Here is a spiritual principle which applies to all branches if they are attached to the vine, as Chapter 15 amply testifies.

Next we are to comprehend what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in us. We are to come to know the abundance of Spiritual things to which we are now entitled because of being made children of God, for if children, then heirs of all that Christ possesses. We have been sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory (Gal 4:6-7; Eph 1:11-14).

We have access to all the riches of His grace unveiled in that finished work of Christ. Can we grasp what is being said here? That great mighty Holy Spirit, who has come to make his home in us, is guiding us into all the reality of the wealth that has been given to us in Christ.

Now what is the immeasurable greatness of His power in us who believe? This power which is available to us **now** who believe in God is that same divine energy which was demonstrated in Christ when the Father raised Him from the dead and gave Him the place of highest honor in Heaven—a place that is infinitely superior to any command authority, power or control and which carries with it a name far beyond any name that could ever be used in this world or the world to come (Eph 1: 20-21).

Satan was conquered, defeated by Jesus before He rose from the dead, and

that defeat is set to our credit, so you can safely say "I conquered Satan in Christ. As Jesus was master of the devil, so am I In His Name." If (since) we have been raised together with Christ, then we have His resurrection ability in us (Rom. 6:5).

We are not left on our own resources, we have His power and grace. Yes, that measureless ability of God is ours **here** and **now**, if we will only claim it.

Read what the scriptures say in II Cor 9:10, "Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food WILL supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the fruits of your righteousness."

What is the meaning of "fruits of your righteousness?" Christ's life-style gives us the example. All the gracious words that He spoke and all the mighty acts which He performed were the fruits of His righteousness.

Have we taken the time to consider that Jesus was fearless in the presence of the enemy in every place: He had no fear of a storm at sea—"...and He rebuked the wind and the sea and it became calm". He had no fear of lack—He multiplied the loaves and the fish. He wasn't afraid of death—He raised Lazarus who had been dead four days.

These are some examples of the fruits of His righteousness. When these fruits abound in us they will make us like Jesus, and these fruits **can** abound in us. (My friends, when you read these words, are you reacting like Thomas did?)

This has nothing to do with our abilities, our talents, our position in this world or the possessions we may have. It has nothing to do with whether we are black or white, male or female.

Notice II Cor 3:4-5, "And such confidence have we through Christ toward God, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account for anything as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant."

Can we understand what he is saying to us here? Not only is He our ability—as we have previously seen—but He is also our sufficiency in all things. In Him we are competent to perform those greater works spoken of in John 14:12, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do because I go to the Father." His very sufficiency and all His ability are at our disposal, "In My Name you shall...." There

is no lack in us, in our service, in our finances, in anything connected with our walk on this earth. Oh, if we can only come to comprehend this relationship we have with our God.

You see when He took us over and came into us and began building His Word into us, He was also building His sufficiency and ability into us.

That Word of His created this universe; created this earth with all its flowers and fruits, its wealth of minerals, chemicals and oils. His efficiency in that Living Word created all these things. Now He is building into us that Living

Word with all its supernatural efficiency. We are being recreated in His image, and as it says in Phil 4:13, "I can do all things through His efficiency which strengthen me." Isn't this what it means?

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God carries the meaning that Jesus Christ is **alive** and **living** among and within us. We are His temple (Rom. 8:11; Matt 12:28; I Cor 3:17; II Cor 6:16). Focus for a moment on Rom. 8:11 where we are told that Christ, through His indwelling Spirit, is now giving and building His Holy Life into our mortal bodies. Christ is for the present, the here and now, as

well as for the future.

Not only is He building Himself into us, He is also there to work through us. Take this into your heart, read what Paul says in Eph 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every Spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." We are blessed with everything we need. His very fullness is ours. His ability is ours. His love is ours. Yes, He Himself is ours?

All we have to do now is to take our place and act our part, for it's God who is at work within us.

—Jerry Laws

"Music" from page 7

sidered. But it would be good to realize first that if you take this route, you may find there are almost **no** songs acceptable to **everyone!**

Q: Is it wrong to sing songs that affect the emotions, not just the intellect?

A: God created us as beings with emotions! We are admonished to come before Him with **joy**. That isn't a thought—it is an emotion. We are to come to him with **gratitude**. That is not just a thought—it is an emotion also. Songs that "touch our heartstrings" by recounting what Jesus did for us may very well bring a tear to the eye of someone recently rescued by the Lord from sin or sickness. This isn't wishy-washy sentimentality. It is true gratitude. We need to be very careful not to misjudge the emotional responses of others. It may be that the Eternal **wants** to bring these Godly emotions to the surface and provide an outlet for them through music. You need only read through the Psalms of David to see that his music was a frequent outlet for his emotions, not just an intellectual exercise for his mind.

Even beyond the words—even without words—music, by its nature, can evoke emotion. That response also was built into us at creation. It is very likely that all of the vast choirs and orchestras organized by David for the worship at the temple were not only so the Eternal could hear Himself praised. The hosts of heaven praise him continually (Rev 5:11-14, 7:11-12). Another role of the temple musicians and choirs likely was to inspire awe and worshipful attitude—and emotions—in **the worshippers!**

Q: Shouldn't all worship music be formal and serious, so

that we show the Eternal proper respect?

A: Was David being disrespectful when he leaped and danced before the ark? (2Sam 6:12-23.) Our concept of what musical "styles" are respectful may have a whole lot more to do with our society and our personal upbringing than any Biblical reality. Several of the Psalms even admonish us to make a joyful "noise"! (e.g. Pslm 100:4.) There are all kinds of descriptions in the Psalms of musical instruments that sound a whole lot more like guitars and tambourines than pipe organs and pianos! And there are numerous descriptions of clapping, shouting, raising hands, and dancing in connection with worship (Ex 15:20; 1Sam 44:5-6; 2Sam 6:14-16; 2Chr 15:12-15; Job 38:7; Pslm 5:11, 32:11, 47:1,5, 63:4, 98:8, 132:9,16, 134:2, 149:3, 150:4; Isa 44:23, 55:12; Jer 31:13, Lam 2:19, Zeph 3:14, Zech 9:9, 1Tim 2:8.)

Of course, pipe organs and pianos are as acceptable as any other instruments. But God created great variety, and gave us a creativity like His own. We are encouraged to use it when we worship Him.

Q: What if you just honestly do not find loud or lively music inspiring—must you force yourself to pretend that you do?

A: No, but it is an opportunity for tolerance. If you are in a congregation that is singing a lively Messianic praise chorus that has lots of clapping and loud singing, you have every right to sit quietly. And those around you have no right to nag you to somehow change who you are and what inspires you.

And if you are in a congregation that is singing somber music which you find

oppressive rather than uplifting, you need to have the tolerance to realize their emotional response may be entirely different than yours. What is oppressive to you may be awe-inspiring to them.

Let's not let music become one more issue to divide the Body of Christ!

Q: Is Servants' News planning to do anything to help this situation?

A: At the Grand Lake of the Cherokees Feast site this year, we will be using a variety of sources for music. But in the long term, it is not practical to have copies of a dozen different music books for everyone who attends a service. We do not wish to violate copyright laws or fail to pay the proper royalties to hard-working musicians by large-scale copying of another's music. The solution seems to be twofold:

1) Find the doctrinally and musically best song books commercially available, and make them known to our readers. Tapes are available with many of the books—making the learning of such music much easier. We will advertise this list in our literature section when we have it available.

2) Begin collecting and eventually print a book of music that is either in the public domain or written by brethren willing to share their gifts freely. We already know of a very few brethren who are writing good praise and worship music. There are probably a lot more of you who have these gifts. If you have written or are writing music suitable for congregational singing we would like to hear from you—preferably after this Feast.

—Pam Dewey & Norman S. Edwards

our group and its traditions, ever reminding us to rely on Him alone and to place principles before personalities.

We do hope you will feel these two ideas may be helpful to our brethren.

Much thanks for the service you provide!

Sincerely,

—James and Sadie Morgan,
221 Ivy St
Rossville, GA 30741-2031

RESPONSE: We think the Pen Pal service is a fine idea. We do not really have time to do it, so brethren interested in Pen Pals can write you directly. If you would like to send us a short article on how the service is going every few months, we would be glad to print it. That would help others learn about your service.

Most of your points for organization seem very good. I would like to add a little commentary to three points:

VII. You certainly do not want to rely on continued funding from an outside person or organization, but if your group produces tapes or literature and an outsider occasionally sends a contribution, I see no harm in accepting it.

X. Not having an opinion on outside issues is probably the best way 95% of the time. There is no need to be involved with most "issues of the day." However, John the Baptist, our Savior, and the Apostles did speak out against corrupt leaders who were leading the people astray.

XI. Every member should be responsible for setting an example and attracting others as you suggest. However, that should not stop your group from making itself known in the phone book or newspaper. People differ. One person may seek to better understand the Bible by talking to his or her friends to see if anyone knows a good place to learn. Another person may prefer to consult the phone book or paper. I think we can serve both.

—NSE

Appreciates Servants' News Letters

LETTER: April 3, 1996

Dear Mr. Edwards,

We sincerely appreciate *Servants' News*.

The letters echo our thoughts about what is happening in the Churches of God, and the articles have been very helpful in sorting out the Truth.

We sincerely appreciate the efforts and balanced approach contained in this paper.

We believe you are sincerely doing

your part in living the Work of God. We are grateful to God for giving you the faith, courage and willingness to help God's people.

Our prayers are for all of you to continue in the love and faith of Jesus Christ.

In Christian Love,

—Mr. & Mrs. G. C., Coseur D Alene, ID

RESPONSE: We are continually amazed at the volume of letters that come our way. We print less than half of the significant letters that we receive.

—NSE

Resigning from CGI

LETTER: March 24, 1996

Dear Friends,

I had a friend give me a copy of your "newsletter" and really enjoyed it. This is a real nice service to God's people all over to keep up on things and people in the church. My wife and I resigned ourselves from the CGI a few weeks ago now and can't support what is happening in the organization any more! So many people have left the CGI and have a hard time where to turn for fellowship. We are so scattered! We can't understand why these people who went through what most of us went through with the WCG are still staying with the CGI...The handwriting is on the wall—Round II is taking place and people are sticking it out—people who we would think would be the first to leave. Anyway, thanks again and thanks for your efforts in serving all of us out here!

Love,

—George Burgess, Filer, ID

RESPONSE: Many of us have learned a lot from Church organizations, both what does work and what does not. When leaving an organization, the single most important thing is to remain dedicated to Bible study, fellowship and living the life that our Savior desires of us. May the Eternal bless you in your new fellowship.

—NSE

Depressed Over Groups

LETTER: February 12, 1996

Dear Norman,

I must not be much of a judge of character. I went from WCG to CGI. Of course, you know of the scandal there. I've been very depressed about this. I'm now in a small private group.

Your writing on this controversy was insightful and personally very helpful.

[literature request omitted]

Thank you.

Sincerely,

—Kyle Williams, Rogersville, MO

RESPONSE: We were depressed also when we realized that the groups we "joined" were not what we expected. But our depression was turned to joy when we realized that we are now trusting directly in our Savior rather than in men. If the group we meet with now disbands, we know that He and we will go on working together.

—NSE

Keeping Up With Scattered Brethren

LETTER: May 7, 1996

Dear Mr. Edwards and Staff,

I am enjoying the *Servants' News* newsletter. Thank you all for all the effort you're putting into it.

Having recently left the CGI and going independent, it is nice to try to keep up with the scattered brethren of all the Churches of God. [literature request omitted]

Thank you. B. R. Brown, LaRue, TX

RESPONSE: Keep on keeping up!

—NSE

Likes Unincorporation & SN Attitude

LETTER: April 6, 1996

Dear Mr. Edwards,

Just read in the March/April '96 *Servants' News* of your decision to end the corporation and not seek tax-exempt status. Good for you! Surely, God doesn't need to have a tax-exempt status to do His will.

Servants' News is a very welcome publication in this house and will continue to be regardless of whether it's tax-exempt or an "official" corporation. As long as we receive truth, nothing else really matters.

Appreciate your hard work (and also those who assist you) and dedication in putting out *S.N.* Of all the publications I subscribe to and read, yours is the one which is most balanced and unbiased. So many so-called "shepherds" today produce slanted material—it seems even the men of God have axes to grind.

What's so refreshing and unique about *S.N.* is your willingness to admit you don't know all things and to change when proven wrong (church government). [literature request omitted]

Thanks so much for being there and filling a void.

Sincerely,

—Linda R. Darrow, Chester, NY

RESPONSE: Thank you for your encouragement. We have received very

few negative comments about our decisions to unincorporate and drop our tax exempt status. The lack of non-profit mailing rates and other savings given to such corporations is small in comparison to our ability to be able to state the truth as we see it. There are a number of items in this very issue that might be considered political and not acceptable for a tax-deductible church to print.

—NSE

Following God and Not Man

LETTER: April 4, 1996
Hello from Texas!

Our family was reading the March/April 1996 issue, and we were so pleased to see your decision to follow God and not man. We consider what you're doing a sincere and serving ministry.

Your efforts will remain in our prayers.

Sincerely in Christian love,

—Robert, Jeana, Betina and Lee
Payne, Manor, TX

RESPONSE: Thank you. We assume this is in reference to our terminating our corporation and tax exempt status.

—NSE

Seeking Other Fellowship

LETTER: April 15, 1996
Dear Mr. Edwards,

Recently through a friend, we were able to read the February issue of *Servants News*.

We would appreciate being put on your mailing list. We are presently attending with the United Church of God but in the last few months have realized it is not where we need to be.

[literature request omitted] Please keep up the good work you are doing. God knows where His people are and He is seeing to our feeding through many sources, of which you are one.

Again, I say keep up the good work and thank you from all of us out here...

Much Christian love,

—Tony and Mary Carbo, Pipersville, PA

RESPONSE: We hope you can keep your old friends as well as find a place to serve even more in your new fellowship.

—NSE

Disabled in Crash

LETTER: September 10, 1995
Dear *Servants' News*

I would like to receive the next few issues. I am 59% disabled due to another

driver's carelessness and unable to find work. This man's company was underinsured but had enough money, however, to retain a better lawyer than I. So in court, (and even though the accident was proven to be the other driver's fault) I got next to nothing as far as a settlement. What I did get is almost gone.

I have been getting copies of *Servants' News* from others until now, and would like to receive my own. And I would also like to say, "Keep up the good work!" I don't care what anyone else says about you. You're doing just fine in my opinion.

Please don't let anyone stop you from telling it like it is. We need to stay on top of "ALL OF GOD'S CHURCHES." Perhaps that way, they'll be more inclined to keep things straight!

"Thanks," once again from someone who does appreciate what you are trying to do!

—K. M. T., Texas

RESPONSE: We are saddened to hear about your accident, but realize that "justice" does sometimes go to "the highest bidder" in our courts. We have prayed for your healing and suggest that you follow all of the instructions in James 5:14-16. Some people have a tendency to leave out the "confess your trespasses one to another" part. We believe that the word elder here refers to any mature, older man who is will grounded in the Scriptures. We suggest that you call upon two or three who you know and ask for healing.

—NSE

Glad for Many Information Sources

LETTER: May 2, 1996
Dear Mr. Edwards:

Greetings. I came across your service through *In-Transition*.

I have been affiliated with WCG and now UCG these past 20 years. I have come to see that many things we heard from the ministry were not always Biblically correct.

I am excited by all the information we have access to now. Being a member of the two mentioned organizations, I say with sadness that information was controlled and stifled.

I am currently studying many subjects. Of current interest are the calendar, tithing, etc.

[literature request omitted]

God bless and thank you.

Richard P. Trecek, Sacramento, CA

RESPONSE: Yes! Worship suddenly changes from just showing up each week to actively studying many issues that we

formerly left to the "professionals." I think there is enough spiritual meat (not to mention technical issues) that we can spend a life-time studying the scriptures and still keep learning something useful.

—NSE

Electronic Servants' News

LETTER: April 28, 1996
Dear Mr. Edwards:

My family and I left WCG about two years ago, and we have been functioning more or less independently since then. We are concerned about the trends of non-accountability, intolerance, and concentration of power which we sense in the United group; so we have not associated ourselves with any group, although we continue to observe the Sabbath and Holy Days.

The recent article on *Servants' News* in *In-Transition* resonated well with us, and we would like to become subscribers. [literature request omitted]

If you publish electronically, we would be happy to pull the publication off of the Internet. It is not necessary to send us anything via regular mail. Do you have a World Wide Web site? If not, I would suggest that you make use of one, in conjunction with automatic electronic mailing lists, as a very effective and cheap means to disseminate your information.

In addition to a subscription, we would like to know of others in the Denver area who have disconnected themselves from centralized control. We would like to fellowship with them. Please feel free to put our name and address, and e-mail address on any lists or databases which might be made available to others with similar interests.

Thank you!

—Leo Bredehoft,

1010 Tony Place, Denver, CO 80503

LBredehoft@netrix.com

RESPONSE: Some of *Servants' News* is available on a Worldwide Web site, but not all. We are in the process of establishing a new Web site and will list it here when it is ready. We could consider distribution of *Servants' News* electronically, but some time would be required to format it so it would be easy for everyone to read. At this time, it is easier to simply mail the publication, but that may change in the future.

We will help you get in contact with others in the Denver area in a separate letter. Later this year, we will publish a list of cities and states of our readership so people can send letters to others in specific geographical areas.

—NSE

**"News" from page 12
in the Living Room—An Alternative?**

He used the analogy of large churches to a professional baseball game: spectators pay to get in (churches expect offerings) and you watch the professionals do the work. Similarly, a living room congregation is like playing in a non-professional baseball game. It may not look as fancy as the professional game, but the participants are really learning to play baseball. They are participants, not spectators.

Mr. Christopher explained the need for the groups to have a mission, to help reach out to teach others and not to end up as an endless doctrinal debate club. Also, he emphasized the need for cooperation with other groups and avoiding a self-righteous spirit. He mentioned resources available to local congregations, most of which are listed on the back page of *Servants' News*.

Norman Edwards spoke on the historical and Biblical background of Sabbath services. Much of his presentation was taken from Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. These principles can be applied to both large and small groups. The spiritual gifts spoken of in these chapters have been largely absent from many Sabbath-keeping congregations. We should not let the apparently false imitations of these gifts by some churches stop us from asking for the real gifts. Most of the principles that Edwards discussed are covered in his *Assembling on the Sabbath* paper, available free from *Servants' News* (see back cover).

Phillip Arnold gave what I believe to be the two **most significant presentations of the conference**. Dr. Arnold is Founder and Director of the Religion-Crisis Task Force, and of Reunion Institute of Houston, Texas. He helped, in a limited way, to negotiate with David Koresh in Waco, Texas but his advice was not followed. He played a bigger role in helping negotiate a non-violent end to the Freeman standoff in Montana.

His first presentation, *The Little Known History of Sabbatarians*, described the Taiping movement. Its leader, Haung, founded it in about 1843 when he received a few books of the Bible and had some visions. He understood that the Eternal was not pleased with all of the idolatry in his country and that people needed to repent, be washed and given a new heart. He believed in keeping the Sabbath, rejected the Trinity, and refrained

from alcohol, tobacco and opium.

In later years they made some contact with European missionaries, but could not reconcile the missionary's doctrines with the Bible. When other areas of China would not accept Haung's teaching, he began to impose it by force. He broke down idols, destroyed temples and tried to set up the kingdom of "New Jerusalem." He believed the seven seals were being opened in China and saw himself in many prophecies. Millions of people began keeping the Sabbath. China's civil government, headed by the non-Christian Manchu dynasty, lost a great many battles. Eventually, they asked the Christian Europeans for military help, and received it. In 1864, the Taiping Movement was finally defeated—over 20 million people were dead from the conflict. There are still Sabbath-keepers in China as a result of this movement, though most of them practice in secret. Estimates run from tens of thousands to as many as a million present-day Chinese Sabbath-keepers.

The lessons learned from this bit of history were brought out in Philip Arnold's second presentation, *Sabbath Friends and Enemies (Warnings & Lessons)*. Dr. Arnold explained how he, and Dr. James Tabor repeatedly tried to make contact with the FBI agents and offered to help negotiate the situation with David Koresh and his followers. The FBI had many others "volunteering" to help and were very slow to accept help from anyone. Nevertheless, the FBI and other agencies did not seem to have a clue as to how to deal with David Koresh. They regarded him as some kind of "nut" and tried to offer him all sorts of physical things as inducements to come out, not realizing the seriousness of his conviction. They rejected all of his "Bible babble" as just a delay tactic and did not seek out anyone to talk to David in his own language until near the end. Why the FBI did not arrest David Koresh during one of his daily jogs outside his facility is unknown. It certainly would have avoided much bloodshed. The only crimes he was accused of was having a very few illegal or improperly permitted guns. Nearly all of the guns he had were legally bought and sold simply to raise money. Almost none of his followers were trained in the use of firearms and there was no record of violence from anyone in the group.

David Koresh had previously attended with a Seventh Day Adventist

congregation for years. One of the SDA pastors attending the Friends of the Sabbath conference once had some of Koresh's followers in his congregation. They believed in the Sabbath, the holy days, in eating only clean food, and a host of other beliefs that many of our *Servants' News* readers share. David had the Bible nearly memorized and was a master at expounding the scriptures. When the FBI offered him unclean food if he would come out (Hag 2:14), it was just more proof that prophecies were being fulfilled.

David felt that the events of the seven seals were being played out right in Waco. He was a carpenter, wounded in the hand and in the side, he had the ability to expound all of the Seven Seals. These and many other things "proved" to himself and his followers that he had the "Christ Spirit." When pressured by the FBI for a date to come out, he told them he would have to wait for a "sign from God." He later believed that he received the sign, and said he would come out after Passover. When asked when Passover was, he told them that he was not sure—the group had done their own calendar calculations and their resident expert had been shot dead on the first raid. The FBI saw this as another delaying tactic, but the calendar concern of the Davidians was very real. Finally, Arnold and Tabor were able to determine that there was a certain radio program that the Davidians always listened to and they arranged to get the time for the entire half-hour show themselves. Arnold and Tabor appealed to Koresh to rest a little season (Rev 6:11) and reminded him that nearly every prophet had spent time in prison and that he could write the rest of his treatise in jail.

Later, Koresh's lawyer took a tape of the program to Koresh, and Koresh asked to speak to Arnold and Tabor. Koresh said that he would come out after finishing his treatise on the Seven Seals. But a meeting was never arranged. FBI and congressional testimony claims that David never did write any of his treatise, but Philip Arnold knows otherwise as he has a copy of the disk that was taken out of the building just as the fire began. You may obtain a copy of these "nonexistent" writings, and a copy of the video David Koresh made about himself and his organiza-

tion during the siege by calling Arnold's office at 713-523-1861.

As nearly all of our readers know, the U.S. government did not wait for the Davidian's to come out, but instead used tanks to inject CS gas, a substance banned for use in warfare by the Geneva convention. After reviewing much evidence, Arnold believes that probably one of Koresh's assistants set the fatal fire, believing a "wall of fire" would protect them from the government (Zech 2:5,7).

Philip Arnold was asked to help in negotiating a peaceful end to the Montana Freemen standoff. His approach was again to determine the religious and political background of the people involved and then to find someone who "speaks their language" that they would listen to. The Montana group included some Sabbath keepers, some Sacred-names believers, members of a Mormon offshoot group, and unfortunately, a few con-artists. Nearly all of these people were constitutional law fundamentalists: people who believe the Federal government has greatly exceeded the powers granted it by the Constitution, and that many Federal regulations do not legally apply to sovereign citizens of the 50 states. Some of their arguments have been upheld in courts, others have not, and many cases have simply been dropped by the government without a resolution. Mr Arnold was involved directly in some negotiations, he also helped to locate a Mormon "prophet" figure and some common law experts who convinced the Freemen to leave peacefully.

Dr. Arnold did not have a reason for why the United States government turned these and other instances of relatively minor law infractions into armed conflicts, but he did feel that some of the more trigger-happy bureaucrats have been side-lined, and that those favoring peaceful negotiations now have the upper hand.

Nevertheless, he feels that there is still some danger that innocent people may again become involved in these kinds of confrontations. Most law enforcement people think the government and its services are great and they are suspicious of people who keep the Sabbath, study the Bible in depth, believe God is more important than the state, school their children at home,

shun Christmas and Easter celebrations, do not vote, decline immunization, associate mostly with people of their own religious group, and/or contribute much money to preaching the Gospel. If a group of people have many of the above characteristics and a supply of weapons or if someone makes some accusations against them (whether true or false), another confrontation may be produced. The single biggest common thread that Dr. Arnold found in all of these violent situations, including the Taiping movement, is that they all had leaders who had specifically identified themselves in prophecy—often using their assumed role as a reason for acts that otherwise everyone would consider irrational.

Some of us need to think about whether we would have obeyed our "religious leader" 10 or 20 years ago if he told us to buy a one-way ticket for the Middle East and walk out into the desert. What proof would we have required to know that it was the will of the Eternal? Would we have "fled the tribulation" at the word of a man? Could we have died confronting a government force that thought our "flight" was in violation of some law? Or could we have simply died in the desert? The scripture "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29) is valid, **but when we let a leader read himself into Bible prophecy with no supernatural proof, are we not obeying a man rather than God?**

John the Baptist was the greatest prophet who ever lived, but he refused to take great titles to himself even though he was the Elijah to come (Matt 11:11,14; John 1:21). If he did his job without proclaiming his own greatness, religious leaders today should be able to do the same thing. Believers everywhere should be very suspicious when leaders set themselves up as the fulfillment of some prophecy. Such claims usually prevent their followers from objectively examining their leaders teaching and letting the holy spirit guide them into all truth (John 16:13).

—Norman S. Edwards

Much Learned in Assembly of Yahweh Unity Meeting

Members of the Servants' News

staff recently attended as visitors a Sabbatarian conference on unity sponsored by an independent Assembly of Yahweh congregation in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. Most delegates were members of other independent Assemblies from across America, and as far away as Jamaica. But other Sabbatarians of good will were warmly welcomed.

Most folks in the Churches of God who have roots in the Worldwide Church of God realize that there have been continuing questions in recent years over the calendar to be used to observe the Biblical Holy Days. The WCG for many years celebrated the Feasts according to the calendar of the Jews, with the exception of the determination of the date for Pentecost. But sharp disagreements have arisen from many quarters, calling for changes to the calendar. It may surprise many in the Churches of God to learn that groups within the "Sacred Name" movement have experienced an almost identical surge of interest in these same calendar questions.

During four days of open meetings, delegates presented a variety of points of view on calendar construction. Question and answer sessions were very lively, bordering occasionally on "heated." But it was encouraging to see that behind it all was the same yearning for unity of mind and purpose that prompts many in the churches of God to try to work through these issues with mutual respect and forbearance. As one delegate, Tom Schattke of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, put it in his presentation, "Can we as Elders admit that we may be wrong?... I would venture to say that there are two men here who disagree on some point, and each is positive his position is right. Is at least one of them wrong? What if I am that one? What if you are?" He then went on to admonish his brethren to agree with him in a commitment, which said, in part, "I will pray in faith for the guidance of Yahweh's Spirit to rest upon the speakers and voting elders here at this conference. I will listen carefully to the points made by each speaker without pre-judging them by my own present beliefs."

As such issues are addressed throughout the Body of the Messiah, such an attitude of humility would certainly be pleasing to the Father.

—Pam Dewey

Niagara Falls, Ontario **GCG**
The Ameri-Cana Resort, 8444 Lundy's Lane, 905-356-8444, 800-263-3508.

The Poconos, Penn. **UCG**
Resort at Split Rock, Exhibition Complex, Lake Harmony, Penn. Area code 717.

Quebec (French-speaking). **GCG**
Contact GCG headquarters.

Snowshoe, West Virginia **NonAlign**
Jim Rector, 3802 Olive Street, Texarkana, TX 75503, 903-792-1352. Area code 304.

USA: South East

Clearwater, Florida **GCG**
Harborview Center, 300 Cleveland St. Area code 813.

Daytona Beach, Florida **TCG**
Manuel Rojas: 904-673-8324.

Destin, Florida **TCG**
Info: Darryll Watson, 904-581-2820. Realtor: 800-336-4853, Shoreline Towers: 800-874-0162.

Destin, Florida **NonAlign**
Sept 11-18. Info: Ken Tate, 501-426-5261.

Ft. Payne, Alabama **NonAlign**
Tom Williams, 205-845-2246.

Gatlinburg, Tenn. **Open**
UCG Birmingham, PO Box 361334, Birmingham, Ala. 35236, 205-444-5049. Area code 615.

Hilton Head, South Carolina **TCG**
Rooms: 803-842-4402, mention "Church of God." Info: David Nix, 540-786-6315.

Jekyll Island, Georgia **UCG**
Hartley Auditorium, 1 Beachview Dr. Area code 912.

Kissimmee, Fla (Orlando) **Open**
Ronald Dart, PO Box 560, Whitehouse, TX 75791, 903-509-2999. Local Visitor's Bureau: 800-333-5477. Area code 407.

Kissimmee, Fla (Orlando) **UCG**
Tupperware Center, 14901 S. Orange Blossom Trail. Local Visitor's Bureau: 800-333-5477. Area code 407.

Land-Between-The-Lakes, Ky. **CGI**
Kentucky Dam Village State Park: 800-325-0146. Ramada Inn: 800-628-6538. Area code 502.

Lebanon, Tennessee **Open**
L.A.M.B. Fellowship (Messianic Jewish). PO Box 3381, Lebanon, TN 37087

Myrtle Beach, SC **Open**
The Cong. of God, 7th Day. John Pinkston, PO Box 2345, Kennesaw, GA 30144. 770-995-1622.

Panama City Beach, Fla **NonAlign**
David Owen, 4213 Owen Rd, Dalton, GA 39729, 706-277-3433. Area code 904.

Panama City Beach, Fla. **NonAlign**

Sept 28 to Oct 6, Charles Kimbrough, PO Box 547, Crystal River, FL 34423, 352-382-0877.

Panama City Beach, Fla. **CGI**
Edgewater Beach Resort: 800-874-8686. Written housing information: 800-722-3224. Housing referrals: 904-234-3193. Area code 904.

Pensacola Beach, Fla. **CBCG**
Beachside Resort and Conference Center: 800-232-2416. Info: Glenn Daniel: 904-968-5561 or 904-937-0260.

Rogerville, Ala. **CBCG**
Low budget camping site, video sermons. Info: Lynn Dailey, 423-334-9111.

INTERNATIONAL:

(A few international sites where Servants' News has no readership were deleted from this issue.)

Australia: West
Bunbury, WA **GCG**
Ken MacLeod, 61-9-457-7624.

Australia: East
Lorne, VIC **UCG**
Rod King, 61-3-9725-8768.

Nelson Bay, NSW **UCG**
Bruce Dean, 61-42-62-1427.

Noosa Heads, QLD **UCG**
Graemme J Marshall, 61-7-3807-6087.

Barbados **UCG**
Call Arnold Hampton, 410-655-6265.

Belgium, Hengelhoef
Rees Ellis, 32-71-218-190. **GCG**

Germany, Winterberg
Winifried Fritz, 49-2208-73132. **UCG**

Italy, Tuscany
Carmelo Anastasi, 39-35-583474. **UCG**

The Netherlands, Hoogeveen
Bram de Bree, 31-346-572280 **UCG**

Norway, Sundvollen
Peter Shenton, 44-01905-351389. **UCG**

South Africa
George **GCG**
Syd J. Hull, 27-11-664-6036.

Uvongo **UCG**
Andre Van Belkum, PO Box 1453, Westville 3630, South Africa.

United Kingdom
Weymouth, Dorset, (Southern England) **UCG**
United Church of God, PO Box 5929, Thatcham, Berkshire RG19 6YX.

York (Northeastern England) **UCG**
John A. Jewell, 44-1257-450829.

KEY TO CODES:

NonAlign (non-aligned) sites are cooperative efforts between multiple groups. They usually accept speakers

from multiple groups and/or allow questions during the meetings. The person or group sponsoring the Feast is responsible for the smooth operation of the site, but is not responsible for approving every detail of the messages presented.

Open sites allow brethren to attend and make their own reservations without asking them a lot of questions. Their schedule of speakers is usually limited to their own organization and they may not allow any questions during services.

ORGANIZATION CODES:

Organizations not listed as "open," below, may have some type of approval process for people attending their Feasts. This process usually varies greatly depending on the organization and the person that talks to you. Some simply want to collect registration information, others ask all kinds of questions. The non-open organizations are primarily trying to prevent people from coming to the Feast to pass out literature and/or discuss ideas that differ from the organization's teaching. They are more than happy to have people attend who are coming to enjoy the feast, listen to their messages, and participate in the offerings.

CBCG. The Christian Biblical Church of God operates "open" sites. PO Box 1442, Hollister, CA 95024, 408-637-1875.

GCG. Church of the Great God, John Rittenbaugh, PO Box 471846, Charlotte, NC 28247, 800-878-8220.

CGI. The Church of God, International, operates essentially "open" sites, but people attending should be aware of the difficulties with the leadership there (see Feb & Mar-April *Servants' News*).

GCG. Global Church of God, PO Box 501111, San Diego, CA 92150, 800-959-1642, 619-675-2222.

TCG. The Churches of God operate "open" sites. RR2 Box 114, Hawkins, TX 75765, 800-611-8080.

TPM. Triumph Prophetic Ministries, Bill Dankenbring, PO Box 292, Altadena, CA 91003.

UCG. United Church of God, An International Association. PO Box 661780, Arcadia, CA 91066, 818-294-0800.

Plan to learn, fellowship, and serve at the Feast this year. "And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings

Our goal is to bring worthwhile information to as many people as want it at the lowest practical cost. This loose-leaf format is inexpensive and allows this non-copyrighted publication to be easily copied. You might wish to bind it with a 3-ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip.

Literature List

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

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.

Basic Bible Study Tools by Richard Nickels. 36 pages. An excellent summary of available Bible study aids and how to use them. Samples of many study aids included.

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.)

By What Authority? by John A. Duffley, 16 pages. A brief overview of authority and its structure in the New Testament churches.

Does the New Covenant Do Away with the Letter of the Law? by Eric V. Snow. 42 pages—revised Jan. 1996. 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.

Where Is the True Church Today? by Jack M. Lane, 18 pages. How can there be so many similar groups, yet one true church? What is required of members? Read and see.

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 Key to the Book of Revelation edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 12-page 9"x4" booklet.

Lazarus and the Rich Man edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 16-page 9"x4" booklet.

The Resurrection of Christ—Is It a Fact? by Don Hudgel. 2 page tract for those skeptical of the Bible & resurrection.

Why Do You Observe Sunday? edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 16-page 9"x4" booklet.

Study Resources and Information

Barnabas Ministries Mission Statement by Alan Ruth. 2 pages.

The Christian Beacon Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter "for the shared ministry of the Royal Priesthood."

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. 4 pages. Religious books, including Darrell W. Condor's.

The Fellowship Commentator by F. Paul Haney. Sample 8 page issue of free quarterly newsletter.

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.

Hebrew Roots Sample 24-page issue of free newsletter with emphasis on the Hebrew roots of "Christian" belief.

History Research Projects Order Form by Craig White. 6 pages. Hard-to-find books on the origins of nations.

The Modern Church, Divine Institution or Counterfeit? by Peter Kershaw. 24 page booklet. We do not agree with all of it, but it has good legal info on unincorporated churches.

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.

Sabbath History edited by Leon Lyell in Australia. One free sample issue of 26-page newsletter about the history of Sabbath keepers & groups. There is nothing else like it.

Servants' News & Norman Edwards Statement of Receipts and Expenses, 2 pages. (Always sent to contributors.)

The WAY Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter of doctrinal articles relating to the Biblical way of life.

We want to send this newsletter only to people who want it! If you are not interested, please send us a postcard or give us a call: 517-543-5544, fax: 517-543-8899, eMail: 75260.1603@Compuserve.com