

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 3, No. 8 A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be November 1997

Feast of Tabernacles 1997 in Review

Thousands of people from all over the world kept the Feast of Tabernacles this year. Some met in big groups of thousands, others met in groups of hundreds, and in some places, one or two families got together. Some people kept the Feast in Jerusalem, some flew thousands of miles to other destinations, others drove, others walked. Some stayed in fancy hotels, some in tents and huts. Some stayed home and built a booth in their yard.

What meaning did these people derive from the Feast of Tabernacles? Some thanked the Eternal for the good harvest and all that He has given them. Some thanked Him for “sheltering” or protecting them in times of adversity. Others looked forward to a latter outpouring of the holy spirit, much greater than the day of Pentecost. And certainly, many looked forward to the Millennial reign of our Savior on Earth. Some, gave thought to all of the above.

Some kept the Feast in September; though most kept it in October. Some kept it twice. We know of at least six different calendar systems that were used.

Which, if any, of these people keeping the Feast were “right”? Some Feast preachers told their audiences that they, the one group assembled before him, were the only ones who will be saved. Others taught that God was only working with one particular organization. Others went about the business of conducting their Feast and left the judging to the Eternal. Is He in a hurry to condemn those who are “doing it wrong”?

**Continued on
page 14**

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 UCG-AIA Rejects Own Birth
- 3 In His Name
- 7 UCG-AIA Memo Shows Concern Over Difficulties
- 10 The Reason for the Season
- 11 Local Congregation News
- 13 Ronald Dart on Unity, Evangelism and Church
- 24 Letters and Responses
- 32 You Can Contact Scattered Brethren



Scriptural Evidence for Home Fellowships

By Calvin Lashway

Today more and more people from our religious tradition¹ are meeting in private homes each Sabbath for worship. These small groups are referred to by various names such as Home Fellowships, House Churches, and probably the most popular term, The Living Room Church of God. These Christians are often criticized for this practice by some of the leaders and members of the religious organizations.

An example of this criticism is seen in a quote from a sermon given by a minister of one of the larger groups:

In the NT, there was organization and congregations. Some think that a big organization is a bad thing. The Bible doesn't spell out the exact organization. It speaks of positions, elders, and deacons. It talks about local churches, but there is no 'Epistle to the Living Room church'. There is only one letter to scattered brethren, Hebrews, all the rest were to churches.²

This speaker is implying that a Living Room Church of God is unbiblical, that it is not a “congregation” or a “church.” What does the Bible say? Is the modern practice

Continued on page 19

UCG-AIA Rejects Own Birth

A *Unity Statement* signed by every member of the Council of Elders of the United Church of God, *An International Association* condemns all church "splits," but fails to note that the UCG-AIA was born of a church split and that there are some biblical reasons for splitting.

Do we need yet another article analyzing the UCG-AIA? Would not the UCG-AIA be better off if people just stopped agitating and tried to cooperate with the headquarters leaders?

Absolutely not!

If the members now in the UCG-AIA had cooperated with their headquarters leaders of three years ago (WCG), the UCG-AIA would never have come into existence! **The UCG-AIA exists because people were willing to split off from a church organization to practice and teach doctrine that they believed to be essential.**

Are "major doctrines" like the Sabbath, Holy Days and Trinity the **only** reasons for forming a new organization? If so, then why did not the UCG ministers and members join the Philadelphia Church of God or the Global Church of God in 1995? They had no fundamental doctrinal differences—their main differences were governance and approach to gospel preaching.

As John Anderson's memo shows (see page 7, this issue), the major differences within the UCG-AIA today are almost all related to governance and gospel preaching methods. **If forming a separate organization from the PCG and GCG was biblically correct in 1995 because of difference in governance and gospel preaching, how can it be unbiblical to do the same thing in 1997?**

We have included a complete copy of the UCG-AIA's *Unity Statement*, dated November 18, at the end of this article (page 6). We realize that this statement may be a sincere effort by these leaders to preserve an organiza-

tion that provides sermons, literature, fellowship, activities, and other things to thousands of people. On the other hand, we see little chance that this statement will solve the UCG-AIA's problems, because it does not address any of them.

The UCG-AIA released two other statements on November 18th: the *Identity of the United Church of God* and *Administration Within the Church*. Unfortunately, neither one of these statements contain much that is not already in the UCG-AIA's constitution and bylaws. They do little to resolve the fundamental problem of how the UCG-AIA can recognize Christians among other groups, yet attempt to command members not to work with or join other Christian groups. We reprint the complete UCG-AIA statement with two words in **boldface** type:

STATEMENT: IDENTITY OF UNITED CHURCH OF GOD

The Church of God is a spiritual body of which Jesus Christ is the head. Members are called into the Church, and God is preparing them for the Kingdom of God through the work of the Church. As the head of the Church, Christ has placed some in positions of leadership for the edification and unity of the Church. The United Church of God, an International Association, is a continuation of that body Jesus Christ founded. We, in the United Church of God, an International Association, do not claim that all Christians are among our fellowship. However, we have a **distinct identity** and endeavor to function according to the principles of unity and organization found in the Scriptures.

How can the UCG-AIA have a "**distinct identity**" from other church groups, yet function according to Paul's instruction not to form sects in 1 Corinthians 1 & 3? If the UCG-AIA tries to set itself up as distinct from

Continued on page 6

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 3, No. 8

November 1997

Servants' News is a ministry to help others understand the Creator's will, obey Him, and teach others. We believe that the Bible contains the foundation of knowledge about our Creator and that He is actively working through people today. Our focus is to help the Sabbath-keeping brethren who believe Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah, but we realize that the Eternal works with many groups and individuals.

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

Editor & Publisher: Norman S. Edwards
Production Editor: Norman Arthur Brumm
Associate Editors: Tim & Jeanice Davis, Marleen Edwards, Robert & Christine Feith, Missi Lara, Jon D. Pike, Anne Wibbelsman
Technical Services: George Dewey
Office Administrator: Pam Dewey
Contributors: Many! Thanks to everyone!

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

Servants' News accepts articles for publication. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope for items that you want returned. We are happy to print corrections for any significant errors. Address articles, letters and subscription or literature requests to:

Servants' News
PO Box 220
Charlotte, Michigan 48813-0220
Phone: 517-543-5544
Fax: 517-543-8899

E-Mail: 75260.1603@CompuServe.com
Internet: <http://www.best.com/~oasis7/sn/>

Subscription and literature requests **may** be sent to the following addresses. Contributions received at these locations will be used for duplicating and mailing.

Australia: Dale Heslin, 9 Alice Jackson Crescent, Gilmore, ACT 2905
Canada: *Servants' News*, R.R. #2, Hastings, Ontario, K0L 1Y0
Europe: *Servants' News*, Gulpen 122, 4852 Hombourg, Belgium
U.K.: Jenny Whiteman, 2 Warren Rd, Narborough, Leicester, LE9 5DR

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

Circulation: 2100
Servants' News is published monthly except for combined March/April and September/October issues. Subscriptions are free to people who request the publication and are genuinely interested in it. The Publisher reserves the right to refuse subscriptions. *Servants' News* is published by Norman S. Edwards, 202 Pearl St, Charlotte, Michigan 48813. Periodical postage pending at Charlotte, Michigan. Postmaster: send address changes to *Servants' News*, PO Box 220, Charlotte, Michigan 48813-0220.

Correction of Previous UCG article

This article builds on an article about the UCG-AIA in the **Sept-Oct** *Servants' News*, beginning on page 1.

Also, we would like to correct two significant typographical errors on page 5 of that issue. The year 1994 appears in the first full paragraph and last paragraph of column 1—both should read "1995".

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father (Col 3:12-17, NAS except where otherwise noted).

In these few verses Paul lays out some living principles for the believers to adopt. He tops them off with, "...whatever you do in word or deed, **Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.**"

Have you ever noticed this before? If so, have you ever given it much thought? Does it mean that when we start our car, we say "starting in the name of Jesus"? (or Yahshua, Yeshua, etc.)" If we go to the store, do we tell the clerk that we are "buying in the name of Jesus"? (or Yashua, Yeshua, etc.).

What Paul is saying to we believers is that every time we speak and every time we take any kind of action, we are to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." How are we to understand this, and what does it mean for us in our daily lives?

Our God is not a god of confusion, and as such, His teachings are simple. This does not mean they are easily understood by we humans, who manage to confuse the simple things of God most of the time, but the transition process from the natural man to the Spiritual man (1Cor 2:14-15) is a long difficult road for most of us.

IN HIS NAME

Sometimes it is helpful to define Spiritual terms and the simplest definition is usually the most appropriate. Therefore, to get us started in this subject, here is a definition of In His Name: It is a Spiritual realm where the Deity of God resides and it is called the Word! We will discuss more of this definition as we continue.

If we are to come to personally know our God and His Son (Jn 17:3), and this deeper fellowship with them should be the primary goal for all believers, then we need to come to

This is not a "sacred name article"—it makes no effort to tell you how to pronounce or use specific words. On the other hand, it is not an "anti-sacred name article." Its message is compatible with any pronunciation that you believe to be correct. This article is an effort to show that our Savior's name is sometimes used to represent His righteousness, power and authority—and **how urgently we need to live our lives in His righteousness, power and authority.**
—NSE

understand and appropriate the Spiritual term "In His Name."

Because it is beneficial for us to take this subject very personally, we should seriously consider one Scripture at the very outset: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Act 4:12).

In the Father's Name

When Jesus came to this earth as a human being, He set the pattern for all son's of God to follow. In speaking to the Jews about witnessing, he said, "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me..."(Jn

5:43). And again in John 10:25, "...I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me."

Later, in John 12:20-36, when some Greeks desired to see Him, He took the opportunity to explain a little of His soon coming death. In verses 27-28 He said, "Now My soul has become troubled, and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 'Father, glorify Thy name.' There came therefore a voice out of heaven; 'I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.'" Notice the past and present/future tense of this statement, and it is the present on which we should focus.

In John 17, the true Lord's prayer, Jesus was speaking with the Father; "I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world..(6)..And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me that they may be one, even as We are..(11-12)..and I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them" (26). Here we see that the Father's Name was given to His beloved Son, and in reading the entire seventeenth chapter, we see that oneness and unity with God, and each other, is inherent "In His Name."

Authority and Power

After our Messiah's resurrection, He made a point of saying something very specific to His disciples; "...All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth..." We need to understand what His authority has to do with us today. Colossians 2:9-10 gives us more insight into this term of His authority. Permit me to give you an amplified translation here: "It is In His Name that the Father gives a full and complete expression of Himself. This is His Deity—His divine personality and ability. And you and I as believers In His Name, have been

made complete, we lack for nothing because Jesus our Messiah is the supreme head over all rule and authority." If we can grasp the significance of these facts, then what follows may be easier to accept.

He then gave specific instructions to His disciples; "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...." "...And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover" (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-18).

Are there any Scriptures that tell us that God's power and miracles were only for the beginning of the church, or only for the end time? If so, I have not seen them. But then why don't we see this power and authority in the church today? I believe it stems primarily from a lack of knowledge of what we are **in Christ**, rather than a matter of lacking faith. Faith must surely follow, but how can we trust in what we do not understand.

Let's see if we can make some connection here. Do we understand that all believers have been placed "In Christ" by direction of the Father? It is His plan for us; "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus..." (1Cor 1:30). During that first Pentecost, those present had been moved by the Holy Spirit to ask, "...what shall we do? And Peter said to them, Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 2:38). As believers, we have been created anew (2Cor 5:17); we are His Temple and He "indwells" us (1Cor 3:16); therefore, we are **in His name!** and whatever we say or do, it is to be in this Spiritual realm where Jesus and His Father are also.

Do you recall in Luke 10, where the seventy disciples were sent out in pairs, and when they returned to

report to Jesus, they said, "...Lord, even the demons are subject to us **in your name.**" Here the temporary gift of authority amazed the disciples because at that time they did not yet understand what belonged to them "In His Name." We are blessed with this example for our understanding.

Are we not also told that all believers have this power and authority "In His Name: "Whatever you ask **in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (Jn 14:13). "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you..." (Jn 15:16). (See also, John 16:23-26.)

The Spiritual term for communicating with the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, is called "Prayer". Prayer keeps us close to our Father and His Son. It's more than bringing Them on the scene, it is going into their presence in an executive meeting, laying out our needs before them and making requisitions for ability, healing or victory for someone.

The Word through our lips really becomes the sword of the Spirit. It dominates world forces now just as it did in Jesus' day. Think about this; Jesus said, "In My Name you shall cast out demons" (Mt 28). That means rule them and govern them. God said, "Working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace (ability) of God in vain" (2Cor 6:1).

Remember that in the beginning, God gave Adam the dominion over all the universe. That very dominion was restored to us through Jesus, but it is of no value to any of us unless we—the ones who belong to Him—use the authority in His Name, just as He commanded us to do. The authority was first given to an individual, Adam, but today, now, the authority is given to all of us as believers in the Name of Jesus Christ.

When Peter and John were confronted by the lame beggar, as recorded in Acts 3, Peter said, I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do

have I give to you: **in the name of Jesus Christ** the Nazarene, walk!" Peter knew what belonged to him, In Christ. The disciples, including Paul, understood and trusted in His name, and many miracles were performed through them. They did not try to do it themselves, but kept in constant communication with the Father, just as Jesus did while on earth; "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Thy bond servants may speak Thy word, with all confidence, while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy Holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29-30).

These may seem like very heavy words to you now. But ask yourself what power and ability has the Holy Spirit of God lost upon entering into repentant sinners like you and me? Has He been so diminished that His children have no ability to overcome evil? The God who raised Jesus from the dead is dwelling in us, and He has lost none of His power.

Not According to Knowledge

Today, there is a popular movement in the Western World of professing Christianity, known primarily as the "Charismatic Christians." They invoke the name of Jesus Christ in a variety of methods, mostly involving healings of different types. High emotions are also usually induced. According to many eye witnesses, some of these healings, but not all, actually take place. What are we to think of all this?

There are two specific Scriptural references that should give us caution:

But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.' And seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, 'I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?' And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of

them and overpowered them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified (Acts 19:13-17).

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matt 7:21-23).

Three points should be noticed in this analogy of the end time. First, Christ did not dispute that they were performing miracles in His name. Second, they evidently felt that this type of activity, by itself, qualified them to enter the kingdom. Third, Jesus mentioned two other qualifications: "...he who does the will of My Father..." and those "...who (do not) practice lawlessness." It is therefore very important that we not be ignorant of the will of God (Eph 5:17), and that we also understand what it means to (not) practice lawlessness. (Both of these subjects are beyond the scope and intent of this article.)

Paul's comments, in Romans 10:1-3, about his fellow country men, may well apply here; "Brethren my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."

Focus on The Facts

There are many counterfeits of God's truth. These may very well obscure the truth, but they do not change the truth. If we really believe in the integrity of the written Word of God—that is, Him speaking to us and revealing Himself to us and His plan

for us—then we need to focus on the facts of the Word, and learn to apply them into our daily lives if we are to be truly useful to God.

Our God gave us a legal right to use His Name, and it has all authority in heaven and earth. This authority is over all the laws of nature, over every demon and their works, over all spiritual forces as well as material. This authority and the ability that goes with it belongs to the believer. These are facts on which to build a faith.

It is also important that we not be confused as to just what believing is. Believing is a verb. It's an **action** word, and it means to **act** on the word. (Very simple isn't it.) Then believing the word is simply acting upon it, as we act upon the word or our government in regard to taxes, or perhaps our overdrawn bank account. When Jesus says, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask what ever you wish, and it shall be done for you" (Jn 15:7). You simply act on that word. There is **no** believing without acting, and believing means having possession; I possess what the Word has promised me.

Read what the Scriptures say to us in John 20:30-31; "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have Life In His Name." Busyness in Christian circles may make us feel good about ourselves for a time and perhaps gain us some form of respectability, but most of this activity is accomplished in the natural realm rather than the Spiritual realm. However, it is in the Spiritual realm where Christ is manifesting Himself in our mortal flesh (2Cor 4:11; Rom 8:11) that we have Life In His Name.

Can we now see a little more what it means when Christ said to all His disciples, "And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents,

and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover" (Mk 16:17-18).

The revealing of the "present/future" circumstances and events, as given to the apostle John and recorded in the book of Revelation, adds to our understanding of the term "In His Name." You can read it in chapter and verses as follows: 2:13,17; 3:8,12; 14:1; 19:11-13; 22:4. Specifically in Revelation 19:11-13 it says, "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war...And He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and **His name is called the Word of God.**"

Think about this for a moment. Suppose some wealthy man should give you a written power of attorney to use his name—a limitless power of attorney—what would that mean to you? With this legal document supplying every one of your needs, you can act as though his fortune were your very own. The Father **has** given us the power of attorney to use the Name of Jesus, and that Name has **all** authority in heaven and on earth. That makes us absolute masters over Satanic power. We, believers, are His ambassadors, His spokesman, His word, God's very voice. We are acting in His stead. Remember this, "**In My Name.**" That is limitless! And it belongs to every child of God.

It is really not a problem of faith, but a problem of knowing the facts of our position in Christ, then taking our place as a son and daughter with Him.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, the Word of God says to all of us, "To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order that the Name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." —Jerry Laws

"UCG-AIA Rejects" from page 2

other Christians, are they not going against the very commands of Paul to avoid aligning ourselves with specific men? Those within the UCG-AIA who want strong centralized control seem to be the least willing to work with other Christian groups and individuals. On the other hand, those who are in favor of local autonomy are generally quite willing to still work with the UCG-AIA home office as well as other Christian groups—both local and national.

Below, we reprint the complete UCG-AIA administration statement with a few words in **boldface** type:

STATEMENT: ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE CHURCH:

We acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Lord, the Apostle of our faith and the Head of the Church. We acknowledge that **God**, in order to fulfill His mission and purpose for His Church, **has appointed** some to carry the gospel to the world, some to pastor local congregations, some to teach, some to help, and some to administer. To this end, **all members may exercise the grace** given to them by God as He has willed (from United Church of God Constitution 3.2.2).

Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church has established offices within the Church "for the equipping of **the saints for the work of ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith

and the knowledge of the Son of God. .. (Ephesians 4:12, 13). It is based on the instruction "Let all things be done decently and in order" (**I Corin 14:40**), "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace as in all the churches of the saints" (**I Corin 14:33**), and "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy" (II Corin 1:24).

The administration of government within the church begins with the **Council of Elders** which is established by the **General Conference of Elders**. That administration is delegated on a day to day basis and exercised with appropriate accountability through the office of the **President** (who acts on behalf of the Council), Ministerial Services and local church pastors and elders. This includes the decisions necessary for the **oversight of the ministry and appointment of pastors** to care for the local congregations, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

By service to the Church (Luke 22:26), the **officers and elders** endeavor to maintain the unity and order within the church by exercising godly love, oversight, and discipline (I Peter 5:2,3; I Thes 2:7, 8).

This statement is a good example of

the cause of the problems plaguing the UCG-AIA and other hierarchical groups. It quotes two verses 33 and 40, from 1 Corinthians 14, **but fails to acknowledge the member participation in worship services taught elsewhere in the chapter**. For example:

What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, **each one** has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up (1Cor 14:26, NRSV).

Secondly, this statement begins by saying that God and Christ choose people to perform functions in the church, but ends by giving **all control to positions established by men**. The men in these positions now were quite apparently chosen by the vote of men—they can, and some probably will—be removed by the vote of men. We have no signs or fruits that prove that the Eternal inspired the votes. The doctrinal turnabout in the WCG taught us that **the Eternal does not always reveal truth to, or correct the leaders at the top**.

So, if the Eternal appoints a person to preach the gospel in a certain city or neighborhood, and a church leader tells him, "no, he cannot do it and remain a part of his organization," then the person must decide: does he forsake his appointment, or does he split from the group? Until the UCG hierarchy can acknowledge that **the Eternal can work apart from them**, they will not have the peace they desire. —Norman S. Edwards

Unity Statement

We, the Council of Elders of the United Church of God an International Association, want to address the rumors of an impending split in the Church. We hereby categorically state that no member of this Council is planning nor will support such a split or division of the United Church of God.

Accordingly, each Council member has signed the following declaration:

As a member of the Council of Elders, I am committed to pursuing Godly unity which is essential in the Church. I therefore denounce divisions and schisms as a means of solving our differences just as the apostle Paul powerfully wrote in I Corinthians 1:10-14:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto

[signed by all 12 UCG-AIA Council of Elders members]

me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;"

Furthermore, we hereby enjoin all members of the General Conference of Elders to follow this same biblical injunction in leading and shepherding their congregations.

Date: November 18, 1997

[signed:] Gary Antion	Robert Dick
Jim Franks	Roy Holladay
David Hulme	Victor Kubick
Dennis Luker	Les McCullough
H. Burk McNair	Peter Nathan
Leon Walker	Don Ward

UCG-AIA Memo Shows Concern Over Difficulties

The following memo has been circulated among numerous UCG ministers and finally made it to the Internet. Its author, **John Anderson**, has worked continuously in "Church of God" Church Administration Departments for 30 years. (He worked for WCG as a student, then full-time from 1969 to 1995, then UCG-AIA from 1995 to the present.) He has never been "in charge" of the department, but he has had many years to observe what happens in these departments. We reprint his memo with our comments interspersed as **SN COMMENT:**

InterOffice Memo

Date: September 19, 1997

To: Regional Pastors—**confidential**

From: John C. Anderson, Home Office

Subject: Ministerial/Church Morale

Following the teleconference of the Regional Pastors on September 16, 1997 to discuss concerns about ministerial morale, I tried to synthesize the comments made during the meeting and consider if there were any underlying factors that contribute to the overall malaise and to see if any solutions might present themselves.

All of you expressed serious concerns about the current state of the morale of the ministry and the membership. Though the meeting was specifically called to address ministerial morale, it was impossible to separate the concerns being faced by the ministry from the concerns of the membership since they are interconnected and in many cases the same.

Below is a summary of concerns I heard expressed in the meeting:

1. Conflict between the President and the Council of Elders, Council is divided, lack of cooperation, party spirit, unwillingness to yield to each other, factions
2. Rumor mill that one faction of the Council is out to get David Hulme and Steve Andrews and already has names waiting in the wings to take their places
3. A lack of leadership, inability to inspire everyone to work together
4. A lack of definition in regard to fundamental issues
5. Disagreements about preaching the gospel locally verses centrally
6. The inability of the Council to agree on key issues (no consensus, 7 to 5 votes on issues reported in the Council reports, etc.)
7. An uneasiness about what may happen including the possibility of a split in the Church
8. Ron Weinland and others divulging confidential matters from the Council, pointing out the division and disunity (The unexpressed concern

was how did Ron hear these things.)

9. The difficulty of dealing with rumors and negative reports coming from various sources such as the Journal
10. Discouragement about the lack of progress in preaching the gospel
11. Lack of a media policy to guide local and central efforts
12. Lack of a focus issue around which the Church could rally
13. A lack of growth in membership, the Work in a holding pattern, stuck in neutral
14. Attrition in membership
15. A sense that the Church is floundering
16. Concerns about finances
17. Criticism has become a part of our Church culture
18. The formation of various splinter groups
19. Lack of loyalty to United (doesn't matter which church group you attend with)
20. Concerns about the Elders Forum with its negative comments, contention, and debate

Mr. Pinelli mentioned at the end of the meeting that the Regional Pastors, who are not Council members, would be meeting to draft a recommendation to the Council about how to deal with the problems and concerns. Though I didn't comment in the meeting, I would like to pass along to you my thoughts on this subject for your consideration in preparing a proposal for the Council.

SN COMMENT: John Anderson did well in producing this concise summary of members and minister's concerns. He did not blame anyone, nor did he shy away from telling the truth—even though it may have been unpopular. He could have taken the easy road, and just ignored the whole thing.

ANDERSON: The problems and concerns listed above are very real and are on many peoples minds; however, they fail to address the underlying reason for the problems. From my perspective the major underlying problem is that there are within the Church two fundamentally opposed and irreconcilably different approaches to administration. One approach is to have a centrally structured

Church and Work and the other is to have a locally structured Church and Work. The one represents our historical roots in the Worldwide Church of God, and the example and teaching of Mr. Armstrong. The other approach is similar to that taken by the 7th Day Church of God with local congregations being essentially autonomous but organized by means of a general conference.

In coming out of the Worldwide Church of God, we were essentially unified on doctrinal issues; however, there were and are two different views on why the problem existed and how to deal with it. One group came out solely because of heresy and didn't have a problem with the hierarchical form of government in the WCG. They viewed the problem in the WCG as being the result of unconverted people who abused their positions of authority. Under this view the problem arose from the fact that the WCG leaders stopped submitting to Christ's leadership over them. The solution was to separate and reconstitute the Church and go on doing the Work in a unified, centrally organized manner.

SN COMMENT: John Anderson's analysis is good. Many of the people in the UCG-AIA (and the GCG and PCG) really do believe the only major problem in the WCG was the person in charge. Now, we would like to point out the problem with this thinking:

The theory of hierarchical government is that each person can know he is doing God's will by obeying the person "above" him in the hierarchy, and the person "at the top" will be doing God's will because he obeys God. That way, the whole organization will be doing God's will. But they just said that the problem with the WCG was that the leaders were not obeying God! And, it is obvious to all that God did **not** quickly correct them.

If our own WCG experience shows us that God does not always correct the man at the top of that hierarchy, how can we be sure that the man at the top of our hierarchies is following God? If the Eternal left it up to individuals to read their Bibles, pray and decide which organization to attend, does not He also hold them responsible for what they do

in that organization?

ANDERSON: The other group viewed the problem in the WCG as being its hierarchical form of government. Their solution was to separate and organize the Church with a totally different form of government, a democracy with power vested in the local congregations and flowing up to a conference of elders and eventually to a Council.

In Indianapolis a compromise was created that encompassed parts of both systems. A central administrative office was established under the authority of a Council to handle such matters as ministerial salaries and to care for the day to day operational duties. However, local congregations were encouraged to collect funds locally and incorporate locally with local boards or set up local councils without taking the step of local incorporation. Some went away from Indianapolis thinking there would be an essentially centrally-organized Church and Work and others went away thinking there would be an essentially locally organized Church and Work. This all sounded fine in theory, but when the practicalities of actually carrying out the functioning of the Church and Work began to be implemented there was immediate conflict.

SN COMMENT: Everyone wanted to cooperate at this conference, so they were more than willing to agree with ideas that seemed close to what they thought was necessary—hoping that changes could be made later. We also believe that a certain amount of deception may have occurred—individuals pretending to agree to ideas that they later planned to change. **Our Savior will judge it all in the end.** The important issue is that many of the people who attended Indianapolis together are now no longer in agreement.

ANDERSON: The Home Office sought to establish uniform policies and a centrally organized media Work. Others in local congregations began to develop local programs such as cable access TV, local evangelistic efforts and local church buildings. These approaches produced immediate conflict. The advantages of a central structure are uniformity in content and approach, efficiency in production and maximizing the use of skills and facilities. All of these advantages are undermined when local groups are free to develop their own programs. In addition, the funding

needed to make a central organization work is not available when local congregations are free to make independent decisions because the funds end up being retained locally for various local projects. Those who favor local initiatives feel the central organization is stifling and too restrictive. On the other hand those who favor the central approach see the local programs as an inefficient and conflicting effort that will detract from and hinder what could be accomplished centrally.

The inherent conflict that exists between the local and the central approaches pervades the entire organization. It affects the collection and receipting of donations, the accounting of funds, the establishing of salaries, the ownership of church buildings, the approach to preaching the gospel, the number of the field ministers needed, who is in charge of a local congregation, the transfer of paid ministers, and so forth. By setting up things in the way it was done, the organization was preprogrammed to fight with itself.

The attempt to forge a workable compromise between the local and central approaches isn't working. It is only leading to greater and greater conflict and bitterness. Until this fundamental issue is resolved the United Church of God will not have the peace, harmony and unity that we all so desperately desire to see. Therefore, it needs to be clearly decided whether the Church will be centrally or locally organized. The sooner the better for all concerned.

SN COMMENT: We agree that the combined central and local organization in the UCG-AIA is not working. A central hierarchy and a local board cannot both have authority over the same local congregation. We believe it is possible to have both local and central operations, but the central operation must either be clearly in charge of the local operations or it must exist to serve them. Many business and other church organizations have a central site to serve local organizations. For example, a local congregation can be responsible for collecting its own money, taking care of its local buildings and expenses, preaching the gospel locally, and helping the local needy—yet it pledges a certain amount of money to central organizations that produce literature and sponsor gospel preaching in other countries. Local organizations that are not satisfied with the service of the central organization will simply

stop supporting it.

We do not believe that the conflict in the UCG-AIA is as much over the issue of 'local vs. central' as much as it is, "Who will be in charge?" **If people believe that the Eternal works through each one of His people by His spirit, they would be content to use the resources that He sends to them.** Those who believe that the Eternal is showing them they should get involved with local projects, should carry them forward as time, talent, and funds permit. Those who believe the Eternal wants them to work through a central organization should contribute there. Those at the head of the central organization should make the best use of what the Eternal sends them. Everyone needs to be concerned about using their "talents" effectively (Matt 25:14-46), not about acquiring someone else's talents (money and members).

ANDERSON: Should we not consider working out a peaceful and amicable separation between the two groups? Rather than beat each other over the head, shouldn't we accept the fact that these two views are irreconcilable and look for a way to disengage those who hold opposing views from each other? There is a clear Biblical precedent for this in Acts 15:37-39 where Paul and Barnabas could not agree about using John Mark. "And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other..." Mr. Armstrong's separation from the 7th Day Church of God is another example of this.

As it is, we are faced with a number of smaller groups and individuals splitting off in a piecemeal fashion. Rather than see the Church fragment into little pieces and individuals, wouldn't it be better to make a clean separation in a decent and orderly fashion showing love and respect to one another. Wouldn't it be better to avoid all the bitterness and nasty recriminations that go along with trying to justify one position or the other and just accept the fact that the two groups don't agree on how to best administer the Church and the Work. God wants us to have love, joy and peace. None of these are being promoted under the current circumstances. Wouldn't it be better to separate so that each group can wholeheartedly do what they believe God has called them to do in the way they believe will best serve Him?

Though a separation will bring its own difficulties (especially if it turns out

to be a nearly 50/50 split), still it would seem to be better than continuing to fight with each other as is now the case. As it is, neither group can truly get on with the Work they see as being possible. Two smaller groups that are truly unified internally will surely accomplish more than continuing in the way things are now going. If it turns out that only a small fraction of the Church desires one or the other of the two approaches, then the smaller group will have a choice to either accept the approach of the larger group or leave and form their own organization. In either case it should once, and for all, resolve the ongoing conflict.

SN COMMENT: We must commend Anderson again on his use of Acts 15:37-39 and Armstrong's separation to show that the Church of God has not always been under one human authority. (Our paper **How Does The Eternal Govern Through Humans?** shows many Biblical cases of the Eternal working through different men at the same time.) We agree that separating would be better than more years of disunity and continual infighting.

But we also must ask the question, is the offer of a peaceable separation an admission that the Eternal does not work through hierarchies. Think about it. If the Eternal does really work primarily through one organization—if people in all other organizations are either unconverted or lukewarm 'Laodiceans,' then how can a hierarchical church knowingly let a large number of brethren depart into such a condition? Does not the hierarchy kick them out in disgrace, rather than offer a peaceful separation? Obviously, we in *Servants' News* do not believe that any of the above things should be done, because we do not believe that the Bible teaches that the Eternal governs His church through a one human hierarchy. But if someone really believes in hierarchy, how can they also justify letting their congregation leave to follow "false teachers.?"

Is it possible that the hierarchicalists would like to see the "local control" people leave, before too many members begin to realize how the Eternal really does govern his people? In our experience dealing with many different church groups, we find it very common for hierarchical congregation to try to prevent their members from having contact with other brethren that can explain a different concept of church government for the Bible. We do not want to judge anyone's motives, but we hope everyone in the UCG will think about this. Are the hierarchicalists driven to separate so they can do a work, or

do they want to separate now before their financial base is eroded?

ANDERSON: Other thoughts:

- I Corinthians 14:33 "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." The United Church of God is a confusing organization. We collect tithes locally and we collect tithes centrally. We account for expenses centrally and we account for expenses locally. Trying to develop a unified audit is going to be a very expensive and complicated job if it is even possible. Some are using a calendar year for their accounting which is different from the Home Offices fiscal year. Some congregations have and are setting aside funds for a church building while their pastor's salaries and expenses are being paid by the Home Office. Some congregations are being very frugal so there will be more available to preach the gospel, but others are not being frugal at all so they are using up what others were trying to dedicate to preaching the gospel. We are incorporated centrally and we also have congregations that are incorporated separately on a local basis. Some are looking for a central direction for a media plan. Others are looking for the freedom to do whatever they chose to do locally. Some are calling for acceptance of diversity and others are looking at the Biblical instruction to strive for unity.

- I Corinthians 1:10 "...that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." When it comes to administrative and organizational matters the United Church of God is far from being of the same mind and same judgment. There are horrible divisions among us starting at the Council of Elders and proceeding throughout the Church. At the Council of Elders meetings in Arcadia in May of 1997 in the discussion about local church buildings, it was stated that some local congregations are going to build or purchase a building no matter what the Council says. That hardly sounds like being of the same mind. Comments to the effect that we gain strength from diversity run counter to the admonition to be perfectly joined together in the same mind.

- The history of the 7th Day Church of God clearly demonstrates that little can be done when the Church is

divided into locally autonomous congregations. No one congregation has enough resources to do much. Without a strong central organization there is no way to bring the Church's resources together to accomplish a major work. Their history also demonstrates that little can be accomplished when the Church is divided into warring factions.

cc: D. Hulme, R. Pinelli, J. Franks, and D. Horchak

SN COMMENT: On a worldwide basis, the various branches of the church of God 7th day have over 100,000 people—some say over 200,000. No one knows how many more groups have split off from them that maintain similar doctrines. No one knows how many people in any congregation are really converted and how many are just "acting religious." The Church of God 7th Day has probably baptized more people than the WCG—without breaking up families and friends due to "disfellowshipment."

The seven churches in Revelation were obviously divided on doctrine. It would be good if they would have "all spoken the same thing"—especially if they all spoke the truth. But Christ did not set a man or a council over them to unify them—he told them all to repent and said he would individually judge them. The only authority that the UCG-AIA council has is that given to it by the elders. There was no great sign or voice from heaven indicating that this council was the Eternal's governing body on Earth. None of those elders promised to remain in the UCG-AIA or send their money to it for the rest of their lives. If a local congregation believes that it is the Eternal's will for them to have a building, why should a group of men hundreds of miles away decide for them that it is not the Eternal's will?

Those leaders in the UCG-AIA that are trying to unify the organization under their own control really need to think about how they will answer for themselves in a day of judgement. Do they really believe that the Eternal specifically selected them for this job? Or do they believe that men's votes (largely on the basis of name-recognition) give them authority to do what they want until they are replaced? They do not need to answer these questions to you or I, but they do need to answer them to themselves and to the Eternal.

The problems John Anderson described are very real. Everyone needs to ask themselves: am I going to help make it better or help make it worse?

—Norman S. Edwards

New Article Available on Christmas Practices: The Reason for the Season

The last of the Thanksgiving dinner left-overs are sent out to the trash, and the background music at stores and malls switches to the sounds of the season. The advertisements hit us with full force, and even our news programs remind us of how many shopping days there are until Christmas. And the yearly lament rises up from Christian circles, "Whatever happened to the old-fashioned Christmas? It's all become so crass and worldly." So out come the bumper stickers and T-shirts with slogans like:

LET'S PUT CHRIST BACK IN CHRISTMAS

JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Most Christians are convinced that Christmas has been corrupted in recent times by all the "worldly" people in our American society. They yearn for what they feel must have been the "good old days"—perhaps in the time of the "Waltons," or at least farther back, in the days of "Little House on the Prairie." The holiday would have been "holy." Families would gather around the hearth to hear Dad read the Christmas story. "Worldly" amusements and revelry would have no place in that simpler time. It would just be hymn-sings around the popcorn-bedecked fir tree.

The article we are offering, *The Reason for the Season* checks this nostalgic picture against reality.

Walking back through historical records from the present to the time of Christ, it becomes quickly obvious that the "good old days" were not so good after all! We give a few examples here:

Christmas in the 1800's

A common Christmas practice during the 1800's were "mumming plays". These have nothing to do with mothers or mummies, but were wild dress-up occasions, including masks so people would not know who is who. Here is a sample speech by the character *OLD FATHER CHRISTMAS* in a typical

"mumming play" of the 1800's:

Here comes I, Father Christmas,
welcome, or welcome not,

I hope Old Father Christmas will
never be forgot.

Although it is Old Father
Christmas, he has but a short time to
stay, I am come to show you plea-
sure, and pass the time away.

I have been far, I have been near,
And now, **I am come to drink a
pot of your Christmas beer;**

And, if it is your best, I hope in
heaven your soul will rest.

If it is a pot of your small,

We cannot show you no
Christmas at all.

[From *A Righte Merrie Christmas*
by John Ashton]

The English here is a little hard to understand. The last line is an unnecessary double-negative, a modern day equivalent might be "we ain't gonna give you no Christmas." The main point of this section is that Father Christmas—the holiday personified, offers a religious blessing based on whether he gets good beer or not. The whole emphasis was on "getting" and partying, not on any Bible teaching or story of Jesus.

Christmas in the 1600's

The death of infant Princess Mary in September 1607 did not interfere with James I keeping Christmas right royally in that year. There were masques and theatricals—nay, the king wanted a play on Christmas night—and card-playing went on for high sums, the queen losing [the sum of] 300 pounds on the eve of Twelfth night. [Ashton]

Gambling was a fairly common practice at Christmas time during these years. In some places, Christmas was the only time when gambling was legal. Was James I an exceptionally evil king? He certainly had his difficulties, but he seems little worse than most of the rest of the kings. In fact, he was the king that commissioned the translation of the King James Bible!

Christmas in the 700's

There exists a letter from the year 742, in which St. Boniface, the "Apostle to the Germans," complains to Pope Zacharias that his labors to convert the heathen Franks and Alemans—Germanic tribes—were being handicapped by the escapades of the Christian Romans back home. The Franks and the Alemans were on the threshold of becoming Christians, but their conversion was retarded by their enjoyment of lurid carnivals. When Boniface tried to turn them away from such customs, they argued that they had seen them celebrated under the very shadow of St. Peter's at Rome [the cathedral that was the central headquarters of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church]. Embarrassed and sorry, Pope Zacharias replied to Boniface, admitting that the people of the city of Rome misbehaved very badly at Christmas time. There was very little he could do about it; however, the following year he succeeded in inducing the Holy Synod of Rome to forbid the Romans, under penalty of law, from setting such bad examples.

Alas for human frailty! The ban had to be repeated over and over, for centuries. [From 4000 YEARS OF CHRISTMAS by Earl Count]

You Need to Know

The Reason for the Season contains much more information on Christmas customs and goes into their origins. It concludes with Scriptures showing the Eternal's opinion of borrowing other's religious practices to worship Him. If you participate in Christmas customs or have friends who do, you need to understand this holiday that is such a dominant force for one month every year. (That's 8% of everyone's life!)

Please write to Servants' News at the address nearest you on page 2, or in the USA simply call 517-543-5544 any time and ask for *The Reason for the Season*.

—Pam Dewey & Norman S. Edwards



News from Local Congregations



Oklahoma Conference Schedule

In the *Footsteps of the Messiah* conference schedule has been announced. This Bible Study Seminar of **December 25-28** will feature speakers: Ronald L. Dart (Christian Educational Ministries), Norman Edwards (Servants' News), Joseph Good (Hatikva Ministries), Dean Wheelock (Hebrew Roots) and Ray Wooten (United Christian Ministries). Jim Rector (Cornerstone Publications) will speak on the Sabbath.

- 24th - Wednesday Evening:** Get acquainted fellowship
- 25th - Thursday 8:45 AM:** Sessions start: each of the 5 speakers will have about an hour with Questions & Answers and a break.
- 25th - Thursday Evening:** Family Fun Show
- 26th - Friday 8:45 AM:** Sessions start (schedule similar to Thursday).
- 26th - Friday Evening:** Opening of the Sabbath (Joe Good) and Hymn-Along (Possibly with a famous guest singer)
- 27th - Sabbath Morning:** Worship Service (**Jim Rector**)
- 27th - Sabbath Afternoon:** Panel discussion among all speakers.
- 27th - Saturday Night:** Family Dance (probably Country & Western)
- 28th - Sunday 8:45 AM:** Sessions start, each speaker will wrap up his/her topic. We hope to end by 5 PM.

We encourage you to bring skits, songs, and other fun things to the **Family Fun Show**. If you would like to participate, call Tim or Angie Kelley at 903-769-2750. This is most important for those who may need special staging or musical backup. However, if you decide on something at the "last minute", just be sure to contact the Kelley's on Thursday some time. Everyone will be given an opportunity.

At press time, over 70 rooms were already booked for this conference—with an **estimated attendance of 300**. See last month's *Servants' News* for more details on the accommodations. If you would like to stay at the Seminar location, please contact **Western Hills at 800-654-8240** soon. For information on other places in the area to stay, please contact Norm Brumm at 918-479-8111. If you need more information regarding the seminar, please call or write: Mitchell Smith, 405 N. Main St., Lindale, Tx 75771; 903-882-7446.

Kansas City Youth Retreat

The Heartland Church of God is sponsoring a Youth Retreat **December 26-28, 1997** in Kansas City, Missouri. It is open to all Sabbath keeping youth ages 13 and up. Activities will include a dance, volleyball, basketball, game room, Sabbath Services, pizza party, and an all-night social with games and movies. The cost is \$15.00 per person. For an application and further information, please contact Roger and Laurinda Armer (phone 816-356-2436 or e-mail shemp@swbell.net) or Rick and Paula Frazee (phone 816-461-3252 or e-mail rickfrazee@aol.com) by December 10, 1997.

Sherrod Confirmed to Australia

Dr. Rick Sherrod's trip to Australia has been confirmed for June 1998. He will be visiting Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. [See Sept-Oct *Servants' News* for trip details.] Accommodation has been found for him. But we need monies for his flight and advertising.

For this purpose we are setting up a special bank account to take donations toward this worthwhile cause. If you are interested we can send you a free bank deposit book. It will contain no serial number making it impossible for us to track who contributes (unless you specify that you would prefer that). We

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Servants' News gladly accepts news of local congregations, conferences, and other events of interest to the family of the Eternal. We prefer items via e-mail or diskette, but will accept typed or hand-written material as well. We will fix spelling and grammar mistakes for you! Please send all items to PO Box 220, Charlotte, Michigan 48813, e-mail to 75260.1603@compuserve.com.

must hear from you as soon as possible. Planning must commence immediately. Write to or send donations to: History Research Projects (2nd account), GPO Box 864, Sydney 2001.

Friends of the Sabbath, California

Friends of the Sabbath will be sponsoring a January 9-10, 1998 meeting in **Irvine, California** at the New Community Church, 2025 Alton Parkway. The meeting begins Friday at 7:30 P.M. Sabbath services will be held at 10:30 A.M. Ron Dart and Jon Garnant will be speaking. For details, contact Dale or Rosemary Stogner at 714-730-3561.

Why is Graham Hymnal Stalled?

I need help! I am sending this message to those of God's people who have expressed an interest in our hymnal project.

Here is the situation. We have produced a hymnal for the churches of God who need one. It's good, and it's finished, and has been since April. We chose to include 29 Dwight Armstrong hymns because they are biblical and

because they mean so much to God's people.

We needed permission from the Worldwide Church of God to do this, and so I submitted such a request to Joseph Tkach, Jr., in November, 1996. **The reply was cordial, and that church's board gave us permission in December 1996.** All that remained was to work out royalty agreements. I submitted what I thought was a reasonable proposal for royalties in March 1997. At that point, things could have been resolved in a week, and you would have had the hymnal in April.

To make a long story short, for reasons which I do not understand, **the legal department of WCG tells me when I call them that everything is OK and they just have to get an agreement out to me to sign, but they don't actually get around to sending one.** I call them regularly, and fax and write. I would think they would be so tired of me that they would wrap things up! I will keep contacting them, but I have reached the point where I feel as though I have done all that I can do, and things seem to have gotten stuck. It is interesting that UCG was able to reach a similar agreement with them, and they had their hymnal at the feast this year. It was a thrill for me to hear my hymns sung and liked by thousands of people, and I am happy that we in UCG have a hymnal, but I still see a need for this other one.

Of course, we have prayed about this project from the beginning, and God has blessed it in many ways. But we have reached a point where the **only** solution is to enlist your fervent prayers to God that this project be completed and put into your hands. In some ways it is insignificant next to requests that God would heal people from life-threatening illness, but in other ways I think it is very important and directly connected to his end-time work. And so, all you friendly people who have been so supportive so far, please continue to pray for this project, or add us to your prayer list. Please ask him to remove whatever is blocking the completion of this project, or to move the right people to do whatever is called for at this point. Once we receive permission, Mr. Jim Hopkins is ready to put it into print. I have given him the opportunity to back out of this

project gracefully, given all the delays, but he still thinks it's important.

I have poured many hours of effort into this hymnal, and it is uniquely tailored to those who "keep the law and have the testimony of Jesus". I seemed to have reached the limits of what I can do. Let's put it even more into God's hands. Please help!

Many thanks,

—Mark Graham, Lakewood, Ohio
216-529-1380

Things like this can seldom be proved because there is usually no written evidence—but we cannot help but wonder if old friends now in the UCG and WCG did not make a deal on this one. Graham's hymnal was ready to print long before the UCG-AIA hymnal, but somehow he did not get an agreement, and the UCG-AIA did. Is someone trying to make sure that an independent hymnal does not become a "standard" that would make movement around the various corporate and independent "Churches of God" one step easier?

—NSE

1998 Sabbath Campers Fellowship

We are currently in the process of planning campouts for the summer of 1998. At this time, we are planning two—one somewhere in the Tennessee area and the other in the southern Michigan area. As many of you probably know, we at SCF desire to celebrate the things we share in common—faith in God and obedience to Him and the Sabbath. We encourage tolerance, godly love and peace allowing God's Holy Spirit to join us as brethren in the casual and informal atmosphere of the campground. We hope that many of you, whether independent or affiliated with an organization, will feel free to participate!

If camping appeals to you, please try to join us for the upcoming camping season. If you are unable or don't wish to camp, perhaps you can join us for fellowship and/or Sabbath services. Our motto remains **"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another"** (John 13:35).

If you would like to receive our newsletter and perhaps join us at one of

the campouts, please send us your name, address, and telephone number and we will forward our newsletter as soon as it is available.

If the planned campouts are too far, why not form a Sabbath Campers Fellowship group in your own area!

Al and Jeanne Raines

5415 Torrey Rd.

Flint, MI 48507-3811

Ph: (810) 232-2288

Fax: (810)232-5562

E-mail: weeder@bignet.net

"Hearing God" Conference

The Church Council of Wisconsin sponsored a conference on "Hearing God", September 20th, 1997. The Church Council was founded by Elder **John Purvins**. Four speakers from different backgrounds were invited to speak on the subject, and then they all participated in a panel—where Norman Edwards joined them. The meeting was opened with 3 songs sung by members of **God's Church in the Appleton-Green Bay Area**, an independent Sabbatarian congregation for nearly 30 years. Ten of the members sang the opening songs, and five played guitars. It was lively, yet respectable and enjoyable.

The first speaker was Augustine Serafini, a Catholic Priest and Author. He said that people hear God through many things: Scripture, tradition, the cosmos, church teaching, liturgy, music, the sacraments, prayer, meditation, religious art, other "holy reading" (in addition to the Bible), sacred art, conscience, and miraculous signs. He did mention that his Church hierarchy retains the power to decide if an individual is really hearing from God in matters that "affect the public order." He cited a personal example of when he thought a colleague really was hearing from God, but then later his Church determined that he was not.

Messianic Jewish Rabbi James Schmadl was the second speaker. His emphasis was on hearing God through the Scriptures. He explained at length how meticulous the scribes were in copying the scriptures: if they found one mistake, they discarded the page it was on; if they found two mistakes, they discarded the whole scroll. At one

Continued on page 37

Quotes from Ronald Dart Letter on Unity, Evangelism and Role of the Church

Ronald Dart has been a long-time leader in Church of God groups. He served as a pastor, writer, head of a college and of the ministry for the Worldwide Church of God. In 1979, he went to the Church of God, International, where he served in nearly every imaginable capacity except making broadcasts. Many of the hundreds of tapes, booklets, lessons, and articles he produced while at CGI are still being distributed.

Ron Dart left the CGI in 1995 when it became clear that Garner Ted Armstrong was again involved in sexual misconduct. While some are unhappy that he cited health reasons instead of his real reason for leaving, he nevertheless had the courage to leave and start out anew.

Rather than attempt to establish another hierarchy or typical "church organization", he founded Christian Educational Ministries (CEM). He set about the business of producing materials that local congregations could use for teaching and evangelism. Some have claimed that he was secretly planning to build another hierarchy, but as far as we can see, he has held to his original plan. At one time, he talked about establishing a rather extensive qualification process for congregations to be affiliated with his ministry. We wrote him (as did others) and said this would essentially create another hierarchy since he would be the one in charge of the process and could simply disqualify a congregation any time he disagreed with it. Ron Dart listened, and scrapped the plan.

This is not to say that we agree with everything that Ron Dart does or teaches. But he probably does not agree with everything that we have done and taught. For that matter, we do not agree with everything that we have done and taught in the past. We are all learning.

What is important, is that Ron Dart and those who work with him are willing to work with others who are willing to work with them. They do not place a lot of demands or insist on controlling others. Following are quotes from Ron Dart's letter to brethren dated November 1, 1997 (emphasis was added by SN Editor):

So many people, lamenting the division that has racked our churches over the past few years, have expressed a yearning for the day when we can all be together again... and most people are beginning to feel it is a vain hope.

But what I came to realize at the feast this year is that it is not as vain as it might seem. In truth, we *were* "all back together again" at the feast in Kissimmee. There were people there from nearly every corner of the church and **representing all manner of doctrinal nuances, and yet we met in harmony and peace.** Once again this year, I was struck by the fact that **so many people with so much diversity could get along just fine if left alone to do so.** We shared music and worship together, we learned together in workshops and seminars, we ate pie and ice cream together and played games together.

It seems as clear as crystal to me that it is entirely possible for us **to all be together again as long as we don't fall in the old exclusivism.** We don't have to be together administratively. We don't have to merge organizationally. We don't even need perfect doctrinal agreement. **All we have to do is accept one another.** I know now that it can be done. It is only a matter of scale. Maybe if we can all just keep working at it, God will bless us and something truly wonderful can happen.

Increasingly, I am becoming convinced that we make a mistake when we engage in "church building". I don't mean physical buildings, I mean setting out **to build a church by bringing in members.** Perhaps it is not too technical a point to note that it is God who adds to the church, not us.

But when we argue doctrine and try to "convert" people to our group, we are merely proselyting and building a following at the expense of others.... *It is not our objective to build the church, but to make disciples....* It may come as a surprise to you when I say that **the church is not the primary instrument of evangelism. That role is left to those individuals who have the desire and the**

gifts to carry it out. It is not necessarily even a function of the ministry, because many non-ministers have been very effective in carrying the word to friends, relatives, and community.

"So what is the church all about?" you ask. "We can't build it, and it is not even the primary instrument of evangelism." It is simple, really. **Jesus will build His church out of the disciples created by the evangelism of His disciples.** And the work of the church has at least two major thrusts. One is to be a **support group** for the disciples and the other is to **strengthen those disciples** and to prepare them for every good work.

The church should first love and care for its members and those who come to it for help. The church should then work on "perfecting the saints." The job of all the ministry of the church is to edify the body of Christ "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). Why is this so important? Because **it is the individual who grows to the stature of Christ who can carry the Word forward** to the next generation.

Don't misunderstand. I am not saying that **evangelism** is the work of a chosen few. I am saying it **is the work of the chosen many.** The many who are educated in the Word, strong in the faith, who care about people, who reflect the love of Jesus in their lives and work.

This is why we at CEM have chosen the **emphasis on education**, even at the Feast of Tabernacles. Those of us who have gone down the road before you have an obligation to teach, exhort, explain, warn and help those who are coming along behind us. This is also why we chose as our vision statement, a paraphrase of 2Timothy 3:17, "That the man of God may be *proficient and equipped* for every good work."

You may contact CEM at PO Box 560, Whitehouse, Texas 75791; 903-509-1139; or cem@ballistic.com. 

"Feast 1997" from page 1

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **who desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, **to be testified in due time** (1Tim2:1-6).

Our Father is righteous, just, holy, and perfect. We are not. But, he wants everyone to be saved. He is looking for the day when everyone will attend the Feast of Tabernacles—and at that time He will punish those who do not (Zech 14:16-19). He understands the confusion that is occurring here on the earth today. Before we conclude that the Eternal condemns people for keeping the Feast differently than we do, we might ask ourselves "What does the Eternal think of people who do not keep the Feast of Tabernacles at all?"

Obviously, there are many people who know nothing of the Feast of Tabernacles, so they will not be judged harshly for not keeping it (Luke 12:47-48). On the other hand, how many Jews and Christians are there who know about the Feast days but do not keep them? Some are prevented from keeping them by physical circumstances. Some would like to keep them, but fail to set aside time and money. But how many are simply not that interested?

We need to be thankful for all of the people who sincerely keep the Feast wherever they are. Those who make time for these days are more likely to learn what the Eternal has in mind for them. We should also be thankful that most Feast of Tabernacles sites are open to whomever would like to come. Twenty years ago, it was very difficult for a person to keep the Feast with other brethren if they were not a member of a big organization. Furthermore, with the growth of numerous independent sites, it is now possible for brethren to go and participate in the Feast, rather than just listening to messages. This year, over 2000 people (whom we know of) attended independent Feast sites—sites

where the vast majority of people attending are not members of any one organization.

In this article, we report mainly on independent Feast of Tabernacles sites—not because the others are unimportant—but because the independents are the ones who send us reports of their Feasts. Also, most of the sites sponsored by a larger organization will be covered in their own publications. Another good source for coverage of all sites is *The Journal, News of the Churches of God*, PO Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755 (Send \$10 for six issues, ask to start with the October issue for Feast reports).

Everyone Participates at Burr Oak

About 100 people met at Burr Oak State Park in Ohio for the Feast sponsored by *Servants' News*. Some shared their Feast between this site and another site. Some were able to come only for part of the Feast, but all were welcome. A family-like atmosphere pervaded throughout. The weather was pleasant—there was no rain or snow during the Feast.

Every effort was made to ask "What does the Eternal want us to learn this Feast?" The speaking and activity schedules were not finalized until well into the Feast—making use of the various gifts and ideas of the brethren. The Wednesday night opening message mentioned that brethren will not be able to effectively preach the gospel to others if they only think of themselves as "former members of this or that group." Rather it is essential that we see ourselves as people with Bible truth to live and to share with the rest of the world. Sharing our truth with others will require us to learn to speak so they can understand, rather than developing a more and more separate terminology of our own.

Since most of the people attending the Feast did not know each other, Mike Riggs suggested that the first service be used for everyone to stand up and introduce themselves and mention something about what they hoped to learn from the Feast. Mike Riggs facilitated the session. People who did not know each other became friends. Everyone agreed that this was an excellent use of a service.

Brethren suggested topics for Bible

studies during the Feast. Some suggested a day of special prayers for the sick. The barbecues and many of the other activities were all the result of brethren seeing what resources were available and using their talents to turn their ideas into real service to others.

Most services had a scripture reading followed by a brief open discussion session. Even children participated in some of the readings and discussions. The scriptures were Matthew 6 and 7, 1Corinthians 13, Romans 12, Isaiah 11 and 12, Revelation 12. Also, 5 to 10 minutes were reserved after each main message for audience questions and discussions. Nearly all were considered helpful and edifying—there were only a very few cases where people appeared to be "pushing" their own personal view of the scriptures.

For one service, the main hall was not available, so the men and women met separately. Norman Edwards spoke to the men about how a man should encourage his wife to have a strong relationship with the Eternal and to use her spiritual gifts, but without relinquishing his position as head of the family. Pam Dewey spoke to the women about how Sabbatarian women have been and can now be lights to their families and to the world. (Acts 16:13 is an example of women meeting together, Titus 2:3-4 commands older women to teach younger women.)

Two interactive Bible studies were held. One was on local gospel preaching. Nearly everyone agreed that there is much less trust of large-scale corporate religions today than there was years ago. Pastors of congregations of all types report a large number of people traveling from one group to another, seeking for truth. By making friends in the community, people find opportunity to share what they know. Some have visited other religious services in addition to their own, and had opportunity to share many Bible truths. We must realize that this should all be done to teach-truth, not to "get people to come to our group."

The other interactive Bible study was on "How Has God Worked in Your Life?" Most of the brethren had one or more stories to tell about miracles that the Eternal had performed for them. Some miracles involved healings, some deliverance from dangers, some deliv-

erance from evil spirits, and others were examples of divine guidance in someone's life.

Other **messages** included: *The Story of Samson* and *My Experience with Local Radio Outreach* by Houston Holland; *Local Congregation Experience* by James Burns; *Joyful Music* and *Learn To Be Still* by George Dewey; *Music: A Christian Priority* and *Trusting God Rather than Man* by Darrell West; *Feast-keeping* and *Barnabas Ministries* by Alan Ruth; *God Works Through Imperfection*, *Meaning of Feast* and *Where We Go From Here?* by Norman Edwards.

Special Music was performed by: Keely Salisbury, Darrell and Dustin West, Roxanne Urbanek, Kay Waggoner, Pam Dewey and Marleen Edwards. **Daily music** included older standard hymns, Dwight Armstrong hymns and modern praise and worship music. The music was led by George and Pam Dewey and Marleen Edwards; accompanied by: Joel (bass guitar), Josh (percussion), and Norman (keyboards) Edwards.

Feast Activities included barbecues, a 3-mile nature hike, family volleyball and football games, variety show, sing-a-long and game night, family swim night, and youth bible classes.

Upon leaving this Feast, several people independently told us that after being at this Feast, they will have a difficult time going back to an "only sit and listen" Feast in future years. We hope that other groups will think more about using the Feast more to help train real ambassadors and servants for Christ.

—Norman S. Edwards

Great Feast in Gatlinburg

Over 350 people attended United Christian Ministries' Gatlinburg, Tennessee Feast site. In my opinion, it was GREAT—it lived up to the many raving compliments it received last year. Here's why:

Grace /Gifting: Ray Wooten's leadership of the site was Christ/grace centered. Other speakers followed his lead and plenty of fine material was presented to encourage all **without apology** in celebrating the outpouring of God's grace as illustrated in the many themes and ultimate fulfill-

ment's of the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

Rejoice: One of Gatlinburg's **R**strong points was its focus on praise as we came together to rejoice in our common ground in the Messiah and the Holy Days that celebrate His ministry. Wes and Linda White hosted a wonderful party for the LikeMinds electronic mail group that evolved into a sing-a-long featuring Wes and Richard Fox on guitar, Rosemary Stogner helping us through new songs and plenty of joyous Maranatha music bouncing through the vaulted pine log cabin. I overheard Ray in the back say something to the effect, "How can you not be at peace with one another when you eat, drink and sing together." The use of music to "join hands" in our worship was effective and appreciated. Who knows, dancing may be just around the corner for more CoG sites. Seeing so many "face to face" who had prior to been visualized around an e.mail address was another reason to rejoice as well!

Encouragement: From the hand **E**count on the First Day it seemed most were active in Home Fellowships. We were welcomed, respected and empowered throughout the Feast. The speakers encouraged us in our celebration of the Sabbath, Holy Days and in our fellowship together. Youths were included and encouraged throughout the Festival. Greetings from other sites kept us connected and encouraged. It was a positively charged Feast site.

Atmosphere: Yes, Gatlinburg was a bit crowded this year due to (what was supposed to be) the fall peak season and FOT overlapping, but the site was still much more cozy and secluded than its city site counterparts. The Smokies formed a beautiful backdrop to our coming up to, "the mountain of the Lord". Southern hospitality was in fine form. The site was small enough to continually run into brethren frequenting restaurants, amusements, etc. I'm not much on tourist traps but even I would give Gatlinburg high marks for a FOT location. If UCM opts to go elsewhere next year I hope they give another independent ministry first crack at their slot.

Torah: The restoration of a grace-based focus (so well defined in the "New Testament") only added fuel in our rejoicing in the Torah (God's law/instructions). The extremes

of legalism and license gave way to a balanced approach in our celebration of these dynamic jewels embedded in the heart of a Torah-observant lifestyle.

I really feel that many in the non-corporate circles have turned a corner so to speak. The Feast reports so far seem to be bearing this out (not that we still don't have our hot buttons). The direction of many of the non-corporate ministries represented here on the LikeMinds's and Interact mailing lists has me in eager anticipation for Feast '98. After I concluded my slide presentation with the customary, "Next year in Jerusalem," John Merritt came up and asked, "Well, what about it?" Actually something I've been giving more and more thought to but was thinking more along the lines of a multi-ministry, non-aligned Jerusalem Feast in the year 2000. (There would be no offering baskets, just discreet boxes or direct mail to the various ministries.) Maybe this is an idea who's time has come and we can begin the discussion at the upcoming "Footsteps..." seminar in Wagoner, Oklahoma, since so many of us will be together there.

Gatlinburg was great because when we "lift up" the Great God all our ego-centered static fades in the distance. A well deserved "**THANK YOU!**" to Ray Wooten, the UCM staff and everyone who made Gatlinburg a success.

—Todd Drawbaugh
Myersville (Frederick), Maryland

Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri

The Feast of Tabernacles sponsored by Cornerstone Publications at Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri was a resounding success! Approximately 400 scattered brethren, some from as far away as Germany, Spain, Canada and Puerto Rico, gathered under sparkling blue Missouri skies for one of the most marvelous Festivals in memory. Both services and accommodations were hosted by Marina Bay Resort, which served as an ideal location for the Feast this year.

Services were held every day except Monday. We were privileged to hear a wide variety of messages from 10 different speakers. The messages were powerful. Those given by Mordakhai Joseph, Jim Wolfe and Helm Hobrath were just tremendous. It was not known beforehand whether Jim Rector would be able

to speak or not, but thankfully he was strengthened to do so three times during the Feast. He was able to attend every service, with the exception of the morning meeting on the Last Great Day. Several excellent workshops were held as well, but perhaps the real highlight of this gathering was the spontaneous formation of study and discussion groups. On any given afternoon or evening, you could easily drop in on any one of a dozen or more such conclaves. Most of these continued on into the wee hours of the morning. It is estimated that these study groups probably involved nearly 90% of the attendees present, a quite remarkable figure.

The weather was strikingly beautiful during the Feast, and the amenities offered at Lake of the Ozarks are so plentiful that it is almost impossible to partake of them all in only 8 days! There were tennis and ping-pong tournaments, dinner cruises on the lake, an afternoon picnic, a delightful Family Night of entertainment, a host of excellent restaurants, world-class shopping, and virtually anything else you can think of as well.

The physical blessings were great, but they were decidedly outweighed by the spiritual ones. We praise and thank God for the delightful and spiritually rewarding Feast He granted us. I hope everyone's experience was as blessed as was ours. We are seriously considering coming back to Lake of the Ozarks next year for the Feast.

—Jim Rector

CEM in Kissimmee, Florida

We have no idea of the affiliation of the all the people who attended the Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) Feast of Tabernacles site. On a show of hands, it looked like half the people present were not at the CEM festival last year. No one seemed to care very much about the distinctions between. We have had many visitors from other locations. Some came and stayed, others were pilgrims passing through to their third or fourth festival location. I have never seen quite so many nomads. There were a number down from United on the Last Great Day because our services were in the morning and United's were in the afternoon.

Attendance ran close to 500—about what we had last year minus the Puerto

Rican brethren who met nearby but with services totally in Spanish. Sadly, I hear their numbers are down due to a decimation of their church due to the "Conder" and the "Sacred Names" doctrinal controversies. Nevertheless, our best guess at the attendance on the Last Great Day was something over 600. There were 670 chairs in the room and from the stage there did not appear to be 50 empty seats. Great crowd, great singing, wonderful finish to the Feast.

We had unbelievable weather. The only rain (light) was on the Sabbath day when no one was involved in outdoor activities. Will almost certainly be our last year in Kissimmee, Florida as we are hoping to move to the Florida panhandle next year. I had originally thought to go to St. Pete, for one year, but I think we may not have to now.

On the first night, I gave a 15 minute message about the fact that tonight may be the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus. I followed it up with the importance of remembering that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. The next day, I spoke on the theme, "Where is Home," and Brent Kern sang "O Holy Night" for special music—did a magnificent job. In the afternoon Bill Rollins spoke on prayer, and it may have been the most helpful sermon on prayer I have ever heard. We will be offering it to our list when we get back. Other Feast messages were brought to us by Steve Sanders, Mike Linacre, John Reedy, Larry Watkins, Gerry Bernardo, and Ken Svehla.

We had 13 well attended and very educational workshops and seminars. Mike Linacre's "Dead Sea Scrolls" was standing room only as was my own—probably 175 to 200 each time. Good size groups also attended the Sabbath School Writer's workshop and Larry Watkins "local church administration" workshop. Other seminars were on radio sponsorship, local evangelism, ministering to the elderly and infirm, using the Internet and computers, and "Know thyself".

We had a really marvelous inspirational music concert on Friday night, a talent show on Monday night, and a great family fun fair on Tuesday afternoon. We had a get-together for the Like-Minds electronic mail group.

I still marvel a little at the harmony we have at this rather diverse Feast site.

I suppose it is because CEM has no special agenda to push but just want to provide a nice place to keep the Feast.

—Ronald Dart

(summary from his e-mail & web-site)

Sunriver, Oregon

Approximately 150 brethren assembled to celebrate the Feast Of Tabernacles near Sunriver, a recreational community near Bend, Oregon. The assemblies at this non-aligned Feast site were held in a rustic lodge located at the Thousand Trails campground. Most of the people stayed in very nice, nearby rental homes and condominiums. Canada was well represented with about 25 brethren. US representation included brethren from California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Idaho, South Dakota, Texas, Kansas, Utah, and Kentucky. The Eternal provided sunshine nearly every day with high temperatures ranging from the mid-70's to the lower 60's.

The brethren enjoyed messages brought by eight different speakers including Wayne Atchison, Jeff Henderson, Bruce Barrett, Al Murrey, Gary Servidio, Gary Sjoldal, Jonathan Sjoldal, and Lee Lisman. Two planned studies were conducted and one impromptu. Jonathan and Kristie Sjoldal presented an intriguing study on Children's Toys and Entertainment. Wayne Atchison, an elder recently relocated to Bend, facilitated a thought provoking discussion on the Smart Card and Prophecy. Social activities included a Western Theme Day and a Game Night. A highlight of the Feast was a short play featuring David vs. Goliath performed by the children on the Eighth Day. The Feast Committee, which sponsors this site, solicited input from all attending on how to make the Feast an even greater delight next year. For information on the Sunriver site, please contact Al Murrey at (541) 881-8600 or Bruce Barrett at (408) 427-2275 (e-mail, bbb@cruzio.com).

—Al Murrey

Hebrew Roots in Estes Park

Forty or so people gathered in Estes Park, Colorado in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. All gatherings were called to order by the sounds of the shofars and

all services were intentionally different from the standard fare. Having no acceptable model from which to pattern the Messianic services, and fully realizing that this Feast would be attended by people of many diverse opinions, it was a play-it-by-ear situation. The schedule was created as we went and was not completed until the last day.

The lack of pressure to participate, yet generous allowance for many ideas was a real "Welcome Mat" for many. Participation, however, came naturally and was welcomed in such forums and studies as the Ecclesiastes (Kohleth) Bible Study, the men's and the women's discussion groups, and the question/answer sessions by Yaffa Decosta. In fact, every speaker was required to allow a question/answer period regarding his chosen subject.

Whether by design or otherwise, every individual in attendance had an important part to contribute, without which the Feast would have been diminished.

All meals were previously arranged and we dined together, family style. This created a wonderful environment which encouraged unhurried, undistracted fellowship and the sharing of a wealth of experiences and ideas. Some of the members took over part of the kitchen, with the blessing of the management, to make homemade whole wheat bread and granola. A special seder service and thanksgiving Sabbath meal was prepared on Friday evening and a Havdala service was demonstrated following each Shabbat.

There was, of course much singing, Jewish folk-dancing and appropriate activities for all to participate in. We were even entertained by a special harp that has made in the traditional fashion in the nation of Israel. A Messianic group came to entertain with dancing and song. Those guys and gals really had the floor bouncing. To me it was very memorable watching the very young children choosing of their own accord to join in the dancing.

Riding the gentle horses up the mountain trail was a unique experience for some of us cowhands. With or without horses, however, the location was perfectly suited for hiking to a beautiful inspiring mountain setting for exercise or private prayer. The peace was totally undistracted except by an occasional

mule deer or elk.

It was a pure delight to see the children involved in virtually every aspect of the Feast. They were blessed daily under a canopy, and were involved in the family services. In addition they had many Succoth activities provided for them. They made special decorations for the Succah that was built on the first day, and other items for the Simchat Torah parade.

The lodge management made the 20 or so families who attended to feel completely at home. The rustic, informal setting was perfectly suited to our purposes. Before the week was over, some of us were running around the lobby in socks or slippers. For fellowship, learning and growing, few other facilities could have provided such warmth.

For those who were able to remain following the final day we had a Simchat Torah parade that danced its way throughout the ground floor to the tune of makeshift musical instruments and Yaffa's special harp. That really livened the place up and provided us with a special memory.

—Condie Irwin

Feast of the Nations Is a Family Affair

New friends quickly became "family" at this year's Feast of Tabernacles. **Sis-Q Meadows, Oregon** youth camp once again saw brethren from the United States and Israel gathered to keep the Feast with a Hebrew flavor. About 20 families created an intimate site, where we really did "get to know" each other; to visit with people we'd have only seen as "faces in the crowd" in times past.

Young people were especially enjoyable, the girls as they improved or were first introduced to "Davidic dancing", and the boys (who, sometimes, also danced) as they gained experience at the blowing of the shofar. Add to that volleyball, basketball, "Snowball" and tracking the guinea hen mixed in with banner making, friendship-bracelet weaving, and encouraging we adults.

The metamorphosis of a youth camp—austere and drab, transformed into a colorful, vibrant Feast Tabernacle was amazing. Many hands coupled with a spirit of cooperation produced a beau-

tiful place in which to keep our "appointed time" with God. Everywhere one looked there were festive pictures of fall harvests and fall leaves. The theme, Feast of Nations, was emphasized with flags, special trims on beams and, especially, the beautiful "festival" banner designed by Mary Beattie and Deirdre Salmon displaying Jerusalem as the center of the world surrounded by national flags. And the cafeteria came out of it's cocoon on Friday evening as we gathered for the "Erev Shabbot". We found ourselves sitting at tables decorated with "jewels", blue vases filled with flowers, glossy green ivy framing lovely pictures of the temple in Jerusalem; and from the ceiling hung oriental style blue and silver baubles. We were kings and queens at God's banquet.

Teachers at the Feast included James Sorenson, Reb., Beverly Clapp, Bob Salmon, John Beattie and Lionel Nightingale. Their subjects included "David's Temple", "The Covenant between God and Man", and "God's restoration of His Things to His people and His People to Himself". Torah and Psalm readings were a part of each service, along with wonderful praise singing.

From the blessing of the sukka and the waving of the lulav (a gift our Israeli guests brought), to the last Davidic dance after the 8th Day, we were coming closer together as a spirit led family. And we thank Our God for His many Blessings.

—by Sharon Bonney

100 People in Ocean Shores

About 100 Messianic, Seventh Day Adventist, various Churches of God, Independents, and Hebrew Roots individuals kept the Feast in Ocean Shores, Washington. Speakers and workshops were wonderful and we have had sunshine the entire Feast! Our hope is that your Feast has been every bit as wonderful.

—Rick Richardson
(excerpted from Internet post)

Little Chute, Wisconsin Feast

God's Church in the Appleton-Green Bay area held a Feast from October 18-25, based on what we per-

ceive as the calendar God gave to Moses. The information concerning Moses and the calendar was reviewed during the Feast.

Topics included: Prayer, Home-schooling, Original Language Text Unfolding, Metamorphosis, A Living Relationship, Healing and Medicine, God's Holy Days, The Dead Sea Scrolls.

Activities included: Children's lessons, videos and discussions, family musical get-together, lunch and hike at local nature preserve.

—John Purvins
(summarized from event schedule)

Nashville, Tennessee Feast

The Church of God, Fellowship, just completed its first Feast of Tabernacles in the middle Tennessee area. Sixty people, representing eight states were in attendance. The weather was beautiful the entire eight days.

Because of the manner in which those present conducted themselves and in taking care of the facilities, resulted in our cost being reduced to a third of the original cost.

During the Feast, we had two off days for local tours. A show of hands indicated ninety five percent would attend the Feast in 1998, if held at the same location.

Because of the overwhelming acceptance of the 1997 Feast site at the Henry Horton State Park, forty miles south of Nashville, we have decided to hold it there in 1998. We are anticipating a doubling of our 1997 attendance. In addition to our regular Feast activities, we plan seminars on specific subjects. Anyone knowledgeable in Christian subject matter is encouraged to consider our Feast site.

—Paul Bell,
Church of God, Outreach Ministries

Two Feasts near Lake Tahoe

Those among our extended fellowship who observe the conjunction calendar celebrated the **Feast during September**, in a large home setting in **Incline Village, Nevada**. This earlier Feast site in the Lake Tahoe area was sponsored by Dale and Arlene Carmean of Sedro-Woolley, Washington.

Some of the presentation topics at the September Feast included:

Purpose of the Feast, Growing in Grace, and Women in the Church by Dale Carmean; *Gifts of the Spirit*, and a "Jars of Clay Conference" Report by Robert Bodkin; *Turning a Physical Religion Into a Spiritual Way of Life* by Jack Lane; *Who is Elijah to Come?* by Arlene Carmean; *Matthew 25 Bible Study* by George and Ann Stevens.

Music offerings for each day were provided by Mariah Carmean and Kamryn Creamer, who sang appropriate Feast songs.

There was a pot blessing one evening when the men did all the cooking and served dinner to the ladies and children. There was swimming in Lake Tahoe, and Sunday was set aside so that everyone, including visitors who came for the weekend, could ride one of the fine cruise ships on Lake Tahoe. An evening class on holistic health was presented by Dale Carmean, and those present experienced many positive results.

The **Feast in October** was sponsored jointly by "The Way" Publications and the independent Sacramento area Sabbath Bible study fellowship, the open Feast site in **South Lake Tahoe, California** was attended by those who observe the Hebrew calendar, those who observe the first visible crescent locally, and those who set the dates according to the first crescent seen in Jerusalem. This schedule gave three consecutive starting dates for the Feast, resulting in a ten day Feast.

Lovely fall decorations and a number of beautiful plaques decorated the South Lake Tahoe site, all made by members of the Sacramento area Bible study fellowship. The plaques contained messages such as "Rejoice at the Feast," "The Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace," "Perfect Love Casts Out Fear," and "Let All Those Who Trust In Thee Rejoice." The brethren commented as to the appropriateness of these plaques, and how they established the theme and intent of the Feast.

Some of the presentation topics at the Feast included: *Is the Beast a Middle Eastern Leader?* by Ron Kearney; *We Can Enter the Promised Land!* by Bill Creamer; *Is the Anointed Cloth Biblical?* by Robert Pinto; *Rejoice at the Feast* by Jason Churchill; *Rules for Child Rearing* by Dr. Jack Churchill *Who is the God of Israel?* by Bob Schimmell; *Truth and Perfection-*

What are our Limits? by Dale Howard; *The Post-Millennialist View* by Joe Lango; *Kingdom of God* by Jack Lane; *How to Avoid Strife* by Dave Bedwell; *The Law and the Ecclesia* by Jim Snyder; and *Hulga Clark's book, "The Cure For All Cancer"* by Linda Carter.

During daily services, the children were involved in Bible readings and music presentations. Bible lessons for the smaller children, prepared by Ashleigh Creamer, were administered by the teens each day of the Feast, showing a serving and ministering attitude among our youth.

A number of poems written by Rachel Empey were read, and Elyse Blakney also sang a song she had written. Beautiful music was performed by the adult and children's choirs; also heard were solos and duets. One exciting feature was the performance of two movements from Claude Bollings "Suite For Flute and Jazz Piano" as musical offerings. On occasion, while the assembly sang upbeat songs, the children participated with hand-held joyful noisemakers, such as maracas, tambourines, and bells.

Those suffering from health problems were able to come forward following services and experience the laying on of hands and prayer by as many of the ekklesia as wished to participate. These ceremonies were deeply moving, and those who participated felt it was a privilege to come before God as a group in this manner. Prayer requests were made for others not in attendance during service, and prayer was also made at that time.

Activities included two pot blessings, a teen pizza and bowling activity, game night, hiking in the beautiful Emerald Bay area, a ladies' night out, and a senior breakfast, all with a heavy emphasis on fellowship and rejoicing. There were two workshops in praise dancing, where whole families were dancing together: men, women, and children as young as three. The October group was invited to join the Church of God International for their dance in Kings Beach. One day (during the October Feast) was set aside as Family day, with no services scheduled; families were encouraged to spend the day together, rejoicing before God in the beautiful Lake Tahoe area.

—Jack Lane 

“House Churches” from page 1
of small groups of people meeting in private homes for worship, fellowship and instruction unbiblical?

The purpose of this study is to examine scriptural evidence showing that it was a normal New Testament practice for small groups of Christians to assemble in private homes for worship, fellowship and instruction.

This study will not explore the subject of church government. The speaker implies that a Living Room Church of God has no organization and leadership. This is simply not true. What is true, is most Home Fellowships do not practice the hierarchical and authoritarian form of government used by many of the churches of our tradition. Church government is another subject altogether, and in recent years many writers have addressed this issue.

Definition of the Word “Church”

The word “church” in the New Testament is always translated from the Greek word *ekklesia* 1577 “an assembly, a (religious) congregation” *Abbott-Smith Lexicon*.

From the *Online Bible*, *ekklesia* 1577:

1) a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly 1a) an assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating 1b) the assembly of the Israelites 1c) any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance, tumultuously 1d) in a Christian sense 1d1) an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting 1d2) a company of Christians, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, observe their own religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs, according to regulations prescribed for the body for order's sake 1d3) those who anywhere, in a city, village, constitute such a company and are united into one body 1d4) the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth 1d5) the assembly of faithful Christians already dead and received into heaven.

A church is not a building, or a place where Christians met. A church is

an assembly or congregation of Christians.

Historical Background

It is important to remember that there is no evidence: biblical, historical or archaeological of Christians having special buildings for worship during the first century. “Not until the first half of the third century did the Christians build houses of worship.”³

Richard Krautheimer writing in “Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture” states:

Until A.D. 200, then, a Christian architecture did not and could not exist. Only the state religion erected temples in the tradition of the Greek and Roman architecture. The saviour religions [for example, Mithras or Isis], depending on the specific form of their ritual and the finances of their congregations, built oratories above or below ground, from the simplest to the most lavish but always on a small scale. Christians congregations prior to 200 were limited to the realm of domestic architecture, and further, to inconspicuous dwellings of the lower classes.⁴

As we examine the biblical evidence, we will see the importance of “domestic architecture,” (i.e. the private home to the New Testament Church of God).

Direct Evidence for Assembling in Private Houses

First we will examine the direct scriptural evidence for Christians assembling in private homes. After looking at the direct evidence, we will examine the indirect evidence for home assemblies.⁵

The Assembly In The Ephesian House Of Aquila And Priscilla

First Corinthians is written in the city of Ephesus probably during the spring of A.D. 57,⁶ by the apostle Paul. At that time an assembly of Christians are meeting in the house of Aquila and Priscilla: “The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca [Priscilla] greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house” (1 Corinthians 16:19). All scripture quoted are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB), unless otherwise stated). As we will see later this was probably not the only House

Church in Ephesus.

The Assembly In The Roman House Of Priscilla And Aquila

Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians is written in the city of Corinth probably during the spring of A.D. 58. By this time Priscilla and Aquila had returned to Rome, where they had once lived (Acts 18:2), and an assembly of Christians was meeting in their house: “Greet Prisca [Priscilla] and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,... also {greet} the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia” (Romans 16:3-5). Like Ephesus, we will see that the House Church of Priscilla and Aquila was not the only assembly of Christians in Rome.

The Assembly In The House Of Philemon

Paul’s letter to the Colossians is written from Rome some time around A.D. 61 or 62, during his first Roman captivity (A.D. 61-63). This is the period of time covered in Acts 28:16-31.

The letter was apparently delivered by Tychicus and Onesimus. Onesimus was a native of Colossae (Colossians 4:7-9). He was a runaway slave of Philemon, who ending up in Rome, was converted by Paul (Philemon 15-16, 10).

In addressing his letter to Philemon, written at the same time as the letter to the Colossians (probably A.D. 61 or 62), Paul sends greetings to the assembly of Christians meeting Philemon’s house: “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved {brother} and fellow worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house.” (Philemon 1-2). The Christians of Colossae assembled in Philemon’s home.

The Assembly In The House Of Nympha

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul makes reference to another House Church: “Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house” (Colossians 4:15).

In the area of Laodicea there appears to be two groups of Christians. The first group being “the brethren who are in Laodicea,” or as in verse 16 “the church of the Laodiceans.” The second

group is "Nympha and the church that is in her house." It is also possible that only one group of people is being referred to, and the entire Laodicean Church assembled in the house of Nympha.

Small Congregations

We see from these scriptures that some 30 years after the crucifixion Christian were meeting in private homes. By the very nature of meeting in homes, these congregations were not large, but small. Each assembly was only as large as the biggest room in a given home.

Richard Krautheimer describes what these homes were like:

And as the congregations were recruited by and large from the lower and middle classes [1 Cor.1:26-31], their houses would have been typical cheap houses. Such houses are known to us, if not from the first and second centuries, at least from the fourth and fifth. In the Eastern provinces, they were apparently one-family buildings up to four storeys high. The dining-room on top was the only large room, and often opened on a terrace. This is the upper floor, the anageion or hyperoon frequently mentioned in the Acts [Acts 1:7; 20:8], the room 'high up, open to the light', of which Tertullian still speaks after A.D. 200. The furnishings would simply consist of a table and three surrounding couches, from which the dining-room takes its name in Latinized Greek—the triclinium. The main couch opposite the entrance was presumably reserved for the elder, the host, and speaker as honoured guest. The congregations might crowd the room, including the window sills, so that at Troas—from the heat of the many lamps and the length of the sermon—a young man fell from the fourth floor (the tristegon), only to be resurrected by the preacher, St. Paul [Acts 20:5-10]. In Rome, where tenement houses with horizontal apartments were the rule, not necessarily including a dining-room, any large chamber may have served for these gatherings. No other rooms would have be required by the congregations.⁷

Indirect Evidence of Assembling in Private Houses

The following scriptures probably refer to Christians assembling in private homes. These verses are not as straight forward as the scriptures we just examined, but are indirect or secondary evidence. Some of them become easier to understand in the context of home fellowship—without it, the reason for the word choice is rather unclear.

The Practice Of The Jerusalem Church

The first seven chapters of Acts are a condensed history of the early Church of God, covering the time period of A.D. 31 to 37. Meeting in private homes is a practice that can be traced back to the early Jerusalem Church of God.

The early New Testament Church met in private homes for fellowship and meals. Luke records: "And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46-47).

The apostles also utilized private homes as another location (besides the Temple) to teach and preach: "And every day, in the temple and **from house to house**, they [the apostles] kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus {as} the Christ" (Acts 5:42).

Around A.D. 37, Saul led a persecution against the Jerusalem Church (Acts 8:1-3). In writing about this persecution Luke records: "But Saul {began} ravaging the church, **entering house after house**; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison" (Acts 8:3). Why did Saul enter "house after house"? Because he knew that is where he could catch Christians "in the act" of teaching and worshipping. **If Christians worshipped in "church buildings," Saul would have gone there to find them.**

The private house was still being used as a location for Jerusalem Christians to assemble during another period of persecution in A.D. 44. During this persecution, James the brother of John is killed by Herod

Agrippa I (reigned from A.D. 41-44), and Peter is imprisoned. Herod plans to keep Peter in prison until after Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, then kill him (Acts 12:1-5).

While Peter is in prison, the Jerusalem Christians are continually praying for him (verse 5). The inference here is to communal prayer, not just individual prayer. This is supported by verse 12 where it states that people were gathered for prayer.

Verses 6-11 deal with Peter being set free from prison. Realizing he was truly free, and not having a dream, Peter "...went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying" (Acts 12:12).

One reason Peter went to the house of Mary that night, besides it being close by, may have been that he knew this was one of those houses in Jerusalem where Christians gathered to be taught and to fellowship. What is known, is that on this night people were gathered at Mary's home for prayer.

This night was probably the night following the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. Remember, Herod did not want to kill Peter until after the Feast (Acts 12:4), and "on the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward" (verse 6) Peter is set free. It appears Herod was going to act as soon as possible after the Days of Unleavened Bread.

There is another reason for Peter going to Mary's house that night. If Mary's house was a regular meeting place for some of the Jerusalem brethren. Paul knew some of them would still be there that night having a fellowship meal, following the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Peter did not stay at Mary's house. Either her house may have been a known location for Christian gatherings or was so close to where Peter was imprisoned, it would be a natural place for the authorities to look for Peter (verse 17).

These scriptures in the book Acts indicate that the Jerusalem Church of God was a collection of House Assemblies or Churches. The Jerusalem Christians assembled in private houses for fellowship and instruction from the word of God. This is the

same activity taking place today in the Home Fellowships or Living Room Churches of God of our tradition.

Thessalonica And The "House Of Jason"

After departing Philippi (Acts 16:40) Paul arrives in Thessalonica. It is approximately the fall A.D. 51. He preaches in the local synagogue over a period of three Sabbaths. This results in some Jews accepting Jesus as the Messiah, and even a greater number of Gentiles converting to Christianity (Acts 17:1-4). This angered a few of the Jews, who stir up a mob, made up of "wicked men from the market place" (verse 5). **The mob attacks the "house of Jason"** looking for Paul and Silas (verse 5). While in Thessalonica Paul and Silas were staying in the home of Jason (verse 7). Not finding them at the "house of Jason," the mob found "Jason and some brethren" who they took to the authorities of the city (verse 6). There is the suggestion here that the "house of Jason" was more than just the place where Paul and Silas were staying. It had become the first meeting place outside of the synagogue for the Church in Thessalonica.

Verse 4 records that some of the Jews as well as "God-fearing Greeks" and "leading women" of the city, "joined Paul and Silas." This may mean they "joined" Paul and Silas regarding religious matters, but that meaning is rather narrow when we examine the context of the verse. When the mob raided the "house of Jason" they only found "Jason and some brethren" (verses 5-6). This would imply that joining Paul and Silas meant joining them in assembling at the "house of Jason." The loss of these people from participating in the synagogue may have been the motivating factor in the attack on Jason's house.

Corinthian House Churches

After leaving Thessalonica, Paul travels to Berea, Athens, then on to Corinth (Acts 17:10-18:1). He stays there for about a year and half (verse 11), early A.D. 52 to the middle of A.D. 53.

Paul starts out preaching in the local synagogue. The Jews of Corinth reject Paul's message. From then on, he concentrates on preaching to the Gentiles (Acts 18:1-6). Paul no longer goes to the synagogue to preach, but "...went to

the house of a certain man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue" (verse 7). The house of Titius Justus becomes Paul's base of operation, and an early meeting place for the young Corinthian Church. The Corinthian Church starts out as a House Church, (i.e. a Living Room Church of God).

By examining the scriptures we see that there are three other possible House Churches in Corinth. First Corinthians refers to two of these House Churches. Paul sends this letter from Ephesus during the spring of A.D. 57.

The first possibility occurs in 1 Corinthians 1:11 "For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's {people,} that there are quarrels among you." (The word "people" is added by the translators, and is not in the Greek.) The verse could also be translated: "For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's, that there are quarrels among you."

Paul writes that he received information about the Corinthian Christians, from some people who are associated with an individual by the name of Chloe. The nature of this association is not clear. They could be members of Chloe's family, household servants or possible even members of a House Church meeting in Chloe's home.

A second possibility is found in 1 Corinthians 1:16 "Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other." **The Greek word translated "household" in verse 16 is *oikos* 3624, meaning " a house, a dwelling,"** *Abbott-Smith Lexicon*. The NASB translates this word as: descendants (1), families (1), family (1), home (19), homes (1), house (78), household (14), households (1), itself (1), palaces (1). Keep the meaning of this Greek word *oikos* in mind as we will be seeing it in several other scriptures. The "house of Stephanas" is a completely justifiable translation—the *Darby Bible* uses exactly that.

Is it possible, then, that Paul is referring to a Christian assembly meeting in the house of Stephanas? Were the members of this House Church baptized by Paul himself? We see additional confirmation in 1 Corinthians 16:15, *King*

James Version: "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the **house of Stephanas**, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints)." A similar Greek word, *oikia* (# 3614) is translated "house," above. It means "a house or dwelling" and is related to *oikos* 3624, *Abbott-Smith Lexicon*. The NASB translates this word as: home (6), house (77), household (5), households (1), houses (7).

A third possible Corinthian House Church is mentioned in Romans 16:22-23: "I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord. **Gaius, host to me and to the whole church**, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother" (Rom. 16:22-23). Gaius is not only the host of Tertius (Paul's secretary), but the "host of the whole church" in Corinth. This may mean the entire Corinthian congregation meets each Sabbath in Gaius' home. Or it may mean that when the "whole church" gathers together in one meeting. It is done at the home of Gaius. With smaller regular weekly congregational meetings taking place in the homes of Justus, Chloe, and Stephanas. Gaius' home may have been used for these smaller meetings as well.

Ephesian House Churches

Paul arrives in Ephesus in A.D. 54. He first teaches in the Jewish synagogue for three months (Acts 19:1, 8). After meeting resistance to his message by the Jews, Paul leaves the synagogue, and begins holding public meetings for two years in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9-10). Paul spent a total of three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31), A.D. 54 through 57. **It is important to realize that the Bible nowhere condemns meeting in hired halls or buildings built for meetings.** The point of this article is that the vast majority of early meetings were in homes.

During his stay in Ephesus, Paul writes First Corinthians (about A.D. 57). At that time there was an assembly of Christians meeting in the house of Aquila and Priscilla: "The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca [Priscilla] greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house" (1Cor 16:19). Aquila and Priscilla had been living in Ephesus since their departure from Corinth

about A.D. 53 (Acts 18:18-28).

Paul comments on his stay in Ephesus to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, "...I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:17-20). Paul taught publicly in "school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9), and "from house to house" in House Churches like the one which met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (1 Cor. 16:19). Is it possible the Ephesian Church was a collection of House Churches, or to use a modern term Living Room Churches of God? The facts point in that direction.

Troas House Church

On a Saturday night in Troas, (about A.D. 58), the local Christians are gathered in an "upper room" to break bread (have a fellowship meal), and listen to Paul speak (Acts 20:6-12). This may have just been a continuation of a Sabbath meeting that had begun sometime in the afternoon.

These verses do not say if the upper room they were meeting in, was in a private house or in a public building. We do know the upper room was on the third floor of this building (verse 9). We also know it was a practice of the early Church to meet in the houses of its members (Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19;

Col. 4:15; Philm. 1-2). So it is plausible that this "upper room" was located in the house of a Troas Christian.

The House of Philip The Evangelist

On his way to Jerusalem, Paul spends a few days in Caesarea, staying in "the house of Philip the evangelist" (Acts 21:7-8). During Paul's visit, Philip's house is a meeting place for the local Christians community (Acts 21:10-15).

Is it likely Philip's house was also used for regular worship? It was large enough for him to host Paul and his traveling companions (Acts 21:8). At the same time Philip's house was able to accommodate "the local residents" (Acts 21:12) or "those from that place" (*New King James Version*), who were present when the prophet Agabus prophesied what would happen to Paul if he went to Jerusalem (verse 10-12).

Roman House Churches

During Paul's first Roman captivity (A.D. 61-63), he rented a house for two years where he preached and taught (Acts 28:16, 23, 29-31). It seems likely Paul's house would have become a regular meeting place for some Roman Christians. Was Paul the host of a Living Room Church of God? The evidence points in that direction.

Paul's would not have been the only

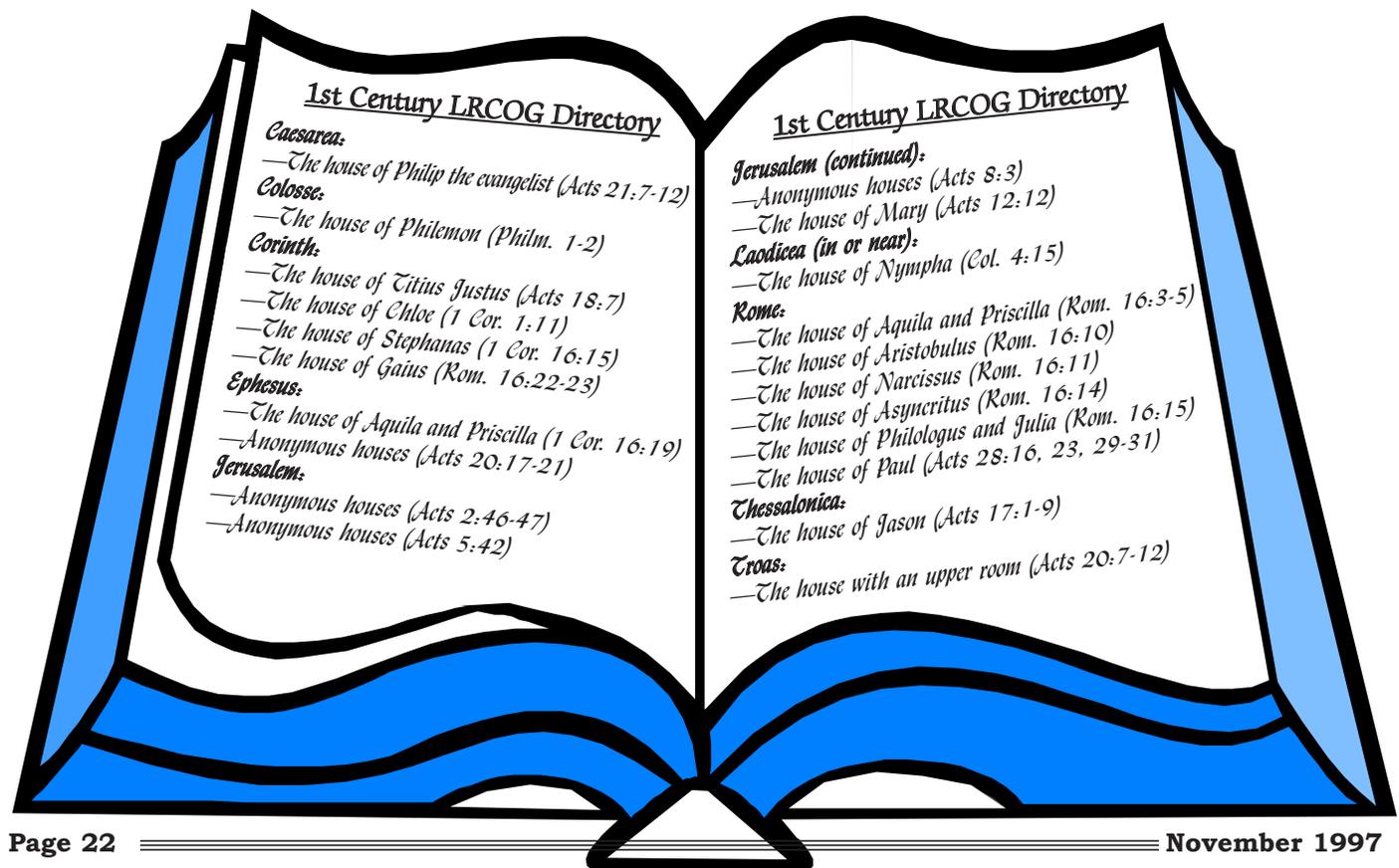
House Assembly in Rome, and it definitely was not the first. There may have been as many as five other House Churches in Rome, before the arrival of Paul. Mention of these assemblies are found in Paul's letter to the Romans, probably written in the spring of A.D. 58. It is important to remember that at this time, Rome had no public transportation. You had to walk, or have a litter carried by servants or slaves. Carts and animals were not allowed to move around in the city during the day, only at night. This was a large spread out city. It was not practical for all Roman Christians to meet together for worship. Rome appears to have had at least five House Churches.

1. An Assembly or Church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila.

We know for a fact that there was at least one Church or Assembly meeting in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (Rom. 16:3-5). By A.D. 58 they had left Ephesus, and returned to Rome.

2. "Greet those of Aristobulus."

Paul writes: "Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ; Greet those of Aristobulus" (Rom 16:10, *Green's Literal Translation*) In the NASB and NKJ say "household of Aristobulus" but "household is not in the Greek text, but is added by the translators. Paul is



sending greetings to Aristobulus and those who are with him. It is possible that "those of Aristobulus" refers to a group of believers meeting in the house of Aristobulus.

3. "Those of Narcissus."

The same Greek wording occurs in the next verse, except the name is "Narcissus". If the above assumption is correct, then Paul is sending greetings to Narcissus and those who are with him.

4. "Asyncritus... and the brethren with them."

Paul continues to acknowledge individuals for three verses, then mentions an additional group of Roman Christians: "Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them" (Rom. 16:14). There is a group of brethren associated with Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas and Hermes, This may be another reference to a Roman House Church.

5. "Philologus and Julia...and all the saints who are with them."

Paul sends greeting to another group of Roman Christians, who may have made up a fifth Roman House Church: "Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them" (Rom. 16:15).

False Teachers Subverting Whole House Churches

In his letter to Titus, written around 67 A. D., Paul warns: "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, **who subvert whole houses**, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Tit. 1:10-11, KJV). The Greek word *oikos* is used here again, and reasonably rendered "houses". The NASB uses "families" and the NKJV "households," but the GLT, Darby and Webber Bibles use

"houses."

Paul is warning Titus about false teachers who are subverting whole houses. This may refer to families, but it makes more sense if it refers to assemblies of Christians meeting in private houses. We know from other scriptures that by the late A.D. 50's and early A.D. 60's, Christians meeting in private homes was common (Rom. 16:3-5; 1Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phlm. 1-2), and this practice is traced back to the early Jerusalem Church (Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 8:1-3; 12:12). Even today, there are people that travel around to house churches, trying to convert them to some new (or old) doctrine.

Paul sends a similar warning about false teachers to Timothy: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such 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. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was" (2 Tim. 3:5-9, KJV).

The Greek word translated "houses" here is *oikia*, again. The NASB, NKJV and NRSV still say "households, but most other translations say "houses". Logic tells you that people do not "creep in" and secretly become a part of your family or servants, but they enter your house pretending to be your friend, then later teach error. In light of evidence showing that Christians met in private homes (Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 8:1-3; 12:12; Rom. 16:3-5; 1Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phlm. 1-2), Paul appears to be warning Timothy about false teachers sneaking into House Churches and leading people astray

spiritually.

Towards the end of the first century (maybe 95 A.D.), the apostle John writes what is known as the Second Epistle of John. In this letter, John writes that there are certain doctrinal standards a teacher should have before he is aloud to teach. "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him **into {your} house**, and do not give him a greeting" (2 John 1:10).

Is it possible that John is warning a House Church to be careful whom they allow to enter their assembly as a teacher? Spiros Zodhiates in his introduction to Second John writes: "The 'elect lady and her children' (2 John 1:1) may be a reference to an actual lady and her children, but many scholars contend that this is a cryptic way of addressing a church to safeguard against the letter falling into the hands of those who were hostile to the Church." ⁸

New Testament House Churches

In this study we examined scriptural evidence showing that during the period of the New Testament, small groups of Christians assembled in private homes for worship, fellowship and instruction. The New Testament contains references to meeting in the temple, in synagogues, and a school. It contains no examples of Christians building a building specifically to meet, though it never condemns the practice. However, there are 4 unquestionable references to House Churches, and at least 21 likely references to House Churches in the New Testament. House Churches appear to be a very common, if not the normal practice of the New Testament Church of God—a practice those in today's Living Room Church of God have returned to.

—Calvin Lashway
—Email: rlashway@nmsu.edu

Endnotes:

- 1) By "our religious tradition" I mean those who trace their history and theological teachings to the Worldwide Church of God and its founder Herbert W. Armstrong.
- 2) Don Hooser, "Thirty-five Reasons Not to Leave UCG," August 9, 1997, Waco, Texas, transcribed from a tape of the sermon.
- 3) Albert Henry Newman, "A Manual of Church History, Volume 1, Ancient and Medieval Church

- History to A. D. 1517," The American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1899, 1933, page 142.
- 4) Richard Krautheimer, "Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture," Penguin Books, 1965, 1975, Page 24.
- 5) The terms "direct evidence" and "indirect evidence" are from the booklet: Harvey Bluedorn, "The Biblical Evidence For House Assemblies," Trivium Pursuit, 139 Colorado Street, Suite 168, Muscatine, Iowa 52761.

- 6) All dates are approximations and are based on the chronologies found in Frank J. Goodwin, "A Harmony of the Life of St. Paul," Baker Book House, 1951, 1988, and Merrill F. Unger, "Unger's Bible Dictionary," Moody Press, 1966, 1982, pages 485-488.
- 7) Krautheimer, "Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture," Page 24.
- 8) Spiros Zodhiates, ed., "The Complete Word Study New Testament" King James Version, AMG Publishers, 1992, page 798.

Letters

& Responses

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

No “Church of God” Background

[This letter is from one of about 20 *SN* subscribers who have no previous Sabbatarian background, but have found us on the Internet. In most cases, these are people who do not believe corporate churches are necessary and essentially cannot be reached by them. Our goal is not to get them to “join us,” but to share truth with them and hope they share it with others.]

LETTER: November 11, 1997
Hello Norman,

I just received your email message. It is now Nov 11 @ 4:26pm central time.

As far as my religious background is concerned, I don't have a religion. I am a Christian. I don't have a church I go to due to the possibility of maybe moving to Denver, Colo here in the next few months. My husband though is a Lutheran by faith.

I belong to no church, or religion. Religion is made by man. Christianity is a relationship with God Jehovah!

Thank you,

—R. J.

RESPONSE: Thank you for your reply. We agree. A relationship with the Eternal and our understanding of His ways as taught in the scriptures is the most important thing. There is also a need to fellowship with others and share our knowledge with others, but we do not have to join an organization to do this. (However, we also realize that much good work has been done through organizations.)

Most of the subscribers of our publication (and the writers) were once members of the Worldwide Church of God. The teachers in that organization did well in the past in that they often emphasized Bible teaching over traditional Christianity in many areas. Unfortunately, the leadership attempted to

govern the members in a hierarchical fashion similar to the Catholic church, rather than follow the Biblical instruction.

Currently, *Servants' News* still often deals with issues relating to the Worldwide

Church of God and the organizations that split off from it. We believe we can help these people, so we do. But we also see that we cannot spend the rest of our lives discussing men and organizations that are now dead.

It is our purpose to re-study everything, to keep the good teaching, to discard the bad, to admit that there are things we are not sure about, and to go on and learn more. We seek to work with and learn from others, and to teach Bible truth and a relationship with our Savior to those who want to hear.

—NSE

Feast-keeping in Mexico

LETTER: November 12, 1997
Dear Norman:

I am glad to inform you that I can send you, again, e-mails from my PC. My address is: 110134.130@compuserve.com, you can send me any e-mails you want and you can publish it as well.

I hope you have had a very good Feast. My family and I have a very good one. We did not go to Acapulco Beach because of the bad conditions in that site due to the Pauline hurricane. It really destroyed a lot of things. We had the opportunity to go to Veracruz Beach. We had a good time. It was our first experience organizing and attending the Feast for ourselves. Finally, there were around ten of us at the Feast but we learned a lot. We do not know what will happen the next year but we are enthusiastic and with plenty of ideas. [literature request omitted.]

Best regards,

—Jose L. Jimenez, Mexico

RESPONSE: Thanks for the information. We enjoyed our Feast very much. I thought about your feast plans and the hurricane—it is good that you did not plan to open up the site to visitors this year as we once discussed. I am glad that you are showing how it is possible for a small group of people to keep the Feast together with little previous experience.

—NSE

Enjoyed Ohio Feast

LETTER: November 6, 1997
Dear Brother Norm,

Thank you for your efforts in putting on an enjoyable feast. I don't think I have ever said, “This was the best feast ever,” but I will

say that I have never had a better one. I also enjoyed meeting you and your family, although I only wish we could have spent more time together. Well, maybe next time we will.

Enclosed is a small donation for you to use as you see fit. I hope to continue to support those like you who are giving so much of yourself for the church at large.

Your friend in Christ,

—Kevin Pomaville, Michigan

RESPONSE: We hope to spend more time with you next year at the Feast.

—NSE

Is This Discovery for Real?

LETTER: October 12, 1997

In a recent copy of the local Sydney BI [British Israel] magazine “The Kingdom Herald”, an article from the “Kingdom Tidings” was reprinted which in turn was based on an article in The Guardian, “Vindication of the Bible Record: 4,000 year spectacular unearthed in Syria”.

According to the article 15,000 clay tablets have been recently unearthed at Tell-Mardikh, with names such as Esau, Abraham, David; creation story, flood; pagan gods such as Dagon, etc. It also quotes a Dr. David Freedman, an archaeologist from Michigan University.

If anyone has the original article from either the Kingdom Tidings or the Guardian, could they please contact me. Or if you know where I might be able to access them, please advise me.

Thanks,

—Craig White, GPO Box 864,
Sydney, NSW 2001 Australia

RESPONSE: If this find turns out to be genuine, this will be a great help in preaching to those who doubt the Bible. If anyone had any solid information on this, we would appreciate hearing about it as well as Craig White.

—NSE

Church History Gives Today's

Answer

LETTER: January 11, 1997

Dear Mr. Edwards:

I have just read the letter from Mr. Wheatley in your latest “Servants News” [December 1996]. This brings me to a problem that many people seem to have and I think I can offer a solution. The problem is this “hang-up” on church government. The solution: let's look at church history.

I have been reading Mr. HWA's booklet “Where is the True Church?” On pages

12,13,14 Mr. A. explains how the church is a spiritual organism. Even he saw it back then for what it is. Then he discusses what the true gospel is, and I believe most of your readers know what that is. Then Mr. A. goes on to say on pages 16 & 17, "He (Satan) deceived certain humans into seeking to destroy the church from within.... He caused some within the church to turn to a false and counterfeit gospel." (Sound familiar?) Then Mr. A. says, "Thus, from false brethren within the church, Satan succeeded finally in deceiving even the vast majority in the Church. He succeeded in turning this majority into a growing false and counterfeit church."

Further down he states, "Soon the curtain was wrung down on historic records of the Church. It evidenced the fact that a vigorous cooperative and systematic effort was made to destroy historic records of church happenings of the next hundred years. It was the 'Lost Century' in Church history." And a few paragraphs down He states, "But, as the vast majority of professing Christians apostatized, they held only to a gospel **about** Christ." (Are we re-living history or what?)

So, what is my point?? God has seldom worked through a big corporate entity. (Only once that I know of.) The church was allowed to be scattered. ("How can this be, we have this great work to do?") Throughout history the church has been scattered by and large. Even Jesus referred to it as a little flock. With the exception of recent history, when was the church ever a big corporate entity with government from the top down? And isn't it prophesied to be scattered, persecuted and the brethren would be dragged into courts and put to death? Now, while hierarchal government served a purpose during Mr. A.'s reign it was not the norm. I repeat, it was not the norm. And we are all aware of the abuses of that form of government.

And please note, God **did not put the church back on track** nor did He kill every leader in the apostate church, nor did He seek out a strong leader to take over the reigns of the church.

How many years after did any leaders come along? And when they did come along, by that time the original brethren were either dead from old age or scattered permanently.

Is their salvation flawed because they didn't or more likely couldn't seek out a corporate entity or stay with an entity that kept the name but legally separated? I don't believe so.

I feel we should look at the overall history of the church and come to a conclu-

sion, instead of looking at just the last fifty years and thinking we have all the truth and all the answers.

Maybe we should all look at this scattering as a blessing in disguise and work within the situation instead of forcing something that in all likelihood is not God's will. If corporate church was God's will, don't we all really believe that God is big and strong enough to have stopped the false brethren if He wanted. We would all answer yes, but the Almighty, in His wisdom has seen fit to scatter us.

Let's not argue with God. Let's stop looking to men for guidance. In essence that's what we do when we seek out a leader. During the last several years in the WCG my thinking was slowly but surely changing to believe that **God wants us to make our own decisions based on His truth and our relationship with Him** and not, I repeat not, on the truth as someone else perceives it or on our relationship with the minister or the deacon or whoever. This is one of the reasons, I believe, many of us have or nearly have shipwrecked our faith.

Thank you for the wonderful job you do. Sincerely

—Jason C. Darrow

RESPONSE: Thank you for your excellent explanation. Many groups teach that a person must understand and believe their list of doctrines in order to be saved. But when we ask them if they know of others who have believed their same doctrines through history, they agree that there is not such a group.

—NSE

Likes SN Articles on UCG

LETTER: November 24, 1997
Servants' News,

[Literature requested omitted]

We appreciated the articles relating to UCG particularly "a Lamentation for the UCG-AIA" and "The Insoluble Dilemma..." We do not believe that doctrine is the real issue. Many of us were hoping for a release from ministerial control/congregational dependency style of administration with more of an emphasis on the individual maturing in his or her relationship with God. This is definitely not happening. We've been pushed out of our local UCG congregation (not exactly forced out) because of our views and the disapproval of our participation in *The Journal*. We are presently attending an independent Sabbatarian church. We plan to support several endeavors including yours as we have the means.

Thank you. —B. & S.S., Missouri

RESPONSE: Our hope is that everyone will find a place where they can grow as the Eternal intends them to grow.

—NSE

UCG-AIA Needs Lamentation

LETTER: November 18, 1997
Dear Norm:

Just finished reading the Sept/Oct '97 issue of SN and believe that your use of the word Lamentation had to be inspired. It can apply to all the Churches of God which we have and are experiencing.

It would be good if all your readership would take a little time to **read the book of Lamentations in their Bible** and see if they can see themselves in it, as a type. Asking God for the eyes to see would be a good method to begin this study. As they read they might take note of: "...for the Lord has caused her (Jerusalem) grief because of the multitudes of her transgressions." Also note the discussion of her princes; and the "little ones," as well as how "...she remembers all her precious things that were from days of old..." and how her enemies have swallowed her up, and how she has gone into captivity.

This book laments all the problems with His chosen vessels, but it also gives them hope. In chapter three, beginning in verse 19, it begins to tell us, among other things, that, "The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him" (v 25). And also admonishes us, "Let us examine and probe our ways, and let us return to the Lord" (v 40; NAS).

Many have lost their first love of seeking God, as it has been and continues to be, obscured in a multitude of confusing directions. (You are correct when you say there are a lot of options available now.) Some seek for the "old" ways and the comfort they had then. Others seek for something else different and exciting, in their new found freedom. But Jeremiah is trying to focus our attention on repentance and back on seeking God. **If there is a major sin in organized religion, placing other gods before Him must surely be it.** Please don't misunderstand, I'm not teaching "anti-organization," but only trying to help others cut through the fog of the enemy that seems to surround so many believers. Identifying these false gods is not easy because we have grown so comfortable with them, but we must learn to identify them if we are to "...return to the Lord!"

I believe it is foundational in this process of obtaining the faith once delivered to the saints. We should be careful in this area, and not assume that we have been previ-

ously taught this faith, although I believe that most of us who have had the WCG experience have touched, and only touched on it in the past.

So, "What should we be doing?" "What is our priority in our lives today?" "What is the will of God for us today?"

Get to know God!!! "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:14). We must first come to truly **behold Him**, and then we can **believe in Him**. This "knowing" is much more than knowledge about Him—most have this—but it is a process of coming into a oneness of nature with Him.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he tells us all of the importance of this specific focus to get to know the Son of God; "...I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord..." (Phil 3:8-11). Notice his wording is designed to demonstrate it is a process, and it is the process of salvation for all believers.

Our Messiah specifically defines what eternal life is in Jn 17:3; "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." Does anyone want eternal life? Then, **get to know the Son of God** and you will also know His Father, for they are one.

Sad to say, that in over 30 years in the Church of God, I have not seen this matter being taught to any great extent. It has not been completely hidden, but taught only by a few, who by the grace of God, have cut through the fog of the enemy, and have been blessed to see the light on this all important subject.

A focus on doctrine separates people. Right doctrine is important, but it is not life, and life is the goal. Jesus Christ is **life!** (Jn 14:6.) His blood justifies and reconciles us, but we are to gain salvation by His life being manifested in us (Rom 5:10; 8:11; 2Cor 4:11).

I would like to humbly offer a challenge to all disciples of Christ who read this letter to SN: Dedicate some serious time to study and searching the Scriptures, prayer and meditation, on this subject of getting to personally know our Savior, and then share your thoughts with as many as you can. "Come now and let us reason together..." (Isa 1:18). True unity between believers can only be found in this knowledge; that is **In His Name**. —Jerry Laws

RESPONSE: The originally-planned title for that article was "sighing and crying for UCG," but the scripture that uses the terms "sigh and cry" is talking about "**abominations**" in Israel—I felt that using that word

would be offensive—the Eternal has not specifically told me to call other people or things abominations, so I probably ought to avoid rendering such judgements. Pam Dewey suggested "Lamentation." I did not study the book in relationship to the current state of affairs, but I see how some of it does apply.

It seemed like ancient Israel was always longing for the good times, acting like they were thinking this: "We are the Eternal's chosen people, we have the Eternal's temple, He protects us from our enemies, so now let us stop worrying and learn some of those fun Canaanite practices." Similarly, people in the WCG seemed to act like this was their life plan: "We are specially called of the Eternal, we are in His one True Church, we are going to a place of safety while everyone else goes to the tribulation, so now let us stop worrying and concentrate on having fun like the rest of the world does."

The truth of the matter is that both they and we need to seek the Eternal. We need to make the big and small decisions of our lives based on our prayers and understanding of what the Eternal expects of us. The big decisions are: where we go to school, where we go to work, where we fellowship for services, who we marry, who our friends are, etc. The small decisions are what we decide to do each day.

We do not claim to have mastered this yet, but we are beginning to see where we need to go.

—NSE

Old Ways Not God's Way

LETTER: November 13, 1997
Dear Mr. Edwards,

I am reading your article on UCG and find it interesting that many do question if it was God who "allowed WCG to go astray." It is, also, interesting that God asks the same question (Isa 42:24) and answers it. He also tells why this came about.

For those who pray for "unity," I can assure you—there will be "unity"—but not in the way we hope for (Ezek. 20:32-38). The "unity" we hope for will only come in God after we turn our hearts back to Him and seek His face and the truth (Isa 55:6-7; 2Chron 15:2). Christ will not follow us. We must follow Him and be found in Him or we will be rejected as "naked" (Rev 16:15).

Our salvation does not depend on where men are—or an organization—but on where we are in Christ. It is not what we do that counts. It is what Christ does in

us that really counts.

The reason UCG has not "produced anything substantial" is because it is not of God. Neither were the "inventions" of HWA. God is not interested in our "inventions" (Psa 99:8 and 106:29,39). He is interested in our hearts.

For the same reason "tried and true methods no longer work." They are not of God.

If we practice Sabbath "benchwarming" and do our own thing, **are we not just as the Protestants as Sunday "benchwarmers"** who do their own thing? If the religion we practice is not of God – it is of no value. —Myra McQueen, Texas

RESPONSE: It's not enough to be with a group that has the truth, we have to individually do the truth. Many of the scribes and Pharisees of Christ's day knew nearly all the truth that was generally available at that time. They just did not always do it!

—NSE

Kansas City Clarification

LETTER: November 18, 1997

In reference to your article on the churches that have separated from UCG-AIA, I found the section on Kansas City quite accurate.

There is one small item of clarification, however. Gerald Weston was always up front with me personally regarding his intentions. I believe him when he tells me that he did not intend to affiliate with the the Global Church of God prior to his separation from WCG, and that this decision came later after he determined that what he called "the mystery group" (which later became United) was not going to be according to his liking. His error, in my opinion, was in making the decision for the entire congregation without consulting with us first.

One point to keep in mind: There was never a board in the period before KC associated with Global, so there was never a board to communicate with. I was never privy to conversations some say they had with him where he promised not to affiliate before discussing it with the congregation. He might have promised and he might not have—I can't prove it either way because I wasn't there. I believe those who told you this were being honest because they are honest people. I just can't prove it either way.

He did communicate with the deacons and elders immediately upon his return from San Diego, telling us he had made up his mind and he was going to go with Global, and we were welcome to go with him if we wished.

I know Mr. Weston well, and I believe his decision to affiliate with Global was based on his belief that it would be in the best interest of the congregation. The problem was announcing the following Sabbath that "next week we'll be meeting here as a Global congregation." But we all make mistakes.

While I disagree with that decision, I have no doubt that his heart was in the right place. Indeed, he and I have had the opportunity to discuss the history of the past few years, and those discussions confirm what I state here.

Those days were turbulent and emotional times, and I am sure that all of us would have handled the situation differently if we had to do it over. I certainly made my share of mistakes in March/April 1995, and for that reason feel uncomfortable pointing my finger at a friend who perhaps did things differently than I would have had I been in his shoes.

A final point: Since those times almost 3 years ago, Gerald Weston still acts much like the pastor for people who used to be in his church. I can cite some interesting examples, but many of those are very private and were done not to be seen of men.

—Lenny Cacchio, Lees Summit, Missouri

RESPONSE: Thank you for your clarification. Some people were shocked to find that they were suddenly in a Global Church of God, but we see how it would be hard for Gerald Weston to deal with his congregation directly. Since both ministers and members were trained in "top down" leadership for so long, it is easy to see why events unfolded as they did. Some members were probably expecting God to guide their pastor to make the decision for them—an open discussion of which group to associate with may well have caused them to drop out altogether, concluding that God was "not in that decision."

—NSE

Finished Listening to UCG Troubles

LETTER: November 14, 1997
Dear Norman Edwards,

Over the course of almost a year now we have been receiving the *Servants' News*, and we have enjoyed reading some of it. I really enjoyed your articles on marriage and divorce, the calendar and other articles that brought out Biblical principles.

However, upon receiving the Sept/Oct 1997 issue, we no longer wish to receive *Servants' News* and ask that you remove our name from your mailing list.

In this day and age it is hard to follow

the admonition of Phil 4:8: "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, are honest, are just, are pure, are lovely, are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Upon reading portions of the Sept/Oct 1997 issue we found much negative, potentially divisive information being passed on to God's people.

As a servant of God with the newspaper you have, you are in a position of great influence...and it can be for good or it can be bad. It is our opinion that the Sept/Oct 1997 issue is full of gossip, fault finding, and innuendo. No Church of God organization has been perfect yet, and neither will any in the human future be perfect. There will be delays, mistakes, hurt feelings, wrongs done, etc. God has placed us here on Earth to learn from these experiences, some of which can be very bad experiences. We are here to learn patience, compassion, understanding, mercy, judgement and faith. We are to help our brother when we are able and it is not for us to go around bad-mouthing and backbiting anybody, especially not God's people, our fellow brethren, even if they are wrong, and even if every word we say is **true**. We are to help our brother get up when he is down, not push him down when he may be staggering.

Some of the things you say in the referred to issue are true, some are not. There are times when wisdom leads a person to **not** say things that are true because to say them would cause offense, distrust, character assassination, division and contention. To say those true things would not build or create anything good.

Here are some scriptures that I think bear serious thought in reference to this issue: Prov. 29:22: "An angry man stirs up strife and a furious man abounds in transgression." Prov 28:25: "He that is of a proud heart stirs up strife:..." Prov 26:20: "Where no wood is, there the fire goes out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." Prov 22:10: "Cast out the scorner and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease." (That is why we no longer wish to subscribe, because of the scorn that we found rampant in this issue of the *Servants' News*. God's people have gone through so much strife and trouble and pain. Why can't people be left to go where God leads them without someone causing doubt and division???) Prov 10:20 "The tongue of the righteous mans is as choice silver;..." Prov 12:18: "There is that babbleth like the piercings of a sword; but the tongue of the wise is health." Prov 15:2: "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright:..." Prov 15:4: "Gentleness of tongue

is a tree of life;..." 1Pet 3:10: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."

Satan is so set on destroying us. He is so full of vengeance and wrath and hate. He is exceptionally negative and destructive. God's people need you to write wholesome, positive, instructive articles that build them up. They need you to search the Bible and help teach them how to grow in the weightier matters of the law...judgement, mercy and faith. Please leave the tearing down of people, ministers, churches, and congregations to Satan. He doesn't need any help to do what he is doing.

We are disappointed and we regretfully ask that our name, be removed from your mailing list. We do not wish to receive any more issues.

Sincerely, —M. & L. R, Wisconsin

RESPONSE: Thank you for your letter. We will remove your name from our mailing list as you requested.

We realize that some brethren are served very well by the UCG-AIA or other organizations. They are happy with their local congregations and ministers, and they wish others could be the same. But many believe there are serious biblical problems with their organizations or congregations. The memo we print from John Anderson in the November, 1997 issue is proof that the UCG-AIA home office knows there are serious difficulties. Believe it or not, **every time we decide to print articles about what is happening in specific organizations, we wish we could be teaching a Bible topic instead.** So why do we print such articles? Why do we not stick to "Bible topics"?

We believe that part of our service is helping people deal with the problems they are experiencing right now. Our effort was not to condemn people or organizations, but to help others understand what is happening and to help them look to the Eternal for his solution. Our sympathy is with your feelings. It would be nice if we could simply put our differences aside and concentrate on spiritual issues. But in reality, how do we do that? Do we achieve unity by unquestionably following whoever claims to be in charge of us? Most of our readers have learned from experience with the Worldwide Church of God that the Eternal does not always correct the leaders "from the top." Sometimes he leaves it up to local congregations or individuals to decide with whom they will fellowship and to whom they will contribute.

The Bible makes it clear that members sometimes have to "try" leaders to see if

they are true or false (Rev 2:2). We have two chapters giving qualifications of leaders (1Tim 3, Tit 1). How much responsibility for determining the right course of action rests on individuals, how much on congregations, how much on recognized leaders? It would be simple if the Eternal would miraculously reveal His will to us in a way that all believers would understand. But He has not. He has left us to seek His will and study His word.

That is most of the substance of the controversy at UCG. Exactly who is responsible for determining what is essential doctrine, what is the format of local services, where and how should the Gospel be preached, who should lead groups, etc? Many people have honest and sincere disagreement on these issues. Ignoring them will not make them go away.

In addition to the honest and sincere differences, there are probably mistakes and self-seeking going on in the UCG. The Bible does not ignore these issues, but addresses them head-on and encourages us to do the same in NUMEROUS places. It discusses factions, false doctrine, and personal sins:

Jesus spent much time talking about the errors of the Pharisees (Matt 16 & 23). Those who believed circumcision was necessary were a continual source of trouble for the believers—but were sometimes a help (Acts 11:2; Acts 15; Gal 2:12; Gal 5:11-12; Col 4:11, Tit 1:10).

The discussion in Revelation 2 and 3 are about church problems at that time, as well as prophetic.

In 1 Corinthians 1:11, Paul tells the Corinthians who told him about the sectarianism there (this is not gossip!), and then tells them how to avoid the problem in the rest of that chapter and in chapter 3.

1 Corinthians 5 talks about a man's personal sins and instructs the congregation what to do about it.

2 Peter 2 is an entire chapter about false teachers—the evils they do and how to recognize them.

Three entire books of the Bible are devoted largely to recognizing false brethren in the church: 2 John, 3 John and Jude. The names of someone helpful (Demetrius) and of a bad leader (Diotrephes) who was wrongly "disfellowshipping" brethren are published in 3 John.

2 Timothy 4:10-22 is a long section where Paul names specific people who have helped as well as harmed him.

We could go on to list other scriptural examples where problems in congregations were discussed. **If** our purpose were to "say bad things about people"—to stir up distrust

and cause division, then the scriptures you listed would apply. But we were encouraging just the opposite. **In numerous cases, we have left out names and avoided condemning people even when their problems seemed fairly obvious.** On the last page of the lead article (page 10), we encouraged people to work together and befriend each other in spite of what happens to the various organizations. This is a great difference from the organizations, which largely teach loyalty to themselves is more important than local acquaintances and friendships.

If there is anything that we have said that was untrue, we really do want to know! We will gladly print a correction and an apology. It is difficult for us to correct errors that no one points out!

We realize that these are difficult times for everyone. When we were members of the WCG, we had a difficult time listening to those who upset our comfortable position in that organization. Some were vindictive, but some were not. Years later, we began to appreciate those who tried to patiently show us things that we did not want to see about "our organization." At some point in the future, you may appreciate the latest *Servants' News* more than you do now.

—NSE

Likes our UCG Analysis, Solution?

LETTER: November 15, 1997
Norm, Marleen:

Thank you for the latest issue of the *Servant's News* of Sept/Oct 1997. I think that in your cover article you pretty much understand what the problems are with UCG and others. The thing that eludes most of us is the solution.

I was listening to a business tape, and the CEO said that the larger the HQ staff the less "productive" the organization is, since 30-60% of the material produced is for somebody else in the same HQ. [personal sentence omitted] Although certain things can be done better in a centralized manner,—payroll, insurance, purchasing, mailing, accounting and the like—the managing of the brethren's spiritual gifts is not one of them!

From reading the SN, Frank Nelte's papers, Journal articles by Gary F., and others we have no shortage of people who can write and explain scriptural truths. I personally like your approach to doctrine: "I do not have perfect doctrine. But we will not be judged by the perfection of doctrine that our group holds. We will be judged by what we individually do with what we have been given." (Sept.-Oct. 1997 SN p. 41) In the

end, as you pointed out once, we will have to face Christ and let him know that we kept or did whatever (calendar, fellowship, tithing, Passover, preaching, teaching, understanding, etc.) the best we knew how at the time with the information we had at hand.

I liked it as well that you gave a forum to Craig White. His analyses are good. We all understand the problems, what to do about them is what we are not as clear on.

I believe that you are about the only ones to explain the "ordination" scriptures(?) in a clear and effective way. You have done much explaining of the use of God's gifts to His people in His church for His service and others. Also the topic of doctrines, dogmas and practices. I see in these writings the making of a good article covering all the ground from the brethren's point of view as a follow up to *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?*

Thanks for serving, keep up the good work and have a nice Sabbath!

Best regards, —BFM, Texas

RESPONSE: Thank you for your encouraging letter. We would like to publish a revised version of *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?*, but it has been difficult to find time to do it. When we do, we hope to add some of the improvements that you have suggested.

—NSE

Church Gvmt., Tithing, Nicolaitans

LETTER: September 17, 1997
Dear Norm,

I just wanted to drop you a line to let you know that I enjoyed your two articles "How The Eternal Governs Through Humans" and "How Do We Give To The Eternal". You did a pretty thorough job on both articles. I've read a couple of other articles on tithing and government, but they were not as thorough as your articles.

I liked them so much I made three or four copies and passed them out to friends at church. I even recommended the articles to this UCG on-line Christian forum, that someone from church signed me up for. They are very good articles and I hope a few ministers take time to read them too.

One thing does puzzle me! When I hear tithing on your increase, to me that means to tithing on anything above your normal salary, which would be the interest on your savings, any stock dividends you may receive, inheritance, winning a lottery, or a raise in pay. Some verses in the Bible mention tithing on your increase and some seem to say on everything you own. But, I realize that tithing was instituted for the Levite and

the widow and that the New Testament church was not instructed to tithe specifically but to give willingly of our own free will. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

I believe you're doing a good work and I will contribute from time to time, and I am also going to support other ministries who are doing a similar work as yours. I am also interested in contributing to those in need. I know that UCG, in Akron, is going to help build houses for the Sabbath-keeping people in India, who recently had their homes destroyed by a storm. This is an admirable cause.

I no longer can tithe to an organization and support a large ministry that basically refuses to follow the true servant leadership outline in the pages of the Bible. The organization defeats one's ability to grow spiritually. Members tend to focus on the organization for their spiritual knowledge instead of the Word of God.

I also found C.J. Milosh's article on Nicolaitanism to be quite interesting. But, I even found a more interesting article on Nicolaitanism on the internet. Very well written and states precisely the system of Nicolaitanism. I believe you would be interested in reading this article and if so, you can find it on the internet at www.acts17-11.com/sauthority.html. Have you written an article on Nicolaitanism? If so, I would like a copy.

On a personal note: To update you on the Akron GCG turmoil, letters were written [by upset GCG members] to Mr. Meredith, Mr. Salyer, Mr. Ogwyn, and Mr. Greer. Mr. Greer, the regional pastor, came to Akron to speak with everyone. The bottom line is Mr. Greer could see no wrong doing by the Akron minister. Now there are twelve people with their hopes dashed and nowhere to turn. They believe GCG is the only true church after the split.

The Akron minister has offered to speak with all concerned. Oh well, another case where the members have no rights and the minister has all the control.

From what I was told, even the Akron elder spoke against the Akron minister, but it had no effect on the situation. It has just left everyone very discouraged.

Your brother in Christ,

—Akron (now attending UCG)

RESPONSE: Thank you for your letter. I am glad you made copies of the articles—that is why they are in "loose-leaf" format. We realize that we will never know the name or address of many people who have benefitted from the literature we publish—and that is how it should be. The Eternal is doing the work, and He will see that each person is fed as they need to be.

The exact definition of increase that the Eternal intended is not clear to me. Genesis 47:24 indicates that increase is everything that comes to you, because it says that what is left is to be used for planting, eating, etc. However, Joseph was here inventing his own taxation system (it was 20%), not implementing the Eternal's—he may well have given a different definition of increase. Leviticus 27:32 indicates that animals were simply to be "passed under the rod" and one tenth taken as a tithe. Most have assumed that only animals born that year would pass under the rod. Certainly any animals that were eaten or taken by the king as taxes would not be there to pass under the rod, and hence would not be tithed.

We can be sure that tithing under the Old Testament was "bottom up", not "top down." People gave to the Levites, and the Levites gave to the priests, and the priests gave to Aaron. There was no definition of exactly who was to give to whom. If a Levite or priest was obviously derelict in his duty, I doubt anyone would give anything to him. How would our national taxation system work if people only paid competent local governments, and local governments supported only competent state governments, and state governments supported only competent national programs? Even with the best of intentions, church organizations that collect all of the funds in one place tend to misuse it on pet projects. It seems much more biblical for individuals to do exactly what you are doing: contribute to those who you determine are doing a biblical work. There can be many. If some seem to bear more fruit than others, you can adjust your contributions accordingly. This is in accordance with the need for each person to do lasting work (1Cor 3:13-15).

I have not written an article on Nicolaitanism. I have downloaded the one from the Website you suggested. I will read it and see if it is worth publishing.

Since I worked for the Global Church of God, I know something of how they handle their ministerial-member relationships. They really hope that their ministers will treat their members in the most fair, biblical manner possible. But they realize that that does not always happen. They believe that publicly correcting a minister would cause people to lose respect for the ministry—so even if they do listen to the member and conclude that the minister was wrong, they almost never make any kind of public apology or make any attempt at restitution. After years of this, some ministers realized that they could get away with almost anything against their congregations. The only reason this method appeared to work for so long is

that people thought they were in the **one true church** and that being disfellowshipped would mean losing all of their friends and maybe their salvation—so they accepted unjust judgments. Now, there is another Church of God down the road to which they can go, so when they are treated unfairly, they pack up and go. I think some of the hierarchical ministers have figured this out, but certainly not all of them. If congregations would follow 1 Timothy 5:19-20 and rebuke elders "before all," the elders would be corrected and there would be respect for them.

—NSE

UCG Articles: Some Good, Some Bad

LETTER:

November 16, 1997

Norm-

Still up to your feisty ways, I see (I just got through reading the latest Servants News).

Are you the person to be writing a "lamentation" for UCG? As I understand it, a lamentation is a sincere lamenting. If UCG falls, you wouldn't really lament, would you?

RESPONSE: I am indeed saddened to see so many people work so hard at something that is not working and that remains on a course that cannot work.

LETTER: You've probably heard that John Anderson has caused quite a stir with a letter proposing that UCG split into at least 2 groups. A local elder here has sent out copies of Anderson's letter along with Guy Swenson's (used to work in WCG Church Admin) rebuttal and his own opinions to leading members in this area. I haven't received the correspondence myself, but heard about it from a guy who loves this stuff.

RESPONSE: John Anderson's letter [reprinted in this issue] is an excellent example of evidence that UCG is not working. However, since management is not openly discussing the problems, those who see the problems feel like they are being ignored, and those who do not know about the problems are upset at the "disunity" over apparently non-existent problems.

LETTER: I enjoyed my feast in the Dells, but it was a lot less enthusiastic place than last year, along with a lot fewer people in attendance. [A former UCG-AIA home office employee] and his family were there, and it was great seeing them again. [He] attends Global most of the time; he says 50 people have quit the Dallas UCG recently and joined Global. [He] is no Global fanatic; he says they attend because it's close to where they live, and the sermons are decent.

RESPONSE: Many of the groups are

completely unaware of how many of their members attend their services simply because they do not know of anywhere else that is better. Members have learned not to voice such opinions over the years, but that does not mean that they are not there.

LETTER: It is my opinion that UCG is becoming a little like Global in promoting itself. They sent out a tape by Gerald Waterhouse (it's hard to keep a good man down, I guess) where he runs all over the place like it was the early 80s—except for HWA being around of course. Mr. Waterhouse says that God does not accept the other churches, and chose UCG, apparently because of the way it was organized at Indianapolis... which we are hearing is not the way it's being run any more.

Anyway, his sermon (nearly 2 hours long) nearly gave me a headache. Among other things, Mr. Waterhouse lashed out at those who ridiculed his belief that Petra will be the place of safety, and said that any contrary belief is tantamount to disagreeing with God (where have I heard this before?)

My intuition is that UCG is trying to give the members what they want—some of that old-time WCG religion, to keep from losing more people. I kept asking myself, why would anyone believe Gerald Waterhouse today after he clearly failed to anticipate HWA's death and, even more importantly, the great apostasy in WCG?

RESPONSE: "And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'—when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deut 18:21-22). We also remember a lot of Gerald Waterhouse predictions made "with the authority of God" that did not come to pass. We lament that he is still doing this, that some people are still believing it, and that leadership still allows it. Of course, Gerald Waterhouse always had many great things to say about Armstrong, Tkach, and now his present employer. That may be another reason why he is sent to continually speak to congregations.

LETTER: Back to *Servants' News*—sorry, but your parody on Revelation 2-3 did not go over well with me at all. Those chapters are the last place I would look for support—or rejection—of the hierarchical form of Church government. The primary intent was to describe future conditions in the Church. Your mocking re-wording of those chapters was not useful.

RESPONSE: When many writers establish their doctrine of church government,

they use scriptures about Moses or New Testament scriptures that do not clearly address the issue of how Christ rules His church. In Revelation 2 & 3 we have a clear explanation of how he does this. While these chapters may also be prophetic, John was clearly told to send those letters to churches existing at that time (Rev 1:11). He makes it very clear that **Christ** would reward or punish them, not a headquarters or a ministerial team of some kind. Yet, so many people today seem to believe that Christ cannot accomplish anything without a human hierarchy.

LETTER: Also, I am growing increasingly restless with the HWA bashing. When you say that he took credit for the material published in the US & BC in Prophecy, exactly what statements, in his autobiography or elsewhere, are you talking about (just so we can judge for ourselves).

I recall HWA mentioning in US & BC the existence of the British Israelite beliefs of others. I have heard the work you mention as having predated HWA, has been in the public domain for many years. Is it typical, or necessary, to cite such references in new works?

I'll throw this out for argument, does Moses give credit to his sources for the ancient history in the first few chapters of Genesis?

Anyway, I hope you guys are well. You appear, obviously, to be in fighting trim, as they say.

—Illinois

RESPONSE: Someone in the publishing business sent us a very good document showing why Armstrong's work would be considered plagiarism. We plan to make it generally available. Several people have mentioned a letter sent to the brethren in the 50's and/or 60's where HWA denied reading the book. **[If any of our readers have that letter, we would like a copy of it.]** J.H. Allen's book was copyrighted in 1917—we will try to find out exactly when that expired and clearly document all of these facts in the upcoming article.

We are sending you the Biography of Herbert Armstrong by Richard Nickels, which we give away. It shows the many other cases where Herbert Armstrong borrowed (or completely copied in the case of the *Has Time Been Lost?* booklet) many different things. The point is, he often claimed that God had raised him up to restore truth in the end time, and the truth was, **he borrowed some of what he taught from others.** That does not make the truth he taught any less true. But when we understand that his voluminous writings were not all his personal study or divine inspiration, but bor-

rowed from other people who also had truth, then we can more clearly see that we should not assume that every doctrine he taught was divinely inspired. **It also should teach us that other groups, outside of the WCG and its offshoots, may have some truth.**

Moses does not give the sources used to write Genesis, but since we have the Eternal's opinion of Moses' life, we can be fairly sure that what he did was not a big sin (Deut 32:48-52 & Deut 34). We do not know the Eternal's opinion of HWA's life.

It was very difficult for us personally when we began to realize that Herbert Armstrong had serious difficulties. But what did Israelites do when they discovered that their king (yes, the one that God set in office), was partly corrupt? They did the best they could—in some cases they had to flee to Judah or even the wilderness. We came to realize that we will be judged on our own works in accordance with our understanding of the Bible.

—NSE

Correction to "No KJV-Only" Article

LETTER: October 23, 1997

I appreciate your article on King James Onlyism. Keep up the good work!

However, I would like to point out an error. The third paragraph contains this sentence: "Three other well-known staunch supporters of this view are Texe Marrs, Peter Drucker and William Grady." **The second name in this list should be Dr. Peter Ruckman.** I have no respect for the man at all, and very little for an educational institution that would grant such a buffoon an earned doctorate, but they did grant it, and he did earn it by their standards. Please correct this before the slaving hordes of KJV-Only use it to cry that they are being persecuted!

Thanks.

—Randy Ehli

RESPONSE: Thanks for your correction to this article. It was an oversight on our part. We have changed our master copies so that if we ever reprint the issue or republish the article, it will be corrected.

We have been continually amazed at groups that claim to be interested in Bible truth, but take the King James Only approach. Such an approach greatly simplifies research (when studying a passage, there is no need to check other translations or original language manuscripts), but it condemns its adherents to be forever stuck with the errors that are in the King James Version. Many people do not realize that the King James Bible was not a completely new translation, but relied heavily on the Geneva Bible (1560)—a Bible that was popular in

homes, but not accepted in the churches because it contained marginal notes and did not support hierarchies very well. We believe that the KJV contains enough information for salvation—before this century, it was the only Bible version that some people ever saw. However, those who reject all other translations are setting up walls of division between themselves and those who are willing to consider other translations. In reality, it seems that the King-James-Only teaching is just another fad used by some teachers to gain and retain followers.

Thanks again for the correction.

—NSE

Who Are You Doing Good To?

LETTER: August 28, 1997
*****PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO HELP THIS LITTLE GIRL*****
Dear All,

I just received this [electronic] mail from a friend of mine in my College. Please respond to it. It will just mean employing a little bit of time and won't cost you a penny. All it needs is the heart for you to send this mail. **Please** pass this mail on to everybody you know. It is the request of a little girl who will soon leave this world as she has been a victim of the terrible disease called **cancer**. Thank you for your effort this isn't a chain letter, but a choice for all of us to save a little girl that's dying of a serious and fatal form of cancer.

Please send this to everyone you know...or don't know. This little girl has 6 months left to live, and as her dying wish, she wanted to send a chain letter telling everyone to live their life to fullest, since she never will. She'll never make it to prom, graduate from high school, or get married and have a family of her own. By you sending this to as many people as possible, you can give her and her family a little hope, because with every name that this is sent to, The American Cancer Society will donate 3 cents per name to her treatment and recovery plan. One guy sent this to 500 people !!!! So, I know that we can send it to at least 5 or 6. Come on you guys.... and if you're too selfish to take 10-15 minutes scrolling this and forwarding it to **everyone**, then you are one sick person. Just think it could be you one day. It's not even your \$money\$, just your time!!! Thanks.

—[name withheld]

RESPONSE: Thanks for the letter, but I'll explain why I would not respond to it. First of all, I received this very same chain letter over 6 months ago—there is no date on the original letter, we do not know who sent it, and we do not know if the "little girl" is

alive. Secondly, we do not know where she is or who she is or which office of the American Cancer Society is donating to her. Why would the American Cancer Society agree to make such a donation? How would they verify that the e-mail addresses sent in are real? There are bulk e-mail services that would gladly supply her with 333,333 real e-mail addresses for a share of the \$10,000 that she would collect. It is possible that they simply want to raise Cancer awareness. But it is also possible that a private individual is putting together an e-mail list of people who would be good prospects from which to solicit cancer donations. They may sell the list or use it themselves. Sad as it may be, some "charities" keep over 90% the money they collect—calling it "expenses."

Why is someone like me who lives by support from others so pessimistic about other groups requesting donations? Because in my short life, I have seen far more charities that are primarily interested in maximizing their revenues, not in actually doing good. Those with the spirit of the Eternal in them should want to do good to those in need, but they must make sure that they are really doing something good, not just donating money or time to someone who **claims** to be doing good. It is much easier to send money somewhere than it is to become personally involved, but personal, caring involvement is what is needed. We need to do our good works in the name of our Creator, not pay someone else who, if they do good works, will do them in their own name.

—NSE

Male Superiority??

LETTER: September 6, 1997

The letters claiming male superiority (*Servants' News*, July 1997) were amazing! "Army Major Big Stick" is alive and well, but is it right? I think not! One sees men (bravely hidden by masks, of course) brandishing guns, men blowing themselves up, along with innocent children, men declaring war or terrorism, and a planet in chaos run mostly by men. Whatever happened to cooperation and love?

I have heard many blame Eve but careful consideration of what occurred in the garden could put a different light on things.

First, Adam was given instructions about one fruit: **Do not eat!** Did Adam pass on these explicit instructions accurately? **when** Eve was asked what God said she related "**do not eat and do not touch.**" The serpent replied, **you shall not die (if only you touch).** The parenthesis contain what should have been added and the basis of the deception—the half-truth—just

as some today still control people with half-truths. Adam still had the choice to follow God's instructions and to seek counsel as to what to do. As the supposed leader he failed and then blamed Eve, just as some, over the years and today, have continually blamed Eve and accepted no responsibility for Adam's or their own actions. Blame Eve, blame women, blame women's liberation, or anyone but themselves.

The sooner we all accept the role of women as complementing man's role in life and cooperate, then the world will be a better place. **Let's face it: No women—No children—No human life on earth, and then we shall surely have died!** Let's respect each other and live.

—Peter Orr, Tamworth, Australia

RESPONSE: We agree!

—NSE

Seeking Old Friends

LETTER: August 9, 1997
Servants' News,

My husband and I are still with Worldwide Church. We love the new covenant and respect all Christians as Jesus instructed. We miss the brethren who left and moved away. Verne and I are celebrating 50 years of marriage. We would be happy to hear from anyone.

Yours,

—Verne and Lori Felbinger

47744 Klamath Ave, Coursegold, CA 93614

RESPONSE: We understand that the Worldwide Church of God is encouraging its members to contact their friends who have left the WCG and share the new WCG doctrines. Whether or not you are a part of this program, we think it is a great idea for people to get together and talk—especially about the Bible. We all need practice calmly and patiently explaining our beliefs from the scriptures. It is far better for individuals to do this than it is for them to simply sit and have "truth" preached "at them."

—NSE

Thanks for the Effort

LETTER: November 13, 1997
Hi Servants' News,

Please accept this to help your efforts. I appreciate the hard work and many hours it must take to support such an undertaking. I get good food somewhere out of every one of them. Thank you all for making the effort and maintaining your commitment to serve—it's inspiring and encouraging.

—Laurie Shutte, Michigan

RESPONSE: And so is your letter!

—NSE ☺

You Can Contact Scattered Brethren!

Brethren often ask if there are others on our mailing list with which they could correspond, fellowship, or study. Many cannot find a local congregation where they can comfortably fellowship. We have responded to some of their requests, but it is difficult for us to know exactly who is within visiting distance of whom. For the third time, we offer a way for *Servants' News* subscribers to find others near themselves. All you need are some postcards and maybe a map to look up small towns!

This list gives the number of *Servants' News* subscribers that live in each country, state (or province) and city. We do not give out subscriber addresses, but you may send us letters or postcards for people in the cities of your choice and we will forward them. For example, if you live in Dallas and would like to contact others in Dallas, Ft. Worth and Denton, send us 17 letters or postcards: 10 addressed to Dallas (this list says 11, but send one less to your own city—don't write yourself), 4 addressed to Ft. Worth and 3 addressed to Denton.

Please include the following on each letter or postcard (see example, below):

1. Your return address.
2. First class postage.
3. The words "Scattered Brethren Contact" near the top of the address area.
4. The city name and state near the bottom of the address area. Leave room for us to write the name and address between "Scattered Brethren Contact" and the "city/state" line.

Then, place all of your cards and letters in a larger envelope and send them to *Servants' News*, PO Box 220, Charlotte, Michigan 48813-0220. (See the note, below, for international correspondence.) We will not send items that do not correspond to the above guidelines, that are solicitations or that are from people not on our mailing list—we are not responsible for returning them.

Brethren using this service need to realize that *Servants' News* readers have a great variety of backgrounds. They attend a variety of organizations and hold a variety of doctrines. Some people on our list may not be interested in responding at all. We recommend that your cards or letters contain a brief description of your interests and beliefs. If you receive a response, then you can say more. We hope both writers and readers of this mail will keep in mind the principles of Romans 14. This is an opportunity to befriend, encourage, and share knowledge, not a chance to force your ideas or your organization on others.



YOUR NAME
YOUR ADDRESS

Place postage here:
.20 - postcards
.32 - USA letters
.60 - International

SCATTERED BRETHREN CONTACT
*(Leave room for *Servants' News* to put the name and address here.)*
DALLAS, TEXAS (SN adds postal code)
(COUNTRY NAME IF INTERNATIONAL MAIL)

Special Note for International Letters:

If you live in the **U.S.A. or Canada** and want to contact subscribers in other countries, send your cards and letters to our U.S.A. address (.50 on each card, .60 on each letter).

If you live **outside the U.S.A. or Canada** please send your cards and letters to the address on page 2 that is nearest to the country with which you want to correspond. For example, if you live in Australia, but want to correspond with people in England and France, please send your cards to the U.K. address. Do **not** put postage on your cards and letters if you are sending them to a *Servants' News* office that cannot use the postage. In the above example, Australian stamps would not be useful for cards that will be remailed from the U.K. However, if you live in the U.K. and are writing Europe, please affix proper postage on each.

Argentina

Buenos Aires 1

Australia - Capital Terr.

Ainslie 1
Fadden 1
Gilmore 1
Scullin 1
Woden 1

Australia - New South Wales

Albion Park 1
Artarmon 1
Bar Beach 1
Blacktown 1
Blaxland 1
Concorde 1
Grafton 1
Illabo 1
Kareela 1
Kellyville 2
Longueville 1
Orange 1
Richmond 1
Riverstone 2
Sydney 1
Thornleigh 1
Via Bathurst 1
Wyong 1

Australia - Queensland

Arundel 1
Beachmere 1
Bundaberg 3
Gordon Park 1
Mt Cotton 1
Springwood 1
Strathpine 1
Woodridge 1

Australia - South Australia

Brighton 1
Lucindale 1

Australia - Victoria

Chelsea 1
Clayton South 1
Coolaroo 1
Glen Waverly 1
Melton South 1
N. Geelong 1
North Balwyn 1
Thomastown 1
Vermont 1
Via Sale 1

Australia - Western Australia

Armadale 2
Forrestfield 1
Kelmscott 1
Manjimup 1
Mollamara 1

Barbados

St. Michael 1

Belgium

Hombourg 1
Oreye 1
Plombieres 1

Canada - Alberta

Blairmore 1

SERVANTS' NEWS

Calgary	6	Longueuil	1	South Korea	Crane Hill	1	Little Rock	1	
De Bolt	1	Montreal	1	Pusan	1	Decatur	1	London	1
Edmonton	3	Pierrefonds	1	Spain	Dolomite	1	Lonoke	1	
Fort Macleod	1	Stanbridge East	1	La Nuncia	1	Gardendale	1	Malvern	1
St Albert	1	Canada - Saskatchewan		Platja d'Aro, Girona	1	Geneva	1	Marshall	1
Canada - British Columbia		Clavet	1	Sweden	Hamilton	1	Mena	1	
Burnaby	2	Saskatoon	3	97 Hajom	1	Irvington	1	Mountainburg	1
Colwood	1	Shaunavon	1	Nassjo	1	Kinston	1	Mt Home	1
Delta	1	Colombia		Switzerland	Leeds	1	Murfreesboro	1	
Nanaimo	1	Cali	1	Corsier sur Vevey	1	Lillian	1	Oak Grove	1
Nelson	1	Denmark		Rumlang	1	Loxley	1	Omaha	1
New Westminster	1	Copenhagen	1	Schonenberg an der		Millbrook	2	Ozark	1
Penticton	1	Roskilde	1	Thur	1	Mobile	1	Paris	1
Port Alberni	1	Skovlunde	1	United Kingdom	Montevallo	3	Plainview	1	
Port Coquitlam	1	Finland		Aylesbury, Bucks	1	Montgomery	2	Prescott	1
Qualicum Beach	1	Pensala	1	Bath	1	Northport	2	Rogers	1
Richmond	1	Germany		Benfleet, Essex	1	Orange Beach	1	Russellville	4
Sardis	1	Cologne	1	Berks	1	Pinson	1	Scotland	1
Summerland	1	Ravensburg	1	Berkshire	1	Pleasant Grove	1	Scranton	1
Surrey	2	Guyana		Billinghay, Lincs	1	Semmes	1	Sherwood	1
Vancouver	5	East Bank Demarara	1	Birmingham	2	Thorsby	2	Springdale	2
Vernon	1	Georgetown	1	Brighton	1	Tuscaloosa	1	Sulphur Springs	1
Victoria	1	Italy		Buckinghamshire	1	Ward	1	U.S.A. - Armed Services	
White Rock	1	Modena	1	Carlisle	1	West Blocton	1	AP0	1
Canada - Manitoba		Malaysia		Conwy	1	Wilsonville	1	U.S.A. - California	
Winnipeg	3	Selangdo D. E.	1	Culcheth	1	U.S.A. - Arizona		Albion	1
Canada - New Brunswick		Mauritius		Dagenham	2	Chino Valley	2	Alhambra	1
Douglas	1	Croisee, New-Grove	1	East Sussex	1	Cordes Lakes	1	Altadena	4
Canada - Nova Scotia		Port Louis	1	Gloucester	4	Cottonwood	1	Antioch	2
Englishtown	1	Mexico		Gwynedd	1	Flagstaff	1	Arcadia	2
Truro	1	Aitzapan, Edo	1	Hereford	1	Gilbert	2	Auburn	1
Yar Co	1	Garza Garcia	1	Ipswich	1	Glendale	3	Azusa	1
Canada - Ontario		Netherlands		Kent	1	Kingman	1	Bakersfield	2
Bramalea	1	Beugen	1	Leicester	2	Marana	2	Banning	1
Brantford	1	Helmond	1	Lincolnshire	1	Mesa	3	Biggs	2
Caledonia	1	Leusden	1	London	6	Morenci	1	Brownsville	1
Chatham	1	Waalwijk	1	Malvern	1	Peoria	1	Burlingame	1
Drumbo	1	Zwolle	1	Merseyside	1	Phoenix	11	Cameron Pk	1
Emo	1	New Zealand		Middlesex	2	Prescott	4	Canoga Park	1
Etobicoke	2	Auckland	7	Monmouth	1	Prescott Vly	1	Canon Country	1
Fenelon Falls	1	Christchurch	4	Northants	1	Red Rock	1	Carmel	1
Hamilton	3	Invercargill	1	Northumberland	1	Sierra Vista	1	Castaic	1
Hastings	1	Wellington	1	St Albans	1	Sun City	1	Chilcoot	1
Indian River	1	Northern Ireland, U.K.		Stanmore	1	Tucson	5	Chino	1
Kitchener	3	Ballymoney	1	Surrey	1	Yuma	1	Citrus Heights	1
Lakefield	2	Norway		Torquay	1	U.S.A. - Arkansas		Clearlake	1
Mallorytown	1	Oslo	1	West Sussex	1	Bentonville	3	Clements	1
Markham	1	Philippines		Wiltshire	1	Booneville	2	Compton	1
North York	2	Calamba, Laguna	1	Yelverton	1	Casa	2	Corona	3
Oakville	1	Pangasinan	1	Wales, United Kingdom		Clarksville	2	Covina	2
Orleans	1	Republic of South Africa		Conwy Gwynedd	1	Conway	2	Crescent City	1
Peterborough	1	Cape Town	1	Newtown, Powys	1	DeQueen	2	Cupertino	1
Pickering	1	Edenvale	1	Powys	1	Elizabeth	1	Davis	1
Scarborough	2	Glencairn Heights	1	West Glamorgan	1	Elkins	1	El Cerrito	1
Toronto	3	Halfway House	1	U.S.A. - Alabama		Fayetteville	6	Encinitas	1
Waterford	1	Houghton	1	Adger	1	Fort Smith	1	Escondido	2
Windsor	1	Irene	1	Ashland	1	Gentry	1	Fair Oaks	1
Canada - Prince Edward Island		Port Elizabeth	1	Athens	1	Greenbrier	1	Forest Ranch	1
Charlottetown	1	Scotland, U.K.		Attalla	1	Harrison	1	Fountain Valley	1
Summerside	1	Dunbartonshire	1	Beaverton	1	Horseshoe Bend	1	Fresno	2
Canada - Quebec		Edinburgh	1	Birmingham	12	Huntington	1	Half Moon Bay	1
Lachine	1	Kilmarnock	1	Boaz	1	Kensett	1	Healdsburg	1
		West Lothian	1	Brownsboro	1	Lincoln	1	Huntingtn Bch	1

SERVANTS' NEWS

Indian Wells	1	Berthoud	1	Margate	1	U.S.A. - Hawaii		Osceola	1
Industry	1	Black Hawk	1	Melbourne	3	Honolulu	1	Plainfield	1
Irvine	2	Clifton	1	Milton	1	Pearl City	2	Plymouth	2
Keene	1	Colorado Springs	4	Ocala	3	U.S.A. - Idaho		Portage	1
La Creescenta	1	Cortez	1	Orlando	1	Blackfoot	1	Richmond	1
La Verne	1	Denver	6	Osprey	1	Boise	7	Rockville	1
Laguna Hills	2	Fort Collins	1	Palm Bay	3	Caldwell	1	Shelburn	1
Lakeside	1	Fort Morgan	1	Palm Beach		Coeur d'Alene	2	Terre Haute	1
Lawndale	1	Franktown	1	Gardens	1	Filer	1	Topeka	1
Laytonville	1	Ft Collins	2	Pensacola	1	Heyburn	1	Versailles	1
Loomis	2	Grand Junction	2	Port St Joe	1	Idaho Falls	1	Vincennes	1
Los Alamitos	1	Gypsum	1	Rockledge	1	Nampa	1	W Terre Haute	1
Los Angeles	1	Hotchkiss	1	Sarasota	1	Pocatello	1	Warsaw	1
Menifee	1	Lakewood	1	Spring Hill	2	U.S.A. - Illinois		U.S.A. - Iowa	
Mentone	2	Littleton	2	Stuart	1	Aurora	1	Chariton	1
Mill Valley	1	Longmont	1	Tallassee	1	Barrington	1	Council Bluffs	1
Mission Hills	1	Loveland	1	Tampa	2	Berwyn	1	Elk Horn	1
Mission Viejo	1	Matheson	2	Titusville	1	Bloomington	2	Fort Dodge	1
Moccaisn	1	Morrison	2	Vero Beach	2	Bradley	1	Keokuk	1
Monrovia	2	Pueblo	1	West Palm Beach	2	Bunker Hill	1	LeMars	1
Morro Bay	1	Wellington	1	Westville	1	Byron	1	Minden	1
Norwalk	1	Windsor	1	Wlnterhaven	1	Caseyville	1	U.S.A. - Kansas	
Oceanside	1	U.S.A. - Connecticut		U.S.A. - Georgia		Chicago	7	Arlington	1
Palmdale	2	Botsford	1	Acworth	1	Collinsville	1	Benton	1
Pasadena	3	Jewitt City	1	Alpharetta	1	Danville	1	Caldwell	1
Perris	1	Lebanon	1	Atlanta	1	Davis	1	Clearwater	1
Placerville	2	Milford	2	Buford	1	Des Plaines	1	Colwich	1
Point Richard	1	New Britain	1	Byron	1	Energy	1	Derby	1
Pomona	1	New London	1	Cassville	1	Geneva	1	Emporia	1
Portola Valley	1	Portland	1	Chickamauga	1	Lena	2	Eudora	1
Ramona	1	Simsbury	1	Coolidge	1	Libertyville	1	Fort Scott	1
Rancho Cordova	1	Thomaston	1	Cumming	1	Loves Park	2	Great Bend	1
Redding	1	Torrington	1	Dawsonville	1	Metropolis	1	Hutchinson	1
Riverside	4	Uncasville	1	Doraville	1	Mt. Prospect	1	Manhattan	1
Roseville	1	Waterbury	1	Douglasville	1	Naperville	1	McPherson	1
S Pasadena	1	Watertown	1	Duluth	1	Ofallon	1	Meade	1
Sacramento	4	West Hartford	1	East Dublin	3	Palos Park	1	Mulvane	1
Salinas	1	West Haven	1	Flintstone	1	Park Ridge	1	Overland Park	4
San Bruno	1	U.S.A. - Delaware		Gainesville	2	Shirland	1	Shawnee Mission	2
San Clemente	1	Wilmington	1	Hazlehurst	1	Stillman Vly	1	Topeka	2
San Diego	4	U.S.A. - Florida		Hoschton	1	Villa Park	1	Wichita	15
San Francisco	2	Antony	1	Jesup	1	Wayne City	1	U.S.A. - Kentucky	
San Jose	3	Boynton Beach	1	Juliette	1	Winnebago	1	Brodhead	1
San Leandro	1	Brandon	1	Kennesaw	1	Woodstock	1	Butler	1
San Pablo	1	Cantonment	1	Kingsland	1	U.S.A. - Indiana		Clearfield	1
San Ramon	1	Clearwater	1	Lithia Springs	1	Avilla	1	Dayton	1
Sanger	1	Cocoa	2	Macon	1	Brownstown	1	East View	1
Santa Ana	1	Crawfordville	2	Milledgeville	1	Canaan	2	Elizabethtown	1
Santa Barbara	1	Crestview	1	Murrayville	2	Clinton	1	Hodgenville	1
Santa Rosa	3	Delray Beach	2	Palmetto	1	Decatur	1	Jenkins	1
Saugus	1	Deltona	1	Rincon	1	Ellettsville	1	Leitchfield	1
Scotts Valley	1	Destin	1	Rockmart	1	Evansville	1	Lexington	2
Sierra Madre	1	Fort Pierce	1	Rossville	1	Filmore	1	Midway	1
Sunnyvale	2	Grant	1	Savannah	1	Frankfort	1	Morehead	1
Tehachapi	1	Hobe Sound	1	Sharpsburg	1	Ft Wayne	1	Nicholasville	2
Tujunga	1	Jacksonville	2	Silver Creek	1	Greensburg	1	Paducah	1
Ventura	1	Kathleen	1	St Mary's	2	Holland	1	Saldee	1
West Sacramento	1	Lake Alfred	1	Statesboro	1	Indianapolis	2	Salt Lick	1
Westminster	1	Lake Worth	4	Sugar Valley	1	Lakeville	1	Woodburn	1
Woodland	1	Lakeland	4	Taylorville	1	Madison	1	U.S.A. - Louisiana	
Yucaipa	1	Lantana	1	Warner Robins	1	Michigan City	1	Ama	1
U.S.A. - Colorado		Largo	1	Waverky Hall	1	Millersburg	1	Baton Rouge	4
Aurora	4	Lauderdale Lakes	1	West Point	1	Muncie	3	Glenmora	1

SERVANTS' NEWS

Hornbeck	1	Gobles	1	Fulton	1	St James	1	Chaparral	2
Houma	1	Gr. Rapids	1	Hattiesburg	2	St Louis	2	Corrales	1
Metairie	1	Grand Blanc	1	Jackson	1	St Peters	1	Edgewood	2
New Orleans	1	Grand Rapids	2	Laurel	2	St. Joseph	1	Hatch	1
Pollock	1	Greenville	1	Lumberton	1	Stockton	2	Las Cruces	3
Shreveport	1	Holt	2	Mantachie	1	Trenton	1	Las Vegas	1
Slidell	1	Howell	3	Petal	1	Tuscumbia	1	Lincoln	1
U.S.A. - Maine		Jackson	1	Prairie	1	Windsor	1	Moriarty	1
Alfred	1	Kalamazoo	1	Quitman	2	U.S.A. - Montana		Portales	1
Andover	1	Lansing	2	Saucier	2	Big Fork	1	Rio Rancho	1
Berwick	1	Linwood	1	Silver Creek	1	Butte	1	Rogers	1
Palmyra	1	Livonia	2	Smithville	1	Dillon	1	Roswell	1
U.S.A. - Maryland		Madison Heights	2	West Point	1	Dixon	1	Sunspot	1
Adelphi	1	Mason	1	U.S.A. - Missouri		Kalispell	1	U.S.A. - New York	
Baltimore	1	Milan	1	Aurora	1	Paradise	1	Baldwinsville	1
Clear Spring	1	Mr Morris	1	Ava	1	Plains	1	Bemus Point	1
Edgewood	1	Mulliken	1	Blue Eye	1	St Ignatius	1	Bloomfield	1
Frederick	1	Niles	1	Blue Springs	3	Stevensville	1	Bohemia	1
Gaithersburg	1	Old Park	1	Boonville	1	U.S.A. - Nebraska		Bronx	3
Glen Burnie	1	Otsego	1	Branson	1	Dannebrog	1	Brooklyn	1
Hagerstown	1	Owosso	1	Brookline Sta	1	Fairbury	1	Buffalo	2
Laurel	1	Oxford	1	Bruner	1	Gering	1	Central Square	1
Linthicum	1	Perry	3	California	2	Lincoln	1	Clifton Park	1
Lothian	1	Pinconning	1	Camdenton	2	Mitchell	1	Clifton Spg	1
Maugansville	1	Port Huron	1	Cole Camp	1	Nehawka	1	Commack	1
Morganza	1	Rockford	1	Columbia	1	Omaha	5	Corona	2
Myersville	1	Six Lakes	1	Crocker	1	Ralston	1	East Patchogue	1
Odenton	1	South Lyon	1	Curryville	1	Scottsbluff	1	Endwell	1
Westminster	1	St Johns	1	Desoto	1	Sterling	1	Hempstead	1
U.S.A. - Massachusetts		St. Johns	1	Eagle Rock	1	U.S.A. - Nevada		Inwood	1
East Freetown	1	Stanton	2	Eldon	3	Caliente	1	Kendall	1
Framingham	1	Vassar	1	Frankford	1	Elko	1	Kingston	1
Halifax	1	Walled Lake	1	Grain Valley	1	Las Vegas	2	Levittown	1
Holyoke	1	Webberville	1	Half Way	1	Minden	1	Lindenhurst	2
Hull	1	West Branch	1	Holts Summit	1	North Las Vegas	1	Montauk	1
Marlborough	1	Williamston	3	Houston	1	Reno	3	New York	1
Merrimac	1	U.S.A. - Minnesota		Independence	1	Sparks	2	Patchogue	1
Milton	1	Aurora	2	Jefferson	1	U.S.A. - New Hampshire		Preble	1
Natick	1	Bloomington	1	Jefferson City	2	Bristol	1	Queens Village	1
Somerville	1	Breckenridge	1	Kansas City	1	Chester	1	Richmond Hill	1
Stoughton	1	Brooklyn Park	1	Lake Ozark	1	Contoocook	1	Riverhead	1
U.S.A. - Michigan		Dilworth	1	Lebanon	1	Derry	1	Rochester	2
Ann Arbor	1	Duluth	1	Lees Summit	1	Hampton Falls	1	Rockaway Park	1
Au Gres	2	Edina	1	Licking	1	Nashua	1	Sayville	1
Belleville	1	Elk River	1	Lonedell	1	Penacock	1	Seneca Falls	1
Benton Harbor	1	Foley	1	Morrisville	1	Salem	1	South Wales	1
Berrien Springs	1	Hoyt Lakes	1	Mountain View	1	Somersworth	1	Spfld Gardens	1
Burt	1	Minneapolis	3	Neck City	1	U.S.A. - New Jersey		U.S.A. - North Carolina	
Charlotte	3	New Brighton	1	Nevada	1	Avenel	1	Andrews	1
Clawson	1	North Oaks	1	Oak Grove	1	Bound Brook	1	Apex	2
De Witt	1	Richmond	1	Plattsburg	1	Chester	1	Ashboro	2
Detroit	4	Rocheter	1	Republic	1	Edison	3	Cary	1
Dowagaic	1	Roseville	3	Rodgerville	1	Egg Harbor	1	Charlotte	2
East Lansing	1	St Paul	3	Rolla	2	Elizabeth	1	Durham	2
Edwardsburg	1	Wrenshall	1	Rueter	1	Englewood	1	Eden	1
Fairgrove	1	U.S.A. - Mississippi		Salem	1	Linden	2	Fort Bragg	1
Farmington Hills	1	Batesville	1	Schell City	1	Manville	1	Franklinville	1
Fennville	1	Biloxi	2	Shell Knob	1	Morristown	1	Garner	1
Flint	2	Carrollton	1	Smithville	3	Princeton Junction	1	Gastonia	1
Fowlerville	3	Carson	1	Spickard	2	Roselle Park	1	Gates	1
Freeland	1	Collins	1	Springfield	4	U.S.A. - New Mexico		Greenville	1
Fremont	1	Collinsville	1	St Charles	2	Alamogordo	1	Hamptonville	1
Gladwin	1	Columbia	2	St Clair	1	Albuquerque	6	Hickory	1

SERVANTS' NEWS

Hopemills	1	Marietta	1	Corvallis	1	Shelocla	2	Madison	1
Kannapolis	1	Martin's Ferry	1	Gold Hill	1	Towanda	1	Maryville	1
Kenly	1	Marysville	1	Grants Pass	2	Tyrone	1	Memphis	2
Kings Mountain	1	Mason	1	Huntington	1	Uniontown	1	Murfreesboro	2
Knightdale	1	Massillon	1	Keizer	1	U.S.A. - Puerto Rico		Nashville	3
Lenoir	1	McArthur	1	Lakeside	1	Ponce	1	New Tazewell	1
McAdenville	1	Miamisburg	2	McMinnville	2	U.S.A. - Rhode Island		Oak Ridge	1
Mt Holly	1	Mineral City	2	Medford	2	No. Providence	1	Reagan	1
Murphy	1	Mingo Junction	1	Milton-Freewater	1	U.S.A. - South Carolina		Sevierville	1
New Bern	1	Mount Orab	1	Myrtle Creek	1	Anderson	1	Smyrna	1
Pfafftown	1	Mt Orb	1	Myrtle Point	1	Beaufort	1	Spencer	3
Raleigh	1	North Lawrence	1	Nyassa	1	Chappells	1	Spring City	1
Sparta	1	North Ridgeville	1	Ontario	2	Duncan	1	White Bluff	1
Thomasville	2	Okeana	1	Portland	2	Goose Creek	1	White House	1
Wake Forest	1	Pataskala	1	Reedsport	1	Greenwood	1	U.S.A. - Texas	
West End	1	Perrysburg	1	Rogue River	2	Inman	1	Alvin	1
Winston-Salem	1	Perrysville	1	Roseburg	2	Iva	1	Amarillo	3
U.S.A. - North Dakota		Plain City	1	Salem	5	Kingston	1	Arlington	4
Fargo	1	Portsmouth	1	Talent	2	Lake City	1	Athens	1
Grand Forks	1	Rising Sun	1	Tiller	1	Laurens	2	Atlanta	1
Lincoln	1	Sciotoville	1	Turner	1	Manning	1	Austin	4
Mandan	1	Sebring	1	Vale	1	Pickens	1	Bed Franklin	1
Neche	1	Seville	1	U.S.A. - Pennsylvania		Rock Hill	2	Bellaire	1
Northwood	1	Shadyside	1	Allentown	4	Smoaks	2	Big Sandy	14
Valley City	1	Somerset	1	Avis	1	Sumter	2	Bruceville	1
West Fargo	1	South Solon	1	Barnesboro	1	Tega Cay	1	Bryan	2
U.S.A. - Ohio		Stow	1	Beaver Falls	1	York	1	Carrollton	1
Akron	4	Streetsboro	1	Bensalem	1	U.S.A. - South Dakota		Cedar Creek	1
Atwater	1	Stubenville	1	Bethlehem	2	Brandon	1	Cedar Hill	1
Batavia	1	Swanton	1	Blossburg	1	Brookings	2	Celina	1
Bethel	1	Toledo	1	Broomall	1	Buffalo	1	Center Point	1
Bexley	1	Warren	1	Canonsburg	2	Freeman	1	Chandler	1
Brilliant	1	W a s h i n g t o n		Connellsville	2	Lead	1	Cibolo	3
Brooklyn	1	Courthouse	2	Coopersburg	2	Menno	1	Conroe	2
Brookville	1	Wayne	1	Danboro	1	Miller	1	Converse	2
Brunswick	1	West Chester	1	Elwood City	1	Rapid City	1	Corinth	1
Burton	1	Willoughby Hills	1	Erie	1	Sioux Falls	5	Corpus Christi	1
Canton	1	Youngstown	1	Fayetteville	1	Viborg	1	Cuero	1
Chillicothe	1	U.S.A. - Oklahoma		Georgetown	1	U.S.A. - Tennessee		Dallas	11
Cincinnati	4	Bixby	2	Germansville	1	Ashland City	1	De Soto	1
Cleveland	3	Broken Arrow	2	Gettysburg	1	Benton	1	Denison	1
Cleves	1	Broken Bow	1	Huntingdon Valley	2	Bethpage	1	Denton	3
Columbus	3	Chelsea	1	Jefferson	1	Burns	1	Deport	1
Conover	1	Edmond	1	Kunkletown	1	Chattanooga	1	Dickenson	1
Convoy	1	Elmwood	1	Marietta	1	Clarksville	1	El Paso	7
Cortland	1	Enid	2	Mather	1	Collegedale	1	Elmendorf	1
Dayton	2	Gans	1	Mattawana	1	Columbia	1	Fairview	1
Dorset	1	Glenpool	1	Mehoopany	1	Culleoka	1	Farmersville	1
Elyria	1	LeFlore	1	Mifflinburg	1	Dickson	1	Flint	1
Fredericktown	1	Locust Grove	1	Millersville	2	Ducktown	1	Frankston	2
Freeport	1	McAlister	1	Monroeville	1	Dunlap	1	Ft Worth	4
Friendship	1	Oklahoma City	3	Moon Township	1	Goodlettsville	1	Garland	4
Hamilton	2	Rose	1	Mt Bethel	1	Hendersonville	2	Gatesville	1
Harrison	1	Sperry	1	New Bloomfield	1	Hermitage	3	Giddings	1
Hartville	1	Stillwater	1	New Park	1	Jackson	1	Gilmer	3
Johnstown	1	Tulsa	6	Northeast	1	Joelton	2	Gladewater	5
Kent	2	Wagoner	1	Pen Argyl	1	Johjnsn City	1	Goliad	1
Killbuck	1	Watson	1	Pipersville	1	Kingston Springs	1	Grand Prairie	1
Lakewood	4	U.S.A. - Oregon		Pittsburgh	1	Knoxville	6	Greenville	1
Little Hocking	1	Aumsville	1	Quakertown	1	Lake City	1	Groesbeck	1
Louisville	2	Azalea	1	Rochester	1	Lawrenceburg	1	Guy	1
Loveland	1	Central Point	1	Saegertown	1	Lexington	1	Hawkins	7
Maineville	1	Condon	1	Scottdale	1	Linden	1	Hewitt	1

SERVANTS' NEWS

Highland Villiage	1	Pasadena	1	Sandy	2	Kent	1	S Charleston	1
Highlands	2	Pflugerville	1	Scipio	1	Kirkland	4	Sandyville	1
Hillsboro	1	Plano	3	West Jordan	2	Marysville	2	Sutton	1
Hooks	1	Pollok	1	U.S.A. - Vermont		Milton	1	Triadelphia	1
Houston	19	Porter	1	Bethel	1	Nine Mile Falls	1	W Union	1
Humble	2	Queen City	1	N Montpelier	1	Northport	1	U.S.A. - Wisconsin	
Huntsville	1	Red Oak	1	U.S.A. - Virgin Islands		Olalla	1	Algoma	1
Hurst	1	Richardson	1	St Thomas	1	Olympia	1	Appleton	2
Irving	2	Richmond	1	U.S.A. - Virginia		Omak	1	Athelstane	1
Jayton	1	Rockwall	1	Alexandria	2	Point Roberts	1	Black River Falls	1
Justin	1	Round Rock	1	Arlington	1	Redmond	2	Burlington	1
Katy	2	San Antonio	13	Cedar Bluff	2	Seattle	5	Cadott	1
Kerrville	1	Seguin	1	Chesapeake	1	Sedro Wooley	1	Eau Claire	2
Kilgore	1	Singleton	1	Hurt	1	Sequim	1	Greenwood	1
Kingsville	1	Spearman	1	King William	1	Spokane	6	Hudson	2
La Vernia	1	Spring	3	Lynchburg	1	Sumas	1	Little Chute	1
LaRue	1	Spring Branch	3	Reston	1	Sumner	1	Madison	1
League City	1	Sprint	2	Salem	1	Tacoma	5	Manitowoc	1
Lindale	1	Stanton	2	Springfield	1	Tonasket	2	Marshall	1
Linden	1	Stephenville	2	U.S.A. - Washington		Tukwila	2	Milton	1
Longview	4	Streetman	1	Auburn	5	Verdale	1	Milwaukee	2
Lorena	1	Sugar Land	1	Battleground	1	Westport	1	Neskoro	1
Lubbock	2	Tempe	1	Bellevue	4	U.S.A. - West Virginia		New Berlin	1
Mabank	1	Temple	2	Bellingham	1	Belleville	1	Oconomowoc	1
Magnolia	1	Texarkana	3	Blaine	1	Charleston	2	Oostburg	1
Malakoff	1	Trinity	1	Bothell	1	Charlestown	1	Pulaski	1
Manor	1	Tyler	7	Burlington	2	Chester	1	Racine	1
Mansfield	1	Uvalde	1	Camas	1	Cross Lanes	1	Sheboygan	1
Marion	2	Wharton	1	Colville	2	Crozet	1	South Wayne	1
Marshall	1	White Oak	1	Edmonds	1	Dry Branch	1	Superior	1
McKinney	1	Yorktown	1	Endicott	1	Ellenboro	1	Waukesha	1
Mesquite	1	U.S.A. - Utah		Enumclaw	1	Huntington	1	Wisconsin Dells	1
Midland	1	East Carbon	1	Everett	4	Institute	1	U.S.A. - Wyoming	
Nederland	1	Kaysville	1	Federal Way	2	Inwood	1	Cheyenne	1
Needville	1	Kearns	1	Fife	1	Lewisburg	1	Gillette	1
Newcamey	1	Magna	1	Fircrest	1	Morgantown	2	Jackson	1
Oakleaf	1	Murray	1	Gig Harbor	4	Nitro	1	Newcastle	1
Ovilla	1	Ogden	3	Gold Bar	1	Poca	2	Saratoga	1
Pampa	1	Salt Lake City	4	Kennewick	2	Ripley	1	Sundance	1

“News” from page 12

point he implied that people need to do a better job of **doing** what God has already written for them, not trying to hear more. He also emphasized that the spirit of God will guide us into all truth.

After a wonderful lunch provided freely to all, we heard the third speaker: Roger Roth, an Elder of the Active Living Fellowship (a charismatic group). He said that people claim to hear from God all of the time, but the question is: “Are the messages they hear really from God?” Most of his presentation was taken up with a discussion of various “3 level” concepts in the Bible. He said there are three levels of growth, and much of the church is at “level 1” where God would like us to be at “level 3”. Some of his three levels were: righteousness, peace, joy; law,

church, kingdom; good, acceptable, perfect; Father, Son, Holy Spirit; faith, hope, love; spot, wrinkle, blemish; water, spirit, fire; ask, seek, knock; court, holy place, holy of holies; etc. This concept was related to “hearing God” at the end, but this writer did not understand it.

John Purvins was the final speaker. He mentioned that direct communication with God is a gift. Some people throughout history have had it—even though, like Baalam, they were not all righteous. We need to learn to listen to people who appear to have this gift. However, we also **need to know the scriptures so we can judge if what they are teaching is true.** He noted that Jesus did not tell the Apostles to write a lot of literature after he died, but he set the example of mentoring—of mature

believers showing new believers how to relate to God and live their lives.

Norman Edwards was given about 10 minutes to speak at the beginning of the panel. He covered the basic scriptures on prophets, showing that they did not cease in the New Testament but that we should seek this gift today, though we still have to be on the lookout for false prophets (Acts 21:8-14, Deut 13, Deut 18:21-22; Is 8:19-20, Jms 5:17; Is 66:2). A variety of questions were asked of the Panel, such as “have you ever heard from God.” Some members indicated that they had on a few occasions, but no one claimed to do so on a regular basis. Overall, the conference was quite informative, and several people met new nearby friends with whom they may begin to fellowship.

—Norman S. Edwards

Partial Literature List

All items are free upon request. All back issues of *Servants' News* are available as well as a **Complete Literature List**.

Our goal is to bring worthwhile information to as many as want it at the lowest practical cost. The loose-leaf format used by *Servants' News* and most of the literature below is inexpensive and makes copying easy (most literature is public domain). You might wish to hold the pages together with a 3-ring binder, staples, brads or a paper

Items Appearing For the First Time:

Mature Literature

The Elijah to Come by Richard Nickels, 12 pages. Shows similarity between Elijah, John the Baptist, and difference between those two and Herbert Armstrong.

Herbert W. Armstrong: 1892-1986 by Richard Nickels, 22 pages. Respectful, balanced biography giving good and bad.

Should God's People be Assertive? by David Antion, 2 pages. Use your God-given understanding to be assertive without being aggressive. Article offers a free 6-tape set on the subject.

Basic Literature

The Reason for the Season by Pam Dewey, 14 pages. Historic

and Biblical analysis of Christmas customs.

Predestination... Does the Bible Teach It? edited by Tom Justus, 16 pages. Explains how God "calls people," but each has a choice; those who never knew Jesus do not go to hell.

What Do You Mean... Salvation? edited by Tom Justus, 16 page booklet explaining salvation is by grace and that conversion gives each person the power to live by the Bible.

Study Resources and Information

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events edited by Melvin Rhodes, 20 pages. Free sample issue of quarterly magazine on current events in the light of the Bible.

Items Featured This Issue (always available):

Mature Literature

The Apple of God's Eye by Jim Rector, 13 pages. God's love for us is far greater than we imagine, and we often take it for granted.

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.

Christ's Birth—Hanukkah—and the New Testament Believer by Eric Paschall, 5 pages. Our Messiah was conceived near Hanukkah and born near Tabernacles.

Church Government? by Wesley Webster, 32 pages. Member, minister & historian show dangers of religious hierarchy.

Confirming Conversion (confirming New Testament teaching through current experience) by Alan Ruth, 18 pages.

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.

Is Christianity a Fraud? A Preliminary Assessment of the Conder Thesis by Eric V. Snow, 74 pages.

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.

Rebuttle to the Worldwide News (12/19/95) Article by Ralph Orr: United States and Britain in Prophecy by Steven M. Collins, 12 pages.

The Remnant of Israel, An Analysis of G.G. Ruppert by Richard Nickels, 36 pages. In the early 1900s, Ruppert taught doctrines similar to those of Herbert Armstrong.

The Seven Eras of Ancient Israel—Type of the Eras of the True Church by Craig White, 8 pages.

Utilising the Members in the Local Congregations and In the Work: A System to Ensure Fair Opportunity for All by Craig White & others. 26 pages. Valuable ideas for working within a church organization.

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.

Highly Recommended Items Listed Every Issue:

Mature Literature

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.

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.)

Did Christ Reorganize the Church? by Herbert 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 Do We Give to the Eternal? by Richard Tafoya & Norman Edwards, 36 pages. Biblical study of giving and tithing.

How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans? by Norman S. Edwards, 34 pages. How the KJV translators altered Scriptures about government to please King James and an analysis of what the Bible says about how we should govern in today's congregations.

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 of God" history.

Study Resources and Information

The Christian Beacon Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter of encouraging articles for Sabbatarians.

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

The Journal: News of the Churches of God edited by Dixon Cartwright. One free sample issue. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups. 16 pages.

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

Servants' News Complete Literature List & Index, 32 pages.