

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 3, No. 9 A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be December 1997

Headline for 2000: Failing Computer Systems Create Global Disaster!

The last time you purchased a digital clock, video tape recorder or computer, did you ask if it would work into the year 2000? Did you ask if there were other models available—even if they were more expensive—that were tested and guaranteed to work in year 2000?

Your answer might be, “What? Am I supposed to ask those questions?”

Unfortunately, computerized things, from watches to aircraft carriers, are subject to possible failures on January 1, 2000. It is caused by tiny flaws in

the working of computers that, until this time, have had no affect whatever. Sadly, nearly all of these problems will hit us at once.

Isn't this a problem that will be solved by the people who manage the production of computerized equipment? It could have been, but it was not. Of the millions of computers serving governments, hospitals, utilities, banks, other businesses and people world wide, as many as half may not work normally in the year 2000. Why have managers of government and business bought and relied upon computers with these problems? Because they were like you—they did not know they were supposed to ask such questions.

Just because you do not own or use a computer, do not think that you will escape this disaster. Unless you “live off the land,” with your own food and energy sources, you will probably be affected. You may lose power and water, you may lose your job, you may find buying essential supplies very difficult. The biggest problem is this: since it

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Volt & Gas Utility Company
Statement for usage ending 02/05/00

John or Jane Anybody
123 Anystreet
Anytown, Anystate, Anycountry

Financial summary:

Last payment	12/31/99	\$42.47
Amount due for gas		\$24.17
Amount due for electricity		\$25.62
Interest due		\$753,920.18
Payment due	02/25/00	\$753,969.97

***Your service will be turned off until we receive payment in full.
***Legal action has been requested in your case.

The above statement reflects one of the many possible problems that could occur in computer software not fully tested to work into the year 2000. The above customer was wrongly being charged for 99 years of interest on one payment. While it is very unlikely that the utility would actually try to collect this bill, the customer might remain without service for several days. The utility may have numerous errors and problems and simply to be unable to tend to everyone at once.

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Why Do Church-Groups Split... and Form... and Split Again?

- If a man appears to be used of God,
then people will want to listen to him.
- If a "man used of God" starts an organization,
then people will want to belong to it.
- If a "man used of God" does not start an organization,
others will probably start one in his name after he dies.
- If an organization appears to people to have the most truth,
most people will want to join that organization.

Those who run organizations after their "founder" dies
rarely operate the same way as their founder:
A "founder" teaches from the scripture and inspiration,
organization leaders imitate his teachings and methods.

Path 1: Doctrinal Disintegration

- If an organization departs from its "founder's" teachings,
people will begin to study and think more for themselves.
- If there is no well-accepted leadership in an organization,
it may split—each group claiming to be the "most right."
- If an organization rapidly changes its doctrine,
whether right or wrong, some members will leave it.
- If a splinter group has trouble keeping its following,
it can add a little "new truth" to help keep its followers.
- If a person leaves an organization once to seek new truth,
it is much easier for that person to leave a group again.
- People not tied to organizations are more free to seek truth.
They are also more free to sin and be lazy.
- Of the making of many books there is no end—
there is never a shortage of "new truth" to be learned.
- If people try to learn most truth before starting to teach others,
they will die before they ever begin to teach others.

Path 2: Continuance with Corruption

- If an organization remains true to its "founder's" teachings,
its members will usually remain in it.
- The longer an organization teaches the same doctrines,
the less likely it is to make any major doctrinal change.
- The longer people have been in a certain organization,
the less likely they are to question their groups teaching;
the less likely they are to study or join other groups.
- The older, the larger, and the richer an organization is,
the more it uses its history to validate itself, not teaching;
the more likely it will be run by self-serving people.
- The more blatantly an organizations leaders serve themselves,
the more likely members will see their leader's sin;
the more likely they will question their teaching ;
the more likely people will look to God, not groups;
the more likely a man "used by God" will appear;
the more likely people will begin to follow that man.

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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).

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People with a Christian background usually

believe that their only major obligation each Sunday is to attend a “church service”—usually about an hour long.

The more diligent may also attend a Bible study and/or a second service, but few see Sunday as an entire day to be observed. When people from this background learn about the Sabbath day in the Bible, they have little experience in how to keep it.

At the opposite extreme are people from a Jewish background. They usually grow up keeping a Sabbath with many rules, blessings, traditions, and customs. Some of these practices are taken directly from the Bible. Others are well-thought out decisions based on biblical principles (a few of which are mentioned in the Bible, though they are not commanded). But most Jewish practices are man-made rules.

It would help both of these groups to step back and take a look at the answer to this question: “What does the Bible say about keeping the Sabbath?” You can use an exhaustive concordance to look at the approximately 150 verses that contain the words “Sabbath” or “Sabbaths.” Also, a few other references to the Sabbath can be found by looking up “seventh day.” Only a small fraction of these tell you **how** to observe the Sabbath—most of them are either telling us **to observe** the Sabbath or telling us about something that happened on a Sabbath.

The first reference we come to is:

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the **seventh day** and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made (Gen 2:2-3).

This scripture shows us that the Eternal rested from His work on this day. A common Orthodox Jewish interpretation of this verse places great emphasis on “not creating on the Sabbath”—they will not write at all, light a candle or turn on an electric light. This emphasis on non-creating over non-work is further exemplified by some Jews who believe they must

How To Observe A Biblical Sabbath

walk a long distance to synagogue rather than drive (which creates a “fire” in the engine) or walk up 20 flights of stairs rather than push a button on an elevator (which creates a spark or a “fire” in completing an electrical circuit). The Eternal ceased from creating because creating was **His** work. All of the scriptures that tell us how to keep the Sabbath tell **us** to cease from **our** work. If this author were faced with two different ways to do a necessary thing on the Sabbath, he would choose the one that is the least work for the people involved—being less concerned about whether or not a machine is creating a fire.

This emphasis on people ceasing work on the Sabbath is foremost in the primary commandment that instructs us how to keep the Sabbath:

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day (Deut 5:12-15).

These verses contain more details than the parallel passage in Exodus 20:8-11. Nevertheless, the major point of emphasis is that we, and those for whom we are responsible, should not work on the Sabbath. It is very clear that servants should be given a rest—not because it is too much work to supervise them, but because **they** need a rest, too. Why domesticated animals should not work is not specifically stated. Wild animals do not appear to rest

on the Sabbath, but they never work harder than they want to, either. It is quite possible that animals “pushed” to work hard plowing and/or carrying for six days also need a day of rest. In either case, the Eternal also probably intended that people not have the burden of supervising working animals on the Sabbath. So even though an animal might be able to walk a circular path to grind grain, it seems clear that the above commandment says it should not be done on the Sabbath.

There is no comment here about machines working on the Sabbath. This writer’s opinion is this: The Eternal made men and animals and then told us that they need to rest on the Sabbath. Men made the machines and know that most of them do not need to rest on the Sabbath. Machines need to stop only when they need maintenance (a person to work on them). This should not be done on the Sabbath! I see no reason not to let machines serve us on the Sabbath as long as they do not require people to work, too. If the analogy can be made, the Eternal’s heavenly servants (angels, etc.) do not seem to rest on the Sabbath, but serve Him day and night (Rev 4:8). After all, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

Commands to avoid doing work on the Sabbath are found in numerous other places (Ex 31:13-16; Ex 35:2 Lev 23:3). Bearing burdens on the Sabbath—heavy work—seems to be particularly singled out as a sin (Jer 17:21-27). Elsewhere, we have specific details of work that is not to be done.

“...[T]reading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions” (Neh 15:13-22).

All of the things listed above would be work that people would carry out to earn their daily living. Buying and sell-

ing what has previously been produced should certainly be included. Even during busy times of the year (planting and harvesting for a farmer), we are not to use the Sabbath to do regular work (Ex 34:21).

Work Exception Cases

However, there seems to be a number of exception cases where certain work is permitted. These fall into two major categories: (1) work that the Eternal specifies must be performed on the Sabbath, and (2) dealing with unplanned events. The Israelites marched around Jericho 7 days—one had to be a Sabbath (Josh 6:3-4). A priest was consecrated for seven days—one of which was a Sabbath (Ex 29:29-30; Lev 8:30-35). Our Savior agreed with the Jewish practice of circumcising a baby boy on the eighth day, even if it was the Sabbath (John 7:22-23). Also, Temple guards worked on the Sabbath (2Kngs 11:5-9, 2Chr 23:4-8)—they took control back from the evil Athaliah on that day. Priests work on Sabbath and are blameless (Matt 12:5). Not only could the priests work, but when the tabernacle was dedicated, the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel each presented an offering on twelve consecutive days (Num 7:10-83). One or two of these offerings must have been on a Sabbath.

The scripture recognizes a variety of emergency work, such as rescuing trapped animals on the Sabbath (Luke 14:5). Picking food to eat immediately and healing are acceptable on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-12). Our Savior even made clay as a part of his healing of a blind man (John 9:14-17).

A specific example of a Sabbath exception was the man healed on the Sabbath (John 5:5-16). The leaders of his day told the man that it was unlawful to carry his bed on the Sabbath—they may have cited Old Testament scriptures forbidding “bearing burdens on the Sabbath.” If another man was carrying the same bed on the same Sabbath for personal or profit reasons, he may well have been in violation. But this man took his bed home so as not to leave it as so much “litter” for others. He had no way to know he would be healed that Sabbath, and he may well never have carried a bed on the Sabbath again.

The general principle of doing good to others on the Sabbath is repeated twice (Mar 3:4, Luke 6:9). Yes, it is good for a man to work to feed his family, but the Bible never commends a man for doing this on the Sabbath. Certainly, some believers were slaves of others that were not believers. Paul does not instruct them to risk death and run away in order to be able to rest on the Sabbath (1Cor 7:21-22). However, he tells them that they should obtain their freedom if possible.

Similarly, today, it may not be wise for a poor person who has learned about the Sabbath to immediately quit his job and lose his wife or children for not supporting them. However, a person must be doing everything they can in order to be “free” from working on the Sabbath—their Savior will be their judge. This author believes that a person should do regular work on the Sabbath **if** the survival of his family is at stake. This does not mean that one should work on the Sabbath to maintain the quality of life they are used to (a standard of living higher than necessary). If not working on the Sabbath means moving to a little apartment and eating beans, that is what should be done. If a person learns about the Sabbath and has faith that the Eternal will take care of them and believes they should quit their present job immediately—then they should live according to that faith.

Emergency Work on the Sabbath

There are often other questions about how much Sabbath emergency or on-call work is acceptable. If a water pipe breaks in a person’s work place on the Sabbath, and the boss asks all of his workers to come in and help save the business from disaster, should a Sabbath-keeper refuse to help? This author advises the Sabbath-keeper to go help for free—it is like an ox in a ditch. I do not have difficulty with a person being “on call” for genuine, unpredictable emergencies—nor does he reject the idea that people in some vital fields such as medical, life-support, etc., be scheduled to work a few Sabbaths a year to maintain the lives of others. After all, sometimes, Sabbath-keepers have medical emergencies on the Sabbath—and they are glad to find others there to treat them.

In matters that are not specifically detailed in the scriptures, each person should make decisions according to their own faith (Rom 12:3; Jms 4:17)—and not make demands of others. Some of the above cases represent regular Sabbath duties, and some represent specific commands where people were told by the Eternal to do something on the Sabbath. We should be very slow to judge another’s method of keeping the Sabbath. If the Eternal has commanded certain people to march around cities or butcher animals on this day, it is possible that He is commanding certain people to do specific works.

When Are “Your Servants” Working for You on the Sabbath?

One of the most sticky issues regarding Sabbath-keeping is the issue of when is someone a “servant” working for you on the Sabbath? Also, the issue of when (if ever) it is acceptable to spend money on the Sabbath is closely related.

In order to answer these questions, we must realize that we are now living in a world where most people are not Sabbath keepers. A person who becomes stranded, sick, injured, or hungry on the Sabbath will probably find it very difficult to get help in most countries unless he or she is willing to pay for it. For example, if a person is in an automobile crash on the way to Sabbath Services, it is very unlikely that he will be able to convince a doctor, auto repairman, restaurant, motel or passer-by to help him for free because it is the Sabbath. On the other hand, they would all probably gladly help him if he were willing to pay for the services. Obviously, in ancient Israel when everyone was commanded to help those in need, help would be forthcoming and no payment on the Sabbath would be understood. Even in the modern-day nation of Israel, a person in trouble on the Sabbath probably need only go as far as the nearest synagogue in order to receive a place to stay, a meal, and help with other difficulties.

Hopefully, most of our readers will probably see that in today’s society, if emergencies occur, they must be dealt with like the proverbial “ox in the ditch”: the Eternal probably accepts our using money to solve emergencies on the Sabbath. The real question is: what

is an emergency and what is simply convenient?

Let us give a brief example that is the opposite extreme. Suppose a large group of brethren go to a nice restaurant on the Sabbath for a leisurely meal. The manager sees that his waiters are quite busy when the reservation is made, so he calls up Jack, an "on call" waiter, to work two hours during the busy time. Jack is a Bible student and is learning about keeping the Sabbath. However, he realizes that he will not be called much in the future if he refuses to work when he is called. Jack is assigned to serve our Sabbath-keeping group, and during the course of serving them, he hears them talk about Sabbath keeping and their regular use of restaurants on the Sabbath. Jack asks them if it is all right for him to continue to regularly work on the Sabbath, since it is apparently all right for them to eat there on the Sabbath.

This is a dilemma! How can our group of Sabbath keepers tell Jack that it is not sin for them to eat there regularly, but it is sin for him to work there regularly? How can they tell Jack that they were not making their servant work on the Sabbath since, since they paid him the tip directly, and since he would have not been called to work at all if the Sabbath-keepers would have stayed home? A question for the readers: "What explanation would you give Jack in this case?"

Most situations where people use restaurants or other services on the Sabbath are not as difficult as the one described above. Most waiters do not care if their customers are Sabbath keepers and are quite happy to receive their money. Nevertheless, the basic question remains: how can it be a sin for people to be working on the Sabbath in service industries, but not be a sin for Sabbath-keepers to use those services?

Further questions can be raised about the difficulty of keeping the Sabbath in today's world. In many families, one or both parents work right up to the Sabbath on Friday night, and have a very difficult time preparing Sabbath meals ahead of time. The easiest way to rest on the Sabbath is to go to a restaurant. Also, many people drive for over an hour to their Sabbath service, and are therefore quite hungry

after it is over. They would like to fellowship with the other brethren for a couple more hours, but the only convenient way to do this is at a restaurant—there are no brethren who live close to the hall who can accommodate a large group in their home.

Other Services Received on the Sabbath

Finally, we can ask questions about other services we receive on the Sabbath: Does the Eternal want us to pay a business for the use of their hall on the Sabbath? Is it acceptable for us to use electricity and other utilities on the Sabbath (since utility employees work that day) to serve us? Further, is it acceptable to live in a rented house or apartment where we are paying someone for every day that we live there—some of which days are Sabbaths? And finally, is it acceptable to mail a letter on Friday or buy fresh food on Sunday knowing that someone will probably work on the Sabbath to help serve our needs?

Do not panic! The commandment teaches that we are **not** to require our servants to work for us on the Sabbath. If we have an agreement to pay someone to provide a service for us, and that agreement does not specifically require people to work for us on the Sabbath, then we are not disobeying the commandment. Since we do not control how they provide the service, we are not responsible for them. For example, we would be perfectly happy if the Post Office handled our Friday-mailed letter on Sunday rather than the Sabbath; we would be happy if stores stocked their shelves on Friday, rather than Saturday so we can shop on Sunday. We would hope that our landlord does not do any work on the Sabbath, but if he decides to paint our building on Saturday, we have no control. We hope that our utility providers would automate their systems so that they need few or no people to work on the Sabbath—but we have no control over this. Our nations are not operating on the laws that the Eternal gave Israel.

If we rent a hall for Sabbath services, we should offer to do any necessary Sabbath work ourselves: provide

water for the people, set up, clean up, etc. Doing such necessary work on the Sabbath seems to be similar to the work that the priests and others did to perform their offerings. There is no Bible example of "hiring out" such work. We should do as much as possible ahead of time, but the rest we can do on the Sabbath. Whenever possible, take care of paying for the hall on some day other than the Sabbath.

Ex 16:23 states that we should prepare food the day before the Sabbath.

Modern professing "Christians" have few customs that are useful in helping them keep the Sabbath.

From this, was developed the concept of the "preparation day," which is mentioned five times in the New Testament (Matt 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31,4).

Whenever possible, we need to prepare our Sabbath meals before the Sabbath. But what do we do in cases where our plans do not work? We may have an emergency on Friday which eliminates our preparation time. Visitors may attend our Sabbath Service who desperately need to fellowship, but no food has been prepared for them. We simply do not have the Eternal's intended society where we could simply eat with some other nearby person who had prepared ample Sabbath meals.

Purchase Food in Emergencies

Rather than make the Sabbath a burden—a time of hunger for our families, our conclusion is that we purchase food to handle emergency situations, but that we do it in a way that eliminates or minimizes other people serving us on the Sabbath. The ultimate way to do this is the "automat," a food-vending place that is completely automated (machines don't sin by serving you on the Sabbath). However, this service exists in only a few places, and the food is often unheated and/or relatively poor quality. The next best thing is a buffet, where you simply serve yourself from food that has already been prepared—no one is specifically working for you. Also, fast food establishments minimize the amount of work that needs to be done for you on the Sabbath.

This author encourages the above practices to take care of emergencies,

but not as a regular practice. I know of one fast-food establishment that hired extra staff to work each Sabbath to serve the large number of people who regularly came to eat after a nearby Sabbath service concluded. Those people, in a collective way, were hiring servants to work for them on the Sabbath. Most lived nearby and could easily have invited people into their homes on the Sabbath.

As in many situations, there are some issues that are clearly right according to scripture, and some that are clearly wrong. How we make decisions in some of the difficult areas defines who we are. It is important to keep in mind that the Eternal is watching us to see what we do in these situations. We need to be able to explain to Him what we have done and why.

Kindling a Fire on the Sabbath

One of the most controversial scriptures about the Sabbath is Exodus 35:3: "You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day." We have already touched on the Jewish interpretation that forbids the running of combustion engines, the turning on of electric circuits, and the lighting of stoves, heaters, lamps and candles on the Sabbath. Strictly observant Jews will either do without these conveniences or light them before the Sabbath. The Hebrew appears to be correctly translated in this verse—the word for "fire" is the common one often used for cooking fires. The word for "kindle" is also frequently translated "burn" elsewhere—the only other possible translation of this verse would forbid the burning of any fires on the Sabbath. This author has heard one historian speak of one Jewish group who forbade all fires on the Sabbath, but the entire group died during one cold winter. Somehow, we do not believe that this is what the Creator wanted us to do.

The meaning of Exodus 35:3 seems clearer **when it is read in the context of the entire chapter**. The Eternal is assigning the Israelites a massive building project—building the tabernacle of meeting. Verse 1 is the beginning of a

major new section of Exodus; Moses gathers the people together to hear, then in verses 2 and 3 he tells them not to work on the Sabbath—they should not even start the fire that they would need to let burn for a few hours in order to do metal work. The rest of chapter 35 plus the next three chapters are the Eternal's command to build the tabernacle. While there is nothing in chapter 35:3 that says "do not start a work fire," the entire context of the section is about work. The word "habitations" is found in the verse because that is where the people worked—they did not have factories or offices. If there is a general principle we can derive from this, it is that **we are not to use the Sabbath to prepare for work after the Sabbath**—such as defrosting the kitchen freezer (beginning to boil pots of water on the stove before the day ends). Such things may take little work on the Sabbath, but they clutter our Sabbath with other responsibilities that will distract us from the purpose of the day.

Rather than focusing on things that we cannot do on the Sabbath, we should look forward to it as a time with our Creator, His family, and our physical family.

Numbers 15:33-36 relates the story of a man who was put to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. Although this scripture is often cited in relation to the above scripture, it does not appear to have a direct bearing. There is no mention of whether the man was gathering sticks to warm his family that day, to make a work fire, or simply to have a bigger supply of sticks for the future. Some historians have theorized that he must have been gathering for a "work fire" because women traditionally gathered the wood for cooking. In any case, he was clearly working in a way that the Eternal judged to be unnecessary on the Sabbath.

Sabbath Day's Journey

Exodus 16:29 says:

...Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

How far is "out of his place?" Obviously, some of the people went to the tabernacle (and later the temple) on

the Sabbath. This was utterly required when some of the holy days fell on the Sabbath. The march around Jericho must have occurred on a Sabbath. The Rabbis set this distance at about 2000 cubits or a little over one half mile. We can be virtually certain that this definition was commonly known in the first century: "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:12).

However, there is no place in scripture that specifically commands adherence to a maximum distance of travel on the Sabbath. It is clear that our Savior traveled to and from synagogues, and traveled through fields on the Sabbath (Mark 1:21; 2:23; 6:2; Luke 4:16; Luke 6:1,6). Exactly how far he traveled we do not know. Obviously, the Sabbath is not meant for us to do our own travel, just as it is not meant for us to do our own work. It should also be obvious that the old half-mile "Sabbath day's journey" can be traveled in a few minutes with modern bicycles, and can be traveled in complete comfort in less than a minute with a car. When one attempts to balance the commands to assemble on the Sabbath, to not travel on the Sabbath, and to not work on the Sabbath—this writer sees little difficulty in driving an hour or more in an automobile to a Sabbath service. This driving helps fulfill the command to assemble, but creates little work for anyone and probably does not violate the command that a person **not** go out of "his place." The Hebrew word *maqowm* is a very general word for "place"—it does not specifically mean "house," but can even refer to a person's country (Gen 29:26). If a person today is a member of a widely scattered congregation, surely, attending his congregation is not going out of "his place."

Candles, Blessings, & Other Traditions

To recap the beginning of this article, modern professing "Christians" have few customs that are useful in helping them keep the Sabbath since most of them do not observe a day, but just go to a service. On the other hand, Jews have numerous traditions and customs, some of incredible complexity.

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We may be unaware of it but there are two subjects with which we deal every day—traditions and fences. An area in which we might commonly hear these terms is when we speak of “The Jews”. “The Jews” definitely have their traditions and, with a little bit of study into their traditions, the term “fences” will show up. The popular concept regarding their first century traditions, is that the Jews added innumerable traditions and that Yahshua (“Jesus”) told us to discard traditions when it comes to worshipping in spirit and in truth. We will examine this development of tradition and fences and see how it all applies to us today.

Keep

In many places in the Torah, YHWH [the Lord] directs Moses to command the Israelites to “keep” this and to “keep” that. In Deuteronomy 5:12 the Israelites were told to, “**Keep** the sabbath day to sanctify it, as [YHWH] thy God hath commanded thee.” In Leviticus 18:5 they were told, “Ye shall therefore **keep** my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am [YHWH].” In fact they were told and strongly encouraged to **keep** YHWH’s “commandments”, “statutes”, “ordinances” or “judgments” at least 43 times in the Torah!

The history of ancient Israel adequately reveals the nature of the human race. Even when a nation is specifically being worked with by the Creator, they tend to be very short-sighted. (The church has been no exception to this!) Israel rose and fell. They approached righteousness and then fell far, far away from it.

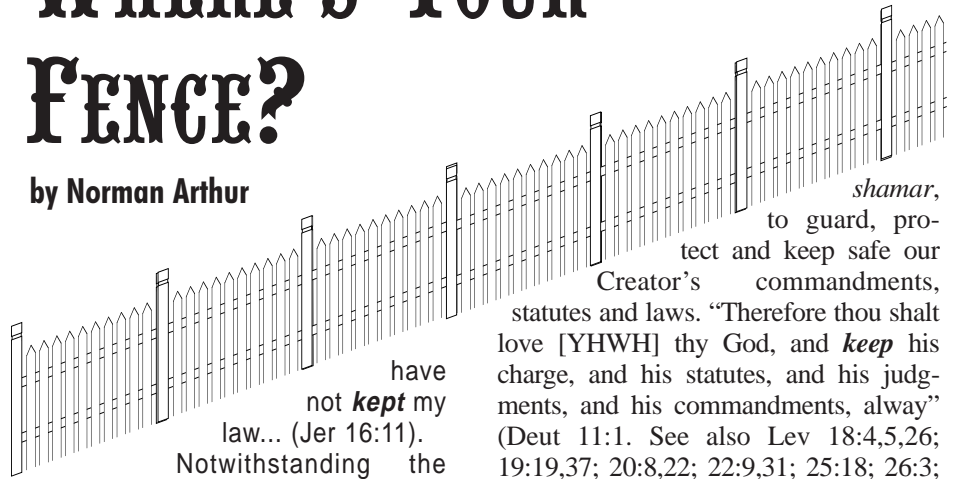
We see the ups and downs during the time of the Judges. We see it with the kings beginning with King Saul. The ups and downs continued through King David and through the split kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Their downs were more wicked and lasted longer than their ups were righteous. Eventually, YHWH sent them all into captivity because they wouldn’t **keep** His word.

Also Judah **kept** not the commandments of [YHWH] their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made (II Ki 17:19).

Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith [YHWH], and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and

WHERE’S YOUR FENCE?

by Norman Arthur



have not **kept** my law... (Jer 16:11).

Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither **kept** my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness (Ezek 20:21).

After the Babylonian captivity, Judah returned to the land of Israel. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, they knew that they would have to **keep** YHWH’s law again (see Neh 1:5-9). How were they to properly **keep** His law? How did they end up with all the traditions 400 years later? And how should we properly **keep** his law today?

To Guard

The Hebrew word for “keep”, in this sense, is *shamar* (Strong’s #8104). Its basic meaning is “to keep, to guard, to observe, to give heed” (BDB Hebrew Lexicon). It has a strong emphasis on watching, guarding and protecting. Other meanings are to retain, to treasure up and to keep within bounds. Gesenius also mentions “to keep safe, to preserve.” Strong’s adds, “...to hedge about (as with thorns).”

Some physical things that are “kept” include the Garden of Eden, flocks, and a house (Gen 2:15; 30:31; Ecc 12:3; 1Sam 17:20). These things were watched, guarded and kept safe. When we have something valuable to protect, we naturally take extra precautions for its care. Depending on its value, we might go to such extremes as putting it in a safe, hiding it in a building, surrounding it with high tech alarms and “hedging about” it with various types of “thorns”.

We are told, in no uncertain terms, to

shamar, to guard, protect and keep safe our Creator’s commandments, statutes and laws. “Therefore thou shalt love [YHWH] thy God, and **keep** his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway” (Deut 11:1. See also Lev 18:4,5,26; 19:19,37; 20:8,22; 22:9,31; 25:18; 26:3; Deut 4:2,6,40; 5:1,29; 6:2,17; 7:11,12; 8:1,2,6,11; 10:13; 11:8,22,32; 12:1,28,32; 13:4,18; 15:5; 17:19; 19:9; 26:16-18; 27:1; 28:1,9,13,15,45,58; 29:9; 30:10,16; 31:12; 32:46).

Israel might have at times kept or *shamar*’ed His law, but they were commanded to do it “always” (NKJV). This particular “always” of Deuteronomy 11:1 is not the same as everlasting, forevermore or perpetual. This word is rendered from two Hebrew words: *kol* and *yowm* (“kaal hayaamiyn” Strong’s #’s: 3605 and 3117). The first means, “all, the whole of, any, each, every, anything.” The second means, “day, time, year.” They were commanded to *shamar* His law **always**, in other words, **each and every day, time and year**. This sounds like hard work! But that is what was and is necessary to be His people.

Shamar His Law

How does one apply this safeguarding and hedging about with thorns to YHWH’s law? How valuable is it to us? To what extremes should we go to protect it?

From Ezra and Nehemiah down to Yahshua’s time, numerous leaders, rabbis and sages saw the need to implement a national understanding of these questions so that captivity would never happen again. In time, many traditions were instituted and added to the Jewish way of life. Before we get too hasty and condemn those traditions, we need to first understand the purpose and use of a tradition.

One area of YHWH’s commandments that was not *kept*

Also, see the companion article beginning on page 11.

was the Sabbath. The primary Jewish understanding is that the Sabbath starts at sunset after the sixth day and ends at sunset after the seventh day. But how do they *shamar* the Sabbath start and end? To guard, protect and keep safe the Sabbath time they simply start the Sabbath 18 to 20 minutes before sunset with a setting-apart ceremony called *kid-dush* (Deut 5:12 commands us to sanctify the Sabbath). They end the Sabbath when it is dark enough to see three stars in the sky (which would be 20-40 minutes after sunset, depending on where you live) with another setting-apart ceremony called *havdalah*. In this way they have guarded, protected and kept safe the actual Sabbath by extending the boundaries of when it begins and ends. They have erected a fence around the Sabbath law. Not only do they observe the Sabbath as holy but they also *shamar* it, both of which are commands of the Eternal.

Is this "fence" a bad thing or is it good? The command in scripture is clear, we are to safeguard and keep—*shamar*—the Sabbath (Ex 31:13-17; Lev 19:3,30; 26:2; Deut 5:12). But how should we do it? Are we to begin the Sabbath right at sunset immediately after rushing around, busily chasing our worldly affairs up until that moment? I would suggest that that approach would not be safeguarding and protecting it. Are we to begin "sabbathing" 5 minutes, 18-20 minutes, or even an hour or more before sunset? Scripture doesn't tell us—nor should it. **It is left up to us to set up our own fence or tradition that will allow us to guard, protect and keep the Sabbath safe.**

Must I also *keep* it differently than my neighbor or am I allowed to borrow his traditions as long as it helps me perform that commandment? Today, many families are borrowing some of the Sabbath traditions of the Jews and adapting them to their family situation. These same families have received much grief from associates for taking on some "Jewish traditions".

Another example that might help us understand some of the traditions of the ultra-orthodox Jews is that of not driving a car or taking an elevator. How does hiking up ten floors of stairs, rather than taking an elevator, help one *keep* the Sabbath?

"And on the seventh day God ended

his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Gen 2:2). One view, which has good merit, has it that the root meaning of the word "rested" is to cease from one's labors. It is often translated "cease" and can easily be translated that way in most other cases. Webster's Dictionary defines "rest" as "repose [to lay at rest], sleep, a state of motionlessness or inactivity, to get rest from lying down." Other definitions include "freedom from work, to cease from action or motion." This is usually thought of in the sense of sitting down and having a coffee break. It may be unfortunate that this Hebrew word is often rendered "rest" as that really does not convey an accurate picture of the word.

So what was it that God did on the seventh day? Did He rest by reposing, sleeping, or kicking back, sighing a big sigh of, "Whew! I'm done!", grab a beer and watch a football game? The scripture doesn't say that He "rested"—it says that He stopped creating. The same word is used to command us to "rest" or more properly "cease" from our creating or from our labors (Ex 23:12; 34:21). Since we are creative creatures, we are to not create on the Sabbath. We are told to cease from our daily work because, by and large, our work is a process of creation. As an example of what not to create, Exodus 35:3 the Israelites were told to not kindle a fire on the Sabbath. Isn't doing such creating a fire? Then, if one is creating, one isn't "sabbathing".

Fires come in many sizes—from big ones to little ones to teeny weeny ones. To run an engine or press an elevator button means that you must create a spark or a fire. It may be short lived, but nonetheless, it was a fire that you created. Climbing up ten flights of stairs in no way violates any Sabbath command. By going to this degree of what we might call "nit-picking", these ultra-orthodox Jews are guarding, protecting and keeping the Sabbath safe. They *shamar* the Sabbath.

One more example of a command that takes on much variety is that of Exodus 23:19, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" (see also Ex 34:26; Deut 14:21). Now, what does that really mean? You and I may have our ideas, but how do we *shamar* this command?

How do Jews *shamar* this command? "Seethe" means "boil or cook". Don't boil or cook a young goat in its mother's milk. Sounds pretty straightforward. But if I eat some goat meat and drink some goat milk, when that digests in my stomach, might that not be a type of boiling or cooking? Is this command, while specific, actually general in nature? Might this also apply to beef and cow milk? Or just to be safe should I avoid any beef, goat or lamb with any milk? If I avoid all meat, including poultry and fish with any kind of milk, that will definitely work!

We are told to never boil a young goat in its mother's milk, but how do we guard, protect and keep this command safe? People who observe this command in their lives set up their hedge of thorns or fence in these various places. There is no law stating that one's fence needs to be at a certain place. There are various teachings and some may come across fairly strong but there is no law telling us how far we should carry this. We are, however, commanded to *shamar* this.

But, Yahshua Said...

In criticizing certain Scribes and Pharisees about their traditions, Yahshua said that they were "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt 15:9). How did it come about that certain *shamar*-type traditions were being presented as commandments of God?

As Judaism developed from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, with their renewed zeal to never again go into captivity, on down to the time of Yahshua, where we see "commandments of men" in place, the nation of Judah had traveled a rough road. After the normal ups and downs of the nation, including the Maccabean era, two predominant schools of thought developed, each named after their leader/founder around 30 BCE. The School of Shammai (Beit Shammai) taught that in order for a Jew or non-Jew to be saved, one had to perform certain numerous commands based on their seemingly endless traditions. They taught that one actually earned one's salvation. If someone didn't do things the Shammai way of doing it, they would never be saved.

The School of Hillel (Beit Hillel) taught the opposite. While one should perform the commands of scripture, it was through faith by the grace of God that one was saved. Non-Jews were not

held to the same standard of Torah that Jews were.

By the time of Yahshua's ministry, Beit Shammai was in power as the ruling political party by a large majority. Most all of Yahshua's attacks were against their mindset. The safeguards and fences that were originally erected to protect God's commandments had become the law of their teachings rather than just a fence. Mark explains some of these traditions in his gospel.

For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? (Mark 7:3-5)

In response to these Pharisees and Scribes, did Yahshua criticize them for the traditions, for the fences that were in place or for their way of *shamar*'ing or guarding, protecting or keeping safe the law?

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. **For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men**, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, **Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition** (vs. 6-9).

Yahshua criticized them for laying aside and rejecting God's commandments and putting their traditions over and above His commandments. These traditions or commandments of men had become their law and they were violating Deuteronomy 12:32, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." A tradition protecting a command is not adding to law unless one turns that tradition into a law. Remember, we are

commanded to guard, protect and keep safe all of YHWH's laws.

But, Paul Said...

Paul also addressed this issue in his letter to the Colossians.

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh (2:20-23).

Yet, Paul told the Thessalonians, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Th 2:15; cf. 3:6). He, just like Yahshua, was against placing traditions of men over and above the commandments of God. It is wrong for us, 2,000 years removed, to categorically say that the New Testament is against traditions. When one understands the issues then at hand, one can see that Yahshua's life and that of Paul's and the other Apostles' were loaded with tradition.

A Fence of Today

Today we have our own fences whereby we safeguard certain commands. One example that comes to mind occurs every year during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Scripture tells us that we are to put out the leavened bread from our houses. The Hebrew is rather clear that we are to put out fermented bread. Yet, what do we do in our modern-day tradition? We also put out any bread that contains only baking soda or baking powder. And we don't stop there. We also put out the leavening agents themselves. We put out yeast, baking soda and baking powder. Yet, it is the Feast of Unleavened Bread not the Feast of Non-leavening Agents!

"Oh, but wait a minute!" someone might say. "Exodus 12:15 says that we are to put out 'leaven' which is a 'yeast-cake' (Strong's #7603). This says to put out the leavening agent."

A study into various Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias will show that this "leaven" was a piece of fermented dough

left over from a previous baking. While it acted as an agent, it was nevertheless fermented bread.


The potential controversy of all this goes to prove the point that we all view things differently and set our fences as we see fit.

There is nothing wrong with this. So long as we don't say that putting out baking powder is law, else we would be adding to the law. It is a good fence. We learn from it.

In other words, we have some of our own fences and traditions that we regard rather highly. We may even be doing some as a result of having been told to by some other organization!

Shamar Shamar

One thing is clear—we are to highly value YHWH's law. We are to guard it, protect it and keep it safe—very safe. Of the fifty-some scriptures in Torah that tell us to *shamar* His commandments, two of them say it rather uniquely. Deuteronomy 6:17 says, "Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of [YHWH] your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee" (cf. 11:22). The Hebrew says, "*Shamar shamar* the commandments of YHWH your God..." (Actual tenses and forms of the words are different but the words are indeed there twice.) We are to keep safe and be sure we keep safe His commandments. Protect and be sure we protect them. Safeguard and be sure we safeguard them.

How valuable are they to us? How well do we know them? How diligent are we to do them, observe them and keep them? Do we set up our own fences and safeguards around His law or are we too busy judging others for doing it? Yes, we need to *keep* His law and set up whatever protections we deem necessary to safeguard them, but, as a word of caution, let's not be critical of how our neighbor *keeps* the law. Let's also not be in a position where we are uncompromising about our fences. **Fellowship is ruined so often because many hold out their fences as if they are the law.** This happens in Judaism as well. Understanding the differences in our fences, or traditions, and what the law is, should help all of YHWH's people draw closer to Him and one another in the fellowship of true godly love and unity. 

"Sabbath" from page 6

How many of these things are divinely inspired? How many are helpful? How many are harmful? Trying to answer these questions would take volumes of books, and there would always be disagreement on the right answers. It is amazing that some Jewish Sabbath traditions seem to point to Christ—it is very unlikely that they deliberately invented such things.

A typical Jewish family will begin the Sabbath with the wife (or another woman) lighting candles. Various songs praising the Eternal will be sung. Orthodox and conservative Jews will usually include the practice of Kiddush, a blessing said over a glass of wine shared by the whole family. This is usually followed by a ritual hand-washing, and then breaking and partaking of a piece of *halla* (challah—a special sweet, leavened bread). Some Jews believe this wine and bread to represent the "fruitfulness of the Earth," but others understand that they are looking forward to Messiah.

Some Jewish families will say a special blessing for their sons and daughters after the wine and bread. They will attend between one and four synagogue services. They will close the Sabbath with a special service called Havdalah, which also includes many lights (Acts 20:7-8 may be such a ceremony), a blessing over wine, spices to represent the diversity of the Eternal's people, and a looking at one's fingernails as a symbol of the resurrection (fingernails continue to grow even after a person dies).

There are many other Jewish traditions and much additional meaning that cannot be explained here. Some believers in Christ have found learning and/or practicing some of these traditions very helpful. They are not harmful as long as they do not become a burden or distract us from establishing a closer relationship with our Creator on that day. Since the Bible contains no large section describing exactly what we should do on each Sabbath day, we must conclude that much of it is left up to us. After all, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Two sources of information on Jewish Sabbath traditions from teachers who also accept the New Testament are: **Joseph Good** of

Hatikva Ministries, PO Box E, Nederland, Texas, 77627 and **Dean Wheelock** of *Hebrew Roots* newsletter, PO Box 98, Lakewood, Wisconsin, 54138. This writer does not agree with everything they teach, but information can be found in their teachings that is hard to find elsewhere.

If You Believe It, Do It!

Some readers will have opinions on how to keep the Sabbath that are different from this article. *Servants' News* respects those views—none of us have learned all there is to know from the scripture. We would, however, like to emphasize that if you do have a different view of how to keep the Sabbath, spend most of your energy **doing it!**

Do not make the mistake of spending most of your energy writing about it, talking to others about it, asking people in your fellowship to preach about it, and judging others who don't do it. "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand" (Rom 14:4).

It may seem unfair to children if one family "gets to eat out" on the Sabbath and the other does not. How does one explain it to their children? How do you answer when children ask "which way is right?" This is an excellent time to teach children the importance of individual commitment to scripture, not commitment to following a group.

Children may then ask, "if my friend's parents think that the Bible says it is alright to 'eat out' on the Sabbath, then I think that is what the Bible says, too. So why can't I do it?" This is an excellent time to teach the value of knowing the scriptures. Ask the child if he or she knows any of the verses that talk about the Sabbath. If the child does not, then ask him or her not to "bother you" about the question until he or she can explain the subject from the Bible. This will be good learning practice for everyone.

Good Things To Do on the Sabbath

While most people's questions are about things that should not be done on the Sabbath, this article would not be complete if it did not include the posi-

tive things that are commanded (and that many people do) on the Sabbath. An assembly or "holy convocation" was commanded (Lev 23:3). This practice of assembly continued in the New Testament (Heb 10:25). Our Savior used the Sabbath to read scripture and to teach others (Luke 4:16,31). Paul continued the practices with both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 13:14,27,42,44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4). In addition to this teaching, Psalm 92 shows that the Sabbath is a time to sing praises to our Creator.

The Bible specified the time of the Sabbath from evening to evening, though a study of the Hebrew word for evening (*erev*) shows that it has a very broad or multiple meanings. Many people keep the Sabbath from sunset to sunset. A common Jewish method is to light the candles 15 to 20 minutes before sunset and continue until the next day at dark. This writer believes that the proper understanding of Leviticus 23:32 is from dark to dark, but I also believe that if this were a critical point with the Eternal, that He would have given more detailed instruction. There are numerous condemnations in the scripture for those who do not keep the Sabbath, but nothing is said about those who are keeping it a little "too early" or "too late." Whenever we believe the Sabbath begins, we should endeavor to be ready for it before this time.

Rather than focusing on things that we cannot do on the Sabbath, we should look forward to it as a time with our Creator, His family, and our physical family (if we have one). If that does not interest or excite us, then we really need to stop and take a close look at our life.

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And **call the Sabbath a delight**, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken (Is 58:12-13).

—Norman S. Edwards

Can't See the Forest for the Fences

by Norman S. Edwards

What is a fence for? It can serve many purposes, but in this article we will emphasize its use as a barrier that makes it difficult for people to go where they normally are not supposed to go.

Parents often teach children not to leave the family property when they are playing. However, if there is no mark on the property line, very young children will probably not even know when they are leaving it. Older children might learn that the property line runs, for example, between the telephone pole and the oak tree, but as they vigorously play, they may not notice that they have crossed the line.

One parental solution may be to build a fence within their property line and tell the children to stay within the fence. Climbing a fence requires conscious effort—children cannot cross the fence and not know it. Very young children may actually fear to be outside the fence without a parent. But the fence is not an impassable wall—if the house caught fire, they could climb the fence to escape the disaster. As children grow older, they learn that they can ask permission to cross the fence to retrieve a stray ball or other toy. When children are grown, parents may take the fence down.

In an effort to live by the Bible, people build fences, too. They build them for themselves and they build them for others. Here, a fence is a rule that is set in order to keep one from accidentally violating a law of Scripture (which is the “property line” in the above analogy).

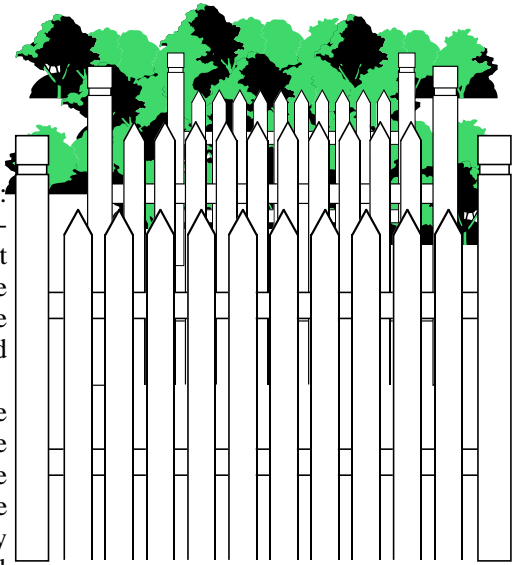
For example, some people believe that they must arrive at their worship service 30 minutes early or they are late. Other people believe they must fold their hands, close their eyes, or get in some other position in order to have meaningful contact with the Eternal—even though the scripture specifies no “required” position for prayer. Another example might be removing leaven

during the Days of Unleavened Bread: the scripture commands that “no leaven should be found” (Ex 12:19), but some people try to clean every surface in the homes that could possibly have leaven—whether any leaven is found on it or not.

It is important to note that some fences can be very restrictive and some not. If the parents in our first example built their fence right at the edge of the property line, it would not be very restrictive—the children would still have access to nearly all of their property. If they built their fence around only a small portion of their property, then it would be restrictive—the children would be allowed to play in only a small portion of the available area because of the restrictive fence. Fences we build for our lives can be of either type. A person who attempts to begin the Sabbath five minutes early is not placing much of a restriction on themselves—this fence requires only five minutes per week and it was well-spent keeping the Sabbath. At the opposite extreme is a person (true story) who vacuumed every page of hundreds of books every year before the days of unleavened bread—just in case there might have been some leaven. That fence consumed many weeks in a seemingly meaningless exercise every year.

Fences In the Bible

We find individuals creating fences in the scripture. The Eternal told Adam “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:17). But Adam or Eve apparently added a fence along the way, because Eve told Satan “but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, **nor shall you touch it**, lest you die’” (Gen 3:3). The Eternal said nothing about touching the tree; a rather unrestrictive fence was added.



Rather than giving offerings for his children when he knew they sinned, Job gave offerings for them continually: “So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, ‘It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ **Thus Job did regularly**” (Job 1:5). The fence was very expensive, the only reason Job could do it was because he was wealthy (Job 1:3). One of the ultimate fences was prescribed by our Messiah:

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matt 5:27-30).

In the above verses, our Messiah advocates physical disfigurement if it will stop us from sinning. This is an **extremely restrictive fence**. As we read the rest of the New Testament, do numerous of the Messiah’s followers

who disfigured themselves in order not to sin? No! We cannot find any account of such disfigurement. Is it our eyes and hands that cause us to sin, or is it our minds? The book of James gives the answer:

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (Jms 1:14-15).

The only way to ultimately avoid sin, is to change our minds: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," (Phil 2:5). But we do not all have His mind at this time. We have to "**grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2Pet 3:18). The Bible makes it clear that we cannot withstand all temptations, so sometimes we have to avoid temptations (Luke 11:4; Luke 22:40; 1Cor 7:5; Gal 6:1).

This is where we can use fences. If there is an area where we **are sinning**, or we see we **are likely to sin**, then we can build a fence around that area that will help us avoid the sin.

But when we build fences to protect fences that protect other fences—the law behind the first fence is often forgotten. **We never want to get to the point where we can't see the forest (the law) for the fences.**

Jewish Fences, Good & Bad

For years, Jewish teaching has been characterized by fence-building. The Jewish *Babylonian Talmud* is several times the size of the Bible and contains thousands of fences to protect the law. After the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, they were determined not to repeat the sins that caused them to be sent there. One such sin was Sabbath breaking (Neh 13:18, Jer 17:27). Today, many Jews use dozens of fences to observe the Sabbath. One of these "fences" is marking the beginning of the Sabbath 15 to 20 minutes **before** sundown by lighting candles in each household. This provides a tangible, irreversible way for everyone in a family—especially children—to know that the Sabbath has begun.

On the other hand, there have been many Jewish fences forbidding all manner of activities on the Sabbath, about which the scripture says nothing.

Two of the difficult ones with which our Savior had to contend were the prohibition not to pick grain to eat on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-2) and the prohibition not to heal on the Sabbath (Luke 13:14).

Whether or not we agree with all of the fences, we have to admit that the Jews have preserved the day of the Sabbath all over the world. Over half of the languages in the world have a name that sounds like "Sabbath" for the last day of the week (English being a notable exception). If all of these fences were necessary for them to preserve the Sabbath and the Hebrew scriptures, then it may be that the fences were a good thing. At least most of the fences do remind a person of the Sabbath.

We find other Jewish fences built around this scripture: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" (Ex 23:19; 34:26; Deut 14:21, KJV). What does it mean? The translation into English appears correct, NIV translates it this way. "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk." The immediate context of all three of the above scriptures is firstfruit offerings or tithing. Adam Clark and other historical commentators bring out that boiling a kid in its mother's milk was a prosperity ritual among the Canaanites—the Eternal was telling the people in the "promised land" to give firstfruits and tithes if they wanted prosperity, and **not** to follow a Canaanite practice.

Whether or not the "Christian" commentators are correct, those few Bible-believing people who own goats would probably avoid cooking a young goat in its mother's milk. We might not understand why the law is there, but we would do it. We might even avoid cooking a calf in its mother's milk, just to be safe. But what fences have our Jewish friends built around these scriptures? They will not eat a kid and drink its mother's milk at the same meal—because both together to some limited degree "cook" in one's stomach. Another fence: they will not eat **any** young goat and **any** goat milk at the same meal. A further fence: they will not eat an old goat with cow milk at the same meal. We could continue to enumerate fences, but we eventually arrive at the fact that most Jews will not eat any milk products with any meat products at the same meal. Some Jews even

have a separate set of dishes and separate refrigerators for milk and meat. They have all of these fences, but what are they protecting?

If the intended lesson of not cooking a kid in its mother's milk is to trust the Eternal for prosperity rather than Canaanite ritual, then all these fences are not emphasizing that lesson. How much better would it be if Jews, as a people, were characterized by being fair, honest and looking to the Eternal for prosperity in their business dealings—rather than being characterized as a people who dogmatically insist on not eating milk and meat together?

Fences Are Not Righteousness

The Eternal's commandments are righteousness (Pslm 119:172). **However, the fences that men build around commandments are not righteousness.** The only purpose of the fences is to help people keep the commandments.

Our Savior specifically warned of teachers who create fences and traditions for other people, but would not do them, themselves. "Woe to you also, lawyers! For **you load men with burdens hard to bear**, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers" (Luke 11:46). Obviously, there are Biblical examples where communities, congregations, and the leaders thereof make rules so the group can function better together. But leaders need to realize that the prescribing of numerous fences for others **does not make the others righteous nor is it righteousness for those who prescribe the fences.** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matt 23:15).

We must realize that our Messiah is not condemning people who are called "Jews," "scribes" or "Pharisees" (many of them later accepted the Messiah's teaching), **but He is condemning the enslavement of people with fences and tradition in the name of righteousness.** The Catholic church and other "Christian" groups have replaced the righteousness of the scripture with all manner of their own fences and traditions. Every long-standing religious group seems to get into this practice at

one time or another. Our Savior, at another time, spoke against the most dangerous fences of all—ones that actually undo the Eternal's commandments:

He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, **Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." He said to them, "All too well **you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.** For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—(that is, a gift to God)', then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, **making the word of God of no effect through your tradition** which you have handed down. And many such things you do" (Mark 7:6-13).

Good Use of Fences

We have seen the need to avoid meaningless, burdensome fences that do not help us keep the law, and the need to avoid fences that work against the law. But most of us probably **do** make use of fences in both our physical and spiritual lives.

We teach young children not to play around electrical outlets even though

"Split Again" from page 2

The above words cover the essential reasons why many religious groups have formed, split, and reformed over the years. They apply to the Catholic Church and the various splits that have come from her, they apply to the many Sabbatarian organizations that have existed throughout history, and they apply to groups today. Major groups are usually started by a diligent leader. Groups break up because they change doctrinally (Path 1) or, more often, because their leaders become corrupt (Path 2).

Do the above statements seem to

the only way they can get a "shock" is if they touch the "hot" side and something "grounded" at the same time. But since the consequences of them making a mistake are so great, we do not emphasize the law, but strongly teach the fence: "don't poke anything anywhere close to the outlet." We also create a fence by telling children not to play with matches rather than say, "don't burn up anything important!" When children grow into teens, we do not teach them only "do not commit adultery," we set limits on where they go and teach them not to be alone with members of the opposite sex. None of these fences are overly restrictive—they all do a lot of good.

When we have sins in our lives that we are having difficulty overcoming, we need to repent of them and pray for the ability to overcome them. But we can also erect fences for ourselves to help prevent tempting situations. If we do not believe we are keeping the Sabbath properly, then we can set up some fences that will help us keep it: be ready for the Sabbath 20 minutes early, do not turn on the television, let the machine answer the phone, etc.

If we are drinking too much, simply stop buying alcohol. If someone offers us a drink, accept it only under the condition that they will not offer us another one. If that fence fails, then refuse all offers of drinks.

If we get angry, eat too much, steal, lust after others, or any such sin, we can set fences for ourselves. A person who has a problem with pornography can simply decide not to go into a store that sells it.


These fences will be more effective

"give God too little credit for what happens in church organizations?" When one sees the wars, infighting, personal sin, and other evils that have occurred in church organizations, it is good that we do **not** give the Eternal the credit!

The Bible nowhere instructs people to create organizations, executive positions, church-buildings, membership lists, etc. Yet today, these are the things that people want out of a church. Paul clearly instructed brethren **not** to create factions around one particular teacher (1Cor 1 & 3). He encouraged people to stay away from those with

if they are written down and if the person reads them every day. We need to consider it sin if we violate our own fences: "for whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23).

While we are in Romans 14, let us consider the question of the fences of others: How should we treat individuals who observe fences that we do not observe? This chapter is a discussion of people who believe they should not eat any meat. The scripture does not say why they believed they should not—it may have been an effort to live only by the instruction in Genesis 1:29, or it may have been the ultimate fence to avoid not eating milk and meat together. Whatever the reason for the belief, Paul instructs the Roman brethren to let them practice it and not to offend them. So if brethren you know observe various fences around the law—let them do it. If you believe that their fences are contrary to the law, admonish them in the spirit of Galatians 6:1. **When someone begins to teach that their human-made fences are essential for others to be saved, then we need to avoid them** (Col 2:20-23; 1Tim 3:6-5). If they want to believe it and do it, let them do it. If their practice makes you uncomfortable, you need to study and pray more to know why you do what you do.

In summary, our Father wants us to become perfect as He is perfect (Matt 5:48). If fences are helping us become perfect, let us use them. If fences help our brother become perfect, let him use them. **But let us not be entrapped in our own, or someone else's religious system where we can't see the forest for the fences.** 

doctrines that destroyed others, but he also encouraged everyone to tolerate people with different personal doctrines (Romans 14).

If we have the Holy Spirit in us, if we have a relationship with Jesus, then groups will not be as important to us. We will be able to work with one group, no groups, or a variety of groups—as our Savior leads us. This will not stop other groups from splitting and forming, but if we are so strengthened by the spirit within us, we will be able to help whichever groups we come in contact with.

—Norman S. Edwards



News from Local Congregations



CGI Hymnal Tapes Available

The Church of God, International (CGI) is making piano accompaniment tapes available free of charge for both their green and blue hymnal. Tapes will be ready in the middle of February. These are ideal for using in services when a piano player is not available. Please mention *Servants' News* and write Vivian Rust, 1603 Northwood Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45237 or E-mail at krust@fuse.net.

Free Hymnal Exchange

Servants' News will gladly serve as a free hymnal exchange. We have run out of our supply of the old WCG purple hymnals (Dwight Armstrong) and gave them away to whomever asked for them. We still do receive requests for them and have found that some people are storing hymnals which they no longer use. If you have **any** old "Church or God" hymnals that you like to give to someone else who would use them, please send them to us—even if they are badly worn. We will store them on our literature shelves and freely send them to others as they are requested. If you know someone else who has unused hymnals, please let them know.

While we believe it is ultimately best for a growth-oriented congregation to use a hymnal that is still in print, there are many small groups who presently need the unifying factor of singing the same songs that they have sung many years before.

Southern WV Church of God

We have changed our name from United Church of God—Southern West Virginia to Church of God—Southern West Virginia, dropping the United name. The change may help others feel more at ease visiting us—they will not mistake us for a part of the UCG-AIA.

We are going on the air Friday night

at 7:30 on a 50,000 watt radio station with Ron Dart's "Born to Win" program. The radio call letters are WEMM, 107.9 FM out of Huntington WV. We are excited to see the results of this program in our area.

—George Hampton

Kansas City Youth Retreat

The teen and young adult winter retreat that was held at the Mokaan Salvation Army Camp in Kansas City, Missouri, began on Friday morning December 26 and ended on the following Sunday afternoon. There were about 45 in attendance.

On Friday, we went to either the game room, the gym, or stayed in the main building and got acquainted.

That night, we had a Bible Study (three different age groups were divided into separate groups) and talked about several different things, one of which was "dealing with temptation."

Saturday evening, we had a pizza party and a dance (with refreshments of various soda pop and trail mixes), after which we played board-games, cards, and volleyball and basketball in the gym.

Sunday, we had breakfast and lunch, played more games, and headed home. It was a lot of fun, and I would definitely go back!

—Darleah McCulley (teen), Missouri

Twin Cities Church of God Busy

The Twin Cities Church of God sponsors Ray Wooten's *Hope for Humanity* program on Minneapolis community access cable TV. This show can be seen on MTN channel 58A/ 36B at 8:30 PM every Saturday.

We are also receiving periodic sermon videos from Mr. Wooten and these will be available for Sabbath services and used in the ongoing production of *Sabbath Sermons* now on MTN's channel 58A/ 36B every Friday at 7:30 PM.

In addition, we also air videos from CEM, Tom Justus, and Church of God Outreach Ministries.

We continue to air Ron Dart's *Born to Win* radio program on KNOF 95.3 FM at 8:00 AM Saturday and on KKCM 1530 AM at 11:30 AM Saturday.

Our web site is constantly being updated with local congregation activities and other articles of general interest to Sabbath keepers:

<http://www.mtn.org/tccg>

I would be glad to help anyone seriously interested in starting similar public access TV in their area.

—Bob Petty, Minneapolis, MN
612-722-5339 or bpetty@mtn.org

Washington Gathering of Brethren

Danny Joe, Dave Madsen, and Chris James are establishing a fellowship that will be meeting regularly in the **Rosedale Community Center**, 8205 86th Ave NW, Gig Harbor, Washington (room for 100 people).

We held our first meeting on December 20, 1997 with about 45 in attendance. Everyone seemed to really enjoy the new environment, although we obviously have a lot to learn about how best to conduct the proceedings in a manner that suits everyone's preferences. We will continue to meet the second and fourth Sabbath of every month.

For the past few years, most of the members of this group have attended regularly with both GCG and UCG. We all now feel that we can make better spiritual progress as a local fellowship without having special ties to any of the corporate churches.

We don't really know at this point if anyone who attends with us will be excluded by others from attending their services. Certainly we hope this will not be the case, as it is our strong intention to encourage all who attend with us to avoid any kind of exclusivity.

A special gathering for sabbath-

keepers from all over the Northwest is planned for January 17, 1998 (there will be no proselyting).

The schedule for this gathering is:

1:00 PM Doors open

1:30 PM Services begin. Format: Hymn, Scripture Reading, Message from **Bob Gentry**, Hymn, Message from **Rick Stanczak**, Special Music, Message from **Lee Lisman**, Hymn, message from **Danny Joe**, Hymn

3:30 PM Services end

4:00 PM Pot luck

4:30 PM Open forum discussion

During the open forum we will be discussing topics of mutual interest.

Some of the subjects might be:

- Sponsoring the CEM *Born to Win* broadcast
- How to build bridges and maintain friendship with the church so very scattered
- Home fellowship lessons learned.
- How to stay independent while attending a corporate church

For directions and details contact:

—Danny Joe, 253-858-7109

—Toli Bohonik, 360-825-7433.

Perspectives Now Offered Free

Perspectives is a quarterly newsletter published for the purpose of informing and helping its readers understand the broad cultural, social, political, historical, and prophetic events of today's world. The subscription price is being discontinued. The second issue is now available. It contains the real story of Anastasia, among interesting articles. Contributions are still accepted, and can be made payable to the United Church of God, Lansing. For a free subscription, write *Perspectives*, PO Box 153, Okemos, MI 48805-0153.

UCG-AIA Moves Toward Isolation

We received several reports of increased isolation from other groups by the Arcadia-based United Church of God, an International Association. Victor Kubic, one of the Founders of the UCG-AIA was asked to remove a number of documents and "links" from his Internet web-site. Most of these items referred to other church groups or evan-

gelistic efforts not under the control of the UCG-AIA.

Similar sentiments were expressed to the brethren in the Hartford, Connecticut, UCG-AIA congregation. Members were told by the ministry that visiting other Sabbath-keeping groups is dis-loyal enough to UCG-AIA that those doing it cannot have leadership positions in that organization. Several speakers and even a piano player were dropped from service because they visited other groups. A detailed story was published in the November 21, 1997 issue of *The Journal, News of the Churches of God* (send \$18 for 12 issues to *The Journal*, PO Box 1020, Big Sandy, TX 75755.).

Some big organizations do not seem to understand the large number of brethren that have friends, relatives, and even prospective mates who attend other organizations. The **only** way a person can fellowship with friends and relatives split among organizations **and** have meaningful congregation services opportunities is to join a group that does not restrict attendance to itself—usually, an independent group. For information on the new independent group that formed in Hartford, contact Rick Beltz, 860-342-5547. —NSE

Lee Colburn Obituary

Lee Edward Colburn, 47, died Wednesday, December 31, 1997 at Dell Rapids Hospital as the result of an automobile accident.

Lee was born December 27, 1950 in Clark, SD. He graduated from Brookings High School in 1969 and from South Dakota State University in 1973. For 11 years he held the all-time scoring record for the SDSU Jack Rabbits basketball team, and was somewhat of a statewide celebrity.

He married Connie Sue Wikle on May 12, 1973, in Sioux Falls. She died in 1984. They had one daughter, Cristina, now 16.

Lee had been the co-owner, with his brother Lorre, of MC&R Pools and Spas in Sioux Falls since 1975. He was also involved in several other businesses.

He married Karen Roufs Dickerson, on December 30, 1984, in Brookings. Karen had lost her husband to cancer in 1977. Her three daughters, now grown, think of Lee as their second dad. His three stepgrandchildren called him papa.

He has been a member of the WCG, UCG and was independent at the time of his death. He was ordained a deacon while attending WCG. His brother Zoell began receiving the PT in 1965 which Lee eventually began reading. He was baptized in 1981.

Though Lee's life was cut short, the years he lived were full and rich. His zest for living and his youthful enthusiasm enriched everyone he came into contact with. He was a gift to those who knew him, and we thank God for the time he gave us with Lee.

—Elizabeth Stith

Bible Reference Web Sites

A great amount of Bible Study information exists on the Internet, most of which is free. Try the following:

On Line Resources:

<http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible> The Worldwide Web Bible Gateway. Full listing of books from the: NIV, NASB, RSV, KJV, Darby, and YLT. Bibles in other Languages: German, Swedish, Latin, French, Spanish & Tabalog.

<http://www.lib.utulsa.edu/guides/bible2.htm> Many foreign Bible links.

<http://ccel.wheaton.edu/index.html> Christian Classics Ethereal Library—Links to some commentaries and early Christian writings and more.

<http://www.berean.edu/library/> Stanley M. Horton Online Library—Links to OnLine Bibles, Bible references, sermon notes, freeware/shareware and more.

<http://members.aol.com/biblelinks/index.htm> Christian Bible And Religious Resources—Links to almost anything.

<http://www.mit.edu/people/aaronc/christianity.html> Virtual Christianity Page—Links to commentaries, Bibles, Bible dictionaries, and more.

<http://www.goshen.net/pst/> Goshen Net—Links to Commentaries, Lexicons, Dictionaries and more

Shareware/Freeware:

<http://www.parsonstech.com/software/eastons.html> Easton's Bible Dictionary.

<http://ian-vink.icis.on.ca/bible/winbible.htm> WinBible—an computer Bible.

<http://www.pcis.net/cool/software.htm> Bible Software Page—Many references in ZIP file formats.

Bible Software:

<http://www.wordmicro.com/weblogos.htm> Logos Research Systems - Various translations, original language texts and tools, dictionaries, commentaries, and more.

<http://www.churchillsystems.co.uk/churchill/bible.htm> Churchill Systems Bible Software. —Will Benedetti

Free Bibles on Disk

The Bible on disk, available to anyone who wants it to study: King James Version, Revised Standard Version, Darby Translation, Young's Literal Translation. Also, *The Complete Works of Josephus* is available. Sent freely on 3.5" disk formatted for Microsoft Word version 6.0. Write:

—Will Benedetti, 2557 Bexley Park Rd
Columbus, Ohio 43209

Read Sabbath vs. Sunday Debate

The famous *Dugger-Porter Debate*, a ca. 1930s Sabbath vs. Sunday debate, has been reprinted by The Bible Sabbath Association. Andrew N. Dugger, Church of God (Seventh Day) leader, and Curtis Porter, a Church of Christ minister and writer, engaged in a rough and tumble debate, which causes both Sabbath and Sunday keepers to squirm. It is a classic Sabbath vs. Sunday contest, and very relevant today, because of the Worldwide Church of God's doctrinal changes relative to the Sabbath. In order to defend the Sabbath, we need to know how Sunday-keepers like Porter think. Could you do a better job than Dugger did in answering a well-versed Sunday proponent like Porter?

This 128-page book is available for \$8.00, or on computer disk (both ASCII and Word format) for \$2.50, from: **The Bible Sabbath Association, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718.** Toll free (USA), 888-687-5191.

In Australia: Henk Merison, 23 Linden Street, Sutherland, NSW 2232.

WCG Observes Christmas, Sunday

Tammy Tkach, wife of Worldwide Church of God Pastor General Joseph Tkach, Jr. wrote a letter published in the *WCG's Women of Service Ministry, Cincinnati West Congregation* explain-

ing her need to keep Christmas. She mentioned that her children enjoyed the nativity scene that she set up in 1996, but that she wanted to do more this year. She expressed her desire to "celebrate all of him [Jesus]"—including his birth and resurrection. Tammy Tkach hopes to "put Christ in Christmas for her children." She also advised WCG women: "We don't have to embrace all the holiday traditions. It can feel uncomfortable after our years of shunning Christmas and its 'paganism'."

We received several other reports of WCG members and ministers observing this old holiday with many of its customs borrowed from false religion. For information on the origins of Christmas and how Christ was **never** in it, write for *Servants' News* free article *The Reason for the Season*.

We have also received reports of Worldwide Church of God congregations observing or planning to observe Sunday. These include Dallas, Texas; Lakeland, Florida; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; Flint, Michigan; Sydney, Australia; and the Philippines. We have made little effort to search out all of the WCG congregations meeting on Sunday, so there may be others.

The study paper by Paul Kroll (of the WCG) on why Hebrews 4:9 is not a command to keep the Sabbath seems quite deficient. He admits that the Greek text appears to mean: "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;" as the NIV translates it. He appeals to his overall conclusion that the book of Hebrews is about the end of the Old Testament law, so he concludes Hebrews 4:9 must be talking about a symbolic rest. In reality, the book of Hebrews is about the end of the Old Testament priesthood and sacrificial system. Only two verses later we find "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of **disobedience**" (Heb 4:11, NIV). This verse warns against disobedience—how can one be disobedient if there is no law? Hebrews did not do away with the "golden rule" (Lev 19:18) or the "ten commandments" (Ex 20). Paul Kroll makes a big point of saying that there is no other possible command in the New Testament to keep the Sabbath, but completely fails to mention that all New Testament examples of early Church history indicate that

the Sabbath was the day that Jesus' followers met to worship and study.

It is sad to see organizations lose easily understandable truth that they once taught. —NSE

Creation 7th-Day Adventist Feast

The Creation 7th Day Adventist Church, consisting now of three small congregations, converged on Buck's Pocket State Park in Northeastern Alabama for Feast of Tabernacles last October 14th. The surroundings were secluded and very peaceful, making for an atmosphere to foreshadow the future New Earth.

We had a few visitors from other Sabbath-keeping congregations come to share in our convocation times. Since no hotel/motel accommodations existed close by, some who would have attended, having to commute from long distances, chose not to travel and camp for the duration. We were disappointed by their absence but understood the situation.

Blessings were abundant as the main topic of the speakers was not planned, but centered upon the need of serious preparation for the soon coming of Messiah—"Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." YAH's people have been sleeping, and it is past time to awake and be alert. Practical lessons on health characterized the children's portion of the program.

The meal preparation was "community style," with a delightfully healthful menu. Much of the food was raw and simple as it comes from the hand of the Creator. Some were impressed that we were so "in tune" with what is commonly known as the "Adventist health message."

The high point of the feast came as we re-baptized a young man who had been raised Seventh-day Adventist, but had always been a "black sheep" in the church. Relating how he had been subjected to "famous" Adventist figures through the years, he admitted that the message of "freedom from sin" had never quite penetrated his heart as much as when he heard the gospel presented by the Creation 7th Day Adventists. "YAH is Our Righteousness" "HalleluYAH!" "Come quickly, Lord YAHSHUA."

—Pastor "Chick" McGill ☐

“In the Footsteps of the Messiah” Oklahoma Conference a Blessing to Many

The conference, *In the Footsteps of the Messiah*, took place December 25-28, 1997. Between 200 and 250 people attended the conference largely put on by the families of Mitchell Smith, Tim Kelly and Rob Feith. The speakers consisted of Ronald L. Dart, Yaffah daCosta, Norman Edwards, Joseph Good, Jim Rector, Dean Wheelock, and Ray Wooten. Announcements and introductions were given by Todd Drawbaugh. Each day began with the blowing of the shofar, and the song *Oh Give Thanks*, sung by Mitchell Smith's adult children Leona, Cryssi, and Gary Smith and accompanied by Norman, Joel & Josh Edwards.

See the other articles on this page for summaries of the main speaking sessions, see next page to order tapes. In addition to the main speaking session, there were many other events of interest. The panel discussion on Sabbath afternoon covered many topics from “When does the Sabbath Start?” to “How many loaves of Challah (bread) were traditionally baked on Sabbath?” to “Will the Marriage of the Lamb be in Heaven or on Earth?” Please write for the tape if you are interested in these questions and answers.

In addition to the speaking activities, conference-goers had a chance to participate in several other largely “Jewish” services and ceremonies. Since the

entire conference took place during the festival of Hanukkah, Hanukkah candles were lit each night. (See the summary of Joseph Good's first message for an explanation of Hanukkah.) On Friday, a little before sunset, Joe Good performed and explained the traditional Jewish Kiddush (the blessing said over wine and bread, blessing of children, etc.). At 9:30, Sabbath morning, a group gathered together to read the weekly Torah (Gen 41:1-44:17) and Haftarah (1Kngs 3:15-4:1) portions and to discuss them. (Nearly all synagogues use the same system that defines scripture readings for every Sabbath and Holy Day of the year. The Torah is the first five books of the Bible and the Haftarah reading is from the prophets or writings.)

During the Sabbath service, Rob Feith gave a brief explanation of why he wears a keppah (cap) and talit (garment with fringes). He also explained why he prays facing Jerusalem (1Kngs 8:22-49). About 10 songs were sung as a part of the worship service. These varied from traditional “Christian” Hymns, modern “praise and worship choruses” to songs all in Hebrew. Singers and musicians were: Gary, Veronica, Leona, & Cryssi Smith, George & Pam Dewey, Wes & Connie Gordon, and Norman, Marleen & Joel Edwards. Also, Tracy Walker sang a song she had recently written about the Sabbath day. After sunset, Joe

Good performed and explained the Havdalah ceremony—the traditional Jewish closing of the Sabbath.

There were also three major audience participation events. The Talent Showcase Thursday night included a number of musical, comedy, and dance acts. Dan Girourd served as the host. The Friday night sing-along was filled with a variety of music, and Davidic (circle-type) Dancing. The Saturday night family dance was mostly recorded music, but everyone was also treated to an impromptu band consisting at various times of Gary & Veronica Smith, Trey Cartwright, Jason Kelley and Joel, Josh & Norman Edwards.

There were a large number of activities for teens. The three teen Bible studies were: *My Parents Say, “Marry in the Church”—Where Is the Church?* given by Norman Edwards, *Straight Talk With Teens*, given by Rob Feith, and *So, You're Ready for the Car Keys Are You?* given by Pam Dewey. In addition, there were corsage making, country and western dance lessons, basketball, volleyball, archery, hiking, assisting younger children on a nature tour, and plenty of just plain talking to friends. There were activities for the younger children, also: Bible stories, Bible videos, arts and crafts, dance lessons, a nature tour, and more.

—Norman S. Edwards

One Man's Opinion of the Conference

I believe the single most helpful thing that occurred at the conference was the fellowship that occurred among the brethren. Many commented about this to me. Even though there were many differing doctrinal opinions, almost everyone found much upon which they could agree.

I believe the second greatest benefit was to the teens and children. Many of the teenagers attend services with zero or only a few people their age. Most of them want to accept much of their parents' Bible teaching, but the future can seem so bleak to them when it seems like they are “the only one.” They were encouraged by the fellowship and to see that there were others in similar situations. The doctrinal

Continued on page 18

Summaries of Conference Sessions

The following is a summary of the main points of the speaker's messages. We cannot possibly give all of the scriptures or historical notes that the speakers used to prove their conclusions.

Dean Wheelock, publisher of Hebrew Roots, gave the background of his ministry in his first session. He became a Worldwide Church of God member in 1968, attended Ambassador College, and then attended the Church of God International from 1979-84. He felt he learned many things during all of those years and has no regrets.

Wheelock believes we are in a marriage covenant with Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah). We need to think

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“One Man’s Opinion” from page 17 differences that may have separated parents, bothered the young people much less—if at all. They know they shared the common goals of living by the general moral teaching of the Bible, keeping the Sabbath, and other basics.

The third benefit at the conference was people learning to interact with others where they do **not** agree on everything, and there is no one there to render an instant decision on questions. (In traditional church organizations, people, who entered into doctrinal debates, could always “ask the minister” to settle it if they could not agree.) While some people may label this difference of opinion “confusion,” it is vital in teaching people to use the Scripture and Holy Spirit to make decisions for themselves.

We are far from being perfect in this process. Some people had great difficulty

sitting still during customs or teachings they were not familiar with. Some speakers are not yet used to taking questions after they talk. I believe some speakers are not as used to substantiating their teachings from the Bible as they should be.

We must admit that the information given out before the conference did not adequately demonstrate the diversity of thought that was presented. *Servants’ News* will attempt to do a better job in the future. On the other hand, there were no restrictions placed on the speakers—they could cover any subject that they believe was edifying. Brethren then need to learn to determine which speakers they would like to hear again and which they would not. If we do not want to have a human telling us which teachers we will listen to, then we must be responsible to sift out the best teachers from a variety. We do not all learn equally well from the same teacher. We are not all ready to learn the same thing at the same time. In future conferences, brethren should have a better idea of who will help them the most.

Finally, I believe there was much good information presented at the conference. Some information was presented from a traditional Christian perspective—the emphasis was on the power and work of Jesus. Other presentations were from a Jewish perspective—the emphasis on the 613 commands and deep meanings found in the Scripture. Personally, I learned new things, was inspired sometimes, agreed with much, but disagreed with some. **Given all of the above, I would go back to a similar conference next year.**

It is important to realize that you can learn useful information from a speaker, even though you may not agree with all the speaker’s conclusions. For example, if you heard the message, *Jesus the Pharisee*, you may have learned for the first time that in most of the debates Jesus had against Pharisees, he was usually disputing the teachings of the School of Shammai and agreeing with Hillel. That may be useful, even though you do not think Jesus was a Pharisee. You may use a concordance to look up “study,” “teach,” “taught,” and other related words and find scriptures like these: “Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, ‘How does this Man know letters, having never studied?’ Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me’

(John 7:14-16). You may form your own conclusion from the points mentioned above, you may go on to do more study in the area, or you may conclude that it is an less relevant point not needing your study right now. **This is just one example of many points made at the conference where listeners may need to make decisions on what they will believe and do.**

While not perfect, we feel this conference is a good starting place for people to learn in a non-hierarchical environment. Mitchell Smith is tentatively planning another conference for next year. We hope that people who were there and those who were not will seek the Eternal’s guidance and decide whether or not to come back next year. If people keep coming in sufficient numbers, then the conference will probably continue. If they do not, maybe some other, more specifically focused conference will emerge. The history in both Old and New Testaments is not particularly smooth: nations came and went, congregations formed and broke up, persecutions arose, people fled, etc.

Our Savior, said “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). I felt a lot of love at the conference—even between people of differing backgrounds. I also felt a certain amount of suspicion and distrust. I felt that some may have come to the conference primarily to gather followers for their special interest. For me, the good far outweighed the bad. The need to share with others and learn from others is very great for largely isolated people that have been part of institutionalized religion for too long.

In the long term, there may be some danger that such conferences could become a place to discuss more and more obscure theology that relates less and less to practical life. This would be a mistake. I believe that the Bible gives us several “commissions” or things to do and that we should not ignore any of them. **We need a balance between learning “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”, learning to live by His Word, learning to discern teachings that are not His Word, and teaching His Word to others.** We are much better off attending conferences like this one, even if we sometimes stumble and fall, than we are staying at home and never learning to “walk” at all.

—Norman S. Edwards

Conference Tapes

For tapes of *In The Footsteps of the Messiah* sessions, write to **Mitchell Smith, 405 North Main St., Lindale, TX 75771, 903-882-7446.** If you would like to make a donation it would be greatly appreciated. The cost to record and mail each tape is approximately \$1.00.

Dean Wheelock:

- ___ Background of Hebrew Roots
- ___ Messiah in the Jewish Wedding
- ___ Who is a Jew?

Ronald L. Dart:

- ___ Birth of Jesus from the Bible
- ___ What do “Torah Codes” Prove?

Joseph Good:

- ___ Hanukkah & Prophecies, part 1
- ___ Hanukkah & Prophecies, part 2
- ___ Hanukkah & Prophecies, part 3

Ray Wooten:

- ___ The Two Adams, part 1
- ___ The Two Adams, part 2
- ___ The Two Adams, part 3

Norman Edwards:

- ___ Where Have We Been?
- ___ What is Important?
- ___ Where Are We Going?

Jim Rector:

- ___ Connecting With God

Five-Speaker Panel Moderated by Rob Feith:

- ___ Questions and Answers

Yaffah daCosta:

- ___ Jesus the Pharisee

"Year 2000" from page 1

has never been the year 2000 before, and since most computerized equipment was not tested to work in that year, **no one knows exactly what will happen on that day.**

Most governments and big businesses are now aware of the problem. Some—maybe less than half—small businesses are. Most of the computers could be fixed. The rest could be replaced. Unfortunately, there are probably not enough technical people available to fix all of them by the year 2000. And those that are fixed will not be fixed perfectly. Nearly all of the difficulties will show up on one day. **There has been no other problem like it in history.** Even invading armies do not attack every part of a country in the same day.

Stories about these problems have been in the computer magazines for at least 10 years, but only a few have appeared in the popular media (See *Newsweek* cover story, *The Day the World Crashes*, June 2, 1997). Why? Because people do not want to hear stories that are long, technical, complex and have little immediate impact. **You may have been wondering whether or not you want to finish reading this article!** How can a non-technical person evaluate whether or not the technical information they receive is correct? We advise that you take the same approach to this problem as you should with other vitally important technical decisions: go to competent sources that you trust—get several opinions.

If your car stops working and the repair shop gives you a complex technical explanation of what went wrong and requires a large amount of money to fix it, what do you do? You will listen to the explanation, and if you trust the repair shop, you will pay to have it fixed. Otherwise, you may get second or third opinions from other repair shops. You can handle this technical problem the same way: Listen to this explanation—it is much more important to your life than a broken-down car—and then, if you do not trust it, get other opinions from sources you trust.

In another page we will explain the nature of the problem in technical detail. But first, we believe it is vital that you understand the size of this problem and its far-reaching scope.

Let us first think about the car story from a different angle. Suppose the repair shop told you that your car had a major

technical problem that would take a lot of money to solve, but would probably continue to run well for 3 years. Would you be in a hurry to pay that money now, or would you think that you might be ready for a new car in 3 years? A lot can happen in 3 years. Your money today would be wasted if some other completely separate problem developed that rendered your car obsolete, or if your job changed and you decided you needed a truck instead. Similarly, businessmen have been slow to pay money to upgrade computer systems that they might stop using before 2000 due to their business changing or some other reason. **But here is the main difference between cars and year-2000 computer problems:** some cars quit working everyday. The large number of auto repair shops can handle this continual traffic. With this computer date problem, all computers that have the problem break down at about the same time. There definitely are not enough computer people to fix all of the problems that will occur on January 1, 2000.

The Gartner Group, a well respected computer "think-tank" has estimated that 600 billion dollars will be needed to solve the problem worldwide, and about 10% of businesses will go bankrupt. Only about 25% of USA corporations have a plan implemented to fix all of their computers by 2000. Some of them will not be ready in time, some will have trouble but survive, some will go bankrupt.

One of the reasons that this problem is so difficult to deal with is that **there are so many unknowns.** Most computer systems today have not been specifically tested to work into the year 2000. Nor has anyone thought out how various computer systems will interact—some of which are year-2000 compliant and some of which are not. We reject the conclusions of some industry analysts who are predicting the year 2000 will be only a nuisance—these optimists seem to ignore many facts. We also reject the conclusions of analysts who are predicting the end of the technology-based world as we know it—their writings usually ignore some of the known solutions to the problems. What actually happens will probably be somewhere between the extreme predictions. The truth is, **no one knows exactly what will happen until it happens.**

What and Where Is the Problem?

When we write dates, we normally

write only the last two digits of the year: 1/18/98 or 12/31/99. The first two digits have been "19" as long as we can remember, so we do not write it every time. Similarly, computers often store only two digits of the year—it has been century 19 as long as they can "remember." Unfortunately, much computer hardware and software was not designed to make the transition from 1999 to 2000 and has not been tested to perform calculations for those years. Hence, we have the "year 2000 problem" (or "Y2K problem").

Equipment affected by these problems is everywhere—some of it might be in your house! These possibly errant computers are in three main categories:

Mainframe Computers. These are the computers that handle the transactions of banks, airlines, large governments, etc. Most of their hardware will work into the year 2000, but many are running old software programs that will not. Repairing these programs is possible, but is a slow process requiring highly skilled people. There probably are not enough people to finish the job, even if every available person started working on the problem now—which they are not.

Personal Computers (PCs). There are millions of personal computers working in every imaginable capacity.

Can Computer Date Problems Really Cost Millions?

Ann Couffou related this story in her testimony before the House Subcommittee on Technology.

A small manufacturer of industrial liquid solutions found their production line completely stopped on January 1, 1997. It was discovered that their [computerized] process control systems were not designed to account for a leap year (1996) and subsequently shut down when they changed from 1996 to 1997. Before company personnel could remedy the situation, the liquid solutions that were in the process pipelines hardened and could not be removed. The company was forced to replace the process pipelines at a cost of \$1 million. They were unable to manufacture products for several days, thereby, causing late deliveries to customers. In addition to the cost to repair the pipelines, the company believes they lost three new clients because their shipments were delayed.

Probably over half of the ones in existence will need some kind of upgrade (\$5 to \$100) just to make the hardware fully year-2000 compliant (see box on page 24 for more on PC problems). Since nearly all software used on personal computers is prepackaged (most people do not write their own software for a PC), and since a number of year-2000 compliant packages are becoming available for the PC, PC owners could be able to avoid problems by fixing their hardware and by converting to software that is known to work. The question is: How many PC owners know about the problem and how many have the desire to fix it before it is too late? Computer stores and repairmen have time to help with the problem now—but how busy will they be in late 1999?

Embedded computers. These are

Can Computer Date Problems Really Shut Down Power Plants?

Tom Becker, a consultant for year-2000 problems, related this account of a power plant test in Scotland. The plant had been shut down for routine maintenance. The managers decided that they would test for year-2000 compliance by setting all of the dates in the various computers and equipment to late on December 31, 1999. All known bugs had been removed from the software. As the computer dates reached midnight, the power plant shut down!

Why? A small sensor box used to detect the amount of toxic gas being emitted sent the signal to shut down. The sensor automatically kept track of when it was calibrated (serviced) and was designed to shut the plant down if it was not serviced on time (no one would want the plant to poison the atmosphere just because a sensor had not been maintained and stopped working). However, due to faulty programming within itself, the sensor wrongly "thought" that it had not been serviced for 99 years, so it gave the "shut down" order. It did not take long to find and fix this problem, but other power plants may not find it so easily.

In most places, power plants are interconnected, so one failure will not deprive anyone of electricity. But collective failures of many plants will probably cause blackouts (no power at all) or brown-outs (low voltage) over large areas.

found almost everywhere today: digital clocks, VCR's, automatic bread-makers, fax machines, medical equipment, fire trucks, and almost every imaginable industrial process. These are computers that essentially do only one job. Almost any device that has a way to set the current date has the potential for trouble in the year 2000. Some devices have been properly designed and will work fine. Others may fail during the transition between years (from 1999 to 2000). Some equipment will be able to be used only by setting its date incorrectly to a previous year (still in the 1900's). Some medical and construction equipment have embedded computers that keep track of monthly or annual maintenance—the equipment will not operate if the maintenance is not performed regularly. These computers also may be designed to prevent the date from being set earlier as that would allow a user to avoid periodic maintenance. These devices simply may not work until their computer is replaced. Most of these devices are easy to test now, but how many people will test them before the year 2000? How many will simply be overlooked? Some of them are in hard-to-get-to places, like satellites, under-sea oil rigs, and human bodies (pacemakers and other medical implants).

Each of these kinds of systems pose their own set of unique problems. Certainly, some individuals will die due to embedded computer failures in medical and other critical equipment. This is a tragic loss, but it probably will be small and not well-publicized. The real worry will be computers embedded in utility and industrial applications. **Will millions of people be without electricity, water, and gas because of failures there?** Will environmental disasters be created? Many businesses and individuals will lose a lot of time and money due to personal computer problems. But many business owners can still run part of their business without a computer system.

The most far-reaching problems will probably occur in mainframe computers used by big business (especially banks) and government. They have no way to process their millions of checks and payments if their computer systems do not do it. The big store chains cannot stock their stores without their mainframes. Governments cannot pay employees, pensioners or the poor, nor can they collect taxes without their big computers.

These are the systems that take a long time to develop and fix. Even systems designed to work properly in the year 2000 may not have been thoroughly tested and will all fail at once. What is even worse, some of these computers will not appear to fail, but will continue working with corrupt results.

This writer was responsible for design and programming of mainframe computers for 15 years, ending in about 1992. Many of the computer systems I worked with would have failed or produced erroneous results in the year 2000. From 1987 on, I began designing new systems to work through the year 2000. I helped formulate and implement a plan to convert the other systems, also. But before the plans were complete, all of the corporation's software was replaced when a new mainframe was installed. Was the new software all year-2000 compliant? Since it was still the early 1990's, management felt that it was not an issue at the time—they might replace the entire system again by then! Of the many friends that I still have working on mainframe computers, some work in places that have fixed nearly all of their software—others work at places where no one even wants to think about it—yet.

Why Is These Problems So Hard To Find and Fix?

We hope our readers will make an effort to **read the next two sections of this article.** They are technical, but we have tried to make them as easy as possible to understand. Without some knowledge of the technical complexities involved, you will have a hard time understanding the problem's nature.

Computers are very good at following rules—doing the same thing millions of times without making a mistake. But they have no innate intelligence. They will do the wrong thing millions of times as happily as they will do the right thing. Computer programmers are people who write the rules for the computers. If the computer programmer did not think about writing rules that will work in the year 2000, then his computer program may fail when a date in the year 2000 is processed. Now, computer programmers often make mistakes and write the wrong rules—but their mistakes are usually found when they test their programs—or very soon after others begin to use them. Unfortunately, computer programs that have bad rules for year-2000 dates have

not been tested or used in that manner yet. Unlike other computer problems that are found here and there, a few at a time, all of these "bad rules" will be found—all over the world—nearly all at once.

There has never been a law passed requiring computer programs to correctly process dates in the next century. For decades, most managers who write specifications for programs (documents telling a programmer what results to achieve), or who buy programs, have not paid any attention to year 2000 problems. Only within the last year or two have big industries and governments actually written year-2000 compatibility into their computer requirements. Unless year-2000 compatibility was a system requirement, computer users are at the mercy of whatever a particular programmer decided to do. Since displaying and calculating with dates requires dozens of program statements, there was a great tendency for programmers to simply copy statements from older programs (which were even less concerned about year-2000 dates). Today, large systems written by many programmers may be partly year-2000 compatible and partly not.

The root of the problem began back in the 1950's when computers were new and storage was very expensive—over 100,000 times today's cost. Computers store items in little places called "variables" that can hold a certain number of characters of information. At some time, you have probably filled out a form where you are asked to put one letter of your name in each little box. There are only so many boxes on the form—if you have a very long name, the extra letters may simply not fit. The computer "variables" are a lot like these little boxes—if a name is too long for the variable, the extra letters are lost by the computer. Our early computer designers only allowed 6 little boxes to store a date. The date 1958, March 21, was usually represented as "58.03.21". (We have inserted the periods (.) for clarity—they are not stored in the computer.) It seemed wise to computer designers not to store the date as "1958.03.21" because the 19 would never change for the next 40 years. Also, since large systems could have millions of these date "variables" in computer storage, many thousands of dollars of storage could be saved by using the short form of the date with a two-digit year.

After a while, this practice of storing dates became common on mainframe

computers. Programs and computers that needed to communicate dates to each other would use 6-digit dates. Today, many trillions of 6-digit dates are stored in computer files all over the world.

As early as the 1970's, major computer designers began to design "computer interfaces" that would talk to other computers with 8-digit dates (e.g. "1958.03.11"). But they were in the minority until the 1980's. Since computer systems are sometimes replaced every 10 years or so, most companies did not even begin thinking about requiring the use of 8-digit dates until the 1990's.

But now, it is the older, heavily used, very large mainframe systems that are in the most trouble. We are talking about banks, corporation payrolls, warehouse inventories, social security, air traffic schedules and other large systems. Some of these big mainframe systems have many millions of lines of program code—instructions written by computer programmers to tell the computer what to do. It would be nice if these computer programs were organized inside like a big department store—a door where you come in, a door where you go out, and everything neatly categorized in between—any item can be quickly found, removed and replaced if necessary. Unfortunately, most old computer programs resemble a huge, teetering pile of stuff in the middle of a barn. People have come at it from many different directions not knowing what was in the pile to begin with. When they find what they want to change, they do it very delicately so as not to upset the rest of the things in the pile. It is sometimes easier to add more stuff to the pile than it is to try to fix what is there.

Ideally, a computer programmer should organize everything

nicely, like the department store, and provide an index so others coming after him can easily find the right parts. But when computer programmers work, most non-technical managers are simply interested in making certain required changes to a program. They do not evaluate whether the programmer left the program orderly, or left it in a big mess—as long as it works now. So the pile grows messier.

Actually, to continue our analogy, some old programs get so messy that companies have to make a rule that "programmers are not allowed to work in the barn anymore." If they want to change the way the "barn" works, they have to write new programs that "guard all of the exits of the barn" and replace those functions of the barn that are no longer desirable. Yes, there are some computer systems that no one understands any more that handle millions of dollars. Worse yet, some companies—maybe some very

Once Discovered, Are Date Problems Always Easy to Fix?

In the first of what could be a blizzard of related suits, a Detroit-area produce supplier has filed suit because its cash registers can't handle sales billed to credit cards expiring in the year 2000.

Mark Yarsike and Sam Katz, owners of Produce Palace International in Warren, Michigan, said they are tired of losing business due to the problem, and have filed a lawsuit against cash register maker Tec America and its local service vendor, All American Cash Register Incorporated, seeking \$10,000, plus damages, interest, costs, and attorney's fees.

The problem, according to Yarsike and Katz, is that their cash registers cannot recognize the year 2000 as a valid credit card expiration date. They said that between April 30, 1996 and May 6, 1997 their registers crashed 105 times when they attempted to ring up sales billed to credit cards expiring in 2000.

"Ten registers would go down all at once," said Yarsike. Ever since they bought the registers back in 1995, they've made 150 service calls to Tec America and All American, he said.

—Internet Post

[This credit card expiration date problem has become much bigger. Several credit card companies have stopped issuing credit cards that expire in 2000 because many stores have trouble with them. Tec America desperately wants to fix the problem, but cannot. Why? The problem may be in a program that they did not write. They may have used "library" of "helper programs" in their cash registers which they acquired by purchase, obtained free as "shareware," or "stole." The author of these helper programs is almost certainly not obligated to fix them. Tec America's only option may be to completely rewrite their cash registers to use a different library of "helper programs." That is a big job. We can expect the same thing in 2000—large systems will fail due to errors in small programs that were bought or borrowed. —NSE]

large ones—have locked all of the doors on the barn and lost the key. They have lost their “source statements” (humanly understandable rules), and all they now have is “machine code”—the rules that only the computer can understand and follow. The people who originally wrote the programs have probably moved on to other jobs, are retired or are deceased.

The problem with 6-digit dates is not simply a matter of finding all of them in computer storage and changing them to 8-digit dates. (Although that problem is bad enough—sometimes a computer record or file is already at its maximum permissible size—there is no extra space to enlarge date “variables”. A programmer must then split the records or files into multiple smaller ones—a lot of work!) Besides expanding dates to 8 digits, the programmer must examine and test every little piece of a computer program (the rules) that processes dates—and see if they work correctly for years 2000 and above.

What Can Actually Go Wrong?

When a computer program sends you a bill, it may, for example, add 20 days to the current date to calculate the day your bill is due. Other programs perform special things for people in certain age groups: they will probably subtract the person's birthday from the current year

to tell how old the person is now. We will use these examples to show what might happen to computers where the software does **not** use 8-digit dates.

If a person born in 1940 walks into an office on January 3, 2000 and someone accesses their age on the computer, it would try to subtract 40 from the current year, 00. ($00 - 40 = ?$) Depending on computer's programming rules, it might do any of the following:

(1) **Fail due to a calculation error.** The computer has never received a negative number when doing this calculation before ($99 - 40$ always gave a positive number in the past). The office clerk might be unable to retrieve any information about anyone.

(2) **Show the person as being -40 (negative 40) years old.** This may confuse the office clerk, or cause her to assume it is the same as the next result.

(3) **Show the person as being 40 years old.** This is similar to the above, but the computer rules might not display a negative sign because it never expected to have a negative age. This is a particularly dangerous option, since someone using the computer may not know anything is wrong, believe the person was 40 years old, and deny “senior citizen” benefits to this person.

(4) **Correctly show the person as being 60 years old.** The computer's rules may work.

A bill is printed for a person on December 14, 1999. The computer calculates the billing due date by adding 20 days. This produces a date of January 3. When the computer ads “1” to a 2-digit year (“99”), it might get the date 1/3/100. Depending on how the system was programmed, any of the following things might happen:

(1) The computer might reject this bill because it produced a 3-digit year (“100”) which it considers an error. The customer may not get his bill.

(2) The computer might simply print “Due Date: 1/3/100” on the customer's bill. If the customer figures it out, no major harm is done.

(3) The computer might lose the “1” off of the hundred, print 1/3/00, and every-

thing might work fine.

As you can see, some non-repaired computer programs may experience problems and others that do the very same job may not. Much of this will depend upon what a particular computer does with arithmetic calculations: Does it allow negative numbers? Does it allow “overflow” when numbers are too big, or does it consider that an error? With some computers, these features are options that can be independently controlled. A desperate computer manager may be able to set his computer to “ignore all arithmetic errors where the numbers are too big.” But altering these options may cause trouble for other programs—causing the “pile of stuff in the barn” to come crashing down on the floor.

Please stay with us to understand one more very real thing that will certainly happen in less than two years.

Let us reconsider that billing program that we previously mentioned—it calculates a due date of January 3, 2000. When the statements are actually printed, another program may check to make sure that the *billing date* is less than the *due date*—it would be embarrassing to tell a customer that his bill is due before we even print his bill (*billing date*). Adding redundant error checks like this is a common practice in large systems—it increases the chances that errors will be caught. When the printing program compares 12/14/99 to 01/03/00, it may conclude that “99” is greater than “00” and then wrongly decide that the bill is in error because the “due date” appears to come before the “billing date”. It may send the bill to a clerk in charge of billing errors rather than to the customer. If a lot of bills were being printed with similar dates, the “error clerk” may find himself with 10,000 bills on his desk in the morning instead of the normal two or three.

This is a typical type of software bug that is hard to find during software testing. If both dates were in the year 2000 (e.g. 01/05/00 and 01/25/00), the dates would compare correctly. **It is only when the billing date is in 1999 and the due date is in 2000 that this error occurs.** There may be big corporations that think they have debugged their software, but have left errors like this waiting to surface! Notice also, that this error will manifest itself up to 20 days **before** the year 2000 begins.

If such an error occurred, what could

Nuclear Accident 2000 or Nationwide Power Loss?

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), in a meeting on October 7, 1997 stated that all nuclear power plants must prove that their software is year-2000 compliant or must shut down before that year arrives. Many important aspects of nuclear plant control occur too quickly for human reaction, so they must be controlled by computer. Even if all of the main plant-control software functions, there are questions about other systems: Access to rooms is controlled by security computers. Other computers keep track of who is trained and licensed to perform which tasks. Still other computers authorize employees to work after they have been through selective drug testing. If any of these computers fail, the plant might be working, but the people may be prevented from doing their jobs. The plan whereby Nuclear plants will be declared year-2000 compliant is not completely formulated yet. It may be completed in time for the power-generating plants to prove compliance. But if the plants cannot get ready, the U.S.A will lose about 20% of its electricity generating capacity—assuming that all of the other non-nuclear plants work.

the company do about it? Amazingly, we can think of a number of solutions, some that require computer programming and some that do not.

(1) If computer source code and programmers are available, find the computer error, fix it, and print correct statements.

(2) Use their own people or temporary workers to manually hand-write the correct date on all of the bills, and send the statements out anyway. This may not work perfectly as the computer system may not have stored any information about payments really being due. People who do not pay their bill that month may not be detected by the computer system. But it is better to get most of the payments than it is to get none.

(3) Write a new, temporary computer program that will print the simplest statements for current month—let any complicated statements wait until next month.

(4) Simply wait until the year 2000 to run statements for both printing date and billing date that are in the same century. This company will have to have money in reserve to do this as many customers will not pay unless they get a statement. Also, they run the risk of not being able to send statements due to other failures in the year 2000. However, this approach is better than the next approaches.

(5) Temporarily (or permanently) convert to a completely new accounting system. This could take months.

(6) Cease business. Readers must realize that this is not a completely unattractive option. In some cases, people can put a lot of money in their pockets by liquidating a business. They can personally buy its assets at reduced prices or “short sell” its stock before others know the company will go bankrupt. (Most of these practices are illegal, but they still take place in various clandestine ways.) Unfortunately, liquidating a business is not so good for the workers who are out of a job, or the people who used to patronize the business.

We have tried to explain above some of the main failures of computer logic. There are many others. For example, some programs may consider a date of “00” to be no date at all. If, for example, a program requires a bank teller to enter the deposit date into a 2-digit place for a year on a computer screen, the teller may not be able to enter the transaction at all. If she enters “00”, the program will tell

her to “enter the year of the date, please.” She could enter 99 or some other incorrect year, but that will create even more problems later on.

There are probably a host of other “funny appearances” that will occur on computer screens and reports. Most can be worked around by intelligent humans, but some may cause mistakes. Some computer reports may try to include a 4-digit year,

but will not have room, printing something like “1/4/200.” Most date programs may only print two digits for each year, so everyone will need to get used to dates like: “01/04/00.” But other date programs remove leading zeros from each of the three numbers, so they may remove both zeros from the year and produce cryptic dates like: “1/4/.” That is fairly confusing unless you know what it is.

Embedded Computers Are Everywhere—Start by Testing the Ones in Your House!

Embedded computers are usually small computers that make a device “smart.” They are found in everything from tiny watches to the largest earth-moving equipment. The most common embedded computers in your home are found in watches, clocks, VCR's, fax machines, timed kitchen appliances, even set-back thermostats. The only ones that you need to be concerned with are those that have a way to set a date, or those that connect up to other computers that may set a date. In order for you to be concerned, these dates must include a year—there are watches, telephones, and other devices that just maintain a month and day—they require an adjustment during leap-year, but they will work fine no matter what year it is. (A very few “surprise” devices do not have an easily evident date—or have a date that only a service-person can set. You need not worry about them at home, but critical business systems should check with the manufacturer of devices of which they are not certain.)

In order to test many embedded computers, you will probably need the manual that came with them. Now is a better time to look for the manual, than January 1, 2000! We will use a VCR as an example of how to test home devices:

(1) Program the VCR to record beginning 1 minute after midnight, January 1, 2000. (If you are testing a clock, set an alarm to ring—just set the device to do something that it can do.) If this step fails, go directly to step 6.

(2) Then set the VCR's internal clock to 11:59 PM, December 31, 1999.

(3) Watch the VCR for two minutes. It should flip over to the correct date in one minute, then begin recording the next minute.

(4) If step 3 works, your VCR will probably work for you into the year 2000. You might want to turn it off and turn it back on again and make sure that the 2000 date is


still there. If that is fine, then go to step 7.

(5) If any part of step 3 fails, try manually setting the date in your VCR to Midnight, January 1, 2000. If that fails, too, go to step 6. If it works, your VCR will be completely usable in the year 2000, but you should make a note to manually reset its date and time on January 1, 2000. Your VCR apparently has the ability to process dates in the year 2000, but not the ability to flip from 1999 to 2000. Go to step 7.

(6) Apparently, your VCR does not have the ability to process dates in the 2000s. You may continue to use in the year 2000 by setting it to an incorrect year. **NOTE: This method will not work for devices that connect to other computers—the differing dates would cause errors among the computers. (This is not a problem in most homes).** It does matter which year you set it to. Since 2000 is a leap year, you must set it for another leap year, otherwise your dates will be wrong after February 28. If you want the day of the week to display correctly, you must set your VCR to 1972, 1944 or 1916—the calendars are the same for those years. If your VCR will **not** accept any of those years, then you can try 1996 or 1992 and your VCR will display a correct day and month, but wrong day of week; or, use 1993 for the right day of the week, but wrong day and month.

(7) **Remember to reset the VCR (or whatever device) to the current date and time after you are finished.**

The above procedure should work for most home devices with embedded computers. By testing them now, you will know what will and what won't work before 2000 gets here. That will allow you attend to more urgent matters or help others at that time.

Special note for “caller-ID” telephones and boxes: The dates in these units are often set by signals from the telephone office each time you receive a call. When year-2000 comes, you will get whatever date they send you. 

What a Mess!

We use the above examples only because they are easy for most people to understand. We agree there would be little cause for alarm if the only year 2000 problems were funny-looking bills or no bills at all for a few months. However, if your local electric utility stops billing you, and stops supplying you with electricity because it has no money to buy

coal, you will probably take notice. Furthermore, if the computer that prints your paychecks fails, or if banks in your area are unable to process checks, then you will definitely take notice.

The previous examples are complex enough, but problems that could occur in banking, inventory and other systems can be far more complicated. Errors in banking programs may cause computers to

charge or pay 100 years of interest on outstanding transactions. (100 years of interest at 10% on \$1000 is about \$21 million.) Computers may automatically close individual accounts based on those errors or shut down all bank processing due to insolvency.

The systems most likely to be completely unusable are specialty systems designed in the 1950's, 60's and 70's. At that time, it was common for governments and large corporations to design new hardware, programming languages and software for each computer project. This allowed systems to work very efficiently, but left only a few people in the world who understood them. Some of these specialty systems are still in use. However, the method of reprogramming them has been totally lost. Unfortunately, a number of government weapons systems may fall into this category. If they fail in the year 2000 (lets hope they don't "go off"), they will simply have to be scrapped.

The category with the next highest risk is organizations using mainframes with substantial custom-written software: the Federal government, most state governments, and many specialized businesses. They have to fix their software or stop using it. They cannot go to a commercial software vendor and buy a "social security administration system," or an "automobile manufacturing system." There are still experienced mainframe programmers available, and there are still consulting firms which will fix other's computer programs for a fee. But as 1999 approaches, these will probably all be completely busy. Most colleges and universities no longer offer any classes in the Cobol (Common Business Oriented Language) or IBM assembler computer languages—yet these are the languages needed to fix many of these ancient systems.

Entire consulting firms now exist for the purpose of helping companies convert old software so it will run in the year 2000. Some of these consultants have developed computer programs that fix the date problems in other computer programs. But they are not perfect—their results still need to be checked and tested by humans. Since so many programs will have to be tested at once, some organizations will need a duplicate set of computer hardware to do a thorough job. Many organizations simply do not have the money or office space to obtain a test computer. Nevertheless, some will install test mainframes—probably creating a

Will Your PC Work For You?

Personal computers (PCs) are subject to a number of year 2000 related problems. Over half of the ones currently in operation will not work properly in the year 2000. Believe it or not, the "internal clock" on nearly every PC contains only a 2-digit year. The BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) is another "chip" in every PC that reads this clock and tells the operating system (DOS or Windows) what date and time it is. The BIOS in some computers simply will not work at all with dates 2000 and over. Every time you turn the computer off, it will reset back into the 1900's. If this error happens to your computer, you will need to either get a new BIOS chip or a new motherboard—or set the date every day.

Other computers can function with dates 2000 and beyond, but they cannot get there by themselves. They need either a little program to help them, or they need to be manually set once at the beginning of 2000. This is the most common error found on PCs. If yours is more than a couple of years old, it probably has it.

You can download a tiny test program to find out if you computer is year-2000 compliant, along with a correction program from this web site: <<http://www.RightTime.com>>. It is all free to individuals, there is a charge for business use. Easy to follow instructions are included.

Once you have made sure that your PC will boot up with the right date, then you are ready to test application software. One approach is to look at vendor advertisements or web sites to see if they claim year 2000 compliance. You may also find information there about which versions are **not** year 2000 compliant. If you have older questionable versions, you may need to upgrade to the newer ones.

Next you may want to test your personal computer software. **Do not try this test unless you are confident you can backup and restore your hard drive.** It is not worth destroying a computer system now in order to solve problems that might occur in two years.

(1) Make two (in case one is bad) back-up copies of your hard drive.

(2) Set the system date to 12/31/1999, about 6 P.M. Do some of all the kinds of work that you normally do—run programs, enter transactions, create files, etc. The more thorough you are in this step, the better your test will be.

(3) With your main applications running, set the system date to 12/31/1999 at 11:59 P.M. so it will flip over to 01/02/2000. Display or insert the current date in all of your applications—be sure that it matches the date you just set.

(4) Enter more transactions and process the transactions you entered in 1999. Try to use as many related computer functions as possible. Make notes about any problems with dates. If anything has obviously failed, you will need to get your software replaced or fixed.

(5) Then, restore the entire computer system from the back-up—that will eliminate all of the test transactions and files that you created.

(6) If you have custom written programs, you can probably find some problem date calculations by scanning the source code for '19'—most complex date calculations contain that number somewhere. Scanning for names of known date fields is also effective.

(7) Make sure you have enough supplies for your printer for several months. Before 2000 comes, print a hard copy of your mailing lists, critical documents, etc. That way, no matter what happens to your computer, you can keep working.

shortage of them in 1999.

Even with all of this testing, computer experience shows that all problems are not caught by testing—some do not show up until the system is actually used. This is a recurring problem the computer people are used to dealing with. The difficulty this time is that all of the hidden year 2000 bugs will show up at the same time.

The potential for disaster is high in large hospital mainframe computers (as well as the embedded computers described earlier). While these computers often have backup systems, it is likely that both will fail if they have date problems. In some cases, these computers hold all of a patient's records—if the computers do not work, hospital staff may have to rely on their memories for how to treat patients. Some hospitals even have computerized control of prescriptions. Erroneous computer programs may decide that a patient is 99-years ahead or behind schedule on receiving his or her drugs. Either one could cause a death.

Most of this article covers computer systems in the U.S.A. It is much more difficult to find good information about the problem in other countries. However, the indication we have is that both Europe and Japan are behind the U.S.A. in repairing their own custom software. International organizations using year-2000 compliant, up-to-date versions of commercial software may have little trouble. However, numerous international organizations use older versions or in many cases stolen copies of software—they will be in worse shape than the U.S.A. The one thing that may be a redeeming factor: nations that have few computers or that have only recently become computerized can still function fairly well with their old manual systems.

Legal Issues

If anything will cost more than fixing errant computer systems, it may be the cost of lawsuits arising from the computer errors. The case on page 22 is just the first of many. In the minds of many, the legal issues are not certain at all. Who is responsible for losses due to failed computer systems? Much software sold today has a broad disclaimer that essentially says "we like to think this is good software that could be very helpful to some businesses, but you better test it for yourself and decide if it is worthwhile because we make no guarantees of anything."

Even if the software does not have

such a disclaimer, is the software vendor responsible if he never claimed that the software will work in the year 2000? What kinds of insurance cover these disasters? If a business has insurance against computer failures not a result of their own negligence, is this going to be considered "negligence?" Some insurance companies, as policies renew, may drop business interruption and director's insurance if companies do not have a year 2000 program in place. Directors without such insurance may resign.

Unfortunately, liability is based on provable negligence—which is determined by records showing that a business knew about problems in time to fix them. This is why most businesses are saying little or nothing about the progress of their computer repairs: **to admit exactly how much they know and when they know it provides legal ammunition to someone who might sue them.** A litigant can always ask why didn't they start sooner and why didn't they spend more money to fix the problem. If there are no public records, it is hard to prove that a business could have done better.

In order to encourage businesses and governments to talk more about their computer repair plans, Senator Moynihan introduced Bill 22, on January 17, 1997 (see page 31). The bill would have limited the liability of businesses for year 2000 computer errors. As of this writing, the Bill had not passed, but it shows how seriously at least one congressman regards it.

Not only are there legal issues for businesses, customers may be affected as well. Who is responsible if "computer errors" cause someone's utilities to be cut off? Who is responsible if someone's "credit rating" is damaged by a computer mistake? Who is responsible for medical problems or death caused by computer

errors? What is a bank's responsibility if they cannot cash checks or give a customer access to his accounts for many days? The fine print on many account agreements, gives banks the right to take quite a few days (maybe 30 or more) before crediting deposits or letting the account holder withdraw funds. They normally give much better service, but these long delays were written into the account agreements for emergency situations—like the one coming up.

Is Anybody Solving Their Problems?

A few businesses are making statements about their year-2000 progress. The most vocal are software vendors who would like more customers. Computer magazines now have advertisements for accounting, database, and other software that is "guaranteed year-2000 compatible." Indeed, conversion to standard software may be the easiest approach for some businesses. Rather than fix their old programs, it may be easiest for a business to move all of the important data to new software and junk the old program. Such conversions are labor intensive and usual-

From the office of Eastern Carolina University (ECU) Administrative Computing Services:

Most people don't realize that many computer based systems, as well as equipment with computer chips, will not work in the year 2000 unless they are changed. For our part, we are correcting Administrative Applications—like Payroll—so they will work.

The Office of State Controller has estimated that it will cost ECU \$724,355 to fix the problem. We have determined that it will take 7 programmer years of effort. Actually, we are way ahead of other universities as all of our Student Systems are now year 2000 compliant. For comparison, it will cost \$2,000,000 to fix applications at North Carolina State University. For computer centers everywhere, the Y2K [year 2000] effort must take priority over other work.

As a word of warning, we are only changing software that we support. **If you have software that you purchased or developed without our assistance, you will be responsible for making changes.** We can't fix what we don't know about.

[People who have worked inside of university, big government, and corporate computer environments know there are thousands of programs that have been purchased, written or stolen and used for significant work without official approval. It is impossible to know how many programs fall into this category worldwide, because the entities using them have no "official" record of them. —NSE]

ly result in some loss of data or functionality, but they also give the business new software features and may reduce future maintenance costs.

Some businesses are reporting their expenditures and progress:

NASDAQ, the stock exchange, has assigned half of its 1000 computer people to work on the year 2000 date problem, costing about 20 million dollars.

NASDAQ's plan is to be finished in mid-1999, and to have a day to test their systems with all of the many other computer systems that connect to theirs.

The Morgan Stanley corporation is spending about \$60 million to fix their software date problems. It is the largest single computer project they have ever undertaken. After 18 months of work, they uncovered over 250,000 potential problems.

The Bank of Boston commissioned an internal investigation to determine what would have happened if they did not fix any of their programs before the year 2000. Conclusion: they would not have been able to handle many of their transactions in the manner prescribed by applicable law for a minimum of several weeks. After seeing the complexity of these problems, many of the big banks are setting aside money to cover loans that will never be repaid because of year-2000 bankrupted corporations.

Other big corporations have disclosed how much they intend to spend throughout the world to fix computer systems:

Federal Express: \$500 million.

Chase Manhattan Bank: \$250 million.

Merrill Lynch: \$200 million.

The state of Michigan plans to spend \$11 million dollars before 2000 just to correct critical systems. They realize that they will not finish some of their secondary systems (management reports and other internal reports).

The cost put forth by a May 1997 Federal government report is

2.8 billion dollars for the federal level (they are also committed to provide matching funds to states that must make their computers conform to federal programs.) However, many analysts consider the above figure much too low. If the four business corporations, above, together will spend over 1 billion dollars, the federal government will probably require **many times** that amount.

The May 1997 report showed how the money would be spent among each branch of the government. The Social Security Administration has been working on their system for several years and has a chance of being ready. (But can the banks process their checks?) The departments slated to receive the most money were Defense and the Treasury—\$900 million (most for the IRS). The state of IRS computing is much more clear when we look at a document that they posted on the Internet at the same time (see box, this page). Very few computer industry analysts believe they have any chance of completing their upgrade before 2000. If they spent half their money to hire programmers at current rates, they would be hiring 2250 programmers for 2 years. Where are they going to find them, and how are they going to train them? Some analysts have proposed that the government may have to pass a "flat tax" or a sales tax at the last minute.

In spite of the good work that many people have done, there seems to be a lot that isn't getting done. Larry Martin, president of Data Dimensions, a computer consulting firm said, "Only about 5% to 10% of actual conversion work has been done. The problem isn't money, but personnel and computers." Complex computer systems take months for new programmers to understand. There is a saying among computer managers that this author has found to be true: "If you take a computer project that is late, and suddenly assign twice as many people to work on it, you will make it twice as late."

Reasons Why the Problems May Not Be as Bad as Some May Claim

Some authors on the year-2000 compliance issue seem to be going out of their way to paint the gloomiest picture possible. They predict many years of non-technological life for everyone until computers can be fixed. Below, we give several factors that doomsday predictors seem to ignore.

Internal Revenue Service

**Request for Comments (RFC) for Modernization Prime Systems Integration Services Contractor
May 15, 1997**

[This 116 page document is the first stage of a proposal to find a private corporation that will modernize the IRS computer systems. This proposal freely acknowledges the IRS "Century Date Compliance" problems (the same as what most everyone else calls "year 2000 compliance"). The proposal refers to another 7-volume document that describes the details of the problems that this private corporation will need to know to help fix the IRS computers. The contract to the private corporation will not be awarded until Oct 1, 1998. Can these massive problems be fixed in 18 months? Below, we reprint section III of the table of contents of that document with a few underlines and translations in brackets. The entire document is available in acrobat format on the web site: <http://www.ustreas.gov>]

III. Today's IRS Information Technology Environment

- A. The Challenge: Core Business Applications Systems are Fragmented, Inaccessible and Asynchronous *[Main software programs don't work well together.]*
- B. The Challenge: The Mainframe Infrastructures are Aging and Lack Century Date Compliance While the Distributed Networks are Duplicative and Suffer From Interoperability and Connectivity Problems *[Hardware and software is old and won't work in the year 2000; networks cost a lot more than they should.]*
- C. The Challenge: The Century Date Conversion Project Compounds the Risk for Failure Within an Information Technology Organization Already Overburdened with Workload *[There is so much regular work to do now that there is little chance the programs can be made year-2000 compliant before 2000.]*
- D. The Challenge: The Information Systems (IS) Organization Lacks Sufficient Technical Management Capacity to Simultaneously Support Today's Environment, Effectuate the Century Date Conversion and Manage Modernization. *[The IRS knows their computer people cannot do what needs to be done. Of interest, an organization chart at the end of this document listed 32 top IRS computer positions: 8 were currently occupied by temporary people, and 3 were completely vacant. They are obviously having trouble retaining managers to do the job.]*

(1) Most businesses really rely on only a small percentage of their computer programs for their main operations. If a bank has 10 million lines of computer program code, their day-to-day vital functioning may be done with less than half a million lines. Another 1 or 2 million lines might be essential to perform functions that are vital on a monthly basis. Another 1 or 2 million lines will be systems such as marketing forecasting or annual reports which help the bank operate, but are not actually essential. Studies have shown that almost half of the programs in a large computer installation are nearly obsolete.

(2) Most embedded computers will not have to be "thrown away" in the year 2000, but can be used by setting the date to some time in the 1900's (see box on page 23). People, unlike computers, are flexible and they can put a piece of tape on a device with an embedded computer that says: "To read date properly, add 28 to the year." That will work until the device can be fixed or replaced.

(3) The danger that one bad computer system will infect all the other systems connected to it is limited. Good programmers working in multiple-computer systems will be careful to check information coming from other computers to make sure that it is valid before entering it into their own database. For example, astute banks are probably now programming their computers to reject checks and other financial transactions that claim to have taken place in the 1900s. However, a certain amount of errors can still proliferate. If a bank improperly processes a date and

When Will Whatever Happens Happen?

I do not claim to have any revelation from God on this matter, but this is **one case where setting dates is completely reliable**. Knowing exactly **what** will happen is the uncertainty.

1998. This is the year to get systems fixed in an economical manner. Help from computer vendors, consultants, and temporary workers will be available and affordable. **Start now!!!**

1999, January. Systems that project one year in advance will begin to fail. There are many more of these systems than there were 2- and 3-year advance systems. These failures, and the "2000 is only one year away" motif will probably bring year-2000 problems to the mainstream press. One by one, computer firms will announce that they are busy till 2000.

1999, August 22. Possible global communications failure. Timing signals from Global Positioning Satellites (GPS) are used to synchronize telephone & computer communications. These timing signals are communicated as the mathematically precise number of weeks that the GPS has been in operation. On August 22, the GPS week number will be 1024—which may exceed the internal capacity of some receiving stations—just as year 2000 exceeds some computer's capacity. This is not directly related to the year-2000 disaster, but is very similar, though limited in scope.

1999, Fall. US government will probably begin to publicly talk about the issue. There may be a great effort to say "everything is all right" or there may be concrete plans to avert disasters—maybe a method of credit or a new kind of cash in case the checking system breaks down. Businesses and government will probably announce certain services which simply will no longer be provided after 1999. They may curtail some services sooner with the simple excuse that they need all effort on the year-2000 problem.

1999, November. This may be the last chance to transact business in any sort of "normal" way.

1999, December. A lot of billing statements will begin to fail—errors associated with due-dates in the year 2000. Some will be wrong, others not sent. Nearly everyone will be convinced of the reality of the problem by this time. Banks or regulatory agencies **may** set limits on cash withdrawals. Other commodities **may** be rationed.

1999, December 31, Friday. Major computer failures will begin as computers calculate tomorrow's date and can't cope with the results. Also, a lot of mainframe computers maintain internal clocks in Universal time (approximately the time in England), so these computers may begin to fail in the late evening of the 31st. We will find out about embedded computer failures first: power plants, hospitals, telephones, etc. Banking and billing failures will come later. Since new days begin west of the international date line, we will hear about the problems in Japan and Australia, first.

2000, January 1, Saturday. Most of the embedded systems that will break down will do so on this day. Most major radio stations have emergency power supplies, so they can broadcast without public electricity. While some radio stations may be down due to computer disaster, not every station uses the same brand of equipment, so some are likely to function. Keep a radio handy. Many businesses will not be "open" on this day, but will want their computer people to be present to check for unknown problems.

2000, January 2, Sunday. People will attend churches in record numbers. Many businesses will still be "closed," but working on computer systems

2000, January 3, Monday. The new-year holiday will be on this day. Many businesses will continue to remain "closed for repairs."

2000, January 4, Tuesday. Provided that utilities and telephones are working, we will all have a chance to see how much of our business world is still operating normally. It may be a little, it may be a lot. You may be back to your regular job, or you may be meeting with your neighbors to determine how you will live in the days ahead. If you work in any computer-related field, you can expect people coming to your door—even if you are at home.

2000, January to ??? We can expect inconsistencies of all kinds. Computer systems that appeared to function, but created corrupt data will be discovered haphazardly. Some will be in such bad shape that companies that appeared to remain in business will have to shut down until the problems are resolved. Also, programmers in a hurry to implement 2000-compliant programs will have made other mistakes that will not be caught by testing—expect unusual errors. Businesses with good software will be very profitable!

2000, February 29. Some computers will fail or create bad data because they will think this is March 1. Every 100 years, we miss a leap year—except in years divisible by 400. Not every programmer knew about that rule, and very few ever tested their programs for it.

wrongly charges a customer \$1,000,000 in interest, it might transfer just the amount owed (and not the date) to another properly functioning computer that may stop the innocent customer from using his funds.

(4) The USA is still largely a free country and businesses are free to make contracts among themselves without anyone's approval. Usually, food stores operate on a margin of only a few percent. If computer failures prevent the automated stocking and trucking systems from working, food stores can still try to sell certain basic foods at much higher profit margins. Food distributors could simply send last week's or last year's order to the local stores. Items not available would simply not be sent. The system will be far from perfect, but hungry people do not need marketing—they will buy whatever food is selling from whomever is selling it. If bank computer failures prevent checks from clearing, stores can buy items from their distributors with a signed promise to pay. A retail store owner can then sell to people for cash, checks (if he knows the people) or maybe even barter with a promise to pay (I'll give you \$40 dollars of groceries for a working TV set—with a promise that you will pay the \$40 and reclaim your TV set later). If the store owner raises prices 20% to cover losses, people will still probably rather shop than be hungry. If the store's cash registers are not working, they may need to use pocket calculators and clerks may need to keep records by hand. Yes, it sounds a little messy—but it will keep people fed and keep stores in business.

The "mom and pop" stores or the few independent groceries are even more flexible: they can buy from any supplier with food to sell. Many of them have run their business without computers for years and will be able to continue. **During the year 2000 crisis, small, flexible businesses may be able to out-do the big giants.**

What Can You Do to Get Ready?

(1) Pray that you will be able to escape whatever minor difficulties come to pass as the result of computer failures in those days. We find that most of the great miracles performed in the scriptures were not simply for the recipient's own comfort, but so that they could get on with the preaching of the Gospel or other

important functions. Most Biblical figures who asked the Eternal for deliverance gave him a reason for it. We must ask ourselves, why should He deliver us? Nevertheless, we should be good stewards of our physical possessions and be sensibly prepared for difficulty that might befall us.

(2) Ask ourselves what we should be doing to help prevent the problems from occurring. This would include testing devices with embedded computers at home and at work, if we are responsible for them (see box page 23); testing personal computers at home and at work, if we are responsible for them (see box page 24); and letting other people know about this problem. Are we our brother's keeper? (Gen 4:9—Yes!). This is not some

Servants' News Experience

So far, we have tested some embedded computers: fax machine, a VCR, watches, clocks, and found all of them year-2000 compliant. Of four different personal computers, two will not properly "flip over" to 2000 from 1999, but should work afterward if their dates are manually set.

We still need to test our personal computer applications software, some of which uses a lot of dates.

issue that "might happen." It will happen, the only question is "how bad is it going to be?" People who start working on the problem now will have a good chance of solving it—they can get help now. **By the time the issue is in the every-day news, computer help will be hard to find.** You can give friends with computers copies of this or other related articles. Friends who run businesses that use computers may also be glad to know in advance.

(3) Be prepared for the worst in case utilities, banking, or merchandise infrastructures break down. Obtain a few months supply of emergency food and water. One of the main reasons these computer problems are so dangerous to "advanced" societies is that our stores are so reliable that few people stock any emergency provisions. Less developed countries are used to finding empty store shelves now and then. Buy inexpensive canned food that is easy to keep and that you can use in normal eating if they turn out not to be needed. By buying this year,

you will help to encourage increased production. If you wait until December, 1999 to buy, you will help to create a shortage then. This "get it early" principle applies to the next two items as well.

(4) If possible, gradually purchase minimum **supplies** that you will need to maintain your family's essential needs for two or three months. Do the same thing for your business, or encourage your manager to do it. If the computer systems of your suppliers and department stores become completely inoperative, your emergency supplies will help you to continue to work until they get the mess straightened out. (If no trouble occurs, you can consume the supplies as you normally would.) When most people's businesses are not operational, anyone whose business is operational and who provides a useful service will have plenty to do.

(5) If possible, save some money for the year 2000—paychecks or pensions may not reach you for a while. Cash is the most apparent choice, but gold is selling at its lowest price in twenty years. A stock market crash and various other financial disasters certainly might occur at this time.

Of the above three items (food & water, supplies and money), do not let anyone else know exactly how much you have and where you have stored it. You may wish to be kind to others and sell to or share with them in the event of a real disaster. But you will not be able to help your family or other truly needy people if your items are all stolen by someone else. If you live in a crowded metropolitan area with large numbers of people who will probably not be storing any food or water, you might pray about moving before the fall of 1999. If utilities, transportation, or banking problems prevent stores from being stocked, hungry people—as individuals and as armed gangs—will simply rove around and take what they can find.

(6) Know your friends, neighbors, and local business people. In difficult times, they may help you—you may help them. Make a plan with neighbors as to what you will do if the public utilities fail. Electrical power is likely to be a hit-and-miss operation even if just some plants fail across the nation. In the Northern Hemisphere, January 1 always comes in the winter. If your family has a way to heat your home, good. But if it is too expensive, several families can write an agreement to buy the necessary equip-

ment to heat one of their homes in emergency, and to let all of the families live there temporarily. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss how to survive without public utilities, but many "survival" books are available from libraries or bookstores. If you do not have one, now might be a good time to get one!

(7) Do not plan any critical financial transactions (house purchase, business deals, etc.) for the months of October 1999 through March 2000. Do not plan any trips from December 1999 to March 2000. If people are suffering, helping travelers will be low on the priority list.

(8) Do all you can not to be a hospital patient in December 1999 through February. If a family member is in the hospital during the beginning of year 2000, you might want to stay with them from December 31, 1999 through the first few days of January. If there are major system breakdowns, the staff will not be able to help everyone at once. Check for obvious signs of equipment malfunction or unusual changes in prescriptions.

(9) Make a point to know when all of your payments will be due during December 1999 and the first few months of 2000. For essential services, like utilities, make the payments even if no bill arrives. It would be better that you pay for services you actually receive before you are actually billed, than it would be to lose your service because someone thought they sent you a bill, but they did not. Customer service departments will be hopelessly overworked by all of the related problems. You do not want to lose essential services even if it is completely someone else's fault.

(10) Stay flexible regarding work. People working in customer-service and computer areas may have to work a lot of overtime helping to recover from computer foul-ups. People in manufacturing, some sales areas may be out of work because suppliers cannot deliver materials essential for production. New construction will probably halt as companies scramble to recover from computer messes. During times of crisis, employment in non-essential industries always falls to a fraction of what it used to be. Non-essential industries include music, sports, clubs, other entertainment, interior decorating, cosmetics, physical fitness, etc. If you end up out of work, you might be able to find temporary work—manually taking over functions that com-

puters are failing to do.

(11) On Friday, December 31, 1999, shut down as many computer systems and other power-consuming devices as possible at your business. This will help ease electric power shortages. Get your family together as early as possible Friday afternoon. Do not forget about grandparents or others who need your care—have them with you if possible. Use as little electrical power as possible. Turn off electronic equipment that might be damaged by power brown-outs (lowered voltage). Listen to radio reports about what is happening in time-zones East of you—the new year creeps around the globe one time-zone at a time.

Where Is It All Going?

Computer failures in the year 2000 are not a reason to panic—panic almost never helps anyone. **This will be a major world event that is going to be remembered for many years to come.** It is a time to be doing what we can do now—as the day approaches. It is a time to think about our relationship with our Father in Heaven, and ask "What is He doing in My life, and what am I doing for Him?"

Knowing the depravity of human nature, various groups will probably use this crisis as a means to get more money or more power for themselves. People may try to sell you fraudulent "year 2000" insurance, or emergency "survival packs" at greatly inflated prices. Desperate financial institutions and government agencies may drop their screening process for hiring technical people to help fix computer systems—spies or high tech criminals may infiltrate financial or military networks for their own power and/or profit. Corrupt individuals may successfully use stolen or phony checks and credit cards when verification systems are not working, or by simply putting on a good act and saying, "Your computer must be having year 2000 problems—this is a valid credit card, I've had this number for 12 years!" Businesses may take advantage of leniency during the year-2000 problem to violate laws that they were afraid to violate in the past. Businesses with working computers will certainly use this time to take away market share from businesses experiencing computer problems.

Religious zealots and con-artists may use the year 2000 problem to push their private prophetic agenda—usually offering deliverance to those who contribute

to or follow them. Even government officials may use it to try to grab more power for themselves. Some are predicting that it will be an excuse for governments to take away personal liberties. Others say the reverse will happen—computer-dependent governments will be forced to give up much of their present control because many of their computer systems used to enforce control will no longer work. Ultimately, some governments see it as the ideal time to start a war—to attack a nation plagued by technology problems.

On the other hand, disasters bring people together for goodwill. We need to use this time to reach out to others and help them in a physical way. "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil 2:4). Acting for the good of those around us will definitely help them to act in a similar fashion. If people fight with one another rather than help one another in this crisis, there could be more damage to lives and property from fighting than from computer problems.

Helping people to be ready to survive this disaster should be a high priority in our lives. Big governments and organizations will probably not be much help—they will be too mired in their own computer problems. If you work together with another group of people to survive a week of no utilities together, you will probably not forget it as long as you live. If our works are good, others may also look to us for help in a spiritual way.

Difficult times help us reflect on what is important in our life—what are we really doing with it? If we put this much emphasis on preserving our physical lives and the lives of others, how much emphasis should we put on preserving our collective spiritual lives? We need to do the things that we can do in preparation for year 2000, but we do not need to **worry** about it. Our Savior said:

So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matt 6:31-34, NIV).

—Norman S. Edwards

HOW MUCH FOOD IS AVAILABLE IN AN EMERGENCY?

The average food store has about a 3- to 7-day supply of food. If new trucks do not keep coming, it will look empty in three days. More and more businesses are relying on computers to coordinate purchases so they can store even less—a practice known as “Just In Time Delivery.” It is interesting to consider these practices in light of the computer disasters that will occur in the year 2000.

I have worked in the Military Airlift Command of the Air Force in which I received my initial training in supply, transportation, storage, and distribution of needed materials. I worked later with Haliburton Services in materials distribution within the manufacturing center in Duncan. I also worked with International Paper Co. and my last position for 14 years was with the hospital at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. I purchased and maintained the food supplies for the hospital and some non-food supplies. I had been working with the Troop Issue Subsistence Agency (TISA) at Ft. Sill for this 14 year period.

During the 14 years I was a Civil Servant for the Department of the Army, I witnessed the military follow American Industry ideas in cost-saving methods of operation. This included the retirement system of the Civil Service workers and contracting very important Military operations to civilian contractors who can go on strike at an inopportune time.

“Just In Time Delivery” (JITD) as developed by companies to eliminate warehousing of parts and materials, which eliminated maintaining buildings and paying personnel to work there. As demonstrated recently by the strike at GM brake parts manufacturing center, all of GM's manufacturing operations were soon shut down due to no brake parts to assemble cars. In effect, when one smaller operation went on strike, it stopped all the manufacturing because there were not any parts in storage to carry on business while the strike was negotiated. I can see the government doing all it can to save money and reduce spending. But it always seem to come at the expense of jobs of the lower paid personnel in the government.

A good case in point is the “Just In Time Delivery” at Ft. Sill where I had

worked. They basically had already contracted out the TISA operations to a civilian contractor (this included all Logistical operations on Ft. Sill). Then they went to JITD and eliminated the need for dry and cold storage warehouses in which to maintain food. The cost saving, if it is totally shut down, is two warehouses and about 8 to 10 personnel and two delivery trucks.

The compromise is that the Post is dependent on a contract food service supplier whose warehouses and shipping point are 100 miles away in Oklahoma City! Food is brought daily to the Post and delivered to the dining facilities. Also, surplus foods that the USDA used to buy to maintain agriculture prices are being eliminated. The US used to have great stores of excess agriculture products. This is no more.

The new MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) that replaced the C-rations of old do not have as long a shelf life. Also the MRE is kept refrigerated, if possible, to help extend the self life. It also has many dehydrated food items in it and is water intensive to prepare and use. The Army spent more money maintaining water supplies to the troops in Desert Storm than the food.

You cannot stock a large amount of supplies with a short shelf life. The supplies must be rotated so that the older ones can be used first. The older must be used up on time. Also, MRE's are very expensive, so the Army does not stock very many MRE's at any one time at a Post. They schedule the use and consumption to field operations and troop movements in and out of the Post of the Reserve and National Guard components. So, in effect, they order and disperse very similar to the way they do the regular food items on the Post.

When I worked in the hospital, I used to maintain a 30 day supply of food there most of the time. We were a

bomb and fallout shelter with contingency plans to feed and shelter a large group of people in emergency. But my 30 day supply was for 30 days of normal operations. It was good for about a week to ten days if we had a large group being sheltered in an emergency.

I had resisted the “Just In Time Delivery” system because it did not provide for the emergency contingency plan. Also, many times, my excess food items carried our operations through long spells of items being out of stock at the Post warehouse.

Even with a warehouse on the Post and storage facilities at the hospital, there were times that it seemed that the TISA office could not come up with every day food items (like french fries, or butter, or sugar) for 4 to 6 days at a time. So this has caused me to seriously consider the merit of the JITD system. **Any** disruption in the supply system (which is trucks running up and down the highway delivering each day) will cause serious problems in all aspects of our daily lives. Even the average grocery store is now operating on JITD system and will not have more than three days food on hand.

I hope this helps readers to understand the possible problems that can come if all these computers that all our businesses are using go haywire. All the paper work such as manifests, bills of lading, orders, receipts, supply levels, shelf life of items, maintenance records, personnel records, accounting, etc. are on the computers that could go down on 1 January 2000.

The military will have a hard enough time feeding itself during an extended disaster. **Do not expect them to help feed you in a disaster.** It is much better if you are prepared to help yourself—then you also have a chance of helping others.

—Raymond Kaping
rgkaping@texhoma.net

Why Isn't the Government Doing More About the Year 2000 Problem?

This bill, introduced 3 years before the disaster, shows that the U.S. government has been warned of the scope of the problem. Yet, national leaders regularly speak to the public on issues far less important than these. Since bringing bad news does not bring popularity, they avoid the issue—even though public awareness would save many lives and much property. Below, we reprint the first part of the bill, adding underlines for emphasis.

105th CONGRESS 1st SESSION
S.22

To establish a bipartisan national commission to address the year 2000 computer problem.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

January 21, 1997

Mr. MOYNIHAN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To establish a bipartisan national commission to address the year 2000 computer problem.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Commission on the year 2000 Computer Problem Act".

SECTION 2. FINDINGS

Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) A devastating computer problem will have extreme negative economic and national security consequences in the year 2000 and in subsequent years, unless the Federal Government addresses and remedies that problem.
- (2) Most computer programs (particularly programs in mainframes) in computers used by both the public and private sector express dates with only 2 digits, on the assumption that the first 2 digits are "19"
- (3) Because of the problem referred to in paragraph (2), most computer programs—
 - (A) Read "00-01-01" as "January 1, 1900"; and
 - (B) will not recognize the year 2000 or the 21st century without a massive rewriting of codes.
- (4) The Congressional Research Service has completed a report on the implications of the problem described in paragraphs (2) and (3) (referred to in this Act as the "year 2000 computer problem").
- (5) According to the report by the Congressional Research Service, each line of computer code will need to be analyzed and either passed on or be rewritten.
- (6) According to leading research in the computer field—
 - (A) on the basis of an average cost of \$1.10 per line of code, it may cost as much as \$30,000,000,000 to correct the computer systems of the Federal Government; and

- (B) it is important to address the crisis caused by the year 2000 computer problem immediately by making funds available by appropriations, because—
 - (i) the cost of remedying that problem will increase at an approximate rate of 20 to 50 percent per year;
 - (ii) the number of available persons with skills to address that problem will diminish as a result of increased demand;
 - (iii) the year 2000 computer problem is an international problem that could cost as much as \$600,000,000,000 to repair on a worldwide basis;
 - (iv) that repair could be compromised by external contamination by foreign countries that do not comply with measures to effectuate the repair;
 - (v) the Federal Government and the governments of States and political subdivisions thereof will bear a significant share of the cost of remedying the year 2000 computer problem; and
 - (vi) it is necessary to have adequate financial resources to ensure the proper operation of computer systems at the levels of government referred to in clause (v).
- (7) The following analyses, determinations, and recommendations need to be made to address the problems of remedying the year 2000 computer problem:
 - (A) A brief analysis of the history and background concerning the reasons for the occurrence of the year 2000 computer problem.
 - (B) A determination of the costs of reviewing and rewriting computer codes for both the Federal Government and the governments of States for the 3-year period immediately, following the date of enactment of this Act, including—
 - (i) a legal analysis of responsibilities for the costs; and
 - (ii) possible equitable basis for sharing the costs.
 - (C) An analysis of the implications of the year 2000 computer problem with respect to intergovernmental and integrated systems.
 - (D)
 - (i) A determination of the period of time necessary to remedy the year 2000 computer problem (including testing).
 - (ii) If the earliest practicable date determined under clause (i) is not January 1, 2000, a determination of—
 - (I) with respect to each Federal agency (as that term is defined

- in section 551(1) of title 5, United States Code)—
 - (aa) priority functions of that Federal agency; and
 - (bb) priority systems of that agency; and
 - (II) which Federal agencies are at risk of being incapable of performing basic services as a result of the year 2000 computer problem.
- (E) The development of balanced and sound contracts to be used in necessary Federal procurement with respect to using private contractors in the computer industry, including contracts to carry out compliance with measures necessary to achieve a remedy of the year 2000 computer problem for computer programs and systems—
 - (i) in use as of the date of enactment of this Act; and
 - (ii) acquired after the date of enactment of this Act.
 - (F) An analysis of the effects and potential effects on the United States economy that would result if the year 2000 computer problem is not resolved by June 1, 1999.
 - (G) Recommendations to the President and the Congress concerning, with respect to minimizing costs and risks to the public and private sector as a result of the year 2000 computer problem—
 - (i) lessons to be learned; and
 - (ii) policies and actions to be taken—
 - (I) before the year 2000; and
 - (II) after the year 2000, if certain public agencies have not taken measures to remedy the year 2000 problem.
 - (8)(A) Congress recognizes that an executive branch interagency committee has been established to raise awareness of the year 2000 computer problem and facilitate efforts at remedying that problem.
 - (B) However, in order to best minimize the impact and cost of the year 2000 computer problem, and in recognition of the extreme urgency of the problem, this Act established a bipartisan commission to—
 - (i) conduct the analyses and determinations, and make the recommendations referred to in paragraph (7) and
 - (ii) take the responsibility of assisting appropriate Federal officials in ensuring that all Federal agencies will be in compliance with necessary measures to remedy the year 2000 computer problem not later than January 1, 1999., [Sections on running the commission removed] ☐

"Summaries" from page 17

more in the frame of mind of the female direction to understand this. When a woman is betrothed to a man, wouldn't she want to learn more about him, his customs and his religion? Since the Father sent Jesus as a Jew, Wheelock concluded that we all need to learn more about being a Jew (**though Wheelock made it clear that he has no intention of converting to Judaism**).

Wheelock said Yeshua never condemned the way the Jews worship—He took issue with their heavy burdens they placed on the people. Wheelock said that the Jews have maintained the oracles of God: the Hebrew scriptures, the synagogue service (patterned after the Temple service), the calendar, and the oral law. Wheelock does not believe that we have to accept every oral tradition—some of the oral traditions conflict, but provide the basis for challenge, study and growth.

In his second session, Wheelock made numerous comparisons between the life of Christ and his understanding of the ancient Jewish wedding ceremony—and further showed how our modern wedding ceremonies are almost exactly opposite. Parallels included: bride = church (*ekklesia*); the groom's father chose the bride = the Father calls believers; the bride had the right to refuse the groom = individuals can reject Yeshua; ketubah (betrothal & marriage contract) = covenant with believers; a price was paid for the bride = believers are "bought with a price"; the bride accepts the contract by drinking glass of wine that groom pours = believers accept Yeshua's blood which he poured out; groom leaves the bride to prepare a *hoopa* (wedding chamber) for bride = Yeshua went to heaven to prepare a place for us; the bride is veiled when she goes out in public = people do not know who the bride of Yeshua is today; groom has two attendants = Yeshua had Moses and Elijah; the groom's father decided when the wedding would take place = only the Father knows when Yeshua will return; the bride and groom spend seven days together in the chamber while the guests feast outside = believers celebrate wedding with Yeshua in heaven at his return (Rev 19:7); bride and groom wear crowns = Yeshua and believers will wear crowns.

Wheelock further explained that at a Jewish wedding, it is said that the two shall become one, in the Hebrew *echad*—the same word used to describe how the Eternal is "one" (Deut 6:4). Wheelock said the Torah was our friend—it helps us understand Messiah. A question was raised as to what are the primary sources explaining ancient Jewish wedding practices—some information is in the Bible and some is in the Mishna and Talmud.

In his third session, Wheelock talked about "Who is a Jew?" He refuted the teaching of some groups that claim modern day Jews are non-Israelites pretending to be Jews—John 11:1 records that Yeshua (a Jew) "came to his own and his own received him not." Also, modern DNA tests have been able to establish clear Jewish, Levitical, and priestly descent. Wheelock said we should not be picky about racial descent—of the two righteous people who saw both the Exodus and entered the promised land, Caleb was a Gentile and received part of Judah's inheritance (Josh 14:6; 15:13; Gen 15:18; 36:9).

Wheelock also spoke against "replacement theology"—the concept that the Eternal has rejected the Jews and replaced them with Christians. He said God has entrusted the oracles to the Jews whether they believe or not. "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). Wheelock said Gentiles are wild olive branches and God is the husbandman and He chooses whom he will graft in. Wheelock further stated that the tree is Israel—we are not grafted into a gentile church or tree—we become Jews.

This writer cannot think of one person who did not like Dean Wheelock's gentle manner of speaking—he always seemed open to other points of view.

Ronald L. Dart, founder of Christian Educational Ministries, spoke twice: Thursday and Friday. In his first message, he talked about the lack of knowledge that many Sabbatarians have about the story of the birth of Jesus—a survey of their youth found that half did not know the name of the mother of Jesus. Dart explained that many people misinterpret Deuteronomy 12:31 which says that "for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods." It says everything He hates, they do—not He hates everything

that they do. The difference is that some people attempt to reject all religious practice that they find among pagan religion—even if the practice is also encouraged in the Bible.

In the process of learning to hate all of the pagan elements in the Christmas story, many of us have accidentally learned to hate the parts in the Bible. **Mary is an excellent example for women to emulate today.** When the angel told her what to do, she did it without question (Luke 1:38)—many of the other famous people in the Bible did not have such a record. Dart explained that the example of Mary's praise of the Eternal, the humility of staying in a stable, and other lessons that traditional Christians have learned—but many Sabbatarians pay little attention to.

In his second session, Dart talked about the "Torah codes." The theory behind "Torah codes" is that each letter of Torah is divinely decreed—that the universe is built from the Torah letters and all significant events can be found in the Torah by rearranging the letters in various mathematical ways. Names of Jewish rabbis, Israeli leaders, gulf war figures, and numerous other things can be found in this manner. However, since these names almost never appear in a certain pattern, these prophecies are only useful in hindsight—they cannot be used to predict events. If the lives of everyone were already predicted in the Torah, how could the Eternal hold us responsible for our sin? We would have to commit the prophesied sin in order to fulfill the Torah codes. Dart explained that nearly **all prophecy is conditional**—if people repent, the prophesied evil will not come (Jer 18:8).

Dart went on to explain that there are several families of Hebrew manuscripts with at least 130 differences and errors. Dead Sea Scroll research has shown that the Hebrew text used during the first century has differences from the 7th to 9th century Masoretic texts which we use today. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) was probably translated from something similar to the first century Hebrew texts. The text we have today is very, very good—but is not letter perfect.

Dart went on to say that there are few if any people who have been convinced the Bible was inspired from Torah codes—the major use of them

seems to be for one religious group to try to establish authority over another. Some people have tried to use Torah codes to establish rabbinic Judaism. He believes that they cannot be used to establish the Jewish "oral law" either.

Drifting somewhat from his original subject, Dart mentioned that he has great respect for Jews and is not anti-Semitic, but believes that Rabbinic Judaism comes from man, not God. He mentioned that the Babylonian mystery religion has infiltrated Judaism as well as Christianity.

Joseph Good has been involved in teaching the Hebrew origins of Christianity for many years. He has television and radio programs, a tape ministry, has done some writing, and takes guided tours to Israel. He has no previous connection with "Church of God" groups. Good believes our calling is to get to know Messiah and that God created the Jewish people so we could get to know him. Yet Good classifies himself as a Christian and firmly believes that Yeshua (Jesus) was sacrificed for our sins.

Joe Good spoke on the same subject for all three sessions: "Hanukkah & Prophecies." He believes that it is vital to understand Hanukkah and Purim to understand prophecy—that we may perish if we do not. John 10:22 shows that Yeshua was in the temple on the "feast of dedication" which is Hanukkah. Antiochus Epiphanes IV tried to enforce Hellenism (Greek culture) on the Jews. He commanded them to stop circumcision, Torah readings and sacrifices. Antiochus made idols of Jupiter Olympus or Zeus but replaced the face with an image of himself. He ordered all priests to sacrifice a pig to Zeus. Mattathias refused to do this, but said, "All who love Torah and God, Follow Me!" He fled to the wilderness more as a personal stand—he did not intend to start a war. But many others followed him. They began to study Torah and learn to fight. Good tied in Daniel 11:31-39 to this action.

The Maccabees were the leading family in resisting the evil Antiochus. Good explained that Maccabee means "hammer" which is often symbolic of Messiah.

Good believes that Antiochus was a type of false Messiah and that in the end

time (very soon) a false Elijah (Revelation's "false prophet") will come preparing the way for a similar false Messiah. Good believes that the false Messiah may look exactly like the pictures of Jesus that people often see. Why? Because many of these pictures are patterned after the face on the "shroud of Turin," a Catholic relic that is purported to be the burial cloth of Jesus. Recent evidence shows that this shroud is truly ancient. Coins appear to cover the eyes of a dead person—a Greek burial custom to provide money for passage across the river Styx on the way to the afterlife. The coins appear to be leptons, coinage that was in use in 100 B.C.

Good displayed pictures of the shroud that appears to have marks where the man was beaten and a spear was put in his side, but the shroud **did not** match many other Biblical descriptions of Yeshua: "His visage was marred more than any man..." (Isa 52:14); His beard was plucked out (Isa 50:6); He was not buried in a Greek manner but a Jewish manner (John 19:40); Yeshua had a separate cloth on his face, it was not all part of one big shroud (John 20:7); and other differences.

Good read from other archaeological reports that indicated the face on the shroud is the same as the face of Zeus Kurios—which is the face of Antiochus Epiphanes. Many scriptures mention an image being nailed to a tree and worshiped (Isa 40:18-20; 44:9-20; 45:18-21; 46:5-7; 41:7). Good believes that this has been fulfilled by Catholics and others who have nailed the image of Antiochus Epiphanes to a cross and worshiped it. He believes Satan has been working all this time to set up his false Messiah that people will believe is the true Messiah. Good stressed that the Message of Hanukkah is to get rid of images of men and study the words of the Eternal.

In his third session, Joseph Good related the prophecies of Daniel and revelation to produce a time-frame for the false Messiah and the true Messiah. None of the *Servants' News* staff were able to capture this high-speed lecture accurately enough to attempt to convey it here. If you are interested, please get the tape. Good did state that he felt another temple would be built and that the Messiah would return on the Day of

Atonement.

Good also mentioned that he is involved in helping to build a model of the temple in Israel, that other Jews are building a full-size tabernacle (the portable version) and other Jews have made extensive preparations to build a temple on the traditional site. Good is certain that the original site of the Holy of Holies was right in the middle of the Dome of the Rock mosque—and that the Eternal will have to give them the land in some miraculous way. At this time, priests have been trained, and are now practicing sacrifices with blemished sheep. Temple vessels have been made. Good said that Melody, the red heifer reported in the press as being essential to make the water of purification may become disqualified, but that there have been other red heifers born in Israel that are not well known. Good noted that sacrifices could begin at only an altar, at the tabernacle or at a quickly built temple. Good expects these may begin some time in 1998.

Ray Wooten of United Christian Ministires had been a Worldwide Church of God minister for many years, but has worked as an independent minister for 3 years. He spoke on the topic of the Two Adams (1Cor 15:45-58) for all three sessions. He believes that God making man in His image is the theme of the Bible (Gen 1:26-27). The first couple, Adam was given a chance to perform this function, but they departed from God's way, so the job had to be done by the second Adam, Jesus Christ (Yeshua HaMashiach). Through one man sin entered the world (Rom 5:12-15). Adam and Eve were direct creations of God. They had no human father or mother. They were not like anyone else—some things that they did had an effect on the whole human race.

There is no one else like Jesus Christ. He also affects everyone. Without Him, eternal life is not available (1Jn 5:11-12). Wooten explained that He sacrificed Himself for us—He did not simply die "in place of us." In the Old Testament, God spoke by various people in various ways, but now He speaks to us by His Son (Heb 1:1). He taught a way of service—those who want to be great in His kingdom have to serve others (Matt 20:20-28).

Wooten explained his understanding

of the Kingdom: there will be little need for enforcement because Satan will be removed, people will have the Holy Spirit, and they will have a natural tendency to do what is right. Righteousness will come from inside. "but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter" (Rom 2:29). "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.... There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free..." (Gal 3:26,28).

Wooten encouraged those who have a ministry from God—large or small—to be diligent to perform it (Luke 13:29-35). Jesus did not fear the religious leaders or Herod. **On the other hand, He did not get involved or try to bear influence on the political issues of his day.**

In his final session, Ray Wooten emphasized the need for God's grace—it does not negate His law, but it fills the void in us. Wooten believes that the believers are now being scattered.

"Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deut 5:29). Wooten said they simply could not do it without the Holy Spirit. He showed that today, true fellowship comes with Messiah—we cannot stop with His coming, death and resurrection—we must fellowship with Him now. We all have the same Messiah, but need forbearance for one another. The New Testament records Gentile converts, and thousands of Jews zealous for the Torah (Acts 21:20). There is one body, one baptism, one spirit. We are all different so that we have to exercise and learn forbearance. **Wooten explained that Messiah's body functions through spiritual gifts, not hierarchical positions.**

Even with the great power that was manifested in the New Testament, God's grace is also manifested through weakness (2Co 11:1-2, 16-30, 12:10).

Norman Edwards, editor of *Servants' News*, spoke on *Where have we been?* He started by expounding the condition of the Old Testament figures: Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc. **These men had relationships and knowledge of the Eternal, but did not have either**

Judaism or Christianity. They had no Torah, no priesthood, etc. There were numerous other people alive at that time—they were not all created in vain. Even after the covenant with Israel, there were Gentiles without knowledge of the covenant to whom the Eternal gave specific rewards or punishments based on their actions (Abimilech, Rehabites, Amorites, Ninevites, etc.).

From the above, Edwards stated that we should learn that the Eternal does not have to work with everyone the same way. Today, there is a vast amount of truth and error mixed into mainstream Judaism and Christianity. From the large number of papers received by *Servant's News*, Edwards was convinced that he is going to die long before he is able to thoroughly study everything that might have a bearing on his spiritual life.

Our spiritual lives should not primarily consist of the groups we join, but what we do with the knowledge we have. There is probably more difference between the true seekers of God and the bench warmers within any given organization than there is between all the differing groups.

Edwards stressed that the people of this world, today, need to know the basics of truth more than we need to know the esoteric things that many of us are striving after.

Edwards read Matthew 11:20-24 which shows that Gentile cities will fair better in judgment than those that know the Torah, but do not do it. **We do not have to be connected to a big organization to do the Eternal's work.** We need to seek Him so that we can do what he wants us to do. Divine intervention is available in our life if we ask in faith, not seeking our own will.

Edwards' second session was an effort to highlight the most important things from the scriptures. Ultimately, we must live by every word of the Eternal (Deut 8:3), but some things are more important. There is an account for everything that has been done (Ecc 3:9-15). We will be judged by how well we obey Him (Ecc 12:13-14). "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic 6:8).

Some passages specifically ask the question: "What is important?" Edwards read Mark 12:28-34—Love the Eternal

with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. Psalm 40:1-10 and 51:10-19 show that the Eternal did not originally want animal sacrifices. Luke 10:25-37 shows who our neighbors are—not just the people who believe like we do.

Matt 19:16-21 shows where Yeshua told a man he had to sell all of his possessions to receive Eternal life—the 613 points did not require this, but Abraham had to get up and leave everything. Paul, at one time, simplified his teaching by saying "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:1-5). Hebrews 6:1-2 lists six basic doctrines that we should all understand. Edwards suggested that we all make sure we understand them—and that we might not understand judgment as well as we should. Matt 25:31-46 shows that people will be judged positively even though they did not know that they seemed to be unfamiliar with Jesus (Yeshua) and the scriptures. Luke 12:35-48 indicates that there will be correction (stripes) in the judgement, not simply death or life.

Edwards third session was on "Where are we going?" He said it is easy to see where the big long-time groups are going. These kind of groups have existed so long that virtually all questions have been asked and answered along the way—most study and writing is to better defend the group's position. Edwards concluded that these groups will last as long as stability can be maintained and any corruption kept hidden. Leaders are usually chosen by some political process that has little to do with righteousness.

Edwards also pointed out that groups dwindle because members begin to study individually and eventually disagree. If an organization begins to change its doctrine, far more people will begin to study independently. Fracturing can continue even over obscure doctrines or leadership.

In the first century, there were many groups of Jews. The Qumran group was so righteous that they completely removed themselves from Jerusalem. A double lesson can be learned here: (1) they were so separated that they had no influence in the New Testament at all, but (2) in their strangeness, the Eternal still used them to preserve their writings

for our day.

Edwards emphasized that we really need to seek the Eternal's will for us. It may be quite varied. John the Baptist was out of the public for a long time, but then later came to do public works. He was a loner and then a preacher to everyone. He did not receive all the Old Testament promises of long life and prosperous fields and to see his children and grandchildren, yet Jesus said that he was the greatest man living at that time. Some of us may suffer great things in life, some may not.

Edwards pointed out that the Eternal could have sent Apollos to the Gentiles, but he sent a Jew, a Pharisee that was schooled after Gamaliel. Also, Jehu, king of Israel was not righteous but did some obedient things and was blessed for it. Even unrighteous people can teach truth (though we should discourage people from being teachers who do not meet the qualifications of 1Tim 3 and Titus 1).

Edwards concluded by talking about how we seek the Eternal's will for our lives. The Bible does not say "John Doe, go do this..." Edwards said that the Eternal speaks to some in dreams or visions, others by overwhelming feelings to do something. We should not superstitiously interpret all events in our lives as signs from the Eternal, but pray specifically for Him to show us His will, and then wait for His answer.

Edwards went on to say that most former "Church of God" members have learned a lot of truth, but also learned that hierarchies do not work. Much has been invested in these people—they have certain experience that few others have. Edwards believed that as the Jerusalem church was scattered in Acts 8:4 to preach the Gospel, so we have been scattered so we can teach others. Are we going to be survivors or not?

Jim Rector gave the Sabbath sermon entitled *Connecting With God*. He began by saying "This is the day that the LORD hath made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it" (Pslm 118:24). Below, we list his five main points:

(1) Recognize the purpose of God.

Even when someone is sick there is some godly purpose being worked out (Jn 11:1-4). Samson had great power, but failed to see the purpose—was so self consumed and ended up in Delilah's

barber shop (Jdg 16). Hezekiah was a much-blessed man yet got too involved with Babylon (2Kngs 20). Job, Joseph, and others had trials for a purpose.

(2) Realize there is a process of God. This may be different than what we may expect. Abraham was promised a son at age 75, but had to wait 24 years. Jesus (Yeshua) allowed Lazarus to die—people told him that he waited too long. Throughout Scripture, God works in many unusual ways.

(3) We must believe in a God of the now. It is easy to believe in the God of the past (who did great things in the Bible) and a God of the future (that will fulfill prophecy some day. It is hard to believe in the God of the now, yet we are commanded to do so (Matt 6:34). he is the God of the living, not the dead (Matt 22:32). How many of us really want to walk in the footsteps of the Messiah? How many are really willing to do what He did? Live as He lived? Not just want to do it but actually take steps to do the things that He did?

(4) We need our stony heart taken away. (Ezk 11:19, 36:26, John 11:38-39.) No fertile ground in stony places (Matt 13:5). Like circumcision, we must remove the hardness of our flesh. It can get painful to remove the stone from our heart.

(5) God wants to move us from death to life. (Rom 6:3-5; Is 25:6.) God is a God of the now. We can't just rest on the past or the future. Consider every moment of your life valuable—even when pain is involved. God is not interested in just making better versions of ourselves. He is trying to make new creatures in us, a transformation unlike anything that we can imagine. Walk in the footsteps of Messiah. Go where He went, do what He did. Walk His walk. Make it real.

We love to be religious. But we fear to change. We need to live the spirit-filled life as they did in the book of Acts. Very few are really involved and doing as Messiah did and really living the power. We have a way to go. God is the God of the living and we must be connected to Him.

Yaffah daCosta spoke at one session. She was raised as a Roman Catholic, but has since found that her ancestors were probably Portugese Jews that were forcibly converted by the

Catholic inquisition. She has 30 years experience working as an adult educator and management consultant, but also produces her own radio talk show teaching Torah to Christians.

DaCosta's message was essentially a book-report on "Jesus the Pharisee" by Orthodox Rabbi Harvey Falk. She asked, "Who are we supposed to exceed in terms of righteousness? The Jews?? No, the scribes and Pharisees" (Matt 5:17-20). DaCosta explained that beginning around 30 BCE, two schools of Pharisees developed, the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai. Shammai said that the only way Gentiles could be in the World To Come was to keep the 613 commandments and all of oral law. Hillel said "no". This same argument was found in Acts 15.

DaCosta explained that there were over 350 major arguments between the Schools of Hillel and Shammai. Yeshua nearly always supported the Hillel position. In 70 CE (A.D.), the year the temple was destroyed, the Halachah [official, binding teaching] was decided in favor of Hillel. Rabbinic Judaism believes that the reason for the destruction was "hatred without cause", which turned out to be the severe hatred the Jews had for the Gentile world, especially the occupying Romans. This hatred was a doctrine of Shammai and abhorred by Hillel. For centuries, most of the Christian world that justified hatred of the Jews from the scriptures did not realize that they were basing their hatred on arguments against the Shammai school which had been long dead. The official Rabbinic position today is to not hate others but to love them, respect them and honor them.

DaCosta posed this question: "You Sabbath keepers, you rest from your labors and keep the Sabbath holy, yet you engage in usury and interest, you engage in unjust weights and measures, you make covenants with the ungodly and their gods. Would those who read about this statement 2000 years later consider me to be one from your midst or as an outsider, bashing you?" She said that she would probably be considered an outsider, even though she was here as a part of the group. Similarly, then, daCosta asked: could Jesus have been **less** of an outsider to the Pharisee community than we previously have thought?

—Norman Edwards & Norman Arthur

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.

Is Christ The End of the Law?

LETTER:

December 21, 1997

Dear Norman,

I have read Romans 10:4 with interest. (Rom 10:4-*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*) What do you think? Is Christ the end of the law (of Moses) or the law (of Christ)? If Christ, then profound meaning concerning this law is realized! Could you possibly study this subject, and publish your results in a forthcoming article? You don't have to give me the credit if you don't want to. I'll just be pleased to see people reading this truth. You know, I feel this is significant because of our experience in WCG. We were law focused, and it pointed to Christ, the present WCG position, effectively abandoning this law in the process. Nothing is further from the truth. That is what so great a deception there is. If it was the law of Moses, the WCG feels confident that they are right—knocking the law. But please address this issue anyway, and write to me personally if you have time. Much regards.

—Paul Christophy, United Kingdom

RESPONSE:

Most of the confusion surrounding this verse has to do with multiple meanings of the English word "end," which is used to translate the word *telos* from the Greek. When most people read the word "end" here, they think of "the termination of something." However, "end" has other definitions, such as "the ultimate state" or "an outcome worked toward."

The Greek *telos* has a meaning closer to "the ultimate purpose." The same word occurs in the following verse: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the **end** [*telos*] of the Lord (Jms 5:11) Clearly, this is not talking about the "termination of the Eternal," but talking about "the

ultimate purpose of the Creator." Likewise, Christ is the ultimate purpose of the law—both the law of Moses and His law. The law leads us to Him, like a schoolmaster (Gal 3:24).

—NSE

Build Bridges

Across Corporate Lines

LETTER:

October 28, 1997

Dear Norman,

I hope you and your staff are well and that you all had a great feast.

Three friends and I went to a United Feast in Weymouth, England. We enjoyed ourselves, took your advice in *Servants' News* (didn't rock the boat) and it all turned out well. It was especially nice to see old friends that we hadn't seen for years.

But one thing stands out clearly, and it is the same thing we see in the Church of God at Corinth: I Cor 1:11 (last part) that there are contentions among you. (verse 12): Now this I say that everyone of you saith I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. (verse 13): Is Christ divided?

There are two differences today. 1) I'm of Rod, I'm of Gerald, I'm of Garner Ted, I'm of Bill, I'm of Fred, I'm of United, I'm of Worldwide. So we see more and different names substituted and, 2) Those brethren who follow these different men no longer worship together. At least in Corinth as far as we know they were all still fellowshiping together.

I said to some friends at the feast that its up to us brethren to try and build bridges of friendship between these groups. If you have friends in them, don't cut them off.

Because sadly, I can't see any of these group leaders trying to do it, even though some of them believe the same things. In fact, they are the ones who are dividing up the flock.

Anyway, I have thought this for some time and thought I would share it with you.

Yours sincerely,

—Mike Hurst, England

RESPONSE:

We agree with you that it is up to the individual brethren to rebuild friendships. The unity solution desired by most of the big groups is for everyone to join their group. That is not happening now, nor can I see any reason why it will happen in the future. We are happy that you made the effort to visit others. Keep it up!

—NSE

Ministers Not To Be In Charge

LETTER:

December 11, 1997

Hi to All at Servants' News!

May God richly bless you all and may He guide, lead, and direct your ways and lead you to all truth.

Thank you for *Servants News*, it is always welcomed in my house, for it challenges me to critically analyze not only what others believe and understand, but what I believe and understand.

Thank you for the Sept/Oct issue. All the articles on UCG were of great interest and informational. The more I know about UCG, Global, and Philadelphia, etc. the more I realize that apart from God's Holy Spirit leading us to all truth, there is no real alternative to Worldwide's offshoots other than being an independent believer in Christ, studying His word daily and fellowshiping with His body (the followers of Christ) in a non-hierarchical congregation, fellowship or group.

For me personally—I would rather "be taught" by a sincere Christian who treats me as an equal and does not "lord it over me" than to be "taught" by a "minister" who treats me as someone lesser or in a lower spiritual position than he. We are all many but one in Christ. We are all equal in His sight. We are to treat each other as brothers and sisters in Christ through love. When a brother or sister tries to dominate, dictate, subjugate, control and rule over another brother or sister because of his or her "belief" that God has given them that authority and uses that "authority" for unbiblical purposes, I ask myself, how can God's love for one another exist? Isn't love what makes us believers in Christ? Since when is love domineering?

This "authority" has been used by Worldwide and its organized offshoot "churches" to stifle the growth of the followers of Christ and to omit their access to having a personal relationship directly with Our Father and our High Priest.

They have tried to achieve this through disfellowshipment, misapplying scriptures, brainwashing, coercion, favoritism, guilt, condemnation, lies, twisting of facts in God's word and deception. I say tried because all that God has called and chosen will not be defeated nor kept from God's glorious purpose of fulfilling our greatest potential as God's people. Satan can't defeat us! Demons can't defeat us! Nor can this world. Neither can these "ministers". Although it may appear like it for awhile.

We will all have to give account for our actions toward others especially our actions toward those of the household of God and those who have accepted the role of a "minister" will be judged accordingly. They will have to answer not only for what they "told us what and how to be" but for how they were. Christ knew very well what He meant when He said "Do what they say, **not** what

they do—hypocrites!!

For those who don't know it yet—**God is in charge!** And no minister who "thinks" he is in charge over the brethren can ever take God's place.

Since God is in charge I will follow Him and not a "minister" or a "true church" or "church of God" or an "offshoot", for God is one and only in Him do I owe my allegiance!

Sincerely,

—Angel Gonzalez, New Jersey

RESPONSE: We cannot refute your reasoning or conclusion. Even though the Worldwide Church of God managed to produce a high degree of apparent unity, it should be obvious that there was no real unity. When the organization began to change its doctrines, the members reacted in dozens of different ways: some accepted the changes instantly, some accepted them slowly, some left for one of many other groups, some went to a Protestant church and others gave up all together. No one can claim that these people were acting with "one mind." People who long for the "good old days" in WCG are longing for a system that did not work.

However, we must be careful not to reject or revile people who are still attending hierarchical organizations. In many cases, that is the only place they can fellowship with others of like mind. Also, we must realize that if it took us 10, 20 or 30 years to understand what the Bible says about hierarchical government, it may take someone else that long to understand, also.

—NSE

Giving a Day of Atonement Offering

LETTER: December 10, 1997
Sir,

How does one justify the taking up of an offering on the Day of Atonement? A) Take Deut 16:16 out of the Bible; B) God will change if those in authority twist scripture; C) Money replaced the offering made by fire; D) God has never disqualified anyone for refusing new truth; E) One may say, "follow me as I follow Herbert W. Armstrong"; F) All of the above.

—[anonymous]

RESPONSE: The traditional way to justify an offering on the Day of Atonement is to translate Deuteronomy 16:16 as "Three seasons a year all your males shall appear..." and then say that an offering should be taken up on every holy day because this verse is referring to the Spring, Summer, and Fall holy day seasons. That explanation is quite bad in that the Hebrew *pah-am* means "different occurrences" not "seasons" and further more the three Festivals are named in the lat-

ter half of the verse.

Unfortunately, there were (and still are) people like me who sat for years and assumed that the headquarters ministers must have known what the Hebrew language really said here, so I happily gave offerings on the Day of Atonement for many years without ever questioning it. Examples like this show the problems with hierarchical government. What would happen if an usher in a hierarchical congregation told his minister that he could not in good conscience help take up a Day of Atonement offering because of this scripture? A few ministers might just quietly excuse him from the duty. But most would probably permanently remove the man from usher duty and some might disfellowship him. He would certainly be disfellowshipped if he was openly sharing his understanding of this scripture with others.

—NSE

Desires Bible Topics Not Bashing

LETTER: December 5, 1997
Dear Sir or Madam,

This is with regard to the letter in the November 1997 issue entitled, "Finished Listening to UCG Troubles" from M & LR, Wisconsin. In your response to the letter, you stated, "...every time we decided to print articles about what is happening in specific organizations, we wish we could be teaching a Bible topic instead." I think you need to pay more attention to that need.

In examining the November 1997 issue of Servants' News, I feel that 4 of the 8 sections either bash a large, corporate organization (UCG lately) or indicate that home fellowships are better (which is an indirect slap to corporate organizations). Actually, if you include the "Letters and Responses" in that count, 5 of the 8 sections are directly or indirectly bashing large corporate groups. So that means that at least half of the issue is devoted to a **Non-salvation issues!**

Although I attend UCG and am a member of UCG, I agree with your feelings that there are members of God's church in many organizations, and members of God's church in home fellowships. If I lived 200 miles from the nearest UCG congregation, and there was a Global (or CGI or COG 7th day or home group) less than 50 miles away, I would have no problem attending with a non-UCG group. That is, assuming the group would allow me to attend (and still be a member of UCG). I don't have a problem with attending a feast site not sponsored by UCG.

[Long paragraph about Feast sermons deleted.]

I think you are doing a disservice by having so much of your publication doing your version of "the work"—bashing UCG, or other large groups. The large majority of the people in Global, UCG, CGI, Philadelphia, home fellowships, etc. left WCG. If these people found the courage to leave WCG because of the heresy being taught, then they can choose to leave their current fellowship if they have a problem with local governance and/or headquarter governance. But these are not salvation issues and don't deserve press coverage, whereas leaving WCG involved salvation issues and people's eyes needed to be opened to the insidious plot to remove the truth from our lives.

—HC, Texas

RESPONSE: Thank you for your letter. We do not completely understand how you separate issues into salvation and non-salvation issues. The letters in Revelation 2 & 3 and many other scriptures indicate to us that different things are required of different people. We are to give ourselves as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). Paul indicates that he had to preach the Gospel to be saved (1 Cor 9:19). Christ told one man to "sell all he had" to obtain eternal life (Matt 19:16-21). We have never been able to find a simple one, two, three formula that would guarantee salvation in the Bible. We believe that there are many persons who attend big Church organizations who will be saved. But I also believe that some brethren are not able to live up to what the Eternal would like them to do because they are in a hierarchical organization.

I do not know what the Eternal's will is for you or for anyone else. However, there are hundreds of people who have left hierarchical organizations partly because of what was written in *Servants' News* and they believe it was a turning point in their spiritual life.

We write about what we consider problems in church organizations for at least two reasons. First of all, when we publish a story about some wrong that was done in a church organization (e.g. money is wasted or a member is disciplined for an unscriptural reason), that organization will often correct the wrong or cease doing it in the future. I have seen this happen many times. I saw it from the inside when I worked for the Global Church of God and I have seen it happen when we published stories in *Servants' News*. An organization may not worry about a secret mistake, but they will correct a public one.

Another reason we write about difficulties is so brethren can see them and learn from them. You mentioned that you have no problem going to another group's Feast site.

You may be interested to know that other brethren in the UCG have been removed from all positions of service because they have done the same thing.

We try to avoid condemning individuals, but report accurate facts and give a Biblical analysis. The dozen or so UCG congregations that have split up during the past year is a fact. Our analysis of the situation may be wrong, but we believe it is still worth most UCG member's time to know what is happening and form their own conclusions about the cause.

We hope this helps you understand why we write these things. In the next few issues, we will probably spend much less time on church issues. We hope that there is much you can use in them.

The Real Temple of God

LETTER: December 31, 1997

Dear Mr. Edwards,

My husband and I are real pleased with the work that you are doing. We look forward to getting the Servants' News each month. Keep up the good works.

[paragraph about article removed]

It seems to me that Satan is using things of this world as decoys to get his way with us. We are so busy looking at organizations, buildings, our own brethren, that we are forgetting how we are going to be judged. We are going to be judged on our own works, not as an organization or on what our brother does.

I am finding out that the only temple I have to worry about keeping clean is the one God has given to me. Now I don't know about you, but that has been taking up all my time. When I am looking at someone else's temple or things outside of myself, I am neglecting the job that God has entrusted me to take care of. Polishing, dusting, washing the temple he made for me. He has even supplied the cleaning supplies.

If I see someone who is spiritually in trouble, I can go right to the High Priest who is Christ which lives inside my temple and ask Him to help them. God is the only one who can change things outside of myself.

I also believe that if my temple is clean and holy unto God, He will accept my prayers and answer them, if He feels they are fit to answer. He accepts my offerings like Abel whose works were righteous, unlike Cain's whose works were evil.

I hope that I don't offend anyone with this message. I am just really worried about my family in Christ. We must trust God to do His job and us focus on ours. Only then can we have peace among ourselves. Idolatry comes in many forms and if we are

obsessed with others or things outside of ourselves we might be in great danger of losing our own salvation.

We must learn to focus on our armor we are wearing because if one piece is missing we will be vulnerable to Satan who is making war with the saints of God. We must fight with all our might for faith and righteousness so we can live, because God said he is coming and he will crown to give to those who have overcome. So polish your temples brethren, make sure you get them clean, because we are to be as virgins dressed in white so we can gleam.

—MK, Arkansas

RESPONSE: Your letter is an obvious reference to the Apostle Paul calling our bodies a temple (1Cor 3:16-17; 1Cor 6:19; 2Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21). Thank you for your encouraging words.

We have had questions about how can believer's bodies be "the Temple" and at the same time how can prophecies indicate that there will be a physical temple both during the end-time and in the Millennium? I believe that both can exist at once. There are many Jews and others that still see a temple as a vital part of their religion that is promised in scripture. The Eternal is quite capable of working with these people according to the Scripture that they understand, and working with us according to the scripture that we understand. If the Eternal can keep track of a temple for every believer, He certainly can add one physical temple, too.

—NSE

Sacred Name, Pro & Con

LETTER: September 21, 1997

Greetings Norman:

Thank you for your response, my wife (Phyllis) spoke to [a friend] at a shower, and she mentioned that they had quit attending WCG, she asked what we did, Phyllis said we don't go anywhere. Phyllis mentioned to her about **Servants' News**, and she was interested in getting it, hence the request.

Say Norm, I read a file back when I was on CompuServe, and the guy said that the false prophets were like **mailmen**, they have some truth (first class mail), and a lot of junk mail with it.

I don't think this "**names**" subject [use of Sacred Names] would even be an **issue**, if the names had never been translated. This is the reason for the problem. One doesn't translate his name when traveling in different countries, it stays the **same**. Did you know that "**Satan's**" name isn't translated, its still the same as always.

Read Acts 4:12, and then Acts 26:14 "...I heard a voice saying to me in the **Hebrew**

language"...

Verse 15, "...Who are you Master? And the Master said," I am Jesus (????) whom you are persecuting,"

Norm, I have read somewhere that the name "jesus" was concocted about 1500 years ago.

1 John 5: I write this to you who **believe** on **THE NAME** (YAOHUSHUA in Hebrew) of the Son of g-d, (UL),..."

Norm, it appears from these scriptures that **the name** is more important that what the **false prophets** would have us believe. I can recall when H. W. **Armstrong** pooh-poohed the sacred / Hebrew names.

Norm, did you notice how I typed "h.w.a."? The YAOHUSHUA people from Israel have a file (False.txt) on false prophets, they "warn" you about people who have these letters "**str**" in their **name**. And they probably never even heard of H.W.A.

Norm, take a **look** at Mat.8:29-32 [In regard to a previous letter which indicated "jesus" means "the (je) swine (sus)".] Its very interesting what animals the demons selected to enter. Then it shouldn't be surprising that the **false messiah** is called "je / sus", and don't the vast majority subscribe to this messiah?

Doesn't our **savior** warn us about this very thing? (See Mat.7:13- 14.) The "**narrow way people are few** in number." The "**broadway people** (je / sus people) are "**many**".

[The fact that almost nobody believes that jesus means "the swine"] is the clever deception part of the whole thing Norm, by keeping people in the "**dark**", (John 8:12, and 12:35) not knowing what they are doing.

Say Norm, I'll have to do some looking, but I'll try to find the download [that is the proof of this]. I looked for the file, but I couldn't find it. If I find it I'll E-mail it.

Norm, **read** John 6:29b, "...This is **the work** of g-d (YAOHU UL) that you believe on **Him** whom **He** has **sent**."

Norm, whom did the **father** send, YAOHUSHUA or je /sus ??? Is it the **few** (Rom.11:4-5), or the **many** that believe on je / sus???

It seems that some of these "YAWEHISTS" get carried away don't they? I must say you had a very good response to Elias R.A. (Name Wrong, You Worship Satan) page 26, Aug. S.N.

I believe in the name YAOHU UL, the Father (SR.) and YAOHU / SHUA, the **son** (JR.). "I have come in my **Father's name** / YAOHU" (John 5:43). YAHWEH (SR) / YESHUA (JR) ???

Israel was to have **His** name, and the Jews are the only Hebrew speaking tribe today. The Prime Minister of Israel is

Benjamin Netan / YA(O) HU, there are other Hebrew names that have a "YAHU" ending as well.

Norm, check Strong's on "lord" it also means "Baal". Isn't it suspect, the words that are used in the translation of YAOHU'S name? And "satan's" name stayed the same?

—MV, Minnesota

RESPONSE: Again, thank you for responding to my e-mail. I read the whole thing including the scriptures, but you did not convince me of anything. Too much sacred name literature is full of statements like you made: "I have read somewhere that the name 'Jesus' was concocted about 1500 years ago."

Another "sacred name" individual once strongly urged me to be rebaptized in the name of "Yashua" so I could be saved. He insisted that the entire New Testament was originally written in Hebrew. When I asked him for proof, he seemed to have forgotten where it was. Later, he referred me to a booklet by another organization that only proved that there was some chance that Matthew, Hebrews and Revelation were once written in Hebrew (which I think is quite possible). It seems extremely unlikely that Paul wrote to Gentiles in Hebrew.

Although there is less variation than the divine names, "Satan's" name has not been as well preserved in the scriptures as you imply. The Hebrew is pronounced *Say-taan'* whereas in English it is *Say'-tan*. Also, the Hebrew form is sometimes *Ha'-Say-taan'* (the adversary), but that version of his name does not appear in any English translation I know of. In the New Testament, we see the Greek *Satanas*—a definite variation. There are some places where Bible translations differ—some say "Satan", and others say "adversary" (Pslm 109:6, etc.). Finally, Young's Literal Translation always uses "adversary"—"Satan" does not appear at all in that Bible version!

None of the scriptures you gave say anything about getting the pronunciation of the Eternal's name exactly right. The original manuscripts of the Bible that the Eternal has preserved for us are in three languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Daniel uses Aramaic words for the Eternal. You showed that the Eternal spoke to Paul in Hebrew—and rightly so because Paul understood Hebrew. But this fact preserved in Acts also shows that it must have been common for people to speak other languages—if they spoke Hebrew all of the time, what point would there be in noting the language in which Paul heard? If it is vital to have correct Hebrew pronunciation of divine names, why was this never mentioned as an important

item to the new Gentile believers who obviously did not speak Hebrew?

Three times the NT records the word "father" in both Hebrew and Greek (Mark 14:36, Rom 8:15, Gal 4:6). This clearly shows that there was no mass conspiracy to eliminate all Hebrew from the NT. Yet, we see no instance where the Father or Son's name was recorded in both Hebrew and Greek. Furthermore, NT quotes of the OT are obviously from both the Hebrew texts and from the Septuagint. Again, no conspiracy to eliminate Hebrew influence, but proof that the Greek scriptures were in use. Yes, a few versions of the Septuagint have Hebrew names, but the vast majority do not.

Too often, we have found that sacred-name advocates are more interested in creating a distinctive doctrine that they can tell others to "accept in order to be saved." There are many aspects of the divine names that need to be taught to a much wider audience, but it must be done in a thorough, well documented way, rather than a "say it my way or suffer hell fire" approach.

On following the "Narrow Way":

These are favorite scriptures of many groups. The problem is, there are hundreds of "narrow ways"—Dozens of ways to pronounce the Names, dozens of calenders, dozens of Passover explanations, etc. Are they all correct because only a few people believe them? No. **The scripture tells us the the right way will be narrow, but it does not tell us which of the many narrow ways will be right.** It does assure us that the broadest way will be wrong, but it does not tell us exactly how it will be wrong. Yes, millions of people profess the name of Jesus, but their problem is not one of pronunciation. There problem is described here:

"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men' " (Matt 15:7-9).

The Eternal is not rejecting their worship of Him, but is rejecting their hearts (attitudes) and their doctrines (Christmas, Easter, heaven, hell, abortion, fornication, etc.) **I believe we need to start teaching people what the Bible says and to obey it, not to begin teaching them a specific pronunciation—something that we have no command to do.**

If you believe that using your pronunciation is essential for your salvation, than you should certainly do it. If you ignore what you believe to be truth, you may well be held accountable (Rom 14:23). If He asks me in a time of judgment why I did not spell or pro-

nounce His name correctly in Hebrew, I will tell Him about the many papers I read attempting to determine its pronunciation (including yours)—I will also ask Him why He hid this vital fact from nearly all of the world. (Let's face it, the average believer throughout history did not own a Bible and was lucky to be able to read one once in a while. It was not until this century that the average believer could have access to Hebrew and Greek at all.)

If there were one scripture in the Bible that said "you shall teach them the pronunciation of My name" or "your pronunciation has separated Me from you," then I would agree with you. But the verses in Hosea, below, indicate that the Eternal responds to these names of Baal, even though He plans to straighten it out in the future:

"And it shall be, in that day," Says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,' [Hebrew Baali] For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more. In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely (Hos 2:16-18).

Notice that He does not say: "you will stop worshipping Baal", but that people will "no longer call Me 'My Master' [Baali]." Is this our commission now? Apparently not—there are still dangers from wild animals and wars. This prophecy is yet for the future.

—NSE

Apology For Stolen Truth Letter

LETTER: November 22, 1997
Hello again, Norman Edwards:

Let me begin by saying that I owe William Dankenbring a "Public Apology" for my accusations of him "stealing" my ideas and reasons for the writing of his article entitled, "The Last Week of Jesus Christ"! [See *Servants' News* July 1997 page 19 & Sept/Oct page 39.] I should have used the word "borrowed" instead, and my intentions were not to accuse him of "stealing" from me, but simply to let your readership know that "he alone", did not come up with this "new found" knowledge of his, and that there were "others" out here, (including me) who "were not" given any credit or public praise from him, and that he was "ignoring" the rest of us, concerning his "new found" knowledge.

I do not have a chip on my shoulder, nor do I feel unappreciated, nor do I feel angry

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Church of God International & Garner Ted Armstrong

Take Separate Paths

Another major step has been taken in the sad story that began to "go public" in the latter months of 1995 when a Tyler, Texas masseuse captured over 40 sexual improprieties of Garner Ted Armstrong against herself on video tape. The masseuse, Suerae Robertson, sued Armstrong and the Church of God, International (CGI) for unspecified damages (see 1996 Servants' News issues Jan p. 5, Feb p.2, & Mar/Apr p. 23 for details). The case is scheduled to go to trial in March 1998.

During the last months of 1997, the CGI Ministerial Council admitted to learning of additional past sexual improprieties on the part of Armstrong. It is the function of the CGI Ministerial Council to grant and revoke ministerial credentials for that organization. The Ministerial Council received information from a lawyer indicating that there is a possibility that they could be held liable if they took no action against Armstrong—especially since Armstrong represented himself as a minister of that organization and promised Robertson God's forgiveness if she gave sexual favors to someone "doing such an important work of God." The CGI Ministerial Council unanimously approved a statement censuring Armstrong and asking the CGI Board of Directors to retire him, or they would remove his ministerial credentials.

The board required a two thirds majority to make such a decision, and was one vote short of doing so. Some of Armstrong's fol-

lowers brought serious accusations against CGI officials—claiming they regularly used church offices and other facilities to run their own businesses. After several days of maneuvering, Armstrong decided to start over, forming a new Evangelistic Association. Its primary purpose will be to produce Garner Ted Armstrong's TV program—local congregations will be encouraged to operate on a completely local basis. The CGI plans to continue operations and has already begun a new television program without Armstrong. **We have included portions of documents produced by each organization, below, so that you may read their own view of their future.**

Editor's Commentary

For years, the CGI provided a place to fellowship for Sabbatharians who were thrust out of the Worldwide Church of God and knew of no place else to go. Today, Sabbath-keeping brethren have numerous places available for fellowship. Brethren remain within groups only if those groups are effectively preaching the gospel and/or serving the brethren. Historically, the CGI has been a mixture of people—some were largely interested in church congregations and administration, others were primarily enamored with the preaching of Garner Ted Armstrong.

There is no doubt that Armstrong is an incredibly gifted speaker. But the work of the Eternal is not only about gifts, it is about

living His way. **Repentance is not the issue**—the Eternal can forgive any sin. But, He rarely removes the consequences of sin. For example, illegitimate children do not disappear when their parents are forgiven for committing adultery; Robinson's suit against Armstrong did not disappear even though the Eternal may have forgiven Armstrong. The entire purpose for the qualifications for elders given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are about the reputation these men will have among others—repentance and forgiveness are not mentioned at all in these chapters. How many people have heard the message of the Bible preached, then given up on it when they found out that their preacher did not live by it?

We hope that Armstrong as well as the leaders of the CGI will repent of their past sins and publicly acknowledge those sins affecting the brethren whom they serve. We hope they will look at their own lives in the light of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and decide for themselves if they are qualified to continue serving as church leaders. "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged: (1Cor 11:31). Some of the writing below shows more enthusiasm than sober "coming to grips" with the problems. Our advice to others in how to deal with these organizations: Befriend the brethren in them—they did not cause leaders to sin. Take some time to weigh the fruits of the organizations and ask the Eternal to show you how you should participate.

—Norman S. Edwards

Letters From CGI

Letter to brethren and fellow-laborers, dated December 7, 1997, from Vance Stinson, Bronson James, and Charles Groce of CGI:

With prayerful consideration and open-mindedness, the Council, after hours of deliberation, unanimously concluded that Mr. Armstrong's conduct, measured against the scriptural qualifications for a minister, gives us no choice but to remove him as a minister. This painful and disheartening realization led to a resolution submitted to the Board of Directors of the church for Mr. Armstrong to proceed to retirement. This was a difficult decision for the Council to reach, but compelling due to the scriptural direction in 1 Timothy 5:20-21: "Them (the elders/ministers) that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear. I charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that you observe these things without preferring one before

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Letter from Chris Cumming of GTA-EA

IT'S OFFICIAL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

NO MORE WAITING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

THE WORK GOES FULL STEAM AHEAD!!!

I just got off the phone with Garner Ted Armstrong. The Board Meeting is over. Valiant attempts were made by James Lamb and Larry Brookreson to secure a fair severance pay from Charles Groce, Benny Sharp, Skip Martin and Guy Carnes. These latter 4 gentlemen would have none of it and as one eye-witness put it, "They cut him (GTA) off at the knees". After more than 19 years of dedicated service, they will only pay him until the end of this month.

Mr. Armstrong was not deterred. He went from the meeting with a high-hand!! The first official Sabbath of the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association is tomorrow.

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when I write, nor do I have a vendetta against the WCG or it off-shoots, etc. I am simply trying to get the "truth" out! My "coup de grace" for my article was found in Luke 22:66 and Matt 27:1-2 and Mark 15:1, which proves that it was daytime or morning time before our savior was even brought out to begin his very first trial with the whole Sanhedrin assembly! Those three scriptures alone destroy the common held beliefs that Christ was tried at night-time, and that he had an illegal trial in the middle of the night., etc.

[Several paragraphs removed that support the conclusion that Christ's trial must have been more than 24 hours before his death.]

If any of your readers would like a copy of my letter (or article), please write to me and I will send you one. I am not trying to get a following, and I don't want your money, and I am not on an ego trip, and I am no scholar, and I don't belong to any organized religion, etc. My purpose is simply to get everyone to do "more studies" on their own, and to "prove all things", and to get everyone involved in putting this puzzle together....Let

your readers decide whether something is true or false, and give them both sides of an issue, rather than just your side!

William Dankenbring is an excellent writer, and I have learned much from him through the years, and I still have great respect for the man, and still consider him as, "my friend from California"! We all disagree with one another at times, but that does not mean that we all have to stop being friends with one another! Are we not all brothers? Do brothers always agree with one another?

Sincerely with love,

—Glen W. Myers, 1047 Iroquois St.
Clearwater, Fl 33755

RESPONSE: Thank you for the apology. It is a nice thing to see people realize they were wrong and change. Anyone interested in writing you for your paper is certainly welcome to do so—we have included your address. However, because of the difficulties we find with this theory in light of other scriptures (see our Sept/Oct 1997 issue), we do not intend to publish any more about it for a long time.

—NSE

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another, doing nothing by partiality."

Mr. Armstrong's letter shows he is not willing to accept the Ministerial Council's decision. We had hoped for his full cooperation, and believed a smooth transition was possible. It appears that expectancy is now beyond our hope.

From the CGI's Weekly Report, week ending 12/27/97:

The Church Marches On With "Armor of God"

Beginning the second weekend of January (10 and 11), the church will begin airing its new television program entitled *Armor of God*. Presenters of the program will include home office ministers Bronson James and Vance Stinson, both of whom have appeared with Garner Ted Armstrong in recently aired telecasts. Additional presenters will be introduced over time.

The goal of the program is of course to enable a warning and a witness to the world, but also to spiritually feed, care for, and edify those people we have reached. Our intent is to have a balanced approach, one that is biblical and of interest to our viewers.


The new program will be used to

promote the church, its work, and its message—the message Jesus Christ commands us to declare (Matthew 28: 19,20). It will also be utilized to generate interest in our local congregations, much more so than our previous programs did. At the close of every new program, the narrator will say, "*The Armor of God* program is sponsored by the Church of God, International. For information about the congregation nearest you, write to PO Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710.

Letter from Eric P. Morris of CGI, December 31, 1997:

Commencing January 11, 1998, the CGI's television program will be called *Armor of God*.... The focus will be more on doctrine and Christian living issues and less on speculative prophetic scenarios... We taped one program already and will record another Friday.

Weekly Report dated January 12, 1998:

The *Armor of God* Telecast on the Weekend of January 10-11 offered the booklet *What is the Real Gospel?* and the audio tape "Today for All Times." Total calls were 620 with 110 new callers. 

"GTA-EA" from page 40

row in Tyler. Members of several affiliated Churches of God will attend. Latest word is that this service will be taped for distribution. Details later. The Work begins in earnest beginning Monday.

The new Home Office will be established soon and the phone number will be sent to you and posted on the web page. Now there are two meetings already planned. I just got this from meeting planner, Tom Kerry.

FIRST MEETING: The Planning Meeting.

This meeting is planned to put down on paper the direction that this Work will take. The results of this meeting will be fully disclosed in a letter to the congregation by Mr. Armstrong. Details of the meeting and the letter will be posted on the website (www.aa.net/gta-truth). The room that has been contracted for this meeting is described as a small board room. The date for this meeting is 24 Jan. but late word is that it might be moved to 31 Jan.

SECOND MEETING: The Organizational Meeting

This meeting is scheduled for early in February. We strongly urge that all ministers, local contacts, hosts and their spouses attend. Other members are also invited if they can be there. Right now, the location being considered for this meeting is New Orleans, Louisiana.

I state this distinction because many had planned to be in town for the First Meeting listed above. We actually need the greater number at the Second Meeting.


More later, but for now...

CALL EVERYONE YOU CAN
FAX EVERYONE YOU CAN
EMAIL EVERYONE YOU CAN
SEND MAIL TO EVERYONE YOU CAN.

Let them know the Good News!

There is no need to hold back your tithes now: Send them to the GTA Evangelistic Association, P.O. Box 747, Flint, TX 75762.

The EA was official 2 January 1998!! If you have any questions: Call me at 425-885-7177, Fax me at 425-9179, Email me at: sunshiner@world-net.att.net

Sincerely, your brother in Christ,
Chris Cumming. 

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:

Study Resources and Information

Biblical Perspectives on Current Events edited by Melvin Rhodes, 20 pages. First issue of free quarterly magazine on current events in the light of the Bible. [now offered free] In **Him Newsletter**. First issue of free every-other-month newsletter for teens and people working in youth ministries.

Late News:

We apologize for the delay in this issue. The next issue will be combined, Jan/Feb 1998.

The year 2000 article kept growing bigger and bigger as we did more research. We thank Wes Gordon for all the information he sent on this subject. We hope everyone will read this article. This global trauma will affect you—it cannot possibly be put off or delayed. —NSE

Items Featured This Issue (always available):

Basic Literature

The Bible Sabbath: Seventh Day or First Day? (From the Bible Sabbath Association) 2 pages. Basic Sabbath tract.
Christian Bible Study Guide by F. Paul Haney, 4 pages. An overview of Bible study and 77 points to consider.
Does the Bible Permit Christians to Eat "Unclean" Meat in New Testament Times? by Steven M Collins. 14 pages.
Christian Educational Ministries Correspondence Course by Ron Dart. First lesson from SN. Others free from CEM.
God, I've Got a Problem edited by Jerry Laws, 54 pages. Bible help for the depressed, tempted, guilty, worried, lonely, afraid, bored, disappointed, bitter, doubtful, proud and dying.
God's Purpose for Your Life by Fred McGovarin, 40 pages, half-size booklet. A "first booklet" for people just becoming interested in the Truth. It introduces Hebrew names (Yahweh and Yashua) for God and Jesus.
Hebrew Holy Day Calendar. (Business card size.)
International Bible Learning Center Catalog, 2 pages. Best source of Sabbatarian college-type Bible courses on video.
The Key to the Book of Revelation edited by Tom Justus,

originally by Herbert Armstrong. 12-page 9"x4" booklet.
Lazarus and the Rich Man edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 16-page 9"x4" booklet.
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.
The Reason for the Season by Pam Dewey, 14 pages. Historic and Biblical analysis of Christmas customs.
The Resurrection of Christ—Is It a Fact? by Don Hudgel. 2 page tract for those skeptical of the Bible & resurrection.
Spreading Sunshine edited by the Cumming Family, 2 pages. A sample of this free, weekly newsletter of "selected words and stories of encouragement and hope."
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.
What Is Christian Religion? by Norman S. Edwards, 2 page tract. Introduction to the Bible—shows religion is living by the Bible and Holy Spirit, not joining an organization.
Why Do You Observe Sunday? edited by Tom Justus, originally by Herbert Armstrong. 16-page 9"x4" booklet.

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.