

# Servants' NEWS

Vol. 4, No. 1

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

Jan/Feb 1998

## Where Does Judaism Fit into New Testament Teaching?

by Norman S. Edwards

For centuries, there has been animosity between Christians and Jews—sometimes erupting into persecution and violence. But there have also been wars and violence between Christian and Christian as well as between Jew and Jew. The problem is not that Christian and Jewish scriptures tell them to attack each other—the problem is that both groups often fail to live by their own scriptures.

This article briefly examines the perceived differences between Christians and Jews as a whole, **then goes to the personal level to cover what individual New Testament believers and Jews can hope to learn from each other.**

The book of Acts and some of Paul's letters clearly state that Jews persecuted the first century Christians. Later through history, some Jews have oppressed Christians through banking and control of industries. Jews will be quick to point out that they were sometimes forced into banking by Christians whose Bible-understanding would not let them lend money at interest. On the other hand, now that most Jews have the freedom to enter into any occupation, it does not seem that they have deserted the banking profession.

Some Christians have persecuted Jews or tried to forcibly convert them. Other times, they have forced them to leave their lands, stolen from them en masse, or killed many of them in riots or pogroms. It is possible to find a major Christian persecution of Jews in almost any century. This writer concludes that the evils done to Jews by Christians far exceed the evils done to Christians by Jews.

### Why Have Christians Persecuted Jews?

There are numerous reasons, but we will give the most common ones. While this may seem like an exercise in idiosyncrasy to some of our readers, it is important to understand them. Thousands, and in some cases millions of Jews have been killed due to the following erroneous myths:

**Myth 1:** Jesus' statements about "the Jews" in the

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## Learning a Lesson From the Pharisees

by Richard A. Wiedenheft

Many modern Christians read Jesus' warnings against the Pharisees and feel secure: "We don't do those 'Jewish' things, so we are all right!"

But we may have more in common with the Pharisees of Jesus' day than we think! They were zealous for God! Are we? Now zeal is a very good thing, provided it is moving in the right direction. Unfortunately, the Pharisees' zeal was going in the wrong direction. They were zealous in the wrong dimension. Perhaps we can learn some lessons from them. After all, Jesus warned His disciples,

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:20).

Our righteousness must exceed theirs—not in degree; it must be of a completely different type!

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# A Lesson in Unity

It is amazing how brethren can refuse to fellowship with each other because of doctrinal differences. The reason for this may sound good: "to prevent ourselves from possibly absorbing someone else's error." However, if we are completely convinced that our doctrines are Biblical, then we should have little worry that contact with different ideas will change us. We do not have to emphasize differences, but we can befriend others who believe in the same Savior, that they may see our example. Look what Paul said about this:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1Cor 2:1-2).

Notice two very important things that Paul said: first, there were some things that he did not want to know! And, second, he wanted to know that the crucified Savior was the center of attention. For so many years it seemed that the most important thing was to find out where another person stood doctrinally, and no one cared about Christ crucified. What a shame! How much this contributes to the dividing of the body of Christ!

Paul knew that there were all kinds of things that could separate brethren if they allowed them to, like arguing over questions and words and doctrines (1Tim 6:4; 2Tim 2:14). I believe this is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians like he did.

It is interesting to note that others in relatively modern times have recognized the problems of divisions created by church groups. Dwight L. Moody is considered to be one of the great American evangelists of the 19th century. When a number of pastors wanted to "ordain" him, Moody took the advice of a close friend and refused. This way, he could never be seen as representing anything other than the crucified Christ. What a wise decision! He did more than anyone of his time to cross denominational boundaries and bring repentant souls to their one and only Savior.

What is so striking in learning about men such as Moody is that God worked with them and gave mighty increase to their labors whether or not they had their theology right. In the beginning of his ministry, Moody taught vehemently about a God who hated sin and hated sinners too. He scared the lives out of lots of people who "gave their lives to Christ." Then, later on, he learned that God hates sin but loves sinners! He learned that God loved them so much that He sent Jesus to die for them when they were still sinners! This was a revelation to Moody even though he knew about John 3:16. But when he began to teach this new truth, more people than ever answered his encouragement to give their lives to Christ.

Moody once said: "The only way any church can get a blessing is to lay aside all difference, all criticism, all coldness and party feeling, and come to the Lord as one man; and when the church lives in the power of the 13th chapter of First Corinthians I am sure that many will be added daily to the flock of God." It is hard to find an argument with that. This does not mean that truth is not important. Nor does it mean that even a majority of those who were "led to Christ" actually repented, were baptized, or received the Holy Spirit. But there does seem to be a significant number of people who did have a massive change in their life and began to live by the teaching of the Bible.

What it shows to this writer is that we have to allow God to be God and to work with His people one by one as He sees fit. We have to stop erecting altars of understanding on which we stand to criticize and condemn others who don't see what we see yet. Or maybe, just maybe, we are still on the spiritual equivalent of Moody's "God-hates-sinners altar." Either way, if we allow these differences to divide people who have come to the crucified Jesus Christ, then we are showing the world that we are not His disciples! We've done enough of that I think.

—Fred McGovarín

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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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# Local Congregations



## Orange County Special Sabbath

All are welcome to a special Sabbath weekend April 3-4 at the New Community Church in **Irvine, California**. Events include: Bible Study, Friday 7:30-9:00 PM; Sabbath service, 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM; a potluck lunch; and an open forum session 2:15-3:30 PM. The speakers will be **Norman Edwards** and **Dale Stogner**. A variety of Bible topics will be covered, including congregational organization. The hall is located at 2025 Alton Pky. (Exit I-5 at Jamboree, go west, turn right at Alton). For more information, call Dale or Rosemary Stogner at 714-730-3561.

## CEM Spring Holy Day Meetings

Plan now to join us April 10th, 11th, and 12th for our annual Christian Renewal Conference during the Days of Unleavened Bread. This year we'll be meeting at the Cohutta Lodge and Conference Center in **Chatsworth, Georgia** near Fort Mountain State Park. This facility offers beautiful rooms, splendid views, family activities and a restaurant with a "clean" buffet.

Scheduled speakers at this time include **Ronald L. Dart**, **Larry Watkins** and **Steve Sanders**. For reservations, contact the lodge at 706-695-9601, mention CEM. For more information, contact Christian Educational Ministries, PO Box 560 Whitehouse, Texas 75791, 903-509-2999; Fax: 903-509-1139; e-mail: cem@ballistic.com.

—CEM

## CGI Bible Study Weekend

The Church of God, International, in **Tyler, Texas**, will host Holy Day services, seminars, a hymn-along, and a concert during the weekend of **April 17, 18, and 19, 1998**. This event will be open to the public. For more information on the weekend schedule and available housing and/or camping, contact: The Church of God, International, **Jan/Feb 1998**

PO Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710; Phone: 903-825-2525; Fax: 903-825-6861; E-mail: cgitylertx@aol.com.

## Sabbath-Keeper's Users Group

This meeting is sponsored by the Bible Sabbath Association and Friends of the Sabbath on March 20-22, 1998 at the Seventh Day Baptist Church, 2301 Wadsworth Blvd, Lakewood, CO 80215, 303-233-0121. Tentative schedule:

### • Friday, March 20, 7 to 9 PM:

Introduction of Speakers; summary of their presentations; **Richard Nickels**, *Bible Study Tools*; **Dr. John Merritt**, *International Biblical Learning Center*; **John Conrod**, *Witnessing by E-mail and on the Web*

### • Saturday, March 21, 3 to 9 PM:

**Tom Justus**, *Tract Publishing, Local Evangelism*; **Alan Ruth**, *Buying Computers, Internet Searching, Sharing the Gospel through Web Pages*; **Scott Ashley**, *Magazine Editing and Production*; **Cecil Shrock**, *Teaching Natural Health with the Gospel*; **Dr. Phil Mills**, *Bible Study Software*; **Sherry Mills**, *Sabbath Schools, Conducting and Writing*. A Potluck Meal will be held about 6 PM on the Sabbath.

### • Sunday, March 22, 10 AM to 1 PM:

**Richard Nickels**, *Using Spreadsheets to Manage Mailing Lists*; **Lars Harrison**, *Utilizing the Brethren's Talents to Preach the Gospel*; **Diane Kleeschulte**, *Breaking the Ice in Sabbath School Teaching*. (Actual ending time will depend upon the final number of speakers)

### • Motels in the area:

Motel 6, 480 Wadsworth, 303-232-4924.

Quality Inn West, 12100 W 44th Ave, 800-228-5151.

Super 8, 10101 W 48th Ave, Wheatridge, I-70 Exit 267 Kipling St, 303-424-8300.

Days Inn: I-70 & West Colfax, 303-277-0200.

### • Local Contacts:

**John Conrod, 303-237-0533.** John

has both a Bachelor's degree in business administration from Seattle Pacific University and a Master's degree in Pastoral Counseling from Eastern Baptist Seminary. He has worked for many years as a Seventh Day Baptist pastor, as well as in the accounting and business administration fields. He served as the Hospital Administrator and Missions Director for Makawpa Mission and Hospital in Malawi, Africa.

A former Cost Accountant, John took "early retirement" and now does voluntary work through a non-profit organization called New Covenant Ministries. He conducts internal audits for non-profit organizations all across the United States, and is a Vice President of The Bible Sabbath Association. John is editor of a monthly internet newsletter for the Mid-Continent Association of Seventh Day Baptists, titled the "Fisherman's Net." The Association also set up Fisherman's Net Publications to distribute electronic material, of which John is the Publisher. The material can be accessed on the Worldwide Web at <http://home.att.net/~conrod/fish.htm>.

## Sabbath-Keepers Users Group Meeting in Australia

The Bible Sabbath Association and Friends of the Sabbath are sponsoring a Users Group Meeting in Australia for all Sabbath-keepers. The first Australian meeting is to be patterned after the one in the USA [see previous story] and is tentatively scheduled for later this year in Sydney (**date to be determined**). The purpose of the meeting is to share information about spreading the Gospel. This is a "how to," nuts and bolts session. Expected results are: increased co-operation and awareness among Sabbath-keeping groups, more efficient use of resources, cost savings through sharing of "best practices" knowledge. The purpose of this Users Group is **not** to foster merging of groups, but to share knowledge and empower each to use the Almighty's



gifts more effectively. Participants will become aware of the successes and failures of others, and discover experts in a wide range of fields.

Speakers are asked to prepare a 30-90 minute tape in areas of their expertise, and answer questions. Tapes of the entire session will be made available by the Bible Sabbath Association, and summaries will be posted on the Internet. Please let us know if you are interested in attending the conference or in presenting a topic. For further information ring: (02) 9521 6742 (Henk Merison); (02) 9745 2964 (Craig White) or (02) 4991 2525 (Alan Kendall) E-mail: henkm@oze-mail.com.au or craig@triode.net.au. Write to Bible Sabbath Association, 23 Linden Street, Sutherland, NSW 2232, Australia.

**Australians: Do not forget about the Rick Sherrrod lecture series this June** (covered in previous SNs). Contact Craig White, above, for details.

## Ron Dart Meets Rod Meredith

We very much enjoyed our visit to the Global Church of God headquarters in San Diego. Rod Meredith and Raymond McNair took my wife Allie and me to lunch, and showed us around the offices. They were very open about everything, discussed freely their headaches and problems as well as plans and finances. I would say that we were received very warmly, and they expressed an interest in cooperating in areas where we might be able to help one another.

We had a valuable contact on a feast location we had decided not to use, and passed it on to them. I think they will be using it.

It is a classic example of finding that people who have been beat up on for mistakes of the past turning out to be human after all.

—Ron Dart

*[I personally worked with Rod Meredith for nearly two years and found him very easy to work with. I think most others would find him the same way. The difficulty, I believe, is that the leaders of many hierarchical organizations do not have the faith to say "Let our members attend services or Feasts with other groups, let them read other literature, let them talk about Scriptures that appear to differ from our doctrines." If these orga-*

*nization's leaders really believed in their hearts that they were God's main work and that they were the most filled with God's Spirit, then they would not fear, but welcome interaction with other groups, because more people would learn about their group. But unfortunately, there is a great tendency for hierarchies to keep their members away from other groups because they realize that they are more likely to lose than gain members. —NSE]*

## More German Reunification?

*[We received this e-mail post about cooperation between the United Church of God (AIA) and the Global Church of God. If this can begin happening all over the world, it will be an important step to breaking down the divisions between brethren that are too often created by organizations. —NSE]*

Larry Salyer and Norbert Link [GCG ministers] would like to express their sincere appreciation for the kind words from some of you regarding their speaking at United [Church of God] Services in Germany in response to an invitation from German UCG ministers Paul Kieffer and Winfried Fritz.

Subsequently, Global invited Paul Kieffer to speak at GCG services last Sabbath in Pensacola, as Mr. and Mrs. Kieffer were visiting over there with Mr. Kieffer's parents-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. John Burquist. Mr. Burquist, as the local elder, and Mr. Dan Hall, as the Pastor, attended services, as did 26 additional brethren. After services, nearly the entire group went to a nearby restaurant for lunch and fellowship for another 90 minutes.

—Larry Salyer & Norbert Link

## Assorted Flavors of 7th Day Sabbatharians

Sabbatarian Internet users might like to check out this Web site:

<http://www.flash.net/~ssef/assorted/>

This is a service to the 7th day Sabbatarian community. It has forums, Sabbatarian chat rooms, e-mail lists, message boards, and more. It has links to numerous Sabbatarian ministries, publications, exhaustive Feast site listing, study sites and personal web sites. It also includes links to non-sabbatarian research that provide good resources for

information.

The Sabbatarian Webring is a high-way to your web page from another Sabbatarian web page. Webmasters can put the webring on their web site with their site name on it.

—Mary Bierman

## Foster Friendships for Sabbatarians

On February 21, nine people from the UCG-Bloomington traveled to Oak Brook, Illinois as guests of the Church of God-Downers Grove, pastored by Ken Svehla. A Bloomington member, Jerry Reece, traveled last July to Asahikawa, Japan, as a part of the *Sister Cities* program. Asahikawa is one of Bloomington-Normal's three Sister Cities and Jerry's wife is a member of the Normal town council. Jerry took a video camera and obtained footage of various events the group attended. Ken Svehla learned of the trip while at the Feast in Kissimmee, Florida and wanted Jerry to come up to their fledgling church and give a presentation during the sermon time.

About thirty to thirty-five filled the small meeting room to hear Jerry's brief overview of the trip and an introduction to Buddhism. Jerry pointed out a few similarities and the many differences between this chief religion of most of Asia and the truth of God as we know it. Sandwiched in between was video footage of numerous cultural dances and ceremonies. Among those attending the service were representatives from the UCG, the Active Bible Church of God (Chicago), pastored by Mike Linacre, and the Church of God United, pastored by Donald Deakins. Following services, most of us gathered at the home of Ken and Trisha Svehla in Downers Grove for feasting and fellowship. I heard at least one comment that at least some of those who had been part of a split are starting to talk to one another again. I think most of us would like to do more of this type of activity again. It does offer us a chance to share ideas about how we can better reach out to the world around us with the good news of Jesus Christ and not isolate ourselves from one another.

—Larry Evans, Bloomington, IL

## Graham Hymnal Still on Hold

Previous issues of *Servants' News*

have covered Mark Graham's efforts to produce a Sabbatarian hymnal containing Dwight Armstrong's and other songs. He was initially told by the Worldwide Church of God that he would be able to purchase a license to use Armstrong's hymns, but he has waited over a year and the WCG has yet to complete the arrangements.

In January, Graham received a very strange letter from **Ralph Helge**, calling him a "thankless child." It was the first direct response Graham had since May 1997. Helge said that his response is now lower than ever on his list of priorities, and that he was spending all his time fighting off those who sought to "destroy God's church," but that he would review the request some day in the future, and that perhaps he would come up with a license. He never did answer Graham's question regarding why the UCG hymnal received a license when his did not.

Meanwhile, Graham is considering redoing his hymnal without Dwight Armstrong hymns (It would make it cheaper). "Musically speaking," he said, "they are the weakest segment of this hymnal, but emotionally, they mean a lot to God's people." Graham is now investigating every source he can find of hymns that are essentially metrical scriptures set to music. (Dwight Armstrong actually borrowed metrical scripture texts and set them to music.) Graham is considering using a combination of good existing melodies and more music he will write in the future.

On a positive note, Mark Graham will be giving a spring concert Saturday evening, **March 21st**, in the auditorium of the Kulas Musical Arts Building at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, near Cleveland. The free concert begins at 7:30 P.M., is open to the public, and will be followed by a punch and cookies reception. Graham will be performing songs he has written over the years for God's people, including old favorites and new material. For more information, call Mark Graham at (216) 529-1380, or e-mail him at magraham@bw.edu. All are welcome!

## **New York Times Fasting Article**

*[Many Sabbatarians probably never heard of fasting until they began to study with a Sabbatarian organization. But in an effort to stop the moral decline in our*

*nation, many thousands of religious people of all denominations are fasting to seek the Eternal's will. While many of these people are lacking in Biblical understanding, their sincerity and zeal would put many Sabbatarians to shame. Will the Eternal use Sabbatarians to teach these diligent groups more truth, or will we be too busy condemning them to help them? The following are excerpts from a February 8, 1988 New York Times article entitled A Call to Fast, in Hopes of a Spiritual Revival. —NSE]*

For 40 days last year, Linda Creager prepared dinner and sat down with her two sons at the table, but ate nothing. For 40 consecutive days she fasted, swallowing nothing but liquids. Ms. Creager says she was not on a diet, but on a religious mission, to find guidance from God. "After four or five days, I didn't even want food," said Ms. Creager, a church outreach worker in Birmingham, Ala....

Thousands of evangelical Christians, hopeful that the nation is on the threshold of a huge spiritual revival, have quietly taken to preparing by fasting and praying, on their own and in large groups. Now prominent evangelicals, led by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ and Pat Robertson of the Christian Broadcasting Network, are calling for 2 million Christians to join in a national 40-day fast...

Many fasters will buy automatic juicers and sustain themselves with fresh-squeezed fruit and vegetable juices. Some will drink only Slim Fast. Others will go on modified fasts by denying themselves a favorite food. What is important to them, they say, is that while they may appear to be carrying on their work and family routines, in private they will be deep in prayer and immersed in Bible study. "Fasting and prayer is the atomic bomb, or the hydrogen bomb, of all the Christian disciplines," Bright said in a recent interview. "Prayer has great power, but fasting with prayer has infinitely more power..."

The adoption of fasting by evangelicals coincides with their growing hope for a great spiritual revival, a fervor that scholars say is fueled in part by the coming end of Christianity's second millennium, but even more by what evangelicals see as a dismal moral climate. Evangelicals, Robertson said, are discovering that fasting "is a way of coming before God and saying we real-

ly mean business, we're not just playing this time..."

For many evangelicals, these years before the millennium are a time of utmost urgency, of darkness just before the dawn. Yet theologians say the renewed fervor for revival among evangelicals has also arisen because of moral concerns.

Some evangelical leaders talk of the United States as "Sodom and Gomorrah." As evidence, they rattle off statistics on the high rates of abortion, teen-age pregnancy, divorce, crime, suicide, drug addiction, alcoholism and prostitution, even though some social indicators, especially crime rates, are improving. In addition, the evangelicals say, the current White House scandal has intensified their sense that sin reigns....

"As a nation, we are faced with the gravest crisis in our more than 200-year history, because we have rejected God and His Commandments," Bright warned last year as he and Mission America, an interdenominational group, announced their fourth annual Fasting and Prayer meeting. "Judgment has already begun with rapid social disintegration during the last three decades, but far worse awaits us," he warned. "Unless we believers truly repent, further judgment and ultimate destruction loom drastically ahead."

In the last few years, thousands of people have taken up fasting. Some fast on their own, some with their congregations. A Denver church began the year with a month-long graduated fast in which, by the fourth week, the congregation was drinking only water. A youth group at a church in Harrisburg, Pa., fasts a day or two a week as a way to grapple with personal problems like addictions.

Ms. Creager says she believes that the nation needs revival because "we buy too many things, we eat too much, people drink too much" as a substitute for a relationship with God. "Out at restaurants," she said, "I have sat and watched people eat, and thought to myself, I wish we devoured God like we devour our food."

—Laurie Goodstein

## **House of Joseph Seminar Held In Bryan, Texas**

A "Return of the House of Joseph" seminar was taught by Dell Griffin of

Torah Voice Ministries on Saturday, January 31 at the "The Veranda" meeting hall just outside of Bryan, Texas. The seminar was held from 11:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. with a noon potluck lunch. Dave Thomas from Bryan, Texas, a non-aligned Sabbath-keeper organized the seminar.

Approximately twenty people attended the seminar. Attendees included persons from the local WCG/CGI splinter groups. Other attendees included persons from the messianic synagogue in Houston, and from one of the "living room" Bible study groups in east Texas.

Griffin, an east Texas native whose background includes seminary, several years of study with rabbis in Jerusalem and nearly seven years residing in Israel, began the first session by conducting a short version of a Sabbath morning liturgy (order of services) that is practiced in many Orthodox Jewish synagogues today. This included audience participation in the reciting of the Sabbath morning blessings and blessings of the Torah. At mid point in the service, Griffin blew a ram's horn for the call to gather and ascend. The group then continued by reciting the Shema (the call to prayer and worship), the mourner's kaddush (the customary sanctification of God's name by those who have lost loved ones within the past 11 months), and a version of the Sabbath Amidah (standing prayer). The group then took a potluck lunch break.

After lunch, the group sang a combination of traditional Protestant and Worldwide Church of God hymns. For special Sabbath music, the Messianic Jewish song *Oh Give Thanks* was sung by Gary, Chrystal, and Leona Smith of east Texas.

Griffin's spiritual turning point began in 1985 while he attended graduate theological seminary at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He didn't graduate because he didn't feel right about taking the required systematic theology courses. Concerned, he prayed about the situation. He concluded that he had to start studying "the Torah roots" of his faith. Soon after this revelation, a man that he had never before met gave him a one-way ticket to Israel. When he got there, he stayed in a Moslem village and became a missionary. His message was not the usual Christian gospel; rather his message was a warning directed at Moslems. Griffin says he believes God directed him to tell Moslems that if they "opposed the children of Israel returning to the land, it would be like spitting against the wind." Essentially, those who opposed the return of Israelites to Israel would not succeed in their efforts. These efforts continued for nearly eight months.

He then returned to his pre-seminary profession as a journalist first with Middle East

Television and then for the *Jerusalem Post* as a copy editor. While at the *Post*, he occasionally wrote columns on religious topics. One of his articles was an editorial about opposing Palestinian statehood. Griffin stated that based on biblical prophecy, that land was reserved for the assimilated northern kingdom of Israel. Rabbi Chaim Richman, of the Jerusalem Temple Institute read the article, was impressed with it and contacted Griffin. They became friends and for two years did Torah studies together in Richman's home. As he made more rabbinical contacts, they asked him to help promote opposition to the proposed Palestinian statehood.

In 1993, he returned to the United States and tried to rally support from pro-Zionist ministries for the cause of opposing Palestinian statehood. The effort was proceeding until the meeting later that year at the White House between President Clinton, Yitzhak Rabin, and Yasser Arafat. Suddenly, all forward momentum stopped. A "witch hunt" for those who opposed Palestinian statehood began in Israel. The rabbis involved in this opposition were considered right-wing extremists and were either imprisoned or placed under house arrest. Griffin was warned that if he tried to return to Israel he could be either deported or arrested. However, Griffin says, "With Netanyahu now in control, I am confident I could return at any time, however, I feel HaShem [God] directing me to work toward establishing the Right of Return for all Josephites. When that work can be better accomplished in Israel than in the States or elsewhere, we do plan to return."

He now strives to promote the return of the house of Joseph to Israel and a second state in Israel to non-Jewish Zionists and/or Josephites. Griffin explains that the tribe of Joseph consists of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin according to Genesis 41:9-12. In this passage, Benjamin became part of the house of Joseph since he was declared dead by his other Israelite brothers and later became a slave to the house of Joseph when Joseph's cup was found in his sack. Griffin's view of Joseph's descendants differs from the traditional British-Israelite view. The traditional view is that most of the U.S.A. and the former British Commonwealth are descendants of Joseph. Griffin believes that Joseph's descendants are a minority scattered throughout these nations. He believes that those people that are pro-Israel, pro-Jewish, etc. and "don't know why" are actually from the lineage of Joseph, and are part of Israel.

Griffin believes that the house of Judah and the house of Joseph (the northern kingdom of ancient Israel) are to be reunited according to Bible prophecy (Jeremiah 31:15-18). To pursue this end, he teaches Torah seminars and occasionally teaches

seminars on Jewish worship. Griffin says that it is important to acquaint non-Jews with how Jews worship in working toward a reunification of Judah and Joseph. Griffin says that "the spirit of God is choosing the House of Joseph" and that God is turning the hearts of the children to their father Joseph. Griffin explains, "many non-Jews identify with Jewish people, the Torah, and Israel. I call it the unexplainable Israel-thing."

As part of his vision, Griffin started an Orthodox Josephite synagogue in Akron/Canton, Ohio in 1996. The service is patterned after Sephardic Orthodox Jewish worship. "We had a Torah scroll. We followed the Sephardic Orthodox prayer book. We recited the Shabbat morning prayers, said Kaddish, ate our kosher meals together and spent the entire afternoon studying Torah before ending the evening with the lighting of the Havdalah candle," says Griffin.

Additionally, he offers audio tapes that will soon include all of the yearly Torah and Haphtarah portions and commentaries on each. Many of these were recorded at the synagogue in Ohio. He also offers a video tape about the "Return of the House of Joseph" and another one on learning Hebrew. All of his tapes are available from Torah Voice Ministries.

Griffin founded Torah Voice Ministries in 1992. It is located in Nederland, Texas. It is a Torah teaching and outreach ministry to non-Jewish Zionists and potential Josephites. He teaches Torah seminars for primarily seventh-day Sabbath churches, but also teaches seminars at churches of various denominations around the nation.

In addition to his work at Torah Voice Ministries, Griffin currently works at Hatikva Ministries, helping Joe Good with various writing, editing, and production projects. He also answers questions from callers when Good is not available.

For more information on "The Return of the House of Joseph," to order Torah study tapes, instructional videos, or to arrange a "House of Joseph" seminar, call Dell Griffin at (409)722-9202 or write him at Torah Voice Ministries, P.O. Box 552, Nederland, Texas 77627. He can also be contacted via e-mail at dell@hatikva.org.

**Another Seminar in March**

Dell Griffin will be teaching a House of Joseph seminar in Hawkins, Texas at the Hawkins Community Center on Sunday, March 15, 1998. The seminar will include 3 ninety-minute sessions with breaks in between and a potluck lunch. For more information, contact Mitchell Smith at 903-882-7446.

—Veronica Smith ☐

*[We have not studied Dell Griffin's work and can not say if God has commissioned it or not. We are sure that God has **not** commissioned SN to do this kind of work, but our readers may find this info useful. -NSE]*

# Feast 1998—an Early Look

Several independent groups have sent 1998 Feast of Tabernacles information to *Servants' News*. All of the Feast sites below are using the Hebrew Calendar, so the feast will be held from Monday, October 5th to Monday the 12th. Most will have their first service on Sunday night, the 4th. Everyone is invited to attend the site of their choice. You may stay at the hotels and campgrounds mentioned here, or you may make arrangements of your choice.

It is helpful to those who plan festivals to know how many are coming. But the festival planners realize that there are reasons why people sometimes do not want to let their plans be known until they actually go to the Feast. Ask the Eternal what you should do for the Feast—and be as helpful to others as you can.

## **Gatlinburg, Tennessee**

This year, *Servants' News* will not be sponsoring a site of its own. The Edwards and the Deweys will be helping with the United Christian Ministries (Ray Wooten) site in Gatlinburg Tennessee. The Feast occurs before the area's "fall colors" season this year, so crowds should be much smaller than last year. Gatlinburg is a resort town with many things for families to do. Several of the hotels are within walking distance of the hall.

Plans include a variety of speakers, interactive Bible studies, workshops, seminars, teen programs, youth activities and social events. Music will consist of both traditional "Church of God" hymns and modern praise and worship music. Rooms for family socials will be available nearly every night of the Feast. A special meal for the entire congregation is planned for one evening. If you are interested, start planning your act for the variety show!

The Feast will be held in the **Mills Auditorium**, part of the **Gatlinburg Convention Center**. Reduced rates on some motels are being negotiated as this issue goes to press. You may contact *Servants' News* for a copy of the special rates and a complete 52-page Gatlinburg Vacation guide. (PO Box 220, Charlotte, Michigan 48813, 517-543-5544, e-mail: 75260.1603@compuserve.com.) For

any questions about the site, or to volunteer to serve in some way, contact United Christian Ministries, PO Box 361334, Birmingham, Alabama 35236-1334, tel: 888-985-9066; e-mail: UnitedBham@aol.com.

—Norman S. Edwards

## **Ludington Michigan**

Several families who attended the 1997 Feast site in Burr Oak, Ohio are sponsoring a site in Ludington, Michigan for 1998. They intend to use a similar approach—allowing questions and comments for a few minutes after each message. Ludington is on the coast of Lake Michigan, and is serviced by an auto ferry, for those who may be traveling from the west. Ludington is a smaller town, but large enough to have a Wal-mart, K-mart, Ponderosa Steak House, Pizza Hut, and other "respectable" restaurants.

Services will be held at the **Lands Inn & Convention Center**. Several nearby motels will provide very reasonable rates as this is "off season" in Michigan. Camping facilities and recreation are available at Ludington State Park. Basketball, swimming and other indoor activities are planned in case the weather makes outside activities too difficult.

The reserved meeting room holds about 100 people, but a larger one could be secured if necessary. For more information, contact Darrell West, PO Box 26, Webberville, MI 48892, 517-521-3630; or Mike & Keely Salisbury, 517-224-6141 (9 AM to 6 PM Eastern Time), e-mail: Keely@mintcity.com.

## **Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri**

Cornerstone Publications will be sponsoring a Feast of Tabernacles site in Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. As was the case last year, **Marina Bay Resort** will serve as the host for this year's Festival as well. They have guaranteed us the same rates as last year for accommodations, as well as meeting facilities. The condos are scheduled for renovation during the first part of 1998, so everything should be in fine order for the fall.

For those of you who might be interested in attending with us, you can go

ahead and make your reservations at this time. The rates for 1998 are as follows:

Hotel room only: \$55 per night

Hotel room with kitchenette (some have wet bar and refrigerator only, some with stoves—inquire at front desk): \$55 per night

1-Bedroom condo (fully furnished kitchen, living & dining area, bath): \$65 per night.

2-Bedroom condo (as above with extra bedroom and bath): \$86 per night.

3-Bedroom condo (off property—contact Marina Bay for details)

You may make reservations by calling 800-377-6274 and mentioning that you are with Cornerstone Publications to receive the above quoted rates. A refundable deposit equal to one night's lodging is required when reserving accommodations. If you are not paying by credit card, you may write: Marina Bay Resort, PO Box 209, Osage Beach, MO 65065. Camping is also available at the local KOA, situated only a few minutes away from Marina Bay. You may call 800-562-7343 for camping reservations.

The earlier you are able to make your reservations, the easier it is on us and Marina Bay to facilitate scheduling. You are under no obligation by making your reservations now, for you may cancel at any time up until September 4th with no penalty. Those on our mailing list will receive a more detailed letter about this Feast. It will contain a short questionnaire which will help us better plan activities for the Feast. If you are not on the mailing list and wish to join us this fall, please contact me and I will send you the letter.

As always, we will certainly need the help, expertise and service of others in both the planning of the Feast, as well as in the actual work that must be done while at the Feast itself. Volunteers are heartily encouraged to make their area of service known to us as soon as possible. You may contact us at 3802 Olive St., Texarkana, TX 75503, 903-792-1352, e-mail: atir903@aol.com.

—Jim Rector

## **Destin, Florida**

CEM is already making plans for

this year's Feast of Tabernacles in Destin, Florida. We will be continuing the pattern that has been so successful at Kissimmee. We have three breakout rooms and will be having seminars and workshops every morning at 9:00 followed by worship services at 10:30. Once again, we will be having YEA classes for young people beginning at 10:15. We hope to develop our music program still further this year, so if you would like to sing in the festival choir, please contact us at the CEM office and we will forward your name to Brent Kern.

The festival at Destin can be as busy or as quiet as you please. You can be involved in education, recreation, fellowship, and fun to your heart's content, or you can have a quiet walk on the beach or a private canoe trip down a nearby river. Or if even that is too busy, you can just sit on the deck and listen to the surf. All this and inspirational music and worship every day of the feast.

Meetings will be at the **Destin Community Center**, 101 Stahlman Avenue, at the corner of Stahlman and Zerbe, right off Highway 98. Our primary host resort will be Hidden Dunes, located right on the beach at 5394

Highway 98 East. Prices at Hidden Dunes will range from \$69.63 per night for a 1 bedroom cottage to \$146.50 per night for a 4 bedroom and 4 bath Villa, and just about everything in between.

For reservations at Hidden Dunes, call 800-824-6335 or e-mail [hidden-du@emeraldcoast.com](mailto:hidden-du@emeraldcoast.com) (or access <http://www.hiddendunes.com>.) In order to receive the special discounted rates, you must identify yourself as being with CEM and use Group Account Number 37757. The above quoted rates are a special blend of both their fall and winter rates and you must stay eight days to get this rate. The first week is quoted at 25% off their regular weekly value season (fall) rates and the eighth day is quoted at 25% off their regular weekly winter rates. The weekly value season (fall) discounted rate is also good for any days before the feast and the weekly winter discounted rate applies to any days after the feast, as long as the stay is continuous and you stay a minimum of four days. We currently have 103 units reserved under our group reservation. **Hidden Dunes will only be able to guarantee these reservations through March 7**, after that you will have to compete with the general public on a first come, first served basis, so be sure to call and make your reservation as early as possible to guarantee getting what you want. Hidden Dunes will require a 25% deposit at the time of the reservations, and all rates do not include a 9% sales tax.

Should you not be able to find housing of the type and size you want with Hidden Dunes, we have made arrangements with **Abbott Realty** for two nearby resorts: Tops'1 Beach & Racquet Resort, which is a little more expensive and Mainsail Beach Resort, which is almost adjacent to Hidden Dunes and is a little less expensive. Abbott Realty will also be able to help you with private homes, as well as other housing options listed in their resort catalogue, which you may request if you are not already on the CEM mailing list. For reservations through Abbott Realty, call 800-336-4853 and ask for group rentals and be sure to mention that you are with Christian Educational Ministries. They are offering a 10% discount on all their rental properties.

For those interested in a 1 bedroom

town home that will sleep up to six, for a weekly rate of \$50.00 per night, call Gail Jones at Ocean Reef Realty at 800-432-7239. They also handle private homes and other properties at or near the beach. Again, mention that you are with Christian Educational Ministries to receive a discounted rental.

—Ronald L. Dart

**Orange Beach, Alabama**

Learning Together will hold a non-traditional Feast of Tabernacles at Orange Beach, Alabama this year. The focus of the Feast will be worshipping and learning about God and Jesus. Everyone will stay in the same condominium complex where the meeting room is located. The services will be held in small-group Bible study fashion where everyone will be able to discuss the scriptures that God has given us. Examples of subjects are: faith, forgiveness, listening to God, etc. There will be a leader for each subject, but no one will have speeches or messages. Instead, we are going to discuss the scriptures that pertain to the subject.

No one should come planning on convincing others of their ideas, but rather with scriptures to back up the things they believe. We are there to learn together through each other what God has given us in the Bible. We will be gathering with open minds and a desire to learn.

Rates are reasonable with one bedroom condos \$71.00 a night, two bedroom condos \$88.75 a night and three bedroom condos \$101.25 a night for an eight night stay, plus 9% tax. If you are interested please contact us as soon as possible as the site will be limited to about 60 people due to the type of feast we are planning. Upon request we will send you all plans and topics available now. Contact information: 7807 N. Illinois, Caseyville, IL 62232-2058, tel: 618-344-5203, e-mail: [LRNTOG@aol.com](mailto:LRNTOG@aol.com).

—Ron and Debi Wilson

**Northern Ireland**

A small non-aligned Feast site is available to European brethren. Contact information: 253 Castlecatt Road, Dervock, Ballymoney, Northern Ireland, BT53 8BN. Telephone and fax: +44-126-57-41616.

—Greg and Caroline Gault

**Tell Us About Your Feast Site**

If you know of brethren who are gathering together to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, we would like to include them in our "1998 Feast List" in upcoming issues. We are interested in sites of all calendar systems. We are interested in large groups or ones as small as a few families. In the past, we have heard of cases where people were not able to keep the Feast, then later found that there were brethren meeting less than an hour's drive away from them.

Please send Feast location, dates, brief description, and information on whom to contact to **Servants' News, PO Box 220, Charlotte, Michigan 48813, 517-543-5544, fax: 17-543-8899, e-mail [75260.1603@compuserve.com](mailto:75260.1603@compuserve.com).**



# Where Have all the Prophets Gone?

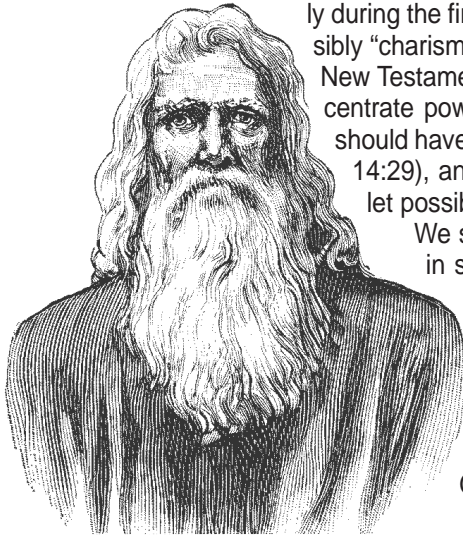
The following article is a reprint from the Eleventh Edition (1911) of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the article *Prophet*, subsection *Prophets in the Primitive Church*. It gives a very interesting explanation of what happened to prophets during the first and second centuries, A.D. The only changes we have made to the article are the replacement of Roman numerals with our standard Arabic numerals, the splitting of large paragraphs into smaller ones, and a bit of **boldface** for emphasis.

It is interesting to note that both "Jewish" and "Christian" groups at one time had a much greater reliance on direct intervention from God. The Talmud records numerous instances of divine revelation to their "sages," including the hearing of the *bat kol* (heavenly voice). The New Testament also speaks of prophets as an integral part of the early church operation (Acts 11:28; 13:1-3; 15:32; 21:10-14; 1Cor 12:28; 14:29-33; Eph 3:5; 4:11, Rev 11:3,10; 22:8-9). But today, very few Jewish and Christian groups recognize any kind of prophet.

It is evident both from the Bible and this history that the numbers of false prophets grew rapidly during the first and second century. Apparently, some were adopting a kind of "ecstatic" or possibly "charismatic" style. Two excuses were used to silence prophets: (1) the proliferation of the New Testament books which contained much essential truth and (2) the perceived need to concentrate power in the hands of church leaders. What should have happened? The brethren should have used the Old and New Testament books to judge the validity of the prophets (1Cor 14:29), and they should have refused to submit to man-made hierarchies which refused to let possibly true prophets speak.

We still have these problems today. Most people claiming to be prophets usually work in some kind of emotional "charismatic" style and often say things contrary to scripture. But today, everyone has their own copy of the scripture and nearly everyone has a concordance—we should be much better prepared to evaluate the sayings of prophets. Unfortunately, many people think that they do not need to hear directly from the Eternal, or the leaders in their church organization refuse to recognize any instruction that does not come through them. But now, more than ever, we need divine guidance in how to organize congregations, how to preach the Gospel, and how to prepare for the difficult times immediately ahead.

—Norman S. Edwards



The appearance of prophets in the first Christian communities is one proof of the strength of faith and hope by which these bodies were animated. An old prophecy (Joel 3:1) has foretold that in the Messianic age the Spirit of God would be poured out on every member of the religious community, and in point of fact it was the universal conviction of those who believed in Christ that they all possessed the Spirit of God. This Spirit, manifesting His presence in a variety of ways and through a variety of gifts, was to be the only ruling authority in the Church. He raised up for Himself particular individuals, into whose mouths He put the word of God, and these were at first regarded as the true leaders of the congregations.

We find accordingly that there were prophets in the oldest church, that of Jerusalem (Acts 11:27; 15:32), and again that there were "prophets and teachers" in the church at Antioch (Acts 8:1). These were not office-bearers chosen by the congregation, but preachers raised up by the Spirit and conferred as gifts on the Church. When

Paul says (1Cor. 13:28; cf. Eph 4:11), "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers," he points to a state of things which in his time prevailed in all the churches both of Jewish and heathen origin. We here learn from Paul that the prophets occupied the second point of dignity; and we see from another passage (1Cor 14) that they were distinguished from the teachers by their speaking under the influence of inspiration—not, however, like the "speakers in tongues," in unintelligible ejaculations and disconnected words, but in articulate, rational, edifying speech.

Until recently it was impossible to form any distinct idea of the Christian prophets in the post-apostolic age, not so much from want of materials as because what evidence existed was not sufficiently clear and connected. It was understood, indeed, that they had maintained their place in the churches till the end of the 2nd century, and that the great conflict with what is known as Montanism had first proved fatal to them; but a clear conception of their position and influence in the churches

was not to be had. But the discovery, by Bryennios in 1873, of the ancient Christian work called [Didache... The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles] (published in 1883), has immensely extended the range of our knowledge, and has at the same time thrown a clear light on many notices in other sources which, for want of proper interpretation had been previously neglected or incorrectly understood.

The most important facts known at present about the manner of life, the influence, and the history of the early Christian prophets, are the following:

(1) Until late in the 2nd century the prophets (or prophetesses) were regarded as an essential element in a Church possessing the Holy Ghost. Their existence was believed in, and they did actually exist, not only in the catholic congregations—if the expression may be used—but also in the Marcionite Church and the Gnostic societies. Not a few Christian prophets are known to us by name: as Agabus, Judas, and Silas in Jerusalem; Barnabas, Simon Niger, etc., in Antioch; in Asia Minor, the daughters

of Phillip, Quadratus, Ammia, Polycarp, Melito, Montanus, Maximilla and Priscilla; in Rome, Hermas; among the followers of Basilides, Barkabbas and Barkoph; in the community of Apelles, Philumene, etc.,. Lucian tells us that the impostor Peregrinus Proteus, in the time of Antoninus Pius, figured as a prophet in the Christian churches of Syria.

(2) Till the middle of the 2nd century the prophets were the regular preachers of the churches, without being attached to any particular congregation. While the "apostles" (i.e., itinerating missionaries) were obliged to preach from place to place, the prophets were at liberty, either, like the teachers, to settle in a certain church or to travel from one to another.

(3) In the time of Paul the form of prophecy was reasoned exhortation in a state of inspiration; but very frequently the inspiration took the form of ecstasy—the prophet lost control of himself, so that he did not remember afterwards what he had said. In the Gentile-Christian churches, under the influence of pagan associations, ecstasy was the rule.

(4) With regard to the matter of prophecy, it might embrace anything that was necessary for the edification of the Church. The prophets not only consoled and exhorted by the recital of what God had done and by predictions of the future, but they uttered extempore thanksgivings in the congregational assemblies, and delivered special directions, which might extend to the most minute details, as, for example, the disposal of the church funds.

(5) It was the duty of the prophets to follow in all respects the example of the Lord, and to put in practice what they preached. But an ascetic life was expected of them only when, like the apostles, they went about as missionaries, in which case the rules in Matt. 10 applied to them. Whenever, on the contrary, they settled in a place they had a claim to a liberal maintenance at the hands of the congregation. The author of the Didache even compares them to the High Priests of the Old Testament, and considers them entitled to the first-fruits of the Levitical law. In reality, they might justly be compared to the priests in so far as they were the mouth-pieces of the congregation in public

thanksgiving.

(6) Since prophets were regarded as a gift of God and as moved by the Holy Spirit, the individual congregation had no right of control over them. When anyone was approved as a prophet and exhibited the "conversation of the Lord," no one was permitted to put him to the test or to criticize him. The author of the Didache goes so far as to assert that whoever does this is guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

(7) This unique position of the prophets could only be maintained so long as the original enthusiasm remained fresh and vigorous. From three quarters primitive **Christian prophecy was exposed to danger—first, from the permanent officials of the congregation, who, in the interests of order, peace and security could not but look with suspicion on the activity of excited prophets;** second, from the prophets themselves, in so far as an increasing number of dishonest characters was found amongst them, **whose object was to levy contributions on the churches;** third, from those prophets who were filled with the stern spirit of primitive Christianity and imposed on churches, now becoming assimilated to the world, obligations which these were neither able nor willing to fulfil.


It is from this point of view that we must seek to understand the so-called Montanistic crisis. Even the author of the Didache finds it necessary to defend the prophets who practiced celibacy and strict asceticism against the deprecatory criticism of church members. In Asia Minor there was already in the year 160 a party, called by Epiphanius "Alogi," who rejected all Christian prophecy. On the other hand, it was also in Asia Minor that there appeared along with Montanus those energetic prophetesses who charged the churches and their bishops and deacons with becoming secularized, and endeavoured to prevent Christianity from being naturalized in the world, and to bring the churches once more under the exclusive guidance of the Spirit and His charismata.

The critical situation thus arising spread in the course of a few decades over most of the provincial churches. The necessity of resisting the inexorable demands of the prophets led to the intro-

duction of new rules for distinguishing true and false prophets. No prophet, it was declared, could speak in ecstasy, that was devilish; further, only false prophets accepted gifts. Both canons were innovations, designed to strike a fatal blow at prophecy and the church organizations re-established by the prophets in Asia—the bishops not being quite prepared to declare boldly that the Church had no further need of prophets.

But the prophets would not have been suppressed by their new methods of judging them alone. A much more important circumstance was the rise of a new theory, according to which all divine revelations were summed up in the apostles or in their writings. It was now taught that prophecy in general was a peculiarity of the Old Testament; that in the new covenant God had spoken through apostles; that the whole word of God so far as binding on the Church was contained in the apostolic record—the New Testament; and that, consequently, the Church neither required nor could acknowledge new revelations, or even instructions, through prophets.

**The revolution which this theory gradually brought about is shown in the transformation of the religious, enthusiastic organization of the Church into a legal and political constitution.** A great many things had to be sacrificed to this, and amongst others the old prophets. The strictly enforced episcopal constitution, the creation of a clerical order, and the formation of the New Testament canon accomplished the overthrow of the prophets. **Instead of the old formula, "God continually confers on the church apostles, prophets and teachers," the word now was: "The Church is founded in the (written) word of the prophets (i.e. the Old Testament prophets) and the apostles (viz. The twelve and Paul)."**

After the beginning of the 3rd century there were still no doubt men under the control of the hierarchy who experienced the prophetic ecstasy, or clerics like Cyprian who professed to have received special directions from God; but prophets by vocation no longer existed and these sporadic utterances were in no sense placed on a level with the contents of the sacred scriptures. 

# Does the Eternal Require the Same Thing From Everyone?

Most long-time believers are familiar with these scriptures:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Eph 4:4-6).

He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1John 2:4).

...the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32).

From the above scriptures, someone might reason:

- 1) I know I have the Holy Spirit,
- 2) So I must be in the body of Christ,
- 3) So I must be keeping his commandments (repenting and being forgiven when I "slip up"),
- 4) Therefore those who are not keeping all of the same commandments in the same way that I am keeping them must **not** be in the Body of Christ and must **not** have the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, many individuals and religious groups follow reasoning similar to this. They are so convinced of the correctness of their own study of the scriptures, that they believe that no one else can be a part of "the church" that Christ said he would build (Matt 16:18).

When you talk with someone who thinks this way, it is interesting to ask them these questions:

- 1) When were you "converted"?
- 2) Have you learned any new important Bible truth since that time?
- 3) If there is another person today who understands doctrines the same way you did when you were first "converted," could he have the Holy Spirit? (It is amazing to see how many people will accept their own limited doctrinal understanding when they first believed, but will not accept the same thing in others.)
- 4) Do you know of any people who have had a doctrinal understanding similar to yours for the past 1900 years?

This writer has never heard anyone rationally try to answer "Yes" to the fourth question. Indeed, it is hard to find any evidence anywhere of any group that has held the same beliefs for 1900 years. So how do we reconcile the statement "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"? (Matt 16:18.) Either we must conclude that there have been a few individuals with the right doctrines for the past 1900 years, but they have been completely lost in history, or we must conclude that the Church is constructed of individuals with the Holy Spirit, but with varying beliefs.

**Actually, we do not need to speculate on this issue.** While the scripture certainly defines in an absolute sense what is sin, it is also clear that individual sin is based upon that individual's knowledge of what is right:

If I had not come and spoken to them [corrupt leaders], **they would have no sin**, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father (John 15:22-24).

Jesus said to them, "**If you were blind, you would have no sin**; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains" (John 9:41).

Notice that the scripture really says that they would have "**no sin**" if they did not understand the truth. (Obviously, it means "no sin in this area"—if the same people stole something that day, they would have sin because they understood that commandment.) Nevertheless, they would not be accountable for sin that they clearly did not know about. Does that mean that the person most ignorant of the Bible is the least sinful—because he does not know he is doing anything wrong? Physical penalties of sin often occur, even when a person is ignorant of them. The entire chapter of Hosea 4 is about the evil that befalls people who are

ignorant of sin. It contains the famous passage "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (v 6). The scripture below indicates that there is a lighter punishment for sinning in ignorance:

And that servant **who knew** his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with **many stripes**. But he **who did not know**, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with **few**. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:47-48).

If a person receives a "few stripes" for each of hundreds of things done wrong in ignorance, it will still total to a great many stripes. Throughout the Bible we find explanation of sin and the difficulty it causes for the sinner as well as those affected by the sins. Nevertheless, we can see in scripture and history that the Eternal does not reveal all truth to everyone. The people who lived while the Old Testament was being written did not have the whole Old Testament to read—they had **none** of the New. Many who heard Jesus did not understand what He taught (Luke 8:10).

**How does the Eternal decide to whom He will reveal which truths?** Even Jesus seemed to indicate that the decision was out of his hand:

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight" (Luke 10:21).

**The truth of the matter is we do not know how much or how little truth the Father chooses to reveal to people with whom He works.** The Apostle Paul had great knowledge of the Old Testament and Jewish tradition (Acts 22:3; Gal 1:14). He was directly trained by Christ (Gal 1:12-13). Even

with all of this, he said “we see through a glass darkly” (1Cor 13:12). If Paul realized that he understood only a small part of Eternal truth, how little do we understand now? Calendars, Holy Day observance, Sacred Names, and a host of other areas where we write long papers, he could simply recall what Christ did.

Obviously, we are responsible to do those things that we know to be true: “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). **But it is not our job to decide whether other people can have the Holy Spirit or not.** “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).

If we judge other people as “unconverted” because they have a doctrinal error, how will we be judged if we, in the resurrection, are found to have a doctrinal error? “For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” (Matt 7:2). If we are judging other's conversion based on doctrine, then we had better believe that our doctrine is nearly perfect. It is much better for each person to diligently do what they understand, than it is to judge others for not having our understanding.

Do we treat everyone who claims to believe in the Bible as a believer? No, but we should acknowledge that such people **might be** believers. They may just be greatly deceived in some areas. Many of the brethren mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 were participating in evil. But at the same time we acknowledge that they **might be** believers, we can also acknowledge what we perceive as their doctrinal error and why we cannot, in some cases, fellowship or work with them.

There are congregations where people may meet together nearly every week of the year, but have a disagreement as to when to keep the Passover. For this reason, they meet separately on that night. Each person is living in faith by their own understanding of the scripture, yet there is much cooperation. It is possible that one or both of them are wrong about how to keep the Passover—but if each has studied and sought the Eternal for the right understanding, then they will be punished with “few stripes”—because they were

doing what they believed to be right.

On the other hand, if someone believes in worshipping on a different day than you do, it will be hard to worship together. However, you may be able to cooperate on a project to help hungry or sick people in your town. You do not have to look down on, those, you work with just because they do not understand the Sabbath. If the people, you work with (and those, you work for) see your good works, they may ask you to explain from the Bible which day you keep as the Sabbath and why. Those with other practices will not be able to explain it from the Bible.

Finally, you may find some people who agree with you on many doctrines, but have serious errors with which you believe you cannot participate. They may believe in a different Jesus, they may be participating in demonic activity, they may believe salvation is available to only a select few, or they may be completely unfit examples of the way the Bible says a believer should live. We do not need to condemn these people as “rejected by God,” but we can say that we will not work with them in their present state. Numerous scriptures teach us with whom we should work, and with whom we should not. We also need to pray for the gift of discernment of spirits (1Cor 12:10) and divine guidance in each of our lives (James 4:13-15).

Additional insight on how the Eternal deals with people can be gained from the three parables found in Matthew 25. Most are well known, but it is always worth re-reading them. These parables were given immediately after the prophecies of great destruction in Matthew 24. In the end of Matthew 24, our Savior is clearly readying his disciples for how they will be judged. We will consider these parables in the light of with whom we should work and with whom we should not.

The first parable (Matt 25:1-13), is about the five wise and five foolish virgins. Apparently these virgins worked together and knew each other well. They may have all thought that they were in the group that was going to be the “Bride of Christ.” But it was not being in the group that counted, it was their own personal preparation that made the difference.

Matthew 25:14-30 is about the talents. Some servants were given more

talents than others according to the Father's own choosing—just as some people are given more truth than others. These workers apparently had no knowledge or interaction with each other. Those who doubled their talents were rewarded similarly. The person with one talent was rejected—not because he did not have enough truth to start with, but because he did nothing with what he had. The distribution of Bibles, production of Bible study aids, basic Bible teaching, and caring for the poor and sick has been done by people with a vast array of beliefs—sometimes showing very little Bible understanding. This author has often wondered if those Sabbatarians with a greater understanding (those with five talents) will not be judged more harshly for accomplishing less. What would the Master say about a man to whom he gave 5 talents and the man made only 1?

The final parable (Matt 25:31-46) shows that there will be people who will be doing the Eternal's work and apparently not even know it. They are surprised that their love and care of others was interpreted as love and care for Christ. Others are rejected simply because they did not have love and care for others—how much truth they knew does not seem to enter in.

Is it fair, then, that those who have studied the Bible a lot have to obey so much of it to be saved? Is it fair that others will be saved knowing and obeying so little of it?

First of all, it is important to realize that we are rewarded according to our works (Matt 16:7; Rom 14:12, 1Cor 3:9-15, Rev 22:12). There is no “little” good work of which our Savior and Judge does not take notice (Matt 10:42). But the question is still a fair one, and we have an answer to it in the Bible. In John 21:18-21, our Savior explains to Peter that he would be killed by people opposed to him. Peter then asks what would happen to John. What was the answer?

Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me” (John 21:22).

We must trust our Father to know how much knowledge to give us, and to show us how to use that knowledge for Him. Praise Him for His wisdom! May He give all of us the strength to understand and follow Him!

—Norman S. Edwards



# The Sabbath— A Day of Delight

By Missi Lara

As I grew up in the Church of God, the Sabbath was not generally a joyful day—it was a day filled with “do’s” and “don’ts”. But God says the Sabbath is a day of delight (Isa 58:13). We need to make the Sabbath so delightful that we and our children look forward to it with joyful anticipation.

My son, Justin, and I were reading about the Puritans and how they didn’t allow their children to play on the Sabbath. They were expected to sit still all day during services. (Almost sounds familiar, doesn’t it?) Justin told me he was glad we don’t keep a Puritan Sabbath. And who can blame him? Keeping children from being children on the Sabbath only serves to make them dread it.

We must teach our children the joys of keeping the Sabbath day holy because it is a gift from God to us (Mark 2:27). Incorporate family traditions into your Sabbath for everyone to enjoy. There are many books available in Bible bookstores from which you can glean ideas to make the Sabbath a delight for everyone in your family. For example: *Let’s Make a Memory* by Gloria Gaither & Shirley Dobson, and *Celebrate the Feasts* by Martha Zimmerman. Talk to others and find out what they do on the Sabbath that your family might enjoy.

Children especially love traditions. They will quickly let you know which activities they welcome and which ones they don’t really care for. And after a few weeks, if you skip one they especially enjoy, they will likely let you know they miss it.



We start each Sabbath by blowing the shofar. It’s a thrill for the kids the first time they manage to get a sound out of it. The little ones still sometimes ask if they can blow the shofar on days other than the Sabbath, but it is strictly a Sabbath activity. That makes it extra special when they do get to blow it.

## Feasting

Many of us traditionally start the Sabbath with a special dinner. Dinner is a great place to add some traditions that are enjoyable for everyone. Since we instituted these traditions, our children look forward to dinner far more than they did when it was just a prayer and food.

Make the table setting unique. Use your best dishes, or collect dishes from a thrift store and let the children set the table with whatever dishes they want to use. Let the kids use special glasses during Sabbath dinner. Collect

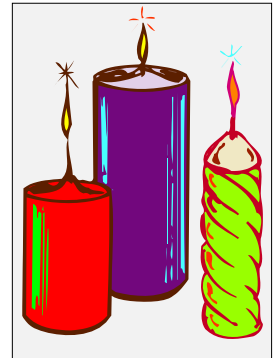


wineglasses from thrift stores or purchase some inexpensive ones (that way you won’t be disappointed when they break) to be used on the Sabbath only.

Candles are a big part of our dinner, even during the summer when we eat in the daytime. We start with a prayer for Sabbath rest and blessings and then we light the dinner candles. After the prayer, everyone at the table has a chance to light a candle. Over the years we have pur-

chased a wide variety of votive candleholders. We like to have enough on hand so everyone can light a candle even when we have dinner guests. Each person thanks God for what he or she is personally thankful and then lights their own candle.

The children love lighting the candles and choosing their candleholder. And they remember that we always have something for which to be thankful. After all the candles are lit, someone asks a blessing on the food.



The most special part of the evening comes after the candle lighting. My husband lays hands on each of the children and blesses them with their own unique blessing. The kids appreciate listening to what he has to say about them each week. And when he lays hands on our firstborn, the baby gets



so excited she can hardly stand it. While she’s waiting for her turn, she spends the whole time pointing to her head. Often when we have guests, their children request their own blessing after watching our children receive theirs. After the children have been blessed, I receive a blessing from my husband. When we’re in a rush, or under time constraints for whatever reason, this is the part of the Sabbath evening that we don’t cut out.

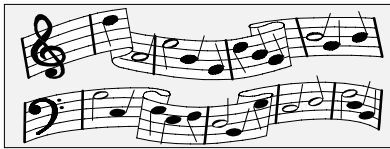
Occasionally, the girls and I wear a head covering during the prayers and blessing of the Sabbath dinner. We have some pretty scarves set aside for just this purpose. The girls enjoy choosing their head covering for the evening. We review “that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” (1 Cor 11:3) It’s a good object lesson for all the children. They understand a physical example far more than just talk.

## Praise & Worship

At some time during the Sabbath, we celebrate with praise and worship. We usually do this on Friday night. But sometimes we’re too tired or we have a special activity to attend, in which case we praise on Saturday morning.

We play praise music (Hosanna! Praise and Integrity Music Just for Kids with the Donut Man are our personal favorites) and dance and sing together. The kids love dancing with Mommy and Daddy. We have no special dances or memorized steps. We just move and enjoy the music and each other.

We also have many musical instruments (tambourines, recorders, wrist bells, triangles, etc.) to help us make a joyful noise. Don't let the expense deter you. We started out with just one or two instruments and added to our collection over the years. Most small rhythm instruments can be purchased from music stores or educational supply stores at a low price.



The instruments help us to "make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise." (Psa 98:4) Many of the references in the Bible are examples of lively and noisy praise to God, not somber, still and quiet singing. So we do our best to follow Biblical examples.

Another fun part of our worship is singing solos. Everyone sings a solo, even those who feel that they should not sing aloud in public. After all, the Bible says to make a joyful noise—not necessarily a beautiful one (Psa 66:1-2; 81:1-2; 95:1-2). This is a time of glorifying God, not ourselves. If you feel like you shouldn't be singing in front of others, it's a good lesson in humility. And God expects us to praise Him with whatever voice He gave us.

**Time With Our Father**

Another important part of the Sabbath is spending family time together. We are to observe the Sabbath in order to spend special time with our Heavenly Father. Likewise, the Sabbath is a day for our children to spend special time with their earthly father.

When my husband gets home on Friday nights he tells the kids "Daddy's home for the Sabbath." What a thrill for them to know that he will be home in the morning so they can cuddle with him when they get up. Then they get to spend a good part of the day just being with Daddy. Of course, giving of yourself and doing good on the Sabbath are also important (Matt 12:12). As we overflow with joy on the Sabbath day, we can give that joy to others. God gives the Sabbath to us. We give to our children by spending special time with them.

Have a good supply of Sabbath videos for the children. They are a lifesaver. Donut Man, McGee and Me and Veggie Tales are some of our choices. That way they can spend time watching wholesome videos while you get your quiet time with your Father, which is so critical for your spiritual life.

**Making Memories**

Making memories is a simple thing. I remember the restaurant we always stopped at on the way to the Feast of Tabernacles when I was a child. I also remember always

going to Hickory Farms before the Feast. I still have a warm fuzzy feeling every time I pass that store. Even the simplest tradition can bring back fond memories.

On Sabbath morning we cuddle. Don't underestimate the power of a cuddle, and be creative in your cuddling. Maybe laughing cuddles or bouncing cuddles or wrestling cuddles—whatever suits your family's personality.

Cuddling in bed with parents holds such great memories for many people when they are grown. A friend of mine with a grown son was telling me that their son still comes in sometimes and cuddles with his parents on weekend morning. And it still ends up in a tickling match.

Go for a walk or a bike ride—at the beach, by the lake, at the park, in the forest. Enjoy and interact with God's creation. After all, this is the work He rested from on the Sabbath day.




Acting out Bible stories is another great Sabbath activity.

Props and costumes add some fun to the experience, but they're certainly not necessary. It doesn't require memorizing lines because we all know the stories and we just make up our lines as we go along. Everyone chooses a part (more than one if there are extra parts) and we just have fun with it. Actually, acting out the stories can add some insight into your child's knowledge of the Bible.

These are some of the traditions that we have adopted as a family. We try many things after reading ideas, hearing from others or just by using our imagination. If the things we try don't work for us, they fall by the wayside. If we enjoy them, they become family traditions. Try a few things and find the traditions that work for your family.

**Doing Good**

There are many opportunities to do good on the Sabbath. Watch someone else's small child(ren) during a sermon (so they can listen for once) or after services so they can fellowship. Help someone with full arms carry their stuff into services. Bake some cookies and hand them out just for fun. Give someone a smile and a hug. The list is endless, just be creative and find ways to do good for others on the Sabbath. Find opportunities to make it a joyful day for everyone.

Strive to make the Sabbath a day of delight for everyone. Dwell on the "do's", not the "don'ts". Concentrate on the activities you can do. You won't have time to think about the activities that you might be missing if your day is filled with enjoyable activities of doing good and praising and worshiping our Great God. 

**Correction**

The December 1998 Servants' News article on *How to Keep a Biblical Sabbath* contained a very misleading statement (page 6, right column, top paragraph). The article mentions the Israelite's march around Jericho at the time of Joshua, then the next sentence gives the Rabbi's definition of a Sabbath

Day's Journey (2000 cubits or about 3000 feet). The purpose of the article was not to say that the rabbi's derived this definition from the Jericho march, but to contrast the two. The rabbi's definition came from the typical maximum distance from the tabernacle to the furthest edge of the camp. The size of Jericho when Joshua conquered it is uncertain. Some estimates are as small as 500 by 1000 feet—

exactly 3000 feet around. However, it is very likely that the Israelites stayed 200-300 feet away from the walls to avoid being hit by thrown projectiles. That would make their trip around the city between 3800 and 4200 feet. With several hundred to a thousand more feet to travel from their camp to the city, the Israelites could have easily traveled a mile on that Sabbath. —NSE



# A Search for Jewish Roots

by George and Pam Dewey

In many families, even in “melting pot America,” weddings are “ethnic” events, with lots of tradition and custom handed down from generation to generation. For instance, in American Polish communities, a wedding reception will likely include familiar traditional music—perhaps a polka band led by an accordion, favorite traditional foods, maybe even guests in traditional costumes from “the Old Country.” The same could be said for many other cultural groups in this country.

However, when we got married, in 1965, there were almost **no** traditions involved. Neither of us has “roots” in a particular ethnic, religious, or cultural group. Although we each had some background in our youth of religious affiliation, by the time of our wedding, neither of us was actively involved in any religious community. Nor were we even close to our own immediate families—we decided to get married quietly in our college town without even telling our parents of our plans. Thus our “generic” ceremony was held in a side chapel of a non-denominational church, officiated by a minister whom we had chosen out of a phone book. And the tiny event was truly “ecumenical”—George’s best man was a Russian expatriate (likely a member of the Russian Orthodox Church), Pam’s maid of honor was an Italian Roman Catholic, and the only guests were Pam’s Jewish college roommates.

The **one** area in which we shared common cultural experiences with

most Americans was in the general customs involved in the observance of Christmas and Easter and other holidays. But in our very first year of marriage, we studied together the literature of the Worldwide Church of God, and became convicted that these were non-biblical observances in which we could not, in good conscience, continue to participate. Becoming official WCG members in 1968, we soon found that even religious music of any kind not specifically endorsed by the Church was forbidden for our home. And thus we entered into a way of life taken up with many church activities, but accompanied by almost no replacements for the customs, traditions, music, festive decorations, or any other thing that would define special times for most Americans.

By the mid-1970’s, we were beginning to really feel an emptiness inside that seemed to cry out to be filled with music, tradition, custom, beauty. We were strongly committed to the doctrines of our church, but felt it was sadly lacking in all of these more aesthetically and emotionally-satisfying elements in its gatherings and in our homelife.

So where to turn? We knew we couldn’t dabble in any “Christian” sources, no matter how non-denominational or doctrinally neutral, as that would get us in trouble with the WCG leadership. So we thought, “What about Judaism?” It had many things in common with our belief system, particularly the Sabbath and Holy Days. And it

certainly had lots of traditions, customs, decorations, music and so on! In the mid-1970’s, particularly outside major metropolitan areas, that religious community we now refer to as “Messianic Jews” were almost unheard of, so our only option for exploring the possibility of “borrowing” some things from Jews was the non-Messianic Jewish community. We later ran across the ministry of Zola Levitt, a Messianic Jew, as well as “Jews for Jesus.” But we soon found out that both Zola and the Jews for Jesus do **not** represent a “Torah-observant” branch of Judaism, but rather one that attempts to graft on such things as Christmas and Easter to the Jewish customs of their converts to belief in Y’shua Messiah (Jesus Christ).

Our daughter, Ramona, was a preschooler at this time. Determined to see if we might find the “roots” we were looking for, and might pass on to her, in a more Jewish lifestyle, we began looking for sources of information and materials. Our first stop was the local public library, which happened to have a recording of Jewish traditional Sabbath and Holy Day music. Most of it was in Hebrew, but we were so excited to have something other than the old WCG hymnal’s music that we taped it to play over and over on Sabbath evening even though we weren’t sure what all the words were about.

One of the first books we purchased was called “The First Jewish Catalog.” It was modeled on the “Whole Earth Catalog.” It was a big handbook aimed particularly at young Jewish people who

may have become secular as they moved out on their own from their more religious parents, but who were now looking to "return to their roots." It included everything from a detailed description of the meaning and traditional observance of the Sabbath and Holy Days, to how to keep a kosher kitchen, and how-to instructions for making beautiful Hebrew calligraphy. It also included information on how to go about creating your own personal library of Judaic materials. Pam tried their **hallah** (traditional Sabbath bread) recipe, and we pondered how we might add some of the customs to our Holy Day observances.

There was an address for "The Jewish Publication Society," so we wrote to them, and joined their organization by paying an annual dues/fee so that we could get discounts on various Jewish publications. We purchased a number of books from them, hoping that perhaps they would not only provide us hints for the area of customs, but also help us in Biblical understanding. We bought the Society's new translation of the Pentateuch, an abridged version of **Maimonides' Mishneh Torah**, a thick **Encyclopedic Dictionary of Judaica**, and numerous other volumes.

We also ordered a copy of "The Second Jewish Catalog." It covered even more details on Jewish lifestyle, including everything from circumcision rites for baby boys, to choosing a rabbi when you move to a new town. And in the back it included "The Jewish Yellow Pages" which was literally a "phone book" for Jewish businesses and organizations throughout America.

From that we found some supply houses for decorations, children's materials and so on. We sent away for a set of Purim hand-puppets for Ramona. **Purim** is the holiday described in the book of Esther. It is celebrated in Jewish communities by festivities particularly aimed at children. The story of Esther is retold in plays and musicals in local synagogues with much merriment and enthusiasm. Traditionally, the audience uses loud noisemakers and vocal jeers to drown out the name of the "bad guy" Haman each time it is mentioned in the play. That year on the evening of *Purim* Mona and a little friend in the WCG joined their dads watching a Purim play put on by their moms. Since

the set of puppets we ordered only included Esther, Ahasuerus and Mordechai, we had to improvise the rest of the cast. Re-enacting the part of the story of Esther where Mordechai was led around the city on the back of a horse, we pressed into service a plastic horse that came with Ramona's "Jane West" fashion doll. And who did we use for the evil Haman? That part was taken by Ramona's Sesame Street **Cooky Monster** hand puppet!

We really appreciate the exposure we thus had to many things Judaic. We came to understand more of the Jewish culture and community. We were fascinated to see in our "Jewish Directory and Almanac" how many famous folks are Jewish that you might never guess, given their "stage names" or Americanized names. Most folks realize that Steven Spielberg and Woody Allen are Jewish, and perhaps Milton Berle and even Richard Dreyfuss. But how about: Herb Alpert, Alan Arkin, Ed Asner, Lauren Bacall, George Burns, Jill Clayburgh, Neil Diamond, Kirk Douglas, Lorne Greene, Henry Winkler, Howard Cosell... and the Three Stooges!


In later years we attended a Jewish Passover seder on the "Night to be Much Remembered" put on by a lady in our CGI congregation who was also attending a Reformed Jewish synagogue. (She later married a Jewish gentleman and converted to Judaism, renouncing Jesus.) George was given a fancy "kippah" to wear (the skull-cap worn by observant Jews) which he still has, and Ramona was invited to say the traditional blessing on the candles opening the evening's activities (She still remembers the Hebrew words she memorized for that.)

However, that night was perhaps the culmination of the journey we had been on. We realized that night that for all our attempts to "graft on" the customs and trappings of Judaism, we still felt no sense of "roots" in all of it. It was, in the final analysis, an attempt to "work up" feelings that those who are **born** into a Jewish community experience just as they experience breathing—naturally. We could **enjoy** the music, we could **respect** the meaning that others found in the customs. But we could not "tap into" the root in a way that would give us the sense of belonging and

rejoicing we were looking for. We couldn't somehow "become Jews" by acting Jewish! For the Jews are not "acting"—they are **living** it because they were **born into** it.

We are aware that there are many from the same background that we have in the WCG who are just now beginning to look into the customs of Judaism in almost the same way we looked into it over twenty years ago. Perhaps some have the same yearnings we had for roots. We wish them well in their quest. Perhaps it **will** give some of them what they are looking for. At the same time, we hope they will understand our choice not to pursue that avenue for our own lives.

Now that we are no longer hampered by the control of religious leaders, we are free to explore other options for making our family and fellowship activities as Christians more inspiring. We have found in recent years that there is much music available from a variety of sources that is Biblically-sound, honors our Father and our Savior, yet is refreshing and lively. Folks are free to develop their **own** Sabbath and Holy Day customs as is noted in the article by Missi Lara in this edition of *Servants' News*. And even though one can certainly find "fore-shadows" of Y'shua, Jesus the Messiah, in some Jewish customs, He certainly plays no prominent part in those customs. Rather than having to somehow "graft" references to our Lord and Savior onto music and customs, we are free to make Him an integral part as we develop our own.

Although we have appreciated what we have learned from Jewish sources, and have enjoyed learning about many of their customs and traditions, we have come to see that we **don't** have "Jewish roots." Although in the natural, our Savior did live His life on earth in the Jewish community, and no doubt participated in many of the customs which we studied and tried out, our connection with Him is **not** as Jews. Our roots go back much farther than first century Judaism. Our real "roots" are in the faith of Abraham. Not an ethnic or cultural faith, but a supernatural faith. We have come to see that the most important thing is not that we are of the seed of Abraham in the flesh, but in the spirit. 





# Seeking the Eternal...

## *One Woman's Story*

I am a believer and follower of Christ, and as I recall my first memories as a young child, I remember my strongest heartfelt desire or need, was to be unconditionally loved. I needed the kind of love that does not forsake me when I disappoint, fail, make a mistake or have an accident. I craved a love that would be concerned with helping me to grow in understanding, to choose the right way. I wanted a love affirming me in who I am as an individual created by God for a real purpose. I wanted to be approved and edified in the right paths.

### **In Search of Fulfillment**

My childhood was probably like most, highly lacking in intimacy and communication in any of the above mentioned areas. The environment I grew up in was one where my parents met my basic physical needs, of which I thank God He provided. But beyond that, there was not much guidance or communication or interest taken in us children. Not excusing, but explaining a reason for the lack of real love and genuine concern was because my own parents had their own emotional pain passed down to them. This pain was caused by their own dysfunctional families in which they grew up, lacking in Godly love and concern, magnified even more by alcoholism.

At about 12 years old, I began reading the Bible and I prayed and believed that one day God would surely give me understanding into the deeper meanings behind these Bible stories I read. Somehow **I believed that it was only through Him that I would never be disappointed.** One of the first things He revealed to me was the 7th day Sabbath. It seemed clear to me that the 7th day was to be honored, but I only knew "Sunday"-honoring folks and was confused as to why this wasn't being questioned among them. When I reached my early 20's, I understood that what God showed me those many years ago was still true about honoring His Sabbath. I saw what a blessing it is, such a time I look forward to of step-

ping out of worldly responsibilities and focusing deeply on the things of God and thankful that He is who He is.

As I grew up, I observed no one I knew gave this kind of love consistently or perfectly. I wanted to believe that there was someone capable of treating others with genuine love, as individuals created by God, but everyone fell short, even "Christians." I realized my expectations of mankind in our own power had been unrealistic. I saw that I too fell short in being a true lover like God, and saw that only God can truly and perfectly Love. **No longer was it about the love everyone owed to me, now I too was a debtor.** Now I too saw I needed forgiveness, mercy, grace, understanding, wisdom, faith in God and His ways, strength and courage in Him to respond to His will. I wanted the courage to step out in faith with the love of God established in my heart, to be able to love as He does; without the fear of the receiver rejecting the love I was giving, and becoming disappointed in myself.

As a young person, I was disappointed and angry that my parents did not desire to be genuinely concerned with the growth and development of the children they had wanted. As an adult, I see now that they could not give what they did not have, which was the love of God. I am not saying that God does not love them, He loves us all perfectly! What I am saying is that they have not yet truly known the love that God has for them and rested in it. **Nor were they secure enough in His love and sufficiency to be able to give His love to others.** I am learning, practicing and experiencing God's way of life, and walking in the faith of Christ. I depend on His Ways and believe they are good. I try to reject my own carnal understanding. I have found that my need for perfect love is sufficiently provided by God and Christ.

### **My Life in the Truth**

God has planned an amazing life for

**Continued on page 18**

## **Conversion Comes in a Variety of Ways**

There is a danger in trying to fit evangelism into a 3-point formula:

- 1) People listen to an organization's radio or TV program for a year or two.
- 2) People write for the organization's booklets and study them for a year or two.
- 3) People are baptized, begin attending with the organization, and financially support it for the rest of their lives so there can be more programs and booklets so the process can repeat.

While the above process does accurately describe the conversion of some people, there are many others who have a much different experience. They believe that the Eternal has worked in their lives long before they began to have a deep Biblical understanding. Certainly, some people have probably imagined that the Eternal was working with them when events were simply happening by chance.

But many people are completely convinced that the Eternal has worked miracles in their lives, long before they were baptized. While we at Servants' News have not tried to keep detailed statistics on the subject, we have reached an interesting conclusion: People who believe their relationship with Christ existed before or apart from a church organization (and its official doctrinal booklets) **are much more able to cope with major changes or the complete collapse of the congregation that they attend.**

We encourage our readers to read the story at left. It may be unfamiliar to you—or it may be a story a lot like your own. But if we believe that Christ is really leading and guiding his Church (body of believers), and that He really cares for each individual believer, then we should not be surprised that He is doing much work—with many individuals, each according to their individual needs.

—Norman S. Edwards

me—times where I experienced life not looking to God and now live life with God. I thank Him, that I have been given a great gift by Him of being drawn into a relationship ever closer to Him, and seeing now that I never want to be without Him and His Guidance in my life! **It is so precious, that once experienced, you never want to go back.**

As a young teen, I prayed that He would lead me into seeing His Truth, and that I would choose to obey Him. I prayed that I could find others who agreed with some of the things I held as obvious truths not to be ignored, i.e., honoring God's Sabbath, and Holy Days, giving God's Word freely, without cost, to those who desired it, and believing God regarding His health laws. (These are a matter of believing He created our physical bodies and knew what we should put in them. It is believing we should be good stewards of these physical bodies so they may be used to serve Him. We recognize that He gave us this knowledge and that good physical health is a blessing from God.) I believed these truths would link us together and that together we could grow in truth and wisdom.

Well, during my teens, in my room late at night, on my radio I came across a very distant station carrying the World Tomorrow with Herbert W. Armstrong. I felt my prayers had been answered. There were the teachings that I had believed in too! I thanked God and sent away for the literature being offered to help me gain a better understanding. Also I requested that I might attend the nearest fellowship, but it was quite a ways from my parents. Since I was a minor, and the fact that my dad did not approve, I felt I had to wait until I became an adult. I was very excited and looked forward to the day when I could meet others of like mind. Also at that time, I was truly afraid I wouldn't be accepted by the congregation because **I felt I had to "know everything" they taught before I could have fellowship.** So, those years, I would read my Bible and some literature from Worldwide Church of God (WCG) and pray for God to lead me into a right relationship with Him, a life full of joy living in Him. I trusted He would ultimately bring me to understanding and willing obedience.

Unfortunately, (or rather fortunately, as God had planned these experiences

for my life to lead me into true and intimate relationship with Him), I did not contact WCG for fellowship until I was 24. This was because I still felt I wasn't "good" enough to go, and I still had the same mistaken idea that I had to know all the truth they held and that I must agree with it before I could fellowship. **As you can see, my faith was not in trusting God and making the first step towards trying to fellowship, but I was being hindered because of the lies that Satan used to keep me from meeting with others.** I believe God allowed this and used Satan to bring me to the understanding that I should not trust in my own human reasonings. I now understand that I need to detect the anxiety and fear Satan uses to keep us from growing. Instead of supporting the lie, I need to trust God in whatever happens. I must deal with and accept and perhaps even wait, but God will always be with me and teach me in the way that He chooses.



Even yet, I was still not diligent in seeking God's will first in my life or seeking His Wisdom regarding the paths to take. **I was blind to the fact that belief in obedience to God's ways would give me true happiness and fulfillment.** I desired more to believe that I could work out certain areas in my life rather than wholly submit to God's will. **I made these wrong assumptions due to a lack of understanding the magnitude of how much God should influence all my decisions for life.** So, in trying to work things out my way for my desired end, I married someone before consulting God on the matter, partly to fulfill the emptiness where God should have been.

#### My Marriage

I met a wonderful young man at work, who I believed expressed the qualities of Christian character.

Although he was not intent on seeking God's will for his life, he did have the basic belief that there was a God. On Sunday mornings, he would come over and we would watch the World Tomorrow together when Mr. Armstrong was still living. He said he was interested and agreed with some of the things that Mr. Armstrong had to say, and seemed interested in "learning" more. Well, I loved this man, who was the most wonderful man I have ever met, and all the Godly characteristics he has. I chose to marry this unconverted man and try and **fill the void in my life, only to find out later that it is God who can completely fill it.**

We have been married for 12 years, and both of us are truly growing in Godly love. We have a good marriage, and I love him. We have very good communication between us and try to meet each others' needs as best as we can. We respect our differences and are always learning patience and Godly love and enjoy its fruit. It would be lovely if we both had the same passion for serving and growing in God, but we don't right now, as God has not yet convicted him of his deep need for God, nor the great value in God. However, we are growing because of our communication and willingness to love one another and make our little family a priority over worldly things. I know through God's blessings on me, we have all been blessed! I do pray now that I will willingly submit to His Will and allow God to lead my life. **I have now learned the benefits of trusting God to lead instead of working out my own life.**

In my marriage, I have learned many good things, and one of them being I should never place any demands on anyone. I try to love others by building them up in the ways of Christ, and helping them in whatever way would honor Christ. I am serving God to the best He has made me capable of. I am at peace, knowing I am stepping out in prayer and faith to follow His appointed way.

#### Time with a Corporate Church

Right before our marriage, I felt a great desire to seek fellowship with other believers, as I had no one to talk with about the deep things of God. I felt that lack in my life, and after much

prayer, stepped out in faith to meet with WCG ministers and hope for the best, however God would have things turn out. After an enjoyable meeting with these ministers for 3 hours privately, they gave me a long list of "literature" to read which would answer some of the questions I had. They were excited and told me they hadn't met with anyone for awhile who had so many questions. Yet, when they began to leave, they still had not asked me to come to fellowship. I figured they must want me to read all their literature, and that I had not yet met all the "qualifications" to attend. I was so disappointed, but by then, **I was learning to accept God's answers because I knew He knew my heart, and He would place me where He wanted me.** So, for a couple of months I read the literature, did the correspondence course, kept the Holy Days and Sabbath by myself, and still wanted to attend and be baptized, as I knew I should be. I did go ahead and get married, and to some extent, this made me feel that someone wanted me.

I finally was inspired to once again try to pass the "initiation." A different minister and his lovely wife came, and after we talked, I spoke up and asked if I might attend with them. They said "yes"! I was so happy I couldn't contain it. I asked why I wasn't asked to come before, and they said it was because I myself had not asked to attend. That right there taught me a lesson to go ahead and ask things and deal with the consequences later. I learned that I should never fear and make assumptions as to what might happen. **It was once again a learning experience about stepping out in faith, not making assumptions, listening to lies that are programmed into my thinking and being ruled by emotions.**

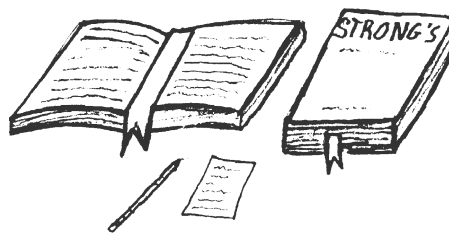
I began attending WCG in 1989, and my husband came with me because of his love for me. I was baptized in 1990 and prayed that God would give me understanding and a heart to follow and please Him and to truly know how to love. As time went on, my husband quit attending with me, and I accepted it knowing his willing heart. After going to WCG, I saw myself becoming indoctrinated with accepting their way of thinking with no questions asked nor answered. I believed I saw in the ministry ungodly attitudes, and a lot of

sheep following human shepherds. I saw myself taking on this way of following and going through the motions of "religion." I began to see a distance being created between me and my God, and I became very unsettled, uneasy, and just plain uncomfortable. I saw myself as a hypocrite.

### Stepping Out in Faith

In the fall of 1992, I began having a deep conviction to seek God with my whole being. I wanted to know the spiritual intent of His will for what a Christian should do and be. **I wanted to know how to live for Him, putting on Christ every moment of my life and not relying on "letter-keeping" to make me right with God.**

Looking back now, I see I was hasty in abandoning my fellow believers, but at the time I needed to examine myself and ask for God's guidance to unravel all these questions and thoughts I had. **I knew I needed to detour from the approach I had before of accepting answers by the hierarchy and saying, "OK, case closed."** I did this without really looking into the questions myself and believing God could also reveal to my mind His truth. I needed to get into the Bible myself and see what God's Word said for sure about certain rumors and things that I was hearing and being taught, and pray that God would open my mind to His truth. **Had I been mature in Christ, I should have questioned those "leaders" in the church personally and privately and tried to reason together.** However, I was just not confident enough in my own beliefs. And at the time I was a very intimidated person who thought others were always right, and I was not.



Thank God, through His Great Power, he has released me from the prison of my mind, and he is maturing me in His love and wisdom. I will not, God willing, take those wrong routes again.

### Our Home Fellowship

When I quit attending WCG, I began fellowshipping with a few other brethren who were "thinkers" also. We have Bible study every Sabbath at one of the homes. I have no affiliation now with any "organization," but consider myself to be of the household of God, serving Him wherever and however He will have me. I try to do this every moment of my life, to everyone with whom I have contact.

Our Bible studies are exciting and in depth, as we come together seeking answers to questions we may have, and become more founded in God's ways. No question is too insignificant or too difficult. We all dig into it and have something to contribute, as each of us read God's Word regularly. **We seek to apply God's ways, wisdom and lessons to our daily lives.** Things are not always perfectly smooth, but we can come together in peace. We can, with God's Spirit, identify the error of our ways and pray, knowing these infirmities are forgiven. Then the Spirit convicts and identifies our sin and we repent of it. We pray that God will strengthen us in His ways in these weak areas of our lives, so that we do harm no more. I believe that our weaknesses make us crave to be even closer to God, helping us fight the battle against our own carnality.

### Lessons Learned About Love

I know we are growing in His Love, we who are blessed and privileged to know and hear and respond to Him in this age. My hope for myself and all mankind is that He will ultimately complete His holy righteous character in every one of us, and I so look forward to that change. In the meantime, I will rest in the goodness of our God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**I thank God that now He is taking away the pain of needing human love to fill my soul, as He has shown me that His Love is sufficient and fulfilling and that it is in no way lacking for us.** I have learned that we cannot demand love from others. I also feel **it is God's desire that we come to know His love and give it to others.** I realize He is showing me His love, and that I do not need the love of others to find any value in myself. Even when those who are supposed to love us the most in the world fall short in it, (be it our parents,

spouse, friends or ourselves), we must learn that all of us do. I feel God is showing us the great difference between Himself and ourselves.

Through His understanding I know forgiveness, and that when we sin against one another, we know not what we are doing. For if we really and truly were mindful of what sins, terrible effects, and consequences to others were, we would not want to do it. However, we are in this weak flesh, and I believe we were made to know the depths and riches of God's Love for us as a sinner! But I do believe that God will convict and convince everyone of us in our errors; in His own time will He do it. He will also make every one receptive to know and experience His Love, and we will choose His Ways above our own carnal reasonings.

### In Conclusion

I would very much like to get to know more believers, to expand my little world. I would love to know others who hold dear the desire to seek God's Truth and Righteousness expressed in their lives. Even more, I am looking for people willing to love one another, to share, to edify and to be patient with one another in our individual growth. I seek those who respect the unique vessels our God is creating each of us to be for His glory and purpose. I look forward to growing in and experiencing God's agape love, and be exercised in it, encouraging one another in Christ. This will help us to profit one another to grow in Him as we use whatever talents or abilities with which God has enabled each of us.

My husband has just introduced me to the "internet," and the first thing I looked up was "Sabbath," which was on a service called "Yahoo." I found [www.biblestudy.org](http://www.biblestudy.org) and from there I found *Servants' News*. I began reading some of the topics covered in the *Servants' News*, and my heart swelled as I had found people who have the same views and attitudes I have. I look forward to getting to know many *Servants' News* readers and to share ourselves with each other to grow in the Lord Jesus Christ!

I am thankful to God and His provision to those of us who are benefited by it. May God guide those who write for *Servants' News* according to His will and bless them for following it.

—your sister in Christ in Georgia ☞

# New Leaders & Members for the United Church of God, *An International Association*

The United Church of God, *an International Association*, continues to go through major organizational changes. On January 20th, the UCG Council of Elders asked then-president David Hulme to either fully support the move of the home office to Cincinnati or to resign. He refused to do either, so the council voted to remove him from the presidency. Hulme, a council member, did not participate in the vote. Apparently only one council member voted in Hulme's favor.

There were obviously other issues involved with Hulme's dismissal, but the United Church of God issued no statement about it—apparently concerned that they would be sued if they broke any of the numerous laws associated with the treatment of people who have been fired. *The Journal, News of the Churches of God*, January 30th issue, contained a helpful article on the probable reasons for Hulme's firing (You may ask to begin your 12-month subscription with that issue by sending \$18 to *The Journal*, PO Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755.)

Robert ("Bob") Dick, the chairman of the Council of Elders is temporarily acting as president as provided by the bylaws. A new president will be chosen at the beginning of the UCG-AIA's General Conference of Elders meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, March 6-9. Steve Andrews, a long-time friend of Hulme and UCG-AIA's treasurer and legal advisor, apparently made an all-out effort to re-instate Hulme. He put forth a number of proposals to the Council of Elders, which were rejected. Then, he sent similar proposals to all of the General Conference of Elders in an effort to have the proposals placed on the Conference Agenda this March. The Council of Elders meeting of February 18-19 dealt directly with Andrews' proposals. We have reprinted the entire meeting report beginning on page 22 as it shows what an incredibly political situation this has become.

In summary, the Council of Elders

asked Steve Andrews to write an apology letter to the Conference by February 24th. Instead, Andrews wrote a letter about why he thought he was right. He was suspended from his job by the Council of Elders pending probable termination when their lawyer returns March 2nd.

*Servants' News* has received reports of UCG-AIA ministers and members holding meetings or calling others to support Hulme and Andrews. We have received some reports of efforts to encourage elders to vote "in block" for a specific set of council members who are supportive of Hulme. (Block voting would make it more likely for Hulme supporters to be elected than if each elder simply voted for whom he believed was best.) Hulme's primary "platform" seems to be to preach a "Ezekiel warning" message to Israel on TV similar to that of Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong—even if it means laying off about 20% of the paid ministry. Hulme and Andrews believe that one man must have essential control of major policies and budget. This latter point would certainly require changes to the UCG-AIA constitution and bylaws. Nevertheless, it appears that Hulme and Andrews will still make an effort to regain effective control of the organization.

Nearly all of the Council members, and apparently most of the ministry, are in favor of continuing to operate the UCG-AIA in the manner planned at its formation. As far as we know, none of its elders are against preaching the Gospel, but they seem to support the Council of Elder's decision to do it by using a combination of local and centralized efforts. Some have expressed to *Servants' News* that they wish this was not such a "political struggle"—they would rather be serving their congregations than trying to figure out who is trying to control what. However, they think it would be a mistake to stand by idly while a few individuals attempt to take control of the UCG-AIA and change its purpose.



Fortunately, most of these difficulties will probably “come to a head” and be resolved at the UCG-AIA general conference meeting beginning March 6. The entire Conference of Elders will vote to replace those Council of Elders members whose term expires this year: Leon Walker, Leslie McCullough, Victor Kubik, and Burk McNair. The Conference will elect one new Council member from the international nominee list and three from the domestic nominee list, below:

**International Nominees:** John Meakin, Joel Meeker, Mario Seiglie, and Leon Walker.

**Domestic Nominees:** Steven Andrews, Wayne Cole, Aaron Dean, Clyde Kilough, Victor Kubik, Leslie McCullough, Burk McNair, Brian Orchard, Richard Pinelli, Gregory Sargent, and Richard Thompson.

It appears that the General Conference of Elders will be expected to do more analytical thinking when electing the Council of Elders members this time. Each nominee will be given a 16 point questionnaire to answer, the results of which will be published to the General conference. In the previous council election, elders were simply instructed to pray and fast before voting. While this is something that certainly should be done, if the Eternal does not give a voter a clear command to vote for specific men, then they must do their best to hear the matter and make a wise decision—the same way we make other important decisions in our lives.

### **Merger With CGI?**

If this situation is not already complicated enough, it has just become more complicated. David Register, a regional and local UCG-AIA pastor gave some very interesting announcements in his February 28th service. David Register's father is a regional pastor in the Church of God International (CGI). Conversations between the two of them caused the beginning of a dialog between Robert Dick (Chairman of the UCG-AIA Council of Elders and acting president) and Charles Groce, Chairman of the Board for CGI. Both seem to be very interested in merging the organizations.

With Garner Ted Armstrong's recent removal from CGI for long-time sexual impropriety, the CGI has lost between 20% and 50% of its members and a good share of its income (it is hard to tell exact-

ly what has happened—many have not even made up their minds yet.) The CGI presently lacks a clear-cut mission and direction since throughout its entire past history Garner Ted Armstrong was essentially its mission and direction. However, the CGI has a large number of booklets and tapes which it owns the rights to reproduce. It has a building that might make a suitable home office for the combined group—or that could be sold to help finance a new home office. It also has a large mailing list of “prospective members”—un-baptized people who have responded to previous telecasts. Both organizations have congregations in numerous places that would benefit from combining services and paying less for hall rental. Small congregations would have more people, and ministers could be made more available to both groups.

Obviously, there would also be some difficulties in the merger. Individuals who have been in charge of local congregations for years might suddenly find themselves the “second man.” The UCG-AIA already uses two song books—adding the CGI book would make three. The CGI and UCG-AIA do teach a few doctrines differently, such as Passover, church eras, etc.

### **Making Sense Out of It All**

What do all of these difficulties and decisions mean for the UCG-AIA? For some, they may mean that they want one strong man in charge who will solve all of the problems for them. For others, it means seeking the Eternal's will to diligently resolve the problems in the best way possible. This writer offers the following opinion:

The entire reason that the UCG-AIA came into existence is because numerous ministers and members were willing to study their Bibles independently of the government of the Worldwide Church of God, and were willing to disobey that government when they found it to be in error. Furthermore, the UCG-AIA realized that a different government was needed in order to prevent similar mistakes from happening again. If any brethren believed that a hierarchical government was necessary, there were already two organizations that had the familiar WCG doctrines and a hierarchical government in place: the Philadelphia Church of God, and the Global Church of God. Both of these organizations had

magazines, TV programs, and an organized ministry already functioning when the UCG-AIA began.

Nevertheless, the UCG-AIA's founding documents are somewhat ambiguous in relationship to other groups. They acknowledge brethren in other organizations, but they go on to refer to the UCG-AIA as “the Church.” Now that the Church of God International is interested in merging with the UCG-AIA, a host of questions will come up: Is this merger an acknowledgement that there were converted people who left the WCG as far back as 1978? (The CGI formed that year.) CGI members have long been free to attend other groups or other feast sites without recrimination. Will they be able to retain such freedom? Will it extend to the UCG-AIA members?

This writer believes that much good will be accomplished and many valuable lessons will be learned if the two groups can merge. Various Jewish and Gentile groups had to work together in the New Testament. If the UCG-AIA and CGI cannot work together, is there really any hope than any of the Sabbatarian groups can learn to work together? If brethren who believe 95% of the same doctrines cannot get along, what hope is there of bringing in new converts that may start out with less than 50% common beliefs? If the UCG-AIA cannot agree to let others with only slightly different beliefs join its spiritual consensus process, is it then destined to become another more and more narrowly focused, smaller and smaller church group?

Much of the difficulty to the brethren probably comes from old WCG teaching—that they should “get behind the man that God is working through” and follow him (do whatever he says). The CGI is living proof that this concept simply is **not** true. Most people would agree that Garner Ted Armstrong does not meet the qualifications for congregational leaders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, yet many people were taught and converted by those working in that organization. **The Eternal works through imperfection.** Even the apostle Paul acknowledged his own sins (Rom 7:19). UCG-AIA members need to stop looking for the perfect person to follow in their organization.

We received some difficult-to-understand writings from Wayne Cole and Les McCullough. These posts to UCG-AIA

members seemed to pretend as if little was wrong with the UCG-AIA, and they told members to "get behind the Council of Elders," treating it as if it was now the God-ordained head of a human hierarchy. Cole went as far as saying that rebelling against the Council was "as the sin of witchcraft" (1Sam 15:23). We hope that UCG-AIA members will read 1 Samuel 15 and see that this is talking about Saul's rebellion against clear commands from the Eternal, not about people's refusal to follow human leaders. The UCG-AIA has many levels of authority. Unfortunately, there is a tendency for **each level to claim themselves as "the real authority that God approves."** David Hulme felt God installed him as president, so he should be able to run the UCG-AIA as he believes God wants him to do. The Council feels their election was of God, and that they hire the president. The General Conference of Elders have all been "ordained," and they elect the Council to represent them.

Can we take this back a little further? Most of the UCG-AIA elders had their ordinations approved by Garner Ted Armstrong, Rod Meredith or Ron Dart. Should they still report to the person who approved their ordination? I think most would agree, "no." Finally, all of the **UCG-AIA members must realize that the ministry has authority only as the members give it to them.** All of the members went to the UCG-AIA voluntarily—they could have joined one of many other Sabbatarian organizations. There were times in Israel's history when kings lasted only a few months or years. At this time, when church leaders are changing equally rapidly, members may lose their sanity unless their faith is firmly grounded on the Eternal and his word

Every member of the Body of Christ has been given certain "talents" to use until He returns (Matt 25:14-30). Each can either decide to use them, or to "give them to the bankers" to earn interest. (Is this like paying money to an organization to use their talents for you?) Using your talents does not mean working by yourself. To the contrary, it means using your ability to work with others in the best way that you can. **It means thinking about the options available to you and asking the Eternal to show you His will for your life.** We hope all of the UCG-AIA brethren and leaders, everywhere, will use this time to seek the Eternal, and to serve their brethren according to His will.

—Norman S. Edwards

## United Church of God, an International Association Council of Elders Meeting Report

Wednesday & Thursday, February 18-19, 1998—Monrovia, CA

The Council of Elders met in Monrovia, California, on Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 17-18, 1998, to address primarily several issues recently raised by Treasurer Steven Andrews. The nature of most of their discussions required executive sessions, but they did break from that format to issue the following resolutions, all of which were unanimously adopted by the quorum present:

### Appeal by the Treasurer

Whereas, the Treasurer has appealed to the Council of Elders to have the following four (4) items included on the agenda for the 1998 Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders in Louisville, Kentucky:

[1] Proposed Operations Plan for 1998-99, [2] Proposed Strategic Plan for 1998-99, [3] Proposed Budget for 1998-99, [4] Proposed Resolution for Recall of the Council of Elders, and

Whereas, the Council of Elders has thoroughly discussed these four (4) agenda items put forth by the Treasurer and has determined that they are in conflict with the Bylaws of the United Church of God, *an International Association*,

Now therefore, it is hereby resolved, that the Treasurer's appeal to the Council to have the following four (4) items added to the agenda for the 1998 Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders in Louisville, Kentucky, is denied:

Proposed Operations Plan for 1998-99, Proposed Strategic Plan for 1998-00, Proposed Budget for 1998-99, Proposed Resolution for Recall of the Council of Elders, and

It is further resolved, that the denial of the appeal of these four (4) agenda items is based upon conflicts with the Bylaws of the United Church of God, *an International Association*.

### Resolutions Submitted By the Treasurer and Placed with Call and Notice

Whereas, the following resolutions:

[1] Resolution to Affirm the Precedence of Scripture in the Governance of the Church,

[2] Resolution for Establishment of Budgetary Priorities,

[3] United Church of God Policy Statement on the Office of President,

[4] Statements of Position by Nominees for the Council of Elders,

[5] United Church of God Policy Statement on the Governance of the Church,

were given to the Secretary of the Council of Elders for inclusion on the agenda of the March 1998 Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders, just before Call and Notice was to be sent out on February 5, 1998, and

Whereas, there was no time for the Council to review said resolutions nor to seek advice from its legal counsel because of time limitations with respect to the mailing of these items with the Call and Notice agenda, and

Whereas, the Council, in consultation with its legal counsel, in a teleconference on February 12, 1998, and a face-to-face meeting on February 18, 1998, has now discussed these agenda items and found them to be at variance with the Bylaws of the United Church of God, *an International Association*,

Now therefore, it is hereby resolved, that the following resolutions are hereby withdrawn from the agenda of the March 1998 Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders, because they are at variance with and conflict with the Bylaws, they cannot proceed, since the Bylaws take precedence:

**[same 5 resolutions were repeated]**

### Letter to the General Conference of Elders with Regard to Steven Andrews

Whereas, the Council desires to issue a letter to the General Conference of Elders with regard to the mailing by Steven D. Andrews dated February 11, 1998,

Now therefore, it is hereby resolved, that the Council formally approves the letter to the General Conference of Elders, a copy of which is attached and made a part of this res-

olution, in response to the mailing, dated February 11, 1998, by Steven D. Andrews, to the General Conference of Elders.

February 19, 1998

Dear Fellow Elders:

By now, most of you have received an extensive package of information from Mr. Steven Andrews dated February 11, 1998. This package contained items which were provided by Mr. Andrews to the Secretary less than two hours prior to the original deadline for the mailing of Call and Notice of the annual meeting of the General Conference. Four items, intended by Mr. Andrews with Call and Notice, were not included. However, five of his resolutions were included on the agenda.

On late Friday afternoon, February 6, 1998, Mr. Andrews appealed to the Council of Elders, the exclusion of these four items from Call and Notice. The Chairman acknowledged his appeal on Sunday February 8, 1998, setting a teleconference for Thursday, February 12, 1998, to consider his appeal. The Council considered the appeal on February 12, 1998, and determined that all submissions were in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws, and tabled the discussion until a face-to-face meeting on February 18, 1998, to subsequently formalize a denial to the submissions. (According to his own admission, Mr. Andrews mailed his package before allowing the Council to render a decision on his appeal.)

The Council of Elders has now reviewed all of these items carefully and, exercising the responsibility granted to it by Section 8.6.2 of the Bylaws, concluded that (i) consideration of these items was not in the best interest of the Church and (ii) the adoption of these items would result in the disruption of the operations of the Church and significantly alter the organizational structure adopted by you, the General Conference of Elders.

With respect to the items included in the package for Call and Notice, it is our view that the proposals listed below, as submitted by Mr. Andrews to the Secretary and included in Call and Notice, seek to accomplish the following:

1. Usurp the power of the General Conference of Elders and/or Council of Elders by permitting any individual

member of management or any individual member of the General Conference of Elders to unilaterally declare any act of the General Conference of Elders or Council of Elders null and void based upon the premise that such acts constitute "ungodly conduct." Further, this proposal permits amendments to the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Church by simple majority vote of the General Conference of Elders, rather than the two-thirds majority required by Article 5.1 of the Constitution (or three-fourths vote required in the case of modification of an article respecting the Fundamental Beliefs of the Church.) [Resolutions to Affirm the Precedence of Scripture in the Governance of the Church, sections (2), (4) and (5), as submitted by Mr. Andrews.]

2. Overturn the decision of the General Conference of Elders with regard to the Home Office Relocation and defer such relocation until the Home Office Management Team (i.e., the President and Treasurer) deem it prudent. [Resolution for Establishment of Budgetary Priorities—last paragraph, as submitted by Mr. Andrews.]

3. Ascribe to the President powers which are currently assigned to the Council of Elders, thereby elevating the office of the President to a position of power equal to the entire Council of Elders. This resolution would hinder the operations of the Church by preventing the Council of Elders from fulfilling its duties without the permission of the President. [Policy Statement on the Office of the President, as submitted by Mr. Andrews.]

4. Ascribe duties and responsibilities given to the Council of Elders, as established by the Constitution and the Bylaws, to the General Conference of Elders. [Policy Statement on the Governance of the Church—last paragraph, as submitted by Mr. Andrews.]

The submission of these documents, in this manner, circumvents the authority of the Council of Elders, and they are contrary to both the Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of God, *an International Association*. The Council of Elders could not, in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities towards the Church bestowed upon it by the General Conference, permit these actions to go unanswered.

The Council of Elders intends to act

immediately to improve communication with the auditors of the Church, Coopers & Lybrand, LLP, and correct any misunderstandings that may have developed over the past few weeks. The Council will make its best efforts, through prompt intervention, to mitigate any damage that may have occurred.

With deep respect,

**Robert Dick** on behalf of the Council of Elders

### **Reprimand to Steven D. Andrews**

Whereas, the Council of Elders has the fiduciary responsibility as the governing body of the United Church of God, *an International Association*, and

Whereas, there have been new developments regarding the presentation of unauthorized material by the Treasurer, Steven D. Andrews, to members of the General Conference of Elders in an attempt to circumvent the authority of the Council of Elders, the submission of such material representing an effort to disrupt the operations of the Church and significantly alter the organizational structure adopted by the General Conference of Elders,

Now therefore, it is hereby resolved, that the Council demands a written apology and retraction, from the Treasurer for all those items in the packet with his letter dated February 11, 1998, to be issued to the General Conference of Elders, the Council of Elders, and all individuals to whom the packet of information was sent, and

It is further resolved, that such written apology and retraction is to be delivered to the Chairman, Robert Dick, no later than 12 noon Pacific Standard Time, Tuesday, February 24, 1998, for distribution to the General Conference of Elders, the Council of Elders and all such other individuals to whom the packet was mailed by the Treasurer.

Council members present at these meetings were Gary Antion, Bob Dick, Roy Holladay, Victor Kubik, Dennis Luker, Les McCullough, Burk McNair, Leon Walker and Don Ward.

The Council next meets by teleconference on Wednesday, Feb. 25, to discuss the amendment process, the request of elders who cannot attend the annual meeting but wish to ballot absentee, and any other issues the Council may need to finalize before the annual meetings.

—Clyde Kilough

# 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.

## Year 2000 Computer Failures

**LETTER:** February 25, 1998  
I get your Servants' News and cannot express my thanks for this. I am disabled and cannot attend services so I read and study a lot.

Thank you Norman Edwards for the needed front page story you did on Failing Computer Systems. This is the first I have actually heard about it in detail. Then in The Journal came Drury Sylvester's article along with web sites to see and study. I have already sent copies out to people. Some snicker at it, but that is O K. I am trying to help them.

[literature request omitted]

I, for one, truly appreciate all you and your staff do to help feed us who have been in this mix-up of confusion since leaving WWCG. Thanks so much.

Sincerely,

—Ruthann Monroe, Arizona

**Response:** We will try to have more information in future issues on the probable failure of numerous computers in the year 2000. We have come to realize that numerous failures will take place in the later months of 1999. Why? Many industries will realize that they will have a disaster if they do not repair their software before 2000, so they will rush to implement new software before that time. They will not have time to thoroughly test it—it may contain other problems and difficulties not related to dates  
—NSE

## SN Too Soft on Leadership?

**LETTER:** February 4, 1998  
I wrote to you several days ago suggesting that maybe you're being a little soft on certain people who put themselves

over the brethren. After reading the "Non-revelation" article, I realize now that I may have spoken a little prematurely.

I don't know if you realize how truly liberating your articles (and this whole concept of openness) can be! From your perspective (pretty much an elder as far as I can tell) you can see how a closed forum can stifle even a mature group of Christians. But do you understand the plight of the "little ones" in Christ?

Do you know how many "little ones" gave up because the proper nurturing, caring environment did not exist! They knew something was wrong, but (unlike yourself) could not quite put the pieces together. In the end they left in frustration, blaming themselves for their apparent failure.

At least with your faith, and good study habits, you've effectively weathered the previous storms. But what of all of those (you must know many) who left the faith, and were never quite able to put it all together? God provided the "sheep," and we let so many go astray!

Please keep up your labor of love! And don't ever forget the "little ones".

With sincere appreciation,

—J. S.

**Response:** Thank you for your letter. We could not find you on our mailing list, so we concluded that you are one of our growing circle of Internet readers.

I started Servants' News because I realized that there were so many brethren who were being thrust out or who could not accept the various Sabbatarian church organizations. I worked for those organizations most of my life in technical areas, but never was an ordained "minister" or "elder." My understanding of the Biblical meaning of "elder" was an older, wiser, person to whom others looked for leadership. I am in my 40's now, so I imagine that I would qualify.

Thank you for your encouragement.

—NSE

## Unleavened Bread Questions

**LETTER:** September 15, 1998  
Dear Norman Edwards,  
[Literature request omitted.]

Some of my friends that were in the WCG were put out in 1993. They have studied very diligently and say we don't have to put out leavening anymore; that the Messiah is our unleavened bread now (as it says in I Cor 5:7-8). They say we can eat a carload of unleavened bread and it won't take away our sins. We must pray to the Messiah for He is our unleavened bread

now.

I feel we have to eat unleavened bread until the Messiah's second coming. What is your finding on this? I would appreciate to have this explained.

I really enjoy *Servants' News* and thank you for all your efforts. I am enclosing an offering for your work.

—H.S., Minnesota

**Response:** Your friends were right about unleavened bread not taking our sins away. There scripture does not say it does. Eating unleavened bread is a symbol of taking Christ into ourselves—one we need to review every year. Is eating unleavened bread for a week each spring necessary for salvation? We have no indication that Abel, Enoch, Noah or even Abraham did this, yet the scripture lists them as righteous men.

However, Christ told Peter that unless He washed his feet, that he would have "no part in Him" (John 13:7-9). Paul placed great importance on taking the symbols of bread and wine (1Cor 11:26-28). The value of learning the lesson of unleavened bread, and its value in teaching children and new converts is so great, that I do not want to ask, "Is it required for Salvation?" No priesthood, temple, or animal sacrifices are required to observe this Old Testament command.

Obviously, though, a person should not be so concerned with removing leaven from his house that he fails to examine himself, too. We do not believe that the Eternal evaluates our life by how much leaven he finds in our toaster, books, floors, and walls of our houses. He is much more interested in the hearts of His people. But as long as we believe we need to remember to examine ourselves, the days of unleavened bread will be a continual physical reminder to seek our Savior.

—NSE

## Holy Days, Sabbaths in Perspective

**LETTER:** February 2, 1998  
Dear Norman Edwards,

I think it very important to touch on an issue that concerns all God's people in our tradition. It is the matter of God's Holy Days and Sabbaths. There is a truth waiting to be discovered—whether they are valid Christian practices. Some people believe they were part of an Old Covenant package and therefore no longer important. Others cling to the belief that they are commanded by God for true Christians today. And then there's the issue of the New Covenant. It seems the Holy Days were burdens and represented "bondage" according to Joseph W. Tkach and now Joseph Tkach, Jr. What is the truth? What truths do two opposing



views share?

Well, we can all agree that the Ten Commandments are **greater** than the Holy Days themselves, yes? I think so! And that is where the answer lies! That we have failed to grasp the significance of this fact, only serves to illustrate that God has been working until now to "perfect" us all. **We have all been guilty of idolatry!!** Yes, idolatry! We worshiped the Holy Days and Sabbaths, and our knowledge of them, to the exclusion of God the Father and Christ the Son. Yes, they were bondage to us because we didn't worship God **more!!**

Our knowledge was "incomplete." It still is as long as we fail to realize that God is greater than the Sabbath and Holy Days. It is not enough to acknowledge that the Sabbaths and Holy Days point to Christ, as some are doing.. Christ comes first! Then, we can all keep the Sabbaths and Holy Days in their proper perspectives, and then they become necessary. **We made them a means to salvation, rather than Christ.** Rather, we should recognize that we are saved by faith in Christ, and therefore we keep the Holy Days as tools for salvation, not as ends in themselves or as pointers to Christ. Can we all comprehend this fact? I hope every minister reading this will realize this. Until we repent of idolizing the Jewish festivals, rather than keeping them in perspective as we do the Ten Commandments, we will be in bondage. Worldwide Church of God was right on this point, but wrong to criticize others who clung to these festivals. There needs to be proper judgments executed in God's Church before God can restore it and put it back on the right track for a more effective witness to the world. God speed that day!

—PC, England

**Response:** I think what you are saying is true in the case of some, probably quite a few, people. The experience of many in the WCG was keeping the Sabbath, Holy Days, and many other things so that "God would like them." We should do good works because the spirit of Christ is in us. On the other hand, if a person is struggling with himself and not yet ready to come to Christ, that person would be best off if he tired to keep the Sabbath, used that day to study the Bible, and learned what the Eternal expects of him. If he tries to do it on his own, and then realize that he of himself does not measure up to the righteous standard of scripture, he will hopefully see his need for a Savior.

On the other hand, some Evangelical congregations (and the WCG?) fall into the ditch on the other side of the road. They teach people to seek Christ, but teach so little about what He taught, and what the Old

Testament says, that a "new believer" often has no idea of what His Savior expects of him.

—NSE

## HaShem Does Not Share Glory

**LETTER:** January 28, 1998

Delete me from your mailing list.

I have proved to myself that Jesus is not the Messiah. That the NT is not inspired scripture. That the Messiah is yet to come.

Therefore, I don't think a 2,000 year old dead man can do anything for me. HaShem [means "the Name" in Hebrew—Jews say this rather than pronounce the name] says that He is God and there is no other, that He will share His glory with no one. His statements to that effect leaves out any god-man.

I wish you well in your search for HaShem.

Shalom

—James F. Swanson

**Response:** Your reaction is understandable for people who have been taught "law" for many years and have never had a relationship with Yeshua (Jesus) nor witnessed powerful working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. For those who have received miracles praying in the name of Yeshua, (Jesus) it is difficult for them to suddenly decide that He does not exist.

Does HaShem not share His glory? One of the first things the Bible records is that he made a garden on the Earth and gave dominion over it to Adam and Eve. Then he gave them a tree that would give them eternal life—one of his very attributes. Notice, also, Psalm 110:

<sup>1</sup>A Psalm of David. The LORD ["HaShem"] said to my Lord [*Adonai*—"master"], "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

<sup>2</sup>The LORD ["HaShem"] shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! <sup>3</sup>Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. <sup>4</sup>The LORD ["HaShem"] has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest **forever** According to the order of Melchizedek." <sup>5</sup>The Lord [*Adonai*] is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. <sup>6</sup>He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. <sup>7</sup>He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head.

This Psalm is quite obviously a conversation between HaShem and someone else

very powerful—a high priest who has the power of judgment over the most powerful men. There are other similar Tanakh passages that one could study.

You must admit that the center of worship described in the Tanakh is the temple—which HaShem has not caused to be rebuilt for 1928 years. Did He provide another means of worship before He allowed the temple to be destroyed?

If you make an effort to live by the teaching of the Tanakh, you will certainly be blessed for it. But it is hard to find a promise in it to all mankind for forgiveness of all sin, eternal life, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Shalom,

—NSE

## Our Roots are in Christ

**LETTER:** January 29, 1998

Mr. Edwards,

I am reading your answer to the letter from MK about the temple. Most do not seem to understand that the physical temple puts God in one place and back under the Old Covenant with the sacrificial system under the Levites. We have to realize that the whole purpose and direction of the Old Covenant was to bring us to the New.

When we can be under the blood of Christ for protection—do we want to go back to animals? It is like saying we want to be immortal like Christ—but we want to stay in a physical body.

God's whole purpose and plan for His people didn't begin with Gen 1:26. It began long before that with Christ being "crucified from the foundations of the earth" and with the "stones of fire" in Ezek 28:14-16 that Satan was allowed to work with. These were taken from the Rock (Isa 51:1). Satan could not continue to work with them because of sin (Ezek 28:16). So, God promises to redeem them from his influence (Micah 4:10).

Peter calls us "lively stones" (I Pet 2:5) and we are closely related to that chief corner-stone (Psa 118 and Mark 12: 10-11) Our "God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:29). And we are His building (Eph 2:20-22).

This is one of the main reasons we are not called "adopted" but actual children of God (I John 3:1) and "inhabitants of the Rock" (Isa 42:11). Remember "the flesh profits nothing"—no matter what our genetic make-up is.

If you really are looking for roots, they are truly in Christ.

—Myra McQueen, Texas

**Response:** There is no doubt that salvation is complete in Christ without a physical temple. After all, if the Temple were

rebuilt today and everyone converted to Judaism, how could five billion offer all the sacrifices and go through all of the purification rituals mentioned in the Old Testament? However, our Father is merciful. To those who are blinded to the New Covenant and are still trying to live under the Old, He may well grant them a temple in the end time—to see the difficulty with that system and to see the **real temple**, which is the Body of Christ.

—NSE

## Men Vs Women Article

**LETTER:**

September 12, 1997

Dear Mr. Edwards,

[Paragraph on another subject deleted.]

I feel so sorry for that gentleman.(refers to article in July 1997 *Servants' News*, page 21.) If he has a wife, I indeed have great sympathy for her. They will never have the closeness that my husband and I have. He lacks respect for the female and without respect he can never appreciate our intrinsic qualities. Sir, I would recommend that you spend the money for the book **Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus**, (by John Gray, Ph.D., Harper Perennial.) You **and** your wife will never be sorry. I became aware of the book several years back and recommend it to everyone. I overheard a lady say that if she had read that book before she had divorced her husband, she never would have divorced him. That is how powerful the knowledge it contains is. The educational system of this world does not give us this knowledge.

I can go that man one better for I feel the worst thing that happened to **men** was the *education* of women! When we became educated we found out we weren't stupid...Let us return to the age when all we were taught was music, sewing, art, and household management, if that. Maybe his wife has more intelligence than he has and has pushed him into this untenable position of running women down in order to make men qualified. Please get that book sir, for you will then understand the differences in the sexes and that God has put differences there for a purpose. Viva la difference!

Because God is aware that the sexes are different, He has told man to **love** his wife because this is the hardest thing a male can do. It is hard for him to love a woman the way a woman **needs** to be loved, unconditionally; to love her for herself and not just for what she can **do** for **him**. This, sir, is the other secret to leadership. First **respect** her and then **love** her without reservation and she will follow you anywhere. God tells women to submit because this is the hardest thing that they can do and

until we are given the respect and the love which we need, in big 'deposits'—well, he has told us in great detail what will happen if you don't...

Out of one *Servants' News* I received pleasure from knowledge and upsetting emotions from a man who sees the world as it is instead of the world the way God meant it to be. Get your world straightened out sir, while you still can. You are only responsible for you and yours. Your attitude is in great need of adjusting before there can be true happiness there.

—EV, Florida

**RESPONSE:** I agree with your overall message. Both husband and wife must realize that they are being judged on what kind of a spouse **they are**, not on what they can get their spouse to be.

—NSE

## Comments on Sacred Names

**LETTER:**

February 11, 1998

Dear Norm,

My wife and I were quite interested in your answer to "MV, Minnesota", concerning the Sacred Names in your last issue of *Servants' News*. We would also point out the danger or futility of this kind of legalistic doctrine by referring to Matt 25:31-46. Obviously, these folks were being rewarded for practicing acts of compassion rather than reliance on a technical pronouncing of Ha Shem, the Name. These weightier matters of the law—caring for the widow, orphans and stranger—with love and compassion are always a supremacy or priority over the instruction (Law).

Our Messiah, Jesus, in every case that I'm aware of, always referred to the Eternal, Everlasting King and Creator of the universe as "my Father" (Abba) or "our heavenly Father."

One point of interest from the oral tradition of the Jews is that they believe the Ten Words (Commandments) were spoken by God and heard throughout the whole world in seventy different languages.

Rather than requiring a technical pronouncement, the Greatest Commandment, The SH'MA, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One" (Deut 6:4 and Mark 12:28) is in marked contrast—focusing on first loving God, then loving our neighbor. We would encourage MV and associates that "by this shall all men **know** that you are my disciples, if you **love** one another."

We are told in Rev 19:12-16 that He had a name written and no man knew His name but He, Himself. Then, in typical Hebrew idiomatic style, it says the name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

If anyone is interested, we have a Feast of Tabernacles cassette tape available free of charge on the subject. (Write **Omega Praise Fellowship**, PO Box 1742, Rogue River, OR 97537; ask for Elijah's Mantle and Love One Another tapes.)

We love the work that *Servants' News* and also *Hebrew Roots* are doing! Baruch Ha Shem (Bless the Name). Psalms 130.

May Our Heavenly Father richly bless you and yours.

—Bob & Deirdre Salmon, Oregon

**Response:** Thanks a lot. We hope this letter helps MV and other readers.

—NSE

## What About Spiritual Gifts?

**LETTER:**

November 28, 1997

Dear Mr. Edwards,

A friend has been passing on to me your publication *Servants' News* and I found some articles of great interest there. I suppose those with a Worldwide Church of God background (which is mine) are bound to find common points of interest. We do tend to think very much alike, even though we may have left our former "fold".

I have also seen publications produced by others who have also left Worldwide. One of these, *Awake! Awake!* is written in England, mainly by Malcolm Heap. You may know of his work. While he and you have a lot in common in your approach and writing, he goes into the area of spiritual gifts in a much deeper way than anyone else I know from our background.

We have always been taught in the Churches of God that the gifts of the Spirit other believers claim (such as in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches) are all bogus. H. W. Armstrong didn't display any of these charismatic gifts, and turned our minds against them. However, since being out of Worldwide I have taken a closer look and found that there is much to commend these other believers in this regard. They cannot all be bogus, or the devil is getting more credit than God. Hundreds, or even thousands are healed at big evangelistic campaigns, not just in America, but around the world. And upon investigation, many of these are completely medically verifiable. Of course, there are always the gray areas where healings are disputed and some even faked, but there is enough incontrovertible evidence to show many, if not most, are genuine.

Since being released from the oppression of Worldwide small-mindedness, I have learned to respect these groups who champion spiritual gifts, because these gifts demonstrate the active, living, real power of

Jesus, alive in our midst, not just a person who died 2,000 years ago.

Do you think you could include some articles on these gifts in your paper? I know they are relatively new and radical to us from our background, but I do feel that so many people could be helped to find a new depth in their worship through the acceptance of these things. And you have done so much already to deepen our formerly shallow worship.

Thank you for all your efforts. May God continue to bless you and those working with you towards the complete maturing of the body.

Yours sincerely,

—TF, California

**Response:** We certainly pray that the Eternal will grant the powerful spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament. We are aware of the publication that you mention and many other groups. Unfortunately, we have seen very little that seemed verifiably miraculous and scriptural. (The scriptures never mention people falling over backwards and/or becoming unconscious during a healing, but that is standard fare for many charismatic groups.) It is one thing to hear the testimonies of people associated with a group or read their literature, it is another thing to read their financial records and find that they pay actors and stunt-men for healing campaigns. We do hope to write more articles in the future.

—NSE

### Persecution of Christians

**LETTER:** September 25, 1997  
Dear Mr. Norm Edwards & *Servants' News*,

Researchers have found that more Christians are being killed now in the latter part of the twentieth century than Christians were being killed in the first century when the New Testament was written. Christians are being made into slaves, they are being killed because they are Christian. They are being beaten, jailed, and Christians are being persecuted in many other ways, also.

All of America should know about the persecution of Christians, today. Enclosed with this letter, is a magazine on this subject. The people who persecute people who believe in Jesus don't care if "Christians" go to church on Saturday or Sunday.

I go to church on Saturday. Please enjoy the Feast this year. With Christ,

—LC, Illinois

**Response:** We have read several articles on persecution of Christians in other countries and have no doubt that some of it is real. A number of groups solicit contributions to help these people, but we have not had time to investigate how much they

are actually helping real people in trouble. We do not like to be overly cynical, but our own experience and reading indicates that over half of all charities spend only a tiny percentage of their intake on the cause they claim to support. If you know someone who has thoroughly investigated persecuted Christians, we would like an article.

—NSE

### Preaching to Imprisoned Spirits?

**LETTER:** January 25, 1998  
Dear Norman Edwards:

Occasionally in my studies, I run across writings of difficult understanding which I had previously just passed over as "not important enough to search out." Now I believe that since it is there, it is important. Could you please shed some light that might help me to understand 1 Peter 3:18-20. I've read the passage in several translations, including the following (JNT):

He was put to death in the flesh but brought to life by the Spirit: and in this form He went and made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits, to those who were disobedient long ago, in the days of Noah [Noah], when God waited patiently during the building of the ark...

Also, I thought I had asked to be added to your mailing list after the Wagoner Seminar "In the Footsteps of Messiah", but since I haven't received *Servants' News*, I'm not sure if I requested it. I would like to receive this publication.

Shalom,

—Sylvia June

**Response:** I agree with your method of passing over some scriptures that seem less important to our lives—saving them for later study while we attend to the most important things. The passage you quoted, 2Pet 3:18-20 shows us some of the other functions that our Savior performs. It indicates that He preached to "spirits in prison" that disobeyed during the time of Noah. Some have said that this is a reference to wicked spirits that were called "sons of God" in Genesis 6:4: "There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown." This opens the door for all sorts of speculation about these "men of renown" being the origin of the various Greek and Roman gods as well as other Mythology. I do not know of any way to prove that this must be or must not be true.

The main thing that I learn from this scripture is that there is a diversity of activities in the spirit world. They receive punish-

ments and restrictions now, and will also in the future. Please notice the following verses:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them (Job 1:6). [The first two chapters of Job show that Satan has much power in this world, but only within the limits that the Eternal allows it.]

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia [an evil spirit] withstood me [an angel] twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia (Dan 10:13).

Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? (1Cor 6:3.)

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment (2Pet 2:4-9).

These scriptures show that the Eternal is dealing with the spirit world according to his own time schedule and that we ought to see that He judges sin both in spirit beings and people. Also, we can see from Eph 6:10-19 that we fight "against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" and therefore need to "take up the whole armor of God" in order to fight against these evil forces.

—NSE

### Trans-organization Doctrinal Journal

**LETTER:** December 21, 1997

For a long time I wanted to see a publication that was truly detailed and scholarly discussing the doctrines, history and archaeology—from a Church of God perspective. Some years ago when the *Reviews You Can Use* came out, I thought that it would lead to something really academic and detailed. Unfortunately it never did reach the standards or breadth one would have liked.

I have therefore been wondering if someone would be interested in commencing a real journal that goes into detail on the truths of God's Word. It does not have to be free, but could have a subscription price. My feeling is that such a journal would assist mightily in proving our views on a host of issues and educate the ministry and members, arming them with the information to counter the heresies and infiltrators who would lead us back into spiritual captivity.

I merely mention this as a means to stimulate discussion and some thought and hope that one of you (or a group of you) would be willing to undertake such a journal—and don't forget to let me know when it is published as I would want to subscribe! But I am afraid I do not have the time to do it.

Here are some suggested articles:

1. History of doctrinal change in the WCG 1934-1974
2. The missing link in the history of the Church of God 1800-1850
3. Proof of the born again doctrine
4. Col 2:14
5. Israel identity proof
6. The canonisation of the Bible
7. Bible principles on abortion, race, euthanasia, surrogacy and articles on archaeology, ancient history, book reviews, prophecy and so forth.

Someone **please** go for it! The Churches of God are desperate for true in-depth educational material. Our material is terribly shallow and watered-down at the moment and another generation is emerging that, if trends continue, will take us back down the road of WCG in a few years—the signs are clear for those with eyes to see.

What do you think?

—Craig White,  
Australia,craig@triode.net.au

**Response:** We think this would be a wonderful idea. I think a lot of people would learn from it. However, before it could be a success, the various church organizations would have to get away from the idea that "we are the church of God because nearly all of our doctrines are right." If such a journal were open to scholarly, well-thought-out papers from all of a congregation's membership (or even multiple Sabbatarian groups), I think many of the leaders would be amazed to find out that things they thought they had "proved" had no real basis.

As a brief example, consider Deuteronomy 16:16 which is used as the basis for taking up Holy Day offerings **seven** times a year—an utterly vital element in the budget of most Church of God groups. Deuteronomy 16:16 was used as a proof text for this practice, even though nearly

every translation says "three times in a year" and specifically names the three feasts. In order to justify the practice of seven offerings per year, Ambassador College and numerous ministers taught that Deuteronomy 16:16 should be translated "Three seasons in a year."

What would happen, if someone submitted a paper to your proposed scholarly journal showing that the Hebrew *pa-am* translated "times" here means essentially "occurrences" and is never translated "seasons" anywhere in the Bible? Would the church organizations make a change based on truth, that was written up by "only a member"? It might be difficult for the organizations to simply ignore the minister's journal entry.

We think the idea of a doctrinal journal would be great, though we do not have time to do it. If someone does decide to do it in a reasonable fashion, we will certainly help promote it.

—NSE

## Seeking a "1st Century" Fellowship

**LETTER:**

August 11, 1997

Dear Norman,

We would like to ask your advice on how to go about contacting other brethren in the hopes of having fellowship with others of like mind (we don't have a computer). We are meeting with some brethren now who have recently left other WCG split off organizations. They are nice people and we really like them, but they are still pretty much in the **old straight jacket mode** of conducting Sabbath Services. By this I mean: Sing 2 songs; have only one opening prayer by a man; listen to a tape by a former WCG minister (fall asleep during tape); one more song; closing prayer; and maybe a prayer request. Then everyone talks about what happened the rest of the week and not about God and no discussion over the sermon we've just heard. There, **the Sabbath duty has been done.**

We would like to find or form a more Bible centered-first century fellowship group. I think the old way (WCG) is dead and non-edifying and feel frustrated in waiting for others to notice that something is very wrong. I know people learn at different speeds and are at different levels of understanding, but **how long must people have their minds crammed full of the doctrines of men** before the Spirit of God can lead them? Must people be taught a distorted view of the foundation of salvation before they can be "lead into all truth" (1John 2:27)?

We recently heard a taped sermon by a Global minister (although this is not a Global congregation) He gave a long tedious ser-

mon in which he angrily **contradicted some scriptures** (1John 2:27, 1Pet 2:5 to name a few) and then proceeded in brow-beating and badgering other brethren. By this, I mean talking about what some people do and believe now and how bad and rebellious they are. And if **you** do A, B, and C, then you are like those bad people and won't be in the kingdom of God etc. **A typical fear and manipulation sermon.** And no one seems to notice. If we are supposed to be following Christ, then why aren't we looking at His words and example and taking it in instead of talking and listening about how bad we are or how others are wrong? **I feel this situation is very stifling of the Spirit and destructive.** Is there anybody else out there? There, I've vented.

Also we would really like to find an open "Spirit of God"-led feast this year. Please no more credentialed yes-men, but **active participation of the brethren.** We would really appreciate any advice and information you could give us.

Keep up the good work and God bless. Thanks.

—Canada

**Response:** You can use our Scattered Brethren Contact service to write people on our mailing list in your area (see *SN* November 1997). But this is no guarantee that you will find a "first century" congregation among them. If you desire this kind of fellowship, you may have to ask the Eternal to use you to inspire it in other people. You may be able to share your enthusiasm with Sabbatarians, or you may have to share it with others that have never had the Bible explained to them before.

May the Eternal bless you in your quest.

—NSE

## Qualifications of Overseers

**LETTER:**

February 1, 1998

If one reads correctly as Paul states [in 1 Timothy 3], if a man seeks to be a Bishop he seeks a good work. Two of the requirements laid out by Paul are that he has raised children and provided for his family. Then Paul makes the statement: How then can he raise up the church of God?

Which brings up another question: Can someone raise up a church without having done these first? The honest and truthful answer should be what?

—J.C.

**Response:** While Paul does mention a few more qualifications than you mention, you appear to be right about the main point: A man should not be an *overseer* (KJV says "bishop") unless he is successful in raising a family. The term "overseer" certainly applies to anyone who is responsible for overseeing



one or more congregation—though he may be called a “minister,” “pastor,” “elder,” etc. Unfortunately, many such overseers claim that their family life is “their own business.” This is not what Paul taught.

The problem seems to come from the idea of training “ministers” in a college. Students typically graduate in their early 20’s with much technical knowledge, but little life experience. They may be placed in charge of a congregation before they have raised any children at all. The overseer practices on his congregation, then uses his experience to raise his family. This is the opposite of the way it should be. There is nothing wrong with teaching the Bible in college. Those so trained can teach classes and assist other overseers. But a young person should not be placed in charge of a congregation.

—NSE

## Hierarchy in 1 Corinthians 12?

**LETTER:** January 20, 1998  
Hello Norman,

Thanks for the one issue of *Servants' News* you sent me. Quite interesting and quite an eye opener. Most of the stuff we were simply never told in Worldwide.

Concerning the church government issue what do you make of 1 Corinthians 12:28-30? Does this imply a hierarchy of apostles, prophets, teachers, etc.? Do the words first, second, third, etc mean rank or timing?

—South Africa

**Response:** Notice 1 Corinthians 12:28-30:

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

The Greek words for “first,” “second,” and “third” have similar meanings to the English words. They do not necessarily imply first in time, rank, place, importance or any particular area. I believe that Paul is giving the overall importance here. However, a time sequence is also possible: Christ chose the apostles, then it may be that he later chose prophets and teachers. Which ever view you adopt, you must realize that these are “spiritual gifts” (as verse 30 says), not “positions in an organization.” We can see this by reading the New Testament and seeing that some people received a variety of gifts: some teachers were also prophets (Acts 15:32), some Apostles spoke in

tongues (1Cor 14:18). A variety of apostles, prophets, and teachers performed healings and miracles, or administered things. These are clearly not “offices.”

Do apostles, prophets, and teachers form a hierarchy? Our understanding of a hierarchy is a structure where the person at the top appoints those below himself, directs their work, and, if necessary, removes them from the hierarchy. Do we have any biblical example of an apostle appointing a prophet or directing the prophet what to prophesy? Did Paul “fire” Agabus when he gave him a negative prophecy? (Acts 21:10-15). Do we find prophets appointing and directing teachers? Do teachers appoint and direct miracle workers, healers, helpers, administrators, and tongue speakers? If these verses are a description of a human hierarchy, why are administrators nearly at the “bottom”? Why don’t the apostles in the various organizations today appoint some prophets so we can hear the will of the Eternal? Why don’t the teachers in these groups appoint some healers to cure the sick people and some miracle workers to catch fish with gold coins inside so they can finance a “big work”?

The only reason why we believe some of these verses could be about human hierarchies is because we have heard the idea so much from people we trusted. Anyone who had no previous idea of what these verses meant would never conclude that this is a hierarchy. Rather, these are gifts that the Eternal, as He chose, gave to people. The fact that few people among us have these gifts means that we have a ways to go to be ready to receive them. (If people within hierarchies received these gifts, would they use them as proof that they are the “one true church?”)

—NSE

## Prediction of CGI/UCG Merger?

**LETTER:** January 21, 1998

With David Hulme’s Presidency terminated, I do hope that a few of the others who are too hierarchical have their wings clipped too.

Hulme wrote a letter which he read to the home office stating that he would take this to the General Conference - this apparently led to his being voted out 10-1. But this would be very divisive due to the roughly even Right vs Moderate-(and small liberal) split in votes.

If he were making a stand against apostasy and watering-down our doctrines, I would support him; but this seems like an ambition thing. And also going contrary to the original intent and spirit of UCG.

In fact, only the Council of Elders can

select the President, so even if the 3 persons coming up for re-election were replaced with Hulme supporters (which I very much doubt), he would still only muster 5 votes (including his own). My personal wish is to see persons such as Kubik, Ward and McCullough in as Chairman and President.

**Perhaps now with GTA out of the way and now Hulme, we might see co-operation between UCG and CGI?** Will God remove other leaders of other Churches of God to bring about co-operation?

I am continually shocked by the abuses still going on in UCG and Pinnelli not doing a thing about them. Let’s hope that we will now see UCG move toward its original positions as clearly stated in 1995, but gradually being dismissed or not appearing in our materials over the last 18 months or so.

—Craig White, UCG member, Australia  
craig@triode.net.au

**Response:** If I would have replied to this letter when you sent it, I would have said that I do not think there is much chance for UCG and CGI to work together. Nevertheless, it looks like it is now a possibility. [See p 21 of this issue]. I think this merger would be good for both of them.

I do not know who would make the best president for UCG. Even if every man interested in the job were to write an extensive list of how he intended to do the job, it would still be hard to know what he would actually do. (One need only study politicians promises before elections and what they do afterward to see there is often little similarity.) I think the selection of the 12th apostle in Acts chapter 1 is a good example of how to do it: prayerfully set down some qualifications and see who matches them. If it is not clear who is most qualified, then cast lots.

I believe that anyone who thinks that they “must be” the president of a group without some clear revelation from the Eternal is taking too much upon themselves. We have never heard of Hulme putting forward any such evidence. Being the leader of such an organization is a difficult job. If I were voted out, I would gladly accept it; the Eternal would voted me back if He wanted me there.

—NSE

## No Perfect Church Government

**LETTER:** February 26, 1998  
Greetings Mr. Edwards:

Yes, I would like to receive the *Servants' News*. I remember reading some of your articles in the newspaper “In Transition” which seemed to be balanced and logical.

All of the splinter groups seem to have problem of some sort, but the major one is

government. Frankly I don't believe the Government has ever been perfect in the church from the apostolic Church till now for the simple reason we're all imperfect people and we're influenced by the untrustworthy society we live in today.

I departed the WWCOC in Nov. 1994 when I saw it was obvious the leadership of the wwcoc were going toward a Protestant based theology. I have been attending the Global Church since Dec. 1994, although it has problems so do all the other groups so I can't see jumping from one group to another. Its like Frank Nelte wrote in an article, "all of these splinter groups are just a refuge in the storm of the apostasy".

All of the leaders of the splinter groups like to think they picked up the Mantle dropped by Mr. Armstrong. It reminds me when we were kids, we used to play cowboys and indians if you were an indian everybody wanted to be the chief and nobody wanted to be an indian, so it is today, **my way** is right and yours is wrong.

I would say when the Messiah returns all of us will be reprimanded for playing our little games. I would like to know if this E-Mail address is your private one if I wanted to ask a personal question sometime?

Please Send the Sept. issue of *Servants' News* if available.

—P.H.

**Response:** Thank you for your letter. I will send you the two previous issues of *Servants' News*. Also, I am including a short package of information about my relationship with the Global Church of God (it might answer some of your questions.)

My e-mail is private. The messages come to me personally. Sometimes, especially with long literature requests, I simply print them for others to handle.

I agree with your analysis of the various WCG splinter groups. It is a mistake to run from one to another based on how many booklets, TV programs, or other activities they have at the moment. Doctrinal comparison is also not worthwhile: There is much more difference between HWA doctrines in the 30's and HWA doctrines in the 80's than there is difference between the various organizations. The primary reasonable reason for going to a new organization is being asked to leave the last one (or at least being persecuted by it).

The biggest problem with all of the various organizations is their failure to recognize people in other organizations as brethren. The problem is not that they hate people in other groups, but that to admit that they are one of many groups would remove their ability to say that "their decisions are God's decisions." The organizations would have to

answer questions and make demands of people based on scriptural principles—not simply from their own authority.

We appreciate your comments. We believe brethren are better off meeting with a hierarchical organization than simply staying home every Sabbath. We hope the organizations will see their difficulties and make changes.

—NSE

## Don't Be Soft on Bad Leaders

**LETTER:** January 29, 1998

I believe we are being too soft on the people whom the Bible would probably term pharisees and Nicolaitons. Sometimes it is necessary to speak the truth boldly! By enforcing as scriptural topics such as church government, tithing and how to "feed the flock", these "blind guides" put stumbling blocks in the way of many "little ones" who are most likely being called by our Father in heaven. I believe that many throughout the years have suffered real spiritual loss as a result of the "heavy loads" these "descendants of those who murdered the prophets" placed on us. There is no secret doctrine. If God is for us, is there any false doctrine that can overcome us in an open discussion? So why all the disfellowshipping?

These "priests of God" are only truly capable of judging what is on the "outside of the cup." It is the responsibility of the individual with the help of God, to clean the inside! I believe that our Savior longed to strengthen His church as we gathered together, but His efforts were thwarted by this brood of vipers, snakes and hypocrites who strained out of the church the gnats which bothered them while not focusing on the preeminence of our personal relationship with our Creator! It is more important to be right with God than to please man!

Is it any wonder that the "house is left to you desolate"? I believe that we will continue to have a stumbling block between us and our Savior until we learn to accept the truth without prejudice towards the messenger (Matt 23:39)!

Thank you!

—John Solomon

**Response:** Everything you have said is probably true in regard to some leaders. There have certainly been many people offended by men claiming to be servants of God while binding heavy burdens that they will not lift. The difficulty is that we cannot condemn every "minister" in a church organization as evil without knowing his heart. For years, I would have told anyone that the Bible teaches "hierarchical government." Why? Because my study consisted of read-

ing the few scriptures that someone taught me that appeared to support hierarchical government. When I studied the matter for myself, I realized what the scriptures really said. Was I an "evil person" when I had not yet studied the matter? No, I was just an ignorant person in that area of study. Similarly, we probably find ministers in organizations whose view is like any one of the following:

1. A minister was awed by all the Bible truth taught by his organization, and was diligent to follow his organization's advice not to listen to "other sources." Whenever he had questions about his organization's doctrines he asked its doctrinal department. If he never received an answer, he assumed that the organization was too busy with many more important things. If he received an answer which did not seem to agree with other Bible scriptures, he assumed that the headquarters had many more knowledgeable people who studied the matter, so he always gave the organization the benefit of the doubt and assumed that they were right. When he was asked to disfellowship people for reasons that he did not understand, he assumed that the person put out was probably guilty of some wicked sin that headquarters did not want to mention, so he put them out. If the disfellowshipped tried to explain their situation to him, he assumed they were crafty liars, so he did not listen to their story. In short, this minister never compromised his understanding of Scripture or his conscience, he was simply naive.

2. Another minister spent time studying his Bible, reading doctrinal papers not produced by his headquarters, and listened to the stories of people whom he was asked to disfellowship. He believed that his organization was often biblically sound in its decisions, but that sometimes they were wrong. However, he was convinced that the Bible supported the authority of church government and that God would "back up" the decision of his Church leaders even if it was unbiblical or unjust. Therefore, he carried out the orders given to him—even the ones that he believed were wrong. Unfortunately, this minister never made an extensive study to see what the Bible says about church authority. He would have liked to make such a study, but realized that if he could not prove all-encompassing church authority, then he would not have a reason for doing some of the things that he had to do to keep his job.

3. This minister was enamored with "church authority" long before he was "ordained." He gave powerful sermonettes on obeying the ministry and was quick to inform ministers whenever he heard about

someone who spoke against the church leadership. After being "ordained," he was always asking his superiors if they were pleased with his performance—and he made doubly sure that those "under him" were doing as instructed. When his superiors mentioned people who had created some kind of problem in the congregation, this minister would have his trusted friends keep a close watch on them—often he could find a reason to disfellowship the problem people—making some of his superiors even happier with him. This minister has been raised in rank several times and was hoping to "make evangelist" before he retired. He could hardly wait for the kingdom where he assumed that he would be given a great rank indeed. He hoped that one day his children would come back under church authority so he could command them to repent and be baptized—his children had all left his church completely when they were old enough to leave home. They cited his personal sins as why they left. "What right do these children have to question the actions of someone with my rank?" he wondered.

4. This minister tried to study the Bible and live by every word of it. He was always open to those who disagreed with him—whether members or other ministers. Several times his study showed him major doctrines where his organization was in error. When he asked them about it, they told him that the church had the right to make doctrinal decisions. When he asked how the church could contradict the Bible, they told him that it was not his place to ask these questions. When he told them that he could not teach the organization's doctrines that were in conflict with the Bible, they at first threatened him, but when they saw that he would not back down, they told him that **maybe** the doctrinal committee might accept his study someday, and that he could continue to believe them as long as he did not share them with others and cause trouble. The organization also let him know that they were keeping him because he had a reputation as a servant of the people, but that they could not give more responsibility to men who were not team players. Several times this minister felt like quitting the organization, but he knew that most of his congregation was so steeped in "church government" and "one true organization" doctrine that nearly all would stay with the organization. He realized that his replacement would probably be far worse than himself—so he stayed on, serving and teaching those truths he held in common with the organization.

There are many other profiles of ministerial thought besides these—and probably every possible combination. Some are right-

eous, some are unknowingly ignorant of the Bible, some do not care what it says once "headquarters" has made a pronouncement, etc. etc. Some may operate under one profile, but claim to operate under another. This is why there will be a righteous judgment in the end when Christ will judge the secret things of men (Rom 2:16). A great many people will probably try to talk about the many great works they did, the many people that they converted to righteousness, etc. I think there will be a lot of surprises.

However, I think that we would make a mistake to say that all leaders in church organizations are evil. We would really make a mistake to say that all "independent church leaders" are good—a number of people claiming to be church leaders show up in independent congregations simply because they are welcomed there but have been rejected everywhere else.

Those who support the evil things in hierarchical governments will be judged for it. Those who do it knowingly will be judged more harshly (Luke 12:47-48). Those who push independence simply to get a following after themselves will be judged also.

We ought to be slow to judge others' motives; (ministers are to judge themselves) but quick to avoid practicing the things that we understand to be wrong.

—NSE

### Non-Revelation 2 & 3

**LETTER:** January 2, 1998  
Greetings to the SN & readers:

The Non-revelation article from SN Vol.3 No.7 (Sept/Oct 1997) is successful and a challenge. The normal reader must get now what the Bible does **not** say.

It's right that sometimes it's better to speak with cynicism and sarcasm about the Bible instead of letting the people leave in a wrong attitude.

Thank you for the SN I receive every month. Thank you to the staff.

—Alexander Gonska, Cologne, Germany

**Response:** Thank you for sharing your opinion. It seems that most people found the article helpful.

—NSE

### Look into Biblical Government!

**LETTER:** November 26, 1997  
Dear Norman:

After being lent a copy of the latest Servants' News by a friend in one of the independent churches, I felt I should write to let you know that I found it rather sad that you should devote so much of your time and effort into denigrating the efforts of organiza-

tions such as the United Church of God.

I appreciate that you, like many others, have a strong antipathy to churches of God that maintain a structure, a government and do not encourage a continual doctrinal turmoil, and all are naturally free to conduct their relationship with the Eternal as they think best. I have the impression from your publication, though, that God's displeasure with any kind of government in His Church is considered so obvious that it requires no proof. May I suggest that you seriously question this assumption?

**RESPONSE:** No, I am not against all "church government." I am against church leaders who claim that salvation is available only or primarily in their organization—that being cast out of their organization is being cast out of the Body of Christ. I am against church government that believes it does not have to explain its actions from scripture—because they have assumed that they are "the government of God." I am against leaders who believe they are a special class of people because they were "ordained" by some other man. I am against government that operates for its own benefit, not for the service of others. Both Testaments of scripture clearly indicate that the Eternal has given people roles to govern and serve others in certain ways. I am not against any government that the Eternal has set up.

**LETTER CONTINUES:** It may be that there is an alternative explanation as to why God withheld the Holy Spirit from converts in Samaria until Apostles from the Jerusalem church had visited them (Acts 8:14-17); why the Apostle Paul dared to interfere in the problems of the Corinthian church instead of allowing them to resolve it as an 'independent' congregation, even giving a direct instruction for one of them to be disfellowshipped (1Cor 5); why the same Apostle directed Titus to appoint elders over the churches in Crete instead of allowing them a free vote (Titus 1:5); why he gave instructions for those who were upsetting the church "to be silenced" instead of encouraging free doctrinal discussion (Titus 1:11); why doctrinal questions were referred to the Jerusalem church instead of being decided at local church level (Acts 15) etc. etc. And there is also an obvious one.

**RESPONSE:** It is interesting that you cannot turn to a scripture that says: "This is how you set up your church hierarchy." You can turn to examples of places that seem to fit with a typical "Church of God" government. But there are also examples that differ from the ones above. God used Ananias, **not an Apostle**, to lay hands on Paul and give him the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Paul, having been taught by Christ, told the Corinthian

**congregation** what to do about the sinning man—he followed Christ's instructions in Matt 18:15-17 and told them to bring it before their congregation ("when you are gathered together"—1Cor 5:4). Paul did not disfellowship the man himself or command the "head of the Corinthian church" to do it.

Those chosen to wait on tables were selected by the congregation they served (Acts 6:3). The Greek word for "ordain" used in Acts 14:23 and 2Cor 8:19 is *cheirotoneo*. It meant "to vote" in classical Greek works—Young's Literal Translation translates it that way. Those who are trying to subvert others should be stopped, but Paul said he would go out of his way not to offend brethren who thought they should not eat meat (Rom 14)—Paul could have pointed out their doctrinal error and commanded them not to teach it, but he did not. The Jerusalem council was used to decide doctrine one time, but it was after much disputing (Acts 15:7). Also, the whole assembly was a part of the decision (Acts 15:22). Things worked differently in Revelation 2 & 3—a number of different doctrines being taught within a 100 mile radius. Christ did not tell John to disfellowship everyone who believed error, but He told them all to repent, and told them what would happen if they did or did not repent.

We should follow every leader that the Eternal sets up—in the area where the Eternal has given him authority. There is no doubt that people recognized the position of the early Apostles. They did not learn doctrine from Bible study, but directly from Christ. Also, they were humble men. Not a one ever claimed that "God only works through me." Today, we have many men claiming to be God's leaders on earth. Is it our job to pick out one of these men, then believe every doctrine he believes? Or are we responsible for our own understanding? We will send you two articles that may help you: *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?* and *Assembling on the Sabbath*.

**LETTER CONTINUES:** I am merely suggesting that members of the UCG and other "hierarchical" organizations should not be considered Biblical illiterates who worship some human leader and are unwilling to acknowledge new truth when it is shown them. We have learned from experience, however, that 'new truth' often turns out to be 'old error', and have a strong suspicion that the current tirades on the evils of hierarchies may be just that. I myself left the WCG in 1979, in part, because I was not willing to accept a new teaching known as the primacy of Peter, regardless of how eminent the credentials of the Church leader espousing it appeared to be, and fellowshipped for

many years with the CGI. This error was minor, of course, compared to what happened in the nineties. The problem, however, was not that the WCG was a hierarchy, but that one man had control over its doctrines.

**RESPONSE:** The term "hierarchical government" usually implies a single leader at the top." David Hulme apparently lost in his effort to become that leader in UCG. We believe, as you do, that it is a mistake for one man to have all control. It is also a mistake for a small group of men to have absolute control. The UCG has made provision to avoid this by having the Council of Elders elected by all of the Elders. However, a pastor of a UCG congregation still has near-absolute control—he can disfellowship a member for his own reasons—there is no requirement to bring the issue before the congregation (Matt 18:17), and as far as I know, there is no appeal process in place yet.

**LETTER CONTINUES:** The United Church of God was formed in such a way as to ensure that this could not happen again, but it recognized also that God's work can be carried out in an organized and structured way, following the example given to us in Scripture. If it has not yet fulfilled the initial expectations of many, it does not deserve the treatment given to it by those who claim to be our brothers in Christ. Instead of telling your readers that UCG publications are "like trick advertisements," and that the language "either says almost nothing or something quite different than what the casual reader might assume," why not suggest they read a few themselves and form their own opinion? Those, like the Athenians, who are interested only "to tell or hear some new thing" may well be disappointed, but not those who want the basic truths of the Bible, the teachings that are to lead us to salvation. They will certainly not find any space in it devoted to criticisms of other organizations because God has not called us for this. And if they should wish to fellowship with us, they will find a warm, peaceful Sabbath environment. If visitors are not permitted to propagate their own doctrinal ideas in our congregations, it is not because we are afraid of some new truth, but because we have the New Testament instruction of what was, and what was not, permitted in the first century church (Titus 3:9-10). Our members see it not as a restriction but as a decided blessing! And those who believe that big organizations are unwilling to allow members to exercise their spiritual gifts may be surprised to learn that in our local UCG Toronto congregation, there are seven "non-elders" who regularly give sermons or sermonettes.

**Response:** We received many com-

plaints about the tactics of David Hulme and associates from people within the UCG, some of them ministers. However, most of these people felt that if they publicly commented about them, they would be fired or put out of their congregations (one of the disadvantages of hierarchy that feels it can bypass the Bible procedures). I agree that it is sometimes a blessing to go to a congregation where there are no heavy discussions—you sit back and hear nice things that everyone already believes. But how and when will you learn new truth? When your organization decides they have time to teach you some? How many people does your organization hire that are devoted to studying the Bible and putting new truth before members? I was on the Global Church of God doctrinal committee. One reason I left that organization was because I realized that truth would only come to them through "the top," and the people "at the top" were too busy administrating, writing, broadcasting, etc., to study new truth—some of them actually said that. As a member of their board, I was not really free to discuss any "new truth," until the men at the top had studied it. It is three years later now, and as far as I know they still have not studied it. What is the role of John 16:13?: "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth."

We are happy to see that the UCG is allowing a wide variety of people to speak. This is a good start. Would they allow a man like Philip, chosen to wait on tables (Acts 6:5), to conduct a major evangelistic campaign? (Acts 8:40—There are many cities in the 70 miles from Azotus to Caesarea.)

**LETTER ENDS:** I have no great expectations that you will publish this letter, but I hope you will at least give it some thought, and consider if the articles referred to are really helping God's people everywhere to "come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God...to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Your brother in Christ,

—Kevin Ford, Canada

**Response:** Our goal is learning and teaching truth. We welcome letters that oppose what we teach (though we do not have time to answer people who write very long articles that we consider erroneous, or that send in multiple letters that say essentially the same thing). If we cannot answer difficult questions, then we need to stop or change our teaching. We realize that teachers will receive a stricter judgment (Jams 1:3). Does your organization publish brief letters that show scriptures that appear to be in conflict with its teaching?

—NSE



## The Myth of "One Man Rule"

**LETTER:** December 12, 1997  
Dear Norman Edwards and *Servants' News* Family,

As always, I enjoy receiving the *Servants' News*. Though I don't always agree with everything written, I do always learn something!

I am amazed at what is going on in the corporate churches such as the UCG-AIA. Much time and resources are spent trying to keep the selfish, abusive hierarchical systems going. Some men seem hell-bent to control and manipulate others. Take their money away and see how long they are willing to "serve."

There are many "lay members" who serve each other year after year with no financial compensation whereas some who still favor the hierarchy and have "ordination papers" require lots of money and "respect" from the members they are supposed to be serving.

The leaders of these organizations preach sole authority from God and become quite abusive in tongue concerning those who don't follow them. Because of "organization" and supposedly government of such, the people are split. The leaders have done this and we the followers have had to choose which leader we would follow. I have heard this one man rule till I am sick.

When Jesus sent his apostles out to teach and witness to the world, who was the one man ruling? They had no phone, computer; or fax systems. If one was in charge, how did he keep control of the other eleven? They were spread out spanning the whole world. Was one man in charge of the whole operation, or was it Jesus who said He worked with them and confirmed their word?

In David's time as king, who was the one man? Was it David as King or Nathan as prophet. If David was, why did God speak to Nathan? If Nathan was, why did he (David) dare do the things he did in his kingly "authority"?

In Elijah's day, who was the one man? King Ahab, the monarch, or Elijah the prophet? King Ahab was evil, Elijah was God's servant. Yet neither knew about the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. How could Elijah be "over" these people that he did not know existed? Who ruled them?

During Saul's reign, who was the one-man? Prior to Saul's anointing, God was their king. He spoke through Samuel. The people rejected God their king--not Samuel. So who was in charge? The king or the prophet? If Saul was, how dare Samuel speak so "presumptuously" to the

king. If Samuel was already ruling as the one man, why did Israel cry out for a king (like the nations around them)? Samuel was not ruling them, as he only conveyed to them what God spoke. God was the "one man" then as He is now.

There were other prophets throughout all this history as well. Who was "head prophet"?

The New Testament is full of examples that totally go against the hierarchy rule with one lone man at the top. Acts is an excellent source to prove this. Throughout the accounts in Acts, we read of the Apostles, disciples and prophets (and prophetesses) interacting with each other. No one was in charge of the others. Sometimes there was harmony and peace and sometimes there was dissension and debate.

The example of Paul openly rebuking Peter before them all: How would that go over in today's churches? What would have happened if any minister had walked up to HWA at the Feast and openly showed where he (HWA) was wrong to separate families because of his D & R understanding?

Whom did God use in anointing Paul so he could see? A simple disciple whom God spoke through.

The four daughters of Philip prophesied to Paul as did other prophets. If Paul was in charge, why did God not speak just to him? Why a prophet?

Can we see someone going to any of the men who claim to be the "one man in charge" today and telling them God has spoken to him a message for them? Many have dispelled the idea of prophets (or prophetesses) in today's church calling it jokingly a "non-prophet" organization. Wonder why? Could it be that admitting that if God worked through and spoke through an individual other than the one man (i.e. HWA) it would take away the sole authority and relinquish control from the man at the top? As such, the whole hierarchical empire would crumble, for who would govern and control these prophets (and prophetesses)?

Consider Deborah. This account is a big thorn in the flesh for the male dominated hierarchy. She was a prophetess who judged Israel for forty years during which Israel had peace. God spoke through her to Israel. When she chided Barak for not going into battle, it was because God had already given instructions through Deborah as to how to conquer their enemies who were oppressing them. She had to spell it out a second time. Even then Barak refused to go except she go with him.

**The account of Deborah has been virtually dismissed among the hierarchical churches.** It's been explained away by saying that a woman was used in this capacity only because no man of courage could be found throughout all of Israel. Are we to believe that Almighty God could not have raised up a man in forty years that could judge and prophesy to Israel? If He could speak through a jackass, He could surely speak through any man He so desired.

The truth is, God works through whomsoever He wills, and His desire at that time and place was Deborah—a woman.

So, during her time and service as a judge and prophetess, who was the one "man" in charge?

If Elijah, Nathan, and Samuel were in charge in their day, then we must conclude that Deborah was (in charge) in her day.

Too many of the women of today's churches have been silenced and emotionally beaten into submission not only to their husbands but to all men. As hard as it is to imagine a man ("laymember") being accepted in the hierarchical circles as a prophet, it would be entirely unacceptable for a woman to be recognized as a prophetess. This would undermine the whole male-dominated system. Yet, God has done it in the past.

Why is it so hard for men to recognize that God works through the individual members of His church? His spirit rules. He has repeatedly warned us not to put our trust in mortal man. Yet this is what the hierarchical pyramid demands. They have much to lose, and they are losing, as the many letters and articles in *Servants' News* (and other media) attest.

I feel very strongly that many people are being freed from this bondage. Yet, others desire this rule over them. And, as history concludes, if they desire this rule, God will let them have it. If we desire this king we shall have the king for there are those who are more than willing to step into that role. If we do desire this rule, then we need to be informed by God's warning what we should expect the consequences to be. I Samuel 8.

And we also should take I Samuel 12:12-17 into consideration as well.

For those who do not feel that HWA was in effect a "king" over us, I suggest they peruse some of the old literature of the Worldwide Church of God concerning government and authority. His own literature compares him to a dictator (howbeit a "benevolent" one) and to the Pope. Those statements alone should give pause for thought.

Sincerely,

—Tawanda Ray, Alabama

**“Judaism in NT” from page 1**  
**New Testament** (Matt 12; Matt 23, John 6-9, etc.) **proves that they are evil people.** What this myth fails to note is that there are numerous positive references to Jews in the scriptures (John 8:31; 12:11; Acts 6:7, etc.). It is easy to study every occurrence of the word “Jew” in the New Testament. It becomes very clear that the major conflict that Jesus had was not with Jews in general, but corrupt Jewish leaders (Matt 21:45-46; Mark 12:37; Luke 19:47-48, John 7:46-49).

**Myth 2: Jews must be punished for killing Christ and wanting his blood to be on them and their children (Matt 27:25).** While the Jewish leaders and sheep-like crowd certainly said this, there is no command for New Testament believers to try to carry out any vengeance whatever. Furthermore, the scripture commands us **not** to take revenge on people—especially for sins of past generations:

Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them (Deut 32:35).

Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin (Deut 24:16).

**Myth 3: Jews are “of their Father the Devil” (John 8:44).** Some groups actually teach that this scripture means that Jews were not physically descended from Jacob, but from some other line that includes Satan as a physical father and are therefore “sub-human.” It should be obvious that Jesus was not talking about literal fatherhood, but speaking in a figurative sense. A literal interpretation is false for all of these reasons:

a) The end of the verse says Satan is also the father of liars—if we accept a literal meaning above, we should also accept it here; it would mean that any one who is a liar is a physical descendent of Satan. It would also mean that those not physically descended from Satan are incapable of lying. This writer’s experience indicates that liars can be found in just about every culture, gender, and religion. One does not suddenly switch heredity when one tells a lie.

b) Jesus was talking specifically

to scribes and Pharisees here—not to Jews as a whole.

c) In Matthew 16:23, Jesus calls Peter “Satan.” This is obviously not literal either.

d) In Luke 16:8 Jesus refers to “children of light” and “children of this world.” While this might make an interesting Star Trek episode, I hope no one seriously believes some children are literally procreated by the earth or by light beams.

**Myth 4: Synagogues are all of Satan (Rev 2:9; 3:9).** These scriptures do not say that synagogues are of Satan, but that there are **some** people who pretend to be Jews who are not. We will not speculate on exactly who those groups are in this article. We do not need to, because the Bible makes it clear that some believers were meeting in synagogues 30 years after Jesus’ death. The word in James 2:2 that is translated “assembly” in most Bibles is the Greek *sunagoge* which is translated “synagogue” **everywhere** else in the New Testament. (Literal translations like Young’s and Darby have this correct.)

**Myth 5: Most Jews are part of an international conspiracy to take over the world.** There is good evidence that **SOME** Jews are involved with efforts to control the economies and politics of most major nations. But there are many non-Jews involved in such activities, too. This writer’s experience has shown that the people who appear to be involved in global conspiracies are **not** the ones who are in synagogues several times each week studying Torah and Talmud. Most people who most loudly condemn Jews have never set foot in a synagogue. Most non-Jews would probably be shocked that they would be welcomed, that they would not be asked to renounce Christ, and that they would not hear one word about plans to take over the world. To the contrary, they would find most Orthodox Jewish Rabbis very concerned that Jews have departed Torah study for the pursuit of worldly riches.

**Christians need to realize that nearly everything in the New Testament that is “against Jews” was against those corrupt within the Jewish leadership of the time.** It clearly says that “the common people heard Him gladly” (Mark 12:37). Furthermore, the leaders of the time were the most corrupt of any generation (Luke

11:50-51). If we want to benefit from the many things that Jesus said about the leaders of His day, we need to look to see what applies to the religious and political leaders of our day. This writer is continually amazed at how many people seem to automatically assume that the leaders in their governments and churches are “basically good people” when the scripture teaches that in general, the opposite is true. This does not mean that we should fall in the other ditch and assume that all leaders must be bad—but it means that we should be willing to hear and consider evidence that our leaders might be corrupt.

### What Should Christians Learn from Jews?

Christians must acknowledge that they are indebted to the Jews for maintaining the Old Testament and the seventh-day Sabbath. While many societies have planned or tried to implement other calendars with different weeks, the Jews have clung to their Sabbath and prevailed for about three thousand years.

Jews believe that they have also maintained an “oral law”—words that were spoken by the Eternal to Moses and other prophets that were not written down. Over time, these oral traditions have been written down—and mixed in with the commentary of various rabbis. This writer prefers to look on this body of knowledge as similar to the totality of the writings of a specific church organization: some appear inspired, some appear clearly wrong, much of it is uncertain, and parts definitely contradict each other. If one is having a difficult time understanding a particular Old Testament scripture, the Jewish approach can **sometimes** be insightful. At other times, it appears that there is little understanding of the “spirit of the law.” There are several different translations of the Old Testament and also commentaries written in English, but from a Jewish perspective. Most Christian book stores will carry some of them.

Even some parts of the New Testament can be better understood in the light of Jewish tradition: naming a baby boy on his eighth day (Luke 1:59); Jesus was at the Temple for the Feast of Hanukkah or Dedication (John 10:22); Jesus used the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the day of the traditional Jewish water-pouring ceremony, to teach

that he was the source of living water (John 7:37-39); the sabbath day's journey is mentioned (Acts 1:12); the practice of immersion baptism for repentance and remission of sins (Mark 1:4); and using the expression "fruit of the vine" for religiously consumed wine (Matt 26:39). In other places, the New Testament uses Jewish phrases, or refers to Jewish ideas that can be more clearly understood from a Jewish perspective. One good source of this kind of information is *Jewish New Testament* and the *Jewish New Testament Commentary* by David H. Stern.

There seems to be two major dangers in studying the Jewish background of the Bible. One danger is simply trying to "understand all of it." The Talmud is about five times the size of the Bible. If you add in all of the other important ancient Jewish writings, plus the significant commentaries, the total size is extremely large. In short, most people who are primarily occupied with earning a living will die before they are able to thoroughly understand all of the documents that make up the body of significant Jewish teaching.

The other danger that comes from overly studying Jewish writings is the tendency to be enamored with all of the wisdom of the Old Testament and all of the physical things associated with it. The New Testament clearly states that the administration under Moses was glorious (2Cor 3:7). However the entire chapter shows how the administration under Jesus **was much more glorious**. It is wonderful to see how many things in the Old Testament actually pointed to Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah. However, a believer must realize that the Apostle Paul was an expert in all of these things, yet he counted them as so much "rubbish" compared to his Savior (Phlp 3, especially v 8). Paul certainly used the knowledge he had, but he did not let it serve as a substitute for the Holy spirit and his Savior.

If Jewish study replaces spiritual growth in a believer's life, he or she is in serious trouble. Brethren need to look deeply at what Paul said if they begin to feel more righteous because they have better Sabbath table cloths or candlesticks, because they start the Sabbath 20 minutes before sunset, because they say prayers in Hebrew, because they wear clothing according to Rabbinic specifications, etc.

It is very important to simply look at what the Eternal has done. Forty years after Jesus died (70 A.D.), the Jerusalem temple was destroyed and has not been rebuilt since. He has allowed the Jews to preserve most of their tradition for many years, but he has not restored the temple service, the priesthood, and so many other things necessary for the Old Testament practices. Even though it is likely that another temple will be built, one must realize that the Eternal found it unnecessary for nearly 2000 years. Both Peter and Paul clearly taught that our Savior's body—the Church—is now the spiritual temple of God (1Pet 2; 1Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21-22).

### Should Jews Try to Convert Christians?

In general, the Jews have made very little effort to convert anyone to anything. Their own writings teach them that they should proclaim the Seven Laws of Noah—basic principles of righteousness and justice—to the Gentiles, but Jews have rarely done this in any meaningful way. The Jews do recognize a couple of categories of converts, but they do not actively pursue making them. The sheer volume of things to learn (as mentioned previously) makes conversion very difficult for older persons.

Most of the effort to convert Christians to Judaism has been from smaller quasi-Jewish groups not well accepted by mainstream Jews. How many of these groups seriously believed they were teaching truth, and how many were simply trying to promote a new religion with themselves as the head, is hard to know. Much of the "conversion" effort directed at Christians has been largely to teach that the Old Testament and (possibly some Jewish writings) are superior to the New Testament, and that Jesus was not who the New Testament claims He is. Some groups will say Jesus never existed, some will say that the New Testament writers greatly exaggerated His importance, and others say that later writers altered the New Testament to say Jesus was the "son of God" and that salvation comes through Him.

One example of this type of teaching is that of Darrell Conder (Commonwealth Publications) who teaches many doctrines common to Judaism and Christianity, but believes that the Gospels are largely forgeries. A more deceptive

example is the teaching by Rabbi Harvey Falk in his book, *Jesus the Pharisee*. While the book is not openly critical of the accuracy of the New Testament, it quietly makes numerous claims about New Testament teaching that simply are not there. For example, Falk concludes that Jesus' mission was to create a new religion for Gentiles (ignoring verses like (Matthew 15:24: "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"). Also, Falk concludes that Jesus' statement, "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6) must have been to Gentiles—though the Bible context is clearly to the Jewish Apostles. In general, the book ignores the message of salvation through Jesus and presents Him as a man who came to teach Torah and support the opinions of Hillel against those of Shammai (two famous Jewish teachers). Without stating it, the book clearly valued Talmudic writings over the New Testament.

Most importantly, Christians, who have an understanding of the Salvation that is available through Jesus (or Yeshua, if you prefer) are strictly instructed **not to give Him up**:

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels (Luke 9:26).

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction (2Pet 2:1).

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also (1Jn 2:23).

### Should Christians Try to Convert Jews?

Throughout history, Jews have greatly resisted conversion to Christianity—whether such conversion be forced or friendly. In 1997, an evangelical Christian group created quite a stir by sending religious literature to a large percentage of homes in the country of Israel. Legislation was introduced to make Christian proselyting a crime. One can understand why the Jews are so against losing converts to another religion: **1) They have suffered terrible**

treatment at the hands of those trying to convert them in the past. 2) Jews are scattered throughout the world, and it has been their religion that has preserved their identity as a people. 3) Most "Christians" have tried to teach Jews things that contradict the Old Testament:

1) God is a trinity.

2) People should keep Sunday, Christmas, and Easter, not the Sabbath and the biblical Holy Days.

3) Salvation is dependent upon accepting an effeminate "Jesus" that had no apparent regard for the Torah—the "law" of God.

4) Converted Jews must begin meeting in churches, not synagogues.

5) Jews must give up all of their tradition to be converted.

Almost none of these things are necessary for Jews to gain salvation through Yeshua their Savior. Christ did show how some Jewish tradition made the law of none effect, but he apparently kept much of it. James 2:2 shows that converted brethren continued to meet in synagogues, though it is likely they had their own synagogues. Jews often object strenuously to a "human sacrifice" for sin—claiming that is pagan. However, when we read Genesis 22, where the Eternal asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, we see that it is something the Eternal thought of for years.

Sabbatarians should be able to lead Jews to Yeshua better than any other "Christian group." They should show how Yeshua was a largely observant Jew and how he was **the sacrifice** for sin, making all of the other Temple sacrifices no longer necessary. A Sabbatarian who has learned parts of the Talmud can show how even non-Biblical Jewish tradition points to Yeshua as Messiah.

Amazingly, Jews teach that some of their most dedicated, righteous men, who go above and beyond the law, are chosen by the Eternal to receive the *ruach hakodesh*. This is Hebrew for "the Holy Spirit." This understanding is confirmed by the New Testament. Luke records five people who had the Holy Spirit before Yeshua's death: John the Baptist, Mary (Jesus' Mother), Elizabeth (John's mother), Zacharias (John's Father), and Simeon (a devout old man) (Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25-26). **What Jews need to understand, is that through Yeshua ha Mashiach ("Jesus the Messiah") everyone is offered the Holy Spirit!**

The first century church was originally composed of nearly all Jews. The Gospel Paul preached was "for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rom 1:16). There was clearly a strong attempt made to teach Jews. It is also clear that the Jews were upset by such teaching. Similarly, today, Christians can expect persecution by Jews for teaching them about Jesus. Even though we bring a message much more compatible to their way of life, it will be seen by some Jews as more dangerous—because it will be hard to tell who is converted and who is not—just as it was in the first and second century. However, if such teaching of Jesus is done in the spirit of love and with the blessing of the Eternal, it need not be continually contentious.

Believers, today, should be certain that it is the Eternal's will before they begin to preach the Gospel to any people. It is clear from Paul's epistles that he understood the customs and beliefs of the people to whom he was preaching. We should do the same. We do not have to understand every detail of Jewish custom to teach them, but it would certainly help to understand the basics—and to be able to use the Hebrew terms for Christian concepts. Whoever preaches to Jews must do it with knowledge and patience. The ideal person would be one like the Apostles: raised in Judaism, but full of the Holy Spirit and in a close relationship with Yeshua his Messiah.

### Conclusion

Christians and Jews ought not to fight with each other. Christians can learn many things about both Testaments of the Bible from retained Jewish knowledge and tradition. However, if such study causes them to abandon or ignore Jesus, then they would have been better to never have begun such study. Jews should be able to learn about Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah from New Testament believers without having to accept any of the false customs that have heavily infiltrated Christianity.

Both people would be so much better off if they would live by the clear instructions that they share in common:

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

—Norman S. Edwards

## Sabbatarians Who Deny Salvation to Most People

Who actually believes that Jews, Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, and other racial groups cannot have salvation? Is it only men with swastikas in military-like camps? Or could there be people with these beliefs in a congregation or conference which you have attended? One teacher of such erroneous doctrines is **Dan Gayman**, bishop of the **Church of Israel**, based in Missouri.

**Dan Gayman** has spoken at meetings held by *Friends of the Sabbath*, the Seventh Day Adventists, and other Sabbatarian Groups. He is a powerful speaker and has much good to say about the Sabbath, Holy Days, strong families, British Israelism, etc. He is clever enough to conceal his racial views when speaking outside of his congregation. He waits until he has gained people's confidence and included them on his mailing list—then he tries to steer them to his unusual racial beliefs. So you may understand what he really teaches, we have included quotes from **Gayman's recent publications**:

From *Did You say You Were From the Church of Israel?* by Dan Gayman:

"We believe that **election is by race** and salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ."

"We believe that Biblical, **genetic** Israel in Jesus Christ is **the Church**, identified among the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Scandinavian, Germanic and kindred people of the world."

**"All genuine and Biblically certified Jews (Judeans or Judaites) are Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews or Judeans.** The distinction here is urgent because so many people now calling themselves Jews are not descended from Judah, the great-grandson of Abraham through Isaac. **A majority of all contemporary Jews are not from the tribe of Judah, are not Israelites, and are not even Biblical Hebrews!**

"For a complete historical review of the history of where almost all of the contemporary Jews originated, please consult three excellent works. Read *The Thirteenth Tribe* by Arthur Koestler,



Random House Publishers, New York, 1976, *The Iron Curtain Over America* by John Beaty, Chestnut Mountain Books, 1963, and *The International Jew [The World's Foremost Problem]* as originally published in the periodical *The Dearborn Independent* by the Ford Motor Company under the hand of Henry Ford Sr. All of these books demonstrate that a majority of all modern Jews are not Hebrew, not Israelites, and are not descended from Judah."

Gayman is letting the above books do his dirty work for him. What do they say? That Jews are evil and less than human. Even though Ford was a respectable industrialist, notice this from a biography of Adolf Hitler:

"I regard Henry Ford as my inspiration," Adolf Hitler explained in 1931 when asked why a portrait of Ford hung on his office wall. Two years later, on his seventy-fifth birthday, Ford accepted in a public ceremony Hitler's gift—the Grand Cross of the German Eagle, the Nazi Government's highest honor. Ford was one of only four men, including Benito Mussolini, to ever receive the award."

From "Q&A" section of Gayman's The Watchman magazine 1995:

**Q.** Pastor Gayman, is there major variation in the hair, eye, and skin color of Israelites? If I have incomplete or scanty genealogical records, how can I be certain that I am a pure Israelite?"

**A.** Israelites may vary somewhat in the fairness of skin color. Historically, if you could pass the **blue blood test**, you were considered white. That is, the blood veins had to be apparent to the eye, a test generally observed by rolling up the sleeve of the shirt and noting the blood veins showing through the skin. You may be assured that Israelites share many variations of eye color, hair color, and skin that ranges from very fair to a **slightly** more olive hue..."

"...Remember that not every Israelite will have blue eyes, blonde hair, and very fair skin. If it is **obvious** by skin color that someone is not Caucasian, **appropriate steps can be taken by Church leadership to preserve the racial integrity of the congregation.**

"...You may be certain that proper preaching and teaching of God's Word will sift from the Body those who are not racially pure Israelites. God's word will **penetrate into the very genetics of a person's body, soul, and spirit. People who are not pure will be sifted out through the faithful preaching of the Word.** ' For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper

than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

From Gayman's The Vision:

"Do we teach that all races except the Israelites were on the earth when Adam and Eve were created? YES! We believe the Bible teaches that no additional races (**biped creatures**) were created after Adam.... **All the other races were created under the terms 'living creature'...** None of these races was made in the image and after the likeness of God, as was the man (#120 Awdawm) of Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7... All of the races created before Adam were good... and each carries God's mark of ownership in skin color and various physical characteristics. They can know God and worship Him as creator, **but they cannot know Him in covenant relationship. That special relationship is reserved for saved Israelites.**"

So there is Gayman's teaching: only a small percentage of the people in the world can have a covenant relationship—which is necessary for Salvation; all Blacks, Orientals, Hispanics, Ethnic Jews, and every other non-white are essentially God's most intelligent form of animal. If you feel the need to confirm these teachings, you may write him at PO Box 218 E, Schell City, Missouri 64783.

You could show Gayman the numerous scriptures that talk about the "mixed multitude" that went out of Egypt, the Gentiles in the lineage of Jesus, the Gentiles that received salvation in the New Testament. But he would tell you that Hebrew and Greek words for "Gentile" also refer to "nations" in general and that these are simply other white people who lived in other countries—people who are of the proper race to receive salvation. But then that begs the question: if there is some large class of people who cannot be saved, what are the Hebrew and Greek words that designate such people?

**The most obvious thing that proves the error of these theories is science:** A species is a group of living things wherein any normal male and female can mate and produce a fertile offspring. For example, a horse and a donkey can mate and produce a mule, but the mule is not fertile (cannot reproduce), so horses and donkeys are a different species. Said another way, the Eternal made everything "according to its kind." **The truth of the matter is that all races or people are the same species or the "same kind"—they can procreate.**

The silliness of trying to conclude that some people have the genetic ability to be saved and some do not is born out by these two very possible stories:

It is possible that there is a respected-couple in Gayman's church, both having some ancestry from other races, but being white enough to pass the *blue blood test*. It is also possible that they could bear a child that would genetically receive many of the characteristics from the other races and not be able to pass Gayman's test. What do the parents do with that child? Use it as a slave? Put it up for adoption? If the Church of Israel casts out the couple for being racially impure, what do they say to others in their group who learned truth from a couple who "cannot even be saved?"

It is also possible for another couple who are both of a mixed racial background to bear a child who is white enough to pass the *blue blood test*. Suppose that this child is separated from his parents at birth, raised by white parents, and joins Gayman's church. Later he finds out that neither one of his parents are eligible for salvation. How can a person eligible for salvation be born from creatures not eligible for salvation?

The ridiculousness of these situations should be obvious. If the message of the Bible were "salvation to a select race of people," we would need extensive instruction on how to deal with situations like the above. **The truth of the matter is that the people in the Bible continually lived and intermarried among other nations, and the Bible contains no instruction on how to determine if someone is enough of the right race for salvation.** Furthermore, the real human capability should be obvious: There is no history of animals being concerned about eternal life, but every race of humans has spent much time and energy in its pursuit.

Believers do not need to return evil for evil and hate those with Gayman's beliefs. The early apostles originally thought that Salvation was only for the Jews—it took a lot to change them (Acts 10, 11). There may be converted people who hold Gayman's beliefs. However, we think it would be a mistake to invite those people to our services and meetings. How could anyone go to a meeting with a black or Jewish brother and say to him: "Dan Gayman is a really good speaker—he just has the minor fault of believing that, uh..., uh..., that you can never be saved!" No, this is one of the few cases where we need separation!

—Norman S. Edwards

**“Pharisees” from page 1  
Preoccupation with Appearances**

Jesus said of the Pharisees,

Everything they do is done for men to see. They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels of their prayer shawls long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them “Rabbi” (Matt 23:5-7).

How many religious leaders today love to be called by special titles like Rabbi, Father, Reverend, Mister, Doctor, Elder, Bishop or Minister? (Not that all are specifically prohibited by Scripture.) How many love fancy clothes, magnificent buildings, the high visibility of TV and slick publications? They live for the approval of men. But this tendency is not limited to religious leaders who like titles and fancy clothes. This preoccupation with appearances and *concern with external obedience* can be found to some degree in all of us!

On one occasion the Pharisees came to Jesus with a question about one particular activity: “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” (Matt 15:2.)

Of all the questions the Pharisees could have asked the Son of man—of all the important issues they could have questioned him about, of all the problems in Judah at the time, they had to ask (accusingly, of course), “Why don’t your disciples wash their hands?”

What kind of questions would we pose today? Would we ask the Master about world peace, about eternal life, about justice, mercy, about relief for guilt? Or would we want Him to resolve matters of make-up, jewelry, clothing, hair length, swim suits, alcohol, and meats? Are we preoccupied with the same sort of things (Col 2:21)?—what a person wears, what he eats, how he looks? Are we busy judging according to outward appearances, **while God is looking at the heart?** (1Sam 16:7.)

To be sure, the Bible deals with some of these external matters; but it makes very clear that what is more important is the inward attitude, which will, of course, be reflected on the outside. The problem is that all too often we, like the Pharisees, assume that

everyone’s heart will express itself externally the same way ours does; and we seek to make our external, outward measures the standard of judging the heart. Jesus’ reply to the Pharisees’ question about hand washing could be very instructive for us. He showed them there were far more important matters to be concerned about.

“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man unclean. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man ‘unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean’.” (Matt 15:16-20).

Is there a lesson in this for our day? To be sure, what we put in our mouths is very important relative to health, something Christians should be concerned about. But compared to important spiritual issues that face us, washing or not washing hands is inconsequential—it’s not even in the same ballpark. And neither are a lot of the physical things Christians worry about!

**Letter- of- the- Law Obedience**

On a Sabbath the Pharisees observed Jesus’ disciples shelling and eating grain in the fields—an activity contrary to their man-made traditions. Jesus answered their accusation by citing from the Old Testament two examples that involved a technical breaking of the letter of the Mosaic law (David eating shewbread and the priests serving in the temple on the Sabbath). In both situations the offenders were considered not guilty because of a higher, weightier “law.” Jesus concluded by stating that “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28).

Do we, like the Pharisees, tend to judge one another—not on matters of justice, mercy, love, joy, and kindness, but on external matters we can see and quantify—like the precise moment for the beginning of the Sabbath, whether or not one is permitted to spend money on the Sabbath, what someone wears, or

touches, or eats or drinks? Are we so concerned with letter-of-the-law obedience in one dimension that we completely ignore obedience in other dimensions?

On another occasion Jesus upbraided the Pharisees for being so meticulous in tithing (something quantifiable) while they ignored justice, mercy, and faith (Matt 23:23). He called them hypocrites! While indicating that they should not neglect to tithe, Jesus plainly told the Pharisees that there are “weightier matters” in the law. They are just as weighty today. Oh, that we would devote more of our precious time to them!

**Preoccupation with Doctrinal Correctness**

Many Christians today are very concerned with doctrinal correctness. I have personally written scores of articles, preached scores of sermons, placed dozens of ads promoting doctrinal truth! For centuries controversies have raged, churches have split, people have been executed over doctrinal differences. Today, particularly among Sabbath-keepers, there are debates about the correct Biblical calendar, about foot-washing, sacred names, how to keep feast days, tithing, Anglo-Israelism, etc., to name just a few.

There is nothing wrong with the quest for the theological truth; indeed it is a noble and worthwhile pursuit. But at what price? Do we ignore the truth about love and mercy for the sake of the “truth” about counting Pentecost or observing new moons?

Consider that the religious leaders of Jesus’ day were also preoccupied with doctrinal issues. The Sadducees wanted to know about the woman who was married to seven brothers. Whose wife would she be in the resurrection? (Even though they did not believe in a resurrection—Matt 22:23.) The Pharisees asked about paying tribute to Caesar (Matt 22:15). They wanted to know which was the greatest command (Matt 23:34); what should be done with the adulteress (John 8:1-11); who sinned, the blind man or his parents? (John 9:1).

Of course, their questions were usually designed to put Jesus on the spot, but it is quite obvious from the record that they were very much concerned with preserving and promoting their

own brand of doctrinal correctness. And in so doing they missed the really important things of God.

Jesus put it to them straight: "You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are." (Matt 23:15) Today we might publish and print and preach—to convince someone of the fact that the lost aren't tortured for all eternity in hell fire! But once we convince him, is he more a child of God? Is he more loving, peaceful, patient, and understanding? Or is he just more self-satisfied because he "knows the truth!" We might take a lesson from Jesus' words to the Pharisees.

In our zeal for doctrinal correctness we publish booklets and make tapes. We promote the truth about prophecy, about the precise vocal pronunciation of God's names; we write articles (and I've written more than my share) to expose false doctrines; we debate whether Jesus was crucified on Wednesday or Friday; we debate feast days, tithing, the correct date for Passover, speaking in tongues!

Our zeal is commendable—but at what price? **One can believe every correct doctrine and not even know God!** A person can have perfect theology and not have an intimate, personal, growing relationship with God. He can know "all truth" and be a lousy parent, a selfish spouse, and an egotistical hypocrite!

Oh, that even a small fraction of our zeal for truth were invested in sharing Jesus Christ with those who don't know him! **Oh, that our zeal were directed to growing in and promoting love, patience, kindness, goodness, and meekness.** Oh, that for every article about the precise meaning of a Greek word, there were ten on compassion and kindness. Oh, that for every sermon on counting Pentecost, there were ten sermons on respecting parents, loving mates, teaching children.

The Pharisees and Sadducees' problem was not that they sought doctrinal truth, but that, with all the effort expended in that pursuit, they missed simple truths such as "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18), "do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great" (Lev 19:15), and "you shall not murder" (Ex 20:13). They wanted to stone a woman "caught in the act of adultery" (John 8:4), but

they completely ignored the equal sin of the adulterous man (Deut 22:22). Some of them even plotted to kill Jesus—partly over doctrinal disputes and partly because they thought they might lose their place in the government (John 5:18; 11:47-48, 53). Preoccupied with their own doctrinal and prophetic understanding, they missed the greatest truth of all: the Messiahship of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to become sons of God.

Today, when millions are starving in the world, when millions of women kill their unborn children in ignorance, when billions don't even have Bibles to read, when so few have an intimate personal relationship with Jesus Christ, when the media is bombarding us and our children with promiscuity, violence, pornography and godlessness, how much time can we afford to devote to being sure about who was involved "when the sons of God went to the daughters of men" (Gen 6:4)? We compass land and sea to find the truth about the Beast of Rev 13, about the rebuilding of a temple, about Israel in prophecy, while our next door neighbor suffers with a crushing load of guilt and loneliness. Where are our priorities?

### Keeping the Right Company

If Jesus came in the flesh today, where would we find him? Would he be preaching in great cathedrals, ancient and modern? In small country churches? In Sabbath-keeping assemblies? Would he be at our church activities and socials? Would we find Him at ministerial conferences, with evangelical theologians, with mainstream denominational leaders?

Well, check the account of His ministry in Palestine. Yes, He did talk to the religious leaders—usually in a less than pleasant atmosphere. But most frequently He was ministering to the working men and women of Galilee and Judea—sharing the good news of the Kingdom of God. In fact, the company He kept was a real problem for the "righteous" people of the day. And I wonder if it would be a problem for us who "know the truth" today.

The Pharisees' attitude is evidenced by a question they asked Jesus' disciples. "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (Matt 9:10). Just so we understand what kind of 'sin-

ners' the Pharisees referred to, we should check a similar passage in Matthew 21:32: "Jesus said to them 'I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.'" The sinners He was not above eating with included prostitutes. They needed the spiritual food he had to offer, and He was not too mindful of His "public image" to minister to those who most needed His healing presence. If He came today, I suspect He would spend a great deal of time with the sinners of our day—sinners of all sorts—including prostitutes, and even homosexuals!

Why?

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. (Matt 9:12-13).

**Are we too busy offering the sacrifice of doctrinal truth to minister to the spiritually sick?** Are we so concerned about the sacrifice of theological purity that we can't reach out with justice, mercy and faith? **Are we so occupied with letter-of-the-law obedience and judging one another on outward appearance that we neglect kindness and patience?** Are we too busy avoiding and condemning sin to reach out to prostitutes and homosexuals? Or are we—with Jesus living in us—doctors, busy ministering to the spiritually sick, just as He did?

Jesus did tell sinners to "go and sin no more." But His harshest words were reserved for the self-righteous who were so concerned about external obedience while they themselves were filled with evil. How much are we like the "righteous ones" of Jesus' day?"

Please don't misunderstand. Christians should pursue doctrinal truth. **We ought to study the Bible to discover truth and we must be diligent in living by what we discover!** But, at the same time, we must realize that **there are weightier matters of God's way.** We must realize that there is a world out there—a world full of sinners who desperately need to come to know God. Let us not be so wrapped up in our pursuit of truth and obedience and doctrine, that we neglect a world that so badly needs the basic knowledge of Jesus—who lives in us!

# 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:

**Computer and Internet/World Wide Web Guide** by Alan Ruth, 18 pages. For novice through expert: how to buy a computer, how to use software & the Internet for Bible study.  
**Feast of Tabernacles 1998 Housing Information Package for Gatlinburg, Tenn.** Contains 52-page vacation guide produced by the city of Gatlinburg, and, special Feast info.  
**Footprints to Follow** edited by A. J. Cannon Dalbey, 12 pages.

Promotional issue of free Bible newsletter for younger children. Has a Messianic Jewish flavor.

**From Prison to Praise** by Merlin Carothers, 118 pages. Reports many miracles that occurred as a result of simply praising God. Whether you believe the book or not, it shows what Sabbatharians must sometimes deal with if they try to tell protestants that God has not worked in their life.

## Items Featured This Issue (always available):

### Study Resources and Information:

**Anchor Magazine** edited by Melvin Rhodes. One free 16 page sample issue. Reaching out to recovering homosexuals.  
**Barnabas Ministries Mission Statement** by Alan Ruth, 2 pages.  
**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.  
**CEM Correspondence Course** edited by Ronald Dart, 8 pages. First lesson from SN, others free from CEM.  
**A Church of God Ministry Order Form** by Lon Lacey & friends. 1 page. Free literature on nature of God & Satan, Biblical law, prophecy, history, church government, etc.  
**The Fellowship Commentator** by F. Paul Haney. Sample 8 page issue of free quarterly newsletter.  
**Friends of the Family Lending Library Order Form** by Rod McKown, 2 pages. Check out family books and tapes.  
**Hebrew Roots** Sample 24-page issue of free newsletter with emphasis on the Hebrew roots of "Christian" belief.  
**History Research Projects Order Form** by Craig White. 4 pages. Hard-to-find books on the origins of nations.

**In Him Newsletter.** First issue of free every-other-month newsletter for teens and people working in youth ministries.  
**International Bible Learning Center Catalog**, 12-page slim booklet. Sabbatharian college-type Bible courses on video.  
**A Living Relationship with Original Language Text Unfolding** by John Purvins. First issue of free Christian living magazine and Hebrew-Greek study course, 38 pages.  
**Living Room Church of God (LRCOG) Directory** edited by Robert Bodkin, 16 pages. Find a place to fellowship!  
**Sabbath History** edited by Leon Lyell in Australia. One free sample issue of 26-page newsletter about the history of Sabbath keepers & groups. There is nothing else like it.  
**Sermon Transcripts for the Deaf Order Form** by Kevin McMillen, 1 page. Free CEM sermon transcripts for the deaf.  
**The Sabbath Sentinel** One free sample issue of 16 page glossy magazine—doctrinal & human interest articles. With Bible Sabbath Association order form: Sabbath books & tracts.  
**The WAY Newsletter** Sample of 24-page free quarterly of doctrinal articles relating to the Biblical way of life.

## 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** One issue of free quarterly magazine on inspiration, Bible education, encouragement, and personal growth.  
**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**, 36 pages.