

Servants' NEWS

Names, Numbers and Nonsense

Throughout the Bible, we find names of men with significant meanings—both good and bad. “Jacob” means “supplanter”, a fitting name for a man who stole his brother’s birthright. Later, he was given the name “Israel” which means “God prevails” or “prevailer with God”. “David”, a man after the Eternal’s own heart (Acts 13:22) means “beloved”. On the other hand, the man who refused to feed David and his men when they were hungry was named “Nabal” which means “fool”.

Cities and other places mentioned in the Bible sometimes have names that nicely fit with their part in a particular Bible story. “Jerusalem” means “teaching of peace”. The name Jordan means “descender”, which is fitting for the people descending into its waters to be baptized, and the Spirit descending upon our Savior (Matt 3:1-16).

פד:סד:הה
 ג:סד:ה
 $\sqrt{40} \times 70 + 360 =$
 $666 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$
 Los Angeles =
 the angels =
 heaven
 NEHEMIA
 Elijah
 MESSIAH on
 Earth

Throughout the Bible we also find many events falling into numerical patterns. There are 7 days in a week, 7 years in the harvest cycle, 49 (7×7) years to the Jubilee cycle, and 70 (7×10) men who were appointed elders over Israel.

There were originally 12 tribes of Israel, 12 apostles, and 24 (12×2) elders in heaven.

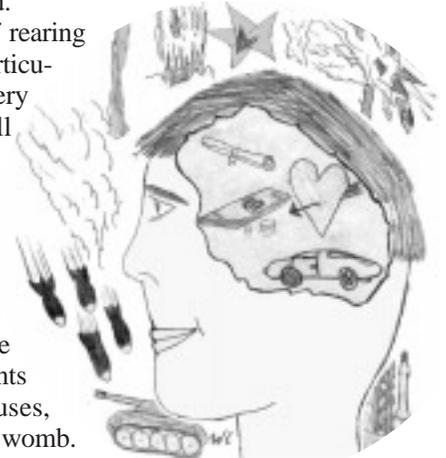
Many thick books have been written on these subjects. The Creator is certainly a God of order, One who pays attention to meanings of names and numbers. But does He tell us that we can find Him and His servants by looking for amazing names and numbers? No! He tells us that His messengers will agree with His word (Is 8:20), that they will not have “mistaken prophecies” (Deut 18:22), and that they will be noted by the love they have for others (John 13:35). The Babylonian Mystery religion, Gnosticism and their

Continued on page 26

Battle of the Mind

Solomon said in the Proverbs, “Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Wise words indeed.

The importance of rearing up a child properly, particularly starting at a very young age, is well understood in all circles. In fact there are major programs where famous intellectuals and the Einsteins of today are donating sperm to be given to certain parents to raise more geniuses, rearing them from the womb.



Naturally, when a person reads these words of Solomon, they almost automatically begin to think of little children, chronologically. But let’s take this same verse and go a little bit further into its spiritual meaning to understand the duality of its intent for adults.

To begin, let’s go to the gospels: “Jesus speaking to the little children...” and “Come as little children...” Now everyone knows you can’t go back in time to become a physical child again, so Christ was referring to the child within all of us. That child is our mind, our attitude—babes in Christ; Come to maturity; On the milk, etc.

When putting Solomon’s words with the words of Christ, we begin to get the picture of the newborn babe in Christ—that spiritual realm we entered at baptism—a full grown adult, chronologically, who begins his spiritual development

from a small infant seed in much the same way as a young baby begins his development. Just as a mother nurtures her young, so does the Holy Spirit, through Christ, nurture the young Christian. However, for the believer this development begins long before baptism.

The mind is a powerful element, it is the guiding force behind everything we think, do and say, and just like a child, if left unattended it can run wild. It needs to be worked with because, by nature, it is basically lazy and unless

Continued on page 28

Also In This Issue:

- 2 Truckers’ Bible Study, Part 3
- 3 News from Local Congregations
- 5 New Feast Sites, Complete List
- 7 Religious and World News
- 9 Security and Identity
- 11 Want to Start Spreading Sunshine?
- 12 Godly Unity vs Worldly Unity
- 13 More Doublespeak from UCGIA
- 16 UCGIA Ministry Letter
- 18 Letters and Responses

Trucker's Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo., Part 3



Servants' NEWS

Vol. 4, No. 4

June 1998

The Truckers' Bible Study is conducted weekly at the Texaco truck stop on I-70 in Oak Grove, Missouri. Arlo Gieselman, a member of the Church of God 7th day started the study. He is often assisted by Lenny Cacchio.

Norman Edwards attended the study on June 7, 1998. Because the sign had not yet been replaced, no truckers attended. However, one employee of the truck stop attended and sought help with a difficult personal situation. It was interesting to see that this individual already had some understanding of the scriptures regarding the problem at hand. Yet, this person attended no church group regularly. Arlo, Lenny, and Norman were able to add other scriptures, as well as give some insight and Scriptural counsel on the matter.

The entire two-hour study time was used in this process. Was this study a failure because no truckers came? If we really believe that our Father in heaven is running His work, we need to realize that He may have decided it was most important for one person to be counseled that day. Another day, it may be something completely different. We have to walk forward and let the Eternal direct our steps.

—Norman Edwards

At the June 21 study, we had two truckers and we were also joined by Bill and Scarlet Stough, who are frequent contributors to *The Journal, News of the Churches of God*.

I believe that the Stoughs might write a feature article on our modest endeavor for that newspaper.

There is now a permanent sign up, which should help attendance. The two gentlemen both asked for tapes and literature, which I was glad to provide. They each took a fistful of stuff with them. We were also able to provide them with Bibles. One of the men says he likes to make copies of the tapes and give them away.

We began with the Bereans, and how they didn't just accept what Paul said, but searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so. The tapes and literature I gave out—and what we discuss in the Bible Study—should be compared to the scriptures, and what they teach should be accepted only if the they agree with the scriptures. Also, which denominations we belong to will not be mentioned in the Bible Study unless it is just mentioned in passing.

I turned to Genesis 1 and 2 and read that God made man in His image, that we were made to rule and to have dominion over God's creation. We also referred to the purpose of man in Hebrews 1 and 2.

Some of the other subjects discussed were:

- 1) God does not force man to obey him. Man has free moral agency.
- 2) God allows the wheat and the tares to grow together. We in our human wisdom often can't tell the difference, but it is God who will sort it out.
- 3) God requires sacrifice from us. Will we follow His call?
- 4) We should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.
- 5) What if the entire world kept just any one of the Ten Commandments? How would the world be different?
- 6) There is more than just grace to salvation; God does require some things of us (Matthew 25 and James' epistle).
- 7) What is sin?

Today was most rewarding, as we were able to walk alongside these men, give them literature and Bibles, give them some things to think about, and yet be non-confrontational about it.

Once again, it is encouraging to see both the depth of Bible understanding that some folks have, and their eagerness to learn more.

— Lenny Cacchio

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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News from

Local Congregations



Exchange Old WCG Literature:

If you are looking to obtain, give away, or trade old WCG literature, this Internet site is worth checking out: www.absin.com/public/WcgSwapPage.html

IBLC Info for More People:

We have a few of the items from IBLC and have appreciated the material. However, the high cost prevents us from obtaining all the course material they have. Others may have this problem as well. Therefore, we would like to begin a loan program of the IBLC audio/video courses through The Bible Sabbath Assn. For a nominal fee to cover postage and shipping, we plan to loan IBLC material for 14-day loans.

If you have IBLC courses, would you consider donating them to The Bible Sabbath Association, for the purpose of loaning them to others? We would appreciate your help.

—Richard Nickels Family Giving & Sharing, Bible Sabbath Assn 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718 (307) 686-5191; giveshare@vcn.com <http://www.vcn.com/~giveshare>

Summer Conference Schedule

Everyone is invited to attend a conference entitled *In Jars of Clay—Uncovering Our True Identity in Messiah*. This may be interesting to those who would like to learn about the Messianic Jewish perspective.

Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota: August 14-16, 1998

Dallas, Texas: August 21-23, 1998

Purpose: 1) To be affirmed as New Creations in the Messiah! 2) To appreciate the Torah (first five books of the Bible) as foundational for our identity! 3) To learn how the Torah and New Covenant work together to establish our identity! 4) To discuss some traditional misconceptions of the Torah!

Speakers: Ariel & D'vorah Berkowitz, authors of Torah June 1998

Rediscovered, Take Hold, and extensive commentaries on the Torah. Ariel is also the co-leader of a Torah based congregation in Jerusalem. **Boaz Michael**, Founder and Director of First Fruits of Zion ministries.

Sponsor: First Fruits of Zion, PO Box 620099, Littleton, CO 80162-0099, Phone (800)775-4807 or 303-933-2119, Fax: 303-933-0997, E-Mail: fpoz-israel@fpoz.org, on-line registration at: <http://www.fpoz.org>.

Kansas City Fellowship Picnic

A Fellowship Picnic for all former & current members of any COG in the Kansas City area will be held Sunday, September 13 at Shelter #3 at Longview Lake. E-mail the organizer, Diane Cacchio at lcacchio@unicom.net or call 816-524-2442.

—Paula Frazee

Preparing the Bride of Messiah

Date: August 29, 1998, 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

Location: New Life Center, 6830 Highland Dr., Everett, Washington.

Speakers: Dean Wheelock (*Hebrew Roots* Editor) and **Lee Lisman**.

Sponsor: Church of God, Everett.

For more information, contact, Dan and Mary Ellen Stevens, (360) 653-6084.

Sherrod Lectures Great Success!

The saying goes that "you cannot get blood out of a stone" when used in the context that it is nigh impossible to undertake or accomplish something.

Well, the Rick Sherrod lecture series in Australia proved otherwise! (For details see *Servants' News* Sept/Oct 1997 p. 29 and May 1998, p.3) It was run on a shoestring budget and the lecture series was more successful than what anyone expected, including Rick and myself. Leading up to the lectures, the signals were clear to

me that they would be successful, but it was not apparent that they would be as successful as they were.

The lecture series, organised chiefly by non-ordained members of the UCG with help from many others, had the following objectives

a) to use these lecture series as a means of outreach: This proved very successful with **about two-thirds of attendees not having any background in the various Churches of God**. He was also interviewed for an article in the Coffs Harbour Advocate and by the Rev Dr Gordon Moyes, who hosts Australia's most popular religious radio program, "Sunday Night Live" on 2GB.

b) to revitalise interest in this key doctrine after 12 years of neglect (Fundamentals of Belief no. 15): members of the various Churches of God appeared to be well pleased with this series. Many found the lectures fascinating, bringing further proof for our Israel identity in addition to the traditional proofs.

c) To build bridges with other similar Churches of God: members of the Global Church of God, Church of God, International, The Church of God, Independent Church of God, Intercontinental Church of God and non-aligned sabbatarians attended and felt very relaxed with each other. The Global Church of God announced the lectures as did certain Worldwide Church of God pastors.

In fact, the following organisations/periodicals permitted us to place flyers advertising the lectures in their mailouts: *British-Israel World Federation*, *Christian Educational Services*, *Servants' News* magazine, *Faith in Australia* magazine, *The Journal* newspaper, *The Independent Church of God*, *Perspectives* magazine, *Alert* newsletter, *Sabbath History* newsletter, *The Shofar* newsletter, *Origins of Nations* magazine/*History Research Projects*. This should be seen in the context of Matt 12:30 and Mark

9:38-40; Num 11:27-29.

Dr Sherrod stated, before leaving for the United States, that "Australia was an utter delight in terms of service that I have been able to contribute to the Church. This is one of the highlights of my career in the ministry. I am pleased that the turnout was as large as it was—I did not anticipate as many outside of the Churches of God."

In the United States, at least 90% of the audience was UCG and most or all of the rest were from other Churches of God.

Approximate attendance was:

Sydney: Sabbath services: 80; Saturday afternoon: 185; Sunday morning 80; Sunday afternoon: 90. **Canberra:** 56. **Coffs Harbour:** 40. **Brisbane:** Sabbath services: 76; Saturday afternoon: 186. **Toowoomba:** 50. **Melbourne:** first night: 120; second night: 86. **Approximate number of individuals attending: 600.**

In retrospect, a few things would be done differently, including pushing harder for follow-up Bible lectures on a range of topics to ensure that the non-Church of God visitors learn more about our teachings in a methodical and sequential manner.

—Craig White
craig@triode.net.au

While Craig may not agree with my comments, I feel I really need to make them: Craig and others, were able to accomplish, independently, what would have been impossible in one of the church organizations. Had an organization attempted to sponsor this conference, nearly all of their members would have attended, but almost none of the other groups would. Furthermore, the organizations might have decided that they had to approve all of Dr. Sherrod's talks to make sure they had a "uniform appearance with church doctrine"—that could have taken years. Also, they may have insisted that the trip had to be "done right" (a big budget), and then decided it was just too expensive. Finally, if anyone who attended was interested in learning more about Church of God doctrines, organizations would only direct them to their own local congregations—even if their nearest congregation was much further than another groups' congregations.

Dr Sherrod clearly has a "gift" for teaching history, especially British Israelism. His doctoral degree makes

him recognized by the world as well. If we are to operate as a body of believers with differing gifts (1Cor 12, Eph 4, etc.), other stable local congregations may wish to invite Dr. Sherrod to draw people and spark their interest. Then the local congregation will have to be ready to teach and shepherd those who may have an enduring interest.

—Norman Edwards

WCG Major Events

The Worldwide Church of God concluded their Regional Pastors meeting in Pasadena this week. A source who wished not to be identified gave us some major points from the meetings:

The Big Sandy campus is ready to go into escrow to a Catholic school.

The Pasadena property has had many interested buyers. At least three of them are currently trying to outbid each other. The Pasadena property may go into escrow as soon as 3 months.

The headquarters management does not really believe in keeping the Sabbath or Holy Days any more, but are maintaining Sabbath services in most areas because a large number of their members still want to meet on the Sabbath.

This confirms the other reports that we have been receiving that the Worldwide Church of God is now losing more members to Sunday-keeping congregations than they are to the WCG split-off groups. Their largest group of members appears to be people who believe that they should "stay in the WCG no matter what".

Ray Wooten in Goshen, Indiana

Date: Saturday, July 4, 1998.

Time: 11:00 AM Eastern Standard Time (same as Central Daylight Savings Time).

Location: Community Building, Green Croft Retirement Center at Goshen College, College Avenue, south side of Goshen, Indiana. From Indiana 15, turn east onto College Avenue, cross railroad tracks, go ½ mile, turn south into Green Croft Retirement Center area. The Community Building will be straight ahead.

Purpose: Ray Wooten, of United Christian Ministries in Birmingham, Alabama will present "Search the Scriptures: John 5:39". All are invited

for a day of worship, fellowship, and instruction.

Sponsor: Church of God, Elkhart.

Contact: John Davis, 219-267-7519 after 5:00 PM or e-mail 102505.1400@compuserve.com.

European Economic Union

For years, Church of God groups, and many other prophetically oriented groups have looked for a union of ten European nations. How do we know when a union is a union as defined in the Bible? Must there be a single government or binding treaty integrating all aspects of governing? Or is a joint military agreement enough to be considered a union? In today's high-tech military, economic power is the single most important factor of a country's strength.

After months of talking and arguing fine points between France and Germany, European leaders meeting in Brussels, Belgium signed a formal agreement for monetary union on Saturday, May 2, 1998. Wim Duisenberg, a dutchman, was named president of the new European Central Bank.

The countries taking part in the new currency are **Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.**

That is 11 countries, one too many for a ten-nation combine. But that could change quickly. Of interest, Britain, Denmark and Sweden decided not to join. (Greece was interested in joining, but did not meet all the criteria to take part.)

Obviously, a common currency is a great step to actually unifying countries. Banks and businesses of all kinds are madly scrambling to try to integrate the new currency by the year 2000. This may cause even more difficulty for computer engineers trying to make computers compatible with year 2000 dates. It could all fail. Only time will tell if this economic union is a prophetic milestone, or just another one of many stones down a long rocky road!

We should continue to pay attention to the European currency, but without direct revelation from the Eternal, it is not easy to declare this a definite fulfillment of prophecy.

—Norman Edwards, with some info supplied by James Tabor. ☐

New 1998 Feast Sites & Complete List of Sites Covered by SN this Year

Cave Junction, Oregon

The Omega Praise Fellowship will be sponsoring a Feast site again this fall at SisQMeadows Youth Camp near Cave Junction, Oregon, Oct 5-12. Final costs have not been determined, but camping in heated cabins and 3-meals per day will be included in a very reasonable price. This is a full-involvement Feast with plenty of activities for all ages for the entire eight days. Many kinds of music, scripture readings, messages, and open discussions will be included. For more information and a brochure, call John and Mary Beattie at 541-855-7220, or Bob and Deirdre Salmon at 541-855-7403. Or, write Omega Praise Fellowship, PO Box 1742, Rouge River, Oregon 97537.

Pagosa Springs, Colorado

The Front Range Church of God, a home fellowship consisting of several families, will be hosting a Feast of Tabernacles this fall in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, at the Best Western Oak Ridge Lodge from October 5 to October 12, inclusive. The theme for the Feast will be non-controversial fellowship, with scripture readings or short presentations at the beginning of each worship service, followed by open discussion. If you might be interested in attending, please write Front Range Church of God, P.O. Box 6116, Longmont, CO 80501 or email to: abredehoft@juno.com.

San Antonio, Texas

Meetings will be held at the *Ramada Inn (Airport)*, 10811 I-35 North, in beautiful San Antonio. (Last year, it was the Quality Inn, but meetings are in the same place.) Call 800-797-1234 for reservations. Give the Group Reservation number **87290** and tell them you are attending the Feast of Tabernacles (Church of God). Room Rates are \$54 + 15% tax, a reduction of \$5 from last year. The first nights' room must be received within 5 days of making reservations, either by money order or credit card guarantee. In

order to avoid paying a \$1280 fee for the meeting hall, 60 rooms must be filled by August 15th.

There are numerous attractions in San Antonio within a short distance of the meeting facility. For more information, contact Julian Cruz, Tel: 210-333-7229, e-mail: jcruz@ix.netcom.com

"Lake Tahoe" Feast in Felton

The "Lake Tahoe Feast," sponsored for the past two years by the Sacramento area Bible study fellowship and *The Way Publications* will continue this year, God willing, in Felton, California. Felton is located in the scenic Santa Cruz mountains, 10 minutes north of Santa Cruz. It's almost like a "Tahoe Feast By the Sea"!

Dates for the Feast this year are **Monday, October 5, through Wednesday, October 14**. Again, we are having a do-it-yourself, "bring your own calendar" Feast with lots of fellowship and rejoicing!

The meeting is in the Felton Community Hall, 6191 Highway 9, in Felton. It's a new hall that seats about 300. It has a second room for other activities such as youth education, teen functions, meals, seminars, etc.

Planned feast activities include a family dance, circle dancing, workshops, youth and adult choirs, two open family days, and some group activities and trips. Please let us know ahead of time if you'd like to help play hymns, sing in the choir(s), perform music offerings, teach young people or help in other ways.

Messages will again be brought to us by members of the assembly, so be prepared to share what you have been studying in your Bibles, and to learn what others have been studying. Once again, presentations will be followed by questions and discussion, so we may all learn even more.

The tentative schedule is for services daily at 10:00 a.m., with the exception of two family days (Thursday and Sunday) when no services will be scheduled, and the weekly Sabbath when services will be at 1:30 p.m., followed by a do-it-yourself fam-

ily dance (bring your favorite tapes and CDs) at 7:00 p.m. On Friday we plan on having services at 10:00 a.m., followed by a everybody-bring-something meal and family entertainment (bring your instruments), then an Open Forum session from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

There are many places to stay and things to do in the area, we recommend that you contact the Scott's Valley Chamber of Commerce at 408-438-1010 and the Felton Chamber of Commerce at 408-335-2764. regarding housing. There are several motels and cabin facilities in Felton and Scott's Valley, as well as houses for rent in neighboring Mount Hermon. Nearby Santa Cruz has many hotels and motels. There are also beach houses to rent, in all price ranges.

Because this year we will be required to pay for the hall in advance, **we are requesting each family planning on attending the Feast with us to send an advance donation of \$50, if possible, toward the hall rental.** (Same principle as the "tithe of the tithe" from our WCG days.) This will be considered as a donation, as all other offerings will be, and you will be sent a receipt, as we do for all donations. You may send these pre-feast donations to "The WAY," in U.S. funds, made out to "The WAY' Publications," earmarked specifically "for Feast 98," and sent to us at our regular address:

The Way Publications

P.O. Box 1976

Placerville, CA 95667-1976 USA

If you're planning on attending the Feast with us in Felton, please notify us by mailing to the address above, or by calling Bill Creamer at 800-808-2560.

A brief technical note regarding the dates of the Feast: We plan on holding either a nine-day Feast or a ten-day Feast. The conjunction of the seventh month will be on September 20th, at 7:02 p.m. PDT, which puts the first day of the conjunction Feast of Tabernacles on October 5 (beginning sundown, October 4). This is also the starting date on the Hebrew Calendar.

The lunar crescent in September is predicted to be visible locally on the evening of September 21, which would place the first day of the Feast on Tuesday, October 6, (beginning the evening of Monday, October 5). If clouds on

the 21st obscure the view of the crescent moon, the new moon might be declared to be the evening of September 22, which would result in the Feast beginning one day later, on the evening of Tuesday, October 6.

For those who base the new moon on sightings of the visible crescent in Jerusalem, if the moon is visible on the U.S. West Coast on the evening of the 21st, it will be only about 34 hours out of conjunction. This means that, for people in Jerusalem, it would have to be visible about 10 hours earlier (Jerusalem is about 10 hours east of the West Coast), or only about 24 hours out of conjunction. Since the moon must be further out of conjunction in the fall than in the spring to be seen, it may be difficult to see the moon in Jerusalem on the evening of the 21st, so it may be visible in Jerusalem on the evening of the 22nd, making the Feast begin on October 6. Of course, if they were to have clouds on the 22nd, they might declare the new moon a day later.

Based on this information, it would seem that we would have, at the least, two starting dates for the Feast, October 5 and 6, and possibly a third, October 7. Therefore, we plan on holding the Feast beginning on October 5 and running for nine or ten days, as needed.

Colo. Springs, Crescent Calendar

This feast is sponsored by the Church of God, Colorado Springs. The location will be 627 N. Circle Dr, Colorado Springs. For many years, this group has been using a calendar based on the first observable crescent in Jerusalem. Festival dates will be October 7 through 14. Write Jack Hines, PO Box 9901 Colorado Springs, CO 80932 or call 719-577-9066 or 719-471-2264 for more information.

Little Chute, Wisconsin

This Feast site, like the above site will also be conducted October 7-14 according to the "first observable crescent calendar." It is sponsored by God's Community in the Appleton-Green Bay Area, (John Purvins). The theme of the feast is Christ's prayer for oneness (John 17). Related messages include God's Presence Among his People, the Heart of the Tabernacle, and Meeting as per 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. Children's classes and a picnic overlooking beautiful Lake Winnebago are planned. The location of the site and the address to write for information is 130 W. Main St. Little Chute, WI, 54140, Tel: 920-

733-5271, Fax: 920-788-2939.

Full Moon Feast in Mississippi

We are holding a nonaligned Feast at Picayune (pic'-a-une), Miss., from Oct. 20th, through The Last Great Day on Oct. the 27th. The first service will be at 7:00 PM on the evening of the 19th.

If you have heard the phrase, "Don't be so Picayune-ish" or have been to Picayune you will know what it means. Originally, a Picayune was a Spanish coin worth 2 1/2 cents. Today the word means "trivial and insignificant." But don't let that fool you. Picayune is worth a dollar and a dime in good ole Southern Hospitality.

Services will be once a day at 10:00 AM except for the Sabbath and High Days and then they will be at 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM. The format for services will be songs and either a prepared message or an open forum Bible Study on various and sundry subjects.

Picayune is about an hours drive from New Orleans or the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where in either place a very wide range of recreational activities can be found. For more information contact: Charles Voss @ PO Box 1058; Picayune, MS 39466; Tel: 601-798-8843, e-mail: jacob@datastar.net.

Intercontinental Church of God

The following Feast sites are sponsored by the Intercontinental Church of God and the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association. [The *Servants' News* staff does not feel that G. T. Armstrong meets the qualifications for a leader in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, but we see nothing wrong with fellowshiping with the brethren in these organizations.]

Panama City Beach, Florida: Boardwalk Convention Center, for reservations call 850-234-3484.

Table Rock Lake, Missouri: Kimberling Inn, for reservations call 800-833-5551.

Lake Tahoe, Kings Beach, California: North Tahoe Convention Center, Visitor Convention Bureau: 800-824-6348.

Carberry Tower, Scotland: Carberry Tower Residential Conference Centre, for info call 011 44 131 665-3135.

Canadian sites are also planned,

use the contact information, below.

More information is available at www.coginterlink.org. You may contact us at info@gtaea.org or call the Headquarters Office in Tyler: 903-561-7070.

Complete List of Sites Covered in Previous SN Issues this Year

These lists include all the various non-aligned sites mentioned in previous *Servants' News* issues. We print organization's site lists when they send them to us, but we have not repeated them. Use all three of these pages for a good sampling of non-aligned sites. We will gladly print information sent to us about new sites in future issues. For more Feast information try the Internet at www.cei.net/~anderson. Or, subscribe to *The Journal, News of the Churches of God*, PO Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755; \$18 for 12 issues.

EASTERN USA:

Ludington, Michigan

Sponsored by: independent families in Michigan. If you are coming from the west, remember that there is a car ferry across the lake to Ludington.

Contact: Darrell West, PO Box 26, Webberville MI 48892; Tel: 517-521-3630.

Paducah, Kentucky

Sponsored by families with rather specific doctrines.

Contact: Henry Anderson, 58 Meadowrue Rd, Russellville Ark. 72801. Tel: 501-968-4546, email: handy@cswnet.com

Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Sponsored by: *United Christian Ministries* (Ray Wooten). The **Edwardses, Deweys and others on the SN staff** will be serving in various capacities at this site.

Contact: UCM, PO Box 361334, Birmingham AL 35236-1334; Tel: 888-985-9066, email: UnitedBham@aol.com

Orange Beach, Alabama

Sponsored by: *Learning Together*.

Contact: Ron and Debi Wilson, 7807 N Illinois, Caseyville IL 62232-2058; Tel: 618-344-5203, email: LRNTOG@aol.com

Destin, Florida

Sponsored by: *CEM* (Ron Dart).
Contact: CEM, PO Box 560,
 Whitehouse, Texas 75791; Tel: 903-
 509-2999, email: cem@ballistic.com

CENTRAL USA:**Keystone, Colorado**

Sponsored by: *United Christian Ministries* (Ray Wooten).
Contact: UCM, PO Box 361334,
 Birmingham AL 35236-1334; Tel: 888-
 985-9066, email: UnitedBham@aol.com

Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri

Sponsored by: *Cornerstone Publications* (Jim Rector).
Contact: Jim Rector, 3802 Olive St.,
 Texarkana, TX 75503; Tel: 903-792-
 1352, email: atir903@aol.com.

LeFlore, Oklahoma

Sponsored by: Independent families which observe a "Full Moon Calendar" Feast dates are tentatively Oct 19-25, to be based on actual moon sightings. This is primarily a camping site with motels available some distance away.
Contact: John Walker, General Delivery, LeFlore OK 74942

WESTERN USA:**Sun Valley, Idaho**

Sponsored by: Independent families. Two-way teleconferences with Ray Wooten and Norman Edwards planned.
Contact: Adam or Jennifer (Adam's daughter) Miller, Tel: 760-941-6120, email: amillerjr@usa.net

Sunriver, Oregon

Sponsored by: Independent families.
Contact: Al Murrey, 2160 SW 2nd Ave, Ontario OR 97914. Tel: 541-881-8600.

INTERNATIONAL:**Northern Ireland**

Sponsored by: Independent families.
Contact: Greg and Caroline Gault, 253 Castlecatt Rd, Devrock, Ballymoney, Northern Ireland BT538BN;
 Tele and fax: +44-126-57-41616.

Carberry Tower, Scotland

Sponsored by: Independent families.
Contact: Anthony and Margaretha Miles, Linderudveien 57, 1353 Baerums Verk, Norway. Tel: 011 47 67 56 22 75, email: anthom@online.no

June 1998

**Religious Front**

"Pray for and share Christ with every person in America by 2000" is the goal of Mission America, headed by 150 parachurch groups representing over 40 million people via its *Celebrate Jesus 2000* initiative. Endorsed by the National Association of Evangelicals, the Southern Baptist Convention and Assemblies of God, the main prerogatives are door-to-door evangelism, the distribution of resource packets to churches that include guidelines on how to present the gospel by direct mail and phone, and follow-up and "discipleship" of new believers.

On April 13, the **U.S. Court of Appeals ruled** that Crystal Evangelical Free Church in New Hope, Minnesota, may keep the \$13,450 donated by bankrupt Bruce and Nancy Young. The church had first pegged of retaining the tithes basing themselves on 1993's federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), but the Supreme Court ruled RFRA unconstitutional last year. However, in April, the appeals court decided that religiously emitted donations to churches and charities before a donor files for bankruptcy are protected.

After being the home of five of Jesus' disciples and the third most frequently mentioned city in the New Testament, **Bethsaida has marveled both secular and religious scholars alike.** Choosing some likely ruins along the Jordan River, about a mile north of the Galilee shore, Israeli archaeologist Rami Arav began a joint excavation in 1987 with professor Richard Freund and the University of Nebraska. Besides unearthing a first century city, without the later levels of occupation found at Capernaum and Chorazin, they believe that an Iron Age City, capital of the kingdom of Geshur and home of the father-in-law of King David, has been located. Among the findings are fishing hooks, a wine cellar, an oven, and, for grinding grain, two

Religious and World News

*A summary of various newswire sources
 by Angel R. Oyola*

basalt slabs. The excavations were financed by the Israeli Tourism Ministry.

Basing their beliefs on supernatural visitations in the 1820's to **Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism**, adherents believe he "was called to restore the true church that had been lost 16 centuries earlier." According to Mormons, also known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, God told Smith that all churches, with specific reference to Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists, were wrong and to join none. Believing God the Father and God the Son have fleshly bodies and that the Holy Ghost is a Spirit Man, Mormons, now numbering 10 million, are one of the fastest growing religions in the world. Persecuted and maligned in nineteenth-century America, Latter Day Saints boast 56,530 missionaries, three-fourths of them young males, knocking on doors in 162 countries. Also being the most generous donors of all American church members, giving 7.5 percent of their income, last year, they had 318,000 neophytes. Besides revering their president as God's mouthpiece on earth, they belief in new revelations which can reverse earlier LDS doctrine, the most known example being the 1890 discontinuance of polygamy, which, 47 years earlier, Joseph Smith declared had been commanded by the Lord. Stephen E. Robinson, professor at the LDS theology school, Brigham Young University, said in *How Wide the Divide*, "What God has said to apostles and prophets in the past is always secondary to what God is saying directly to his apostles and prophets now."

World News

Multi-millionaire Saudi dissident living in Afghanistan declared holy war against U.S. forces in his homeland and said results would be known in the near future. Osama bin Laden was stripped of his Saudi citizenship for activities against the royal family and has been named by the United States as a prime suspect in two

bombings in Saudi Arabia wounding 400 people and killing 24 U.S. servicemen in 1995 and 1996. "It is incumbent upon all Muslims to wage a jihad [holy war] against them [U.S. forces] and evict them from the holy lands," he said at his base in Khost, eastern Afghanistan. "This is the order of the holy Prophet [Mohammed] that Muslims fully activate themselves to evict these forces of nonbelievers," he said of the U.S. troops who have been in Saudi Arabia as a regional security force since the 1991 Persian Gulf War which reversed an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Wearing white clothes, a turban and a Russian-made rifle, Osama proclaimed, "Today we are confronted with a big problem, a very big, a tragic problem... The Arab land has been occupied or a conspiracy has been planned to occupy [it]. For the first time after the death of the Holy Prophet, Mecca, Medina and Masjid-i-Aqsa have been occupied by nonbelievers. This is the most important issue of the present time. The land where the holy Koran was revealed is now being occupied by the Jewish and Christian forces." Asked if he felt a threat of capture by Western authorities, Osama said, "The Americans can block all roads but they cannot stop the ways of Allah. We are in the ninth year of our struggle and I am still alive."

Israeli based Haaretz newspaper has reported **Palestinian security forces have stepped up training for wide scale military battles with Israel** if the peace process collapses. The preparations for armed conflict "are becoming increasingly professional" and include civil defense and weapons training of the civilian population. The training involved exercises in fighting in formation and launching assaults on an army position and a Jewish settlement. Haaretz also declared that intelligence reports about the training were of a concern by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai during a cabinet meeting last week that the ongoing deadlock in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians was leading to violence.

The head of the Palestinian Authority's Preventive Security Service, Col. Jibril Rajoub, recently said, "**We view Hamas as part of the national and Islamic liberation movement.** Outside of the [autonomous areas] they can do as they wish... At the top of my

list of priorities is the [Israeli] occupation [of Arab land] and not Hamas..." A Government Press Office memorandum recently emitted claims that statements are in violation of the Oslo agreement obligating the PA to fight terror.

The Council of Jewish Communities, **located in Judea and Samaria, has begun an information campaign, attempting to educate the public of the dangers of further Israeli withdrawals.** One million pamphlets containing maps of the various withdrawal proposals will be mailed to homes throughout the country. The 8-page pamphlet explains the crucial importance of each of the three areas of the disputed territories: the Jordan Valley and Judean Desert (which afford protection and a buffer against an attack from the east); the mountain ridge (where are found many of the Yesha communities and the early warning stations, and is that which connects the Jordan Valley to the densely-populated Coastal Plain); and the area adjoining the Coastal Plain (3-5 kilometers of buffer west of the Arab villages of Samaria). The pamphlet also discusses the water sources originating in Yesha (30% of Israel's water), Jerusalem, the holy sites, and other issues.

According to a highly read newspaper in Japan, the Japanese government issued the warning that "**there is a possibility North Korea possesses at least one nuclear bomb.**" Nuclear tests by India and Pakistan have created an environment which made it easier for North Korea to develop its nuclear technology. Reports said there appeared to be increasing risks of a nuclear war breaking out on the Korean peninsula, in the Middle East or between China and India. A spokesman said that past events suggested North Korea could have been developing nuclear weapons and that even without nuclear tests by Pakistan and India there was an undeniable possibility the communist dictators might resume such development. "In the end, it is the North Korean government's decision [whether to develop nuclear weapons]..." After Pakistan said it conducted several nuclear tests, Japan voiced concern North Korea could get assistance from Pakistan that would help them to develop nuclear weapons. Even though North Korea has denied developing nuclear weapons, while at the same

time insisting it has the right to do so, Japanese officials say that apart from China, Pakistan has the closest ties out of all the nations on that continent.

The AIDS virus has the potential to outsmart virtually all the drug treatments now approved in the U.S., according to a recently released study. "There is a problem with drug resistance, and we can't fool ourselves," said Stanford University's Dr. Robert Shafer, lead author of the new research published in the June 1 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*. His team of researchers found patients previously treated with multiple drugs tackling the HIV virus, which causes AIDS, can develop the idiosyncrasy of full resistance to all available medications, a finding which could indicate a developing split in the AIDS epidemic.

Mexico City authorities have extended a pollution emergency warning amid criticisms reporting it reacted too slowly in the face of the worst environmental crisis in decades. The order restrains industrial activity and traffic some 40 percent under a plan launched by federal district Governor Cuauhtemoc Cardenas. "These are cosmetic measures," writer Homero Aridjis, head of an environmental group, told a news agency, adding "Mexico City's inhabitants are turning into mutants. For the first time I'm afraid of dying due to lack of air." The capital district of 30 million, one of the world's most polluted metropolitan areas, has over the past few weeks been covered in a dark haze that cuts visibility when it sets in early in the morning. The government has warned of more trouble amid the country's worst environmental crisis in 70 years, partly due to forest fires that have spread in Mexico and Central America since the beginning of the year. Besides killing 50 people, over 11,000 blazes have devoured nearly 815,100 acres in Mexico. Recent anti-pollution measures went into effect after ozone levels rose past 220 on an air-quality scale, more than twice the US trigger level of 108. Mexican officials said the measures would remain in place until ozone levels fell below 179. Some 29 percent of Mexico City residents suffer from dry coughs, 19 percent have migraine headaches, 30 percent have throat pains and at least 50 percent have irritated eyes, according to the Health Ministry. 

Security and Identity

by Richard A. Wiedenheft

The author is a former principal of a Sabbatarian high school, the former editor of Focus On Truth (a publication of a previous group also called the "United Church of God"), and a former pastor of the Worldwide Church of God.

Among the most powerful forces within human beings are our needs for security and identity. We need to have a sense of who we are, of what makes our lives worthwhile, of what makes us distinct and different from others—and an assurance that these will continue! There's no quicker way to discover what gives someone his sense of security and identity than to threaten to take it away from him. He will become upset, angry, illogical, even violent—because the very foundations of his existence as a person are being threatened.

Christians are no different from non-Christians in their need to know who they are, why they are worthwhile human beings, and in their need for assurance that what they hold dear will not be taken away from them. Unfortunately, the identity of Believers is often determined by things that, while not necessarily wrong of and by themselves, are not what should really form the foundation of their identity in Christ. Consider a number of examples.

National Identity

It is very natural for people to identify themselves with their country, to feel a sense of security in being able to say, "I am an American" or "I am a Canadian." Wherever they go in the world, they can let people know who they are by revealing their citizenship.

The Israelites in Bible times felt very strongly about their national heritage; they were the people specifically chosen by God. The Jews of Jesus day were quick to point out that they were descendants of Abraham; they could hold their heads high, no matter what else happened (John 5:33)! Even Paul indicated that it would be so easy for him to put confidence in his national heritage:

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews... (Phil 3:4-5).

The power of national identity is demonstrated by the fact that when push comes to shove among nations, people who months or years before were worshipping together, will lay down their Bibles and song books and take up rifles and begin killing one

another. Hitler was able to stir up the sense of national identity in most of the German people to the extent that their religious identity became secondary. Catholics, Lutherans, Adventists were willing to take up arms against fellow Catholics, Lutherans, and Adventists in Poland, Holland, Norway, France, etc.—because they were Germans, they were the Master Race! In the United States during the Civil War, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians in one part of the country were willing to take up arms against Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians in another part—because their regional or cultural identity was stronger than their religious identity.

Christians are supposed to be part of an international brotherhood of believers from all nations, yet their identity as citizens of a particular country is frequently a more powerful source of identity in their lives. It is the prime determiner of how they will act in a crisis.

Religious Group Identity

One good way to ascertain the basis of one's identity in the Christian realm is to complete the statement: I am a Christian because I... How one concludes that statement will reveal much about his sense of identity. Some would conclude the sentence, "I go to God's true church"—by which they mean a particular denomination. They see themselves primarily as members of that group as opposed to another group, which might be very similar in doctrines and practices. They believe God is working primarily or even exclusively through their organization. In order to preserve this conviction, they must remain ignorant of the works of God in other organizations or discount those works as deceptive ploys of the devil. At best they might allow that God could work with people in other groups, but only as a rare exception to his general practice of working through their true church.

Of course, group identity is frequently not so extreme. Many true believers admit God is working in other groups, but maintain that their group is the most correct, the most effective and the most faithful to the word of God. They tend to view themselves as distinct and separate from other Believers, rather than as part of a larger fellowship of all Believers. Hence, they are better than others—a cut above—more righteous. For example, the Pharisees attitude was, "We're the descendants of Abraham and I thank you that I am not like other men.... They could only feel condescending pity, not true love, for others who did not belong to their righteous ranks.

Identifying oneself with one elite group usually leads to feelings of superiority over others who are not as lucky, as blessed, as smart, etc. The Jews of Jesus day so identified themselves as God's chosen people Israel, that it was extremely difficult for them to see the gospel being preached to Gentiles, to whom they felt superior.

Today, human beings are little different. Parents instill in their children how lucky they are to be born Irish Catholic, German Lutheran, Baptist, or Jewish—and not something else. If the parents are effective in their teaching, the children grow up with their identities wrapped up in the ethnic or religious group to which they belong. It is very difficult for them to feel real love toward those outside their group.

How do you feel about people in other groups? When you meet them, do you feel a sense of distinction **from** them or of kinship **with** them? Do feelings of superiority arise in you, or feelings of warmth and acceptance? Do you see yourself as belonging to a different group, or as part of some common larger group—like the human race?

Followers of Men

Frequently, group identity is focused on the leader. Followers see

their significance in life in the fact that they are following the chosen man of God, the one through whom God is working. They rest secure in knowing that God will bless them and be with them for being loyal to His "chosen servant". And nothing will upset this person more than someone who criticizes his leader.

Several years ago, Mormon missionaries were explaining to me the glories of Joseph Smith, God's prophet of the latter days. I told them about my experiences in once having believed in a man as God's chosen prophet for the end days and how I come to learn he was very fallible in many respects. I went on to point out some of the errors and failures of Joseph Smith. One of the missionaries responded by dogmatically defending Smith and his own conviction that Smith was a man of God; but as he did, tears welled up in his eyes. I had clearly touched a raw nerve; I had struck at the very seat of his identity and security. Without Joseph Smith, this young Mormon's world would come crashing down; his whole sense of purpose would be destroyed. He could not let that happen, even if it meant plunging ahead in blind faith.

Doctrinal Identity

Recently I sat in on a discussion about the trinity, among Christians who believe in this doctrine. They openly admitted that there were many aspects of this doctrine that they could not understand. They confessed it was a mystery beyond their comprehension. Questions were asked for which there were no answers. But in spite of all the questions and doubts, one comment was made over and over again: "We must not abandon this ancient, orthodox doctrine just because we can't understand it.

So many Christians are more sensitive about challenges to this doctrine than almost any other. For some reason, their identity is, at least to some extent, tied to a belief in the trinity. It seems to be the one doctrine that makes them really Christian. You can question and disagree with many other doctrines, but just don't mess with the trinity. It is sacred ground, even though it is not explicitly taught in the Bible.

Other Christians are wrapped up in

other doctrines. Sabbath keepers frequently get very nervous about a challenge to the Sabbath. I've heard several people say, "Why, if we give up the Sabbath, we'll be just like all the Protestant churches." Obviously, the identity of these people is in being distinct from Protestants, particularly in regards to the Sabbath. The Pharisees identity was intimately involved with the Sabbath—and with how they kept it. They were incensed that Jesus did not accept their standards on how to observe the Sabbath; at one point they even concluded, "this man is not of God for he does not keep the Sabbath" (John 9:16). Much of their personal identity was rooted in the meticulous manner in which they observed the Sabbath.

Identity of Traditions

For some, identity is tied to whether or not they eat certain foods. Once, in a discussion of a proposed merger of two churches, the issue of dietary restrictions came up. One church taught against eating unclean meats (Lev. 11, Deut 14), the other had little concern about such matters. A member of the first group, in reference to the merger, said in a worried tone, "Does this mean we're going to begin eating unclean meats?" Clearly, to a significant degree, the identity of this person was wrapped up in a doctrinal point—he saw himself as different and separate from others because he didn't eat pork. Of all the things he could have been concerned about regarding the proposed merger, eating or not eating pork was of prime importance. Such is the nature of personal identity when it is rooted in doctrines.

Identity is frequently wrapped up in traditions—either religious, family, or national ones. Observing holidays, for example, plays a major role in personal Identity and serves to connect us to previous and future generations. Sometimes traditions have such a profound meaning in a person's life that he can't give them up even after he comes to believe they are not Biblically sanctioned. He feels, perhaps subconsciously, that if he turns his back on these time-honored customs, he turns his back on his parents, his grandparents, his heritage—on himself! He cannot bring himself to do it.

I have known young parents who, even though they were convinced that baptism was for believers only, had their own infant children baptized; they just didn't feel right about not doing it.

If our identity is bound up in our practices, whether they stem from tradition or from a desire to obey God, we tend to view ourselves as superior and set apart from those who don't observe the same laws, and we tend to be very defensive about them. Those who observe Christmas look down on, or feel sorry for, those who don't. Those who don't observe Christmas feel more righteous than those who do. Those who don't observe Easter often hear the comment, "Don't you believe in the resurrection?" So intimately is the tradition of Easter connected with the historical fact of the resurrection! The Pharisees traditions were so important to them that they would break God's commandments rather than their own customs. Jesus said of them,

And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition (Matt. 15:3, 6).

They were so incensed with His manner of observing the Sabbath and His challenge to their concept of God that they were ready to kill him (John 5:18). If you challenge a person's traditions, you may find that you are striking at his very being! He will fight you.

Proper Source of Identity

In addition to those mentioned above, there are many other aspects of one's life that can provide a sense of identity: one's work, one's past accomplishments, one's status, etc. In most of us, all of these do play a part in whom we think we are. But there is one source that should overshadow all the others. Our primary sense of worth, our feelings of being useful, our sense of being different and distinct should stem from being children of God through Jesus Christ!

Please don't misunderstand. I'm not saying we should have no sense of family, national, denominational, or doctrinal identity. But doctrines can be proven erroneous; nations rise and fall; church organizations decline and decay, merge and split! If our identity is too closely tied with any of these, we are in for rough times.

If our identity and security are based primarily on belonging to God through His Son, then we will view other Christians with feelings of love, compassion, and warmth instead of superiority and self-righteousness—even though our doctrines and practices may vary. Then we will not be sensitive, defensive, and even combative, when challenged about things that are peripheral to our existence as citizens of the eternal kingdom of heaven.

Through Jesus Christ, the walls of hostility that separate one group from another are broken down (Eph. 2:14). We are all one body in Him. To be sure we still have differences. We are still men and women; we are still of different nations and races; some of us are employers, some are employees; our doctrines and practices are different. But if our primary identity is rooted in being part of the spiritual body of Jesus Christ and the brotherhood we have in Him, these differences can be understood, and even appreciated; they need not be divisive and destructive.

If someone challenges one of our doctrines, we don't need to break out in a cold sweat. Our security is in our relationship with God, not in our doctrines. If disaster strikes our nation, we are still citizens of the kingdom of God. If our local congregation or denomination becomes embroiled in controversy and schism, we are still part of the spiritual body. If we find ourselves in a meeting with Christians with different doctrines and practices than ours, we can try to find and appreciate the common ground of love and belief in Jesus Christ; we don't need to recoil in fear and feelings of separateness.

Throughout all generations, God is on His throne and human beings can have an intimate personal relationship with Him, they can be part of His eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ. Let there be questions about doctrines, about traditions, about church organizations! Let nations rise and fall! Let human leaders disappoint us! It may hurt us, but it should not shake us—for we remain, as always, in the loving hands of our Heavenly Father. We are His children, we are citizens of His eternal kingdom; we are in His loving fold. What more identity can we want? What greater security can we have? 

Want to Start Spreading Sunshine?

We received this letter from the publishers of Spreading Sunshine newsletter:

June 8, 1998

TO: All Subscribers of The *Spreading Sunshine* newsletter

Dear Friends,

It is with a heavy heart that we come to you to announce that after 3 years and 129 issues that we are putting the newsletter to bed and ceasing publication with this enclosed issue. Joan and I are both involved full-time with the ministry of our local church in addition to administrating 4 large websites for the Intercontinental Church of God and the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association. We have been so involved with what we have been doing that we have been late on 3 issues and missed one altogether.

We wish to thank all of you that subscribed to a master copy of the newsletter so that you could distribute the newsletter to a much wider audience than we ever could have. We have enjoyed every minute of our involvement with the newsletter. In the last 36 months we have received scores of letters from our readers telling of miracles that were experienced and lives that were affected and changed. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences that our family has ever been involved with. Thank you too, those of you that supported this work for so long. In the first two years, we published weekly and it was only in the past 12 months that we published every other week.

The theme of this last issue is Prayer and probably nothing can be as important as our contact with God, our Father. It is our sincere prayer that all of you continue to be blessed and experience the warm "sunshine" that is the love of God and Jesus Christ. Just because the newsletter is ceasing publication does not preclude us from continuing in the spreading of this sunshine throughout the world. Remain steadfast! As Christ said...

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: (Col 2:5-6)

The "sunshine" we spread now will pay off later, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. (Matt 13:43).

In Christian love,

The Cumming Family: Chris, Joan & Jody.
5514 160th Avenue NE, Redmond, Washington
98052. e-mail: sunshiner@worldnet.att.net

We at *Servants' News* are sad to see this newsletter go. It served many people and asked nothing from them. It boasted nothing about itself.

We believe that the Cummings are making a mistake to stop this newsletter, but that the Eternal will show it to them in due time. (After all, all of us lived under hierarchical government for years in the WCG before we understood what was really wrong with it.) Nevertheless, we cannot help but compare the humble service of *Spreading Sunshine* to the rather extensive claims made by Garner Ted Armstrong and his Intercontinental Church of God. The name of the group is to some degree a boast. GTA has often claimed to be "the Ezekiel watchman." Nevertheless, we realize that people have learned the Bible through GTA's preaching.

But Spreading Sunshine does not have to stop now!!

If someone has the time, ability and desire to continue *Spreading Sunshine*, the Cummings will be glad to help them continue it. We asked and received this message from them:

If someone wishes to take over, we would ask that they send to us a copy of an issue that they have published and we would send it to our mailing list with a cover letter. Should any of them wish to continue getting the *Sunshine*, they could contact the new publisher directly.

Should someone decide to become the publisher, I will provide for them complete procedures demonstrating how we put the publication together. I have complete records on every poem and story I used. Because of copyrights, no one will be able to charge for the newsletter, of course. Much copyrighted material was used but no one restricted us because we gave it freely. The cost of providing one person with the *Sunshine* weekly for a year was \$13.00. When we went to bi-weekly after two years, that cost dropped to \$6.50 per person. We spent most of \$5,000 in those three years. One should count the cost before deciding to take this over. I have complete production records (themes used, sources used, etc.) that I will share with the new publisher.

There it is! A work looking for laborers! Are there any? 

Godly Unity vs Worldly Unity

by Harry Curley, Altadena, California

There is a **fast** that God does not like (Isa 58:4). There is an **offering** that God does not like (Jer 6:20). There is a **sorrow** that God does not like (2 Cor 7:10). Could there be a **unity** that God does not like?

Just as there is a Godly sorrow that works good and a worldly sorrow that works wickedness (2 Cor 7:10), there is a Godly unity that works good and a worldly unity that works evil.

The word unity sounds so good and scattering sounds so bad, but what does the Bible show us about these words? Biblical accounts show us that Satan uses unity for his own evil ends.

In Genesis, the foundation book of the Bible, we see that Satan does **not** want people to be scattered. Satan wants people to be unified under a man.

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top [may reach] unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be **scattered** abroad upon the face of the whole earth (Gen 11:4).

The first scattering was caused by God (Genesis 11:8). Satan wants God's people to be unified under a man or an organization. That way he can use the leaders who he can deceive to deceive God's people.

On the other hand, we see that God has allowed his people to be scattered for a good purpose. In Acts 8, His people were scattered to preach the Gospel all over the known world.

In the New Testament, we only see the word "unity" used twice. Once in Ephesians 4:3 "unity of the Spirit" and 4:13 "unity of the faith." There is no mention of being united under a man or an organization.

The difference between Godly Unity and Worldly Unity is the source of the Unity. If it is from God's spirit working within a person, then the unity is good. If it is from unity imposed by a man or an organization it is bad. Even if that organization calls itself the Church of God.

God wants us to be free to choose his way (Deut 30:19). He does not respect orchestrated obedience.

The right kind of unity, that comes from within through God's spirit, is beautiful.

A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalms 133:1)

God is not talking about organizational unity here. He is talking about the unity that

comes from within God's people through his spirit.

Many have said the problem with the WCG was government. That is partially true. A big problem with the WCG was that unity was being forced upon the membership. That was a worldly type of unity. That unity was built upon a lie.

The lie was that a small group, ordained by men, not by the membership of the Church of God (God's people), were God's representatives on earth and that they had authority over God's tithes and God's people.

Exodus 18 was taken out of context to justify this lie. Deuteronomy 1:13 clearly shows that the Nation of Israel chose its elders, not Moses.

Under this lie a fleshly unity was established. It was not built on God's spirit working within the membership, but imposed upon the membership by an immature ministry more interested in the Corporate welfare than the welfare of God's People. This unity had a certain appeal to the flesh, provided you were not stepped upon unjustly by it.

For many, it was an easy unity. Don't think, just trust in men and do what you are told. The fifth commandment had been replaced with:

Exodus 20:12 **Hierarchical translation:** "Honor thy Pastor and the Ministry: that thy days may be long in the Church Corporation which the LORD thy God hath put over thee."

That was a bunch of B.S. (Babylonian Stupidity).

An Example of Godly Unity: Pentecost 1995 was an example of Godly Unity. Over 12,000 members came out of a Church of "God" that had abandoned God's law to worship with a group that offered hope. This was not caused by man, but by God's spirit working within God's people.

An Example of Worldly Unity: There was a conference six months later where a small group orchestrated the events. Those led by God's spirit were silenced by a group of men with private agendas. Worldly unity was more important than open discussion.

There were two spirits at this conference:

1) The Spirit of Indianapolis

- a. Local membership control of money and administration
- b. Leadership accountability
- c. Inclusion of membership in the decision-making process

2) The Spirit of the Tower of Babel

- a. Centralized control of **money** and local leadership
- b. No effective leadership accountability
- c. Ignore the membership while pretending to listen

There was an unspoken cry at this conference: "Unity at all costs." This propaganda was not from God. God tells that we should not be unequally yoked with anyone who believes differently (2 Cor 6:14). We are not to be surprised when "members" and "ministers" go different ways, because they were not part of us (2 John 2:19).

There should have been a peaceful separation between the two groups at this conference. Instead there was a spirit of compromise for the sake of Worldly Unity. God is not interested in compromise, or Worldly Unity.

Those who wanted to return to the WCG way of doing things, won the day. It did not seem to matter that the WCG way of doing things ended in disaster.

The end of this age will see the biggest effort to unify everyone under one church. God's people will be martyred. Not because they will have done anything wrong, but because they resist this unity.

Could there be a Unity that God does not like? Yes!!!

Paul says we should not allow ourselves to be put under this worldly bondage (2 Cor 11:20).

For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour [you], if a man take [of you], if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face (2Cor 11:20).

Unity to a man or an organization can be an idol. We should seek out teachers of God's Word who do not have private agendas. We should fellowship with those who are like minded and not compromise for the sake of Unity.

So why has God let things happen as they have happened?

It is my opinion that God is hardening the hearts of many church leaders to destroy the organized ministry as we know it. As a group, they have failed God's people too many times.

My disgust for these hireling operations should not be confused with the respect I have for the few ministers who have risen above this and have truly put the welfare of God's People above personal and Corporate interest. 

More Corporate Doublespeak from UCGIA

by Tim McCaulley

On June 18, 1998 UCGIA president Les McCullough wrote what amounts to a "state of the corporation" letter to the brethren who support that corporation with their equity (tithes and offerings) and goodwill (prayers for and attendance and participation in the activities of that corporation). The corporation UCGIA is in trouble and that trouble is spelled c-a-s-h-f-l-o-w.

Like many of his colleagues in the corporation, president McCullough is ambiguous and unclear in distinguishing between the UCGIA, a Corporation (herein after referred to as "the corporation") and the Church of God, A Spiritual Organization (herein after referred to as "the Church").

President McCullough and all the credentialed ministry are members of both the Corporation and the Church. Their non-ordained brethren are members of the Church only. The corporation is organized, run, and managed by the members of the corporation for the benevolent purpose of doing the work of the Church and serving the members of the Church. These are useful distinctions to keep in mind as you read selected excerpts from this letter.

Because the corporation uses the shorthand name "the Church" to refer to itself, it is easy for members of both the corporation and the Church to have trouble distinguishing between the two. This confusion is doubled for those members of the Church who are not members of the corporation (ie. the non-ordained brethren).

President McCullough's 06-18-98 letter is really an accounting of the failures of the corporation to fulfill its stated purposes for existence. But when it suits his purposes, he blurs the distinction between the corporation and the Church. It most often suits his purposes when it's time to apportion and shoulder responsibility for the problems facing the corporation, as a selection of quotes from this letter illustrate.

We have expected at some time to face an outside source which would generate great problems for us. We haven't and didn't expect the problems to arise from among us.

Those problems have come and much heartache has resulted. Some members have decided to disassoci-

ate themselves from UCGIA for a variety of reasons. Some have joined a new organization led by David Hulme and others have decided to stay at home. Some have chosen to become totally independent. All these things have had their effect.

Who does he mean, when he says "us"? The first two sentences seem to allude to the defection of David Hulme et al. By the middle of the second sentence of the next paragraph we begin to see a blurring between members of UCGIA (who consist of only the credentialed ministry) and the brethren with the use of the words "some" and "others". The first and second "some" could be either Church or corporate members, the last "some" and "others" almost certainly refers to non-corporate Church members. Thus begins the implicit denial of responsibility for corporate failure on the part of corporate members by the spreading of the blame to the non-corporate Church members.

The saddest part is that this is all so tragic and senseless. We all believe and accept the same basic doctrines, but differences of opinion divide us. Christ tells us that a house divided against itself cannot stand. The majority of the membership remains and we must determine to stand together in our common problems. We all need strong leadership or anarchy will rule and confusion will reign. We know that God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). So let us make peace among ourselves and join in doing a great work.

Exactly who does President McCullough mean when he says "the majority of the membership remains and we must determine to stand together in our common problems"? If he is referring to the corporation, then why is he addressing the letter to the non-corporate Church members? If he is referring to the Church members who have supported UCGIA (which seems to be the case) then in what way are these problems of cash flow the responsibility of those brethren? They had absolutely no say in the hiring, determination of salaries, strategic planning, or anticipated income projections, all of which have been woefully botched by the council of elders committee system and the home office

management team. These items were dutifully supported by the rest of the ministry in their yearly general assemblies.

This is not to say that the Church members do not have a keen interest in seeing the corporate members succeed in their efforts to assist the Church members in doing the Work of God and serving the members of the Church. It is to say that it serves no good purpose for the corporate members to dump the blame for their bungling of personnel and budgeting decisions in the laps of those who had no say in those decisions.

Also, are President McCullough and the rest of the corporate membership ready to reach out to all the other corporations who are serving members of the Spiritual Church of God and whose only reason for existence is (as is UCGIA'S) over a "difference of opinion"? The conduct of their ministerial services department in such places as Kansas City and Big Sandy where they have sown division over the existence of another corporation other than their own would appear to say otherwise.

President McCullough's plea for an end to "anarchy and confusion" would have a more sincere ring were it not for the record of UCGIA's regional pastors and ministerial services department. They have gone around with gestapo like efficiency expelling anyone from participation in their corporation's affairs who showed any originality not thought of or approved by the home office or council. These actions were about how to preach the gospel or organize the local affairs of a congregation. Who has sown more division in less time among the Spiritual Church of God in the name of corporate control and uniformity than UCGIA? This is not to deny our brotherhood and solidarity with the corporate membership because we believe and trust that they are also fellow brethren and Church members.

Tim McCaulley attends the services of, and contributes equity and goodwill to the Jacksonville Florida congregation sponsored by the corporation known as the *United Church of God, An International Association*. He has been a member of the spiritual Church of God for 28 years, is married, and has two teenage children. Daytime phone: 904-727-5590 (8AM to 4:30 PM). Other times: 904-743-9811.

It is to say, however, that a plea to "make peace" rings hollow when it is preceded by the ultimatum that it must be on the terms of the corporate membership whose actions have precipitated the discord.

None of us are blameless in the problems and difficulties we face. We can probably all do better in growing in patience, understanding, and respect for one another. We all need to learn to bear with one another, recognizing that all are human, subject to making mistakes, and we will not be perfected until we are resurrected to immortality in God's family.

The above expresses the truth of our common humanity. It is something with which no one can argue. It is also a meaningless non-sequitur since the topic of the letter is not the common carnal frailties of all mankind, but the mismanagement of the Church's assets by the corporation. Its sole purpose for existence is supposed to be for the efficient and effective proclamation of the gospel to the world and the feeding and care of the flock.

It is neither cruel nor unconverted behavior for the Church to expect an accurate and honest accounting from the custodians of the corporation before they decide whether to place the tithes and offerings of God under their control into the hands of any who would claim stewardship over them.

The task which faces all of us—the council, the administration and all of you as members—is a daunting one. We are facing extremely serious difficulties which try the dedication and commitment of all of us.

Now exactly who is President McCullough referring to when he says "us" and "all of you as members"? This passage as clearly as any shows the dichotomy between corporation and Church members. It's "them" and "us", and the idea of "we" is totally absent. Strictly speaking, this sentence can only correctly refer to the collective credentialed ministry, since they are the only ones who can be "the council, administration, and members" of UCGIA.

Again, this is not to say that the members of the corporation are not spiritual brethren of the non-credentialed members of the Church, and that we do not care about their trials. It is to point out that the corporations and their members have become a modern day Sanhedrin and created this "wall of separation" (Eph. 2:14) within the Church. It

is complete with its own talmud of constitution and bylaws that, when expedient, ignores the counsel of scripture in the way it isolates the shepherds from their flocks and instead encourages them to be hirelings of the corporation.

For the welfare of us all, we must ask a series of important questions—and answer them honestly. The whole body is truly involved in the outcome. Just how much do we believe in the system, or organization, of the United Church of God? How committed are we to its success? How convicted are we that God is dealing with us and is a part of this organization? Do we want above all for the United Church of God to succeed? Are we dedicated to doing a worldwide work of preaching the gospel? Are we??

Finally, a clear distinction between corporation and Church! For non-corporate member brethren who support UCGIA some of the following might be helpful in answering the above questions. We repeat the above questions individually:

How much do we believe in the system or organization of the United Church of God?

To the extent that it does not ignore the counsel and guidance of scripture in the conduct of its affairs on behalf of the Church. Christ gives His brethren guidance on how to answer this question in Matt. 7:15-20 and Lu. 6:43-44. These scriptures show that a tree (in this case the corporation UCGIA) is known by its fruit. You cannot gather figs from thorns nor grapes from a bramble bush. It is time to take an honest and sober view of UCGIA based on its fruits. Are the corporate chieftains false prophets and wolves in sheep's clothing or simply inept?

How committed are we to its success?

The 1998 spring Holy day offerings for UCGIA have increased with fewer members than they were in past years. Since the primary focus of President McCullough's letter is the cash flow shortage, the answer should be obvious.

How convicted are we that God is dealing with us and is a part of this organization?

Since when are problems a sign that God is not "dealing with us and is a part of this organization"? Haven't we all known that sometimes God's answer to heartfelt and earnest prayer is "no"?

(Luke 22:41-42) Don't we all know that God corrects all whom he loves and that without correction we are nothing more than Spiritual bastards? (Heb. 12:5-11).

However, this again brings up the intriguing question of exactly who is this "us" that President McCullough is referring to? Exactly who "is a part of this organization"? It also begs the question, does God appreciate or endorse those who, in the name of the artificial fiction of a corporate entity, promote division within the brotherhood of The Church?

Do we want, above all, for the United Church of God to succeed?

[This statement seems to assume that the UCG is the pinnacle of God's plan for the world. How can anyone prove that? What if God is primarily working somewhere else and hopes to steer the UCG members in that direction?—NSE]

Only if the corporation truly serves the Church. Otherwise it has no claim to the tithes, offerings, prayers, and participation of the Church.

Are we dedicated to doing a worldwide work of preaching the gospel? Are we?

Asking this of Church members is not being honest about the three year history of the corporation. Over the past three years the brethren who support the corporation have been very energetic and inventive in looking for ways to proclaim the gospel and feed God's sheep in addition to paying multiple millions of dollars of their tithes and offerings to the corporation.

What has been the corporation's response? To squelch any effort that was not under the control of the council or home office! And when the corporate plans did not materialize as anticipated, to blame it on not enough money. Congregations were split and divided. Church members who didn't "snap to" and endorse all the corporation's plans were told they were no longer welcome at the corporations church services.

The corporation has no broadcast ministry except that which was invented by local congregations working on their own. The corporation's most significant publishing effort, The Good News, is similarly produced beyond the home office confines by men whose primary tasks involve other things.

The corporation has been consistently wrong in its estimation of potential membership, income, and needed ministry. It has consistently diminished the flock God gave it over the past three

years. Now, given this record, to whom would you think this question most appropriately applies?

Tom Kirkpatrick (new UCGIA treasurer) and I are new in our jobs. We inherited a structure where there have been problems of overstaffing, other financial commitments, and actions which now plague us. The solution is not an easy one. We want to serve you and all the brethren to the best of our ability. It is our intent to work in partnership with the membership to produce the best possible product we can, using the talents of as many of God's people as we can. These things take time to work out, but we have already made progress.

The "problems of overstaffing, other financial commitments, and actions that now plague us" may have been a legacy of corporate mischief by David Hulme and Steven Andrews but both the council and General Assembly of Elders (in other words all the corporation) share in both responsibility and blame for the performance of UCGIA these past three years. The council (except for three resignations) is identical to the original one in its membership.

The words "you and all the brethren" are confusing at best. Is this just a redundancy (since the letter salutation reads "Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ") or is this yet another distinction between corporation and Church members?

One is also reminded of the famous saying "the road to hell is paved with good intentions". It would also be interesting to learn just exactly what the corporation considers its "product" and exactly how and when the corporation plans to "use the talents of as many of God's people as we can".

I don't like asking this, but can you help? It is imperative. We need the largest offering you can personally make. We need help from the congregations as a whole. Will we all join together to resolve this problem? Can we commit ourselves to this so that we can do the work? We are just getting positive things going in the media area and now it seems we may need to consider cutting back. Brethren, I personally don't believe that is God's will or desire. What do we do? It seems the Father is testing each of us to see just where we stand and how committed we are to doing a worldwide work of preaching the gospel.

Now we see the creative use of the pronoun "we". Just who is President McCullough referring to when he says "we" in this passage? Since UCGIA (like taxing governments) possesses no wealth it has not been given by non-corporate brethren in the first place, the first and second use of "we" is an obvious plea for more money from the brethren. It is to be hoped that the next two uses of "we" that refer to joining together to resolve problems and committing ourselves to doing the work refer to both the corporation and Church members.

Since the corporation has taken total ownership and control of the work of away from their non-ordained Church brethren, the rest of this passage can only correctly refer to the entire corporate membership and not their non-credentialed Church member brethren.

It would be easy at this point to just say with a smirk to our corporate brethren, "you made your bed so now go sleep in it". But that is neither Christian nor constructive. It is both humbling and sobering to see our collective ministry faced with the potential for such a monumental rebuke and correction by the Eternal God. Their most cherished beliefs about the righteousness and godliness of corporate control are on the verge of collapse. Would any but the most bitter or cynical not yearn for them to once and for all wake up and finally understand that there has been something terribly wrong with the way they have been doing things? Who of us called to a similar accounting by Almighty God would not want mercy shown to us under similar circumstances?

The tithes and offerings of God's people are the only finances we have with which to operate. They have fallen off for whatever reason. Why? Have some forgotten Malachi 3:9-10? Look at what it says:

"You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house, and prove me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."

Okay here comes the guilt trip! We have not gotten enough money, therefore you people must be stealing God's tithes instead of sending them to us. For the sake of the corporate membership may

we sheep suggest a few possible other reasons for your apparent short fall in cash flow?

1. Your ministerial services has run off hundreds of people and their ministry whose only sin was wanting to take some ownership of the work of the Church on a local congregational level and do something after the several years of council and home office dickering showed them that not much of anything was coming out of Arcadia.

2. Your presumption that you have the exclusive ownership of all the tithes of those who attend your services is practically and scripturally indefensible. Because you have taken over the sole control and ownership of the work of the Church and consigned the brethren to paying, praying, staying put, and shutting up, they have no other means to register their displeasure with your stewardship of God's tithes and offerings other than to contribute them elsewhere. Thankfully, God has provided a multitude of alternative ministries that seek to serve the Sabbatarian Church of God community. There are even more than enough Feast of Tabernacle sites that are non-aligned to siphon off Holy Day offerings if you keep on going down the path of arrogance and pride that you have been traveling for the past three years.

3. Your council and home office has a three year record of blown budgets, bungled projections, and remarkably little to show for all the millions of dollars of God's tithes and offerings you have spent over that time.

I know most of you indeed have been very supportive of the council and management team. Your letters tell us that. I know you want to see the Good News subscription list grow, and the invitation for life it carries, be made available around the world. I also know most of you are very supportive in your tithes and offerings. That is why this letter is so hard to write. I thank you for all your efforts most sincerely. But I must ask, Can you do something more to get your work through this time of financial crisis? It is simply not financially responsible to continue on the basis of one set of projections when all the facts indicate something else is needed.

"Your work"?!!! By what fiction do the efforts totally controlled and originated by the corporation become the responsibility of the Church?

continued from previous page

Now is the time for us to unitedly seek God's answer to whether or not he is pleased to work through us in the manner the General Conference and leadership of the Church has laid out. We individually or collectively may still have some blind spots which God is trying to show us. Let us all ask him to make known, as dramatically as he has in times past, whether he is with us now in fulfilling our, and we hope His plans. His will be done.

A sober, humble, and reasonable request.

As president of the United Church of God, I must ask if you will join together as the combined congregations of God's people for a special day of fasting and prayer.

The council and I are asking you to set aside the Sabbath of June 27 for this special time. All of us need to repent of our sins and grow closer to our Father. We need to ask him in the most heartfelt manner for his intervention and help. We need to ask God to provide new coworkers to help carry the heavy load. We need to ask Him to give the council the wisdom only he can give to make the proper budgetary adjustments so that such a problem doesn't arise again. Those adjustments will hurt, I am sorry, but there is no alternative. We should ask God's blessing on each individual in His Church. We need to ask Him to grant us the willingness to make a special sacrifice at this time and help His Church out of the deep problems which afflict it"

Asking the brethren to fast is entirely appropriate in such a situation as that which faces the corporation UCGIA, as is seeking Godly repentance for our collective sins. We then see a rather interesting reversal of Christ's prayer for the Father to send more laborers for the harvest (Matt 9:37-38, Lu 10:1-2). President McCullough and the corporation do not need more laborers for the harvest, but rather more harvest for the excess of laborers.

For the Church members who support the corporation UCGIA the dilemma is whether bailing out UCGIA will result in the repentance of its members from their irresponsible stewardship of God's tithes and offerings or reinforce those corporate members (particularly the council, the home office, and ministerial services in their intransigence.

Epilogue

Christ teaches an important lesson for both the brethren who support the corporation UCGIA and the brethren who are members of that corporation.

"He also spoke this parable: 'A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, "Look for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down, why does it use up (waste) the ground?"' But he answered and said to him, "Sir let it alone this year also until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well, But if after that you can cut it down"'" (Luke. 13:6-7).

The brethren who have supported the fruitless efforts of the UCGIA fig tree these past three years are waiting to see if its caretakers (the corporate members) will take the actions needed for it to bear fruit or not. I intend to take Chairman McCullough's requests before God in prayer with fasting. I hope President McCullough and the rest of the "Sanhedrin" corporation will tear down that wall of separation between them and the rest of their brethren in the Church. Right now I rather doubt it, but God has not run out of miracles if the occasion warrants. 

UCGIA Ministry Letter Ignores Member Fast

The following letter was written by Les McCullough, president of the UCGIA on June 26, 1998. Please note that this is one day before the fast scheduled in the previous letter sent to the members. We, as well as many UCGIA members, find this letter almost beyond belief. It contains a complete program of budget cuts which were implemented before the members had a chance to fast and pray, asking the Eternal for his will in the matter. These cuts included 30% of the full-time ministry being reduced to half pay (or in a few cases no pay)—one of the largest cuts in any "Church of God" history.

The letter makes no mention of the member fast at all. It never mentions the possibility of divine intervention to improve the situation. It notes that 10% of the membership left in 6 weeks, but seems totally unconcerned with why those members left and says absolutely nothing about making organizational changes that would cause members to return—or that would cause existing members to stay. Indeed, there seems to be little sorrow that existing members are leaving—separating brethren in local areas. It makes many rosy, positive statements, but almost none of them have any substance to them.

There is not a hint of a plan to transform UCGIA into an organization that would serve the many scattered Church of God brethren better. The UCGIA has done little in three years to bring new members to the organization. The only place where they seem to be able to promise and deliver is to budget and spend all of the money that they receive.

We would hope that after a major event such as the doctrinal reversal and breakup of the Worldwide Church of God, that ministers from that organization would stop and seriously ask: "What does the Eternal want us to learn?" Instead, it looks like they are trying to go on in the way of the "50s and 60s" as if nothing has changed. We do not like to be the bearer of bad news, but it seems that if major changes are not made in the UCGIA, that it will continue its current path of diminishment, until it cannot even pay its own headquarters staff. We really think that anyone who looks to this organization to pay its retirement is making a real mistake. We hope that those leaders and ministers in the organization will realize that neither their own documents nor their own members regard the UCGIA as "the one True Church". If they do not do a superior job of serving the brethren in their organization, should they not expect it to continually decrease in size?

Following is Les McCullough's letter:

June 26, 1998

Greetings Fellow Ministers and Wives,

Most of you are probably aware of the cost-cutting measures which went into effect this week. Most of them were referenced in the member letter which should have been received by now. But I felt it important that I give you a personal update on what has actually taken place. We would like you to be armed with the facts when questions begin to arise.

We are most grateful for the outstanding example being set by the ministry during this most stressful time. It has been encouraging to talk to so many of you over the past several days

and see a willingness to make the necessary sacrifices for the good of the Church.

This is the spirit and attitude that the work was built on in the 50s and 60s. It is good to see that same spirit at work in the ministry of God's Church today.

This past week the Council met for two days via teleconference to finalize a number of changes in Church personnel. The total meeting time was about eight hours. This was grueling and quite exhausting.

In preparation for this meeting the Regional Pastors made contact with most of the full-time ministry to discuss our manpower needs in each region. Following these discussions, the Ministerial Services Team met for two days in Arcadia to review all the input from these men.

All in all hundreds of man-hours have been invested in this process to arrive at the most equitable decisions.

A few days prior to these meetings, the Council was informed by our treasurer, Tom Kirkpatrick, that \$840,000 of cuts in the salary area (on an annual basis) were needed immediately, in addition to other expense cuts.

This was the order of magnitude of cutbacks that needed to be made to survive to the fall festivals in light of our current level of financial support.

Some have wondered about the abruptness of this action. Suffice it to say that we have lost at least 1500 people between the Last Day of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Pentecost. This is more than 10% of our Church attendance departing over a period of six weeks. Simple mathematics tells you that our income will drop proportionately. We are happy to report that the income has not dropped quite that dramatically, but this has been largely due to the generous Holy day offerings. With no Holy days for the next four months, we are facing a serious crisis by September 1. These cuts are necessary now to ensure our ability to pay salaries and other commitments that will be due between now and September. While these are the most painful days any of us have experienced in some time, it is absolutely crucial that we make these cuts. We could hide our heads in the sand and continue spending at our current level, even though our membership has decreased. In our opinion, this would be foolish and contrary to what God has clearly shown us. We must do

the right thing and we must do it now.

As a Church with limited assets, the only area where we can make these kind of cuts is personnel. Our Home Office staff has been reduced to a bare subsistence level of 12 full-time people. We are operating with just under 100 full-time men in the field ministry, which equates to an average workload of 115 people in attendance for each pastor. This is considerably fewer when compared to past years.

In order to achieve our goal for cuts, we took a look at the entire ministry and began to make adjustments. We believe that all our men are loyal and dedicated servants of God, but we must face the reality of how many men do we need at full pay to accomplish the task of caring for the people of God. It is painful to consider, but we had to do it. Based on the workloads, it was clear that changes could be made in the ministry. We only wish we had more time for families to make the necessary adjustments in their lifestyle to assimilate a severe loss in income. Please know that if we had the luxury of time, there would be no question but that we would extend that to all our employees.

In the US field ministry we have 42 pastors each serving 100 members or less in regular attendance. We realize that there are a number of mitigating circumstances—multiple churches, long distances, etc. But this is the reality. In order to continue to serve the members in these areas, we have contacted many of these men and asked them to look for part or full-time work. We will pay them a reduced wage to continue pastoring the local congregations where they are presently assigned. This plan keeps men in our employ, continues the service to the brethren, and allows a minister to augment his income with an outside job. We have had success with this program in the past in very limited areas. We are hopeful that this will be received with a positive attitude by the men who will be involved. Many have already contacted us and it has been quite humbling to hear their inspiring comments. It is so encouraging to see the spirit of sacrifice that these men exhibit. We owe them all a great debt of gratitude.

I am sure you are all interested in who has been put on 1/2 salary and who hasn't. While we can't give you all the names at this present time, we can provide some limited information as we go into the

weekend. In the past few days 29 men have been contacted about going to a 1/2 salary. This equates to almost 30 percent of the entire ministry. Roughly 1 in 3 of the full-time men has been asked to go to a 1/2 salary. We have also terminated a few men in areas that we can adequately handle by other pastors in the same city or by combining Church circuits with a neighboring pastor. We feel badly that in some of these cases we could not even offer a 1/2 salary. We truly value these men, but simply felt, given the circumstances, that we had no other choice. These are very difficult matters and no doubt there will be factors which get overlooked. When you deal with this large a group of men, there will always appear to be inequities. But, please be assured, we have done our best to be fair and equitable to everyone. We want to emphasize that these men who were given 1/2 salary are all considered full-time employees and pastors, but will generally be less available to the membership (primarily evenings and weekends).

Of course, in addition to the reductions to 1/2 salary, and the terminations, we also begin across the board salary reductions for all in the regular full-time ministry (but not those going to 1/2 salary) with our next paycheck. These reductions will be in effect through the Feast of Tabernacles. It is our desire to restore the salaries to their current level after the Feast, but obviously this will depend on our financial condition at that time. We have also drastically reduced ministerial expense. If you have any questions about these items, then please contact one of the members of the Ministerial Services Team.

The point we must be clear on is that everyone in the organization will be asked to make some sacrifices. Given our sudden membership loss, we are forced to take these steps. With God's blessing, we will weather this current crisis and move forward with our goal of preaching the gospel and caring for the people of God.

Thank you all for the wonderful comments we are hearing. It is truly inspiring to work shoulder to shoulder with all of you. Let's pray that God binds us closer together through this current storm and makes us a stronger body for the future. Please feel free to share this information with your congregations.

—Les McCullough ☞

Letters & Responses

We print a representative sampling of our mail—both positive and negative. Writers should specify how much of their name and address they would like us to print.

Spread Gospel—Run Local Ads

LETTER:

June 8, 1998

Dear Brethren:

Thank you for the article (page 6 of the Mar/Apr 1998 *Servants' News*) regarding the local effort to spread the gospel here in northwest Indiana. Donna and George McCammon are instrumental in the effort as they send all the booklets out. In case any brethren want to know, Tom Justus in Springdale, Arkansas created and printed the small booklets.

An update: We have received a total of 15 responses to the ad. Four of the responses were from Knox, Indiana, where we have discovered a small non-affiliated Sabbath keeping organization. We are very excited about these new (to us) brethren. They wrote in for the booklets because they wanted to know who else believed Christ was resurrected on the Sabbath. They do keep the Passover on Nisan 14. Donna McCammon visited them last Sabbath and we hope to continue communicating with them.

I am very excited to see "Shelter in the Word" and will offer these articles to all the people who wrote in for booklets. Keep up the good work!!

—Carolynn Landgrebe, Indiana

RESPONSE: Thank you very much. I believe it is efforts like yours that will eventually spread the Gospel nearly everywhere. By this, I do not mean that everyone must run ads in a paper, I mean that everyone should reach out in love and service to others, in whichever way Christ leads them. If the new group you found allows others to comment and participate, it might make sense for a few of you (possible all of you) to stop meeting where you are and join their group for a while (if they will accept that). That may sound radical, but if we think of the ministry of Jesus and Paul, that is exactly what they did. They never built the "Synagogue of Jesus" or "The church of Paul" and then mounted a campaign to get others to come to it. Most of the records we have are of them traveling to existing synagogues and groups and then speaking to them.

Several times while I worked for the Global Church of God, we received contacts like yours, from small groups of Sabbath keeping brethren. They usually liked the GCG literature, but they did not want to disband their local meetings, drive fifty miles to the nearest GCG group, and send "tithes" to a distant headquarters where they knew nobody. So the relationship ended. **How can these little groups ever come to believe that God works only through one human organization, when they have learned so many truths directly from the Bible and Christ?**

But independent local groups, and non-controlling national (or international) organizations **are able to work with these little groups that the Eternal is calling directly.** Let us do it with zeal!

—NSE

Sabbath School Lessons & Bickering

LETTER:

June 10, 1998

To the Ministers of Servants News:

I once read somewhere that there was children's Bible stories available through your work. I believe Ron Dart was in charge of them. I would like to have some sent to my granddaughter for her children: [address deleted].

I think one of the greatest mistakes Mr. Armstrong made was not providing a Sabbath school study for the children in his work and church.

I receive your Servants' News but I believe the "nit picking", backbiting gossip of the other churches and ministers should be stopped. I'm sure according to the Bible it is not pleasing to God to be printing all of those mistakes they make. Forget the sins of others. Let's have more on studies and lessons of the Bible. [personal request deleted].

—NB, Illinois

RESPONSE: At this time, we are not offering Ron Dart's Sabbath School Lessons, but you may contact him directly at Christian Educational Ministries, PO Box 560, Whitehouse, TX 75791, Tel: 903-509-2999, Fax: 903-509-1139, e-mail: cem@ballistic.com.

We do not enjoy printing sins and mistakes of others, **but much of the Bible is lessons and mistakes of others!** We print what we believe are the doctrinal mistakes and flagrant sins of those teaching others today, in order to help others understand where they should assemble, and what evangelistic efforts they should support. Nearly all of the historical books of the Old Testament are about what people did—and

the majority of those things were mistakes. Of the 40 kings of Israel and Judah, the scriptures have something good to say about only a few of them. Many passages of the New Testament are warnings about evil plans, false teachers and false teachings. Sometimes, names of specific sinners are mentioned (Matt 7:15-27; 28:11-15; Acts 8:9-23; 24:25-27; 1Cor 5:1-6; 1Tim 1:18-20; 2Tim 2:16-18; 2Tim 4:10, 14-15; 2Pet 2:1-22; 3Jn 9-10; Jude 3-23; Rev 2 & 3). There are many other scriptures about church problems, but the above should be enough to understand the idea.

—NSE

Real Heresies Among Us

LETTER:

May 27, 1998

Dear Marleen and Norm,

[Personal paragraph omitted.]

Satan certainly has been busy among the brethren, deceiving some to believe Jesus was just an ordinary man, not our Savior, some "other" will save mankind, the New Testament was not written by the apostles, that it is not valid or inspired by God, only the Old Testament is inspired and possibly only Moses' books and on and on.

We certainly need to pray without ceasing, about these matters and seek God's constant guidance. I hope you are well and thriving.

—CM, California

RESPONSE: We have heard someone teach all of the heresies that you have mentioned. We think it is interesting to note the nature of people who tend to get caught up in these heresies. Is it people who have obvious sins and want to disprove most of the Bible so that they will not be convicted of sin? No! It is usually people who live fairly good human lives—they feel good enough about themselves that they think that they really do not need a Savior or the Holy Spirit to dwell in them. They feel "knowledgeable and skillful" enough in "explaining the law" so that they can explain away anything they do as righteousness. They are also "knowledgeable and skillful" enough to find "errors" in the New Testament, and maybe even some in the old. It has been my experience that things seem to go very well (physically) speaking when people depart from Jesus—for a while. Then, if they continue in this thinking for a few years, their entire lives come apart. They have left their Savior and lost His Spirit—their human reason, good as it may be, can no longer carry them.

The nature of man is explained in the first five books of the Bible: "...although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth..." (Gen 8:21). The coming of a

Messiah was also clearly prophesied: "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him" (Deut 18:18-19). Acts 3:19-26 clearly explains that Jesus (Yeshua) fulfilled this prophecy. To doubt these and many similar scriptures is to say that the entire New Testament is a clever hoax.

To my knowledge, **there is not one ancient document** that supports the "hoax theory". If the New Testament books were not written by whom they claim to be written by (or who they are traditionally attributed to), why do we not find at least one writing of a Roman, Jew, or some other enemy of the Christians exposing when and how these "phony" books were supposedly "concocted"? The truth is we have numerous writings from the enemies of the Christians during the second and third centuries. We have records of efforts to dissuade Christians from their religion. But the argument that "all of your writings are fake" is never brought up. Does anyone believe that the Eternal caused many hundreds of ancient New Testament manuscripts to be preserved, but **no** manuscripts documenting the "New Testament hoax theory" to be preserved, and yet He expects everyone to reject the New Testament and accept the "hoax theory"? I, for one, do not!

—NSE

Computer 2000 Problem Article

LETTER: February 20, 1998
Dear Norman,

Your article about the computer problems in Year 2000 is so well written, I've read it twice. (Dec 1997 issue). Hope many people will take time to read it. Thanks for telling us how to prepare for the hardship that will come. Could you do a print-out of the article by itself for us to hand-out to others?

[Literature request omitted.] Thanks so much for your service.

—Mildred Barnette, Georgia

RESPONSE: As soon as we finish the update to *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?* we will work on a separate booklet about the year 2000 problems and how to prepare. We intend to write this booklet for people with no Church of God experience. We feel it is an excellent opportunity to preach the Gospel to others—to show that our nations are greedy and not obeying the Eternal, and that He promises a punishment for doing this.

Judging from recent progress reports, it looks like many industries and governments will not be ready. As one commentator pointed out, even if the USA was perfectly ready for the year 2000, failure of international trade and military takeovers in other countries are likely to throw the world into chaos. Most other countries are far behind the USA. The possibility that even in the USA a state of emergency will be declared and martial law will be imposed is very real. The constitution does provide for a state of emergency and numerous regulations for implementing it have already been written. While this may sound overly dramatic, if the Federal Government is unable to collect taxes, they could choose this approach rather than passing a very simple, emergency tax bill. In February of this year, Arthur Gross, the man in charge of year-2000 compliance for the IRS resigned. In a search for his replacement, the IRS commissioner stated "Mr. Gross's successor will face the biggest technology management challenge in the world." There are about 550 days left before January 1, 2000. Companies with much simpler computer systems have taken much longer than that to become year-2000 compliant.

—NSE

Gospel Preaching & Year 2000

LETTER: May 27, 1998
Norm,

Thanks for your article in the *Servants' News* that I received today! Well done! Yours is a fair assessment of all the major offshoots, their leadership and direction. I especially liked the last few paragraphs reminding the reader of HWA's determination to know the scripture to the very best of his ability, and to teach others who had **no** knowledge of the Sabbath and other scriptural truths. It is a stark contrast to those who today are working hard to scavenge the remnants of the WCG, concerned more with authority than with service. Regardless of what HWA was or was not, none can deny his tireless devotion to teaching his message, based upon thousands of hours devoted to learning God's word. Where do we stand when compared to his example of tireless devotion to what he believed? (The person writing this sure falls short!) Can we agree that "if you teach it [God's truth], they [who earnestly desire to hear] will come"? I hope so.

Also, I appreciate the well-balanced article on the Y2K problem in the [Dec 1997] issue. I expect we will see some very high-profile failures, lasting days, weeks or months, depending on the situation. Those companies/organizations depending on reverting to an all-paper system in the inter-

im will be swamped with paperwork to the extent that they don't survive, especially if they have competitors who had the foresight to be prepared. The state of the U.S. Government Agencies and the Electric Utilities, not to mention the questionable readiness of the European nations (also absorbing the reprogramming to include the "euro") as well as that of third-world countries is of major concern. There are several web sites with some very good information—www.year2000.com is one—helping to show the nature and extent of the dilemma. Compuserve has a Year 2000 forum accessible on the web from the Compuserve home page. (One can view, but not post, without a membership.)

Regards,

—"Random Axe"

RESPONSE: Thanks for your encouragement. This is very significant coming from someone with your background—one who has worked with ministries as well as run a large a large successful business.

—NSE

Unusual Year 2000 Problems

LETTER: June 13, 1998

I just found the first (and creepiest) instance where the year 2000 crisis is not just a digital problem, but a very "analog" one, as well. It seems that the burial industry (or whatever you call it) is faced with an oversupply of headstones pre-carved with a "19" prefix.

This is pretty much out of my league, but apparently it's common to preorder your tombstone, specify an inscription, and then leave a space blank for the actual date. Because it's cheaper to pre-carve (who knew?), people add the "19" prefix and then leave the remaining part of the date for loved ones to fill in.

The companies responsible for holding onto these pre-carved tombstones have started worrying that they'll have a lot of useless "19" grave markers unless an awful lot of people, pardon the crassness, drop dead over the next year and a half. One company is experimenting with a cement like paste to fill in the number "19" and has had results buffing the stone to hide the error, while others are experimenting with brass plates that fit over the "19."

I find this particularly fascinating from an archaeological viewpoint, because centuries from now, archaeologist will wonder what the mystery brass plate meant on some of our markers. Were we hiding dates? Did some people in our culture die twice? Was brass plating a sign of nobility? Or poverty? Anyway, you get the idea, and I've obviously

had way too much coffee, but I think this one helps us keep our perspective.

Of course, the truly dark and morbidly missing link in all of this is the opportunity to buy them up wholesale and offer them up to the poor data managers who can't face another day struggling with the digital year 2000 crisis (couldn't resist!).

—John (e-mail)

RESPONSE: The headstone problem will probably resolve itself in a true free-enterprise manner. Somebody will find a very good way to repair or cover the stones, so they will not be wasted. Also, repaired stones will sell at a discount compared to new, properly etched "2000" stones. (And some shysters will probably try to sell repaired stones as "2000" stones to unsuspecting customers.)

But the idea that someone might try to use those "19" stones before the year 2000 does give us pause for thought. Many smaller countries are loaded with military hardware that they obtained inexpensively when they were "friends" with a superpower. But when small countries want to attack their neighbors, they often have to greatly distance their relationship with superpower lest the superpower pressure them not to attack. Realizing that they may not have the ability to repair or reprogram military hardware that is not year-2000 compliant, will some nations decide to attack their enemies before 2000 arrives? From an evil military perspective, it makes a lot more sense to expend one's military hardware against an enemy than it does to see it become useless due to a computer bug. Could many people die in such a war? Yes! But is not this a good time to buy headstones?

We need to realize that the Earth contains many evil men. Should we fear them? No! But, all of us need to learn to have a much greater faith in our Father in Heaven, and to realize that our existence here can be very temporary.

—NSE

Organization Affiliation Addict

LETTER: May 30, 1998

It has been about 42 months (or 1260 to 1335 days, or about 3-1/2 years) since we finally left WCG. Although it was good that we "came out of her", it has not been a "place of safety" out here. After affiliation with GCG, UCG, PCG, CGG, and now various splinters, our issues that we focus on have changed somewhat in their priority. I have just finished your June, 1995 article on "How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?" There is a paradox in my writing this to you.

I want to ask about your personal church history, and the history of the Servants' News organization. Does my wanting to ask this indicate that I have been an organization-addicted churchie since 1969? I am not trying to corner you with the question—it is a question that I am honestly asking myself. As stated above, the priority of issues has changed with each affiliation change since January, 1995. The new #1 question now seems to be: should we even look for any particular organization? It seems paradoxical to ask you, considering your article which points out the importance of "Attitude not Form". Hopefully, I can learn more about a "Messiah-centered" organization from your "Assembling on the Sabbath" article.

Nevertheless, if you do have information of how you started, and how the Servants' News is organized, it would help this "Organization Affiliation Addict". Perhaps it can lead to a cure.

—Ted M. I. McCord
UKZC41B@prodigy.com

RESPONSE: Your questions are fair. I graduated from Ambassador College in 1978, and worked for the Worldwide Church of God in various technical areas until 1992. Toward the end of my stay in the WCG, I witnessed many events that convinced me that people within that organization, all the way up to the top, were dealing dishonestly and that the Eternal was no longer using it in the same way. I began to study my Bible and really see that false doctrines were being preached.

I quit my WCG job to help Rod Meredith start the GCG. I felt that the Eternal was testing everyone to see if they would leave one corporation to go where the true doctrines were being preached. It was 6 weeks before he was able to pay me. When Meredith began, there were **no** full-time WCG ministers with him. He had faith that the Eternal would take care of him and supply what he needed, and it worked out. He admitted a number of errors in the way he had dealt with church government in the past. But as several long-time WCG ministers began to join him, it became largely back to the same old church government "business as usual".

As I continued to study the Bible, I realized that there were questions that Rod Meredith and other long-time WCG evangelists could not answer—especially in the areas of government, the Passover, etc. Also, Mr. Meredith admitted on more than one occasion that he simply did not have time for major study in some of these areas. Of course I, as a GCG board member, was expected to speak the "party line" on all doctrines. After about a year in the GCG, I

began to realize that if I were going to be able to grow in understanding and share with others, that I would have to stop working for the GCG. Yet, I did not have any idea where I should fellowship, except with Church-of-God organizations. I quit working for the GCG after two years, late in 1994. For more information on this part of my life, you may write for our package on our relationship with the Global Church of God.

After that, I decided to start Servant's News, as a publication to share sincere information and study. Soon, I was able to study and write my paper, *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?* At that point I began to realize how far away WCG-style church government was from the Bible. I also began to realize that the Eternal did not break up the WCG in order to create a dozen or more much weaker, look-alike organizations somewhere else. If God really wanted us to learn hierarchical government—that he rules top-down through human organizations—would he do it by placing corrupt men at the top? Would He then have dozens of others claim they are Armstrong's successor, apparently none of which have shown great faith or other spiritual gifts?

What I believe the Eternal has done is allow many to learn from HWA's diligent job of teaching, but that HWA seems much like Solomon—his desire for riches and possibly women took him away from his job. The Eternal allowed his way to go on so that we could see the fruit and dangers of human hierarchies: we can see how many ministers simply followed whoever would pay them—how few stood up for what they understood to be truth. Now, the Eternal has many people all over the Earth who are trained in much truth, but who will never be tempted to start an organization where people look to a man in place of Christ or the Scripture.

Today, Servants' News goals are much the same as stated in its original issue, three years ago. I have learned a lot along the way: Bible teaching, and how to ask for things from God and how to listen to Him. I realized that I did not want to incorporate or apply for IRS tax exemption. In 1996, we moved to Michigan where George and Pam Dewey now help us. They had seen the error of the WCG government back in 1978. We have visited a great many congregations and talked to a great many people. The vast majority of people whom I have met who are spiritually at peace with the events in the WCG during the past 10 years are people who have a view similar to mine. We can talk to others in any group and not be upset with what we hear. We can learn from them. Most people who believe they must stay in a certain group simply do not want to talk about how they know

that their leader and group is **the right one**. I have had only a very few people spend any length of time trying to convince me that I should join their group. And once I began asking them questions about their group, they usually did not want to talk about it any more.

While being at peace and being able to answer questions is not a proof of truth, "uptight people" who cannot explain their belief are a good indication that error was present. Think about it. If a person believes that they must follow a certain leader for salvation, **but that person cannot easily explain to anyone who might ask exactly why they must follow**, are not they **putting faith in that man**, rather than in the Eternal? Can they afford to be uncertain of their belief on such a critical point?

There are statements in the Bible that tell us to cooperate with the leaders whom the Eternal sets up. But there is no command anywhere to follow a human leader when he is doing something contrary to our understanding of Scripture. Even children are told to obey their parents "in the Lord" (Eph 6:1). Now if we try to twist the meaning of Scripture to suit what we want to do, **we bring judgment upon ourselves** (2Pet 3:16). But if we are obeying the Eternal in real faith, we do not have to worry what men tell us (Rom 14:23, Acts 5:29).

—NSE

Question on 1John 2:27

LETTER:

Sept. 7, 1997

Pam and Norm,

I have a question about 1John 2:27. Recently I heard a minister (whom we all regard highly) in a sermon explain 1John 2:27 as "no need to be taught by anyone other than those who are of the body of Christ and of the same spirit. There obviously is a need for us to teach each other."

Is this what this verse says to you? To me it says that the Holy Spirit will teach me all things, and is truth.

Am I missing the understanding of the scripture?

—DW, Ohio

RESPONSE: The verse confuses many people. Some think it says that no believer ever needs to listen to any teacher because they will be taught everything they need to know directly by the Holy Spirit. Others look at this scripture, then immediately show the other scriptures about the need to assemble together, the need for teachers in Christ's body, etc. They use the overwhelming evidence of the many other scriptures about teaching to sort of dismiss this scripture. The best way to understand this scripture is to read it in context. We offer the following

excerpt from 1John 2:

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, **even now many antichrists have come**, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. ²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. ²¹ **I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it**, and that no lie is of the truth. ²⁶ These things I have written to you **concerning those who try to deceive you**. ²⁷ But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

John was not advising them to get rid of **all teachers**, but telling them that they should **leave false teachers**. Verses 22-25 give the nature of the specific heresy in question, but the overall principle here is that believers with the Holy Spirit will learn more on their own than they will from recognized teachers who are teaching error. Revelation 2:2 shows that there were some who claimed to be apostles, but were found by the brethren to be liars. The question our brethren must face today is: "How do we know when a teacher is 'false enough' to leave?" In this case, John was dealing with people who no longer taught that Jesus (Yeshua) was the Messiah. We must obviously depart from people who teach or insist that we practice major heresies like this. But if there are no major heresies, then we need to look for works and fruits (Matt 7:15-20, 2:Cor 12:12; Gal 5:22-23). We need to be careful not to simply let the teacher claim that he has great works and fruits, but we need to really see them!

—NSE

COG Divisions Hindering Growth

LETTER:

June 6, 1998

Greetings!

Would you please send me your free subscription of Shelter in the Word.

I am so pleased to find out about this publication. I have been blessed in that God has been using me to "plant seeds". And while "planting" I've passed out many booklets that I had accumulated over the years from CGI and UCG-AIA. The problem with that is eventually you're faced with explain-

ing the what, how and why of "splits", "spin-offs" and disarray of the COG. No "spiritual Babe" should have to endure this "spiritual indigestion"!

God Bless You!

—David Martel, Oregon

RESPONSE: We agree. We do not believe that significant evangelism will be possible until the various Sabbatarian groups can freely acknowledge other groups to outsiders and admit that there is very little difference between themselves and others.

—NSE

The Scattering Produces Blessings

LETTER:

January 10, 1998

Dear Servants' News,

Many miracles have been performed behind the scenes bringing people together since the scattering of the large corporate churches. Jesus Christ can gather his flock to Himself and to one another without men even being aware of it.

Look at all the grass roots efforts trying to serve others, research, study papers, newsletters, etc. Believers who left the large corporate churches 20 years ago are coming out of isolation, and sharing insights and communications. Avenues to reach people are spreading out more than some realize—newsletters, tapes, videos, letters, seminars, etc. We all have the same goal: to grow in the maturity of Christ.

John 17:20: "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word".

Their word is still going out. The Bible has recorded the words of the apostles and their eyewitness accounts. Let's not limit "those who will believe". Let's leave that to our Creator.

While some groups are isolated by choice, it is unfair to say that all the independent groups are uninterested in cooperation. Actually, there is much communication between the interdependent groups, and I find it amazing the similar growth patterns and beliefs of the many scattered who have never even heard of one another. Let's praise Jesus Christ who is keeping tabs on all of it and guiding the whole process!

—Michigan

RESPONSE: Amen!

—NSE

What are the Nephilim (Giants)?

LETTER:

June 11, 1998

What is your answer to Genesis 6 regarding the Nephilim (giants). Some people, like Dankenbring, and others are purporting this is the answer to our UFO's and

other problems. What is your answer to this.

Can demons take on human form like their angelic counterparts and repopulate themselves with females? Or is this absolutely reposterous?

—James P., e-mail

There are many scriptures, and we have written many articles about how we will be judged for what we do in this life. We cannot think of any scriptures that indicate we will be judged on knowing the answers to these kinds of questions. While the scriptures do say “my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”, we cannot think of one person who has suffered for lack of this kind of knowledge. (If you, or any of our readers know of someone who suffered or perished because he did not know about the Nephilim, please let us know.)

On the other hand, we can think of many people whose lives deteriorated because they spent much time studying such issues when their own lives, or the lives of their families and friends, were in desperate need of real spiritual help.

Nevertheless, we are told to live by “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”, so we should not ignore this scripture. But do we want an answer out of the mouth of God, or do we just want an answer?

The Hebrew “Nephilim” appears in Gen 6:4 and Numbers 13:33, and is translated “giants” in the KJV and NKJV. Most modern Bible versions simply say “Nephilim” as the meaning of the word is not certain. However, “giants” seems to be a reasonable translation, as Numbers 13:32-33 makes it clear that these people were taller. However, the comparison made by the Israelites of themselves as grasshoppers in their sight is clearly an exaggeration—a person is 50 to 100 times taller than a grass-hopper—there were never any people that were hundreds of feet tall.

All I really know about these verses is what the Bible says. The Nephilim were “mighty men” and that they were tall. Does the expression “sons of God” refer to some kind of spirit being? This exact Hebrew phrase is used in Genesis 6:2,4 and Job 1:6 and 2:1). In Job, it definitely appears to be referring to spirit beings. However, there are very similar expressions found elsewhere:

You [the Israelites] are sons of the LORD your God... (Deut 14:1, RSV or NASB).

...Bring My [the Eternal's] sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth (Isa 43:6).

Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the

place where it was said to them, “You are not My people,” There it shall be said to them, “You are sons of the living God” (Hos 1:10).

From studying the language of Genesis 6:4, I think it is possible that it refers to spirit beings, but from studying the meaning of the rest of the Bible, it seems like they were men—the Bible gives no clear explanation of a race or group of people that are partly spirit beings. On the other hand, the Bible does not clearly state that such a thing is impossible. The three verses above indicate that the “sons of God” might refer to people who followed the Eternal—so the “daughters of men” might refer to people who did not. But in all of this, if the Word of the Eternal does not clearly say, then we do not clearly know.

To speculate about such things is largely harmless. To make dogmatic statements about UFOs or half-human/half-demon creatures without clear Biblical proof or a revelation from the Eternal is a big mistake. Nevertheless, religious teachers through the ages have gained followings by claiming to understand difficult scriptures—even though there was no way to prove that their interpretation was correct. Some will also cite apocryphal books that claim to explain these events, but these same apocryphal books contain statements clearly in opposition to the Bible and almost no one accepts them as totally reliable.

If it were important to me to understand exactly who these “sons of God” were, I would pray, fast, and seek an answer from the Eternal. But I do not think I will do it any time soon. There are too many other pressing needs to ask about. I feel that understanding scriptures to help the personal lives of myself and others are much more important. Understanding how to preach the Gospel to others is more important. Yes, even physically preparing to be ready for difficulty caused by year-2000 computer crashes is more important.

I think your question is a reasonable one, but my “I do not know for sure” answer needs to be considered in light of the important events facing us in the near future.

—NSE

How to Keep the Feast?

LETTER: June 21, 1998
Dear Mr Edwards,

Concerning the feast of tabernacles I am really unclear on what is the right or wrong thing to do.

1. Some people in the church don't even observe this feast, not sure why.

2. Some go to the services, but stay

close to home so they go home every night.

3. Majority will go to services and stay in temporary dwellings for the duration.

4. Then there is those that only go on the holy days and work the rest of the days in between. This is so confusing to me since I haven't been in the church but 3 yrs. What does the Bible say we should do?

I do know the Bible says you shall go where He (God) puts his name. Well where is that? There is a Feast site everywhere! I sure would appreciate any information on this to help me serve God the way he truly wants me to.

Thank you for all your help.

—c. (e-mail)

RESPONSE: The reason you are having such trouble is because the Bible is not specific about how to keep the Feast, especially without sacrifices and a temple.

We are told in three different places that we should assemble together three times a year (Ex 23:14-17; Ex 34:22-24; Deut 16:16-17). If we read other scriptures about what to do on the Feasts, we find they are mostly about how many and what kind of animals to sacrifice (Lev 16; 23; Num 28; 29). There are commands for assemblies on most of the holy days.

Obviously, there are specific things to do on the Passover night, we put out leaven during the Days of Unleavened Bread and fast on the Day of Atonement. The law was to be read at the Feast of Tabernacles every seven years (Deut 31:10-11)—some groups today have actually done this latter point. Also, during the Feast of Tabernacles, the Israelites were told to live in Sukkoth (Hebrew) which means a primitive shelter, either a tent or a lean-to.

When the Jews were sent into captivity, they began to keep the Feasts locally, without sacrifices. They had no great section of scripture to guide them, they just did the best that they could in captivity. They built symbolic “Sukkoth” during the Feast of Tabernacles and ate meals in them, they did not need a real building since they were not journeying and did not need a place to stay. When the Jews again had a presence in Israel, diligent Jews in the dispersion would try to get to Jerusalem for a Feast whenever they could. Very few could afford to travel there three times a year.

There is no long discourse about keeping the Feasts in the New Testament, but it is clear that the believers did it and seemed to follow the Jewish lead of meeting locally. Paul went to Jerusalem for some Feasts, but he never encouraged other brethren to do it en masse, nor does there appear to be any records of others doing it. Gentile believers **would not** be welcome to take part in the

Temple sacrifices, anyway.

The Worldwide Church of God once attempted to get their members in the USA together for both the Days of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles. As they found that this was nearly impossible for many brethren, they dropped their central Days of Unleavened Bread meeting, and tended just to combine services for several local congregations. Pentecost was always handled this way, too.

Are there clear scriptures that show God's people need to get together for the Fall Feast but not the Spring or Summer? Are there scriptures that prescribe our traditional format of fancy motels and restaurants, half-days of sermons, and half-days and nights of entertainment? Are there verses that tell us how far we need to leave our homes and how many days? Are there verses that tell us how to determine where the Eternal has "placed his name"?

The answer to all of the above questions is "no".

The only justification that most groups give for their Feast practices is "church authority". Many people have a tendency to believe that their church group's Feast practices are "right out of the Bible", but that simply is not so. Today, there are many groups with many Feast sites, and what happens at these sites varies greatly. Some sites simply view taped messages of sermons by the group's one or few "top leaders". Others hear from a variety of live speakers. Some expect everyone to take an active part so that all may learn. Some sites emphasize their entertainment potential, others emphasize bringing the brethren closer in a sort of spiritual family reunion.

Obviously, it is not sensible for each person to study the scripture and organize their own feast site according to their own interpretation. There would be no assembling together if there were as many sites as believers. On the other hand, there may be people who have the gift for organizing Feast sites, who should be doing it! So if you believe you should be organizing a site, do it. But if not, which site we will attend is another decision we have to make—just like where will we work, whom will we marry, etc. The choices are vast and we have to pray for the Eternal's will in our life. If He clearly shows us, we take His choice, and if not, we make the best decision we can.

Where has the Eternal placed his name? I once heard a big church organization strongly warn an independent believer against "going where the Eternal has not placed his name". I am sorry if I destroy anyone's cherished belief, but I have talked to many directors of Feasts for the various

church organizations and not a one of them could remember an instance where the location of a Feast site was chosen in some miraculous way. No city name ever miraculously appeared on someone's desk or chalk board. No one ever put a bunch of city names in a box, drew a few out, and then held Feasts in those cities. As far as I know, every Feast site was always chosen by people looking for affordable, available facilities in a city where they believed brethren would want to attend. I have never heard anyone attempt to prove from the scripture why they have any more authority than anyone else to "place the Eternal's name" somewhere. (The only argument ever used is one of the church authority of a particular organization—that their church has the right doctrines or the "biggest work" and therefore has the right to speak for God in matters of Feast sites, doctrines, ministerial control, etc. etc.)

The truth of the matter: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matt 18:20).

We hope that you will be able to choose a Feast site where you can learn as well as serve others. We hope you will try to attend as many days as you can, rather than as few. If you want to be as literal with scriptures as possible, stay in a tent, cabin or maybe an RV? But if you are not going to do that, we see little difference whether you stay in a motel or home. The Hebrew "Sukkoth" never seems to mean either one of those. However, it is our understanding that the main point of the Feast should be praising the Eternal and fellowshiping with other believers. Recent history has shown us that the results of fall Feast-keeping have been good. Most people look forward to it all year, and come back spiritually refreshed. A great many long-time friendships and marriages of brethren have begun at the Feast.

Have a wonderful Feast this year!

—NSE

Feasts Should Be Kept Locally

LETTER: November 30, 1997
Dear Norman and all at SN:

I came across this paper that I scribbled some thoughts on probably a year ago. It is incomplete no doubt but, I think the 2 points I bring out are important and should be looked at/thought about. I believe the early churches kept all the Feasts in their local areas. I believe the Bible proves this. The Churches today continue a practice Mr. Armstrong instituted—not God. It doesn't make sense to travel out of our local areas for Tabernacles, but not for UB and Pentecost. Either we pilgrimage for all three or keep them all locally.

And I know point 2 is a hard one for the Churches of God (Armstrongites) to swallow but I believe the Bible proves that Christ comes for his own on Pentecost and that we return with him when he comes to claim His Kingdom. Of course we don't sit around heaven forever on clouds like so many protestants believe but scriptures in Revelation show the saints in heaven and returning with Christ. (at least some of the firstfruits). The Protestants have some good ideas and some bad. The Kingdom definitely comes to earth though.

I would very much like these points to be brought out in SN and would like to know what others think.

[Copy of attached paper follows]

I have been thinking about the Holy Days for quite some time now and would like to share my thoughts with the brethren.

The Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and Feast of Tabernacles were "all" pilgrimage Feasts to Jerusalem. Passover/Unleavened Bread was 8 days long the same as Tabernacles. People didn't journey all the way to Jerusalem, stay for Passover and the first high day, then journey home only to come back for the last High day. Christ told the Samaritan woman (John 4:21-23) that a time was coming (70 AD) and has now come when true worshippers would not worship in Jerusalem but in spirit and in truth.

If Passover/Unleavened Bread and Pentecost can be kept in local church areas then so can the Feast of Tabernacles. According to Acts 20:6, Paul, Luke and some others sailed from "Philippi" after the Days of Unleavened Bread, therefore they must not have been in Jerusalem although the temple worship was still there. Paul says in Galatians 1:18 that he didn't go up to Jerusalem until 3 years after his conversion and in Gal 2:1 he says he went up again to Jerusalem 14 years after that. When Christ said, "a time is coming and now is..." he meant in 70 AD the temple worship would be taken away from the Jews, but it was already eliminated for true believers. If one is a pilgrimage Feast then so are the other two. If two can be kept locally then so can the third. In the past, in the WCG, I don't think we ever kept the true meaning of the Holy Days and especially Tabernacles. I don't think God meant for us to get used to living like Kings. The temporary dwellings remind us that we are strangers here and we look forward to the city with foundations (Hebrews 11:10-16).

Also, Pentecost is the "harvest" of firstfruits. The Church of God people are firstfruits and I believe we will be harvested then. John 14:2-3, Revelation 14:14-16.

When Christ returns to Jerusalem, (on the Feast of Trumpets?) we will be with Him. The saints come out of heaven with Christ. Rev 17:14 ; 19:14. Rev 18:20 and 12:10-12. Some are not appointed to suffer wrath, but are kept from the hour of trial that comes—others do have to suffer but overcome the Beast and his mark through death. “Watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape these things.” Christ comes in 2 stages at His second coming. As a thief for those who are watching and praying. No one but Christ’s own saw Him depart on the Mount of Olives after his resurrection and He will come in like manner, yet He will also come in power and glory finally when all will see Him. Just as Christ’s 2 “advents” were blended in prophecy, so no one understood how he could come as the humble servant and die for us yet also come as King as Kings etc. So His final return is in 2 stages that are blended in prophecy so as not to be easily understood. Christ goes to prepare a place for those who are counted worthy to escape yet there are many of us that will have to undergo a more severe trial during the Beast’s reign before we are counted worthy yet will persevere and gain eternal life as well. Luke 17:26-37. The day Noah entered the ark...sudden destruction! The day Lot left Sodom...sudden destruction! I Thes 5:3-4 (on them) 9. The Day of the Lord is a long day-1000 years and many things occurs at different times on that Day. Noah wasn’t surprised and neither was Lot. Nor will be those counted worthy to escape. Christ will come for them. Matt 24:36-42, 44. Also Matt 24:15-17 and Luke 17:30-31. Compare these with Zech 14:4-5 If Christ is returning in power and glory at this time, who if fleeing? We should be free and rejoicing—but He is just returning in like manner as He left—only those ready will see Him and go with Him, those in Judea will flee to the mountains made possible by the great earthquake that occurs. The Beast will set up the abomination of desolation Rev 12:10-12. Some of the firstfruits go to heaven. Satan is cast out—no longer able to accuse. They overcome him by their steadfast faith—the blood of the Lamb (Christ’s sacrifice) Rev 15:1-2. Later after the Beast’s reign and battle of Armageddon, those victorious over the mark, because they died rather than take the mark. I believe the Bible shows the resurrection to be in more than one stage as well.

No one has even talked about to any extent let alone explained...Luke 17:26-27, Matt 24:15-17, 36-44 and Luke 21:20-24, 36 and Mark 13:14-15. Just as Noah and Lot were righteous and saved by God/angels directly from sudden destruction, so will

some brethren. When the abomination comes—will be a momentous time—much will be happening and many will begin to understand. The 2 witnesses will be preaching during the Beast’s reign.

Sincerely,

—Jean Colgrove, Montana

RESPONSE: I agree with you that the early apostles and brethren did not always keep the Feast in Jerusalem every year. As far as I know, there was no Jewish tradition of getting together in regional areas—they either went to Jerusalem or stayed home. If the apostles implemented something radically different, we would expect to find something of it in the New Testament. We really do not know what they did, but we do know that there is no command for any kind of regional Feast gathering.

We also do not see any command in the New Testament to pay tithes other than to the Levites (for more details, write for our paper *How Do We Give to the Eternal?*). There is no mention of saving “second tithe” for the Feasts. It is almost inconceivable that first century brethren would be saving 10% of their earnings to keep the Feasts locally. As you say, the temporary dwellings of the Old Testament were not the “live like kings” image that the WCG promoted.

Nevertheless the spiritual fruit of Feasts has been good—and is even more so now that brethren are even more scattered than they were in the past. Many independent congregations now make an effort to get together for some of the Spring Holy days and Pentecost as well.

Can everyone get away from their job for all of these holy days? Does everyone have the faith to tell their boss that they are going no matter what, and then come back to see if their job is still there? Does anyone have the right to judge others in these matters? I think the answers to all of these questions is “No.” But if anyone’s approach to his or her Christian life is “what is the least that I have to do to obtain salvation”, I think that person is in serious trouble. If anyone thinks that they are going to be saved because they have gone to the Feast every year for 30 years, I think they are in trouble, also. We should make an effort to make the most of every Feast day, because we want to learn from the Eternal on those days, not because it is some kind of work that will earn us salvation. The Eternal knows whether we are trying to **keep** his Feasts, or trying to **avoid** his Feasts in a world that often makes their keeping rather difficult.

The sacrifices and temple rituals are gone. But the assembling together, the rejoicing before God, and the building of friendships that occurred during the Old

Testament Feasts can also occur during our Feasts today. “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1Cor 5:8).

In regard to your second point, your speculation about the return of Christ on Pentecost, I must say that I do not know for sure. I believe it is a subject well worth studying.. Your idea that the saints may spend some time in heaven is probably foreign to most of our readers. However, most people who believe that the righteous go to heaven use these scriptures in Revelation to prove it. Obviously, there are many scriptures that say things similar to “the dead know nothing.” But the possibility that some converted brethren will spend some limited time in heaven **may** satisfy all of the scriptures. Nevertheless, I have not studied the matter at length, nor have I received any divine revelation on the subject.

—NSE

Resurrections, New Moon Calendar

LETTER: September 15, 1997
Greetings Archie Faul & Norman Edwards,

Thank you for sending me the “Servants’ News”. I look forward to them, and I have found as long as we listen to all our brethren from the break off of the WCG, we put all our studies together, instead of condemning each other for being in different so called groups. (We all have the same foundation beliefs). We can learn more much faster, even as the world did when they were able to understand each other all over the world. They went from horse and buggy to space age in about fifty years.

Your article “Feast of Tabernacles...What does it symbolize?” You did not say where you felt the dry bones came in... These bones are dry, very dry. Breath comes into them, sinews are layed upon them, and bring flesh upon them, covered them with skin, and put breath into them, and they shall live, and know the Lord; an exceeding great army of the Eternal’s people was brought back to physical life and prophesied to, and brought into the land of Israel; and He will put His Spirit into them, Judah and all Israel is joined together once again. Under the Eternal’s rule, they will be burying Gog and all his multitude for seven months. When will they be resurrected?

RESPONSE: I cannot say dogmatically when this Ezekiel 37 resurrection occurs, but it would appear from Revelation 20:5 that it is after the Millennium: “But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.” We must remember that it is **only** Revelation 20 that clearly men-

tions a **1000-year** reign of Christ. Without divine inspiration, our assignment of various Old Testament events before, during or after the Millennium is often guess-work.

LETTER: Why does Rev 19:10 and 22: 9 say "I fell at his feet to worship and he said unto me, see you do it not, I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus , worship God.

22:8,9 I fell down to worship, before the feet of the angel which showed me these things, then he said to me, see you do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book, worship God.

RESPONSE: These scriptures should be self evident—we should not worship angels. Some people may think that this angel (Greek means "messenger") may be Christ, and therefore Christ is not to be worshiped. But notice Revelation 5:12: "saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!'" Also, notice Philippians 2:10-11: "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

LETTER: Wilderness: seems to be where we find the Eternal... it is in a sense a driving, pasture, an open field...

RESPONSE: I do not know exactly what you mean here.

LETTER: There is another thought...the Feast days, the Sabbaths, and New Moon, are shadows of things to come. How are New Moons shadow of things to come?

RESPONSE: Col 2:16-17 certainly indicates that New Moons were a shadow of things to come. Certainly they foreshadow the restoration of the lunar-month calendar—when everyone will know when the Feast Days occur, instead of needing a little pocket conversion chart. It is possible that they foreshadow some spiritual event also, but I do not know what that would be. We have received many papers on new moons but have not had time to study them thoroughly.

LETTER: And how in Psa 81:3, can this New Moon be a crescent moon? It says, blow up the trumpet (singular) in the new moon in the time appointed on our solemn feast day (singular).

The word for appointed in this scripture and one other place is 3677 which is from 3680 meaning a full moon and hides, concealed, covered. That cannot be a crescent moon.

Why does the new Brown-Drivers
June 1998

Griggs Genious Hebrew English Lexicon (page 294) say concealed behind a curtain? That is what it says about the words in the beginnings of your months?

Why does the ones who map the sky for the time we live by, and teach our school children that the dark moon is the new moon?

RESPONSE: We have covered Psalm 81:3 in previous answers to letters. It is a poetic verse with three expressions, but **no Hebrew words that tell us how these expressions are related—are they the same or are they all three different?** A literal reading is: "Blow the ram's horn in the new moon, at the full moon, on the day of our Feast." You can blow one ram's horn (singular) on one Feast day (singular), and blow that same ram's horn on another Feast day (singular). The Septuagint version of this scripture (Psalm 80:3) says "Blow the trumpet at the new moon, in the glorious day of your feast."

The Septuagint is a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek—much of which was completed before Christ. While there are many versions of the Septuagint, and those versions vary much more greatly than the Hebrew Masoretic texts, the Septuagint is often in better agreement with the New Testament quotes of the Old Testament and with the Dead Sea Scrolls. As you can see above, the Septuagint says nothing about the full moon at all. Which text is right? I do not know. But I know that if Christ is to hold me responsible for keeping Feasts based on the Full Moon calendar, that He would reveal it to me either miraculously or in his Bible.

Furthermore, it is evident that Christ and his disciples kept the Feasts in Jerusalem at the same time as the other Jews. If they were keeping the full-moon calendar, and the Jews were keeping a crescent- or dark-moon calendar, **their feasts would never be at the same time.** There is significant historical evidence that a crescent-moon calendar was in use during the first century.

LETTER: All I want is, what is truth, I don't want my own way, what good is my own way, I want to continually learn and change to what ever is truth. Are people afraid of losing face? No one can lose face with truth, but they sure can by holding onto something once they have proved it wrong.

Sincerely wanting to learn and go forwards even if it means change.

—NT, Missouri

RESPONSE: I, as well as many other brethren I know, would start keeping a full-moon calendar this year if we were convinced that the Scriptures taught it, but most simply do not see Psalm 81:3 as a clear com-

mand to do so. If Psalm 81:3 said "Blow the ram's horn on the new moon **which is** the full moon..." it would be different, **but it does not say that.** Those who do believe that the months start with the full moon, should observe the Feasts accordingly—we have mentioned two full-moon Feast sites this year. But we should not say other people are not interested in truth or "just trying to save face" because they do not understand a difficult scripture in exactly the way we do!

—NSE

New Moons Not Sabbaths

LETTER:

March 26, 1998

Norm:

A couple of interesting points on the new moons question:

1) In Numbers 1 Moses took a military census. This was on the first day of the second month, i.e., a new moon.

2) In Ezra 10:16, on the first day of the tenth month, Ezra and certain others held court and rendered a legal judgement.

Looks to me like the new moons couldn't possibly have the same force of law as the Sabbath.

—Lenny Cacchio, Missouri

RESPONSE: Thanks for this brief insight into one of the many questions about new moons. Most people I know who observe new moons do not regard them as Sabbaths, but a few do. Your scriptures show that they are not the same as a Sabbath. I would be interested in hearing any more factual conclusions of this nature.

There is no section of scripture that commands **individuals** to keep new moons or tells exactly what to do. There are commands for the Priests. I know of no scripture that says anything against keeping new moons. There are simply references to people keeping them and we are left to study them and attempt to determine what was done and why. Were they only a method of marking months, or was there a specific spiritual lesson in them? Were they kept before Moses?

As far as I know, the only New Testament verse about them is Col 2:16: "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths." Some say that this is a proof that we should be keeping them, but to me it simply says that we should not judge others about how or if we keep them. We do not have any New Testament references to people actually keeping them—like we do for the Sabbath and most of the Holy Days. Obviously, though, this scripture indicates that we should not judge people who decide to keep them.

—NSE

“Names & Numbers” from page 1 modern-day counterparts have an endless supply of special names and mathematical relationships. **Our Father never commanded us to look for these things as a proof of truth or to determine who His servants are.**

About the only place in Scripture where we are told to calculate a number from a person's name is in Revelation 13:18: “Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.” The Bible gives much information about the error and evil of this “beast”—we do not have to identify him solely by calculation. We are never commanded to calculate the number of a man's name or to listen to the meaning of his name to determine if he is God's servant. Think about that! What better name could a man have than “son of Jesus”? He could claim to be a loyal spiritual son of God's Son. That is the exact meaning of the name “Bar-Jesus”, but **he** was a sorcerer and false prophet (Acts 13:6).

We see nothing wrong with noting unusual occurrences in names and numbers. But if you accept these things as proof of someone's divine calling, you are on dangerous ground. If the person makes a prophecy, it fails, and then they ask you to believe their new prophecy, citing even more names and numbers as proof of their divine commission—then they and their followers are in terrible trouble.

Take the Challenge of Numbers

Are you sure that you will not be swayed by a bunch of unbiblical name and number nonsense? If so consider the following information that appeared in a recent “church of God” magazine.

Each letter of the Hebrew and Greek alphabet has a numerical value associated with it. The English alphabet does not. (Some English letters can be used in Roman Numerals, but there is no such value for every English letter, so the system is not too useful). While it would make the most sense to calculate the number of people's names in the original languages of the Bible, that does not work very well if a person is hoping to discover evil about contemporary English names with no convenient Hebrew or Greek equivalent. So, the article in this publication proposed a numbering system for the English alpha-

bet: **A = 6, B = 12, C = 18, D = 24,... Z = 156**. In other words, the numeric position of each letter within the alphabet is multiplied by 6. What did this publication reveal? **It revealed that the following names add up to 666:**

Kissinger, Santa Claus, Gerry Adams, Ian Paisley, New York, Murrah bomb, Waco Texas, Auchwitz, computer, slaughter, and witchcraft. In a later issue, someone wrote in and noted that **Jim Rector** also added up to 666—and the publication editor found that significant. Jim has been very ill and thanks the Eternal for each day of continued life. Does anyone believe he will be the head of 10 nations?

When analyzing this system we noticed that a number of “good” words added up to **444** (three fours add up to 12, the number of tribes, apostles, etc.) Words adding up to 444 include: **Jesus, Messiah, Y'shua, Joshua, forgave, greater, Gospel, jewels, preacher, parables, unafraid and wiser.** We also noted that **Edwards** and **Bohonik** (two *Servants' News* writers) also add up to 444. **Is that significant?**

No. It all means very little. You will notice that the above lists sometimes contain just the last name and sometimes both names. Sometimes the form is incomplete (“Murrah bomb” instead of “Murrah bombing,” “New York” instead of “New York City”) Why? Because that is the only way to get the desired result. **When “numerologists” do not get the answer first, they try different forms of the words until they get an answer that suits them.**

Furthermore, does the Bible tell us to multiply the value of each letter by 6? What would happen if we multiplied the value of each letter by 5 or 7? If we multiplied by 5 or 7, we would **never** get any word that added up to 666, because 666 is not divisible by 5 or 7. By multiplying each letter's value by 6, we make it 6 times more likely to end up with the number 666! As a matter of fact, with the above system, the average value of a letter is 81 (add the values of all the letters 6 through 156 and divide by 26). That means that it is very likely that a word of about 8 letters will have a value near 666 ($8 \times 81 = 648$, $8.22 \times 81 = 666$). Obviously, the value depends upon whether the letters in the word are near the beginning or end of the alphabet, but the chances of a long word or two short

words adding up to 666 are not remote.

There are plenty of “good words” that add up to 666 by this method, but those that want to pretend that their teaching is somehow inspired never tell you about those words. For example, does it make sense that **amethyst** or **sapphires**, stones used in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:19-20) each add up to 666? Are the following words evil because they add up to 666? **Competent, confessing, dromedaries, explaining, handkerchiefs, honorable, grandsons, labourers, mourning, oliveyard, perfection, pictures, repenteth, recovery, relatives, speechless?** We can see that this numbering system is not a reliable way to find “bad” things.

Similarly, **444** words are not always good. Other words that add up to 444 include: **abominable, accursed, bitter, bruise, craving, envies, error, Gadarenes** (the place where a powerful demon-possessed man lived), **harlot, killing, kidnaps, Lucifer, nuts, Sargon** (an Assyrian King), **Satan's, traps, tempt, unbelief.**

Using this kind of “numerology” is simply a trick that teachers use on unsuspecting students. The teacher simply tries words and formulas till he gets them to add up to something. If he does look for or stumble across words that disprove his conclusion, he typically never mentions them.

Take the Challenge of Names

If you had no trouble seeing the error in the previous system, then please read these excerpts from a paper that Murray Hyson wrote about himself entitled: *Dualities and Other Notable Occurrences in My Life* (March 27, 1996):

My mother was born in the 7th month of 1931. This is 100 *nineteen year cycles* (per HWA).

My birth date is two days later than hers, just as Jesus Christ returns in two of His days (approx) from A.D. 31 (Day as a thousand years).

I'm a **FIRSTBORN**—holy unto the Lord. Both Mr. Armstrong and Jesus Christ were also firstborn (Ex 13:2, Luke 2:23)....

I was born in the **SEVENTH** month on the **THIRTIETH** day in 1951 ($19+51=70$) all God's numbers. Mr. Armstrong's birthday was also the

7th month, on the 31st day....

Born in Nova Scotia, I lived in the area of the world's HIGHEST tides. Water represents God's Holy Spirit.

I was conceived on East **PRINCE** St. I lived in BIBLE Hill. When going on SEVEN years old, moved to SEVEN "**ROYALTY**" St. This street, on a hill overlooking, Truro is off "**KING**" St. and to the RIGHT.

I went to work for Michelin Tire. Tires are mounted on rims—wheels within the middle of wheels which travel in any direction—connected with the four cherubim (Ezk 1 & 10), one of which I am represented by.

I worked in Quality Control. My first position was as a "Tester." Before any rubber was used, samples were first taken and tested to determine if they reached an essential high standard of quality. Since 1990 I've performed this for God through the items He revealed to me, only now His begotten are the ones being tested....

Not until a man was killed in a car accident did I begin my new position. This to be repeated (image) for my new position as leader....

Having considerable authority I could, when necessary, scrap both rubber or their products. I now have God's authority, to be used righteously and when necessary, to "SCRAP" people, even outside God's Church. (Necks of my enemies!)...

The last building [I] purchased was 1656 Mackay St. The Flood began 1656 years after creation (Masoretic Text). There were only 8 people saved, this building has 8 units. During the Flood the whole earth became a giant graveyard. This building overlooks a graveyard just across the street and was the only building I had a flood in....

The Holy Bible is DUAL (physical then spiritual), my ministry is DUAL to those servants God sent in the past. Finally, my life is DUAL, those physical things in my past now being spiritually repeated in God's church. **THREE DUALITIES—A "SIGN!"**

Finally, my name is **Hyson**, pronounced "**HIGH**" Son! This will be my position (reward) in the Kingdom at the end of my assignment, higher than all God's created beings in this entire universe.

We hope none of our readers are anxious to run out and follow this man. He wrote many more pages of similar things. He has also written a 300-page book entitled *Revelation's Little Book*. Notice the great claims of authority, with little or no real service—exactly the opposite of the instructions Christ gave to his apostles (Matt 10:42-45).

The man does deserve some commendation for creativity. Since his birthday differed from his mother's by two days, he went into the Bible and found a significance of the number two. If his birthday had been 3, 4 or some other number of days different than his mother's, I am sure that he would have found some other significant Bible number to match. If that proved too difficult, he could have computed the number of days using the Hebrew or some other calendar.

Similarly, he found significance for his birth in 1951 (19+51=70). If he had been born later, what might he have claimed?

1952: 52-19=33, Christ's age at death

1953: end of HWA's first 19-year cycle

1954: 1+9+5+4=19, one 19-year cycle

Hopefully, we have made our point. If we thought long enough, we could come up with a "prophetic" formula for everyone's birth year. If you worked hard enough, you could probably find spiritual analogies for every town, city, street name, job, and dog's name that has touched your life. But would doing such work make you a **spiritual leader** or simply a **vain person in desperate need of learning humility**?

If you understand that you would not be a spiritually special person if you wrote pages of analogies about your personal life, please understand that the same is true for others who use such "proof" to claim that they are spiritual teachers. They probably are not any closer to God than you are.

Do Not Be Deceived By Misuse of History and Foreign Languages

It is fairly obvious that the previous example is just so much human reasoning. But a person may seem to be "above you" if they talk a lot about history, calendars or foreign languages—especially if you have not studied those areas. Notice this quote from the March-April 1998 issue of *The Total Truth, A magazine of Love, Truth & Understanding*:

Emer of Elliott [the name used by the writer] was on earth in the 1961st year of time from Yahshua, i.e. Sept

1988-Sept 1989 C.E. and was entering his 54th year on Kislev 1,4,5 (Quartodeciman Perpetual Calendar). I am sure that the Pope in 1582 must have considered these things because the Gregorian calendar counts down time from Abraham to Emer of Elliott. (My first name is "Clemer" and I was born at Elliott, West Virginia. "CL" [the first two letters of "Clemer"] = 150 [Roman numeric value] or three Jubilees and it is three Jubilees from Adam to 1988-89 if we count Abram, 1961 as the first Jubilee of a 1960 year Sabbatical-Jubilee cycle after Adam. The 2nd Jubilee of a 1960 year cycle would be that of Christ (Messiah Yashua) and the third Jubilee of a 1960-year cycle after Adam would be that of 1988-89—the time of Emer of Elliott. "CL" is 150 in Roman Numeral value and those 2 letters have a numeral value of 6 symbolically (1+5+0=6). The first Adam was created on 6-2 Abib. The last Adam, Christ, was born on 6-2 Abib. The Icon of Christ, Emer of Elliott has these numbers in his name. Emer is a Hebrew word with the equivalent meaning of *Logos* in the Greek language. I was born at Elliott, W. Va. Thus, I am Emer of Elliott. There is only one Emer: one=1, Emer=4, Elliot=7. I am in numbers 1, 4, 7 in Hebrew and born on 1, 4, 7 Kislev (old calendar reckoning from Feb 26.) The conception of Emer was about 6-2 Abib, 1936 C.E.). Emer of Elliott in Hebrew means Word of God's Salvation.

If you cannot follow what the man is trying to say, do not worry. There are a few parts we were not sure about either. **But if you think that this man must be right, or righteous because what he is doing seems so complicated**, you are in trouble. It seems that there are false teachings available with all possible levels of complexity.

But do the Scriptures teach us that we are suffering from a lack of technical knowledge? **No, they do not.** They teach that people need to obey the basic principle of love toward God and neighbor, and to learn how to do that in detail from His word. In the case of *The Total Truth*, we did not feel like we needed to read much of the publication to realize that it would contain little of value to most believers. The summary on the cover showed that it was completely

continued from previous page
 devoted to obscure historical facts and proving the "authority" of its writers. The front cover summary is:

The Exodus Passover was the 12th of April, 1443 B.C.?

The Time of Creation—4000 B.C. or 3896 B.C.

Adam was 8 years of age in physical development at the time of creation?

How the Gregorian Calendar "counts down" to the last messenger of God.

How the Sun and Moon in their cycles gives the anointed Messengers of God the numbers of God.

Did Jesus, Paul, or the other apostles ever give messages like these? **No!** The whole purpose of such messages is to make people dependent on these so-called "messengers of God" for so-called "truth". The result is a **continual state of dependence**: the teachers teach and the students study a continual string of historic "things". Some of the teachings may be true and some not, but they are of little value no matter what. The students often have no way to verify what they are learning, and once they are convinced they are learning from "Messengers of God", they usually stop trying to independently check the teaching they are receiving. The teachers have usually spent so much time "proving" their own authority from scriptures that they actually believe it themselves. The fact that they have just one or two followers is "confirmation from God" of their position, as they see it.

We would not write this article if it were not for so many brethren who become deceived by such things. Church of God members have a tremendous desire to follow after "the man that God is working with". But let us look for someone who is a servant, someone who teaches the obvious meaning of the scripture, someone who has the fruits of the spirit (Gal 5:22-23), and someone who meets the qualifications of a leader (1Tim; Tit 1). If the person claims to have a prophecy from the Eternal, he had better always be right.

Let us look back on our former leaders who made great claims for themselves and prophecies that never came to pass—let us admit that they, and we, were wrong.

—Norman Edwards

"Battle of the Mind" from page 1
 you make it function, it will just sit there totally useless. The term "scatterbrained" might be fitting here.

As we begin our comparative study between a young child and the babe in Christ, you will see many similar problems as well as the same types of joy and pleasures.

Proper Environment

When raising a child it is important to have a proper environment. The old saying "birds of a feather flock together" plays a vital role. A child who is brought up in a house with continual yelling, foul language, fights and mental abuse, grows up with a mind-set reflecting these negatives, and will usually go out and find others of like nature where he feels he will fit in and be more comfortable.

The young believer must also seek the proper environment. He looks at his goals and plans for the future, and as he begins to examine his desires and nature, he also will be most comfortable with those of like mind.

Proper Companionship

Proper companionship in this area is essential. Peer pressure is stronger today than it has ever been. Doctors who have studied peer pressure have noticed a substantial increase in its influence even in the first and second grades of school.

Even the mind of a Christian must fight peer pressure sitting at home in his own living room where there is no one else around. The T.V., magazines, newspapers, and yes, even the computers, are designed to place stumbling blocks in front of the young Christian, if we will let them. (Satan is the prince of the power of the air and this includes all types of media.) The Christian's mind is starting fresh and it needs the proper materials to begin its development.

Proper Self-control

Here's another popular saying: "I told that kid a thousand times." The mind will automatically revert back to where it is comfortable and will allow itself to get away with whatever it can. It takes determination and discipline to control it. Many times, the Christian will make the same mistakes over and over again simply out of habit until the problem is finally overcome. And even after one battle is overcome, the mind goes on fighting.

Thoughts keep popping up like: "Go ahead, nobody's looking" or "Just one more can't hurt" or "Just one last time and I'll stop." This spiritual battle is much more difficult than the physical battle ever was. The mind has become so comfortable in its own environment that it retaliates whenever subjected to a new environment, just like the child who is taken from one home and placed in another home.

The newborn Christian's mind is in the same position as a newborn infant: it must start at the beginning to learn, step by step. However, there is one major difference between the two. The Christian generally has had years of misinformation which must be reprogrammed into its proper order, and this is a difficult and often painful process. When the Christian is baptized, the old man is buried, he comes up out of the water clean and fresh, without sin, just like the baby who has just come out of his mother's womb into the world.

Now that the foundation has been laid the growing period begins. It takes discipline. Notice when a child is allowed to do anything, he becomes wild and unruly, he eventually becomes hostile and attempts to rule his parents. Many succeed in these attempts and control the parents. The stronger the will, the more difficult the fight. The mind of the Christian is no different; unless it is put into subjection it will eventually retaliate from the abrupt change at baptism and revert to its prior state. Even though the change has taken place, the mind will choose to have its own way. The old saying "He's losing his mind" holds a great deal of truth in dealing with the spiritual battle in the mind of the believer. The mental institutions are full of people who have lost control. Thousands of others who have lost control commit suicide every year. Keep the mind in subjection. Don't allow it to have its own way and throw its temper tantrums.

Discipline Your Mind

Begin with a daily mental exercise program. Exercise is vital to the development of a child. It keeps the body active and the blood flowing to the brain to keep it active. Find a subject of interest; the Bible is just loaded with thousands of interesting subjects. Now remember, the mind by nature is basically lazy, so when you read something, the mind says,

“That’s interesting” and is ready to go on to something else. Make it stay there, let it earn its keep, make it probe the subject and not just accept it at face value. Prove it out, research the subject, ask lots of questions, find other information related to the subject. Study to show yourself approved to God, rightly dividing the word of truth (2Tim 2:15, KJV).

Here is another popular saying that fits here: “If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it.” The mind is the finest and most powerful part of the body, so why not make it work for its room and board? Another applicable saying is: “If you don’t work, you don’t eat.” If the mind isn’t actively working and probing, it won’t be eating anything and eventually will die of malnutrition. Stretch the mind. It actually enjoys learning new things, probing new frontiers or even just expanding the old frontiers. Christians become the same way. The mind, if given the proper nudge, enjoys creating things and learning about new and exciting areas. Just watch a child’s face the next time she comes to you with something she has just accomplished.

Have you ever observed a child watching a magician? Their curiosity overwhelms them. But soon, the mind begins to work and the inevitable question pops up: “How did he do that?” It’s something new; the magic doesn’t seem to conform to the laws which govern the child’s mind. He wants to prove out what he has just seen. The babe in Christ must do the same thing. As he learns new subjects, he is just overwhelmed and excited. He must learn to do as the child and ask questions.

Laughter and Rest

Another major area of development for both child and the mind which is often overlooked in our spiritual development is laughter and rest. There is a time and place for everything, including rest and humor. Pass by a grade school during lunch or recess and you can hear children running, screaming and laughing a block away.

The educators understood long ago the importance of proper rest and relaxation. Make a child study and work and practice all day long and he will become stunted in many areas of his life. He can become dull and bitter, lose his sense of humor and eventually strike out at others. If you search, you will find that most

children who are termed “trouble makers” have lost touch with a sense of humor.

The same holds true for the Christian mind. It needs to laugh. Laughter is a necessary ingredient for spiritual growth. It stimulates the blood and activates the mind and when this simple process takes place the mind rests and is temporarily relieved of the burdens it is under.

Meditation

Laughter and rest open another door essential for spiritual growth and this is meditation—taking time to think about things that are important in your life. It is much easier for the mind to meditate when it is relaxed and happy. Find a place where the mind can be put at rest, somewhere quiet and peaceful.

The mind can really be productive if nurtured properly. During a meditation period the mind can reach out and explore the regions of your thoughts, develop ideas and even create new technology. The only limits it has is the limits we place on it ourselves. Remember, with God all things are possible.

By what method does the child learn to meditate? Most begin with daydreaming. Don’t stop the child from daydreaming as these dreams can help initiate him into future meditation. The daydreams simply need to be channeled into the proper direction. The babe in Christ is no different. He or she needs to spend time reading about the characters in the Bible and dreaming that he or she too will be like them: withstanding fiery trials, walking through the den of lions or overcoming some other major challenge.

Meditate on the things that are proper, good, just and honest. Be merciful in your thoughts about others. It is also important to be able to **be merciful and forgive yourself** for something you may have done wrong. Don’t spend the time constantly kicking yourself. Admit the wrong, ask for forgiveness and go with life.

Keep the mind in check during these periods because, as mentioned previously, it is lazy. Meditation makes it work, but if you’re not careful, right in the middle of your meditation, it will simply

get up and wander away into some fantasy. Imagine how rude it would be if someone would just get up and leave during the middle of your conversation. The undisciplined mind can do that very thing. You begin thinking about one thing and before you know it, ten minutes have passed and the mind has been on another subject for that period of time.

Disciplining the mind is the starting point from which the babe in Christ can enter all the new and vast frontiers of Christian growth.

Beware of Impatience

One of the biggest hazards to all children is impatience. The mind is just like the kid on a long trip. Every ten minutes he wants to know how much longer. The mind does the same thing. It will nag you to death, sometimes very subtly, until it gets what it wants. In all

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of the areas discussed so far you will find the mind struggling to put things off—procrastinate—or to go wandering somewhere. But

when the mind is being denied and told it can’t have its way, the battle is stronger than ever. The less the mind has been disciplined the harder the battle. Have you ever seen a spoiled child when they are told they can’t have something or they have to wait? You can have a major temper tantrum, retaliation supreme. The mind reacts this same way, with some kind of temper tantrum. It tells us we will just die if we don’t get it right away.

Start Today

Remember to follow the guidelines of proving out all things, because the youth’s mind is susceptible to believe things that are not true or real, just like the magician tries to do with the children.

If you have read this and felt that you need to work on your mind, and you will start first thing in the morning, then you just might need more work than you figured. You have just lost the first battle of the mind if you: “Put off till tomorrow, what you should do today”.

—Morris C. Kerry Jr. (deceased)

[submitted by Jerry Laws]

Are Church of God Groups Long-term Sustainable?

A very interesting pamphlet was left with me by a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) group. In it was a tabulation of all the hours of "witnessing" by the JWs worldwide on a country by country basis and a compilation of the global effort in "hours". (All good JW members spend time visiting neighbors, preaching their groups doctrines in an orderly fashion.) Also the amount of converts to the church were listed as well. I took my calculator and did a quick marketing analysis:

It took about 4000 hours of witnessing to get one new JW convert. (This group is more similar to the COGs in both culture and belief than most of us would ever want to admit!)

Giving a dollar value of the witnessing at an extremely conservative \$10 an hour (\$50 an hour is a typical skilled US labor rate) we can conclude that the cost of the new convert came at a minimum of \$40,000 in "Sweat Equity".

I hate viewing the Work of God in a business sense, yet these numbers are fascinating! Back at WCG, it was taking about the same amount of money in advertising marketing to obtain **one** new member. Somewhere around \$40,000. So the choice for growth becomes one of, or combination of either "Shoe Leather Sweat Equity" or "Buying your Equity".

Since historically we in the COGS are unfamiliar (and I believe **unwilling**) to work with others one-on-one,

we are forced to use expensive "slick paper" marketing, **this will lead to our eventual demise as a people.**

The reason is that we do not have the economic financial asset base to be able to reproduce ourselves! Let me give you the hard facts... The COGS are demographically much older than they were 30 years ago. The average member is past his peak earning years and is in or heading towards retirement. An aging and retiring ministry will add to the economic burden of the Corporate Churches and limit the assets available for growth. The average "half life" of our membership because of the older median age now of our memberships is probably less than 15 years. This means we have to double our membership in the next 15 years just to stay the same size we are now and not shrink. We are not going to be able to do it just by throwing money at the problem, because the money is just not there!

Let me demonstrate this in the micro economy of UCG. Historically it took a circulation of the PT of about 40 times the size of the membership in order to maintain that size of membership and modest growth. (In other words, it took a circulation of 4 million PTs to have a membership of 100,000 and maintain about 10% growth). In order for the UCG to maintain a long-term member count of 12,000 with a 10% growth, it will require a Good News circulation of at least 500,000 copies! The most ambi-

tious and hopeful plans for future UCG expansion are for just 160,000 circulation. This 1/3rd level circulation will probably not make up for attrition and deaths in the UCG!

We are an old and aging and dying church! At age 40 and 34, my wife and I find ourselves at the "**young**" end of the church demographic today! Amazingly, just 25 years ago, men like Ted Armstrong and Rod Meredith were called "Veterans of the Work" at the same age as myself right now. But today, I am still considered one of the "kids", having been baptized 23 years ago!

We must change our attitudes about evangelizing or we will die out! One-on-one or "belly to belly" evangelism is free and can never be shut down. Corporate overhead must be eliminated and most of the ministry must become unpaid. The days of comfort have ended. We must either accept necessary changes or watch all that we have had disappear and die out. We as individuals cannot afford to be shy and reticent anymore about the hope that lies within us! We need to ask the Eternal to show us effective and workable personal evangelism techniques and to quit hiding our lights! It is not that hard; it worked in the first century. It can be done now in an easy-going and friendly manner and we can reach **millions!**

There is no gain without pain!

—Bill Lussenheide, Menifee, California

How Does The Eternal Govern Through Humans? To be included with next *Servants' News*

We are receiving enough requests for the revised edition of this paper that it will probably be more efficient to send it to everyone. It will be included with the July *Servants' News*.

Canadian Subscribers:

Our Canadian address has changed. To request literature, or to send funds in Canadian Dollars, please write to:

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Free Literature List

You may call, write, or send e-mail to obtain our free **Literature List**. It contains a complete list and index to all of our Basic Literature, Mature Literature, Study Resources and Information, and all back issues of *Servants' News*. All items are free. See contact information, below.

Our new looseleaf magazine, ***Shelter In the Word***, is again included with this issue of *Servants' News*. We hope you continue to enjoy this magazine, and pass it on to others.

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