

Servants' NEWS

Vol. 5, No. 3

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

May/June 1999

Where are You on the Field? Be Ready for Feast 1999!

The diagram below looks like it might be a new game—a cross between baseball, pool and the games religious people play. It is only about the latter—but far more serious. It is about the lives that people live.

Most readers of *Servants' News* live in a religious world that is anything but stable. Most have attended several church groups. Family relationships, doctrines, and religious practices that they once took for granted have been questioned and re-thought. A simple “good guys” versus “bad guys” explanation does not explain the problem for most people.

Nevertheless, most of the church groups try to paint it that way. They will say that the WCG was going along fine until the wrong people got control, and then when they changed _____ (fill in blank for your group), it was time to leave; people who left before they did “jumped the gun”, and those who left after they did were “slackers”. This writer does not believe that the issue is nearly so simple.

It is not the purpose of this article to

“set everyone straight” on what is right to do. This author does not know what is right for everyone. The purpose of this article is to offer a model for better understanding what has happened to us, where we should be going, and how do we process the mass of diverse information that is now coming to us.

We also want to say before we begin that we do not want to judge others' decisions or make this a tool for judging other's decisions.

People often must make church decisions for reasons not apparent to others. For example, a person may decide to attend a certain congregation to keep their family together, to help long-time friends or to be helped by friends. This may be exactly what the Eternal wants them to do. Unfortunately, some have also used a church group for support *against* their spouse or former acquaintances. Some groups have essentially said, “If you join us, we'll let you get a divorce or allow you not to repay the guy whom you owe money—after all, those people are not in our group so they are Laodiceans at best.” Dedicated

Continued on page 37

Feast 1999!

Choose any Feast site where you want to go. Try to help the site's sponsors, though, By showing you care, To help them prepare, By promptly letting them know!

We hope you have made your plans for the Feast of Tabernacles 1999—and if not, we hope you make them soon. Brethren have more sites to choose from than ever before. But those who

Continued on page 5

Also In This Issue:

- 2 Truckers' Bible Study
 - 3 News of Local Congregations
 - 5 1999 Feast Site Summary
 - 7 Church of God Groups: How Do We Appear to Others?
 - 9 Karl Beyersdorfer Letter on Herbert Armstrong
 - 12 One Search for a New Leader
 - 13 Jim Rector Correspondence *See page 24 for conclusion.*
 - 17 Charismatic Static
 - 25 Holt Assembly History
 - 26 Letters and Responses
- After 42 *Shelter in the Word* included!

Servants' News Moving On

Servants' News is “moving on” in these three ways : 1) Its production location is being moved from Charlotte, Michigan to Perry, Michigan about 50 miles away. 2) It is going to an every-other month schedule instead of nine issues per year. 3) Its focus will shift, placing more emphasis on the important practical issues commanded by the scriptures and less on the complex

doctrinal issues covered in the past.

Most of our subscribers have noticed that *Servants' News* is often mailed considerably later than its issue date. All of these three points are related and we hope you will read the rest of this article to see how .

We currently plan to move in late August. We have

Continued on page 41

Trucker's Bible Study

Oak Grove, Mo., #21



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The Trucker's Bible Study is conducted weekly at the Texaco truck stop on I-70, Oak Grove, Missouri by Arlo Gieselman, often assisted by Lenny Cacchio, the writer of this series.

May 30, 1999: We had three truckers initially, then near the end of our study we were joined by one more gentleman, then a couple. The group was diverse. We had an Ecuadorian, an African-American from Mobile, Alabama, and a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant from Illinois. We were able to study the Bible together as fellow seekers of God's will. The Word of God has a way of reconciling people, a lesson that should not be lost on us. The key to healing the breach is to follow the Word.

Today we spent a good deal of time talking about the truckers' personal stories. How did they come to have an interest in the things of God? The three gentlemen each had unique and interesting stories. All three firmly believe they had a genuine encounter with God that changed their lives. Whether the encounter came as a kind act from a believer at a critical time in life, a life threatening illness that forced one to face his own mortality, or whether as a return to the teachings of one's youth after experimenting with the ways of the world. All three had an obvious enthusiasm to talk about God, the Bible, and the meaning both have in their lives.

I was impressed by one aspect of the Ecuadorian's story. This was in 1988, and he was in the US Army. Someone from a Christian background invited him to his home for Thanksgiving dinner. I had never thought of it quite this way before, but engaging your community and those in it by means of **hospitality can be a form of evangelism**. Several times in our conversation the gentleman mentioned the importance of being a light. I suppose from personal experience he understands the importance of that.

The gentleman from Mobile related an interesting story from this past week. He attended his son's high school graduation. Keep in mind this is a public school. He said that both the valedictorian and salutatorian gave speeches, and both mentioned the importance of their faith in God. Putting this together with other stories I have heard recently, it's beginning to look like the **children of this nation are taking a stand where their elders have been afraid (or ashamed) to**. In conjunction with this, we talked about ways that we can "stand in the gap", taking off on Ezekiel 22.

All three truckers said that they have noticed a greater interest in issues of faith over the past couple of years. There is a longing that needs to be filled, and people know there is something terribly wrong in spite of prosperity. As an example, ten years ago there were very few truck stop ministries, whereas today they can be found all over the country.

I ended today's session reviewing Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2, which explain God's purpose for mankind. The idea that God will put all things under our feet—that our destiny is to rule the universe—is exciting news indeed and seemed to open a few eyes. They took Bibles, tapes, and a little bit of literature with them. Hope to see these men again some time soon.

—Lenny Cacchio

705 Ne Bryant Dr; Lees Summit, Mo 64068;
lenny_cacchio@hotmail.com

[Lenny Cacchio may have learned as much from those attending this Bible study as they learned from him. If one believes that God only teaches through certain "ministers", this does not make sense. But if we believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church—guiding every member—working in their lives to teach them, then we can easily understand this study. A vital lesson that should not be lost: one Christian with only a little Bible knowledge, but willing to invite a stranger to dinner can have a more profound effect than another Christian who has great Bible knowledge and a houseful of booklets—but who is not willing to step out and befriend the "sinners" of this world. —NSE]

Servants' News is one of many ministries of the spiritual Church of God. 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 and teach 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 groups, but is supported by those who personally decide to help this ministry. We do not have IRS tax exempt status, but church groups are exempt without this status (see IRS Publ. 557, p. 16, col. 1).

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

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Local Congregations



This column includes information sent to us from a variety of groups. Servants' News does not necessarily agree with the teachings or practices of these groups. Please ask about them before attending their functions.

Sabbath Campers Fellowship

You are invited to the Sabbath Campers Fellowship at Gateway Park Campground in **Hillsdale, Michigan, August 27-29**. Fellowship, group singing, interactive Bible studies, and recreational activities will abound. Alan Ruth will cover the subject **"joy and humor from the Bible"**. Sabbath Activities begin at 11:00 A.M.

Camping prices per site for each night are: Full Hookup: \$19. Primitive: \$18. "Pull thru": \$21. Cabins/trailers \$40 & up, one-day visitor's pass: \$2. For reservations contact: Norm Wilcox, Gateway Park Campground manager, at 517-437-7005, 4111 W Hallet, Hillsdale, MI 49242. Mention you are with the Sabbath Campers Fellowship. Motel accommodations are a few minutes drive away. For more information, contact Richard Fox 1-800-228-2473.

Kansas City Fellowship Picnic

You are all Invited! The fourth annual Kansas City fellowship picnic/potluck will be at Baumgardner Park in Blue Springs, Missouri on Sunday, **September 12** (11AM-4PM). Come and see friends old and new.

Baumgardner Park features tennis and volleyball courts, children's play area, covered picnic shelter, horseshoe pits, and more! Despite an all-day down-pour last year, we were still blessed with over 100 friends. We would love to double that in 1999. Contact Lenny or Diane Cacchio for more information: **705 NE Bryant Drive; Lee's Summit, MO 64086; Phone: (816) 524-2442 e-mail: lenny_cacchio@hotmail.com.**

Jackson, Tennessee: Visitors Welcome

After much discussion, the United Church of God in Jackson, Tennessee decided we would like our name to be

placed on any list of places to meet, for those looking to meet on the Sabbath. We have maintained an open door policy from the beginning. We have accepted visitors from any group and all who have come to meet with us.

We started in the Living-room and have maintained that family atmosphere. Any travelers or visitors to West Tennessee are welcome. Services typically are at 10:00 AM. Holy-days are held in nearby Brownsville, TN. Several (40%) are Servants' News subscribers.

Come visit and see for yourself if you are travelling nearby.

Bill Shults, 901-427-8099
46 Locust Lane; Jackson, TN 38301

Prestonsburg, Kentucky Re-Union

All former members and members of the Worldwide Church of God and all 7th-Day Sabbath Keeping Christians are invited to a Church Family Reunion at picnic shelter #2 below the dam at Jenney Wiley State Park in Prestonsburg, KY on Sunday, August 22, 1999.

The shelter is available for all day so plan to come early and stay late. We hope to obey Christ's command to "love one another" as we meet old friends and make new ones. No sermonizing will take place and we ask that no proselytizing be done at this reunion. Various individuals who believe that there should be harmony and respect between the various christian groups are supporting this event.

Eating time is about 1:30 PM. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be grilled on the spot. You may contribute those (no pork please), along with the fixins, desserts, drinks, or extras as you choose.

—Orville Bumgardner, 606-639-6429
e-mail: orville@kymntnet.org

Finding Brethren in Toronto

I am from a Church of England back-

ground, my wife is from the Baptist church. We were called in spring 1997 and baptized by Jack Hendren in Nova Scotia in July of that year. God quickly moved me to Toronto after that and I started to attend with Global. My wife joined me in June 1998 just in time to attend with Global for the Global/Living split. We remained with Global and attended with the brethren in Milton, just in time for the Global/Restored split.

To the best of our knowledge there are no Global brethren left in Ontario and, since we detected the same spirit in David Pack (Restored Church of God) as we had felt with Rod Meredith, the 4 families who did not go over to the RCG have formed a Home Fellowship COG. **We believe it is our calling to find as many of the lost sheep and scattered brethren as we can in this area and we intend to help them find the place where they may best grow** and develop in preparation for the times which are soon to come.

If you are aware of any lost sheep in the Toronto/Ontario region who are looking for fellowship please feel free to forward my email address or phone to them.

—David J. Walters, 905-263 2194
david.j.walters@cpmx.saic.com

[We hope that Servants' News subscribers who have friends in the Toronto area who are not attending anywhere on the Sabbath will call them and encourage them to contact this group. Stories like this are becoming all too common: 1) a new person hears about the Sabbath and other Bible truths and is excited by them; 2) they begin attending a corporate COG; 3) they hear their leaders arguments about why they are the "main group" that God is using; 4) they try to prove those arguments from the Bible and realize they are very wrong; 5) the new person quickly joins or in many cases forms a home fellowship where they can continue their study of the scriptures.

—NSE]

GCG Going Through Trials

In a letter to brethren dated July 7, 1999, Raymond McNair of the Global Church of God wrote about the "trials Satan has thrown at us". Since the GCG board voted out Rod Meredith and over half of the members left to join his new Living Church of God, the GCG has had great difficulty paying its bills. The GCG has had to stop nearly all printing of booklets and its *World Ahead* magazine, posting their writings on the Internet instead. They continue to produce their television program, but are putting it only on free, public-access cable channels. They plan one US Feast site for this year. There is nothing wrong with these things—they are the same approaches being used by many independent and home congregations.

A lawsuit filed by a former member, and continued attacks from former GCG minister Dave Pack have also contributed to the decrease in income. The GCG was able to negotiate free rent with its landlord until December of this year. McNair announced that Larry Salyer made a trip to Dallas, Texas to consider the possibility of moving the GCG headquarters there, where the cost of living and doing business is much cheaper and where they would be much closer to most of their congregations. It is an interesting twist of events, in that Raymond McNair vigorously opposed my proposal to move the GCG headquarters to Tulsa when I was on its board in 1993. —NSE

Restored Church of God

The Restored Church of God under David Pack is continuing to place a heavy emphasis on the "apostleship" of Herbert Armstrong and the need to follow his teaching and government. In a June 19th tape, Pack 6/19/99 stated that he did not know if he would have a huge work, or a small work, but that it is God's work and that he is the head of it. He also stated that God leads by Apostles—implying that might be his position. Other ministers who have joined with Dave Pack include, Arlen Berkey, formerly of the PCG and Ron Laughland, formerly of the UCG and GCG. We have received a number of **abuse complaints** against all of these men, and would advise potential members of the group to tread carefully and check it out. —NSE

Worldwide Church of God Restored

Our previous *Servants' News* issue covered a "third alternative" put forth by a group of about 40 WCG members who wanted to remain in that group, but continue to keep the Sabbath and holy days. They called themselves the **Worldwide Church of God, Restored (530 New L.A. Avenue #115-214; Moorpark, CA 93021; e-mail: wcgr@juno.com)**. They thought they had worked out an arrangement with Joe Tkach, Jr. that would allow them to meet separately on the Sabbath, but remain a part of the organization.

However, on June 10 the group's spokesman, Mardy Cobb, found himself disfellowshipped from the WCG. By July 1, Joe Tkach, Jr. clearly wrote "that if members create division in the church by persisting in teaching things that are contrary to church doctrine, for example, that Sabbath or holy day observance is commanded for Christians, then the church has a duty to rescind their membership." **The WCG's position is that people can worship on any day of the week, but teaching Sabbath worship as more important than any other day is a sin.** The WCG let other members know that they would be disfellowshipped if they continued with the WCG Restored.

But as Mardy Cobb so well noted, Joe Tkach is being very one-sided. When Tom Lapaacka, a former WCG minister, departed to to become a Lutheran minister, neither he nor the WCG members who attend with him were disfellowshipped. And the Lutherans clearly teach that Sunday is **the** day of worship. Mr. Cobb said that he and others remained in the WCG till this year because they were able to keep the Sabbath and holy days, and because he was able to preach about them in some WCG services—even within the last year. Cobb and the WCGR tried to make peace with Tkach by holding their own services where their teachings would not affect WCG members who did not want to hear them. But as of now, **they do not know of anyone in the WCG who is still permitted to speak about keeping the Sabbath and Holy days.** While the WCG still claims to be tolerant of Saturday-Sunday and Feasts-Christmas-Easter, Cobb said that the WCG pastor of his congregation never speaks about the Sabbath or Feast days, but gave them 6 weeks of Christmas sermons last year.

Cobb explained that he never faulted

other WCG members who left the WCG for other groups—as long as they were following their conscience. He and those with him left when they simply had no other choice. Many have asked him why they do not join an existing "Church of God" split-off group. His answer was very interesting:

1) Would the GCG leaders be happy if we joined the LCG? Would the UCG be happy we joined Mr. Hulme? Or would each group only be happy if we joined them? Most have little doctrinal difference. They are just fighting about who is in charge.

2) Is there a date, after which any group exiting the WCG is no longer legitimate? Do all the split-off groups agree on this date?

3) The WCGR is not the architect of division inside or outside the WCG—division existed long before the WCGR.

4) If unity is so important to the groups that have left, why do they not drop all their leaders' names in a hat and trust God that the one chosen should be their new Pastor General? Or is running their own organization more important than unity?

Mardy explained that their services are "geared" for people who have been through the specific trials that they have all been through. This group does not have a ministerial hierarchy, and allows people to ask questions at the end of every service (which is different from most other corporate "CoG groups). "I believe that the Spirit of God is leading our community," said Cobb. They are providing tapes to some groups in other parts of the country that are in a similar situation.

Servants' News received a WCGR information packet and found it well designed and easy to follow. The doctrinal statement was good, though it had no doctrine on "the Church". This is sensible as they are still actively thinking about exactly what defines "the church". The statement did have a section on "Eternal Judgment", a fundamental doctrine mentioned in Hebrews 6:2 that is ignored by many doctrinal statements.

I think the WCGR still places too much importance on the WCG, Herbert Armstrong, and the Tkaches. But I made this mistake for 20 years of my life. The Eternal works with each of us in our own time, in His way. It is wonderful to see that this group is focusing on serving their members and preaching the Gospel as they can, rather than setting up another hierarchy and making great pronouncements about themselves. —NSE


"1999 Feast from" from page 1

sponsor sites have more difficulty than ever before. From talking to those who plan sites, it seems that brethren are making up their minds which site to attend later and later each year.

The problem is understandable because choosing a feast site is much more complex than it was years ago. For many years in the WCG it was straightforward: The format and messages at the various sites were all very similar. Members were given a list of sites and a list of "official" motels early in the year. They were given a date when they could begin making reservations. If they did not make reservations on that date, the best sites and motels would often be full. (Before the 1980's, members were assigned a Feast site and had to apply if they wanted to transfer to another.)

Today it is very different. Members face questions like:

- My relatives and friends attend several different church organizations. Is there a site to which we can all agree to go?
- My relatives cannot agree on a common site. Is there a place where my and their organizations have sites close together so we can all stay together, but attend nearby sites?
- Will my church organization still exist or will I still be a member of it by Feast time this year?
- What doctrines will be taught at a particular site?
- What form of services will be used at a particular site?
- What music will be used at a particular site?
- What calendar is used to determine the dates of the Feast?

These questions can be difficult. But please remember the sponsors who plan Feasts. When they try to make reservations for meetings, rooms, dinners, activities, etc., the first thing they are asked is: "How many people will be there?" Managers of such facilities are not impressed with, "I have no idea." In many cases, making reservations requires down payments of hundreds or thousands of dollars. **Brethren can help Feast sponsors by letting them know now where they are planning to go. If your plans change, let them know about the change.** This will help sponsors provide a better Feast, and save them from spending money on unnecessary facilities. Thanks a lot. —NSE 

May/June 1999

1999 Feast Site Summary

This article summarizes, by geographical area, all of the Feast site descriptions submitted to us. *Servants' News* readers will certainly be welcome at all of them. Many additional Feast sites are available via these corporate churches which usually welcome visitors: United Church of God, an International Association: 513-576-9796, Church of God Outreach Ministries: 800-611-8080, Church of God International: 903-825-2525, Living Church of God: 858-673-1363, and the Global Church of God: 619-675-2222.

Sites appearing in *Servants' News* for the first time have a larger write-up. Consult previous *Servants' News* issues for more information about sites with a smaller write-up. **All Feasts are Saturday, Sept 25th through Saturday, October 2, 1999 unless otherwise noted.**

North East USA

Butler State Park, Kentucky sponsored by *Servants' News*. See page 1 article of our Sept/Oct 1998 issue for the approach to be used at this Feast. Butler State Park is near Carrollton, Kentucky, 3-miles off I-71, between Cincinnati, Ohio and Louisville, Kentucky. A variety of accommodations are available, both at the State Park and in motels 1 to 3 miles away. Prices include tax. Mention "Feast of Tabernacles" when calling.

The State Park offers lodge rooms at \$58.54 (double), and cottages with kitchens starting at \$80 per night. Camping, including RV hookups, is \$12 per night. **800-325-0078.**

Five motels are less than three miles away. **The two in bold, recently gave us a price reduction:**

Port William Motel single:	\$24.02
502-732-5985 double:	\$29.48
Days' Inn, 502-732-9301	\$42.58
Super 8 Motel, 502-732-0252	\$49.13
Holiday Inn, 502-732-6661	\$57.87
Hampton Inn, 502-732-0700	\$60.00

Note: Hampton Inn is the only place with a heated pool. For more information, contact us at 517-543-5544, e-mail: 75260.1603@compuserve.com. **If you are interested, contact us by July 30 to receive an information packet.**

Ludington, Michigan. Sponsored by independent believers. Motel Rates in the \$30's. Accessible from Wisconsin by ferry. Contact Darrell West; PO Box 26; Webberville, MI 48892; 517-521-3630.

Mystic, Connecticut. For reservations: Residence Inn by Marriott, 860-

536-5150 or Comfort Inn, 860-572-8531. Ask for the "Northeast Church of God rates". For more info: Rodger Sandsmark; Northeast Church of God; PO Box 14; Weatogue, CT 06089; 860-651-7690; e-mail: lr3sands@gte.net.

Lake Cumberland, Kentucky. We (three men who made many of the arrangements for Jim Rector's Feast sites in previous years) are planning a Feast site on Lake Cumberland in Bronston, Kentucky where we will "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). If you are looking for a site where you will not be confused by "every wind of doctrine" we urge you to fellowship with us.

The meeting place is Woodson Bend Resort and it is located on a peninsula high above and surrounded by Lake Cumberland. The prices for lodging and condominiums are very reasonable and the resort offers swimming, tennis, volleyball, golf, and basketball. Condominium rates vary from about \$33 for single to \$61 for a two-bedroom (kitchen included). &61Call 800-872-9825 for reservations, please tell them you are with the Church of God at the Lake. Their website is www.woodsonbendresort.com

We would like to know how many are planning to attend with us so we can make the proper arrangements. For more information contact Helm Hobrath; 1550 Birdie Lane; Painesville, OH 44077; 440-639-0916. Or contact Jerry Simmons in Mississippi at 601-736-0418 or Al Winters in Oregon at 541-759-2424.

continued on next page

If you would like another site to be listed in the next *Servants' News* issue, send info to PO Box 107; Perry, Michigan 48872; e-mail: 75260.1603@compuserve.com.

South East USA

Destin, Florida. Meetings in the Arts Center of the Okaloosa-Walton Community College in Niceville, Florida, just across the bay from Destin. Primary host resort: Hidden Dunes Beach & Tennis Resort at 9815 Hwy 98 West, Destin, Florida 32541; 800-824-6335. Contact: Christian Educational Ministries (CEM); PO Box 560; Whitehouse, Texas 75791; 903-509-2999; fax: 903-509-1139; e-mail: CEM@ballistic.com.

Destin, Florida. Contact: United Church of God, Big Sandy (Dave Havir), an independent group, 800-946-5545, e-mail: agprosys@aol.com.

Clearwater, Florida. Meeting at Harborview Center; PO Box 329; Clearwater, FL 33757; 813-462-6778; fax: 813-462-6798; e-mail: gfs@harborv.com. Contact: United Christian Ministries (Ray Wooten); PO Box 361725; Hoover, AL 35236-1725; 888-985-9066; fax 205-985-9515.

South Central USA

Big Sandy, Texas. Contact: United Church of God, Big Sandy (Dave Havir), an independent group, 800-946-5545, e-mail: agprosys@aol.com.

Lake Texoma, Oklahoma. Meetings at Lake Texoma Resort Park; PO Box 248; Kingston, OK 73439-0248; 800-654-8240; mention "Church of God". Contact: Steve Kieler, Church of God Outreach Ministries; 2193 Sheker Drive; Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8707; 515-576-5743.

Lake Murray, Oklahoma. Sponsored by hosts of "In The Footsteps Of The Messiah" seminars. Meetings and accommodations at Murray Resort; 800-654-8240, mention "Season of Our Joy" for room discounts. Contact: Mitchell Smith, 903-882-7446 or Tim Kelley 903-769-2750, e-mail: N55154@aol.com.

North West USA

Glendale, Oregon. Meetings and accommodations at: Fir Point Bible Conference Camp. Cost for food and lodging: \$27.50 per day per adult. Children under 18, free. Contact Omega Praise Fellowship; PO Box 1742; Rogue River, OR 97537-1742; 541-855-7220, 541-479-0467 or 541-855-7403.

Ocean Shores, Washington. FOT

Celebration and Hebraic Roots of Christianity Conference sponsored by Christian Renewal Ministries International (CRMI). Contact: Gregory Richardson; 800-333-5208 CRMI; PO Box 111; Auburn, WA 97071; e-mail: Rick@shalom-crmi.org; website: www.Shalom-CRMI.org/html/ftos.htm.

Rapid City, South Dakota. This year the meetings will be at the Holiday Inn Express; 645 E Disk Dr; Rapid City, SD 57701; 877-801-9090. Rooms \$58 per night. The feast site is being sponsored by Bill Buckman and John Leitch. It will be similar to the Rapid City Feast site last year which featured some live messages, and some interactive telephone hookup sessions with Norman Edwards (this year from Butler State Park, last year from Gatlinburg, Tenn.). Bill Buckman was in the process of moving as this issue went to press, but anyone interested in this Feast should contact Sam Dower of Newcastle, Wyoming, 307-746-3626.

South West USA

Oxnard, California. Sponsored by Guardian Ministries (David Antion) and United Christian Ministries (Ray Wooten). Meeting at Embassy Suites Mandalay Beach Resort. Base rates \$109 per night weekdays and \$129 per night weekends. Reservations: 805-984-2500, mention Church of God Retreat. Contact: Guardian Ministries; PO Box 50734; Pasadena, Ca., 91115; e-mail: cogscpas@aol.com.

Canada

Collingwood, Ontario. The Canadian Church of God will be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles this year at Collingwood, Ontario, Canada. The CCG is an organization composed of different groups associated on a voluntary basis, groups that recognize their inter-dependence. Every group is autonomous and we strive toward a unified effort in our outreach program to bring the light and the truth of the Bible to a world that needs hope. We want to obey our master's commandment and preach the word, so He, at his coming will find us "so doing". We want to be "profitable servants"!

We are expecting about 120 in attendance. Reservations may be made at the

Mountain Springs Lodge; RR#3 Blue Mountain Road; Collingwood, Ont. L9Y 3Z2; 800-704-8633 (only Southern Ontario); 705-444-7776; fax: 705-444-6533; e-mail: reservations@mountainspringslodge.com; website: www.mountainspringslodge.com. Nightly rates if you mention CCG and stay the entire Feast: Studio suite (1 queen with pullout), \$75; 1 Bdrm (1 queen with pullout), \$90; Studio Loft (2 queens with pullout) \$100; 1 Bdrm Loft (2 queens with pullout) \$115. Prices do not include tax. Contact Sydney Merchant, e-mail: sydney.merchant@sympatico.ca

Galiano Island, British Columbia.


The Assembly of The Eternal, An Independent Church of God, has decided to consider hosting a site for this years Feast of Tabernacles. We have reserved practical, comfortable and affordable accommodations at Driftwood Village Resort on Galiano Island, British Columbia. There are 11 cottages suitable for 28 people. Other inns and Bed and Breakfasts can be found close to the Feast meeting hall. Many pleasant outdoor activities are available. There is a regular Ferry service connecting Galiano Island—It would be easy to take a day out to visit Victoria or Vancouver.

The goal of this Feast is to provide ample opportunity for Bible Study and fellowship. Those attending are invited to participate as well as listen. To receive a full package, contact us: Ashley Rattee; 5375 Commodore Dr.; Delta, BC; Canada; V4K 4Z6; 604-940-0542; e-mail: theassembly@bigfoot.ca. Our mailing address is

Nova Scotia, Canada, Full Moon calendar, Feast begins approximately Oct 9. Kevin and Ada Macpherson: AMacPherson@webtv.net.

Other International Sites

Bagio City, Philippines. Co-sponsored by United Christian Ministries. Meetins in the Inn Rocio. Contact: Enrique M. Gabuyo; #398 Kinsville Subdivision; Calamba, Laguna; 4027 Philippines.

Rye, England. Multi-group site affiliated with the Intercontinental Church of God (Garner Ted Armstrong). Contact Anthony & Margaretha Miles; Linderudveien 57; 1353 Baerums Verk; Norway. Telephone: 47-6756-2275. 

Church of God Groups: How Do We Appear to Others?

This letter and cartoon were submitted separately, but they fit together. The letter is by Charles and Jenny Miller; the Cartoon by Dean Neal.

July 6, 1999

Dear Brethren in Christ,

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:35).

Are we disciples of Christ?

If that is how we know that we are Disciples of Christ, then we had better learn **how** to love one another!

It is time we stop warring among us, and fight the **higher powers** that the Bible says are our enemies!

We need to learn how to work together, for Christ!

If a man is **teaching and doing the truth of God**, does it matter, which one we follow? **Why fight** over which one we follow, or where we attend our holy convocation? **Only** when the man stops doing this, does it matter! After all, **only Christ** can get us into The Kingdom of God! As the man follows **Christ**, follow him!

At least the churches that don't keep the commandments and Feast days disagree over doctrine! We that do keep them *have the same teachings and doctrines*, but have hate and disagreement over the man or organization that someone will or will not follow.

Are we not all of Christ, trying to do his will and teach God and Christ's gospel?

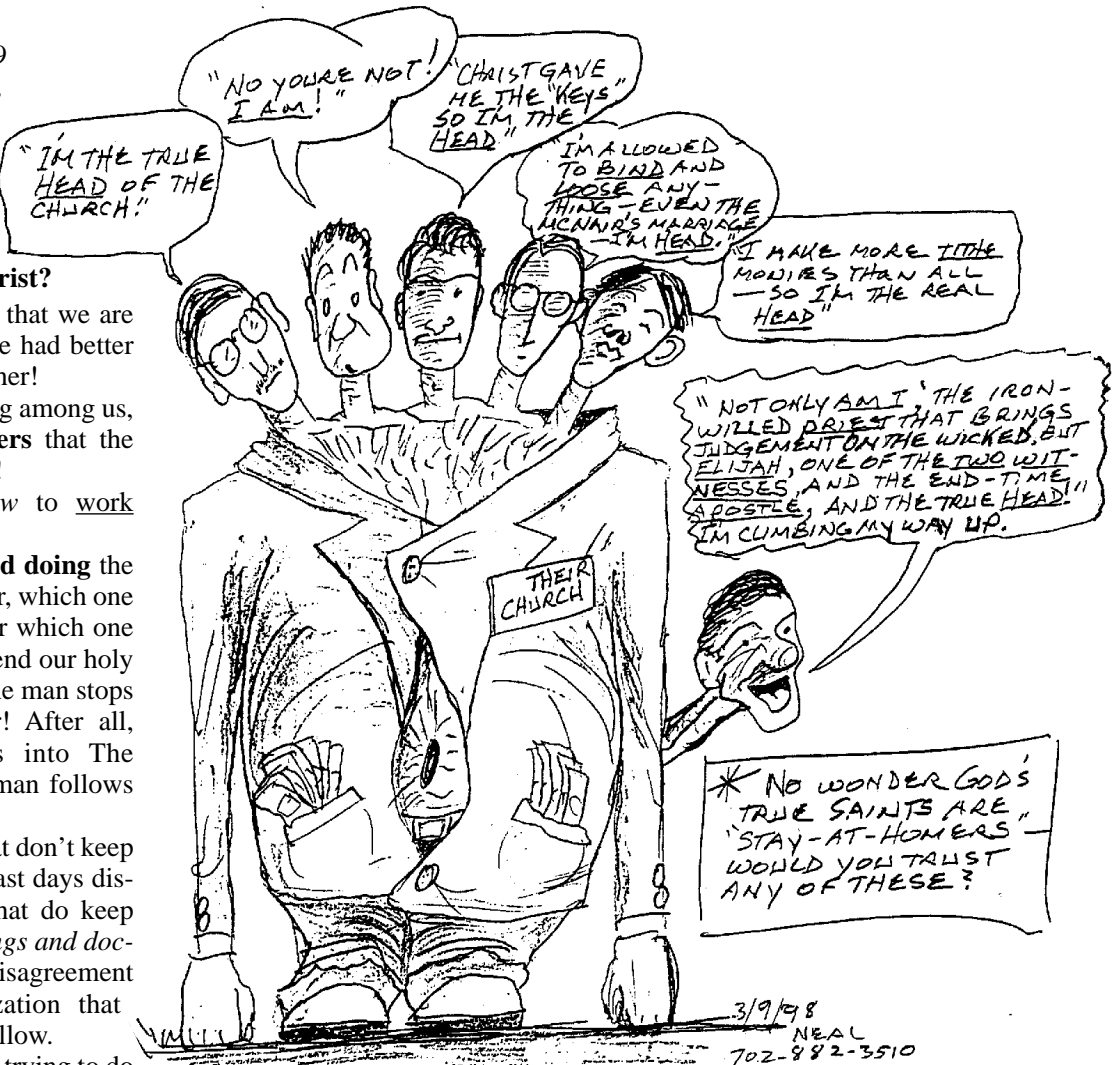
Do you really believe that man gave the gospel or it came only to him and his organization? What did Paul have to say about this?

What? Came the word of God out from you? Or **came it unto you only?** If any man think himself to a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant (1Cor 36-38).

It is time to wake up and smell the coffee. The time is nearer than we think. Why did Christ say:

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, **if ye have love one to another** (John 13:35).

Because, in the Kingdom there is no room for hate, one man trying to be



greater or better or listen better than you do. There is no room for strife, arguing, or any jealousy.

This is our testing ground. Judgment begins at the Church.

If Christ came today, how many of us would be kept out because we have one of the sins above? Yes, it is sin! Breaking the Commandments 6 through 10, and the second greatest commandment: "and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt 22:39).

When we only love those in our own group or organization or Church are we any different than the people of the world?

We are to be the light to the world, the example! What kind of example are we, when we don't work together and love one another because of man or organization?

Are we, that teach, in need of being taught?

I say that anyone can follow any man or organization that is following Christ and he is our Brother. We had better love and work together with him, not try to destroy or put him down.

Do you really think Christ is happy over our constantly trying to prove that unless you are following our man/organization, you are not worth our time or our knowledge, you can't use our material or truth unless you are in our group!

Instead of trying to prove we are the only one whom the Gospel was given to, we had better put the part we do have with the parts that the others have, and **try to put the entire gospel we have out to the entire world!**

This is no game, or no money making venture we are on. So let's quit playing Church. Let's quit worrying

about who has the biggest church. Let's quit worrying that we are not getting tithe money, because another man or organization has members that could be ours. We have **no members**; we are all members of Christ's body, Christ and God's Church. We all have a work.

Christ showed us by example that one man was not to do all the work. Christ was the only one who could have. **Did He? No!** He said the harvest is great:

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest (Matt 9:36-38).

After these things the Lord appointed the seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest (Luke 10:1-2).

He sent out 70 people—35 groups—all teaching the truth. That is the way it works: groups, not one man or one group, teaching the truth. Paul says in Romans 10:

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Rom 10:14-15.)

So we need all the preachers and teachers we can get to get the gospel out to the people!

You may say, "This is all well and good, **but** put up or shut up." I will put up. Send me your material that teaches the truth about God and Christ, and I will put it in our building for any and all people to get and read. This will be a start!

Are you willing to do this to get the **truth out**? Are you willing to let others put the **truth** on your table or are you afraid of losing your following so you

will not? If they want to put the **truth** on your table, then you don't have to worry about false teachings. If you are not just worried about losing members and tithes, why won't you let them?

If you are teaching the **truth**, you won't lose members or tithes but your members **will** get a chance to learn **more truth**. **Be the first to take a step for God and Christ**. Send your material to:

**The Inter-Dependent Church of
God Sabbath Day**

18482 Quicktown Rd.
Laurel Hill, NC 28351
Tel: 910-582-2143 Fax: 910-582-2165
www.peedeeworld.net/users/moses

Your Fellow Laborers in Christ Jesus,
—Charles and Jenny Miller

Comment from Norman Edwards:

Your sentiments have been expressed many times by others, but it is wonderful to see yet another witness like this sent to the leadership of the many Sabbatarian church organizations. While we do not have much hope that they will all completely change upon receiving it, some minor changes may occur. Because of the continual efforts like yours, many church organizations have dealt more fairly with their members who visit other church groups.

Hopefully, even one of the leaders of these organizations will see and say: "I am just one head of a many-headed confused creature. If I would stop proclaiming myself 'a head', and just serve and teach people, then the Eternal could really use my ministry".

When new people come to such a group, they would not be confronted with the many headed monster, but greeted with love and respect and encouraged to learn from whichever group they can.

However, making this change is not a wonderful, immediate cure-all, but the start on the long road to true service. Once a group no longer claims that they are the "main Work" that Christ is using, they must justify their existence by their teaching and service. Members will stay with an organization simply because they believe its "head" is "the man that Christ is using". But once an organization gives that up, brethren stay for different reasons:

1. Because the brethren exhibit

true, Godly love.

2. Because the leadership is just and fair in their treatment of others—not making decisions for their own political expediency.

3. Because they are "fed" from the Bible and their doctrinal questions are heard and answered if possible (or not answered if the leaders do not know).

4. Because each member has an opportunity to serve as their gifts allow.

Most leaders of organizations do not have much experience working in this environment. Yet the Bible makes clear that leaders will be judged by what they accomplish, not by what they command others to accomplish (1Cor 3:10-15, 2Cor 1:24). For the sake of each of these leaders, it would be much better that they begin struggling down this road, than to continue to be part of the many-headed creature.

Doctrinal Surprise

I disagreed with this letter when it said: "We that do keep them [Sabbaths and Feasts] have the same teachings and Doctrines." Anyone receiving literature from several Sabbatarian groups will soon discover that the groups differ on more items than "who is the head?" There are many different views on:

- 1) how to preach the Gospel*
- 2) the understanding of prophecy*
- 3) the nature of God*
- 4) the name of God*
- 5) the calendar we should use*
- 6) tithing*
- 7) the format for Sabbath services*

When church organizations give up the idea of a "human head", they also must give up the idea that they have the correct Bible answer for everything. If Paul, being trained directly by Christ, says, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known" (1Cor 13:12), cannot we also agree that we see some things dimly? We can learn profound truth and live our life according to the Bible without knowing (for example) the exact year Christ died.

From the "most eminent apostles" of Paul's day (2Cor 11:5), to Herbert Armstrong, to modern day church leaders, we have suffered from church leaders claiming authority that God had not given them. Let us all strive to have love and be "doers of the word"! —NSE ☞

Karl Beyersdorfer Letter on Herbert Armstrong

LETTER:

May 29, 1999

Dear Norm,

Thank you for continuing to send *Servants' News*. I find your material thought provoking and stimulating, though as you know, I don't agree with some of your positions.

While I feel it is pointless to debate doctrinal issues, there are two regarding HWA which I feel are sad and misguided. The first is the plagiarism issue, and the second is the "only true Church" issue.

In the early days of Ambassador College, Mr. Armstrong taught many classes and guested in others. I remember vividly a few of his observations. In one class a student asked about copying others material. People often asked things that were impossible to ask in later years because of limited access—not because of fear. (HWA had a huge thing about people who were confrontational. If you asked sincerely for an answer, he would comment on both sides of an issue and speak of his concerns and even misgivings. If you were confrontational, he could get angry, and be very abrupt—it would also often end the enjoyable part of the conversation.) Mr. Armstrong said, "No one has a monopoly on truth".

RESPONSE: I have spoken with many others who were with Herbert Armstrong in the early years and they agree that he did answer difficult questions non-authoritatively or sometimes even admit that he did not know. However, as the years went by, this happened less and less. I remember him saying in a 1980's sermon: "if people don't have an attitude of agreement with what God is doing through me, then I just have to get them out of my sight". Most of the people I know who personally spoke with HWA during the 70s and 80s were very careful to avoid controversy. Even Mr. Armstrong's loyal assistant, Aaron Dean, freely talks about the many times that he was fired from his job, then rehired. There were many others who were not rehired. Fear was a factor.

Contrast Mr. Armstrong's quick temper with the scriptures: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city (Prv 16:32). Also, "For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money" (Titus 1:7). How can we point others to Herbert Armstrong as a

"leader of God" when nearly all those who knew him agree that he **was** self-willed, quick-tempered, and, for a time during the 70s, given to wine (actually Dom Perignon champagne) The reaction to some people may be: "How dare you ask Mr. Armstrong's friends such personal questions?" But how can anyone apply Titus 1:7 unless they do ask such questions?

LETTER: I took this as his philosophy on plagiarism. In his early years HWA was very widely read. In fact, he felt that a person could be adequately educated simply from reading widely. We all knew that much of what he taught came in part or whole from the teachings of others. How we felt about it was this: Mr. Armstrong would read 10 books on a subject and from all that information he would focus on a single bit of truth. We felt this was his strength. Many of us might read the same 10 books and the result would be confusion. We would be overwhelmed with all the conflicting concepts and contradictory logic and evidence.

RESPONSE: Your description does not fit Herbert Armstrong's plagiarizing of J. H. Allen's work on British Israelism—he copied much of the structure of the book. Also, he used most of the words from *Has Time Been Lost*. There probably are cases where he did what you said—distill truth from many sources and present it in an easy-to-understand manner. **But Mr. Armstrong kept his sources and his methods a secret from nearly all his readers.** He kept his followers dependent upon him. When he died, look what happened! Many of his followers abandoned nearly everything he taught.

The Scriptures teach us that mature brethren should be able to sift out truth for themselves: "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth**" (2Tim 2:15, KJV). "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their **senses exercised to discern both good and evil**" (Heb 5:14).

LETTER: People's offense in all this comes from two directions. 1) HWA's 19th century philosophy and orientation. Books were fewer and concepts and knowledge was precious. People would read a book and

discuss it; and its points would alter the way they lived and thought. Nowadays, people read like they watch TV. Nothing affects them very much and they can't remember the titles or the contents of the 10-20 books they read last year. Reading is more entertainment than educational. 2) The concept of plagiarism is a modern concept. Plato with his writings founded a class of philosophy that changed over centuries, but his works were copied, and debated, and used by much of the known world. No one thought of it as plagiarism if you wrote something or gave a talk and used his thoughts.

RESPONSE: I do not see how you conclude that people in Mr. Armstrong's era had a different view of plagiarism. My 1947 Encyclopedia Britannica, article *Copyright*, shows that U.S. Congress passed the first copyright law in 1790, and additional laws in 1802, 1819, 1831...12 acts prior to 1870. In 1846, congress authorized the Smithsonian institution to obtain one copy of every copyrighted book in the USA. An international copyright committee was established in 1885 and related statutes were passed in 1909. All of this occurred before Herbert Armstrong was an adult.

Yes, people borrowed ideas from Plato and other well-known philosophers, but we do not find another philosopher who copied 50% of Plato's Republic, added some of his own ideas, and claimed it was an original work. People would often quote these well-known philosophers without a reference, but that was because educated people knew their works and would recognize them. The New Testament quotes the Old Testament and some Greek writers in this fashion—it does not pretend the quotes are new, original work, but simply cites them with a vague reference ("it is written" or "your own poets have said"), realizing that the educated readers would know the source. If Armstrong's readers knew about Allen's work, they obviously would not have believed his grandiose claims.

LETTER: Let me give you another illustration. I bought a home here in Joplin several years ago. In the early days there were surveyors, but the science was inexact, and they were not always used.. My neighbor's home was 18" into my lot, it was built in good faith 80 years ago, and no one thought much of it when the error became known. All the lots in our subdivision were off by several feet. I sold

my neighbor a 10' strip, because some idiot might someday find grounds for a lawsuit. People sue for anything and everything. WWC sues Gerald Flurry because they want to use the copyright laws to censor HWA's writings.

HWA used other people's material and seemed to expect others to use his. As we got more sophisticated, we had a legal department, which seemed to have its own philosophy. A very different philosophy. Mr. Helge would often give talks during ministerial conferences. He would outline suits they were defending, and some they were pursuing or perhaps persecuting. Legal was a strange alien world that seemed to have little to do with what we were about. Mr. Armstrong seemed to tolerate them—perhaps he didn't know what to do with lawyers either. But to confuse the legal department's amoral legal philosophy with HWA's moral philosophy seems to be part of the confusion.

RESPONSE: Do you expect me to believe that the WCG legal department operated without Herbert Armstrong's request or approval? In the 70s and 80s, I implemented computer programs for that department. They operated very much by request of Mr. Armstrong. When most other departments had budget cuts, they would still have money available for his priority projects. Can you show me any case where some other group copied Mr. Armstrong's writings, printed them under their own name and were not resisted by Mr. Armstrong? The WCG often fought other groups for just looking too similar. When Garner Ted Armstrong started the Church of God International in Texas, the WCG reserved that name in all 49 other states just to stop them from using it. Mr. Armstrong approved this effort.

LETTER: Most early ministers had a copy of Joseph's Birthright, Judah's Sceptre. Most read it, or parts of it. The implication that we were ignorant is shallow. We knew, we simply viewed it in a different light. We knew some of his work was plagiarism, but did not think of it as a horrible moral or legal issue.

RESPONSE: The "early ministers" who had a copy of the book and did not let their congregations know about it share the guilt in covering this up. I did not know about this for many years, and most other former-WCG members I know did not find out till this decade. I still occasionally meet some who refuse to believe it. Why? Because Herbert Armstrong claimed that **he was the only one who taught it**. Notice these quotes:

By God's direction and authority,

I have laid the truth before you! To neglect it will be tragic beyond imagination! To heed it will bring blessings, happiness and glory beyond description! The decision is now YOURS! (*United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*, 1975 & 1980 editions, last 2 paragraphs in book.)

The truly amazing truth about Israel is a mystery totally unknown by any religion—by Christianity—by even Judaism! (*Mystery of the Ages*, Chapter 5, *Mystery of Israel*).

Filling this page with similar quotes would be of little additional value. **The problem is that Mr. Armstrong claimed his information was from God and that nobody else taught it.** Several sects of Christian religion taught British Israelism and Herbert Armstrong (and many "early ministers") knew it.

LETTER: Norm, have you ever compared Jude with 2Peter or Matthew with Mark. It is obvious someone copied from someone. No credit is given. Several times in the NT, (John and the concept of the Word for example) concepts are borrowed from worldly writers or poets. Rarely is credit given. Yet none of us writes scathing denunciations of the early apostles. We do not think these things diminish from them morally, or think them thieves. Why are we so quick to condemn HWA?

RESPONSE: Because HWA so often claimed that **he was the only one** to whom God revealed these things—that the Gospel was being preached for the first time in 19 centuries and other similar exaggerated claims. Secondly, the scriptures you mention do not remotely compare to Mr. Armstrong's plagiarism. Most of the duplication between Matthew and Mark are quotes of Jesus. There are other duplicate descriptions, but most scholars think they used a common source. **The authors of these books do not even identify themselves in the text and offer virtually zero personal opinions.** The gospels (and apparently the prior sources they used) are nearly an anonymous reporting of facts—a practice common among newspapers many years ago (they allowed others to copy their stories because by the time they did, it was already "old news" anyway).

There is some overlap of subject matter and a few similar phrases between Jude 1:10-18 and 2 Peter 2:12-3:3. However, the rest of the material is vastly different. There would be no legal

case of plagiarism here as there would be in the case of Armstrong and Allen. It is far more likely that Jude and Peter discussed church problems before writing their letters, and included a few similar subjects and wording.

LETTER: Norm, I think all this plagiarism brouhaha is just a modern quirk, an idiosyncrasy unique to our age and probably nothing God in heaven is bothered about at all.

RESPONSE: I have met people who were disfellowshipped and marked—lost a lifetime of friends and acquaintances—for openly talking about Allen's book. Herbert Armstrong could have stopped that type of persecution at any time by simply openly acknowledging it, but he did not. Does God care about that, or are truth-seeking church members "expendable" in his eyes?

LETTER: Now, the "Only true Church" concept. In listening to Mr. Armstrong, I heard him say repeatedly that there were people who were converted, who would be in the resurrection with us in other groups. Specifically, he mentioned the 7th Day Church of God. Early members here in Joplin were encouraged to attend services there till we could raise up a congregation convenient for them. Rod Meredith preached in 7th Day congregations while working a summer job in Oregon. I visited a 7th Day congregation in New Auburn, Wisconsin in 1970 while I was the pastor of the Duluth Congregation. I count as friends several 7th Day pastors. Did Mr. Armstrong exclude 7th Day Baptists or any other Sabbath keeping group?

RESPONSE: Karl, I know that you have friends in other Sabbatarian groups whom you believe are converted—I respect you for that. I believe that Herbert Armstrong said those things, especially in his early years—and especially when he was around other Sabbatarians. Unfortunately, I believe that Mr. Armstrong was double minded—because **he wrote the opposite of what he said**. But I challenge you to find a place where he **wrote** that there are a significant number of converted people in other groups. The last few issues of *Servants' News* have shown many quotes where **Mr. Armstrong claimed that he was the human head of the one True Church**. Before the CGI started, nearly all WCG members believed that if they were put out of the WCG, there was nowhere else to go. (And all the way through the 80's, many considered CGI a false church, too). Karl, I hope that you did not disfellowship people for petty reasons, but you

know that many other ministers did.

LETTER: HWA explained it this way: "We, The Radio Church of God (later WCG) are called to do a work. Others are asleep. I attended a 7th Day evangelization seminar, and found it pathetic. I have searched out the 7th Day Baptists. They are for the most part fading away, and are hostile to the idea that we (WCG as it used to be) are their brethren." Norm, here and there is a lively viable congregation connected with these groups. Occasionally we read about an incredible "work" (such as the Japanese leader of the 7th Day movement in Mexico City). I respect and applaud these exceptions.

RESPONSE: Who gave Mr. Armstrong the right to judge all other Sabbatarian congregations because he found one (or even several) evangelization seminars "pathetic"? Most church people today would find the video-sermon services of the Church of God groups "pathetic". Why judge the Seventh Day Baptists because they do not appear to accept the WCG as brethren—can you find any written evidence that the WCG ever accepted them as brethren?

I will agree that many congregations of other groups are dead. But so were many WCG congregations. We cannot measure truly converted people, we can only measure total attendance. It is possible that the combined branches of the Church of God 7th Day have always had more people than the RCG/WCG. The first article in the December 1998 *Servants' News* details many other groups with somewhat similar doctrines, but a total attendance many times the WCG's.

LETTER: HWA felt that all these others were a distraction from the focus we needed. In that I feel he was partly right and partly misguided. As we grew bigger, the impact, of other groups faded in significance. However, several times congregations from other groups would be welcomed if they wanted to join us. Sadly, many of the field ministry did not share HWA's view. Keith Thomas, for example, in his district required all 7th Day members to be re-baptized. It was very offensive to some wonderful people. I felt grieved by such a superior and exclusive approach.

RESPONSE: "Misguided" is a very nice word to describe what Mr. Armstrong did. Let us be honest. Herbert Armstrong saw converted people in other groups as a "distraction" to the work he planned to do **so he lied about them** and told his followers that he was the only true church, the only one accomplishing anything. He wrote

the following in January 4, 1985, and the paragraph was reprinted in his second-to-last letter dated January 1986:

We are humanly inclined to judge by what we can see physically. What we see physically is a small church body on earth [the WCG]. Yet what we should see spiritually is something so stupendous as to defy any comparison, so colossal above all that has been accomplished by all the combined efforts of the large churches of this world. Spiritually it is a gigantic worldwide accomplishment **compared to no spiritual accomplishment whatever.**

Where does that leave all of the other Sabbatarian brethren? The Seventh Day Adventists certainly are a "large church". What would they think if they read that? Paul and the other apostles were so often careful **not** to offend brethren of various backgrounds. Herbert Armstrong brags about his own accomplishments worse than most lying politicians.

Karl, can't you see why I no longer can stand up and tell others that I learned what I know from Herbert Armstrong? I agree with some of what he said about the Bible, but his own personal practices that he so well documents are unscriptural beyond belief. Karl, I hope you can see through this, too. You are skilled at reading and teaching, and could serve brethren without leaning on that stumbling block that Herbert Armstrong's own writings have caused him to become.

LETTER: What confuses people was Mr. Armstrong's flamboyant, hyperbolic style. In his zeal to infuse brethren with a commitment to, and a love for "the Work", he often implied we were the only ones. I found that if you listened to HWA with one mind set, you got clearly that we were not alone, but that it was not an important issue. If you were of another mind set, and you wanted to be God's only true believers, you found that supported in his writings and sermons.

So, the problem was with people. Those who wanted to be the only true believers, or who needed a narrow focus blocked out anything contrary. They went far beyond where Mr. Armstrong stood in his thinking—still he knew (I think) and tolerated that approach.

RESPONSE: Please show me the proof! Show me where the average church member could have known about Mr. Armstrong's tolerance for other groups. Even if you can show me, I will show you dozens of other quotes where

he clearly has none. The Bible says nothing about a church leader needing a "flamboyant, hyperbolic style", but it says **a lot about the need for leaders to tell the truth.** Is salvation an issue of so little importance that it does not matter that Mr. Armstrong said thousands of people were not converted even though he knew they were?

LETTER: Norm, I think of HWA as being very human, with serious failings, both personal and doctrinal. It doesn't offend me to examine his doctrine, or his methodology and learn from his mistakes. However, some of the criticism seems so misguided, so hostile. My conclusion is this: if HWA made mistakes and I believe he made many, his critics are making worse mistakes. If he was a socialist, they are commies. If he was a nationalist, they are Nazis. They don't like the strong words he occasionally used to dissuade brethren from following someone he saw as a threat. They use stronger words (and just as misguided) to ruin his legacy and his reputation. It is another case of the pot calling the kettle back.

RESPONSE: I have read other criticisms of Mr. Armstrong that are hostile or unprovable. But is there anything in *Servants' News* that you find in these categories? On the other hand, **Herbert Armstrong frequently wrote untrue things about other groups.** Searching his writings for "churches of this world" produces many false statements. (For example, his September 15, 1980 letter claims that no other groups teach Christ is returning to earth to rule as a king—that teaching has been in many groups for hundreds of years.)

LETTER: Norm, don't feel you need to reply. Please feel free to use any or all of this letter if you choose.

Sincerely, your brother in Christ,

—Karl Beyersdorfer, Missouri
[Living Church of God, pastor]

RESPONSE: Thank you very much for writing. Almost no other corporate minister will touch the subject. Obviously, we do not yet agree—Christ will straighten us both out in the judgment. While I am far from a perfect person (ask my wife), I feel fairly confident that I have taught truth that I believe was right according to the Bible. I never taught something because I thought it would increase circulation or because it would keep people away from "distractions". In spite of his many works, I would **not** want to trade places with Herbert Armstrong in the judgment.

—Norman Edwards ☞

One Search for a New Leader

The excerpt below appeared in the *Focus on the Family* subscriber letter. *Focus on the Family* is non-Sabbatarian, but has been a source of Bible-based marriage and child-rearing material for many years—often quietly recommended by “Church of God” ministers. The organization was founded by James Dobson in 1977 as “an expression of one man’s desire to serve families”. You can reach them at 800-232-6459 or by writing *Focus on the Family*, Colorado Springs, CO 80995. (*Servants’ News* thanks C. Gudeman for drawing our attention to this.)

It seems that Mr. Dobson’s group understands that the character and reputation of a man is more important than his human “capability”. We encourage you to compare this organization’s **leadership qualifications** to the Bible:

So the LORD said to Moses: “Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same

upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone” (Num 11:16-17).

Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you (Deut 1:13)

You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous (Deut 16:18-19).

Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business (Acts 6:3).

But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit,

by sincere love (2Cor 6:4-6).

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (1Tim3:2-7; see also Titus 1).

Notes on article below: A college degree is not essential for doing the Eternal’s work, but the Eternal may use it just as he used Paul’s Roman citizenship. Also, hiring a skilled businessman as CEO could possibly shift the organization’s focus into making money rather than teaching the Bible—unless the businessman has commitment to the Eternal similar to the leader. —NSE

Where Do We Go From Here?

Will Focus on the Family continue to be effective in the post-Dobson era? It is certainly prepared to do so. Only two questions remain: First, will God’s ordination continue in days to come? And second, will His people continue to support the work? It is our belief that the answer to both questions is yes!


Choosing Future Leaders

Dr. Dobson has held two primary responsibilities since the ministry began in 1977. They are the chief executive officer role and the chief articulator of the spoken and written word. Since it will not be necessary for a successor to handle both of these assignments, it is likely that they will be divided in the post-Dobson era. It is assumed that the CEO role will be the easier position to fill by acquiring an experienced executive with a craft honed in the business world. By contrast, the creative and teaching responsibility promises to be more challenging. Here are the necessary requirements for a person being considered for this second assignment:

- Genuine, mature relationship with Jesus Christ and purity in personal life
- Earned Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent in a division of the “helping” sciences (e.g., psychology, psychiatry, medicine, child development, marriage-family and/or child counseling)
- Highly developed ability to communicate and inspire

through both the spoken and written word

- Firm dedication to family relationships, accompanied by a sincere love for people and a ceaseless compassion for those in need
- Thorough knowledge of the Bible, particularly as it relates to family life and human relationships
- Conservative views regarding Scripture, morals and culture
- A pleasing radio voice and skill as an interviewer
- A strong marriage with no lapses in moral behavior
- Potential to serve as a moral and spiritual leader in the nation

Though we do not yet have a need for a successor with these unique talents, it is fitting that we consider the time when a transition becomes necessary. The ideal scenario would be to find the candidate within the next three years and then start scheduling that person for occasional guest appearances on the “Focus on the Family” radio broadcast. If our listeners respond favorably and if God so leads, he or she could gradually accept more responsibility in the studio. It might even be appropriate in the interim to develop a new radio program to accommodate the skills and personality of the likely successor, while also serving under the tutelage of Dr. Dobson. The importance of steadfast prayer cannot be overstated as we seek God’s direction in this search for future leadership. 

Jim Rector Correspondence

This article is essentially “Part 2” of the article from the Jan/Feb Servants’ News, page 17. Writing these two articles has been sad and difficult. Jim Rector has been an encouragement to both myself and many other independent Sabbatarianians. We need more men dedicated to teaching and encouraging. But we need more men who will speak what God has given them, or who will tell us when they are reading someone else’s books. We need people who are willing to tell the truth when confronted with potential problems, rather than cover it up.

At this writing, at least 27 of Jim Rector’s tapes are known to be plagiarized from other works. He is not simply making use of facts or outlines, but reading word-for-word from books for 50% to 90% of a single tape. Many brethren have confronted Jim on these and related issues for several years (Bill Dankenbring, John Davis, Pam Dewey, Mindy Diller, Norman Edwards, Richard Fox, Malcolm Heap, Mildred Kaping, Myron Martin, Jon Pike, Jurjen Kuipers Postema and likely others unknown to us). Even though he began “searching his library” for plagiarized tapes several months ago, he only told his readers about 6 wilderness tapes and 9 other much older tapes that were plagiarized. Either he has completely forgotten about several of the books he has read onto tape in the last two years, or he is deliberately trying to deceive his listeners.

The exchange of letters between Jim Rector and Norman Edwards is reprinted below. They tell the story. —NSE

May 25, 1999 Letter from Rector to Edwards About Advance Copy of Jan/Feb Servants’ News Article

Dear Norm,

The attachment [article] you sent with your last e-mail post apparently did not work, because all I could retrieve was the title. The rest was completely blank. I know those things happen, but would you be kind enough to re-send it so I can at least read what I presume you have already printed and mailed out to your mailing list.

I have no doubt that you are well-intentioned and feel compelled to do what you must do in this situation. Since I am the guilty party, I do not

intend to complain too much about your approach in the matter or offer excuses for any of my own behavior. I do wish that I wasn’t being held to a deadline of your determination in all of this, but that is something you control, not me.

It goes without saying that I have been quite devastated by what has transpired, and have been trying to spend the kind of time and focus necessary to deal with these matters before God in my life, all the while being pressured by you to come forth with more public admissions. I wish that you could trust that I am diligently seeking concert with God in all of this, and that it cannot be done overnight, neither is the process aided by the constant pressure to also deal with things publicly according to how you feel it ought to be handled.

I am sure that you believe the steps you have taken fall into a Matthew 18 format, but I rather doubt that they have. If your intent was on “winning your brother,” you should be pleased that I have been greatly impacted by this matter, have entered into a deep period of repentance, have publicly apologized (even if it wasn’t everything you wished it had been), have withdrawn from public ministry, and have suffered the ultimate in embarrassment, humiliation, and have been on the receiving end of the taunts, sneers, and rejection from others over it all. Whether you like it or not, these are very positive steps that have occurred, and there will be others that derive from these as well.

Has every appropriate step been taken yet? No, but I challenge you to experience something like this and see just how responsive and effective you would be in not just coming to grips with things before God, but with also having to satisfy the personal demands and expectations of someone else who essentially was threatening to take matters even more public than they had already been if you did not meet his requirements and do it according to his timetable.

Of course, my prime consideration is my relationship with God, and in coming to terms with Him and pleasing Him. It is certainly not in pleasing you or Pam or simply in maintaining some kind of hold on this ministry, which I have basically just had to let go of and place in God’s hands for His will to be done. Of course, you will do what you

will do, and apparently you indeed have already done it, if I read your last post correctly. In spite of the public nature of this whole matter and the hoopla that has been generated, what really counts is how God views it, and what He chooses to do about it. Eventually everyone will be able to see the answers to those issues for themselves, and they won’t come through the pages of *SN*.

I know that this response will probably be meaningless to you, and if true, then so be it. I have my hands more than full just attempting to deal with the aftermath of what has happened. The chips must fall where they will, and life must go on. I hold nothing against you and wish you the best, and may God’s will be done.

Sincerely,
Jim

June 7, 1999 Letter from Edwards to Rector

Jim,

I hope the Eternal is strengthening you at this time. All of us who are teachers are aware that we incur a stricter judgment (James 3:1). Nearly all of the judgment scriptures talk about what we personally do—only a little is said about the value of righteousness that we teach others.

I do not want to rush you. I pray that you will have time to “do it right”. I am not mentioning your name or tapes in the next [March/April] *Servants’ News* issue. But my understanding of the Bible and the mind of the Eternal is that people do not find forgiveness from sins until they confess it to those affected. In your case, that is your mailing list.

Through a variety of means, I keep learning of more examples of your plagiarism. What do you think the Eternal wants me to do with this information? Do you think He wants me to keep it hidden? Do you think He wants people to continue to believe that all of these tapes are your own work, when they are not? Do you believe it is the Eternal’s will that your plagiarism remain hidden from your mailing list? If so, then why do you think He is allowing me to know about it? Is there some spiritual reason why people should know about the plagiarism of Herbert Armstrong but not about Jim Rector?

Jim, if you have answers to these questions, I would like to hear them. The Bible teaches that a person who

steals should restore double (Ex 22:4). I think the least the Eternal wants you to do is to restore the works you have published to their rightful owners—to let your mailing list know each one of the authors whom you have copied. I think you should do this rather than me. However if you do not, I think the Eternal has given us this information so others can know.

If the Eternal has given you some other understanding of these issues, will you please explain it to me?

—Norman S. Edwards

June 9, 1999 Letter from Rector to Edwards

Dear Norm,

Thank you for your latest post. I trust that things are well with you and your family. We are weathering this storm as well as can be expected, I suppose. It certainly has changed my life! Just to keep you up to speed, I have written a letter in which I document a number of instances where I utilized material without citing the source. I give both the tape in question, as well as the source and author. It is probable that I have overlooked something, and I'm sure that someone will come forward to remind me. I will be sending the letter out next week. Due to the drastic reduction in contributions, I simply cannot financially afford to send out another letter to the mailing list, so this one is probably going to have to suffice, at least I am hopeful that it will.

At this point, my life is totally on hold and in a spin. I know that God is working with me and will see me through this ordeal. He is far more interested in seeing someone truly learn profound spiritual lessons from his or her mistakes, than he is in the fact that they made the mistakes in the first place. I know that God will bring me out of this a stronger spiritual person.

May God be with you and bless you in the work you've been given to do.

Please keep in touch.

Sincerely,

Jim

June 10, 1999 Letter from Edwards to Rector

Jim,

Thank you so much for your letter. I feel the only way this issue can be brought to rest is by your admitting all

of it, and then going on from there—never repeating the problem again. It is very hard to do this. It takes a lot of courage. You can even have the courage to say that “I copied from” or “read word for word from”, rather than just saying “I utilized material without citing the source”.

I would think that the books you read from during the last few years would be easy to remember. The ones that are more than five years ago might be harder, but if you think back “where was I and how did I make this tape”, it will probably come to mind.

Twenty years ago, I had a single female friend, who told me that she was being “stalked” by a troubled employee where she worked. Everyone treated him badly while she tried to treat him neutrally, which caused him to conclude that she loved him. She had expensive medical bills at the time, he found out, and he began to make payments for her. After a while, he had paid several hundred dollars. His stalking continued—he would wait outside her house, and that sort of thing. She realized this situation was serious, but had no money to move away or do much else about it. I told her that once a poor person like he is invested in such a big way in someone like her, that he will not let go easily and leave his money there. She realized that accepting the money was a mistake. I wrote her a check for all that he had paid on her doctor bills and she wrote him a letter indicating that she never wanted anything to do with him again. She never had any trouble with him again. (Eventually, she repaid me.)

What does this have to do with you? There are times, when doing something for another can make a big difference in their life. If your additional research or other's reminders help you compile a significantly more complete list of tapes and the works from which they were copied, I will pay the cost for you to send another letter. I believe that can be done for around \$1000 bulk mail. I will not expect to be repaid. I am not interested in your mailing list, I am simply interested in first seeing that the letter does what we have discussed, then sending a check for the mailing cost to whoever mails for you.

This is an important issue, it is about the repentance and recovery of

Jim Rector, the spiritual understanding of those who listen to your tapes and need to know what sources they are listening to, and about the reputation of the independent Sabbatarian movement. I would like to see all prosper in the eyes of the Eternal.

Please contact me if you need to send another letter.

May the the Eternal bless and provide for you in this recovery and healing process.

—Norman S. Edwards

June 14, 1999 Letter from Rector to His Entire Mailing List

Dear Brethren,

Greetings to everyone. As you know, some weeks ago I wrote a letter of confession and apology for utilizing someone else's material in making some of the *wilderness* series of tapes. I also withdrew from public ministry for a while to fully deal with this situation and regain my spiritual focus. This incident has caused me to search the tapes we have produced over the years in order to determine what other uncited material might have been used. Based upon my research, I wish to make the following disclosure to you:

Who is the Greatest? Used material from *God's Church - Whose Authority?* by Malcolm Heap. A copy of this publication can be obtained for \$5.00 from Midnight Ministries, PO Box 29, Aylesbury, HP17 8TL. UK. I want to especially apologize to Mr. Heap for not giving him credit for some of the information on this particular tape, and publicly ask for his forgiveness (we have already settled matters privately).

Entering God's Presence—Used material from *How to Enter God's Presence* by Terry Law.

The Pathway to Greatness—Used material from *Descending into Greatness* by Bill Hybels.

Hearing From God—Used material from *How to Listen to God* by Charles Stanley.

What God Wants to Know—Used material from *What God Wants to Know* by Bruce Larson.

Quenching the Spirit—Used material from *The Open Church* by James Rutz.

Unlocking Your Faith—Used material from *Hardness of Heart* by Andrew Womack.

The Kinsman-Redeemer—Used material by Chuck Missler, the name of which I do not recall.

Breaking Wild Horses—Used material from *Broken in the Right Place* by Alan E. Nelson.

In each and every case I was wrong not to have cited the references used. In whatever way I have deceived anyone, I am deeply repentant before God. Yes, it is correct that by far the vast majority of material we have produced over the years is free from this problem, but obviously not in every instance. If I have overlooked an unnamed source, please let me know. Though I definitely do not wish to downplay this situation, I do want to put it behind me. I do not want to *protect* my image. I do not wish to *enhance* my own personal status. I simply want to serve God, warts and all. My supreme motive was to reach out and give people hope and encourage them to look to God. This will **always** be my objective.

Once again my deepest apologies to all of you for any hurt or disappointment I have caused. This situation has certainly produced a major change in my own life, for which I am eternally grateful to God. I am not interested in *furthering my work*, but only in using whatever talents God has given me to serve and glorify Him. I hope that you can find it in your hearts to forgive me, and that we can continue to work together in serving one another. May God's richest blessings be upon you always.

Sincerely,
Jim Rector

**June 30, 1999 Letter from
Edwards to Rector**

Dear Jim,

I received your June 14, 1999 letter yesterday, June 29. I was saddened very much to read it. I must encourage myself by remembering that the Eternal will judge all things with perfect righteousness as well as mercy (1Sam 16:7; Is 11:3-4; James 5:11).

Nevertheless, I must decide whether I will continue to support or recommend your ministry. You certainly are aware of Revelation 2:2: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them

liars." I realize that you do not claim to be an apostle, but you certainly are a teacher and the principle certainly applies. The Ephesians (in Rev 2:2) must have learned some truth from these false apostles to have called them apostles at all—but they also tested them and found them to be lying about significant things. They had to dismiss those teachers.

I have learned a lot of things from you, and so have many other people. **but I cannot understand your letter.** This was not a spur-of-the-moment accident. Several times you have told me that you have withdrawn from your ministry in order to repent and get closer to God. Several times, you have said that you are examining your tape library to see if there are other tapes where "uncited material might have been used."

Was your intent to really inform your readers about the material you have copied, or was it simply an attempt to "pacify" the people who have suggested that you should do this? I cannot believe that it was anything but the latter. **You did not mention tapes and articles that you know have been copied.**

In *Servants' News*, we mentioned that large sections of your article *The Heart of the Matter* were copied from *Spiritual Burnout* by Malcolm Smith. We even printed a picture of the cover of this book. Yet your letter to your mailing list said nothing about your two tapes titled *Spiritual Burnout* (12/18/93 & 12/25/93), where you read from the same book. Am I supposed to believe that in searching your library you overlooked the fact that the titles of your tape and the book were the same? The *Servants' News* article also mentioned your reading from the book, *Beyond Radical*, by Gene Edwards [a radical charismatic author] in your lecture entitled *Radical Departure* at the Footsteps of the Messiah conference in December of 1998. Were you also unable to remember that you made a tape for your mailing list called *Why We Do What We Do?* (1/16/99) where you used the same book?

Jim, this is only six months ago!

Have you also forgotten that your friend and long-time supporter, Richard Fox, mentioned his concerns to you about the similarity of your *Launching into the Deep* (1/24/98) tape and a TV sermon he saw by Rod Parsley? Did not that remind you that your tape *Raise High the Banner* (9/5/98) contained a

lot of reading from chapter 2, *Raise High God's Standard* of Rod Parsley's book *No Dry Season* (1996)? [Rod Parsley is a radical charismatic preacher and author—see following article.] This was also less than a year ago. If you had somehow forgotten which books you had read from, you could have called Richard Fox (or me) to remind you, but you did not.

Also, do you remember the talk you gave last year at the Sabbath Camper's fellowship in Tennessee? You later made it into a tape called *Conditions of the Heart* (6/13/98). It was from Chapter 20, *Heart Hermeneutics* of the book *The Journey Begins* by Rick Joyner (1992) [a radical charismatic author mentioned in the following article].

If, after months of time to research, you either cannot remember these many examples of plagiarism (or knowingly intend to conceal them from your readership), how can you expect me to believe that any future work is your own? How can you expect anyone to believe you?

A couple of people have written us claiming that there is nothing wrong with plagiarism as long as the words are true. My understanding from the Bible is that plagiarism is both lying and stealing. You must believe this also, because you have apologized and admitted guilt to everyone I know of who has confronted you about the problem. Yet you seem to try to continue to hide it or minimize it to those on your mailing list who do not know.

In your mailing list letters, you continue to talk about being "wrong not to have cited the references used." This sounds like merely a technical error. You have still not admitted that large portions of your messages consist of reading from other author's books. This leads me to the conclusion that you are attempting to minimize this problem so as to retain as much of your mailing list as possible. This is further confirmed by the fact that (as of 6/30/99) these known, plagiarized tapes are **still** being offered on your Website: *Spiritual Burnout* (2 tapes), *Entering God's Presence* (3 tapes), *What God Wants to Know and Unlocking Your Faith*. Also, *The Heart of the Matter* article is still being offered.

I am not accusing you of doing this for money, personal status or power. I think you realize that your ministry has helped people in the past and because

you want to continue to help people, you are humanly trying to represent this problem as much less than it really is to your mailing list.

The WCG experience taught me the dangers of ignoring the problems of religious leaders because they otherwise seemed to be doing a "work of God". Jim, I think you have taught and encouraged many people. But, so have thousands of other religious teachers who founded organizations on less than righteous and true principles. I am especially concerned that your time of "seeking God" away from your ministry has not led you to fully acknowledge your error, but has led you to become more like the "charismatic" religious authors that you have so frequently plagiarized. You wrote "I have found a way into God's mind that I never knew before" on the InterAct public forum (May 30, 1999). I am very concerned for both you and any who may listen to this kind of message. This is typical talk for "charismatic" religionists. But does the Bible talk about little known ways into the mind of God? The Bible is very clear on these things. Sin separates us from God and the sacrifice of Christ reconciles us (Col 1:21-23). The formula for having God nearer to us is found in James 4:7-8: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

I am not your judge, but I must decide whether I will personally listen to your speaking and read your writings. I also must decide whether I will promote it to others. The scripture is clear that teachers receive a greater judgment (Jam 3:1). **I can no longer in good conscience promote your tapes, literature, feasts, or ministry in any way.**

If anything, this chapter in our collective history shows why there is a need for Christians to be judged (Luke 12:45-48; 1Cor 3:15; 2Cor 5:10). Some have accused you of plagiarism and of trying to hide it from your mailing list. Others have accused me of "Lashon Hara" (Hebrew for "evil speech") or "dividing the church" because I exposed your writings in my newsletter. Are we both right? I do not see how that can be. One, possibly both of us are wrong.

I am doing what I sincerely believe to be right, so if I am wrong, I will be

punished with few stripes (Luke 12:47). I hope you can say the same.

May the Eternal grant both of us understanding, and have mercy on us all.

—Norman Edwards

Concluding Remarks by Edwards

Jim has not responded to the above letter. However, there is a note on his web-site indicating it is being refurbished. Since the above correspondence was written, we have discovered more tapes where Jim read from other works:

A Passion for Fulness! (three tapes: July 1, 8 & 15, 1995) was from *A Passion for Fullness* (1990) by Jack Hayford, a charismatic author.

Where Did Christ Die? (April 12, 1997) was copied from *Secrets of Golgotha* by Ernest Martin, a former-WCG minister, now independent scholarly author.

The Pathway of Spiritual Growth Part I (March 21, 1998) was copied from *There Were Two Trees in the Garden* (1993) by Rick Joyner, a radical charismatic author who claims to be a prophet of God (see following article).

After spending some time listening to Jim Rector's tapes, a pattern became all too apparent. Many tapes begin with announcements, current events, or sometimes an introduction to the topic that would be delivered in conversational tones—with occasional pauses, sentence fragments, self-interruptions etc. But when the main part of the message began, Jim's delivery would become very smooth, and quick—and in many places very powerful. Many of us once might have thought that this was the inspiration of God taking over, but was actually Jim's switch from speaking to reading!

While it is possible that Jim was speaking from reading his *own* writing, other factors indicate that he was reading from other's books. We noticed uncertainty in his rapid-fire delivery most often when he was covering a subject where "Church of God" doctrine differs from "charismatic" doctrine. When the books mentioned "heaven" or Easter or Christmas, Jim would slow down and adapt the sentences to "the Kingdom" or God's Feasts. In a few rare cases, Jim actually read the doctrinally incorrect words, and then corrected himself.

Our point of this is not to say that Jim is a poor reader or speaker; **he is very good at both!** There are probably very

few people who could do what he does. But is the purpose of Jim Rector's ministry—to read books from radical charismatic authors and to "sanitize" them for Sabbatarians? By listening for these "signs of reading", we believe many more of Jim's tapes are read from books—we just do not know which book. If anyone is skeptical, we encourage you to listen to some tapes with these things in mind. We have heard a few tapes where Jim does not appear to be reading at all. Also, he has given live messages with no notes.

It is not our purpose to judge Jim Rector's motivation in all of this. Christ will do that. But each believer must decide for themselves which teachers they will listen to and which they will not. Also, each person must decide which teachers they will recommend to new believers.

Jim Rector and others who listen to him have expressed the desire to "put this issue behind them". We agree. It probably matters little whether someone proves that 30, 100, or 130 tapes were plagiarized. The real issue is that Jim has admitted that specific instances of his plagiarism are wrong, but will not admit how many there are nor clearly tell his mailing list that many of his messages are a reading from a book, not just a simple lack of citing a reference. The other issue is that **Jim is not teaching "new truth", but is teaching the foundation of common charismatic theology without his listeners knowing it.** Please read the following article to understand more about it.

Those of us who have been in the Worldwide Church of God should have learned what happens when leadership problems are suppressed for many years: congregations stay together in a false unity, and when the problems are brought to light, friends and families of many years are divided. The longer some people have trusted in a leader, the harder it is for them to give him up. While it is still difficult to deal with problems as they happen, it is usually better than suppressing them.

Even though this situation is sad and difficult for many, we can rejoice that this situation is in the best possible hands: "...And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth..." (Is 11:3-4). —NSE

Charismatic Static

By Pam Dewey and Norman Edwards

During his lifetime, Herbert W. Armstrong made it very clear to the loyal members of his Worldwide Church of God that they were not to study the literature of any other church groups, nor listen to radio or television programs by any other teachers. While this was certainly helpful in keeping church members from accepting false teachings outside the organization, it surely also limited their opportunity to compare WCG teachings with other doctrinal points of view. In most cases, members just blindly accepted what Armstrong **claimed** other teachers and groups believed and taught. The only time most members ever went into a Christian bookstore was to buy a Bible or a Biblical reference work.

This isolation from any outside influences, inside a “hothouse environment” where everyone ostensibly believed the exact same thing on every imaginable doctrine, kept alive a certain sense of security in the members. They rarely ever had problems evaluating any “different” teachings that they might be exposed to—as they were seldom exposed to any! And thus, few developed any knowledge of the good teachings of other groups—nor the ability to use the Bible to show where other groups were teaching error.

Since Mr. Armstrong’s death and the crumbling of the organizational unity of the WCG, many former members have had difficulty wading through the somewhat confusing religious world outside the confining walls of their former church. If they belonged to a particular denomination before becoming WCG members, they may know just a little bit about that group. (This is not surprising, as the average member of any “Christian church” does not know much about his or her church’s official doctrine.) But beyond that, many WCG members knew little about the history of religion from the time of Christ to this day—apart from their knowledge of the Bible and their experience in their group(s).

Much has happened between Christ’s birth and today. **To give a two-paragraph summary of Church history:** Christ died about 30 A.D., and the

Romans destroyed Jerusalem and most of Israel 40 years later. For the next two centuries, historic records are sparse, and those that we have indicate a lot of confusion. Diverse doctrinal beliefs abounded. It is not possible to find a clear-cut group that was the continuation of the first century church, the beginning of the Catholic church, or the beginning of the Eastern Orthodox churches. Various councils in the 300s A.D. finally establish the Roman Catholic Church, though there were always independent believers who opposed her. The Eastern Orthodox churches gradually split from the Roman Catholic Church, the split being complete by 1054 A.D.

During the 1300’s and 1400’s many individuals within the Catholic Church tried to reform it—to reduce corruption and translate Bibles for the “common people” to read. With the Protestant Reformation in the 1500’s and the invention of the printing press, many people began to study the Bible and many new groups formed, large and small. Literally thousands of teachers began speaking and writing on almost every imaginable Bible topic. For centuries, there have been many groups teaching personal repentance, baptism, and obedience to Christ and the Bible. Also, there have been groups expecting the literal return of Christ and prophesying it from the Scriptures. In various ways, Bible teachers have predicted the soon, powerful, obvious intervention of God in individual lives as well as world affairs. Many of these teachers mostly borrow from other teachers—creating religious trends and fads. But others spend great amounts of time studying the Bible and really seeking God.

Sorting It All Out

When a person has spent most or all of their life reading the teachings of one or a few closely-related groups, taking a look at the great amount of truth and error available from the religious marketplace can be somewhat perplexing. It is easy to find oneself tossed to and fro by new teachers bringing new doctrines via their newsletters, magazines, tapes or broadcasts.

One such source of “new” teachings

that are making inroads around the edges of independent Sabbatarian COG circles is the so-called “Charismatic movement”. “Charismatic” means many different things to different people. Like the Sabbatarian “Church of God” groups, there are many different subgroups and leaders in the Charismatic movement, some of which cooperate with each other, and some of which denounce each other as “false teachers”. Nearly all of these groups believe in baptism, speaking in tongues, gifts of the spirit, and direct guidance from Christ in each individual’s life. All of these things are taught in the Bible in some way. The problems begin when these groups insist that true believers **must** display certain outward signs—signs that the Bible does not clearly mandate. So some members may “fake” the gift, or receive a counterfeit “gift” from another spirit. Secondly, some Charismatics add doctrines not found in the Bible at all.

We at *Servants’ News* believe that some Charismatic ideas could become as much a divisive force in COG circles as the calendar and Hebrew Names disputes of recent years. We have noted an increase in material coming into our office promoting some aspect related to this movement, and we have seen more and more questions and comments and discussions on Sabbatarian Internet forums regarding Charismatic themes. Reading Charismatic literature is not completely bad as there may be things we can learn from them. But we must not swallow it all: hook, line, sinker, and biblical error. Thus we would like to provide our readers with a brief overview of this movement, and point out some teachings related to it which we feel may be cause for concern to sincere Bible students.

Charismatic and Pentecostal

The Greek word “charisma”, meaning “gift” is the root of the words used in the New Testament passages by Paul about the “spiritual gifts” available to Christians, as outlined in 1 Corinthians. Although some of these gifts, such as a “word of knowledge”, might appear to merely be an enhancement of someone’s natural abilities, a number of

these gifts appear particularly “supernatural”, such as “speaking in tongues”. Although it is obvious from the scripture that all of these gifts were in operation in the early church, history shows that the more “supernatural” manifestations ceased from public view very early in the development of what finally became known as “Christianity”. And even those gifts which might be considered less “showy” such as the “gift of wisdom” seemed to be eventually reserved to a “clergy class” and unavailable to the average Christian.

Over the intervening centuries, there have been times when small groups of people banded themselves together outside the “accepted” religious hierarchies and sought to return to a more “Biblical” model of interaction. This frequently included seeking a return of those “gifts of the Spirit”. Most such movements ran their course and faded soon after the death of the founders of the movement.

During the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, interest in this question of “spiritual gifts” arose in many quarters again. Because these gifts were said in the scriptures to have been first sent to the Church on the day of Pentecost, it was common to speak of these gifts as the “Pentecostal gifts”. In 1900 AD, in Topeka, Kansas, a teacher named Charles Parham encouraged his group of Bible students to study the scriptures to see what might be unmistakable evidence that someone had the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”. The group determined that it would be the ability to “speak in an unknown tongue”. And thereafter they determined to seek this experience. Within a few months, over half of the group had what they considered a “Pentecostal experience” and spoke in what they assumed were “Biblical” tongues. This was the beginning of the modern “Pentecostal movement”. It spread from there to a group that began meeting in a building on Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Dubbed in later years the “Azusa Street Revival”, these meetings were to be the source of enthusiastic “evangelizers” who took the message of the “Pentecostal experience” around the world.

For the next several decades, the movement grew, but was largely confined to the “lower classes” in America and elsewhere. The kind of emotional

displays of weeping, shouting, loud music—and loud preaching—that characterized most Pentecostal meetings were considered undignified in most “polite society”. Yet the movement continued to grow, and by the 1950s had several organized denominations in its ranks, such as the Assemblies of God. At that point, however, a number of long-time members had begun to decide that the formally-organized Pentecostal denominations had lost their “first love” and their “fire” and had become spiritually dead, or at least spiritually bankrupt. And thus began an independent Pentecostal movement, with more radical evangelists promoting ever more radical “new truth”. With no denominational “boards” to please, independent speakers like **Oral Roberts** were free to build up their own little empires.

A succession of “new truth” movements swept through the independent Pentecostal circles. First came the “**Healing Revivals**” headed by faith healers such as Roberts. Then came the “**Latter Rain**” movement, which emphasized that the “five fold ministry” of the early church (“Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers”) needed to be restored to the church. Since evangelists, pastors and teachers had been around all along, the real issue was restoring the Biblical “offices” of apostle and prophet. As you might expect, a number of men stepped forward—and continue to step forward today—to claim those offices.

Another movement begun in the 40s which is also a major force in the Charismatic movement of today. It is usually referred to as the “**Word-Faith**” movement. Also called “**Positive Confession**”, it is sometimes called by a more popular slang phrase—“**Name it and Claim it**”. Teachers in this branch of the Pentecostal world began to emphasize that Christians should **never** suffer from illness or poverty, that the Bible promises health and wealth to all who believe. And the way to appropriate that wealth is through the “power of the tongue” to “confess” the believer’s faith in what he determines to be the Biblical promises of God. This becomes, in the teachings of many in this movement, a “legally binding” requirement for God to act. And thus, in their perspective, **God Himself** is con-

trolled by the power of the human tongue when it speaks words of “faith”!

Such teachers warn their students to **never** pray prayers of petition to God with the conclusion “If it be Your will, Father”. For that would indicate you haven’t studied your Bible well enough to know all of His promises. If you know the promises, they insist, you know His will at any moment, and need only speak that word. Anything less is evidence you lack faith in His promises. They also insist that their students should never “pray the problem”, but rather “pray the solution”. Speaking to God about your problems is tantamount, in their eyes, to not believing that God will take care of your problem immediately if you will only “pray the solution” exactly as you find it in the Bible.

This, of course, makes no sense in the light of many of the Psalms/Prayers of David, who frequently elaborated his problems to God. David surely spoke words of confidence in God’s ultimate goodness, and in His ability to rescue David. But David certainly spent quite a bit of time in discussing with God the exact nature of his dilemmas and suffering. It would seem that these teachers have changed prayer from intimate conversation with our Father to a sterile legal arrangement with a distant benefactor. Even Christ prayed: “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will” (Mark 14:36).

In 1951, the Pentecostal movement took its first real step toward becoming “mainstream” in America. A millionaire dairy farmer named Demos Shakarian founded in that year an organization he called the “Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International” (FGBMFI). His vision was to take Pentecostal doctrines to mainline churches by reaching out socially to their members through business luncheons, prayer breakfasts and the like in more socially upscale settings.

And in 1960, the Pentecostal experience jumped to the mainline churches when an Episcopal pastor, Dennis Bennett, in California claimed to have received the gift of tongues. He shared his newfound experience with his congregation and his peers in the Episcopal church. There was much enthusiasm—and much resistance. He resigned from his position at his church, and accepted

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a position with an Episcopal church in Seattle, which for a decade was a center for the spread of this new movement throughout mainstream churches around the world.

By 1966 there were active Roman Catholic Charismatics, and in 1974 thirty thousand of them gathered at Notre Dame for a convention. And by 1970 there were practicing Pentecostals inside almost every major denomination in America, from Baptists to Lutherans.

Not wanting to be mistaken for old-time Pentecostals, a new word was coined to describe this new wave of activity—"Charismatic". This was based, of course, on the Greek word for "gift" mentioned above.

Signs and Wonders

All of these various strains of Pentecostal and Charismatic teaching, along with others too numerous to cover in a short article, have combined in one "river" which has led to the current crop of radical Charismatic teachers. In recent years, some of these teachers have begun referring to this latest manifestation of the Charismatic movement as "**The Third Wave**" of revival. The first wave was represented by the old-time Pentecostals going back to Azusa Street. The second wave was represented by the healing revivals of the 1940s and 50s. The defining characteristic of the Third Wave is a belief that God is now restoring "signs and wonders"—miracles—to the Church at a level never before experienced since the first century.

In fact, modern Charismatic prophets such as **Rick Joyner** are predicting that the miracles of this generation will far outstrip those of the first century. He boasts that the Apostles of Jesus' time will come up in the resurrection and be more eager to meet modern apostles than we will be to meet Peter, James and John—for modern Christians will far surpass them in miracle power. Charismatic Christian believers can expect, according to Joyner, to soon have people laid out in their driveways, waiting for the resident Christian to come out and walk past them so that they may be healed by his shadow. This doctrine of the restoration of miraculous powers is also referred to at times by the title "**Power Evangelism**". Proponents of this claim that such displays are absolutely necessary to call attention to the Gospel in a world that is jaded.

Lure of Charismatic Teachings

What is it about such a movement that would appeal to some Sabbatarians with a background in the WCG?

1. Some look back on their COG church experiences as drab, dull and boring. Charismatic services are flashy, exciting and invigorating. The music is more emotionally satisfying and uplifting for many than what they have been used to. And whether the "miracles" are real or not, it can be inspiring to be among others so greatly anticipating such great works from our Father in Heaven.

2. Some may have gone through most of their lives with a feeling that, even though they have been faithful to God, He has been a "distant father". They may recall few or no dramatic answers to their prayers or feelings of intimacy with their Father. This is not surprising in the light of hierarchical teaching that anything really important that Christ does will be done from the "top down"—Christ will work through the

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TBN—Changing the Way the World Views Christians

The Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) founded by Paul and Jan Crouch in 1973, started small but is now seen around the world. Many cable companies throughout the country carry its programming 24 hours a day, and many other stations carry some of the programming originating from the network. For those who do not regularly attend church, the programming of TBN is their main view of just what Christianity is all about. However, it is a skewed view, as the programming on TBN is dominated by *Third Wave* and *Word-Faith* Charismatic teachings (see accompanying articles for explanation on this terminology).

In the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, the exposure of most TV viewers to "religion" was mostly limited to Billy Graham TV specials, and the Sunday morning preaching of individual televangelists such as Oral Roberts, Robert Schuller, or Garner Ted Armstrong. These programs had obvious Biblical content, and thus most folks with no particular interest in the Bible would likely watch for only a few moments and then move on to something more exciting.

But the advent of TBN has changed this scenario quite a bit. The network carries individual programs by a variety of Charismatic teachers, special events such as large national revival meetings, Christian "interview" shows, musical programs featuring top Christian performers with a variety of styles from old-time Southern Gospel quartets to popular "contemporary Christian" music, specialty programs on "natural health" and "alternative medicine" topics, and much more. Thus, if a person is "surfing" TV channels, they may well stop to see the music or the comments by a doctor on good nutrition, and stay on to see the next "Bible teaching" show. A person with no particular religious affiliation or background would have no way to evaluate the specific doctrinal slant of any of these teachers. Thus they might well assume that all Christians believe just like the people they see on TBN.

Most Charismatic teachers have learned not to alienate their audience by prominently displaying their most "unusual" doctrinal beliefs on their public programming. On the air, they usually preach very **general** messages about the Bible which are quite true, mixed in with their own specific doctrines which are less biblical. Audiences may be impressed with the amount of "joy" displayed by the preacher, his staff, and the folks in his audience. And thus they may seek out his latest book or attend a "revival" meeting in their area. With very little—or no—Bible knowledge with which to evaluate what they hear and read, such a person can be quite easily sold on *Word-Faith* teachings, totally unaware of the scriptures that would counter this material. Since TBN rarely if ever says "we represent only a small part of Christianity" and since their main speakers are all Charismatic, their teachings throughout the week and around the clock only serve to reinforce the **false idea** that "they are Christianity". —PD

apostle(s) who will tell the high-ranking ministry who will tell the local ministry who will tell the members. The "closest to God" that some can recall feeling has been when they were hearing a sermon by a man who felt "close to God". By contrast, the Charismatic "Word-Faith" teachers explain that every person can have a *powerful* relationship with God—as long as they know the right "rules" for prayer. Because the COG groups had a heavy emphasis on law, their members might take to the concept that "God has set *laws for prayer* which He will not disobey". Radical Charismatic teachers essentially say: "Just sign up for the 'new improved' prayer formula, and your answer from God is guaranteed!"

3. The approach of Herbert Armstrong, particularly up through the 1960s, of regularly revealing "new truth" to his flock on a variety of topics, and his constant hype about the possibility of the Tribulation beginning soon, was, for some, a real "high". It kept them constantly looking to hear "some new thing". With the demise of the WCG, most of that "anticipation" has been gone for a long time. The Charismatic movement promises "new truth" regularly. In fact, there are now many "modern prophets" who get dreams, visions, and direct words from God regularly. And they are more than willing to hype everyone else about them—for the price of their latest book!

Holy Laughter & Heavenly Dentistry

There have been unusual manifestations at Charismatic/Pentecostal meetings since the days of Azusa Street. People have spoken what sounds to many outsiders like gibberish, some have fallen over in trances during church services, others have had unusual body movements such as twitching, shaking and writhing. But these have usually been scattered manifestations. In the past decade or so they have intensified and localized, and been joined by even stranger manifestations.

At a church near the Toronto, Ontario airport, a new explosion of the unusual took off in 1994. Strange supernatural manifestations became common at revival meetings including people allegedly "under the influence" of the Holy Spirit barking like dogs, roaring like lions and pawing the ground like

bulls. This has come to be known as the "**Toronto Blessing**". A similar common manifestation is called "**Holy Laughter**", where people begin laughing uncontrollably, sometimes for hours, with no provocation.

There was a time, even in Pentecostal circles, when such manifestations would have been considered demon possession, and the leadership at such meetings would have "cast out the demon". But for whatever reason this time, those involved decided that these unusual activities were signs of a "Great Move of God", manifesting His presence by inducing these uncontrollable actions in participants. The revival that started then continues to this day, with meetings six nights a week. People have come from all over the world by the tens of thousands to "Catch the Fire" of what is happening there and take it back to their home churches. Related revivals have thus sprung up in a variety of places across America, notably Brownsville, Florida. And similar manifestations have become common in other countries, particularly Great Britain.

Although we realize this whole business may sound ludicrous to some of our readers, we are aware that there have been many with a Sabbatarian background who have been looking toward this and other manifestations of the Charismatic movement for guidance and inspiration. The hunger for a "fresh move of God" is just so great that some seem to abandon critical thinking skills and their Biblical foundation to dive headlong into this "new wave", desiring to surf it to its crest!

In recent weeks we have seen reports, spread by other long-time Sabbatarians, of what some have dubbed "Heavenly Dentistry". It is alleged that, at Charismatic healing revivals in a number of places around the world, God has been in the business of "filling" decayed teeth with gold fillings, or even putting gold crowns on teeth! At some of the same meetings, it is alleged that people discover "gold dust" on their skin or in their hair. Supposedly, at one Baptist church in South America after such a meeting, enough gold dust was "swept off the floor" to gather up and sell to pay for the hall! All these manifestations are taken as proof that God is present in power to bless the meeting. The doctrines preached or the character of the preach-

ers is often of little or no consequence. For these groups, manifestations or powerful feelings are what counts.

Spiritual Gifts

We have no doubt that God intended all of His gifts to be available to His people. We do not doubt that God could (and may well before the return of Christ) restore even the more "supernatural" of the gifts to active operation among believers on a wide scale. Our concern is that the current Charismatic movement, by the fruits of its doctrinal teachings and the questionable nature of the "miracles" offered as "proof" that God is moving, does not appear to be a legitimate move of God through the Holy Spirit.

It rather appears to be a **counterfeit** that is being perpetrated on many sincere people. Many in its ranks have even touted it as "the" route to unity among all who call themselves Christian—including Roman Catholics. It has been said that in Charismatic circles, experience is far more important than knowledge or doctrine. That is, if one's experience seems to be contradicted by scripture, the answer is not to question one's experience, but to rethink the scripture to bring it into line with experience. Thus in some Charismatic circles, if "speaking in tongues" is offered as the main proof that someone has the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, then whenever someone speaks in tongues, they must be accepted as a brother or sister in Christ—no matter what outlandish or abominable things they may believe or practice.

Significant Good With the Bad

Even though we believe many of the miracles, signs, and doctrines in Charismatic groups are not from God, we cannot say that nothing worthwhile is accomplished among them. The letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 point out serious errors, but Christ still credits them for what they have right. If a person has been living a sinful life, realizes they are in trouble, turns to a Charismatic broadcast or service, repents of their sin and commits themselves to study the Bible and then lives by it, they have begun a good thing. Some present day Sabbatarians first became interested in the Bible from Charismatic teachers. Some firmly believe that they have received real

healings at their services—before they understood the Sabbath. If God worked with those of us in the WCG in spite of its errors, He certainly can work with someone seeking Him, but who only knows to go to a Charismatic service. Leaders can be false, even though the brethren are true (Rev 2:2).

While some Charismatic groups are as hierarchical as the WCG was, others are a great example of shared ministry, where each of the brethren are responsible for using their gifts. Some brethren teach, some encourage, some counsel, some take care of the physical needs of others, some take care of their buildings, etc. Some Charismatic teachers, such as Gene Edwards, have done a good job of showing how traditional “church services” come from Catholic origins, not the Bible.

Music in Charismatic congregations is also a mixture of good and bad. Some songs are lively, heartfelt expressions of Scripture texts set to music. They seem to capture the joy and the “loud noise” of which David speaks in his Psalms. Other Charismatic songs are expositions of their unbiblical theology—often very repetitious, designed to mesmerize the audience into feeling like they are “in the presence of God”.

All Charismatic groups teach that God works directly through each of his believers. While they may have leaders that claim to be prophets or apostles with a very special relationship with God, members still expect individual members to be directly led and guided by Him in their daily life. This was not taught as much in Church of God groups.

The secret in dealing with these groups is to neither join them nor completely ignore them, but to:

Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil (1Ths 5:21).

That is not always easy to do. Teachers can sound spiritual and sincere, but inside be calculating and phony. Small independent groups may have more Bible truth than large groups which are more concerned with paying their big bills and “keeping the numbers up”. Unfortunately, very few books or congregations invite you to “learn what you can and then move on”. Most try to get you to completely commit to their way. Obviously, if

studying Charismatic literature or attending Charismatic services causes you to depart from Bible truth, you should not do it!

But there are things that a mature believer can learn from them. Also, being familiar with their practices and terminology will be very useful in serving the *many* people who leave Charismatic groups having found their “miracles” phony and their promises empty. Some Charismatics have contacted Sabbatarian groups seeking Bible truth, but have not stayed because:

1. Sabbatarians treated them like they were unconverted.
2. Sabbatarians were more interested in showing them where they were wrong than in welcoming them and simply teaching good things from the Bible.
3. The Charismatics were so used to services based on 1 Corinthians 14:26 that they could not accept “a few bland songs, announcements and the playing of a tape” as a legitimate worship service.
4. The Charismatics were shocked by the truths taught by Sabbatarians and would not accept them even though they were in the Bible.

There is little Sabbatarians could or should do about the last point, but there is a lot we could do about the first three.

Summary

There is both good and bad in Charismatic teaching. People who go after the good without any knowledge of the bad are likely to get caught up in some of the error. This article was titled “Charismatic Static”, because the Charismatic movement claims to have great power from God when in most cases it does not. It is like so much static on the radio—it is of little value and prevents people from hearing the real thing.

Christ did promise his followers that they would do greater works than He did (John 14:12). **But pretending to do these greater works when one is not, or promising specific followers that they will do great works when God has made no such promise, is only so much “Charismatic Static”.** False miracles and teachings only help to convince the skeptics that there are **no true miracles and teachings.**

On the other hand, if we want to “always be ready to give a defense to

everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1Pet 3:15), we need to be able to give a defense to people who are of Charismatic background, Protestant background, or no religious background. If Sabbatarians only talk about the Bible with other Sabbatarians, they may not learn as much or help as much as they potentially could.

Statements like this sometimes frustrate believers causing them to say, “Where is the group that has all the truth—I want to fellowship with them!” The answer is found Ephesians 2:19-22 which shows that all believers are collectively being built into the temple of God. How was the original stone temple built?

And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built (1 Kings 6:7).

Other scriptures show that the materials for the temple came from a great many places. We can find no historic church with the same doctrines continually for the last 1900 years. God is building His Church from many different sources—around the world and throughout history. He is finishing His products where they are—in their quarry (quarries can often look ugly). Each one is different, but when He assembles His believers together, they will fit perfectly.

If we occasionally bump into other rough stones while we are still in our quarry—we do not have to judge whether they will be a part of His final building or not. We only need to ask our Father if we should be helping them or if they should be helping us. We can probably help some people from a Charismatic background, and we can probably learn from them as well—once we know how to avoid the “Charismatic Static”.

Bibliography: Information for this article was in part gathered from the following books, as well as a wide variety of Internet websites:

Charismatic Chaos by James MacArthur © 1992, Zondervan

Holy Laughter & The Toronto Blessing by James Beverley © 1995 Zondervan

The New Charismatics by Michael Moriarty © 1992 Zondervan

A Sample of Prominent Radical Charismatic Teachers

Benny Hinn

This television evangelist packs auditoriums and sports arenas around the country with people seeking healing and supernatural manifestations. What he calls “the anointing” appears to allow him to wave a hand at people, or even just blow in their direction, and cause them to fall over backwards. Sometimes recipients of Hinn’s “gift” don’t just fall down in place, but their bodies appear to be flung backward many feet before crashing to the floor. They don’t necessarily faint, as some immediately get to their feet again. But at times Hinn continues to point to them, and they appear to be “glued” to the floor, unable to rise until he allows it. Others do appear to faint, and when they awake, appear to be “drunk”, even staggering back to their seats at times. This phenomenon doesn’t just happen to a few people on stage at a Hinn revival. At times he will wave toward large sections of the audience, and hundreds or thousands will appear to be flung backwards. Instances of injuries, and even one death, have been reported as a result of individuals being knocked down by persons in front of them falling on them.

Does Benny Hinn accept other Christians who do not agree with his theology or methods? Here are some samples of his reaction to criticism from website http://www.voyager.co.nz/~philip/unmasked..._benny_hinn.html:

Somebody's attacking me because of something I'm teaching. Let me tell you something, brother: You watch it! ...You know, I've looked for one verse in the Bible; I just can't seem to find it. One verse that said, 'If you don't like them, kill them.' I really wish I could find it! ...You stink frankly—that's the way I think about it! .Sometimes I wish God will give me a Holy Ghost machine gun; I'll blow your head off (Praise-a-Thon, TBN, 8th November 1990).

The Holy Ghost is upon me...The day is coming when those that attack us will drop down dead....Don't touch God's servants; it's deadly....Woe to you that touch God's servants. You're going to pay (Miracle Invasion Rally, 22nd Nov '91).

Now I'm pointing my finger with the mighty power of God on me...You hear this: There are men and women in Southern California attacking me. I will tell you under the anointing now, you'll reap it in your children unless you stop...And your children will suffer. You're attacking me on the radio every night—you'll pay and your children will. Hear this from the lips of God's servant. You are in danger. Repent! Or God Almighty will move His hand. Touch not my Anointed.... (World Charismatic Conference, 7th August 1992).

Rod Parsley

Television evangelist whose bombastic, flamboyant, sweating, stalking-around-the-stage style of preaching to the audience on his “Breakthrough” TV program—and at large revivals around the country—is reminiscent of the tent evangelists of the 1800s. Parsley frequently indulges in “bullying” his audience, and has been known to jump down off the stage, dash up to the front row of his audience, shove aside someone sitting there in order to jump up onto the pew, and then put a foot on the back of the pew and wag his finger at the audience—delivering rapid-fire admonitions all the time. Parsley’s

“World Harvest Church” in Columbus, Ohio, is reported to be one of the fastest-growing congregations in America. The following statement from Parsley’s website shows his typical method of raising financial support for his ministry:

As you join as a Breakthrough Covenant Partner, Rod Parsley covenants to pour his life and ministry directly into you this coming year. He will pray and fast and deposit into your life the life-changing revelational truth God has imparted to him. Rod Parsley covenants that Breakthrough will stand ready, 24 hours a day, to take your needs before the Lord in fervent prayer anytime you call the Breakthrough Prayer Line number printed on your Breakthrough Covenant Partner Membership Card.

Rick Joyner

Commonly recognized throughout “**Third Wave**” Charismatic circles [see accompanying box on terms] as a bona-fide modern prophet. He has several books on the market at the present time detailing end-times visions allegedly given to him directly by God. Included in these visions are dramatic portrayals of a coming gigantic “spiritual Civil War” among Christians. Those who believe in and promote the signs and wonders of the movement are styled the “Blues”, any who would doubt and resist and preach against the teachings and manifestations of the movement are styled the “Grays”.

Rodney Howard-Browne

South African evangelist whose revival appearances in America were instrumental in engendering the “**Holy Laughter**” movement (see previous article) He continues to be its premier speaker. On July 7, 1999, Browne began speaking four nights a week for a six-week revival in Madison Square Garden in New York. Advertising for the event noted that over 2,000 churches participated in preparation and “More than 1,000 volunteers, including Christians from every state and 21 foreign countries, began evangelizing in the streets on June 21 in conjunction with the crusade.... Members of many denominations, including Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Baptists and others are working side by side.” Howard-Browne often refers to himself as the “Holy Ghost Bartender”.

David Yonggi Cho

Korean evangelist who has created the “largest church congregation in the world” in his home country. Estimates of its size vary, but the following facts from their website hint at the magnitude: “The Main Sanctuary of the Yoido Full Gospel Church holds 25,000. [It] has 130 Regional Churches in Korea (126) and Japan (4). Over One Million people can worship together simultaneously in the 9 A.M. and 11 A.M. Worship Services of the Yoido Full Gospel Church via satellite.” Cho’s theology related to “confession brings possession” is even more radical than most “Word-Faith” preachers:

“You create the presence of Jesus with your mouth...He is bound by your lips and by your words...Remember that Christ is depending upon you and your spoken word to release His presence.” (The Fourth Dimension, Volume One; © 1979, p. 83).

—Pam Dewey

Some Common Charismatic Terms

Baptism of the Holy Spirit:

Most Charismatics believe that salvation involves not just original faith and repentance, followed by the public act of water baptism, but that there is another step, the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit". This event may happen at the same time as initial conversion, but frequently is said to occur some time later. The *evidence* that this has happened is the fact that the person immediately begins to "speak in tongues". Usually, it is "an unknown tongue", though a few Charismatics will claim to speak a foreign language that others can understand. Opinions vary in Charismatic circles as to whether a person who has **not** spoken in tongues is truly "saved". Some groups teach that the purpose of this Baptism is to empower the believer for service, but its lack doesn't keep one from eternal salvation. Others teach that only the "Spirit Baptized" receive salvation.

Slain in the Spirit:

At typical Charismatic or Pentecostal healing revivals for many decades, the evangelist may touch the forehead of those coming to him. At that point, quite a number of participants fall backwards in an apparent faint. This is referred to in Charismatic circles as being "slain in the spirit". It has usually been accounted for by the suggestion that the "power of God" involved in the healing just overwhelms the physical body to the point it can no longer stand erect. Connections are made to incidents in the Bible where prophets "fell as dead" at the feet of God or an angel. (In reality, the Bible gives no examples where a person clearly falls over backward because of God's power.)

Recently, however, it has become quite common at Charismatic gatherings for many to be "slain in the spirit" not by touch, but by a mere wave of the hand of evangelists such as Benny Hinn. And often it is not just one person affected, but whole rows of people on the stage or in the audience—even hundreds or thousands at once. It usually has no direct connection with healing. It appears to just be a "show" of supernatural power. To a "believer" it may be "proof" that God's presence is in the meeting. To a skeptic, it may appear to be just "spiritual bullying" by the evangelist, caused either by some sort of hypnotic suggestion, or by a supernatural force not necessarily Godly in nature.

"Confession Brings Possession":

This is a cliché often included in writings by teachers who are part of the branch of Charismatics known as the "*Word-Faith*" movement. The implication of the cliché is that there are certain statements in the Bible which can be taken as promises from God, and you need only "confess" them to "possess" them. You are not to pray and ask God for them, using the words

"according to Your will, Father," but rather to merely "confess" (or "profess") that these blessings are already yours by decree of God. In fact, many such teachers insist it is almost blasphemous to tack on the words "if it is Your will" to a prayer of this type. Such teachers include as "promises" from God such general statements as John's greeting to the recipient of his third epistle:

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth (3Jn 1:2)

This is taken, not as a pleasant wish from one person to another, but as a promise from God. Thus such teachers insist that it is **always** God's will for any Christian to receive financial prosperity and instantaneous healing.

The original form of this cliché appears to have been "What I confess, I possess", coined by E.W. Kenyon (1867-1948).

The phrase "confession brings possession" has been widely used by Charismatic speakers and authors for decades. One example from Hobart Freeman (1920-1984) in his book *Faith*: "Confession brings possession, for what you confess is your faith speaking." In fact, a little tract by Norvel Hayes, currently available from the "Charismatic Interest" section of many Christian bookstores is titled "Confession Brings Possession".

Power Evangelism:

Many who believe that the current Charismatic movement is a manifestation of the power of God insist that the **only** way to effectively evangelize the public in our time is to provide alleged demonstrations of God's supernatural power, such as those manifestations seen at Benny Hinn campaigns.

The Third Wave:

The Power Evangelism movement mentioned above is also commonly referred to by charismatic authors as the "Third Wave" (the "first" wave was the Pentecostal movement, the "second" the general Charismatic movement). The following quote, allegedly spoken by God directly to televangelist Rod Parsley, characterizes this concept:

There is a wave coming! A wave of supernatural Holy Ghost power! A wave of unexplainable demonstration of My ability and proof that I am God. There is a demonstration of the Holy Ghost coming! It is coming in a mighty wave, and when it comes, if you are not prepared, it will crush you under its thundering torrents! But if you will get ready, if you will prepare yourself, the wave that will crush others will propel you to the heights and realms of the demonstration of the glories of My kingdom." (The Day Before Eternity © 1998; p. 164)

—Pam Dewey

Jim Rector Correspondence—Conclusion

This page should be read after pages 13-16. Those pages were already printed when this final letter was received.

July 14, 1999 Letter from Rector to Edwards

Dear Norm,

Greetings. I trust that things are well with you and your family. If you didn't like any of my other letters or responses, I'm certain that you will not like this one either. Realizing that anything I say can and will be used against me, I will be brief.

First of all, you said that you weren't sure if you could continue to support or recommend this ministry to others. I completely understand your perspective and your coming to that conclusion. I do not hold this or any other thing against you. As you know, I have never asked for any kind of support from you or anyone else. If you cannot support this outreach effort, then you just can't. It's as simple as that.

In spite of what you see as near-insurmountable problems, I have repented of my wrongs, and do intend to press on, going and sinning no more, even as Christ so instructed. It does not matter to me if you or someone else happens to discover some additional information about what I may have done and sees fit to make it public. That is the decision of others, and I cannot control it, nor do I wish to. My whole purpose, regardless of what you may think, is to get what I feel is a crucial message out to as many as have ears to hear. In attempting to do this, I have made mistakes, bad decisions, taken wrong paths at times, and done things that were both unethical and outright sinful. I am aware of what I have done, I have deeply repented of what I have done, but I do not intend that this is going to cause me to give up what I strongly feel led of God to do. Therefore, God willing, I do plan on resuming the work that I have been given. If you or anyone else decides to publicly oppose it, then so be it.

It is my fervent hope that we can and will remain friends, but I cannot be certain that this will happen. As far as I am concerned, we can. Time will tell. I pray that God will guide and bless you in whatever He has for you to do. Thank you for the contribution you are making in serving God's people. There is no need for a lengthy response from

you to this post as in the past. Best wishes always.

Sincerely,
Jim Rector

July 16, 1999 Letter from Edwards to Rector

Jim,

Thank you for your letter. Actually, I like this one more than the others in that it is more truthful. In previous writings, you spoke of going through your library to find other tapes where you did not give proper credit for material used. It has been four months and you have not done it.

On the other hand, this letter saddens me more than the others because it appears that your course is now clear: **You do not intend to publicly acknowledge that a major portion of your ministry is based on the work of others.** It seems you are trying to "sweep it under the rug" and go on.

Whether I support your ministry or not does not really matter. What does God think when a person hungry for Bible truth hears a Jim Rector tape, learns from it, and says, "That helped me, is there more?" So someone shows them a drawer full of your tapes and the new person says, "This man must have a great gift of teaching from God; I don't know anyone else like this."

What does God think about this? What will that new person think when they are in a Christian bookstore some day and read the original material from one of their "gifted teacher's" tapes? **Will it cause them to conclude that all religion is phony?**

I believe that your intent is to help people be closer to God. But I believe you are going about it wrong. **The end does not justify the means.** If God must use stolen literature to do his work, what good is living His way? I certainly believe that God forgives past sins, both mine and yours. But continuing a ministry with thousands of plagiarized tapes in circulation is continuing a sin. This is what I hoped you would avoid. I cannot believe this is what God is leading you to do.

I believe I know why you said: "It is my fervent hope that we can and will remain friends". I have been a friend to you. I have told you the truth from my

heart, whether it was bad or good. I wish you would do the same for me.

If you are my friend, then please tell me why you believe God wants you to read Radical Charismatic literature to Sabbatarian Brethren. At least three of your tapes from 1998 are read from books by Rick Joyner. You must be aware that Rick Joyner claims to be a prophet of God—that God actually speaks to him and gives him many pages to write, just like the Bible prophets.

Is Rick Joyner a true prophet or a false prophet? If he is a true prophet, why do we not let all of our brethren know? But if he is a true prophet, why doesn't he understand the Sabbath? On the other hand, if he is a false prophet, why are you reading his books to believers?

I understand the need for a feeling of power from God—to be close to Him—to witness His greatness. I have experienced this feeling at times, and so have many other believers I know. But these things come from our willingness to do whatever the Eternal wants, and His initiating the relationship. There is **not** some formula we can use to make the Eternal respond to us as is commonly taught by Radical Charismatic teachers.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that the Eternal is merciful, and will work with each of us, whatever we do. I have prayed for you in this matter.

—Norman S. Edwards

Tired of CoG Problems?

According to the *Times Newspapers*, the Vatican is filing a suit to stop the publication of *Gone with the Wind in the Vatican*, a book that "discloses the alleged 'secret sins and vices' of cardinals and other senior Roman Catholic churchmen, including homosexuality, sexual abuse, financial skulduggery and careerism". The presumed author of the apparently too-accurate book is Monsignor Luigi Marinelli, a retired Church employee. "Vatican sources said the book was inspired by the bitterness of a man who had not risen as high as he thought he deserved." Just as we need to apply 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 to our leaders, so the Catholics need to apply it to their leaders. —NSE

Early History of the Holt Assembly

by Nina Bigford, wife of Earl Bigford

[This is a very interesting story about the history of a Sabbatarian group that began before Herbert Armstrong taught. It shows that the Eternal teaches His truth on a small scale sometimes. We cannot know how many other places He has done this.]

In the summer of 1927 at a Sunday School Class in the Methodist Church in North Lansing, Mich, Harriet (Mrs. Bill) Lasky invited the class to a Bible Study in her home. I attended that study. There I met the teacher, Mrs. John (Nora) Bush; Mrs. Vern (Mabel) Whitney, Mrs. Lee (Marguerite) Bashore, Mrs. Pearl T. Coulter, who later became Mrs. E. E. Smith. After Mr. Smith's death, she became Mrs. Tom Hogarth. There were others I won't mention at this time.

The studies were about the Sabbath, Second Coming, Clean and Unclean, Feast Days, and many other subjects we had never heard in the churches.

I would tell Earl what I had heard and he asked why the studies couldn't be held at night so the men could attend. Sister Bush said to find a place and she would come. It was decided to have them at our house. Meetings were called for Friday evening and all day Sabbath beginning at 9:00 in the morning. A round table was held all day on Sabbaths, with a pot-luck lunch served at noon. Women came bringing their babies and older children. We had a two-year-old girl, Marjorie, and then in Feb 1928, another little girl, Barbara was born. The studies went on as usual.

In April 1928, we kept our first Passover and Feast of Unleavened. *[The literal Hebrew says "unleavened" which implies "unleavened bread", but there is no word for "bread" so these people called it the "Feast of Unleaved". I do not think the point is worth arguing over, but for those who place great importance on "doctrinal perfection", they have been ahead of the "Church of God" groups on this point. —NSE]* They were held at the home of Sister Coulter. We met many more people there, as Sister Bush was holding studies in various places. Some of the new ones we met were Claude Biggs,

who was the one who did the immersing for those wishing to be immersed. *[Because "baptism" means "sprinkling" to so many people, they avoid the word and use "immersion". —NSE]* Also, Harry and Florence Mercer, who became Florence Butterfield many years later after Harry's death; John Corneil and his family; Bertha Ohlenkamp, now Mrs. Orva Saxman.

More kept coming to the studies at our house, including Oliver and Cora Mae Starks, his mother and aunt. There were many others I won't mention now. In the Spring of 1929 we exchanged our home in Lansing for a farm. The Bush's were renting the farm, and moved upstairs when we moved in. The studies and Feasts continued to be held in our country home until we rented a house in Lansing for the winter. Florence and Harry Mercer opened up their home for meetings until we returned to the country. The Bush's lived upstairs with us until Oct 1930, when our son Richard was born. The Bush's built a home on their land and began holding the studies and Feasts there. They invited people to build on their land. Several homes were built on the Bush farm, thinking it was a place of safety during the time of trouble.

[The Bush family must have lived a life style worthy of 1Tim 3 and Titus 1, because they lived so close to the many believers whom they taught. Also, they shared their own land with the other believers (somewhat like Acts 4:32-37) rather than asking them to continually send money to a lavish headquarters. Does a "place of safety" on the Bush farm sound silly? Remember, this was just before the great depression and World War II. This "place of safety" really worked. Some CoG groups promise a "place of safety" that God will divinely reveal in the future—even though they have had no other similar divine revelation in their history —NSE]

In Feb 1936, we moved to Grand Ledge, Michigan. By that time Sister Bush was beginning to have poor health, and Sister Coulter took over the teaching by the request of the group. Meetings were held in our home in Grand Ledge, and Earl was asked to take over the duties of the immerser, which he did for many years. *[They did not have a clergy*

and laity, but simply people who had various jobs to do. They were ahead of the Church of God groups here. —NSE] As Mr. Coulter had been dead for several years, Sister Pearl married E .E. Smith, who was a faithful Bible believer. The Smiths and Bertha Ohlenkamp bought a farm next to the Bush's and allowed people to build on it. Florence and Harry Mercer built a home on the land, and we began holding meetings there. It later became known as "The Camp of Yah". Marguerite Bashore's niece Marjory, (Mrs. Wilbur) Graham bought a home that someone built and left the State. She is still living in that home.


Our group began to grow. Fred and Helen Duguid, Bill Graham and his sister Helen (now Mrs. Harvey Briggs) built a home in the Camp.

In 1939 or 1940, Brother Owsen from Detroit came with the name of Yahweh and Yahshua. We had read about those names in The Faith, but had not started using them. Soon after that at Pentecost time, Brother Dodd and Brother Traina suggested we have a three day meeting, which we did. We rented a big tent and quite a few people came. We began using the Sacred Name altogether. We had a Feast of Tabernacles meeting in a tent after that. More visitors began coming to our meetings every Sabbath.

Our group kept growing, some not mentioned before: Don and Helen Trowbridge and boys, Ethel and Adolph Florian, Brother Seaton, Cooke, and Harriet Fish, Lloyd and Ruth Helen Parry and family and many, many more.

In 1961, we bought a schoolhouse to hold the meetings and Feasts. The Elders took charge of the meetings, taking turns. Later Dick Francis (married Camille, Lloyd Parry's daughter) and George Kinney and wife, Bernita began meeting with us. Sam Graham (raised in the faith from a baby) became an Elder. Bertha Ohlenkamp married Orva Saxman. She began writing songs and poems in the Sacred Names. We have over 100 songs in a book we sing from.

In 1968 or 69 we began printing *The Faith*, which we are still doing.

[If women teaching is upsetting to you, remember Mr. Armstrong learned the Sabbath from his wife who learned it from another woman. —NSE] 



famine of the Word. (Rejection is the problem, 1Thes 2:10-11.)

Mr. Armstrong "laid a foundation" all right—but it was not Christ, (Isa 23:13).

—Myra McQueen, Texas

RESPONSE: Your letter

brings a significant problem for many of us that have spent years in the WCG. We have very specific meanings of certain scriptures in our mind—but only because Mr. Armstrong said that is what they meant and because nearly everyone else we knew agreed for all those years. For years Mr. Armstrong said that the "open door" that no one could shut in Revelation 3:8 was the print and electronic media. I personally believed that for years. But hundreds of other churches, Sabbatarian and Sunday-keeping, have had those same doors open to them—and gained a much bigger audience than the WCG ever did.

Revelation 3:8 also says that the Philadelphia church had "a little strength." Yet Mr. Armstrong frequently claimed that he was the first one to preach the whole gospel in 1900 years. If that were true, then all of the the other churches must have had "very, very little strength" by comparison—but the Bible does not say that.

This is not to say that all of Mr. Armstrong's expounding of Scripture was wrong. But we need to look at what the Scriptures say, before blindly accepting it all.

—NSE

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

LETTER: December 12, 1998

Dear Norman,

Thank you and all your staff for producing a balanced and thought provoking *Servants' News*.

I'm glad to see the circulation is growing if only for the fact that more people will be receiving it, and hopefully expanding their spiritual vision.

Norman, I'd like to bring up a subject, which I think was never really addressed in WCG certainly from the time I was a member from 1971 to 1989.

This is the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I think that we would all agree that the power of the Holy Spirit has never been evident in our time. Was this because we weren't taught it, or the ministry didn't believe in it? 2Tim 3:5: "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The Greek word for power here is the same word used in Acts 1:8, Rom 15:13,19, Luke 4:14, and Luke 24:49 all

relating to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now getting back to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Heb 6:2.. It mentions the doctrine of baptisms in plural indicating more than one baptism. This is backed up by other scriptures. John 1:26: "John answered them saying I baptize with water." Verse 33: "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom you shall see the spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizes with the Holy Spirit."

Matt 3:11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

John clearly states in these scriptures that he could only baptize with water unto repentance. I'm beginning to think that all we've taught in Worldwide was water baptism and repentance.

I believe the scriptures show a difference between begetting through the Holy Spirit and receiving the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the case of John the Baptist, he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb Luke 1:15. Yet I don't believe the power of the Holy Spirit was evident in his early life.

The same is true for Christ. We know he was begotten by the Father, through the Holy Spirit. But there is no evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit shown until he was baptized by John and the Holy Spirit was seen to descend upon him in the form of a dove. It was after this that the miracles began.

We can see other evidence of a time lag between water baptism and the baptism of the disciples by the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. Before that event happened, we can turn to John 4:1-2. This shows Christ's disciples were allowed to baptize by Christ i.e. water baptism.

So I believe that it is safe to say that Christ's disciples themselves had all been baptized possibly by John the Baptist. This could have been at least 3 years before the events in Acts 2 mentioned above.

If we go to the book of Acts, we see that Christ gave a clear distinction between water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:5: "For John truly baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." Acts 1:8: But you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you...."

Does this show us that we can be begotten by God i.e. have the earnest of the Holy Spirit given to us, yet not be filled with its power?

We print a representative sampling of our mail—both positive and negative. We do not include names unless we are fairly sure that the writer would not object. To avoid any difficulty, writers should specify how much of their name and address they would like us to print.

Correction to Clergy/Laity Article

LETTER: July 12, 1999

Thanks so much for publishing the article on "The Origin of Clergy & Laity". I think it would be worthwhile to mention to your readers that an introduction to the portion about the word "cleric" (middle of page 25) was edited that gives credit to the source: "The Catholic Encyclopedia". That way the reader realizes: 1. I didn't write that material (especially after your excellent article on plagiarism), and 2. the Catholic Church readily acknowledges that the original view of scripture is that the "lot" (clergy) included all believers (not just the leaders). If your readers would like to see the entire article, it may be found on the Internet at:

[HTTP://WWW.KNIGHT.ORG/advent/cathen/0409b.HTM](http://WWW.KNIGHT.ORG/advent/cathen/0409b.HTM)

—John Bair

RESPONSE: Thanks for the correction. When you sent us the article, the "Catholic Encyclopedia" credit was in the format of a "picture" in your document. Our publishing program had trouble using it, so we took it out. Afterward, we lost the spacing that made clear which part was quoted. I meant to go back to the original and fix it, but I do not think it happened. We hope anyone interested will find a computer (or a friend or library with a computer) that can look it up on the Internet.

—NSE

Comments: Open Letter to GCG/LCG

LETTER: June 17, 1999

Mr. Edwards,

This is just a comment about JDP's letter in the Jan-Feb and Mar-April issues. The "open door" is Christ—John 10:9, not Europe and the world. "Truth" has to be revealed through that "door", John 16:13. I am beginning to wonder if HWA ever walked through it. Amos 8:11 refers to a "famine of hearing the Word"—not a

I believe that the power of the Holy Spirit is a different aspect of the Spirit than that required for begettal.

You wouldn't let a physical baby play with power tools so perhaps God in His wisdom hasn't given the power of the Holy Spirit to spiritual babes, for the same reason neither can handle them correctly.

Let's look at some more scriptures in the book of Acts which show clearly a difference between water baptism and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit .

Acts 8:12 This verse shows Philip was baptizing men and women, i.e. water baptism. We know this from what happened in the subsequent verses. From verses 14-17 The Apostles then sent Peter and John to that area and it was only after they had laid hands on them and prayed that they received the Holy Spirit

Remember! This was after Christ had been resurrected and gone back to heaven and also after the events in Acts 2.

We can find another example in Acts 10. Only this time the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes first followed by water baptism.

See Acts 10:44-48.

Now we know that this was a unique case to show Peter and those with him, that salvation was also going to be offered to the Gentiles. But it still shows two separate baptisms.

The final example I'm going to use can be found in Acts 19.

But first let us look at Acts 18:25. It tells us that Apollos knew only about the baptism of John i.e..water baptism coupled with repentance.

Now let's turn to Acts 19:1-6.

Here Paul comes across a group of disciples who had received John's baptism but didn't even know about the Holy Spirit.

To sum up, Norman, these scriptures clearly indicate two different and separate baptisms, and God has made a distinction between them in his Word.

Could it be that we in the church have never understood this, therefore it has never been taught, and that's why God's power has not been evident in the church in our time?

Norman, in a multitude of counselors there is safety so I would appreciate any input you or your staff have on this subject, along with anyone you might wish to discuss it with.

I did write a similar letter to Jim Rector several months ago, but as yet I received no answer from him. I have written to you.

I know you must be busy so feel free to discuss the issue through the pages of the Servants' News. I don't require you send

me a personal reply unless you would rather do that.

1999 looks like being a momentous year—the gloves are coming off in Europe with the beginning of the Euro and with Germany in the driving seat for the next six months.

Take care and God bless you and all your staff.

—Mike Hurst, England

RESPONSE: I agree that the Worldwide Church of God did not clearly explain the many different scriptures about the Holy Spirit. There are many expressions used in the Bible: "spirit of power", "spirit of truth", "spirit of God", "spirit of Christ", "comforter", etc. The WCG seemed to assume that they were all the same thing. Does the Bible say that? Or does the Bible clearly show that they are different? Also, the Bible speaks of people who "receive the spirit", and people who are "filled with the spirit." Most people who are "filled with the spirit" do some significant act—either a miracle or utter a prophecy. Yet there are other places, where great miracles are performed, and being "filled with the Spirit" is not mentioned.

For several years, I have hoped to make a thorough study of the scriptures regarding the Holy Spirit. One thing I have noticed, is that when the "filling of the holy spirit" takes place, it is not usually something they were praying about, or trying to make happen. It is something that **the Eternal did**. Charismatic religion has added a great deal of confusion to this subject. Many believe they have a formula or method they can use to "pray down" the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What they usually produce is great emotion, people falling over backwards—often unconscious, and claimed miracles that no one can really prove. The effect is nothing like what we see in the Bible.

We should all want to be filled with the Spirit. But if we want it so badly that we accept a counterfeit, we are in trouble.

Two minor corrections to your letter: **1)** Jesus **did** exhibit clear outward evidence of the Spirit before his Baptism with John: "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke 2:40). Also, Jesus at 12 was able to astonish the learned teachers at the Temple (Luke 2:42,47). **2)** The analogy that a "spiritual babe" cannot be "baptized with God's spirit" because it would be like giving power tools to a baby does not really fit. Power tools can be used for good or evil, whereas the Bible gives no example where the Holy Spirit can ever be used to do evil.

Thanks for studying this issue. We hope

to write more on it later.

—NSE

No Battle of Armageddon

TELEPHONE MESSAGE: July 10, 1999

Would you please print someplace that there is no battle gonna' happen at Armageddon. Everybody, everybody except Mr. Armstrong believes that its Armageddon. Its not Armageddon. There is no battle gonna' be there. All they have to do is **read** Revelation. So would you please print something on that. And maybe we can get two people or three people or four or five on the planet Earth that knows what revelation says—something that Herbert W. Armstrong brought out—so you can have something positive to say about him.

—Jim Graves,
Jackson Michigan

RESPONSE: The phrase "Battle of Armageddon" does not appear in the Bible. Revelation 16:14 speaks of "the battle of that great day of God Almighty". The gathering place for the armies is Armageddon (Rev 16:16). But was Herbert Armstrong the only one to ever teach this? A little searching of the Internet showed that the Jehovah's Witnesses referred to the battle by its correct name back in 1889. The Jehovah's Witnesses have reached millions. Unless we have spent a long time studying the teachings of other groups, we should be slow to say "nobody else teaches" a particular doctrine.

How did the term "battle of Armageddon get started"? I do not know exactly, but we must remember that personally-owned Bibles have been common only for the past few hundred years—people had to rely on their memories a lot more before that. Battles are often known by their locations. Maybe it was easier for people to remember "Battle of Armageddon" rather than "battle of that great day of God Almighty".

"...For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment (Matt 12:36)". I think most people will be judged more severely for lies or evil things they have said about others, than they will for getting the name of a future battle wrong.

—NSE

RCG/WCG Baptized into Organization

LETTER: July 11, 1999

Dear Sirs:

I refer to the 'Did HWA baptize into organisation?' headed letter to the editor, dated March 23, 1999, from the Richard Nickels Family, appearing in Letters to the Editor in the March/April edition of

the Servants' News (SN).

In item #2 thereof, exception is taken to a previous statement made in the SN that: "The WCG ministers never baptised anyone unless the person agreed that the WCG was the true church."

I wonder whether I might be permitted to add some personal experience to this?

Both my parents, now deceased, were baptised by WCG ministers in the early 1960s. At the time, and prior to baptism, in line with the then normal practice in the UK (I cannot speak for the practice in other countries), they had to undertake a somewhat lengthy 'investigation' by the ministry to see whether or not in the view of these ministers they were suitable for baptism, (see comment on this below). During this exercise, they were asked to confirm that they believed that the then RCG was the only true Church of God, specifically of the Philadelphian era, and the only one in which true baptism was available, and by which salvation could be secured.

This caused some difficulty for my mother, who had been baptised long previously in an evangelising mission. However, both so confirmed, and were baptised in due course. Despite this, both questioned privately whether these ministers had any authority or commission to conduct such investigations as a "condition precedent to baptism".

The readiness for baptism is not a subject for the judgement of the then RCG ministers, or, indeed, any screening process ordained by man. It is a matter of repentance on the part of the sinner, a desire for baptism and a better way conformed to God, the gracious conferring of the Holy Spirit, and subsequent growth in the Lord. There is nothing in this last sentence importing the decision, or vetting, or moderation, or judgement of man. What the RCG was doing was similar to the Roman Catholic Church catechitical modus, and that of many other churches, which insists on 'interviewing, teaching, and counseling' aspirants before the church makes the decision on whether to grant baptism.

Now turning to the WCG, I can recollect an article in Good News, in the earlier Tkach era, which stated (and I paraphrase), 'entry into the kingdom of God is dependent upon having the imprimatur of God's Church.'

"Imprimatur", in religious matters, is almost exclusively Roman Catholic. It means "sanction", allied to "authority". What Tkach Snr. was saying was funda-

mentally the same as the RCG ministers had told my parents—the only route to salvation is through the "gate" of the RCG/WCG, and "we've got the key". This is what the Pope claims to hold: the "keys of heaven", known as "Peter's keys"; a doctrine dating from 431AD. (They are, in fact, the keys of the pagan gods Janus and Cybele.)

This, in turn, is very closely related to the erroneous doctrine of "binding and loosing", whereby mortal man holds himself able to dictate to God what might be bound and loosed on earth and in heaven. Both the Roman Catholic Church and WCG, amongst many others, subscribe to this gross apostacy. RCG and WCG set themselves up as the moderator between man and God, but the Bible says we have but one advocate—Christ.

Now this letter comes to the personal part. I was baptised by other than the RCG/WCG "ordained" ministry. However, prior to being baptised, I met with two ministers of WCG from Northern Ireland, and asked whether it was at all possible for anyone outside the WCG to have, in however small way, the Holy Spirit. I was told in no uncertain terms that such a thing was impossible. The comment that was made was that the only place where the Holy Spirit is evident is in the WCG: nowhere else. That was in 1972, at a private meeting in Dublin, Ireland.

Next, 1991, this time in Scotland. Again, two ministers, this time Messrs. Delap and Bolzern. Delap questioned the very validity of my baptism, on the basis that it had not been conducted by an ordained minister of the WCG, the only ministry "sanctioned" by God for such work. It was very easy to demonstrate biblical instances of people being granted the Holy Spirit without first being baptised by an ordained minister, but this made no impact. Delap also questioned my biblical understanding, my reliance on God, and much else besides. Bolzern, for his part, said little.

I happened to ask why healing of the sick was not in evidence in the Church. Delap's answer was that "now is not a time of healing." According to him, God's healing was manifest in the early stages of the Church, and during Christ's ministry, and might be so again just before the end, but that that was speculation.

When pointed to John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father," and when certain works of Christ were dis-

cussed, by way of illustration, the minister's response was that "now is not the time—Christ was only talking about the immediate few years after his departure."

However, when such a critical onslaught is brought into one's own house by invited guests, it does take one aback, if only for a short time. When they left, two of us, in independent locations, prayed to God seeking answers to the following questions.

These are reproduced below, with the text replies, received after asking that our hands be guided to whatever text God so wished:

Q: Is the WCG minister correct in his statements concerning the worthlessness and ineligibility of my baptism?

A: Isa 28:7-8, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgement. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean."

Q: Should we fellowship with them?

A: Rom 16:17-18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

These answers left nothing in doubt.

When, later, these were put to a preaching elder of the WCG, he indicated that it was Satan who had guided our hands, and not the Lord. When it was pointed out that Satan would hardly have urged anyone to hold to the true doctrine, he had no answer.

So where does this leave the matter? Was the RCG/WCG as the Richard Nickels family have it? It may have been for them, but certainly not for me. From a reading of some of the vast amount of personal experiences of the WCG available on the Internet, I have concluded that almost all have had experiences much closer to my own.

And that is very, very, sad indeed.

Yours faithfully,

—John Scott, Scotland

RESPONSE: Thank you for sharing your story. There are people who were very happy with their WCG experience and, as Richard Nickels points out, some WCG ministers who knew they were not baptizing people into an organization. Exactly

how many were treated which way, we will never be able to tell. But your story shows that some, in no uncertain terms, were told that the WCG controlled salvation.

This is what I believe is most important for us today: **If current churches publicly refer to Herbert Armstrong as a patriarch in some way, new people may read what he actually wrote—and they will see that Mr. Armstrong wrote that the WCG was the true Church of God.** When one sees the many Sabbatarian congregations today which are often a mixture of people from several groups, the concept of one human organization being the true church just falls apart.

Teaching that others cannot have salvation if they are not part of your group is not a light thing. "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matt 7:2). If teachers falsely tell others on the "authority of God" that they do not have salvation, will they receive the same judgment—loss of salvation—themselves? I do not know the answer. I would think that the answer has something to do with whether the teacher really believed his group was the one true church, or whether he just claimed that to keep followers supporting him. I am glad that Christ will judge this in righteousness and that I do not have to.

—NSE

Repent of Publishing Against HWA?

LETTER: July 9, 1999
Norm,

LETTER: Its sad to see how many times you publish against HWA. I thought you guys preach about not judging anyone? What do you call this? It seems that you have allowed many to hate this man which is contrary to what you preach about showing love. Do you know that you will be judged as you also judge? How will you expect God to forgive you if you teach others to hate this man?

You are a false preacher as well as a rebellious son if you ever was a son. And no rebellion will be allowed in God's Kingdom. I hope you repent and tell all whom you have led to destruction to do the same otherwise you are heading for disaster. Can't any of you see the sufferings of Gods people because of turning away from the truth that was once delivered? Don't you see many who are afflicted with sickness and disease and that are dying all around you? You should be frightened yet you are also blind and can't see. May God have pity on all your souls and remove the scales from your eyes so

May/June 1999

you can see and repent.

—A Witness for Jesus Christ

RESPONSE: Wow! You have told me clearly that I am a "false preacher" and a "rebellious son". Yet you have not specifically told me what I have done that is wrong. I have not taught anyone to hate Mr. Armstrong. I do not hate Mr. Armstrong. I have told the truth about what he has done, both good and bad. I have pointed out specific places where he has taught things contrary to the Bible. I have given him credit for the many thousands of people which he reached with truths about the Sabbath, Holy Days, etc.

For years, Mr. Armstrong promised his followers financial prosperity for tithing, blessing for obeying ministerial decrees, deliverance from the tribulation, and other things which did not always work out as he said. It is understandable that a person could be angry with him or even hate him when they find the truth of some of these matters. But any such anger and hate is pointless. We are responsible for what we do. Our Bible teaches us to individually seek God, not to seek a man who claims to be close to Him. We learned a valuable lesson. Rather than being bitter about what Mr. Armstrong did, we must take the truths we learned from Mr. Armstrong, add to that the lessons we have learned in trusting God directly, and teach that to others.

Mr. Armstrong spent most of his life taking the knowledge he had to many. If we have even greater knowledge and do nothing with it, I am not sure how Christ will judge the matter.

—NSE

Trust Your Spiritual Instincts More

LETTER: June 21, 1999
Dear Servants' News,

I am reminded of some other thoughts of days of yore and HWA.

I have been reading a fascinating book, The Gift of Fear, by Gavin De Becker (a Number One national bestseller). It is subtitled, "And other survival signals that protect us from violence." It is about the signs of physical danger.

The **proper fear of God is also a gift**; we are not born with it (Romans 3:10-18; 1Cor 2:14; Prov 14:27).

The normal human signals that we process consciously and subconsciously automatically alert us to danger in the physical realm. We override and dismiss those signals often to our peril. We should instead listen to them carefully to determine if they are substantive.

I did not know much at all about the

Bible when God began noticeably to open my mind in early 1966 when I was 15 years old. Yet, despite a lukewarm "Protestantish" background, God had given me some rudimentary and simple concepts that I recall inculcating by about age 8.

By that tender age I had learned that literal idolatry (literally worshiping before any statuary—icons of so-called "saints" for example) meant you were not Christian or godly. By age 12, I knew the seventh day Sabbath—the same period of time faithful Jews observed—was the fourth major commandment of God. But, I was just a kid, so I dismissed the subject. God brought it forcefully to my attention a few years later.

Some Descriptions of Idol Worship Explained

I requested a visit from the local elder in the WCG (then, the Radio Church of God), Oakland, California area, Spring of 1967. When I first answered the door to receive the elder and ministerial trainee, the first words out of the elder's mouth were: "We're here representing Mr. (Herbert) Armstrong."

I remember thinking immediately: "Shouldn't ministers of God and Christ be representing God and Christ?"

My budding spiritual instincts and intuition were correct. But, I was spiritually very young, so what did I know? I learned a lot of truth, along with some error in my first ten years in the WCG and at Ambassador College.

Some other things I noticed that didn't square with my growing spiritual instincts: At my first Feast of Tabernacles in 1967 at Long Beach, California, when Herbert Armstrong got up the first time to speak there, he said that some of us might not know who he was. He said we would soon find out; and he said it as though he were quite important.

My first thought was: "Who does he think he is?" I had only been attending for six months. I had not yet absorbed the "cult of HWA syndrome".

However, as time went on, I did partly absorb the "exalt HWA virus". Thanks be to God that it was always with the caveat that it was only to the extent that I perceived that HWA was following Christ. Unfortunately, HWA and the WCG made sure that that is all we mostly knew about; or, that we interpreted everything in a positive light regarding HWA.

Replace Christ's Name with Herbert Armstrong's Name?

When I was at AC (1968-1972) the director of the Work in the UK visited and taught at Big Sandy (where I attended) for

a while. He mentioned that he required every public prayer throughout the British Isles, where he had jurisdiction, that Herbert Armstrong **by name** must be at least mentioned in some way in the requests to God.

Because I had been partly infested with the “exalt-HWA-bug”, I recall mostly accepting this at the time. (Years later I categorized this quasi-idolatrous approach as the “New Trinity:” that every prayer—in Britain at least—must always contain the tripartite formula: In the names of the Father, Jesus Christ, and Herbert Armstrong!)

My Trust of HWA Gets Eroded

About 1973-1974 Herbert Armstrong felt the need to address, very generally, the reasons for the excommunication(s) of Garner Ted Armstrong. Apparently several ministers along with some members were alleging that GTA had been disfellowshipped in the 1972-1973 period at least partly for sexual misconduct (adultery!). I well remember that HWA said publicly that GTA's sins were “spiritual not moral”.

Strange, though, HWA did say (or write) that if he (HWA) did divulge the exact nature of GTA's sins, that perhaps as many as 10,000 (as I recall his rough estimate) of God's people might fall away from God and be lost from God's Kingdom forever!

I accepted the explanation of “God's Apostle”. Surely, of all people, HWA would never break the commandment against false witness! Now that we know that HWA was not above plagiarism over a several decades period (re his booklet, *The US & Britain in Prophecy*); and now that the viewing public has seen his son (literally) exposed as overtly sexually immoral while in leadership; I no longer accept HWA's gloss regarding the reasons for the 1972-1973 banishment of his son (I believe GTA was disfellowshipped about four times then).

In 1978 after some weeks of banishment, this time for having deceived/withheld much information about the state of the church and doctrinal changes, etc., GTA had apparently gotten into dire financial straits. I recall HWA stating that he (HWA) felt that the WCG should go ahead and give GTA a stipend of \$50,000 per year (I believe was the figure) for all the good work that he (GTA) had done over the years.

I do not believe that this arrangement lasted long or ever actually went into effect. I believe a few weeks after such a proposal, GTA decided to form the CGI and obviously then was reimbursed by those who joined his new church.

But, I remember that I felt such a pro-

posal (to pay an obstinate, deceiving, conniving person, as HWA had tended to portray GTA in the Spring/Summer of 1978) was not right. **You (HWA) reward the unrighteous with such an amount (equivalent to about \$100,000+ today!) while others—loyal brethren—through the years had been laid off with little or no severance pay?! What kind of injustice/inequity is this?**

Also, by 1978 I had gone back over my older literature and noticed a number of predictions as noted by *Servants' News* concerning the setting of dates by HWA and others for the time of the end. These were “within 10 to 15 years,” “in a few short years”, and similar expressions in articles that dated from about the mid-1960s and before. And I had noted several historical inaccuracies especially in the book, *The United States in Prophecy* (though I was unaware until this past summer of 1998 when I read JH Allen's book for the first time that HWA had indeed plagiarized Allen's book—*Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*).

When we received HWA's book, *The Incredible Human Potential*, at the Feast of 1978, I was further dismayed by the many logical, scriptural, and historical errors therein. This time I wrote HQ Pasadena noting several of the problems in the book. These errors were never addressed. Further, HWA incorporated many of the same errors, plus additional errors, into his last book, *Mystery of the Ages*, published in 1985, shortly before his death in 1986.

So, I was becoming a bit disillusioned by HWA. But, I kept reminding myself, as I had been diligently taught, that Christ would correct His apostle! It was not my place. (Why not, one might ask: are we not all brethren? Note the humble response of God's Apostle Peter in the situation described in Acts 11:1-18)

When the state of California via the Attorney General's office tried to take over the WCG in January 1979, I was still a loyal supporter of “God's Government!”

About 1979 I heard a deacon say: “The way to salvation is easy to understand: just follow Mr. (Herbert) Armstrong!” (I knew that was nonsense even then).

Even before that statement, I knew that a “cultishness” about HWA existed among some of the brethren and among some of the ministry. Few, though, would have summarized it so blatantly.

When one of the reports of the time in the secular media noted that HWA's annual salary was \$200,000 (as I remember), I was taken aback. That would be the equivalent of upwards of \$500,000 today, as I

remember the degenerating value of the dollar, especially during the high-inflation days of the 1980s. I thought that was inordinately high.

I also remember that the *Quest* magazine had some Christmas ads or some such ungodly nonsense at about the same time.

When HWA asked the members to put up their own assets as some sort of guarantee against the property of the WCG and Ambassador—some sort of surety bond—I did NOT give a 100% endorsement on the form we sent back to Tucson. I specifically stated that I did not support “the Work” in the area of *Quest* magazine, and I felt that HWA's salary was too high. (Due to the turmoil of the times these protests of mine did not come back to haunt me; others were not so lucky).

So, due to the above paragraphs, there was an erosion in my trust of HWA. But, I was determined to be faithful to God's Government and let Christ do the correcting. And I still believed much of the in-house press concerning HWA's many other virtues, strengths and accomplishments. The controlled press within the WCG allowed no other assessments!

Conclusion

Since 1995, and the consequent freeing up of communications among brethren, and the weakening of the formerly suffocating so-called “Government of God” control over the brethren (not for all the brethren, of course; witness the reactionary groups such as PCG and COGIC), I have learned much more of the true legacy of HWA. And things that I once was involved in have been analyzed more objectively than in the past closed system. Many errors of belief and practice have been brought to light that formerly were hidden from most of the brethren.

So, my conclusion in this little history, along with my opening remarks is: trust your spiritual instincts more.

Though remember we are all human and frail. And our natural spirit is deceptive. So, trust what God says in His Word and draw close to Him to be filled with His Spirit. And trust in the true leadership of Jesus Christ, the true Chief Apostle (Hebrews 3:1).

Be merciful to the brethren; we all need God's mercy, and often one another's. But, we also need to be repentant and to offer proper apologies.

But, once you see solid evidence of plagiarism, lies, agreement-breaking, immorality, etc.—beyond some rare situation that includes a repentant response—among leaders especially—then know that

your spiritual instincts not to trust in such leadership, are correct. Certainly God will not bless such leadership in the long run.

—Bruce Lyon, California

RESPONSE: Thank you for sharing your past approach to Mr. Armstrong. There were many parallels to my own. Because Mr. Armstrong taught so much truth to so many, the process of accepting that he taught error, and then rejecting that error, takes a long time. We have heard hundreds of other variants of that story, and there are many thousands that could be told. We must all ask for the individual leading of the Spirit: "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13).

—NSE

Know Them By Their Fruits

LETTER: June 25, 1999
Dear Norm,

I really appreciated your articles on HWA. Enclosed is a small thank you for that as well as for the costs of sending me your publication which has a lot of other valuable information in it.

I'm looking at a letter you printed from GA, California. The reason it attracted my attention is because of who they and many others are listening to. It sure would be nice if we really knew the character of the people we choose to teach us God's way. As you recently found out, that can lie well hidden for a long time.

We are told "you shall know them by their fruits", not their speaking, number of followers, or anything but fruit. Fruit may look good on the outside, but its what inside that counts. We really should look very carefully at who we listen to. Our eternal life is at stake.

Thanks again for your efforts and dedication to doing a very helpful work.

—Washington

RESPONSE: You bring to mind Ron Wilson's article *Works and Fruit... Are they the Same?* (page 5, Nov 1998 *Servants' News*). It was not until I read his article, that I clearly understood the difference. A person can have great works, but little spiritual fruit (Gal 5:22-23).

Paul simply told the Roman believers: "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom 14:12). Yet so many Christians seem to place such great importance on their loyalty to their church organization and leaders. I often envision a believer of this attitude talking to Christ in

the judgement. Christ might say: "There are some major 'unknown sins' in your life that we need to talk about—sins you did not know were sins." The person might respond, "Oh I, know that I had plenty of sins, but I want you to know that I was loyal to my church organization and its pastor general my whole life, doesn't that get me an immediate high position in your Kingdom?" Then Christ might respond, "No, that is the first of your 'unknown sins' we need to talk about."

—NSE

Never Question God's Method of Giving the Increase

LETTER: June 28, 1999
Dear Norm,

I'm going to refer to *Servants' News* Jan/Feb 1999, Truckers Study page 33. You said in #15 "Some plant, some water, some harvest, but of course it is God who gives the increase".

You have accused H.W. Armstrong of plagiarism. I was raised with the knowledge of British Israel truth giving the identity of Israel and Gentile nations and that there are unclean meats.

Since 1958, I've been aware that HW Armstrong built on that foundation of biblical truth but added the keeping of holy days and the seventh day Sabbath. I've since learned that he incorrectly taught a method of tithing, that fallen angels could not reproduce with the daughters of men (Gen 6:2 says they did) plus he saw only one future millennium of Christ's rulership instead of the two indicated by the seventh and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles and verified in Revelation.

You have accused Jim Rector of plagiarism. The book Jim referred to in detail I have never read nor am never likely to read, but perhaps like H.W. Armstrong, he extracted and passed along some valuable truth. One of Jim's tapes was a *A Sense of God's Presence* where he states that some aren't aware of God's absence because they never knew His presence. That answers a great many of our questions about WCG et al. Was that tape plagiarized?

You benefited from HW Armstrong's use of British Israel truth and others benefited from Jim Rector's knowledge. Never question God's method of giving the increase.

This is in no way meant to be a correction, Norm—just a gentle reminder of something you may have forgotten for a brief moment.

—Muriel Crawford, Ontario, Canada

RESPONSE: I do not have a Jim Rector tape entitled *A Sense of God's Presence*—though a search of the Internet showed that to be a common phrase in Charismatic literature. Jim did agree that his tape *Entering God's Presence* came from a book by Terry Law. Somebody else may know more about that specific tape.

I would like to talk about your statement "Never question God's method of giving the increase." **We do not need to question God, but we need to question whether a specific method was of God!**

The Eternal promised Jacob that he would be set over his brother before he was born (Genesis 25:23). Jacob obtained the birthright and blessing of Isaac by deceit (Gen 27:35-36). Should we say that the Eternal teaches us to deceive people to get what we want? Or do men do it because they cannot wait upon the Eternal?

The Eternal said that kings should not multiply horses (used for war) or wives to themselves (Deut 17:16-17). Solomon had many war horses and married foreign women (often done to keep peace with their nations), yet he was used to build the Temple and he made the kingdom of Israel stronger than any other king. Do we conclude that Solomon's method was righteous because it produced apparent success? Or do we conclude that he could have had a strong kingdom without violating the Eternal's commandments.

Simon the Sorcerer offered to pay Peter to give him the ability to give the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9-25). People already thought he was a great leader of God (v 10). Did Peter simply "not question" this man, and say we need more Christian leaders who can hold a following? No! **Methods are very important to the Eternal.** The Bible does not tell us to try to stop false teachers from teaching, but it does instruct us not to participate with them:

⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest

is light (Eph 5:6-19).

—NSE

Take it Easy on HWA Problems

LETTER:

January 15, 1999

Dear Norm and Pam,

The recent issue of the *Servants' News* on HWA raised many good points on the problems we have in tying ourselves too closely to him as a person. I don't deny the plagiarism issue. **It seems even parts of "The Missing Dimension in Sex" were taken from some book in the world on the same general subject [bolding by SN].** One friend in the WCG (still there also) said his mother had a college textbook that he evidently used to write this book.

However, we need to make a distinction between the sins of his personal life, and how this man still had basic doctrinal truth. In the latter regard, because I believe in a 14th Passover being taken just once a year, tithing as still being binding on New Covenant Christians, and hierarchy in church government, I see fewer problems in the latter than you do. We're always faced with this reality, which I call the "Gerald Flurry" argument because he likes to use it: HWA did more to spread a non-Trinitarian Sabbatarianism around the world than any man since the first century, by the power of God. Proof of this comes from the anticult polemics. They say almost nothing about the Church of God (Seventh-day), but they had **lots** to say about the WCG/HWA/Plain Truth/GTA. A comparison of the Plain Truth's circulation with the Bible Advocate in 1969 will make this point clear, as well as the reality that the WCG (at one time or another) was one of the world's largest purchasers of air time on radio and TV for a church group. For a group of its relatively small size, this is a remarkable record.

When you turn to the issue of mis-spent tithes in your next issue, you should also cover the other side. HWA voluntarily made himself homeless during WWII in order to keep the broadcast on the air and print up more booklets. How many of us would be similarly self-sacrificing? He may have wasted money on his travels abroad in the 1970s and 1980s, but we also have to remember his real poverty from the time he was called into the church until the early fifties, at least. (Remember, although his family got a new permanent home when AC was founded, that institution was constantly threatened with folding in its early years).

My intent is to send you a copy of a

research report I wrote dealing with anticultist attacks on the WCG. It includes a chapter on the corruption charges against HWA. I believe you should read it before putting out the next issue of the *Servants' News*. There is another side to these issues, despite the mistakes that were made. The WCG may have been corrupt, to one degree or another, but what other non-Trinitarian Sabbatarian organization has done even 10% of the public gospel preaching it did? (Even if most never became members, etc., that "wasted seed" still may have helped some improve their lives, or at least permanently put them on notice). It was immoral to plagiarize Allen's book, but certainly US&BCIP influenced a lot more people in the US than Allen's book ever could have hoped to. It seems God decided to use a morally flawed man, a deeply flawed man (compare him to, say, Billy Graham in this regard) so we would put the focus on the doctrinal truth, not the person. Unfortunately, we did a miserable job of that in the WCG while he was still alive (and some, such as the PCG, since his death). Yet God used this man to do so much, bailing "the work" (a problematic term, but I use it for clarity) out of many big financial problems, such as when AC was founded, or the Radio Church of God went on the air with ABC, and God rewarded his faith.

So, despite his sins, God accomplished a lot more through his work and life than any of us have any realistic chance of doing so in preaching a non-Trinitarian Sabbatarianism to the world. This is worth pondering, before attacking him harshly. If God used him, despite many manifest failings, shouldn't we be more careful in how we judge him?

Sincerely,

—Eric Snow, Michigan

RESPONSE: Thanks for your letter. I had heard the same thing about *The Missing Dimension in Sex*, but I do not have the name of the book it was copied from. If you (or any of our readers) find it, I would like to know.

I believe Herbert Armstrong taught a lot of truth. But as you state, I accept less of his teachings as truth than you do. The Passover issue is complex enough that I do not fault anyone for having differences with me there. I will send you a copy of my paper, *How Do We Give to the Eternal?*, which I do not believe you have. I believe it shows conclusively that Jewish believers continued to tithe to the Levites until the destruction of the Temple, and that Tithing never transferred to church or ministry. Church history shows that it was at least

300 A.D. before tithes were commonly collected by any Christian Church. Even if you do not accept the conclusions of *How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?*, you must agree that we do not know the names of the human heads of the "one true church" throughout history. (Nor do we know them now!)

Just because Herbert Armstrong was a favorite of anti-cult writers does not mean that he was the greatest teacher of certain doctrines. I believe he was the target of anti-cult writing because he ran his church organization like so many other religious cults. He taught that his organization was the only true church and that all others were false. He never entered into any open dialogue with other groups. He told members not to read outside literature and not to participate in any other charitable or religious groups. He would disfellowship members for talking to previously disfellowshipped members. This cult-like behavior, combined with his massive TV/Magazine efforts made cult-watchers take notice.

It is important to realize that the vast majority of the millions reached by Armstrong's warning message never heard most of his doctrines. Only hundreds of thousands actually read most of his doctrinal booklets or attended services. After you read this and the upcoming issues, it should be evident that more people probably learned about the Sabbath, Holy Days and other "Armstrong" doctrines from sources other than Herbert Armstrong.

Mr. Armstrong's autobiography does state that he sold his home (the down payment of which was paid by the local church) in 1944. However, he was not living in shelters or another's home as your term "homeless" implies. The autobiography goes on to explain that he lived in motels and a couple of rented rooms and ate in restaurants for the next three years (incurring much more expense than he would have by remaining in his home). One can make a case to say that he needed to sell his home anyway because he was planning to move to California in three years. Nevertheless, it was a sacrifice to sell his home—but even more of a sacrifice for his wife and teenage boys who were at home while he was in his office most of the time. The autobiography shows that it was at that time that they picked up smoking and other habits. Mr. Armstrong concluded the story of that time with these words:

"My heart was no longer set on material acquisition. I had come to know its worthlessness. Instead, God had literally lavished upon us the **true** riches—the spiritual blessings!"

Those words remained in his autobiography while he lived like a king for years, but asked widows to send in their "mites" over 100 times. The continual financial crises which we wrestled with were virtually always solved by his writing a letter threatening those co-workers who would not send more money. He died surrounded by riches, but estranged from his family and nearly everyone in his Church.

I do have experience in this area. Our family sold our home at a loss in 1994 in order to move to San Diego with the Global Church of God. There were plenty of computer jobs available to me in the Pasadena area. We have lived in an apartment, two rental houses and a trailer since that time.

We are making no effort to judge Herbert Armstrong's eternity, but those who were taught by him desperately need to see him in a true perspective, not in the self-exalting way in which he was portrayed so many years.

—NSE

Credit for Exposing Rector Problems

LETTER:

May 27, 1999

Dear Pam and Norm,

How are you? I have to give you credit for running the article dealing with Jim Rector's plagiarism. I have to admit this is embarrassing to the COG, even though I'm someone who almost never has heard him on tape.

Thanks for running the announcement on the dance July 4th weekend.

Your January/February issue arrived today—May 27th! Maybe the date should have been changed to reflect the month mailed!

—Eric Snow, Michigan

RESPONSE: See the article on Page 1 of the May/June issue for an explanation of the issue date problems. It is amazing—no its all too human—that we have found very few "Armstrong students" upset with our exposing Jim Rector, and very few "Rector students" upset with our exposing Herbert Armstrong. It is simply much more difficult when a person who has been a positive influence on us disappoints us.

"Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Pslm 40:4).

—NSE

Jim Rector like GTA or Pharisees

LETTER:

June 14, 1999

Regarding your shooting down of Jim Rector: The books Jim plagiarized, I would

never see or read, but tapes I listen to because of low cost, ease of accessibility.

Hence I thank Jim for this information even if it was someone else's.

How many sermons are given with innumerable biblical quotes without the preacher constantly saying "this is from the Bible".

I categorize Jim, the same as GTA or the Pharisees whom Christ said to heed, but not do as they do!

Sincerely,

—Bill, Canada

RESPONSE: Obviously, Jim was counting on most of his listeners never seeing the books he was reading from. We agree with you that a "low cost" can be achieved when people take other's work and read it onto a tape—they bypass all of the cost of hundreds of hours of research and writing, being left only with the cost of tape production and mailing. The only problem with this, is that it is illegal in most countries, and certainly a violation of the 8th (and often 9th and 10th) commandments.

Of course preachers do not continually tell you they are reading from the Bible when you know they are. Classical literature will frequently quote Plato or Aristotle without citing a reference because most educated people would recognize the quote. Similarly, the New Testament frequently quotes the Old without giving a reference. But Jim read well-organized, carefully worded books onto tapes, letting his listeners believe that they were his "own inspired teaching".

Rector Story Sad but Necessary

LETTER:

June 5, 1999

Hello!

Thank you for your newsletter. It is very helpful in staying informed about God's people and useful when looking into scriptural matters. I appreciated hearing the truth about what was going on with Jim Rector even though it saddens me. There has been far too much cover up in the past. All it does is breed mistrust in the end. (We are all so human!)

[literature request removed]

Thank you.

—M. P., Missouri

RESPONSE: Thanks for the encouragement.

—NSE

Jim Rector & Other Plagiarism

LETTER:

June 13, 1999

I was saddened beyond words to read your **expose** in the Jan./Feb. issue. I remarked many times to friends directly,

and probably in correspondence if I had the time to search several year's records, that I certainly could not do what Jim was doing, come up with fresh new ideas to turn out a weekly tape and even do a series on many facets of the same subject and keep it interesting. It never ceased to amaze me how fluid the tapes were on complex subjects with many scriptures that I know would have taken me days to prepare for a single tape. Now we know how such seeming, **God given talent** was really possible. I was probably just too busy to consider the implications seriously and put two and two together that he must be getting material through reading or listening to others without giving credit for his sources. While I can visualize someone like yourself who gets deluged with material, forgetting where you might first have been exposed to a new idea or concept, even scriptures not in our regular vocabulary, Jim's conduct is simply too blatant and repetitive to assume forgetfulness. I can not imagine having 5000 E-mails to sort through, but then 250 a week as I have recently been working through is probably somewhat proportionate given that I work an average of 12 hours a day to earn my living.

I always had a soft spot in my heart for Jim because of his dedication in serving the scattered brethren in spite of his severe health problems and personal trials. Given the current circumstances I feel I would be remiss in my duty in remaining silent about what I know of this sorry state of affairs. I can appreciate how difficult it must have been Norm for you to expose a mutual friend when confronted with unmistakable evidence. You did the right thing, and likewise telling the truth about HWA in spite of cancelled subscriptions that could affect your income raises my respect for you immensely. If only a few of the leaders or would-be leaders of churches exhibited the same integrity! While it amazes me that Jim would not make a clean breast of things when caught **red-handed** it is not that I did not have warning. In between the Feast in 95 in Springdale we shared, and the 96 Feast in Snowshoe WVA. sponsored by Jim, I was contacted by a Malcolm Heap in England who tried his best to gain my confidence, sending me a tremendous amount of unsolicited material that must have cost him hundreds of dollars. It took well over a year for his true colours to manifest themselves, but that is another story.

It is a fact that many people can witness too, that Bill Dankenbring plagiarized material from Jim, Malcolm, and several others besides myself, that do not immedi-

ately come to mind, you already know about Glen Myers, and I could dig others out of my files. I first made contact with Jim over Dankenbrings vicious disfellowshipment letters to both of us, another story. Maybe our common experience is what drew us together in the first place, in any event, it turns out that Malcolm Heap in England had also been sending his material to Jim. Malcolm's big thing was **gifts of the spirit** charging that they were totally absent in Sabbatarian circles and he believed, manifested in Sunday keeping churches and ministries. He sent many tapes and even videos from his own meetings, those of Benny Hinn and other televangelists to try and convince both of us that he, **Malcolm** was receiving direct visions and guidance from the Almighty with instructions to **correct and warn** false teachers, with manifestations of speaking in tongues and healings etc. I received several letters in which he castigated Jim for his failure to **move on in the gifts of the spirit** urging me to do so and sever any relationship with Jim, who by that time having rejected Malcolm's overtures, was in Malcolm's bad books. When I did not **buy into** Malcolm's premise either, he also turned on me and denounced me as a heretic, but in less severe terms than Dankenbring had.

That being said, Malcolm's booklet on church government is one of the best I have ever read. It was not too long after Jim produced a tape with the title of "Who Is The Greatest" which I highly recommended and distributed in some quantity, that I received a letter from Malcolm that in effect was trying to gain my allegiance while denouncing Jim for plagiarizing his material. It is a little hazy in my memory now, but I believe I may have sent a copy of Jim's tape to Malcolm who then fired back a letter with whole paragraphs of quotes from Jim's tape that matched Malcolm's booklet. As a result I took a copy of Malcolm's booklet to the Feast in Snowshoe and confronted Jim privately with the possibility of plagiarism as per Malcolm's charges. He was very evasive and said the booklet was **vaguely familiar** that he **might** have received it and possibly read it. Given other testimony you printed, I now have to believe that was a blatant lie, as you stated, "Do you really expect me to believe that you typed numerous paragraphs from a book and put it into an article and now no longer remember doing it? Do you expect me to believe that you read large portions of a book into a tape recorder and no longer remember what book you read from?" I concur, it stretches credulity, and again you were correct, "you

will probably lose a lot of credibility and bring a bad name to the independent Sabbatarian movement." Sad but all too true.

I will close by quoting you again; "If we have faith in the Eternal, we never have to fear doing what is right!" This lesson has apparently been learned by very few who were trained **brainwashed** in Ambassador College. Most ministers still believe they have to lie, connive, coerce, compete with others, brow beat the sheep, to try and raise the funds to **do a work** when the scripture is very clear that the work is done directly by the Creator (Zech.4:6) in individual minds through His Spirit, (John 16:13). One thing I will say in Jim's favour, at least he did not openly pursue money, maybe the success he did have was due partially to his low key approach that caused people to trust him in contrast to those who used Feasts as fund raising events, write panicky appeals for funds to save the work etc. I take no pleasure in having to relate what I know about this unfortunate situation and I do have one concern. Given the competitiveness that exists between the various off-shoots, I see a great danger of leaders [sic] ganging up on **independents** who oppose hierarchical government and looking for dirt, **real or imagined** to try and destroy those they might consider as a threat to their religious empires. Had I not had some personal knowledge of the validity of the charges against Jim, I might well have been inclined to believe someone defending him with the premise that jealous hierarchists were **out to get him**. That may sound rather cynical, but given all the dirt that has already been swept under the carpet in the past history of the WCG, nothing that will be exposed in the future should surprise us. To those who would abuse the trust that people have placed in them as teachers, one can perhaps point to Num.32:23; "...be sure your sin will find you out". One could conclude that being an editor of a newsletter/magazine has become an occupation fraught with danger given the desire for recognition that seems to motivate so many people.

—Myron Martin, Canada

RESPONSE: Thanks for giving your personal story of what happened. The squabbles and the plagiarism that go on among independent teachers are indeed a poor witness to others. However, it is good that these matters are brought into the open, and those who want to find the truth, can. Whereas, in the hierarchical groups, where there is no free press, people have been born, baptised, married, and buried having never understood important areas where

their leaders were not representing the Eternal.

You and I have disagreed on doctrines and what I should publish. It may be that one of us is wrong in our understanding, or it may be that the Eternal simply wants different people to learn different doctrines first. But at least I can truthfully say that I have never written that you (or any other Sabbatarian teacher) is "unconverted", nor have ever "disfellowshipped" anyone from the Body of Christ. As far as I remember, you have not done these things either.

—NSE

Is Plagiarism in the Bible?

LETTER:

June 11, 1999

Dear Mr. Edwards,

I just read your current article concerning Jim Rector and the accusation of plagiarism. I thought that the advice you gave to Mindy contained in Matthew 18 was right on. I question whether she agreed with God's procedure. God's law is always a two-edged sword, remembering always that when you draw the sword back to strike someone you can seriously wound yourself, even terminally. The two or three witnesses are to help you to convince a person to repent. This is done in love to help your brother get right with God. But if the two or three witnesses have reservations, do not agree, or are instead trying to convince you it is unwise, this would be a time to reexamine your motivation to make sure you do not have a hidden agenda.

In Mindy's correspondence, she says things like "this is just another thing covered up, etc." Don't you feel at this point that she is accusing the brethren by setting herself up as a committee of one? If she was in possession of all the facts, she would realize many of God's true learners would have come forward if Jim would have been trying to change one jot or tittle of God's law. I hope I would have been the first. I would have to be shown where Jim has caused anyone mental anguish or harm. God gives his people a special gift called discernment. We must never try to use Caesar's law to hurt one of God's people. Because I'm only a novice, maybe you could show me where in God's law it deals with copyrights. In the book of Solomon, God states there is nothing new under the sun. To say it is stealing is too general. To convict someone under God's law you must be more specific using God's law.

This comes at a very critical time in the history of God's church. Our greatest problem presently is that most ministers in the Church were educated at the feet of the

scholars at Ambassador College. This is now a fallen church and all that they have learned is not correct and some of them are still at the feet of the same scholars. The sermons in many of the Churches of God today are almost pabulum-like and obviously meant to offend no one or are political sermons to teach it is unChristian-like conduct to question the corporation—the results of which will be that you are dis-fellowshipped and cut off from Christ (I don't think so). Jim was never afraid to stand up to the corporation for its questionable practices.

I think all of us who have God's Holy Spirit should be pulling together, wanting to learn more about our Father and the law he has so graciously given us that makes us different and special. I hope we hear from Mindy again—this time to tell (to quote Paul Harvey) “the rest of the story.” She said she did not want to hurt Jim's reputation, but I think she has done exactly that. I'm not sure that that was God's will.

Sincerely,

—Ken Omick, Wisconsin

RESPONSE: Some of the people whom Mindy first contacted were not interested in finding the truth of the issue, so they could not be witnesses. Matthew 18:16 says “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more.” It does not say “if the first one or two you ask to go with you refuse, then give up.” Mindy finally took the issue to me, and I took it to others. Anyone who took the time to listen to the tapes could quickly see the problem. To say it is not God's will to hurt someone's reputation is denying much of the Bible—the Bible contains the stories of the mistakes of many people. Mindy did not specifically want to hurt Jim, but she wanted people to know what they are listening to.

Ken, you can no longer “be the first to go to Jim and show him where he has caused mental anguish or harm”, but you can still do it. I and many others have recommended Jim as a man with a great gift to put words together to move and stir people. It was a great amount of anguish to realize that it was not his gift, but the gift of others whose words he was reading.

I am glad to help you understand how God's law applies to copyrights. Notice Exodus 20:16-18:

You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.”

When Jim Rector finished his *A Radical Departure* message at the *Footsteps of the Messiah* conference by saying “But these are 10 or 11 things that just came to my mind”, he was bearing false witness. They were 10 or 11 things that Gene Edwards researched and wrote in the book *Beyond Radical*.

Notice the “coveting” verse ends by saying “anything that is your neighbor's”. What things does the stealing verse apply to? That should be obvious. Can it be a sin to covet your neighbors writing, but not a sin to steal it? No, it is a sin to steal anything that is your neighbors. The Bible does give specific cases where it is all right for the poor to take things that they did not produce: to eat out of a field while traveling, (Deut 23:24-25), to eat what grows itself in the seventh year (Ex 23:11), to glean grain or olives (Deut 24:20-21, Lev 19:9-10), or pick up a forgotten sheaf (Deut 24:19), etc. Other than these specifically mentioned things, stealing anything from someone else is wrong. But does the Bible say anything about “intellectual property”—words and ideas—being stolen? Notice Jeremiah 23:30:

“Therefore,” declares the LORD, “I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me.

The Hebrew word used for steal here is the same one used in the ten commandments. Jim Rector has made at least two tapes from Rick Joyner, a man who claims to be a prophet.

The Bible teaches that people who steal and sell things should pay the owner four or five times for what they stole (Ex 22:1). Zaccheus actually did this when he repented (Luke 19:8). While Jim did not sell his tapes, many people do send him offerings so that he will continue to produce them. You seem to be critical of “Caesar's law” in regard to copyrights. It is actually not far away from God's law. If a person sues another for copyright infringement, they are usually awarded money based on how much revenue they lost—how many books they would have sold had the other person not been selling or giving away the equivalent. It is possible for a jury to award “treble damages”—three times as much. Is that so much different than God's law (four times as much)? Do you think that an author should be able to work years on a book, or a company spend thousands of man hours compiling an encyclopedia—only to have some other person copy it word for word and sell it cheap? That does not sound just to me.

I specifically encourage people to copy

my work because I am more interested in sharing my work than being compensated for it. But if these authors whom Jim is plagiarizing from chose to receive money for their work, has Jim Rector been commissioned by God to take that away from them?

Lastly, I certainly commend Jim for standing up to corporations and their questionable practices. Let us pray that he has the courage to stand up to his own.

—NSE

Rector Plagiarizes Ernest Martin

LETTER:

June 19, 1999

Norman,

After you have looked at the sender you will wonder ‘what will it be this time’. Indeed, my letters to you have not always been of the commendable type, but then I had my reasons for them. The last one was about Armstrong, it did not put you in a favorable light, the more I was surprised when I noticed that you considered it worthwhile to be printed. There are times when I read your magazine that I wonder whether there is a bit of a change in your character. I am certain that two years or so ago you would not have printed my letter. Not that I was entirely pleased because it escapes me why you did not print my name as well instead of the subterfuge, calling me ‘a reader’. Why confuse your readers, were you afraid of admitting that you were scolded by a foreigner? Are not we all brothers? I hope that one day you will tell me of your reason.

The ‘change in character’ bit was prompted by the fact that you really dared to attack one from the ‘inner circle’, one of the ‘mighty ones’ as I call them, those who are mentioned in Ps 123:3-4. I am almost certain that two years ago you would not have done this. I'd like to commend you on this and surely YHWH will also. Liars should be exposed but first be approached as you wrote Mindy Diller. Well, in my case I did the same and I attach copies of correspondence addressed to Jim Rector. You will notice that I received a reply only once, his letter full of invective dated Nov 17, that is 6 months after my letter of May 11th in which I accused him of plagiarism (Rector's tape *Where Did Christ Die?* (April 12, 1997) is taken from Ernest L. Martin's book *Secrets of Golgotha*). The accusation still stands and no ‘mea culpa’ has been received and I am sure at this late date never will be given.

I think I can also tell you why no reaction was received until after 6 months. I gave Rector ample time to answer my letter but when no reply was forthcoming, I

directed myself to Ernest Martin. As per copy letters attached, I approached him three times but never received a reply. It is my assumption that Rector communicated with Ernest Martin, by phone or fax or letter, telling him that he had used his book as basis for a tape and forgot to ask permission and /or also forgot to give credit to whom credit is due. Whichever, Rector asked to be excused and apparently he was because Ernest Martin never answered my letter and preferred to lose a customer and a yearly freewill donation which was more than I sent to most other organizations which are of service to me.

After Rector made certain that Ernest Martin would never admit that the tape was a word for word and line for line repetition of his book. Finally on November 17, he, Rector, wrote me his invective letter to which I did not bother to reply because the tape he had made revealed all and Rector had made sure that Ernest Martin was not going to give additional proof.

Now I know for a fact from a friend of Rector's that plagiarism is normal procedure, he does it all the time. When taken to task for his behavior, Rector mentioned that he was not aware of what he did, it just happened. Well, I do not want to call him schizophrenic but one is inclined to believe that he is.

I would not be surprised when you will be approached by other brethren who will tell you similar stories, in fact **facts**, because unless I was 100 percent certain I would never have given you the above information. There are a lot of rotten apples in what is called the "Church of God" but which I now call the "Church of Man", because there is so little of YHWH left in that church. In fact I think it is an affront to YHWH Elohim that His name is being misused in that way.

The irony of it all is that Fred Coulter had threatened Jim Rector because his belief of the Passover was different from Coulter's. I felt sorry for Rector and approached Coulter and asked him to tell me the truth about this, of course, I never received a reply from this 'minister' either. Anyway, Paul's is the superior book taking it for granted that you have read 'the Passover Papers' by Paul R. Finch [PO Box 110155; Palm Bay, FL 32911-0155; e-mail finchteam@aol.com]. As a matter of fact, Finch quotes you in his book. The book was no great revelation to me because most of what he said had already been proven by others and myself. Still, it is the best book on the Passover so far, he gives a complete overview about all that has been said about the Passover though I do not agree with all his conclusions. But

at least it is a 100% improvement on all myths, fairy tales, and nonsense in Coulter's book.

Of course, Norman, we all borrow from each other. We all read papers and articles from various authors. We absorb their knowledge if we consider it to be the truth, it becomes part of our belief system and we pass it on to others in articles of our own without even being aware of where we picked up the knowledge. There is nothing wrong with that I think, but when you pass on someone else's paper as your own or filch someone else's research set down in a book, like Rector does, then it is criminal, I am sure also in YHWH's eyes. Years ago I established some facts about Lev. 23 and Yohua as per attached paper. The final truth did not dawn on me until recently, but that **after** is a very erroneous added word in these scriptures will become obvious also to you. Still, someone had the nerve to tell me that "someone else beat you to it", referring to a paper which had been written two years after mine. Of course, I gave this person a piece of my mind.

[Paragraphs on other subjects deleted].

Yours sincerely,

Jurgen Kuipers Postema,
Aptdo. Correos 75
03530 La Nucia/ Prov Alicante
SPAIN

RESPONSE: I put "a reader" on your last letter because the envelope was marked "private". We thought that you might not want others to know that you hold Mr. Armstrong in such high esteem (calling him "YHWH's anointed", even though you believe many doctrines different than he taught. We wanted to print your letter because it well presented a view that we have heard from several people. I guess what you meant by "private" was that I was supposed to get it rather than someone else. This time we are including your entire address so that other readers who are interested in "heavy" doctrinal study can write directly to you.

Thank you for your comments about working with Jim Rector on plagiarism. Your comments and others have established that **many people have gone to him over the years about the issue, and he did not change**—Jim plagiarized many more books **after** he received your letter.

I do not respond to all of your articles and doctrinal letters because I receive many of them from a number of individuals and I simply do not have time to respond to all of them. To answer them thoroughly requires a lot of time and research. How do we choose what to respond to? We take the time to respond to

those things that we determine to be Biblically the most significant, or those where we can be most helpful to people. We are not saying that the other topics are unimportant to the Eternal or to the people who want to study them, we are just saying that we do not have time to study it.

While I believe the Passover is an important subject, I do **not** expect to see two lines at the judgment: one for people who kept Passover on the right day getting their reward, and the other for people who kept Passover on the wrong day getting a big punishment. If someone believes they understand the scriptures, but goes against their understanding for some petty human motive, that may bring them judgment. But most people I know desperately want to do whatever is right. I think the greatest danger of judgement is for men who teach that their view is the "only possible Biblical view", when they know there are some questions about their view that they cannot answer from the scriptures—they just hope no one asks.

—NSE

Blind Loyalty to Jim Rector

LETTER:

June 1, 1999

Dear *Servants' News*,

Thank you for showing us that we need to expect accountability from our leaders!

Of course we are thankful for the good things we learned from Jim Rector. And naturally, we forgive him for his deception. But we can be thankful and forgiving without shirking our responsibility of expecting our leaders to be accountable for their own actions. When we allow the natural consequences of our actions to occur, (we reap what we sow) then we do not get in the way of deserving judgment.

If the elders and the members stood up to wrongdoing years ago in the Worldwide Church of God before all the splits, our history would certainly be different today. If Herbert Armstrong had stood up to those men under him who "covered up" sins and abused church authority, he would have a different legacy today.

Let's respect our leaders, and exhort them like we want to be exhorted. If our hearts are pure, we appreciate it when a "good friend" points out any errors we have. That is a test of a good friend: are they loyal to you in your wrongdoing or are they loyal to God in your wrongdoing?

—Anonymous

RESPONSE: Thanks. We really do not need to say anything more.

—NSE ☞

“Where on the Field” from page 1 believers on the other side of situations like this have had to decide whether to let their family break up or attend where they believe they can best grow. The outside observer may have no idea what any specific person is contending with. Let us not judge an individual’s motives.

But let us do think deeply about what various religious teachers teach, and also think about what God wants us to learn. The model at right does not explain everything, but nearly everyone who has seen it has found it helpful. Let us start by explaining exactly what we mean by the four corners:

God’s Truth

By this, we mean truth as God knows it. Obviously, humans cannot be perfectly sure when they have God’s Truth on all subjects, because humans are so often in disagreement on specific points. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of God’s truth that most educated people are in agreement on. Most of this is provable scientific as well as Biblical fact: The earth is round, people turn to dust when they die, they become sick when they worry too much, etc. Also, most societies agree that it is bad for people to steal from each other, and many will acknowledge that the Golden Rule is a good idea.

We deliberately avoided the term “Bible Truth” here, because there are errors, however minor, in Bibles. For example, for centuries, people believed that God was “three in one” because they read John 5:7: “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” Modern Bibles leave this out because it was obviously not in the original manuscripts. However, the early King James Bibles had no notes and Greek-text Bible helps simply were not published. For people in the 1600s through the 1800s, a “three in one” God was **Bible truth, but it was not God’s truth.** Yet some during that time rejected the “three in one God”—partly from other scriptures, and partly from direct inspiration from God.

So how do we obtain God’s truth? Please notice a few fairly common beliefs that **are not in the Bible:**

1. People who know the most truth will be first to be in God’s Kingdom. Christ told the chief priests **May/June 1999**

and elders of Israel, **who knew a lot of His truth,** that “tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you” (Matt 21:31).

2. Those who study their Bible the most will have the most truth. The commonly quoted scripture, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God,” is somewhat of a mis-translation. The Greek word does not imply “book study”, but means “be diligent” (NKJV) or “do your best” (NIV). When the Bible was being written, almost nobody had personal access to a Bible. Personal ownership of Bibles for the last few centuries has resulted in much truth being learned by many, but there is no promise that we will learn it all. The command to “live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD” (Deut 8:3, Matt 4:4) does not refer to only the Bible, but also refers to anything He might say to us today.

3. God’s true church will have all or nearly all of God’s Truth. The first century apostles did not all have the exact same truths given to them: Peter acknowledged that Paul had more in some areas: “and consider that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, **according to the wisdom given to him,** has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, **in which are some things hard to understand,** which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures” (2Pet 3:15-16). Revelation chapters 2 and 3 show that several major errors had crept into some of the church congregations. Finally, church history shows us no single group existing for hundreds of years with the same “truth”.

4. God wants his people to share every truth they learn with everybody. When a ministry was founded on making the truth plain, it might seem that the above statement would have to be true. But the Bible shows otherwise. The most important truths that each person needs to know to change their life and obtain eternal life are clear from any Bible. But some of the deeper truths

about God’s purpose are not “made plain” for all to understand—and God would not direct His servants to write down an understanding that He does not want to declare to the world. For example, John heard what the “seven thunders” said, but they are not written down for us. Paul talks about a man who “was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” 2Cor 12:4. Also, the book of Daniel says “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (Dan 12:10). If God gave the understanding of Daniel to someone who made it plain in a booklet, then both the wicked and wise who read the book would understand.

How do we come to know God’s truth?

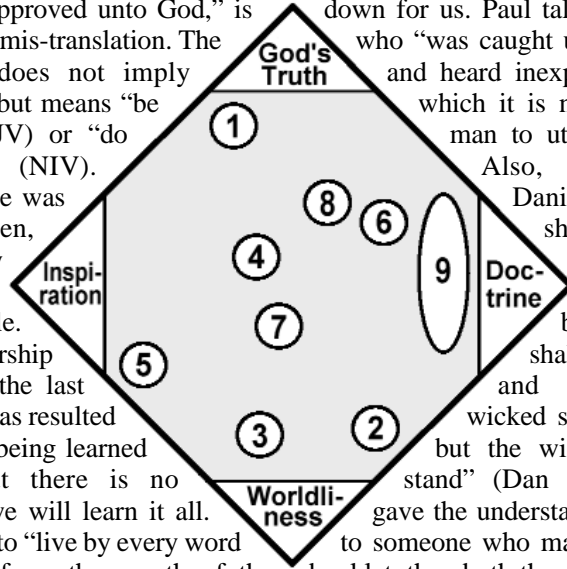
1) Live by whatever we do know. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever (Psalm 111:10).

2) Ask Him to show us by His spirit. “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth,” (John 16:13).

Worldliness

This is the opposite of knowing and doing God’s truth. We could say “sin”, but it would be too hard for many of us to identify with. Most things that defeat and distract believers do not really look “all that bad”. They are “important” things like jobs, homes, cars, entertainment, etc.—we just serve them too much rather than serving the Eternal. Or, we have verbal—maybe even unspoken—“fights” with our family and friends. But doesn’t everybody? And are not others worse than we? Nevertheless, “for whatever is not from faith is sin” (Rom 14:23).

The trend toward or away from worldliness often has little to do with the group one is in. Let us illustrate this with a few realistic, but fictional exam-



ples. **Andrew** used to pray and study his Bible an hour every day, and would never view a “dirty movie” because his former “strict” minister told him that is what he would have to do if he ever wanted to “get anywhere” in his church. His life was made better by these things. In his current group, no such standards are “enforced”, and all of these habits have collapsed. On the other hand, **Bob** used to be in that same “strict” congregation, but prayed and studied very little because nobody ever seemed to care what he knew or thought. Now that he has more responsibility in his smaller congregation, he wholeheartedly prays and studies much more than before.

Catherine married a handsome athletic hero from her high school, but within a few years became disappointed with him because he was not able to earn as much as other men. She has grown continually more distant from her husband and only child, and now spends nearly all of her time with her own job, and historic jewelry collectors club. She has not seriously considered any counsel or advice from the old strict minister or from those in her new group—she believes none of them know enough to help her. Catherine’s pathway toward worldliness has continued in spite of church changes.

Debbie was a drug user in the strict church, but never told the ministry for fear of being kicked out. Nevertheless, she found one friend who agreed to pray with her and encourage her whenever she was having trouble fighting it. Debbie, with her friend’s help made progress, and when it was time to change churches, the two agreed to change together so it would be easy to keep helping Debbie. Debbie is now almost completely recovered from the drug difficulties, and will probably never mention it to the congregation. Her path away from worldliness has continued in spite of church changes.

The point of these stories is: personal righteousness—doing the Truth of God that He shows you—can often be independent of the church group one is in, and is often independent of the next two items to be discussed.

Doctrine

Initially, it may seem like there is no

difference between “Doctrine” and “God’s Truth”. But by “Doctrine”, we mean “all doctrine”, not just ‘true doctrine’. There is “true doctrine” and there is “false doctrine”. A doctrine is simply a religious teaching based on the Bible, language studies, history, and human reason. **Nearly every teacher claims that their doctrine is true doctrine.** But a quick survey of the doctrines taught by various groups (including Sabbatarian groups) shows that the average doctrine taught must be false—because so many doctrines are in conflict with each other.

This does not mean that true doctrine does not exist. Nor does it mean that we cannot know the important doctrines. The most important doctrine, nearly everyone agrees on:

Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt 22:37-40).

The need for Jesus as Savior, the ten commandments, principles of love, righteousness and justice are also clear in the scripture. These are the things that we will be judged by. Ourselves and others can see the fruit of doing these things in our lives. But if you look at the way a person lives, can you tell whether he believes that Jesus *was* the “God” of the Old Testament, or that Jesus was one of two eternal beings, or that Jesus was a created being? No! These beliefs make no observable difference in how a person lives!

Yet it seems the more obscure the doctrine, the more dogmatic people become in proclaiming it. Thousands of people died in historic wars because some believed the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and others believed it proceeds from the Son.

Church of God groups have been split up over whether one should tithe on “net” or “gross” income—an issue that is not clearly spelled out in the Bible. Other groups have been split over the endless doctrines related to prophecy: Who is the “Beast”? What is the “Mark of the Beast”? Who are the “Philadelphians”? Where is the place of safety and who will go to it? Indeed, many groups have doctrines that their

members will go to the place of safety and those in other groups will not.

The potential for doctrine is unlimited. A person or group can claim to have **the specific correct understanding of every word of the Bible.** Some even claim to understand multiple true meanings of the same verse. The Bible teaches us to “hold fast that which is good”, but it does not teach us to find the group that appears to have the most true doctrine, then do whatever they say. It is wonderful to be able to read the Bible, to learn it, and to use it in our lives. But if we think we need to figure it all out, or find the group that has it all figured out, before we begin to do it, we are mistaken.

Inspiration

To be brief, there is only the one word “Inspiration” on our chart. The intended meaning is “supernatural insight”. Like doctrine, there can be true and false inspiration—inspiration from God and inspiration from demons. Truth can certainly be used by inspiration—the Bible is full of stories where God inspired or said certain words to people who served Him. On the other hand, the Bible mentions many false prophets—those who claim to be inspired of God, but are not. Historically, the WCG taught that inspiration was largely reserved for the top leadership. Yet the Bible records direct intervention for a great many people. An unnamed servant of Abraham was divinely shown whom he should ask to marry Isaac (Gen 24). A shepherd in Tekoah (Amos 1:1) was given a prophecy for his nation. Simeon—not a leader, but a “devout man”—understood by inspiration that he would see Christ before he died (Luke 2:25-26).

Inspiration can be as world-affecting as the writing of the Bible or God’s words spoken to the heads of nations. On the other hand, it can be as minor as a strong urging to call a friend—who turned out to be having a bad day and in need of cheering. It can also affect our personal decisions: whom to marry, where to live, what job to take, etc.

Inspiration can come in many forms: the hearing of a voice, a dream, a vision (essentially a dream during the day), or the words of a person that gives the answer to a question that a believer prayed about. Probably the most com-

mon form of inspiration is simply a secure, peaceful, close-to-God feeling that a person believes is coming from outside him or herself.

All of these methods can produce true inspiration, false inspiration, or "non-inspiration". A dream can be from God, from demons, or just normal human occurrence. Similarly, a secure feeling can come from God, demons, or simply human emotion. Mistaking "non-inspiration" for true inspiration **can be dangerous** if one takes it as proof that a related service, teacher or doctrine is of God. It is vital that each believer **develop discernment** and learn to distinguish true from false inspiration. The Bible is our source to judge inspiration:

And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:19).

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge (1Cor 14:29).

Unfortunately, there are many who call themselves Christians, but place too much emphasis on inspiration. This is a typical problem in Charismatic congregations. It is wonderful to want to receive spiritual gifts from the Eternal. But when people fall over backwards and experience other bizarre manifestations not in the Bible, they are not getting closer to God's Truth.

On the other hand, the concept that truth only comes from the Bible and not from seeking God's direct inspiration is not true. The WCG and its off-shoots tend to emphasize doctrine far more than personal inspiration. Consider the following quote:

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Heb 13:5-6)

Does this verse mean that believers would never be left without a Bible and their church's doctrinal statement? No, this means that God personally promises deliverance to each person.

Doctrine and Inspiration Should Work Together

There is no conflict between true doctrine and true inspiration. The Eternal will not inspire something contrary to the true meaning of the original Bible. But the Bible does not reveal everything about the Eternal. It does not tell us what the Eternal's will is for us today, or tomorrow. Reading through the New Testament, we see decisions made and actions taken based on a balance of their understanding of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus (doctrine), and direct guidance through the Holy Spirit (inspiration).

There is much of a **tendency of people** who are seeking the Eternal to seek Him either mostly through doctrine or mostly through inspiration. Many regard one method as superior to the other. **The Bible teaches both.** Without understanding true doctrine, people often receive things that they think are inspired, but are easily proven wrong from the scripture. On the other hand, others study months or years trying to understand some complex doctrine from the scripture, when they could simply ask the Eternal to show them what to do.

Similarly there is a **tendency of church groups** to either emphasize inspiration or doctrine, but not both. Some groups read the Bible extensively and give long complex sermons. Inspiration or Godly emotions do not enter into their services much at all. This often prevents them from asking for and receiving many of the New Testament promises.

Other groups have services consisting of mostly music and emotional messages trying to stir up the inspiration of God. They do not have enough Bible reading and doctrinal teaching for the people to be able to know if their inspiration is of God or not.

Explaining the Chart

These concepts of God's Truth versus Worldliness, and Inspiration versus Doctrine, are illustrated on the diagram. Obviously, the goal is to get closer to

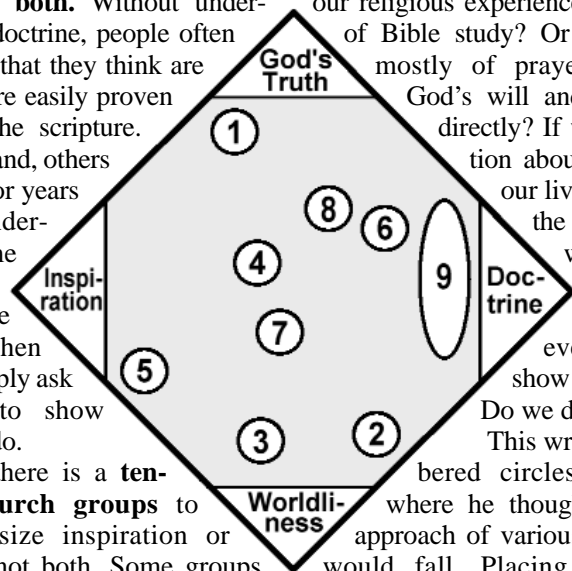
God's Truth (Matt 5:48), which is a balance right in the middle of Inspiration and Doctrine. In their efforts to achieve this, most believers tend to favor either Inspiration or Doctrine. Few achieve a balance in between. At the bottom of the Chart is worldliness—where people are so disinterested in God that they have no interest in inspiration or doctrine.

It is hard to objectively measure where anyone is between God's Truth and Worldliness. Any assessment we might make is based on our understanding of what God's Truth really is. However, if there are many unanswered questions about why things happen in our lives, in our Bible, or in the world at large, we can be fairly sure that we have some distance to go to reach "God's Truth".

The issue of Doctrine versus Inspiration is much easier to see. Does our religious experience consist mostly of Bible study? Or does it consist mostly of prayer and seeking God's will and understanding directly? If we have a question about what to do in our lives, do we search the scriptures, or to we pray and ask God to send people and events that will show us the answer? Do we do both?

This writer placed numbered circles on the chart where he thought the common approach of various church groups would fall. Placing these dots is extremely subjective on our part—we had to make very broad assumptions as to what we consider important. This is **not** an effort to judge the people in these groups—any one individual's approach can vary greatly from that of the group he attends. The **purpose of this chart** is to use some commonly known groups' teachings **as examples** in order to help you think about where you might fit on the chart and how you want to learn in the future. If you disagree with where we placed any group, feel free to grab a pen and alter the chart.

1. The first century church. This church had very good teaching directly from Christ's apostles, but did not have a written New Testament. We placed them left of center because they seemed to rely upon ongoing inspiration more



than technical study. Because of this, false teachers with false inspiration were a big problem.

2. The Roman Catholic Church (of today). This group has a detailed doctrine about nearly everything. Unfortunately, sacraments and the authority of the clergy have largely replaced truth in this church. Inspiration is accepted only at the highest levels.

3. Liberal Protestant churches. Many of the leaders of these groups do not even believe that the Bible is true in a significant way. We placed them left of center because they try to impart a good feeling more than teaching doctrine.

4. Evangelical Protestant. Some of these groups have a far greater emphasis on members living their lives based on their Bible study and direct guidance from Christ. Protestant churches can be found that exist anywhere between 3 and 4.

5. Radical Charismatic. To these groups, experience of the spirit is everything—even if it appears to conflict with the Bible. Some groups certainly have more truth than others, but false inspiration seems to prevent real learning in most of them.

6. Worldwide Church of God, 1980's. The amount of truth taught was better than evangelicals (WCG had the Sabbath, Holy Days, etc. but many evangelicals understood church government, giving and individual responsibility better). The WCG's greatest claim was true doctrine, though, to a lesser extent, it also taught that members would personally receive answers to prayer, healings, blessings for tithing, etc. Some of the WCG split-off groups belong here also, as they have changed very little.

7. Worldwide Church of God, today. It still retains some of the truth and doctrinal orientation of the past, but would actually fit quite well in the middle of the Protestant groups.

8. "Liberal" WCG split-off groups. Some of the WCG split-off groups have softened on doctrine, dropping those that are hard to defend from the Bible. Some no longer claim to

have the truth about everything, and tell believers to follow their "understanding from God" on certain issues. This is an improvement from trying to enforce a church doctrine that obviously does not fit all cases. The CGI, UCG, and other groups probably fit into this category.

9. "Conservative" WCG split-off groups. A few large, and many dozens of smaller groups have attempted to define doctrine to much greater degree than the Worldwide Church of God. Indeed, the sole reason for existence of some groups is their claim to understand one (or more) doctrines better than the WCG. It is our opinion that a few of these groups have made improvements in their overall doctrinal stance, but many have made their doctrines worse. Hence, the chart has a large oval rather than a ball. All of these groups appear to be further away from teaching their members to rely on the Holy Spirit to teach and guide them.

Where Do "Independents" Fit?

Where do local, independent groups fit on the chart? To be brief, "all over the place!" Some are heavily dependent on doctrine, others are nearly Charismatic in their approach. Some are full of people really seeking God, others are no much more than a weekly party where the Bible is occasionally mentioned.

In most corporate church organizations, the approach to doctrine and inspiration is set by the headquarters. Members are usually free to seek understanding and inspiration apart from their organization—as long as they do not try to influence their congregation too much based upon it. But in independent congregations, there may be great differences of opinion on how to learn truth and what to do about it. Since the members determine how most independent congregations operate, this can cause conflict. Brethren need to understand that seeking God's truth through doctrine, or seeking it through inspiration are not necessarily incompatible. You cannot label one "good", and the other "bad". Some questions are better solved by one

method than the other, some people are more skilled with one method than the other. If brethren realize this, they can probably work together much better. If they realize that their approaches are too different, they, like Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:39), can agree to go their separate ways, but still remain friends.

Conclusion

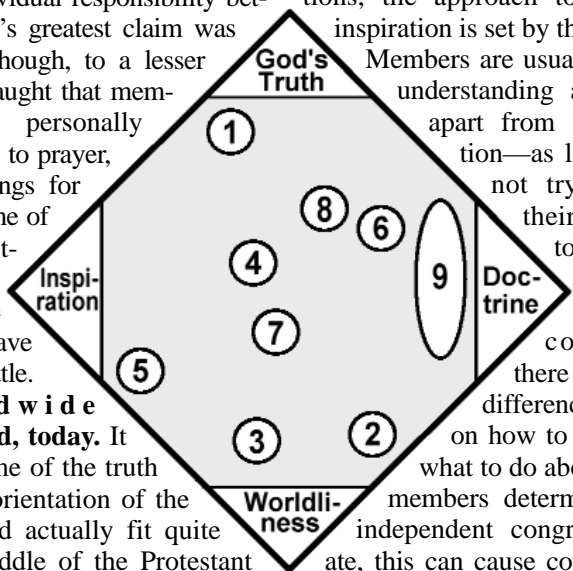
Many "Church of God" groups place nearly all of their emphasis on defining doctrine—thinking that they have Bible truth. Several times, I have seen the following happen: A person wrote a paper and convinced many other members of a nicely functioning group that only he had "the truth" on a particular doctrine: the calendar, Sabbath, Holy Days, Sacred Names, etc. People left the group being very sorry to part from friends, but also believing that in order to "be right with God", they have to "go where the truth is". Then, within a few years, the same leader greatly revised his doctrine.

Let us assume for a moment that the new version of this doctrine is God's Truth on the subject. That means that people left their functioning group years ago to trade one false doctrine for another. Furthermore, the new group often **only has doctrine**, it may have little of the brotherly love, encouragement, basic teaching, and other things that were in the first group. Also, could we conclude that the "true church" did not exist until this leader discovered that doctrine?

Too often, people go from group to group over the issue of single doctrines. A church congregation should be a place where iron can come to sharpen iron—where people can share their experience, inspiration and doctrine and learn—not a place where the "leaders" try to force their doctrines on the "followers". Some congregations have such a body of built-up doctrines that new believers could not be accepted there without years of study. (One of the best reasons for changing church groups is to move to a group where members are not persecuted for living by personal conviction of inspiration and doctrine.)

We will have more articles about inspiration in the future. We hope this article will help you to think about how you and your group seek the Eternal. Where are you on the field?

—Norman S. Edwards



"Servants' News Move" from page 1 found a house with room for our family in the top two floors, and room for *Servants' News* in the partially finished basement. Our new PO Box will be:

PO Box 107

Perry, Michigan 48872-0107

Please continue using the old PO box through August (PO Box 220, Charlotte, Michigan 48813-0220), then begin using the new one in September. (We will receive the mail at either box, but if you use the wrong one, it may take several more days to reach us. We will keep the old PO Box open for a number of months because it has been printed on so much literature.)

Why Are We Moving?

There are a number of reasons for moving—I'm not sure exactly which is the most important.

1. I'm taking my own Y2K advice.

We had been living in a mobile home park for last three years. Implementing alternate energy or storing fuel is not practical or safe there. We have no control over the water system. We do not see much potential for cooperation with park residents for the likely year-2000 computer-related disasters. By putting our home and our ministry under one roof, we will be able to provide alternate energy for both with one set of equipment; we will have a well. We want to be able to continue to publish both *Servants' News* and *Shelter in the Word* during the year 2000 problems. History has shown that during disasters, people's interest in God increases greatly.

2. We will be much closer to local brethren. About half of the people who attend our local fellowship live in the Perry area. The fellowship meets nearby. Nearly all of the other brethren live closer to Perry than Charlotte. We would like to be able to see them more often than once per week. Our teenage sons prefer activities with their Sabbath-keeping friends. When we move, they will be able to do many more things together. Also, many of these nearby brethren have been a tremendous help to us in collating and mailing our publications. It will be easier for all of us if we are closer.

3. Our growing family needs more room. Our four boys range in age from 6 to 14. Our mobile home had 1200 sq. ft. of room. The house will have 1900 sq. ft. of living space and

about the same amount of room for publication production that we have now.

4. We believe that the Eternal wants us to move. We prayed that if it was the Eternal's will for us to move, He would provide a place with sufficient room in Perry that we could purchase. (This is not simple, as the money our family receives is not stable enough for most banks to consider making loans.) It did not take long to look at the few houses that were for sale that had sufficient room and an affordable price. There was only one that really would work for us. The owners went out of their way to make it possible for us to purchase the house.

Why Change to Six Issues per Year?

As you have noticed, we are getting behind in our production. Mailing at "Periodical" postage rates requires that we have a "stated frequency" of publication. We cannot combine any monthly issues at any time unless we pay \$50 and file a statement. Nevertheless, "Periodical" postage rates save us a great deal of money compared to bulk or some other kind of mail.

Also, increased weight has very little effect on the cost mailing periodicals. It costs about 27 cents to mail a thin issue, and about 30 cents to mail a thick one. As you can see, we save almost half the money on postage by mailing six issues per year as opposed to twelve. Also, we save on envelopes, labels and processing time by mailing less often.

However, we realize that you would be better served by receiving smaller issues, more often. People have told us that it was easier for them when they received a 22-24 page *Servants' News* every month, and could finish reading it before the next one. Now, they go a long time between issues, and then receive 70 pages (combined size of *Servants' News* and *Shelter in the Word*).

We hope to get back to a monthly publication rate at some time in the future. That may be possible if the Eternal sends us more help. As it is right now, I (Norman) spend too much time away from my family. I often spend 12-14 hours per day, 6 days a week for the two or three weeks it takes to produce an issue. Some people have asked why we started a second publication if we were already too busy with the first one. I believe that it is neces-

sary to help fellow former-WCG members through the difficulties we shared (*Servants' News*), and I believe it is necessary to learn to reach out to others as independent Bible believers without dragging them through all we have been through (*Shelter in the Word*).

In between issues, there are still many things to be done. We produce the literature that we offer separately. We plan our Feasts or travel to speak with other groups. We encourage and share our experience with others who are starting groups or planning Feasts. Some people, with no one locally to help them, call about personal problems. Others write in with good questions that are not appropriate to publish—we try to answer as many as we can, but do not get to all of them.

About 15% of our subscribers are outside of the USA. They have different needs than some of the other subscribers. Fortunately, the Eternal has provided people in England, Belgium, Australia and the Philippines to help us.

Also, we do much of the technical work that a "big magazine" would simply pay someone else to do: computer maintenance, network administration, software writing and installation, auto repair, duplicator maintenance, etc. (I've saved \$10,000 over four years by doing my own maintenance on our Risograph—used to print our publications).

We will continue sending issues as quickly as we can produce them, dating them every other month, until we are back on schedule.

Why More Practical Emphasis

We believe every believer should study the Bible and history to learn Biblical truth. But the Bible does **not** teach that "the person who dies with the most truth wins". It teaches that those who do the most with what they do know will be rewarded (Luke 12:47-48; 16:1-12). We will continue to deal with doctrinal issues, and publish articles by people who seem to be genuinely seeking to help others understand the scriptures (as opposed to trying to convince others that "they are **the** one with the truth"). We do not believe that we will come up with "God's truth" on every significant doctrine before we die.

I think it is important that we take an honest look at the WCG movement and see where it is going. Many men have

continued from previous page
 claimed to be the successor of Herbert Armstrong in some way. Yet, nearly all of their organizations are shrinking. They can barely pay the ministry they have—there are virtually no new ministers. There are many previous examples of what has happened when a religious leader dies—both Biblical and historical. Sometimes the Eternal selects a person to continue on the work and it prospers (as Joshua was after Moses and Elisha was after Elijah). In other cases, people attempt to continue a leader's work, God does not choose them, and it fails (as Gideon's sons, Eli's sons, Samuel's sons, Solomon's son, etc.).

By looking at other religious movements, we see three basic patterns that occur when a founding leader passes on: **1)** A strong new leader emerges and the work goes on, possibly taking a new direction; **2)** The leader prepares one or more successors before he dies and his work continues—largely run according to the original leader's teachings and programs; **3)** The work falls apart, either due to an ineffective leader or multiple quarreling leaders.

The Worldwide Church of God has had particular difficulty continuing, because it was so hierarchical in nature, and because the new leaders attempted to reverse much of its original teaching. It seems to be a combination of the above points **1** (with a completely new direction) and **3** (quarreling leaders). The likelihood of the WCG split-off

groups getting back together seems more remote each day—they are not even talking about merging. **We cannot effectively serve people as “the church that once was” or as “the church that hopes to get together some day”.**

My oldest son was a year old when Herbert Armstrong died. He and his “Church of God” friends have not experienced anything but divided “Church of God” groups. Can you or I prove to his generation from the Bible that it is their responsibility to “get the former WCG groups back together”? I don't think so. Can I prove to them from the Bible that it is their responsibility to live by the Bible—to keep the Sabbath and other commandments, to fellowship with others similarly convicted and to teach those things to the world? Yes, I can prove that.

I believe former WCG members need to turn outward to accept and help others, not to try to re-establish the “good old days” of the “big work”. I do not know how the Eternal will accomplish that. He may do it through effective small groups, He may do it through the leadership of large groups. But somewhere down the road, I believe the day will come when there will no longer be a significant body of “former WCG members”, but a large number of Bible-believing Sabbath keepers—much more involved in their communities, spreading the Gospel as was done in the first century. If the Eternal desires *Servants' News* to continue, we hope to be serving them.

—Norman Edwards

Late News

Feast Site in Australia

A non-aligned Sabbath discussion group based in Canberra (using a non-postponed calendar) is arranging a Feast site at Bermagui on the south coast of New South Wales. The site is a small cluster of comfortable holiday cottages in quiet countryside about 10 kilometres south of Bermagui proper, close to surf beaches and fishing. The format will be mainly interactive Bible discussions and possibly some informal seminars. Informal get-together on Thursday night. First day Friday 24 September, LGD 1 October. Site booked until Sunday morning to permit Sabbath observance on site. People observing other calendars are welcome. The overall emphasis will be on Christian fellowship promoted by informal group activities and barbecues. For more information contact Walter or Cindy Steensby on (02) 6254 3881, e-mail: quokka@netinfo.com.au.

Southern Minnesota Feast

A small group of independent Sabbatharians are organizing a Feast (Hebrew Calendar) in Southern Minnesota. All are welcome. For details, contact Dan and Paula Vander Poel; 253-826-0953; e-mail: dpvanderpoel@wa.freei.net 

Highly Recommended Items Listed Every Issue:

Mature Literature

Assembling on the Sabbath by Norman S. Edwards, 16 pages. An exposition of the scriptures regarding our need to fellowship on the Sabbath and how to do it.

Biblical Calendar Basics by Norman S. Edwards, 10 pages. Introduction to the issues about the Biblical and Hebrew calendars (beginning of months, years, postponements etc.)

Did Christ Reorganize the Church? by Herbert Armstrong in 1939, 8 pages. Very different than his later approach: Christ never set up a hierarchical government.

How Do We Give to the Eternal? by Rich-

ard Tafoya & Norman Edwards, 36 pages. Biblical study of giving and tithing.

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

The Worldwide Church of God Splits: Their Triumphs and Troubles by Alan Ruth, 56 pages. Facts and analysis of the last 20 years of “Church of God” history.

Study Resources and Information Freedom Biblical Information Center

Catalog by Wayne Schatzle, 12 pages. Free, mostly Sabbatarian literature & tapes sources.

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

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

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

Servants' News Complete Literature List & Index, 36 pages.

Servants' News, PO Box 107, Perry, Michigan 48872-0107

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International brethren will receive literature more quickly by writing or e-mailing the nearest office on page 2.