

WHO ARE WE?

Group Name: We have no official name--nor do we want one--however we provide the following: INTERDEPENDENT-INTERACTIVE, CHURCH OF GOD, SABBATH SERVICES, BIBLE STUDIES, AND OPEN FELLOWSHIP.

Address: 320 N. Griffin St. City: Bismarck State: ND Zip Code: 58501

Country: USA Phone: (701) 258-7172 FAX: (775) 239-2119

E-Mail: Darwin-Laura@Juno.com

Website: <http://darwinlauralee.150m.com>

Leadership Body: Christ the Head of God's Church, Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 5:23, and I Corinthians 11:3. Local contact persons are Darwin or Laura Lee.

Purpose: To provide Interdependent-Interactive, Church of God, Sabbath Services and Bible Studies to all of God's People, including those who are not welcome to visit or attend other groups due to having been suspended or disfellowshipped, as well as those who want a place to attend weekly, those who are just visiting our area, and anyone else who is interested in God's way of living. We also have open fellowship here, meaning that you are welcome to come visit with us during our open fellowship times even if you are not interested in attending our Sabbath Services or Bible Studies.

History: We held our first Bible Study here on June 30, 2000 and our first Sabbath Service was held on December 16, 2000.

Affiliation/Membership: Our Affiliation is with God our Father and His Son Jesus the Christ. Our membership includes *all* of God's people, no matter where they are.

Distinctive Doctrines: John 13:34-35

Use Sacred Names?: Since salvation is between God and each individual (Philippians 2:12), so the use of sacred names would be between each individual person and God.

Observe Holy Days?: We believe that God commands us to keep the Weekly Sabbath as well as Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day, however, we also believe there is much controversy out there in understanding if certain ones should or shouldn't be kept, how to keep them and when to keep them. So with this in mind, we will try to the best of our ability to accommodate these differences, believing and having faith that someday through God's Holy Spirit, we will all be brought into the same understanding on this subject. Until then let's follow John 13:34-35.

Evangelistic Efforts: We provide a service to God's People no matter where they are to the best of our ability. This service includes Interdependent-Interactive, Church of God, Sabbath Services, Bible Studies and Open Fellowship. We also welcome live speakers for interactive, and special music, on a volunteer only basis.

Periodicals: We have a newsletter, which we publish every 2 months.

Literature: We distribute tapes and literature for others and ourselves to the best of our ability.

Parent Group: The greater Church of God--The Ekklesia. Language: English

Other Language: None Country: USA

Name: Contact Persons are Darwin & Laura Lee Address: 320 N. Griffin St.

City: Bismarck State: North Dakota Zip Code: 58501

Phone: (701) 258-7172 E-Mail: Darwin-Laura@Juno.com

Directions To Meeting: 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota, located at the corner of Rosser Avenue and Griffin Street, with plenty of side street parking.

Time of Meeting: Usually 1:00PM, but may vary.

SABBATH SERVICES--Every Saturday unless stated other wise on page 3. We generally do a phone hookup, video tape, or cassette tape, service with various speakers. If you have a video or audio tape you think we should hear, please send it.

We also welcome live speakers, and special music, by others on a volunteer basis.

Sabbath Schedule is as follows:

12:00 Noon--Open Fellowship
(Door Open, Come In)

1:00 PM----Sabbath Services

3:00 PM----Open Fellowship

BIBLE STUDIES--We have Bible Studies approximately every 6 weeks. We have a Pot Luck Meal before we start our Bible Studies, so please bring food if you would like to participate in the fellowship, which goes with a meal.

Bible Study Schedule is as follows:

6:30 PM----Open Fellowship
(Door Open, Come In)

7:00 PM----Pot Luck Meal
(Bring Food)

8:00 PM----Bible Study

9:00 PM----Open Fellowship

Bible Study Dates are as follows:

Friday, January 10, 2003

Friday, February 21, 2003

Friday, April 4, 2003

GUEST ROOM--If you are from out of town and are here to attend Sabbath Services or one of our Bible Studies, we do have a guest room. Please call ahead so we know when you will be arriving. (701) 258-7172 (Please Leave a message.)

LOCATION--Sabbath Services and Bible Studies are held at the home of Darwin & Laura Lee, located at 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota. Please use the upper back door by the garage. Phone Number (701) 258-7172 (Please Leave a message.)

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE--The deadline for submitting articles and letters for possible inclusion in our March/April 2003 Newsletter is February 15, 2003. Thank You. Laura Lee (Editor)

E-MAIL & SNAIL MAIL

Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com Please use this E-mail address for prayer requests, prayer request updates, and prayer request inquires and information. All prayer requests go around the world via E-mail and are always printed on our Web Site and they are also available via Snail Mail on request. Thank you.

Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com Please use this E-mail address for anything which you want considered for inclusion in our newsletter such as articles, advertisements, letters to the editor or points of interest. If you do not want it printed, then do not send it to this E-mail address. The deadline for Issue #14--March/April 2003 is February 15, 2003. Thank you.

Answer-Me-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com Please, use this E-mail address only for those letters which you want an answer to. Send tape, literature and newsletter requests and unsubscribes to this E-mail address. If you do not want or need an answer to your E-mail, then do not send it to this E-mail address. Thank you.

Darwin-Laura@Juno.com Please only send things to this E-mail address if you only want us to read it and you do not need or want an answer to it. Also, if you want to unsubscribe and do not need a notice stating you have been taken off, this is the place. Thank you.

FAX--We now have fax 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our Fax number is: (775) 239-2119.

SNAIL MAIL--When you send a letter or information via snail mail, and you do not need an answer back or if you do not want it printed, please be sure to clearly put that information in your letter. Our snail mail address is Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502. Thank you.

WEB SITE ADDRESS--<http://darwinlauralee.150m.com>

AD SECTION--If you have an ad that you would like to have us print, please write it up and send it to: **Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com** We may not print all ads, but we will read them for consideration of inclusion in this newsletter and then will let you know one way or the other. Some ads will also be posted on our Web Site.

VIDEOS

We will be showing the following video. This video showing as well as our regular Sabbath Services are all open to the general public, so please feel free to come join us at 320 North Griffin St. in Bismarck, North Dakota.

January 11 at 1:00PM--"The Search for the Real Mt. Sinai"--"What could possibly upstage the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls? Maybe the news that Mount Sinai has been found in Saudi Arabia by Robert Cornuke and Larry Williams." (Copied from the video case.) Afterwards we will also show--**"The Exodus Revealed--Search for the Red Sea Crossing"**--A journey that reveals physical evidence for the Exodus including: the remains of 3800 year old Hebrew settlements in Egypt's Nile Delta; Egyptian records of the Israelite's bondage under Pharaoh; the precise route they may have followed to freedom; their crossing site on shore of the Red Sea; and the location of Mr. Sinai. (Copied from the DVD case.)

--JOIN US--

THE GARNET HILL STORY--ANOTHER CASE OF ABUSE

When cases of abuse such as this one, in regard to Garnet Hill, are brought to our attention, we will try to make them available to those who are interested. You will find this literature listed on our order form on page 24 of this newsletter. It will be mailed to you only if you request it. Thank you. Laura Lee

In Him is a FREE, bi-monthly newsletter where you will find spiritual food for spiritual growth. It keeps you updated with events; news, articles and cutting edge resources that will help build Christian character and values. Visit our websites today - www.cog7day.org/news or www.mtzioncog7.org

Are You Tired Of The Media's Lies?

A growing number of Americans are sick and tired of the endless lies we are barraged with daily by the liberal media. Perhaps you're one of them. If so, you need to subscribe to Midnight Messenger- a long established geo-political newsletter that's not afraid to deal with sensitive or "politically incorrect" topics. In today's information war honest, unadulterated truth is an absolute must. Sadly, the American media cartel has a stranglehold on the information of this country and truth and integrity mean very little to them. To fight and overcome this tidal wave of confusion and deception you need to add **Midnight Messenger** to your arsenal. You'll be amazed at how this publication cuts through the clutter and sheds light on history, economics, politics and religion.

To subscribe, send check or money order for \$20.00 (6 issues) or \$36.00 (12 issues) to **Midnight Messenger**, PMB: #1776,9205 SE Clackamas Rd., Clackamas, OR 97015.

BELLS AND TRUMPETS

(A PERSONAL EVANGELICAL DEPT. OF CHRISTO-AZ ENT.)

CALLING ALL TRUE CHURCHES, MINISTRIES AND ASSOCIATIONS TO SEND TRACTS, LEAFLETS, NEWSLETTERS AND BOOKLETS WITH TEACHING STRICTLY BASED ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE SABBATH FOR UNLIMITED FREE DISTRIBUTION TO HUNGRY AND IGNORANT SOULS. ("ALL ITEMS MUST BE MARKED "FREE NOT TO BE SOLD")

My mailing address is:
CHRISTO-AZ ENT.
P.O.BOX 309
OWERRI, IMO STATE
NIGERIA 460001
WEST AFRICA.

Giving & Sharing announces a new, free, publication, "**News of the Church of God**," to begin in January, 2003. Plans are to publish it ten times a year, on the Internet at www.giveshare.org/news, and in print. To subscribe to the Internet version, E-mail info@giveshare.org. If you do not have Internet access, subscribe to the printed version by writing: Giving & Sharing, PO Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849.

We need regular news reporters who will submit articles every month, as well as special reports from many Church of God groups. Please submit news articles of your group's activities. Deadline for each issue is the 15th of the preceding month. December 15, 2002, is deadline for copy for the first issue. E-mail articles to: editor@giveshare.org.

"**News of the Church of God**" will contain: church events, special meetings, youth camps, youth activities, feast sites, seminars, special speakers, news of new publications, summary of important articles and noteworthy sermons, new booklets, weddings, births, baptisms, deaths, ordinations, etc. Our purpose is not to compete with other publications nor duplicate their efforts.

"News" will NOT contain: paid advertisements, doctrinal arguments, personal attacks, negative articles attacking traditional Church of God doctrines. We want to discover what the Churches of God are doing right, not advertise what they are doing wrong. Our purpose for the new publication is to inform and edify, Ephesians 4:12, to stimulate and exhort, Hebrews 10:24-25, and unify, Ephesians 4:3.

May we count on your regular news article contributions?

We are now listed in the yellow pages of the local Bismarck, North Dakota phone directory, under "Churches-Non-Denominational". Our listing reads **In Home Saturday Fellowship-Church of God Bismarck 258-7172**.

We decided to do this in an effort to reach out to our local community, as well as to those who might just be passing through town and in need of Sabbath Fellowship. Our area code is 701 and if the county phone directory picks up this listing in July 2003 it will go out to the entire state of North Dakota. Laura Lee

INFORMATION SECTION--This section is meant for various items which should be of interest to the general public. Again as a reminder, we are not in agreement with all things we print. If you have an item to be considered for inclusion in this section, please send it to: Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com

IS GOD PLEASSED WITH OUR MARRIAGES?

by Wayne Speed
Phoenix, Arizona

My wife and I came into God's church in 1968. I was 21 and my wife was 19. The only thing we knew about marriage was taught to us by this world. The husband's responsibility was to "bring home the bacon." The wife was to stay home and raise the children. The only instruction we received from the Church was through marriage sermons, and this was only 2 or 3 times a year. Back in those days it was not proper to go "outside" the church to learn anything "lest we be led astray." We were basically left to fend for ourselves. So, it was no surprise to anyone when we heard that the number one problem in the church was marriage. Has anything changed?

Looking back, over the years, I believe we received so few marriage sermons because the ministers, themselves, had such poor marriages that they didn't want to have to look their wives in the eye while they gave a "How to have a happy marriage" sermon. The sermons were basically reminding the wives to respect their husbands and that he's "The Boss", and admonishing the wives to be submissive. For years I tried to improve my marriage by reminding my wife of the scriptures that demand this. I don't know about you, but this never worked for me. It was like throwing gasoline on a fire. My wife and I struggled for years with our own relationship. Of course no one knew this because, being a deacon, I made sure that my wife put on her "Happy Face" before we went to church. I had to be sure she didn't tarnish my image.

About seven years ago my wife asked me to go to a marriage seminar put on by a man named Ken Nair. He had written two books, "Understanding the Mind of a Woman" and "Understanding the Heart of a Man." I first argued, "How can this man teach me anything? He's not even a Sabbath keeper and knows

nothing about the Holy days." We have since come to the understanding that this was a very naive stand to take. I reluctantly agreed to go to the seminar. I thought to myself that maybe she would learn something that would help her to be a better wife, and maybe there was an outside chance I could get some material for a sermonette. So, I went with my wife and listened for 10 hours about a husband's responsibility to be Christ-like to his wife. I came away from the seminar so embarrassed I could hardly look my wife in the eye. God through this marriage seminar, had showed me what a fraud I was. To call myself a Christian husband was an insult to Jesus Christ. The scripture, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" became very clear to me. Because of ignorance, I was systematically destroying my wife's love for me and, at the same time, I had been teaching my children, through my bad example, how to carry on the sins of their father to the next generation.

My wife and I signed up for Ken Nair's marriage class. It was a college level course that required attending every Monday night for three years. It was a huge commitment, but was priceless in terms of what we learned and it changed our lives. Because of what I've learned, I've recommitted my life to be a Christ-like leader to my wife and love her as Christ would love her, holding nothing back.

We in the Church are so focused on Satan's attack through heresy, that we've left the back door wide open for Satan to attack us through our marriages. Are we spending as much time seeking out ways to improve our marriages as we are trying to prove doctrine? Husbands, when we stand before God and his judgment do you think he's going to be impressed with the amount of hours we've spent on our computers doing word studies? I think he would be more impressed with how much time we've spent learning how to care and love our wives and children.

My wife and I have been applying what we've learned for five years now, and we shared this knowledge with others by presenting a seminar on marriage, if you're interested, we have the seminar on tape. It's yours free for the asking. Send

your request to: Wayne & Claudia Speed, 1313 N. 25th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009 Or request by e-mail:

wspeed@webtv.net

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following books mentioned by Wayne "Understanding the Mind of a Woman" and "Understanding the Heart of a Man" by Ken Nair, have had their titles changed to the following: "Discovering the Mind of a Woman" and "Discovering the Heart of a Man". These books can be purchased on the internet at: <http://www.lifepartners.org/> or snail mail: Ken Nair, 10834 N. 32nd St., Phoenix, AZ 85028 Phone Number: (602) 485-5115 Fax: (602) 485-5271. If you are able to visit Ken Nair's web site, he also sells a few other helpful books on marriage and life. Laura Lee

FEAST REPORT FROM SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

by Rosy Halley
Chandler, Texas

The Churches of God Outreach Ministries sponsored a Feast of Tabernacles in San Antonio, Texas and it was hosted by the Church of God, San Antonio.

In Leviticus 23, verse 31, God states: "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.' Then He elaborates further in Leviticus 23, verses 40-41: 'And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; **and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.** You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.'

So, throughout the ages, the Feast of Tabernacles has been celebrated!!! Our

Father and His Son had to be so pleased with His Feast of Tabernacles held at San Antonio, Texas this year of 2002. "God's Family Reunion" as it could be called, was celebrated with love, rejoicing, and family caring. Attendees were always being directed, from the pulpit, to rejoice at "God's Holy Party", that this is a Family Affair, to believe that "what makes God happy, should make us happy, and that the Feast is only eight days, but memories (made here) last forever.

The amount of love and caring shown to each other this year was just fantastic!!! Not just from those who were the speakers and volunteers, but from the general run of attendees. There was a continuous fellowshiping attained at the planned activities, but the outside lunches, dinners, and activities were always blessed by others offering rides, meals -- everyone seemed to be so attune to others wishes and needs.

We were also blessed by many excellent sermons, beautiful special music, and activities that were unsurpassed. The attendance was up this year, hovering close to 200 each day and 310 were shown as being registered. The speakers who brought the messages each day all seemed to be God-inspired, since most of their sermons were working close to the same theme. Those who blessed us with the messages and words of God were: Julian Cruz, Lawrence Gregory, Tom Williams, Steve Andrews, David Hope, Dan Johnson, Fred Porter, Matthew Steel, and Tim Hall.

Each day began with a scripture reading from the youngsters. There was one baptism this year, Rick Ory, who joined us in the family of God. The special music this year was just that - special! The music provided was both varied and performed by a myriad of different persons. The Fun Show was about the same, very diversified and multi-talented. It's always amazing to me how many of God's family are blessed with special talents.

Our thanks to all the speakers, teachers, musicians, volunteers, and photographers who gave of their Feast time to make the time better for everyone. A special thanks to Julian and Ofie Cruz and their congregation there in San Antonio, for all their hard work and effort.

The Feast in San Antonio this year was as expected: Tremendous!!! What else could we expect God's Holy Party to

be?

You may listen to Feast online sermons by going to:

www.churchofgodsa.com

NEWS REPORT

by Chris Abiazem
West Africa

On Tuesday, the 19th of November, 2002, there have been Newspaper reports of religious unrest in the Northern part of Nigeria. Kaduna is mentioned as the hottest point of hostilities. We learnt that the muslims are protesting the hosting of Miss World contest in Nigeria. And at the same being very furious about a Newspaper publication of 16th day of November, 2002 by a National Daily named "THIS DAY". The Miss World contest has been moved to London.

There is calm here in Owerri, the capital city of Imo State and Yesterday in owerri, the 24th of Nov., some mobile policemen were sent to the Hausa quarters probably for the protection of the muslims so as to prevent any reprisals from the Christians.

Yesterday was the Corpose-Christy day and the Catholics were in an age long procession as is being done on such day.

Today, the 25th day of November, 2002, a National Daily, THE DAILY CHAMPION on its front page reported that over 250 people were killed in the riot and that they are to be buried in a mass grave (today) in the state of Kaduna.

Now, what is the world saying about Islamic religion? Will we continue watching people killed at will? Where is the "Human Right" which the UN tends to be protecting. The incident in Kaduna is nothing but terrorism.

In the "Sabbath Sentinel" of Jan-Feb 2002 page 20, Dr. Samuel L. Blumenfeld wrote and I quote "We have been told... we are not at war with Islamic religion. But what they all prefer not to recognize is that the spiritual power behind that terrorism-the power that drives otherwise intelligent human beings to undertake suicidal missions against the infidel-is the religion of Islam"... etc.

Again every non member of the Islamic religion is an "infidel". (source:

Giving and Sharing Dec., 2001 No. 63 page 20).

Go to the www.islam.com website and you will be told that Islam means peace. However, Koran says if non Muslims should not repent their evils and turn to Islam, slay them wherever you find them and when you encounter infidels, strike off their heads till you have made a great slaughter against them: Surah :93; 5:55; 4:105; 5:41; 24:2; 5:3; 2:28; 4:11; 2:282; 9:29-30, Al Bukhari volumes8:770 and 9:57 etc. ---- "No Muslim should be killed for killing a kafir (infidel or non muslim) Al Bukhari vol. 9:50" (Giving and Sharing Newsletter No. 63, pages 21&22 of Dec., 2001 by Richard Nickels).

**"YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!"**

sent by Name Withheld
Australia

You ask your boss or spouse a question. Ok, it's a silly question. How would you feel if the response to you was, **"You don't know what you're talking about!"** How would you feel if this was the standard response to any question you might have? And you're only 8 years old. Aren't you entitled to ask questions that may seem silly and irrelevant to adults, but expect a reasonable reply?

A child I know has told me that a teacher at his school says it to his classmates in a harsh tone. He doesn't like the teacher. (He has an extremely sensitive nature.)

And guess what? His father had also often said it to him. He was most upset with his father and at one stage refused to talk to him. It all came out one day when he told his mother that his father said nasty things to him. His father was most angry and demanded to know what terrible things he had said to his son. He was most surprised to learn that his son found this phrase most upsetting.

So, how do you tell a child that he is wrong and yet not quench his spirit and not squelch his desire to seek answers, yes, even to what may be silly questions? Don't we sometimes ask silly questions of God? How does He reply to us?

God could have said to Elijah, **"You**

don't know what you're talking about!"

when he fled from Jezebel after the great victory over the priests of Baal. Yet, God was gentle and showed him things he didn't know and was most uplifting.

Please, by all means show your children where they are wrong but do not use phrases such as **"YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!"**

LETTERS SECTION--This section can contain letters to the editor, to the brethren, or from the editor. Please keep in mind while reading these letters, that just because we print them does not mean that we agree with everything people say in these letters. Letters many times are filled with opinion and emotion and sometimes factual and un-factual information. This section is interactive. If you agree or disagree with a letter or an article in this newsletter and want others to know, this is the section for you. Please, if you want your letter to be printed, clearly say so and send it to Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com We do not print all letters that we receive. If you state you want your letter printed, then we do consider it for inclusion. If we receive a letter that we feel would be of interest to others, generally we ask the writer for permission to print it.

10-03 to 28, 2002
by Lee Ann Sanders
Branchland, West Virginia

EDITORS NOTE: Did you ever have really good email days, and really bad email days? Following are two groups of email letters and replies which both took place at approximately the same time. Group #1 turned out really well and Group #2 turned out really bad. As you read each group, please take careful note of the dates. Laura Lee

LETTERS--Group #1
LETTER FROM LEE ANN SANDERS--

OCTOBER 3, 2002

Hey Laura,
(Name Removed) has been on my mind for several weeks now, now I know why. I haven't talked to her in a long long time. would you know her current email addy? I would like to contact her again. would greatly appreciate it.
blessings to ya
Lee Ann

OUR REPLY--OCTOBER 15, 2002

Dear Lee Ann,
I'm sorry I couldn't get back to you right away on this, but here's what I need. I can't give you anyones email or snail mail address except for those listed on our Web Site or in our Newsletter. What I can do though, is if you give me your permission, I can send your email address or any other contact information you want passed on to (Name Removed), to her and then she would have to contact you.

If this happens in the future where you want contact with someone on our prayer list, do the following #1--just give me your permission to send the person your contact info (It will save us both some time.) or #2--Send the person a get well card through us and it will be forwarded to them unopened. If you have questions please ask.

Send your permission for me to send your contact info on to (Name Removed), and I will get it to her as soon as possible.
Thanks.
With Much Love,
Darwin & Laura Lee (Letter by Laura)

**LETTER FROM LEE ANN SANDERS--
OCTOBER 16, 2002**

ok, I give ya permission to give her my addy. she use to be on one of my groups and I think things got financially tight and she had to get off of the internet and it drove me nuts trying to find out how to get a hold of her. I really liked her. your help would

be greatly appreciated.
hugs to ya
Lee Ann

OUR REPLY--OCTOBER 17, 2002

Dear Lee Ann,
I will be sending (Name Removed) your email address at the same time that this reply is sent to you. Now it's up to (Name Removed) to contact you, if she wants to. Thanks Lee Ann.
With Much Love,
Darwin & Laura Lee (Letter by Laura)

**LETTER FROM LEE ANN SANDERS--
OCTOBER 17, 2002**

Excellent! thanks!
Lee Ann

OUR REPLY--OCTOBER 17, 2002

Lee Ann,
You are welcome.
With Much Love,
Darwin & Laura Lee (Letter by Laura)

LETTERS--Group #2

**LETTER FROM LEE ANN SANDERS--
OCTOBER 4, 2002**

Hey Laura, my question is this on this prayer request is, why dont anyone quote,

EDITORS NOTE: Please read the above letter from Lee Ann Sanders very carefully. That is all the email letter said and we had no idea what she wanted, since it clearly appears not to be all there. Laura Lee

OUR REPLY--OCTOBER 15, 2002

Dear Lee Ann,
I am not sure what this email says as it appears to only be partly there. Let me know what it was supposed to say, if it's important. Thanks.
With Much Love,
Darwin & Laura Lee (Letter by Laura)

**LETTER FROM LEE ANN SANDERS--
OCTOBER 16, 2002**

LOL, hmmm, I think it has something to do with the prayer request about the woman who lost her job, and is living with her

mother and it seems no one is willing to help find out why she won't go back to work. I think that was it, LOL.
lee ann

EDITORS NOTE: I very clearly let Lee Ann Sanders know that I did not receive her entire email and for her to please let me know what it said. The above is the reply I received from her, which I also did not understand because it was not clear and she asked me no questions, so I clearly did not know what she wanted from me in regard to this. We also did not have any idea what she meant for LOL to mean. Laura Lee

OUR REPLY--OCTOBER 17, 2002

Lee Ann,
I guess I can't do anything with it unless you know what it originally said. Was it a question or a statement. I guess if you don't know, and I don't know--probably best to drop it.
With Much Love,
Darwin & Laura Lee (Letter by Laura)

LETTER FROM LEE ANN SANDERS--OCTOBER 17, 2002

.....best to drop it... sorry i bothered you.
lee ann

EDITORS NOTE: By this point, I just thought she meant to drop it, because I never knew what she wanted in the first place and she didn't seem to be able to tell me even when I clearly asked her. That is why I responded as I did in the following reply. Laura Lee

OUR REPLY--OCTOBER 17, 2002

Lee Ann,
Okay, and no bother, I just get real busy here sometimes.
With Much Love,
Darwin & Laura Lee (Letter by Laura)

OUR REPLY--OCTOBER 18, 2002

Lee Ann,
I agree.
With Much Love,
Darwin & Laura Lee (Letter by Laura)

EDITORS NOTE: This last reply is clearly my mistake and I apologize to Lee Ann for this. We get a lot of email here and sometimes I am in a hurry, because email is not the only thing that I have to do in a day, so some days are busier than others for me and sometimes I do make mistakes. I answered Lee Ann Sanders email dated October 17, 2002 twice, once on the 17th and once on the 18th. This was clearly my fault as I forgot to delete her email on the 17th after I answered it the first time and then after I pulled email on the 18th and saw it still there, I thought it was a new email from her and I answered it again. Even at this point, I had absolutely no idea that Lee Ann was becoming upset with me and certainly not to the point which her next email shows. Laura Lee

LETTER FROM LEE ANN SANDERS--OCTOBER 18, 2002

Laura.....why am I sensing a tone from you? I had asked you an honest question several days ago out of humbleness, and you sent me back the email with "best to drop it". I was really puzzled at you on that and literally sat here in a daze wondering what that comment was all about. now you send me another reply saying, "I agree" and I am wondering, what is going on with you. its like your picking a fight, and I never had any kind of intention on starting anything, just asked some simple questions. I don't know what the problem is, but I never done anything to get a tone from you. sigh. when someone says to "drop it" it is in a negative tone and I am just bewildered at the way you said that to me. Whatever it is that is bothering you I pray you will be relieved of it.

you will notice that I am sending this to the email in which I do not need a reply to. so, you don't need to reply. and if you send a reply it won't go through cause I now have all your addys on "blocked" so it wont do you any good to reply back. I just want to be left in peace.

please just remove me from

your email list, ok?
appreciate it.
Lee Ann

EDITORS NOTE: I was in no way ever trying to start a fight with Lee Ann Sanders and I know I wasn't trying to come across to her as having a tone, as she states it. The only reason I ever said that it was best to drop it, was because I had no idea what her questions were and even when I let her know that I did not get the whole email that she sent to me, Lee Ann still did not tell me what the original email said, so I just felt it would be best to drop it, unless she could remember what it said.

This would have been a very simple problem to solve, except that Lee Ann said she blocked my email so I could not try to straighten the matter out with her in that manner and I didn't even know she was mad at me until I received the above email.

Since she blocked my email I did attempt to contact her via US Mail. I sent her copies of the above emails in an attempt to show her what happened. I do not know if she read what I sent to her, but I received the following threat from her via email. Laura Lee

LETTER FROM LEE ANN SANDERS--OCTOBER 28, 2002

Subject: Your continued disrespect of my asking you to not contact me will get you in trouble

Listen up lady, I made it clear to you not to contact me anymore, yet, you disrespect my wishes and send me your attitude in the mail. I am now letting you know right now, that if you contact me in any way, shape or form, I will turn you in, especially to the postmaster general. I made it clear that I wanted no contact with you. yet, in your bullheadedness, you insist on sending me your harrassment of me in the postal system now.

send me one more thing and I will turn you in. leave me alone. I want nothing to do with you ever again. you have problems and you need some kind of psychiatric help.

leave me alone.
Lee Ann

HOW WE TREAT EACH OTHER IS IMPORTANT

Matthew 18:15-17 gives us clear instruction on how to reconcile with each other. If we are truly the children of God, we will be trying to reconcile with each other when ever there is a problem between us. If we are unwilling to speak to people now when we have a problem with them in this age and to at least attempt to work it out with them, then how will God ever be able to use us in the world tomorrow, where He will be expecting us to work with and talk to all kinds of people, even those who are really difficult to work with.

I have no anger towards Lee Ann Sanders, and I truly wish her the best and hope that at some point she will at least try to understand that I wanted to answer her questions, I just never got them. My hope is that she will work toward reconciliation with us in the very near future. Laura Lee

10-25-2002
by Gary Witte
Mount Horeb, Wisconsin

This letter is in regard to the article "The Precious Fruit of the Earth", by Arlan Weight, Bismarck, North Dakota, which was printed in Issue #11 on page 7.

Dear Darwin and Laura:

God has inspired me to write to you concerning the matter herein.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the letter of Mr. Arlan Weight of Bismarck, ND that was published in the September/October newsletter.

It would seem that Mr. Weight is shocked by the violence going on in the world, and rightfully so. One should note however, that levels of violence in general today and throughout history are far worse than he mentions.

Ghenghis Khan swept through Asia and Europe with his hordes and did massive damage to many areas.

Estimates of the dead from WWII are variously estimated at about 50 million people.

The Mafia and other criminal organizations kill each other each year to the extent that police organizations cannot keep track of it all.

Abortion has taken many millions of lives as Pagans sacrifice their children to their thousands of various "gods".

Since 1966 we have seen one mass murder spree after another on a nearly annual basis: Charles Whitman, Richard Speck, Charles Manson and Co., and many others. As of this writing a sniper is stalking the people of the Nation's capitol.

In the popular media we read about the way things are today, and a great many people talk about how bad things are, but this is the way things have always been, and will be until the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Note God's word:

22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (Romans 8:22)

We know from the Holy scriptures also, the tremendous war deaths that occurred in Old Testament times.

We know that in most ancient kingdoms if one went to see the king without a very good reason, that he would be executed for wasting the king's time.

What I am outlining and what Mr. Weight specified are only the tip of a colossal iceberg. Great volumes could be written just listing the recorded murders throughout Earth's 6000 year recorded history in the absence of commentary.

4. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.
5. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.
6. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.
7. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
8. All these are the beginning of sorrows. (Matthew 24:4-8)

And there certainly are all of these things now.

11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. (Matthew

24:11)

These false teachers are far more dangerous than the kidnappers, warmongers and murderers; for they can cause the soul to be lost.

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.
13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (Matthew 24:12-13)

Like He said, we have to live with it, and maintain our faith, and if we do we will be saved from the agonies of hell into the sublime perfection of service to the Lord in His Heavenly Kingdom.

14. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:14)

Armageddon will not come until the gospel has been preached everywhere on earth. To the best of my knowledge this has been claimed, but has not yet occurred.

Well, that is all interesting, but what should we do about all of this?

Firstly, realize that to a great extent the devil will have his way with humanity. Not completely, but greatly.

Most importantly be aware of the protection that the Lord offers:

20. Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. (Exodus 23:20)
22. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. (Exodus 23:22)

He still does these things for his believers today, so pray for protection, and cite scripture in your prayer.

14. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. (Exodus 14:14)

He fought for the ancient Israelites, and he still fights for his believers today. Unseen guardian angels will follow you about.

11. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. (Psalm 91:11)

Be in prayer, and you will be protected from most of that mayhem out there. Read ALL of Psalm 91.

39. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. (Psalms 37:39)

And most importantly remember:

17. No weapon that is formed against

thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me saith the LORD. (Isaiah 54:17)

Weapons will be formed against the Lord's believers, but they will not prosper (complete their mission). For a Christian it is better to be afraid of forgetting to pray every day than of murder and mayhem in the world.

Persecution will come, and it will go. There is no good reason to leave home, friends, family and church because of corruption, unless the Lord speaks to your heart and tells you to go somewhere.

Those people and institutions and people need Christian people, so just pray for all of them, for the Lord can fix anything.

There are Christians living relatively safe lives in downtown Manhattan, when many consider it to be a pit of evil. I know of a man from Brooklyn, NY who said that many of the restrooms contained gospel literature. If they were in mortal danger, how could this be?

The Lord has saved my life on several occasions, and I know from personal experience that in secular terms there is no safe place in the entire world.

In Christian terms, any place that God wants you to live will be safe.

May the Lord God continue to bless you and the Church of God, and of course all glory, praise and honor for all blessings to any of us belongs to Him.

In the Holy Name of Jesus the Christ of Nazareth,
Gary C. Witte

11-11-2002
by Fred Brettell, Jr.
Mingo Junction, Ohio

Fred Brettell's Letter

God is love and God is spirit, both are correct. God's one and only spiritual law is love, and it is eternal love. I have no problem if you and others keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, but in christian love I disagree, because out in eternity beyond the millennium the Sabbath and Holy Days will no longer exist!

If you think this is worthy to be

answered and printed you may do so.

EDITORS NOTE:

God is love...

- ❖ 1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.
- ❖ 1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

God is spirit...

- ❖ John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

What Does God Say About Love & Law?

- ❖ Exodus 20:6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- ❖ Deuteronomy 5:10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.
- ❖ Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;
- ❖ Deuteronomy 11:1 Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway.
- ❖ Deuteronomy 11:22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;
- ❖ Deuteronomy 19:9 If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee beside these three:
- ❖ Deuteronomy 30:16 In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.
- ❖ Joshua 22:5 But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law,

which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

- ❖ Nehemiah 1:5 And said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:
- ❖ Daniel 9:4 And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;
- ❖ John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.
- ❖ John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.
- ❖ John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
- ❖ John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.
- ❖ 1 John 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.
- ❖ 1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.
- ❖ 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

The law is spiritual...

- ❖ Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.
- ❖ Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
- ❖ Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

A new commandment?...

34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.
35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (John 13:34-35)
2. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.
3. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.
4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
5. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.
6. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.
7. Brethren, I write **no new commandment** unto you, but an **old commandment which ye had from the beginning**. The **old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning**. (1 John 2:2-7)
5. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had **from the beginning**, that we love one another.
6. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard **from the beginning**, ye should walk in it. (2 John 1:5-6)

As we can see...

From the above scriptures, God's law is love. We can clearly see though, that we love God by keeping his commandments. **John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments**. We can also see that eternal salvation is only given to those who obey God. **Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;**

This is only a very short study and I tried to focus only on what you stated, showing full agreement between you (Fred) and scripture in regard to your first two sentences. In **John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye**

love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. Verse 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. This is actually not a new commandment. This comes directly from the law as stated in the Torah. **Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.**

12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.
13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
14. Ye are my friends, **if ye do whatsoever I command you**.
15. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.
16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
17. These things **I command you, that ye love one another**. (John 15:12-17)

From the Old Testament to the New Testament, you will find throughout that God loves us all, however God knows that we love Him, because we keep His law and obey His words. The Bible is God's word and states His law. God's law is clearly spiritual, so does this mean we don't keep it? Sometimes I get the idea from reading what people write and from listening to what they say that spiritual means to them only things which are invisible. With this in mind, then does it mean that spiritual law is invisible? Many people seem to also feel that love is invisible and that most people know when they are loved even though we do nothing to show love and maybe only say we love someone once in awhile. The bottom line on this however is that love is an action verb and requires us to do something in order to show love. Again, God clearly states in **John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments**. So, if we love God we will keep His commandments.

Commandments and Ordinances and Statutes...

Exodus 24:12 And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. God's law was written on tables of stone by God and defined by God in the first 5 books of the Bible and consists of commandments, statutes, ordinances, words, sayings, charges, instruction, judgments and precepts. In our worldly governments we have laws which also consist of statutes, judgments etc. People in general think little of the volumes of law books that can be found in most libraries across our country and the many different components that make up the laws of the land in those many volumes. And by components, I mean statutes, judgments, etc. God has one law book, called the Bible and people in general want to do away with most every law listed there in. Many people think the law only consists of the 10 commandments and throw out the rest. Many say they keep the 10 commandments, but then worship on Sunday which is in total opposition to the 4th commandment.

You will find no place in the Bible where the Sabbath is ever the 1st day of the week or Sunday. Even the Catholic Church understands this one. If God commands the 7th Day Sabbath to be kept, which is the 4th Commandment and can be found in **Exodus 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy**. The keeping of the 7th Day Sabbath is a sign that you are following the true God. If you believe that the God who inspired the Bible to be written is the True God then why don't you believe what He tells you to do? If you do not believe that the Bible was inspired to be written by the True God, then why do you care one way or the other? **Exodus 31:13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you**. God is also very clear on what the penalty is for not keeping the 7th Day Sabbath. Read it for yourself, it's death. **Exodus 35:2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath**

of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

When you do away with the 7th day Sabbath which is commandment number 4, you are breaking the law of God. Many people say they keep the commandments of God, but throw out the 4th commandment. People in general love to pick and choose what they will and will not do. If you believe that God exists and that he created everything that is, then I guess I wouldn't advise messing with God, by throwing out those laws which do not suite your lifestyle, as God also has the power to destroy all that he creates. Please remember Noah's Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember also Lot's wife. **Genesis 19:17 ...look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. Genesis 19:26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.** When we obey God, we show our love for God and when we disobey God, we will always suffer the consequences of our disobedience, just as Lot's wife did. Even the spiritual aspects of God's law have physical consequences. For example, the law of gravity, is invisible, however it still exists whether you believe in it or not. The law of gravity even though invisible also has physical consequences if we disobey that law and jump from a building thinking we can fly, we either end up dead or wish we were.

The Holy Days are Ordinances and Statutes which are a part of the Ten Commandments. Ordinances and Statutes further explain the Ten Commandment Law of God. Read Exodus 12, where it shows that Passover is an ordinance and all the Holy Days are part of the Statutes, Read the entire chapter of Leviticus 23. These laws existed long before God taught them to Moses, so he (Moses) could teach them to the Israelites. **Genesis 26:5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.**

For Eternity?...

Actually I see no clear scriptures which tell us absolutely that the Sabbath and Holy Days will or will not exist in eternity, and you quoted nothing to back up your own statement that they will not exist in eternity. If you have such a

scripture, we need to see it.

You conclude that since the Sabbath and Holy Days will not exist in eternity, that therefore you do not have to keep them now. Let's use some logic on this one. Cars may not exist in eternity. If I believe that cars will not exist in eternity, then I will conclude from this, based on your (Fred's) human reasoning, that I do not have to obey any traffic laws at this time?????!!!! "Huh"????!!!!

Fred, your disagreement is not with those of us who do keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, but with God. What you state here is nothing more than another one of the many, many, excuses that many people use to not keep God's Law.

❖ Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and **keep his commandments:** for this is the whole duty of man.

❖ Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments **to a thousand generations;**

11-23-2002

by Tommy West

Wake Forest, North Carolina

This letter is in regard to the following articles: "Missing Mercy and Love Ingredients" by Ted Saunders, Renton, Washington, which was printed in Issue #11 and Issue #12. "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" by Laura Lee, Bismarck, North Dakota, which was printed in Issue #3. "Who Is, or Is Not Free to Marry?" by Rhoda Foust, Williamsburg, Indiana, which was printed in Issue #11. And last, it is in regard to another letter written by Tommy West, Wake Forest, North Carolina, which was printed in Issue #12 and starts on page 19.

TOMMY'S LETTER:

Laura,

Congratulations once again on an excellent newsletter. The article by Ted Saunders entitled **MISSING MERCY AND LOVE INGREDIENTS--PART 2** is outstanding and will stand up to any

comparable article of the so-called "glossy" magazines published by some of the hierarchical groups -- which proves an irrefutable and significant point: **SPIRITUAL TALENTS AND GIFTS ARE NOT LIMITED TO JUST A FEW. WE ALL ARE RESPONSIBLE TO SHARE IN THE EDIFICATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

A few days ago. I was scanning the July/August issue of **THE CHURCHES OF GOD NEWSLETTER** which is published by fellow North Carolinians, Rick and Eileen Beltz, and happened to notice an article you wrote entitled **A FRESH LOOK AT MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE.** While there are many commendable points in the article, it is definitely NOT free from error. Perhaps some other time you will allow me to clarify these errors for you and your readers.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The article referred to here was also printed in this newsletter in Issue #3, May/June 2001, under it's original title "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" and will also be posted on our web site very soon. Again, if anyone finds error in any of our articles, please send us the details. Laura Lee

TOMMY'S LETTER:

It does relate to what this letter is about. I would like to respond to your response to my letter re: Rhoda Foust's article on Divorce and Remarriage which she wrote for your SEPT./OCT. 2002 newsletter. The subject of Divorce and Remarriage is highly controversial within the ekklesia. It is also one of the most abused and/or misunderstood. In your **EDITOR'S NOTE:** to my letter we read 6. *"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."* (KJV) Then you write, "Tommy concludes from this that marriage is for life, and I agree. God's intent from day one was that marriage be for life." **THAT'S NOT MY CONCLUSION. THAT'S WHAT JESUS SPECIFICALLY STATED AS WRITTEN IN MATT. 19:6.**

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Matthew 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let

not man put asunder.--I believe I answered this very clearly last time, but again, it says "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." In the last issue I clearly defined how God joins people. You have now written two letters to me, but neither one of them explains how people are joined by God in marriage. Is it by marriage license, contract, sex or by some other means? For my full explanation on this, refer to Issue #12, pages 19-22. Laura Lee

TOMMY'S LETTER:

IN ANY DISCUSSION OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, IT MUST BE NOTED AND REMEMBERED THAT JESUS' POSITION AS ADDRESSED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS NOT ONLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE PHARISEES AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF HIS DAY, IT IS THE ONLY CORRECT POSITION.

He came to fulfill the law. Matthew 5:17 "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (KJV) Fulfill is STRONG'S #4137 **pleroo** *play-ro-o*; from 4134; to make replete, i.e. (lit.) to *cram* (a net), *level up* (a hollow), or (fig.) to *furnish* (or *imbue*, *diffuse*, *influence*), *satisfy*, *execute* (an office), *finish* (a period or task), *verify* (or *coincide* with a prediction), etc. --fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply. THAYER'S definition as used in Matt. 5:17 -- universally and absolutely, *to fulfil*, i.e. *to cause God's will* (as made known in the law) *to be obeyed as it should be*, and *God's promises* (given through the prophets) *to receive fulfillment*. In the matter of Divorce and Remarriage, Jesus "perfected" the law which meant He corrected the stance that Moses took in Deut. 24:1-4 where Moses "allowed" rather than "commanded" divorce.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

I do not disagree with your information quoted from Strong's in regard to the word "fulfil", but there is a problem with what you are saying here. ***You said "In the matter of Divorce and Remarriage, Jesus "perfected" the law which meant He corrected the stance that Moses took in Deut. 24:1-4 where Moses "allowed" rather than "commanded" divorce."*** -- The law as stated in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was not a

law that Moses wrote or allowed. Please note the following: Moses wrote down the law as God gave it to him to write down.

12. Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.
13. Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments:
14. And madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, **by the hand of Moses thy servant:** (Nehemiah 9:12-14)

4. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, **which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.** (Malachi 4:4)

The law clearly was God's law, and Moses was used by God to write it down so we would have it today.----Please also look at this point, there are many references throughout the Bible like the following: Leviticus 11:46 This is the **law of the beasts**, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: **Did the beasts write their own law or did God just refer to it as the law of the beasts?** Leviticus 14:57 To teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean: this is the **law of leprosy**. Numbers 5:29 This is the **law of jealousies**, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled;----The point is the different laws are named either for who wrote them down/or who God used to command His laws through or for what the law is in regard to. Please also note in:

2. And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.
3. And he answered and said unto them, **What did Moses command you?** (Christ is the one that spoke here clearly using the word command.)
4. And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. (The Pharisees are speaking here and using the word suffered, which means allowed.)
5. And Jesus answered and said unto them, **For the hardness of your heart**

he wrote you this precept. (Mark 10:2-5) (Here, Christ himself calls it a precept, which is a law and/or command, see Strong's #1785 in the Greek.)

7. They say unto him, Why did Moses then **command** to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? (The Pharisees are speaking here and using the word command.)
8. He saith unto them, **Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.** (Here Christ is speaking and using the word suffered which means allowed, and then Christ launches right into the exception clause.)
9. **And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away (for fornication) doth commit adultery.** (Matthew 19:7-9) Laura Lee

TOMMY'S LETTER:

Neither in your article nor in your response to me did you make reference to Mark 10:1-12 which is a parallel account of Matthew 19:1-9.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

There are many scriptures on many different subjects including this one. When responding to a letter I generally respond to the scriptures which the letter writer brings up within his/her letter, only bringing in other scriptures when needed and as space allows. Laura Lee

TOMMY'S LETTER:

- Let's look at those scriptures --
1. Getting up, He went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan: crowds gathered around Him again, and according to His custom, He once more *began* to teach them.
 2. *Some* Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and *began* to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife.
 3. And He answered and said to them, **"What did Moses command you?"**
 4. They said "Moses permitted a *man* TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY."
 5. But Jesus said to them, **"Because of**

your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

6. "But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.
7. "For THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER,
8. "AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh.
9. "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."
10. In the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again.
11. And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her;
12. and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery." (Mark 10:1-12 --NASB)

Take note here two points: 1. There is no exception clause. 2. Unlike Jewish law, either the man or woman could commit adultery. (It might also be noted that most Bible scholars contend that Mark wrote his epistle first having heard the words directly from the apostle Peter). Also see Luke 16:18, Jer. 3:1, 8, 14

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Matthew 5:32 **But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced (because of fornication) committeth adultery.** You state that there is no exception clause, may I ask what exactly this is as stated in Matthew 5:32? It is also stated in Matthew 19:7-9:

7. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?
8. He saith unto them, **Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.**
9. **And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away (for fornication) doth commit adultery.**

In both places Christ is the one who stated this exception along with the clear intent from the beginning. If you do not believe these to be exception clauses as you put it, then please explain to all,

exactly what these are? Please also explain what fornication is, as explained by the Bible?

Have you heard of the Harmony of the Gospels? If not, it's where different writers will write of the same event, but some writers put in more detail than other writers and this concept is not just confined to the gospels. You will find this throughout the Bible, that is why when we study a given subject we need to take all the clear scriptures into account and many times this will explain more fully those which are not quite so clear. It is never a good idea to take one scripture and try to build an entire doctrine based on one verse. A particular subject should always be considered in context and in respect to all known scriptures on that subject.

Your second point speaks of Jewish law, which I didn't bring up at all, but since you stated your point as you did, let me show you something which comes directly from the Law of God. **Leviticus 20:10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.**

God always held both the man and the woman responsible for committing adultery. My advise on your point two would be, to be less concerned about Jewish Law and more concerned about God's Law. Laura Lee

NOTE:

In regard to your statement: "*It might also be noted that most Bible scholars contend that Mark wrote his epistle first having heard the words directly from the apostle Peter.*" #1--Mark's book is well known by most serious Bible Students as the Gospel of Mark, not an Epistle. #2--"Bible Scholars?" If that can be proven from scripture that Mark heard "the words" as you state here from Peter first, then we need clear scripture that proves that, other wise its just that, contend, which equals "scholars opinion". #3--What are you referring to when you say "the words", the words specifically quoted by you Mark 10:1-12 or all the words that Mark wrote in his gospel called Mark?

Jesus' disciples walked with and were all taught by Him throughout His three and a half year ministry. For someone to make claim that certain

disciples only heard certain words of Jesus from another disciple and not directly from Jesus Himself is a bit of a stretch and matters little as to what and how God inspired His writers to write what God wanted written down. Darwin Lee

TOMMY'S LETTER:

There is much more that could be said about this subject but let's chew on this for awhile.

Perhaps you'll decide to print this letter in your next newsletter. Whether you do or not, thanks for allowing me this opportunity.

Tommy West

ARTICLES SECTION--We are always looking for good articles written by ordinary people, to consider for inclusion in this newsletter. Darwin and I do not always agree with every single thing that we print. Darwin and I also do not know everything. Like most people reading this newsletter, we are still learning. We do strive to bring to you Biblically Based Articles--The problem is that opinion and interpretation of scripture varies from person to person. So with that in mind let's let "iron sharpen iron" Proverbs 27:17--Let's learn from each other. Send articles to: Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com

A STUDY OF "THE TRUTH"

by Garry D. Pifer
Bloomington, Illinois

It seems that as long as I can remember I have heard the term "THE TRUTH" used within the Radio Church of God/Worldwide Church of God, and the many offshoots. Notice how it has been used. From the May 1960 Good News magazine, in Herbert Armstrong's opening statement in an article entitled "Should We Listen to OTHERS?", "AFTER you have come to a knowledge of the TRUTH, have repented and been baptized, and by the Holy Spirit been put into the true Church of God..." Individuals ask one another, "How long have you

been in THE TRUTH?" or make the statement that "...when God called me into THE TRUTH." One individual, a leader in one of the larger COG groups, a few years ago visited some Sabbath keepers in another country. He commented on his return that "they understood about 70% of THE TRUTH."

What do we mean by the term THE TRUTH? It appears from our usage that we mean a knowledge or understanding of the "basic doctrines," such as the Sabbath, the Holy Days, clean and unclean meats, etc. And, it additionally implies that we understand "100% of THE TRUTH" BUT is an understanding and knowledge of basic doctrines what is indicated in Scripture when the term is used? Very definitely the Scriptures refer to truth and also to THE TRUTH. What does the Bible tell us about truth and THE TRUTH?

The primary Greek word translated "truth" is *aletheia*, #225 in Strong's. It is used approximately 110 times. Here is how the lexicon defines the word:

- 225 *aletheia* {al_ay'_thi_a} from 227; TDNT _ 1:232,37; n f AV _ truth 107, truly + 1909 1, true 1, verity 1; 110
- 1) objectively
- 1a) what is true in any matter under consideration
- 1a1) truly, in truth, according to truth
- 1a2) of a truth, in reality, in fact, certainly
- 1b) what is true in things appertaining to God and the duties of man, moral and religious truth
- 1b1) in the greatest latitude
- 1b2) the true notions of God which are open to human reason without his supernatural intervention
- 1c) the truth as taught in the Christian religion, respecting God and the execution of his purposes through Christ, and respecting the duties of man, opposing alike to the superstitions of the Gentiles and the inventions of the Jews, and the corrupt opinions and precepts of false teachers even among Christians
- 2) subjectively
- 2a) truth as a personal excellence
- 2a1) that candour of mind which is free from affection, pretence, simulation, falsehood, deceit

A most familiar verse regarding truth is John 17:17. Let's begin our study by turning there. This chapter is Jesus' prayer to His Father just prior to His being

taken by the band of men being led to Him by Judas. Jesus says to His Father, "Sanctify them (speaking of His disciples) through thy truth: thy word is truth."

He asks that His disciples be sanctified, set apart, through God the Father's truth. He then tells us what the Father's truth is. "Thy word is truth."

We need to ask, what is "the word" that is the Father's? I know we have always taught and thought that the "word of God" is the Bible, the "written word of God." And, in many places that is the meaning, BUT, is that what Jesus is saying here? Is He asking the Father to "sanctify them through the Bible?" Of great interest is the Greek word translated into the English as "word." You have heard it many times. It is *logos*. The Greek word *logos* is used by John, and only by John, as a title of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. We are familiar with John 1:1-18 where we are told clearly that Jesus Christ "was the Word."

I believe that John 17:17 becomes much clearer and can be understood much better if we recognize the fact that Jesus is speaking of Himself in this verse. "Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word, the incarnate one who was in the beginning, who was with God, who was God, is truth."

This understanding is confirmed by Scripture. Notice another passage from the gospel of John, chapter 14 and verse 6. Jesus is speaking to Thomas, responding to his question concerning where Jesus was going. "Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus clearly states that He is THE TRUTH.

There is still more clear Scripture affirming that Jesus is THE TRUTH. Let us turn back a few chapters to John 8. Notice verse 32. Jesus is speaking to His disciples. "And ye shall know THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH shall make you free." The word "free" is translated from the Greek *eleutheroo*, Strong's #1659. It is defined in the lexicon as, 1.) To make free 2.) Set at liberty; from the dominion of sin. Whatever THE TRUTH is it will make one free from the dominion of sin.

We need to ask ourselves the question, does "knowing" the doctrines of the Sabbath, the Holy Days, clean and unclean meats, etc. make us free from the dominion of sin?

NO! It is NOT just knowing certain

"truth" of a doctrine that will make us free. Let's continue reading here in John 8. The Scripture interprets itself.

John 8:33-37 "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: [but] the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you."

Verse 36 tells us plainly WHO makes us free, free from the dominion of sin. And, it isn't just knowing the "true" doctrines. IT IS JESUS CHRIST THAT MAKES US FREE. It was His shed blood that redeemed us from the debt to sin. (Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:18) We have been bought with a price. (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Cor. 7:23) We have been freed from bondage to sin. We now are to be the servant of Jesus Christ, THE TRUTH.

The Apostle Paul makes this plain in his writings. Notice a few verses. Romans 6:16-23 "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things [is] death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. It is NOT knowing a certain body of doctrinal beliefs or being "called into the Church" that constitutes

being in THE TRUTH. We'll look at what the Bible clearly says about being in THE TRUTH a bit later. But first, let's look at a couple more areas regarding our usage of the term, "THE TRUTH."

As I mentioned earlier, our usage often implies that we have complete, 100% understanding and knowledge of THE TRUTH, meaning the "true doctrines." Though we might say we know we don't have 100% understanding we still have that as an underlying belief. Again, note the example I mentioned before. After visiting a Sabbath keeping group in another country a leader in one of the COG groups stated, "they understand about 70% of THE TRUTH." And, we ALL knew what he meant. They, in his estimation, understood 70% of the basic doctrines that we adhere to. The assumption was made that "WE" had 100%.

Brethren, how arrogant can we get? But, can we be blamed? For years we were told and told again that "WE" are the ONLY TRUE CHURCH OF GOD. We were told that God, after 1900 years had "restored" the basic TRUTHS to His Church through His end time Apostle. We were repeatedly told that we were the "best era" of God's Church. I submit that our attitudes, if not our very statements, could better be described by Christ's words to the Church of the Laodiceans, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:" Haven't we said that very thing? Especially if we paraphrase it slightly. "Because you say, I am spiritually rich, and increased with the knowledge of THE TRUTH, and don't need anything, I'm okay!" But, Christ's response so aptly applies to us. We don't recognize the fact that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked SPIRITUALLY!

Maybe you never noticed, but Paul had to deal with the same basic attitude among the Jewish people. They didn't express it as we have. They didn't say they had THE TRUTH, they said they had THE LAW. Let's notice this over in the book of Romans, chapter 2 and verse 17. "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God." Paul could easily address us by some very simple word substitution. "Behold, you are called a Spiritual Jew, and rest in

THE TRUTH, and make your boast of God." In general we have held ourselves up and put others down. We state that they don't know THE TRUTH, meaning that they don't keep the seventh day Sabbath and the Holy Days. In our own eyes we have perceived ourselves to be better than others. We have labeled others as "Christians, so called," and have stated they worship false gods and another Jesus, just because they don't "go to church on the correct day." And, all of this because we haven't even understood what THE TRUTH is. I'm not saying that many of our basic beliefs and doctrines aren't true. I'm not saying that we shouldn't keep the Sabbath. But, as we will see a little later from Scripture, knowing and keeping these basic doctrines IS NOT what constitutes being in THE TRUTH.

Before we get to that I want us to look at another familiar passage and understand it. John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. We know that on the day of Pentecost following Christ's ascension to heaven the Holy Spirit was poured out on those assembled. It is this Holy Spirit that Jesus speaks of here in John 16, referred to as the Spirit of truth. He says that it is this Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, which will guide us into all truth.

There is a lot in this verse that we need to understand. It DOESN'T say that when we receive the Holy Spirit following baptism we now have THE TRUTH. It DOESN'T say that we are possessors of ALL truth. Jesus Christ says the Spirit will "guide" us into all truth. What does that mean? What does "guide" mean? Doesn't God and Christ reveal the basic doctrines, commonly defined as THE TRUTH, to us, we are then baptized and have hands laid on us for receiving the Holy Spirit, and we are now in THE TRUTH? Let's understand. The Greek word translated "guide" in this verse is hodegeo, number 3594 in Strong's. It is derived from number 3595, hodegos. The lexicon defines it this way:

- 1.) to be a guide, lead on one's way, to guide
- 2.) to be a guide or a teacher
- 2a.) to give guidance to.

I believe there is great significance to the

use of this particular word in this passage of Scripture. There are many other Greek words that mean to "lead" or guide. The primary one, used over 70 times in the New Testament, is ago, Strong's #71. But, hodegeo and hodegos are used in regard to guiding and leading the blind. Both words are used in Matthew 15:14. "Let them alone: they be blind leaders (3595, hodegos) of the blind. And if the blind lead (3594, hodegeo) the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

How does this apply in regard to the Holy Spirit "guiding" us into all truth? Scripture is plain in it's revelation that the world as a whole has been blinded spiritually. We have all quoted Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 4:4 regarding Satan, the god of this world, having blinded the minds of people. In chapter three of this same book Paul speaks of the minds of Israel being blinded, that there was a veil upon their hearts. It does show that the veil has been taken away in Christ. He has now sent the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to guide us, as a guide of the blind.

Sadly, we have not recognized our own blindness. We see ourselves as having THE TRUTH. We are "rich and increased with goods" and don't see our spiritual condition. As we saw earlier the Jews had the same basic condition.

Turn again to Romans 2. We read verse 17, but notice now verse 19. Paul makes a very powerful statement. He says that they, the Jews, "art confident that thou thyself are a guide (3595, hodegos) of the blind, a light of them which art in darkness." They perceived themselves as the ones to lead and guide the spiritually blind. Jesus addressed the same thing in Matthew 23. He gave a very strong and scathing indictment to the Pharisees and the Scribes. They were the leadership, the "ministry" if you will. They were in the position to lead, to guide. But, notice what He told them. After calling them "hypocrites" He calls them "blind guides" (verses 16 and 24), and tells them they are "fools and blind" (verses 17 and 19). Christ clearly shows that they were "guides." He doesn't dispute that. But, He also makes it plain that they in their own vanity and perception that they had THE LAW, or as we might say, THE TRUTH, they themselves were blind. And, as we quoted earlier, Christ makes the point that when the guide of the blind is also blind "both shall fall into the ditch"

(Matt. 15:14).

But, let's get back to John 16:13. We are told that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will guide us into all truth. Who did we find is THE TRUTH? Jesus Christ! So, the Spirit of Jesus Christ has now come and is to "guide" us as one guides the blind, into all truth. How does one guide a blind person? Generally you either take them by the arm or you have them take your arm. And, by gently nudging them, speaking to them, you take them to wherever they are going and direct them around the obstacles. We often speak of "our walk with Christ." This is the "walk" we must have. If we were to "guide" a blind person to "all stores" in the mall how would we do that? One store after another. When Christ "guides" us into "all truth" how does He do that? One "truth" or bit of understanding after another.

Let's use an analogy. Jesus Christ, the Spirit of Truth, leads us as a blind individual into all the stores of truth in the "Truth Mall." He perhaps has led us into the "Sabbath Store" and the "Holy Day Store." We have bought from those stores the amount of truth we have of those doctrines. I would suggest there is much more in those stores to yet obtain. But, I'd like to pose a question. What about others that Jesus is guiding that came into the "Truth Mall" through another entrance? Perhaps they were guided to the "Mercy Store" or the "Visit the Fatherless and Widows Store." Maybe they bought of the "Feed the Hungry and Clothe the Naked Store." In many cases we haven't even gotten to that end of the Mall yet. And, perhaps they haven't yet been led to the end of the Mall with the "Sabbath Store" and "Holy Day Store" and haven't yet been given the chance to understand and buy from those stores. Are they any less in THE TRUTH? Are they any less a Christian and a believer? Jesus is guiding us on a journey into "all truth." And, each person's journey is different and unique to them. How are we to judge where another is on his or her journey with Christ leading? We are in no position to know who He is guiding or where they are. It is not our place to decide if others are in THE TRUTH or are Christians.

This is easier to understand and grasp when we understand that being in THE TRUTH isn't about a body of beliefs or basic fundamental doctrines. Just because we understand doctrine about

the Sabbath, the Holy Days, etc. DOES NOT, according to Scripture, indicate that we are in THE TRUTH.

Let us see what it is that identifies us as being in THE TRUTH.

14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not [his] brother abideth in death.

15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16. Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren.

17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels [of compassion] from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19. And hereby we know that we are of THE TRUTH, and shall assure our hearts before him. (1 John 3:14-19)

Verse 19 New American Standard "We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our hearts before Him."

Verse 19 Amplified Bible "By this we shall come to know (perceive, recognize, and understand) that we are of the Truth, and can reassure (quiet, conciliate, and pacify) our hearts in His presence."

This is the same thing Christ told us that would identify His disciples. We know we are in THE TRUTH, IN JESUS CHRIST, if we have love one for another. Let us look at a few more verses:

1. The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; (in Jesus Christ) and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; (Jesus Christ)

2. For the truth's (Jesus') sake, which dwelleth in us, (through the Holy Spirit) and shall be with us for ever.

3. Grace be with you, mercy, [and] peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, (walking with Jesus Christ, the Spirit of Truth guiding us) as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment

unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. (2 John 1:1-6)

1. The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. (Jesus Christ)

2. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth (Jesus Christ) that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. (the Spirit of Truth guiding)

4. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (walk with Jesus Christ, the Spirit of Truth guiding) (3 John 1:1-4)

Are you in THE TRUTH? Am I in THE TRUTH? If we each individually have a personal relationship and walk with Jesus Christ, who is THE TRUTH; if He dwells within us and is guiding us, and if we have love for the brethren, THEN the Scriptures tell us we are in THE TRUTH. We will be demonstrating and exemplifying LOVE, because God and Jesus are LOVE. We will be being led and guided into truth, true knowledge and understanding of THE WORD of God, the living AND written WORD. We will be striving to obey THE TRUTH, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (1 John 3:22)

JESUS IS OUR FRIEND!

by Bill Bratt
Portsmouth, Ohio

The Bible speaks of two kinds of friendship; (1) the friendship between man and God as in the case of Abraham and God (2 Chr. 20:7, Isa. 41:8, James 2:23); and (2) the friendship between man and man as in the case of David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18:1, 2 Sam. 1:26) or Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi (Ruth 1:16-18).

The special relationship experienced between Jesus and His twelve disciples developed from that of teacher to disciple, through that of Lord to servant (John 13:13-17), into that of friend to friend (John 15:13-15).

The Apostle John recorded Jesus as saying: "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. {12} "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. {13} "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. {14} "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. {15} "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. {16} "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. {17} "These things I command you, that you love one another" (John 15:11-17 NKJV).

Out of this passage we can compile a list of things for which we are chosen and to which we are called. (1)

We are chosen for *joy*. However hard the Christian way is, it is, both in the traveling and in the goal, the way of joy. There is always a joy in doing the right thing. The Christian is the man of joy, the laughing cavalier of Christ. A gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms, and nothing in all religious history has done Christianity more harm than its connection with black clothes and long faces. It is true that the Christian is a sinner, but he is a *redeemed* sinner; and therein lies his joy. How can any man fail to be happy when he walks the ways of life with Jesus? (2)

We are chosen for *love*. We are sent out into the world to love one another. Sometimes we live as if we were sent into the world to compete with one another, or to dispute with one another, or even to quarrel with one another. But the Christian is to live in such a way that he shows what is meant by loving his fellow men. It is here that Jesus makes another of his great claims. If we ask him: What right have you to demand that we love one another? His answer is: "No man can show greater love than to lay down his life for his friends--and I did that." Many a

man tells men to love each other, when his whole life is a demonstration that that is the last thing he does himself. Jesus gave men a commandment which he had himself first fulfilled. (3)

Jesus called us to be *His friends*. He tells his men that he does not call them slaves any more; he calls them friends. Now that is a saying which would be even greater to those who heard it for the first time than it is to us. *Doulos*, the slave, the servant of God was no title of shame; it was a title of the highest honour. Moses was the *doulos* of God (Deut.34:5); so was Joshua (Josh.24:29); so was David (Ps.89:20). It is a title which Paul counted it an honour to use (Titus 1:1); and so did James (James.1:1). The greatest men in the past had been proud to be called the *douloi*, the slaves of God. And Jesus says: "I have something greater for you yet, you are no longer slaves; you are friends." Christ offers an intimacy with God which not even the greatest men knew before he came into the world. (4)

The idea of being the friend of God has also a background. Abraham was the *friend* of God (Isaiah 41:8). Wisdom is said to make men the friends of God. But this phrase is lit up by a custom which obtained both at the courts of the Roman Emperors and of the eastern kings. At these courts there was a very select group of men called *the friends of the king, or the friends of the Emperor*. At all times they had access to the king; they had even the right to come to his bedchamber at the beginning of the day. He talked to them before he talked to his generals, his rulers, and his statesmen. The friends of the king were those who had the closest and the most intimate connection with him. (5)

Jesus called us to be his friends and the friends of God. That is a tremendous offer. It means that no longer do we need to gaze longingly at God from afar off; we are not like slaves who have no right whatever to enter into the presence of the master; we are not like a crowd whose only glimpse of the king is in the passing on some state occasion. Jesus gave us this intimacy with God, so that he is no longer a distant stranger, but our close friend. (6)

Jesus did not only choose us for a series of tremendous privileges. He called us to be His *partners*. The slave could never be a partner. He was defined in

Greek law as a *living tool*. His master never opened his mind to him; the slave simply had to do what he was told without reason and without explanation. But Jesus said: "You are not my slaves; you are my partners. I have told you everything; I have told you what I am trying to do, and why I am trying to do it. I have told you everything which God told me." Jesus has given us the honour of making us partners in his task. He has shared his mind with us, and opened his heart to us. The tremendous choice laid before us is that we can accept or refuse partnership with Christ in the work of leading the world to God. (7)

What is a Friend?

Webster's Dictionary defines the word "friend" as: "A person whom one knows, likes, and trusts; One with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause; a comrade."

To be the friend of Jesus we have to learn to know Him, His likes and dislikes. How do we get to know Jesus? By reading the Bible. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John recorded the words of Jesus. They were eye witnesses of the life of Jesus. They saw Him perform miracles and heal many people. They heard His sermons on the Sabbath. They walked the dusty roads with Him and they helped Him as He fed the five thousand. They saw Him rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees. They saw Him calm the stormy sea.

For us to get to know Jesus, we must read the gospel accounts, the New Testament and the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophecies tell of Jesus as the coming Messiah.

Elements of a good friendship are trust, loyalty, honesty, truth and love.

Jesus is a perfect friend. He sets us a perfect example of love, friendship and loyalty.

Jesus left us an example for us to follow: "For to this you were called, because *Christ* also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet 2:21 NKJV).

If we are to follow in the steps of Jesus, then we also must set a right example to our friends and neighbors.

Jesus is loyal to His friends and He will not forsake us as He sees us struggling to overcome the problems of life: "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" (Heb 13:5 NKJV).

We, too, must not abandon our friends during their times of trials and tests. "A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17 NKJV).

Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to lay down His own life and die for us. He is our sacrificial Lamb, our Redeemer and our Savior.

Jesus was not exclusive in choosing His friends. He was "a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Mat 11:19 NKJV).

A good friendship requires that we spend time together and share our thoughts and ideas, our hopes and our dreams. We can do this through prayer and Bible Study. Jesus told us to pray to the Father as recorded in the model prayer that He gave to His disciples when they asked Him to teach them how to pray (Mat. 6:9-13), but there is nothing wrong in occasionally praying to Jesus. How does Jesus talk to us? Again the answer is by reading the Bible.

A good friendship requires that we love each other. What did Jesus say that we are to do to show Him that we love Him? Jesus said: ""If you love Me, keep My commandments. {16} "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever; {17} "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. {18} "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. {19} "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. {20} "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. {21} "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him"" (John 14:15-21 NKJV).

Notice in verse 21, that Jesus said that if we keep His commandments then He will love us and manifest, reveal and show Himself to us.

Also notice verse 18, that Jesus said that He will not abandon us as orphans. He will not forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Jesus said that He will come to us. Jesus prays for us to God the Father that He will send

His Spirit as a Helper for us.

Jesus wants to be our friend. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev 3:20 NKJV).

Open the door of your life and make Jesus your friend. Our friendship with Jesus must be personal and not a community thing. No church or organization can be between you and your friend Jesus. The Church and the ministry are to be the helpers of your joy (2 Cor. 1:24), not to come in between you and your relationship with Jesus and God.

Jesus is more than our Friend, He is our Brother!

Being the friend of Jesus is very special, but He has revealed in the scriptures that we are to have a greater relationship with Him than that of being a friend.

God the Father wants to have a family of many sons and daughters: "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty"" (2 Cor 6:18 NKJV). This indicates that in this family we will be brothers and sisters of Jesus. Matthew records Jesus talking about this family relationship: "While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. {47} Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." {48} But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" {49} And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! {50} "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother"" (Mat 12:46-50 NKJV).

One of Jesus' jobs as our older brother is to bring many sons to glory: "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. {11} For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 2:10-11 NKJV).

Notice that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren.

In Conclusion:

Jesus is the best friend that anyone could ever have. He wants to have a personal relationship with each and everyone of us.

Jesus is our friend and our brother!

Footnotes: (1,2,3,4,5,6,,7): William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series, The Gospel of John (Volume 2)*, 1975, p. 177-179.

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHLORINE AND FLUORIDE

by Alex Nicholson
Canada

CHLORINE DESTROYS CELLS

Why do towns and cities across North America add chlorine to their drinking water? The obvious answer is to kill germs and bacteria. But how does chlorine work as a germ killer? Chlorine is a well-known poison and a cell killer. Municipal water suppliers keep the bacterial population of the water under control by adding chlorine to kill the bad cells. But chlorine does not distinguish between good cells and bad cells. So when you drink, swim or bathe in chlorinated water, you are destroying cells that do not have to be destroyed. After swimming in a pool containing chlorine, many people experience bloodshot eyes. The reason for that is because millions of cells on the outside of the eyes have been destroyed.

Many people simply don't think about the problems their water can cause. Every time a cell dies, it becomes the responsibility of the immune system defense forces to clean it up. That type of unnecessary activity reduces the efficiency of the immune system.

Because the lymphocytes are assigned the job of ingesting all those dead cells, the immune defense forces are seriously overworked and won't be able to clean up the mutant cells that turn into cancer.

It is true that chlorine destroys the waterborne bacteria that cause typhoid fever, cholera and dysentery, but it also injures red blood cells and damages their

ability to carry life-giving oxygen where it's needed. Chlorine upsets the electrical potential of the cell membrane. The chlorine is highly soluble in water and diffuses rapidly through cell membranes.

The drinking water that comes into your home is most likely the source of the greatest number of cancer inducing agents that you put into your body.

WHAT IS CHLORINE?

Water is more important for life than all other nutrients combined. Cells need water for every activity they perform. Water is the universal solvent and can get through all your cell membranes in order to take nutrients in, or waste material and hormones out.

Most community water systems supply heavily chlorinated water, which they say, is purified and considered to be of acceptable drinking quality.

What is chlorine? Chlorine is a nonmetallic element, a diatomic gas that is heavy, noncombustible and greenish-yellow. It has a pungent irritating odor. In liquid form, it is a clear amber color, also with an irritating odor. It is toxic and irritating to the skin and lungs.

Where is it found? It doesn't occur in a free state, but is a component of the mineral halite - better known as rock salt.

What are some of its uses? Chlorine is used in the manufacture of carbon tetrachloride and trichlorethylene, for water purification and in shrink proofing wool. It's put in flame retardant compounds and used in processing fish, vegetables and fruit.

We have already established the fact that chlorine is an effective cell poison, but there's something overlooked by water purification experts. The chlorine used to kill bacteria in water often contains carbon tetrachloride - a contaminant formed during the production process. It's poisonous by inhalation, ingestion or skin absorption.

Chlorinated water has also been known to cause the formation of other undesirable chemical compounds in water, such as toluene, xylene and styrene. These compounds are deadly to the cells of your body. They kill off red and white blood cells, destroy skin cells and produce serious heart problems.

Most public water systems use chlorine to disinfect water, but these chemicals are present in virtually every water supply tested by the EPA

[Environmental Protection Agency].

Cells must follow the strict rules of the body or face elimination. These rules were established thousands of years ago and are based on true principles. But many times, humans - and your greatest scientists are human - follow a group of rules dictated by politics. Too often, these rules have absolutely no regard for truth.

WHAT IS FLUORIDE?

Fluoride is an acid salt they put in toothpaste and water supplies to allegedly prevent tooth decay. Chemically speaking, it should be called fluorine because it belongs to one of the halogen group of chemicals. The other three are chlorine, bromine and iodine. The truth is that fluoride is an insidious poison and does not prevent tooth decay. It's toxic, very harmful and cumulative in effect. Even when ingested in minimal amounts, fluorine remains in the tissues and builds up over time. No matter how many sources call it safe - the fact remains that fluorine is a deadly poison.

Fluoride is an industrial waste product occurring in the manufacture of aluminum. It is this same industrial waste that your health officials use to fluoridate your drinking water. It is one of the most toxic substances known to mankind.

Fluoride is not an essential nutrient. It is a documented fact that as little as one-tenth of an ounce of fluoride can cause death. When sold over-the-counter, fluoride comes in a can marked with the universal symbol of poison - the skull and cross bones.

Does fluoride prevent cavities? No. Studies by the U.S. Public Health Service show no difference in tooth decay between high and low fluoridated areas. British, Danish and Japanese studies all agree that fluoride does not reduce the incidence of tooth decay.

Fluoride can't actually penetrate teeth because both carry a negative charge. So if fluoride can't penetrate the teeth, then brushing with it doesn't help reduce cavities.

FLUORIDE LINKED TO CANCER

As incredible as it may seem, research by the American Cancer Institute conducted as far back as 1963, clearly shows that even very low levels of fluoride can cause cancer.

Dean Burk, chief chemist emeritus of the NCI has been quoted as saying, "In

point of fact, fluoride causes more human cancer death and causes it faster than any other chemical". Further, the U.S. Center for Disease Control has confirmed an increased cancer death rate in humans living in fluoridated communities.

Using the same level of fluoride commonly put into the U.S. drinking water, scientists at the Nippon Dental College of Japan have determined that even this small amount of fluoride is capable of transforming normal cells into cancer cells. At a meeting of the Japanese Association of Cancer Research in Osaka in 1982, the researchers reported: "Last year at the meeting, we showed that sodium fluoride, which is being used for the prevention of dental caries, induces chromosomal aberrations in the irregular synthesis of DNA. This year, we report findings that show malignant transformation of cells is induced by sodium fluoride".

Mason City, Iowa, was the scene of an interesting fluoridation campaign. An employee of the Iowa State Department of Health came to town to display his graphs and charts which ostensibly showed that adding 1ppm fluoride to the drinking water would lower the incidence of dental decay in Mason City children by 65 percent. But they were in for a surprise. Some forward thinking scientists tested the existing water supply and found it already contained 1.25ppm of naturally occurring fluoride - even more than the "magic" number the experts claimed was needed to cut the decay rate.

Scientists at the Seibersdorf Research Center in Austria have reported that as little as 1ppm of fluoride slows down the activity of the immune system.

Fluoride can cause various genetic and chromosomal damage in plants, animals and humans. That would make them mutant cells - possible cancer candidates. The soldiers of your immune defense forces are slowed down every time you drink fluoridated water.

The immune system has to search out and destroy all the damaged cells in your entire body. When cells have to defend against these harmful substances, it increases the possibility that you will develop cancer. When the immune system is overworked by chasing them down, it can't take care of the mutant, precancerous cells.

THE REAL REASON FLUORIDE IS IN THE WATER

In 1938, a biochemist with the Mellon Institute came up with the idea of fluoridating drinking water supplies. He was supported by an attorney in the deal. What did these two have in common? Both had been associated with the Aluminum Company of America. Do you suppose the fact that fluoride being a waste product of aluminum manufacturing, had anything to do with their decision to dump it into the drinking water? What was the motive behind this move? What would you do if you produced over half a million tons of poison every year that you had to get rid of? Statistics from the National Society of Sciences show that U.S. industries pump over 100,000 tons of fluoride into the atmosphere every year, and dispose of another 500,000 tons by dumping it into the drinking water.

The attorney became director of the Social Security Department of the U.S. Public Health Service.

If fluoride is so bad for us, why do our health experts endorse fluoridation of our drinking water? It's because of ignorance, pride, greed and politics. The regulations that were set up were not based on truth.

If decisions are based on politics instead of truth, it will be devastating to people who are depending on their experts when the truth is finally revealed. For example, ever since the politicians and scientists endorsed fluoridation, they have been forced to defend it in the face of increasing worldwide opposition from many responsible scientists. As a result, the reputation of dental and health organizations has become irrevocably bound to the use of fluoride. Rejecting water fluoridation and treating teeth with fluoride will irreparably discredit the American Dental Association and the related research published by the U.S. Public Health Service.

AN INSIDIOUS AGENDA

There is clear evidence that certain individuals had yet another agenda for putting fluoride in the drinking water.

"Sugar, salt, tobacco, aluminum and fluoridated water over a period of years, with perhaps other slow poisons, will help to ensure that they expire before they retire. If there were fewer people bidding

against each other, money or credit would keep its value" (*Keeping Our Money Healthy*, Federal Reserve Bank - New York City).

We are drinking fluoridated water because it was put there on purpose by a consortium of banks whose desire is to control the masses. Some people recognize them as the Illuminati.

THE POLLUTION SOLUTION

If you live in the countryside, then you probably don't have to worry about chlorine and fluoride in your drinking water. But many towns and cities have both. Some people purchase either spring water or distilled water at a store or supermarket. If possible, it is advisable to buy water in glass bottles. The water in plastic containers becomes carcinogenic after 8 hours if sunlight passes through it at room temperature.

Another solution to water pollution is to purchase a home purifying system that you can hook up to your kitchen faucet. If you go this route, be sure to find a system that removes both fluoride and chlorine, along with all the peripheral pollutants and groundwater contaminants that abound everywhere. This way you can receive only the highest quality crystal-clear pure water and pure oxygen. Then you can have peace of mind knowing you are drinking water that is essential for good health.

THE DAY WITH A BLESSING

by Wayne Schatzle
West Chester, Ohio

With all the renewed interest in the Ten Commandments these days, one can only hope that we as a nation will see the extreme value in them.

The very future of our people may rest on if we allow God's rules for life to guide us or not. In reading the various essays presented by churches on this subject, it is interesting how they handle the Sabbath command. For the sake of their tradition, they will usually say the Sabbath was transferred from Saturday to Sunday. For some reason, keeping Saturday is bondage and Sunday is a blessing. Anyway, that is a point for study

all itself.

But let's say they are right and look at the Fourth Commandment from that standpoint. Most all articles I have seen quote Exodus 20 for the listing of the Ten Commandments. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it Holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: nor your son, daughter, nor manservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gate. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

It seems that the one command that is viewed as optional and is also the longest and the most forgotten starts out with "remember."

Many of us remember when the "blue laws" virtually shut down towns and forced a day of rest on the residents. As we read the commandment, that is exactly what God proscribed, where even "strangers" and animals in town were to rest.

I suppose pressure from merchants, those of different faiths and nonreligious folks caused the blue laws to fall into disuse over the years. Many felt it was quite a burden to rest the whole day. I am sure Israel of old enjoyed it after being in slavery for generations with no rest.

Notice how the Sabbath is observed now in these present days. It seems that the handful that still do keep the Sabbath holy have reduced it to just one hour in services, then go about their business. It was a national ordinance in Israel with a rather strict penalty for transgressing it.

"....Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a Sign between Me and you through out your generations... Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death... whoever does any work on that day shall be cut off from among his people ...it is a perpetual covenant... then He gave Moses the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God." (Exodus 31).

Even though it is legal to work on the Sabbath today, is it possible for a Spirit-led believer to transgress it? Does one searching after God need a civil law to keep it? Oddly enough, the Sabbath command is the only command we can keep. More often than not, it was used by God as a test command to see if those called by His name will obey. How are

you doing in your test?

Almost lost in the obedience argument are the words of Isaiah: "If you turn your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your business on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and honorable ...then you shall delight yourself in the Lord... and He shall cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father... the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

In these incredibly busy times, the Sabbath command may be the most important commandment, if for nothing else for our mental and physical health. Why not start this week to draw near to your Heavenly Father. Turn off the cell phone, television and other toys that consume your life. Mark your planner ahead of time that you and your family will be busy that day seeking your Creator. Establish a kinship with a Father who loves you and misses the quality time with His children.

(Wayne Schatzle is director of the Freedom Biblical Information Center in West Chester.)

SEEK SHALOM AND PURSUE IT!

**by Jeffrey A. Caldwell
Cupertino, California**

"To the Jews who had believed in him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32 NIV unless indicated otherwise). We come to know the living Word of God by holding to his teachings -- by doing as the Word of God commands, as Jesus, the living word of God, did. Knowing God is a matter of experience; to know the Holy One, we must "do" as the Holy One does, by His grace.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..." (Proverbs 1:7). David says: "Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord..." (Psalm 34:10). He then prescribes things for us to DO, confirming that knowing God is by experience. We grow in reverence for the Eternal by walking as Jesus walked, thereby tasting of his

wisdom and love and suffering. The highest aspect of fearing the Eternal is: "seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14b).

In a Forerunner magazine article about peacemakers, John Ritenbaugh points out that what the Lord means by "peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9) is much more than current connotations of the English word 'peace' seem to indicate. David speaks in Hebrew; it is shalom that he urges us to seek to learn to hold-in-awe the Eternal. To give us a fuller understanding of what the Word of God means by "peace" John quotes from William Barclay (Daily Bible Study Series, Volume 1, page 108):

"In Hebrew peace is never only a negative state; it never means only the absence of trouble; in Hebrew peace always means everything which makes for a man's highest good. In the East when one man says to another, Salaam--which is the same word--he does not mean that he wishes for the other man only the absence of evil things; he wishes for the presence of all good things. In the Bible peace means not only freedom from all trouble; it means enjoyment of all good."

In the light of this understanding "seek peace, pursue it" takes on the meaning that God intends rather than the poor substitute that too many settle for or even urge, mistakenly thinking 'peace' refers merely to the absence of active strife!

Regarding being 'peacemakers' Ritenbaugh notes: "Paul writes in Romans 12:18, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." Undoubtedly, Jesus did this, but it did not produce peace at that time." Any pilgrim who sets his or her heart on being a genuine 'peacemaker' in this present evil world will more than likely come to sing with feeling: "Too long have I lived among those who hate peace. I am for peace; but whenever I speak of it, they are for war" (Psalm 120:6-7 REB)! The real powers that be, the spiritual powers of this present evil world are not interested in any person's highest good and are set on setting back anyone who seeks it!

Concerning the precept 'seek peace and pursue it', John Ritenbaugh concludes: "far from being a simple task, complying with it will call upon our constant vigilance, self-control and earnest prayer."

Genuine peace centers in agreement with God, who certainly wants everything that makes for each and every man's highest good. Paul pleads with Christians at odds "to agree with each other in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2) -- the Lord's will is our common ground! May each of us find the grace to seek and find out and as need be contend graciously for, His will! When we speak and act with godly wisdom, the Eternal is pleased: "A wise son brings joy to his father"! (Proverbs 10:1b).

Ironically, pursuing genuine peace may well involve contending and confronting. It is entirely in the spirit of seeking shalom and pursuing it that Jude urges: "...contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3)! When Messiah comes to wage war, it will be seeking shalom and pursuing it! For good cause those called to be holy are likened to soldiers!

[Forerunner is the thought-provoking magazine of the Church of the Great God]

STANDING FIRM

**by June Narber
Raleigh, North Carolina**

As Sabbath observers, we sometimes encounter unpleasant situations in which our very commitment to the Sabbath is continually being challenged. After seventeen years of being a committed Sabbath observer, the last three years have been increasingly challenging for me.

Having completed my Masters Degree during the summer of 1998, my life had seemed to finally have reached a plateau. A goal I had worked toward, for some time, finally was accomplished. Observing the Sabbath had been difficult during this time as there were so many paper deadlines to be met; living in Thailand for three months, alone and without brethren to associate with; and probably just the growing isolation I was feeling, having separated myself from a large corporate Church of God, Sabbath keeping Church. No longer playing "obedient little church woman", I suddenly found myself shunned from many friends

that I thought would have been life long friends, I made while at Ambassador College. Exploring new ways of socializing, I spent an adequate amount of time on the Internet church forums. While these were both positive and negative experiences, I found more negativity, in the fact that a few individuals seem to take pleasure in spreading gossip, ill will, and even personal attacks through the increasingly popular email system. I had to ask myself, is being part of the Sabbath really worth continually getting my feelings hurt and my person attacked when I disagreed with the latest wild speculation on prophecy or even challenged some of the long held views about my right as a human being or from being a woman and the right to develop my mind and talents as I saw fit, and as God opened up the doors of opportunity?

The Sabbath is both a public and personal experience. It is public in the sense that we share "community" with others of like-minded and "mind" opened individuals who have been given this understanding of God's law. The Sabbath is also a private experience as it is observed internally as well as externally. Our mind is set apart for 24 hours to both reflect, dwell within, and study God's way of life, His Word, and even to think "out of the box" as the holy spirit guides as we develop deeper understanding of God's truths.

Personal trials and situations (personal scenarios that are not severe enough to be classified as divinely allowed trials, but irritating or unpleasant enough to make daily life challenging) erode our carnal and fleshly mental outlook. But through this process, a deeper spiritual person emerges. It cannot be explained scientifically, but it can be felt and experienced individually. The Holy Spirit's influence is literally a recreation of self from the inside out. Maybe that is why some trials feel like they are turning our insides out. Spiritually, this is exactly what is happening.

Have you met people who can talk for hours about the meaning of every Hebrew and Greek word, but who seem to lack having any form of compassion for you, the person they are speaking with? Lack of awareness and sensitivity can be a warning sign that something is wrong with someone. Knowledge without

wisdom is like love never quite reaching the heart and being felt. It can be known about and talked about, but unless felt and shared with others, it is utterly useless.

Standing firm in our personal commitments, including the Sabbath comes not only through personal dedication, but through something much deeper. If doing something is making your life more physically unpleasant, why keep doing it? If observing the Sabbath has increased personal pain through broken relationships, trials, lost opportunities, personal attacks, shunning by others who are supposed to be Sabbath keepers; gossip; name calling; and so on, *why keep doing it?* That is the simplest thing to answer: because God commands it, and if we want part of Him, the Sabbath is the path to fellowship with Him. He has placed His presence in NO OTHER DAY of the week.

I'm taking God at His word. He has promised not only immortality for obeying His laws, but also ruler ship with Jesus Christ in His Kingdom. No matter what trials or problems haunt my doorstep at this moment in time, NOTHING can be compared to the coming power, glory, and fellowship we will experience for all eternity. Standing firm is worth whatever the sacrifice. However, that doesn't mean we have to cave in to whatever mishap is upon us. It means relying on HIM to give us the personal strength, knowledge, and power to get through the situation (and that includes going under, over, or around the obstacle-maybe even plowing right through it) to "keep on trucking" toward the eternity. I've heard of this door mat mentality, where Christians are supposed to lie down and let everything walk all over us. Why would we then be told to put on the full armor of Jesus Christ? That sounds like preparing to wage battle instead of lying down in defeat. Part of the calling we have is that we are each unique and individual creations by the hand of God. We each have our quirks, and most of all, we have our own thoughts and feelings that we are entitled to. I encourage everyone to develop their talents and pursue their personal goals regardless of what other people say. If some had their way, we'd be crammed into a box the size of a cigar box labeled, "obedient, thought controlled, and good financial supporters"; A box of individuals who pay, pray, stay and obey. In fact, a

group of people so controlled by their belief structure and church government and social expectations, it is a rarity to find one ounce of original creative thought in the whole box! God doesn't like this. He works in and around our personal strengths and weaknesses; loving us in spite of and sometimes maybe for these oddities.

Stand firm in your own spiritual race. Don't let any human take your crown of life. That crown is just sitting there with Christ waiting for you, as is He. Who cares what fellow humans think of the path you walk to be with Jesus Christ and the Father? **STAND FIRM!**

---submitted by June Narber, a member of the Board of Directors for BSA.

IF YOU FIND BIBLICAL ERRORS IN ANY OF THESE ARTICLES, PLEASE EMAIL US WITH THE DETAILS.
OR SEND US THE DETAILS VIA SNAIL MAIL.
ALL CONTACT INFORMATION IS ON PAGE #2.
Laura Lee (Editor)

We want to give a special **THANK YOU** to everyone who has submitted an article, a letter, or information to this newsletter, since it started 2 years ago. Also we give a special **THANK YOU** to those who help us with postage and printing costs so we can continue to send this newsletter and forward get well cards to those who cannot afford to help.
THANK YOU
Darwin & Laura Lee

NEWSLETTER--BACK ISSUES [Snail Mail Only]

- _____ 1. January/February 2001--Issue No. 1
A. UCG Attendance Policy Raises More Questions (From Servant's News)
B. Humor--Public Service Announcement (From Servant's News)
C. Ending the Cycle of Abuse in the Church of God--by Laura Lee
- _____ 2. March/April 2001--Issue No.2
A. Humor--A Parable and Evolution
B. Is Disfellowshipping a Christian Practice?--by Arlan Weight
C. Just Judgment Important for Local Congregations--by Darwin Lee & Norman Edwards
D. Letter of Appeal--by Ned Dancuo
E. Go To Your Brother....--by Arlan Weight
- _____ 3. May/June 2001--Issue No. 3
A. Are You Busy?--by Turning Point Ranch Ministries
B. Letters Section--What is Anger? What is a Heart? What is Division? What is Individual Responsibility?
C. Passover--by Arlan Weight
D. Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage--by Laura Lee
- _____ 4. July/August 2001--Issue No. 4
A. The Titanic--Then and Now--by Myra McQueen
B. Woe....--by Tawanda Ray (Poem)
C. Testimony of Abuse Within the Church of God--by Tawanda Ray
D. Bear Witness--by Tawanda Ray (Poem)
E. God's Government--by Arlan Weight
F. Gifts of the Spirit--by Laura Lee
- _____ 5. September/October 2001--Issue No. 5
A. Where Are God's People?--by Laura Lee
B. They Sang As It Were A New Song Before The Throne--by Author Unknown
C. Fat Cats, Fat Cats--by Tawanda Ray (Poem)
D. First Love--by Arlan Weight
E. Why Do You Observe Saturday?--by John Currier
F. A Church Without Women--by Dianne D. McDonnell
- _____ 6. November/December 2001--Issue No. 6
A. "Unless You Change..."--by Royce Mitchell, Jr.
B. Paul and Women Teachers:--by Dianne D. McDonnell
C. Delight in the Sabbath--by James McBride
D. Physical Illness and Demon Possession--by Don Esposito
E. Demon Possession and How it Comes About--by Don Esposito
F. Truth--by Arlan Weight
- _____ 7. January/February 2002--Issue No. 7
A. Junia, A Woman Apostle--by Dianne D. McDonnell
B. The Christian Sabbath Part #1--by Catholic Mirror 1893
C. Be Strong and of Good Courage--by Tommy S. West
D. "They Shall Not Hurt Nor Destroy..."--Arlan Weight
E. Take Heed That No Man Deceive You--by Garry D. Pifer
- _____ 8. March/April 2002--Issue No. 8
A. "Things I've Learned From Treasure"--by Vanessa Lorentzen
B. The Christian Sabbath Part #2--by Catholic Mirror 1893
C. Leadership in the Church of God--by James McBride
D. Fellowship? With Whom?--by Royce Mitchell, Jr.
E. Can You Be Deceived?--by Wayne Schatzle
F. Mary, Mother of Jesus--by Bill Bratt
G. To Cover or Not to Cover--by Rhoda Foust
- _____ 9. May/June 2002--Issue No. 9
A. The Christian Sabbath Part #3--by Catholic Mirror 1893
B. The Commandment Considered 'Optional'--by Wayne Schatzle
C. "She Is Not Dead But Sleeps..."--by Arlan Weight
D. Resurrections-How Many?--by Rhoda Foust
- _____ 10. July/August 2002--Issue No. 10
A. Four Letters To Us & Others
B. The Christian Sabbath Part #4--by Catholic Mirror 1893
C. Counting To Pentecost--by Arlan Weight
D. The Spirit of Reconciliation--by Wayne Schatzle
E. "Ezekiel's Prophecy and Revelation 20"--by Rhoda Foust
F. The Cancer Answer--by Alex Nicholson
G. Warning to Teachers--by Doyle J. Carter
H. Intentional Deceptive Practices and Lying--by Laura Lee
I. Afflictions--by Michael Porter
- _____ 11. September/October 2002--Issue No. 11
A. Three Letters To Us & Others
B. The Christian Sabbath Part #5--by Catholic Mirror 1893
C. "The Precious Fruit of the Earth"--by Arlan Weight
D. Missing Mercy and Love Ingredients--Part #1--by Ted Saunders
E. Christians Strive to be 'Chosen' Generation--by Wayne Schatzle
F. Learning to Wait--Michael Porter
G. Who Is, or Is Not Free To Marry?--by Rhoda Foust
- _____ 12. November/December 2002--Issue No. 12
A. Grace vs. Law--sent by Rusty Ames
B. How Do You Identify A 'Laodicean'?--sent by Jeffrey Caldwell
C. The Christian Sabbath-Part #6--by Catholic Mirror 1893
D. Missing Mercy and Love Ingredients--Part #2--by Ted Saunders
E. Christmas Has Pagan Roots--by Wayne Schatzle
F. From Trouble to Joy--by Michael Porter
G. Addicted to Authority--by June Narber
H. Preparation For Righteous Rulership--by Norman Edwards
I. Four Letters To Us & Others

SEND ORDERS TO:

Darwin & Laura Lee
320 N. Griffin St.
Bismarck, ND 58501
(701) 258-7172

SEND TAPES & LITERATURE TO:

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____

I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE PRAYER REQUESTS AND UPDATES VIA SNAIL MAIL.

Darwin & Laura Lee Name _____
320 N. Griffin St. Address _____
Bismarck, ND 58501 _____
(701) 258-7172 Phone _____

Please send your prayer request by snail mail to: Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502
By E-mail to: Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@juno.com By Fax to: (775) 239-2119.

THESE TAPES ARE FROM THE BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM IN MINNESOTA. FOR INFORMATION ON THE BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM YOU MAY CONTACT DALE & DONA FEHR AT DLFehr@compuserve.com TAPES MAY BE ORDERED THROUGH US.

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ 1. C. Wayne Cole 12-18-99 | _____ 2. Ray Wooten 3-25-00 |
| _____ 3. Wayne & Claudia Speed 4-22&23-00
Marriage Seminar (5 Tapes & Study Papers) | _____ 4. Ken Westby 6-10&11-00 (2 Tapes) |
| _____ 5. Dave Havir 9-9-00 | _____ 6. Norm Edwards 11-18-00 (2 Tapes) |
| _____ 7. Dennis Mouland 3-10-01 (2 Tapes) | _____ 8. Ron Dart 4-28-01 (2 Tapes) |
| _____ 9. Ron Smith 5-26&27-01 (3 Tapes) | _____ 10. David Antion 7-28-01 (2 Tapes) |
| _____ 11. Dean & Susan Wheelock 9-15-01 (2 Tapes) | _____ 12. Leon Sexton 11-17-01 (2 Tapes) |
| _____ 13. Marv Davis 2-9-02 (2 Tapes) | _____ 14. Mark Kaplan 6-29-02 |
| _____ 15. Ion Hufton 9-7-02 | _____ 16. Arnold Mendez 11-9-02 (3 Tapes & Study Papers) |

OTHER TAPES

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. Nimrod's Effect on the Church Today
Wes White 6-17-00 | _____ 2. Spiritual Gifts (3 Tapes & Study Papers)
Wayne & Claudia Speed |
| _____ 3. Church of God Big Sandy Seminar (3 Tapes)
12-23&24-00 | _____ 4. Interview With Dixon Cartright, by Ken Westby
6-9-01 |
| _____ 5. The Holy Spirit
Wayne Speed | _____ 6. Keynote Message For The Tulsa Conference
C. Wayne Cole & Dixon Cartwright 7-22-00 |
| _____ 7. The Hireling & the Wolf --Brian Convery (3 Tapes) | _____ 8. Noah's Ark Seminar--Arnold Mendez (Study Papers) |
| _____ 9. Origins--Arnold Mendez | _____ 10. Evolution: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups--Arnold Mendez |

LITERATURE [Snail Mail Only]

- _____ 1. Why Were We Disfellowshipped By The United Church of God an International Association? by Darwin & Laura Lee 111 pages
_____ 2. Wiley & Suzanne Black (Another Case of Abuse) by Bernard Kelly (The Bible Expositor--Last Issue) 16 pages
_____ 3. The Garnet Hill Story (Another Case of Abuse) 28 pages