

CHURCH OF THE
E T E R N A L

“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

June 2, 2008

Dear Brethren, Co-Workers and Friends:

When you receive this letter, the annual Feast of Pentecost has almost arrived. The Church of God has understood for many years that Pentecost must be kept on a Sunday—counting 50 days from the *Sunday*, which falls *within* the annual Holy Days of Unleavened Bread. We explain how to count Pentecost (as well as the reasons why we have to keep it today) in chapter 3 of our free booklet, *“The Meaning of God’s Spring Holy Days.”*

Not everyone in the Church understands or believes that we must keep Pentecost when most of us do, and some have begun to “observe” Pentecost at a different time.

Some maintain and uphold a mistake, which the Church of God had made many decades ago (but which was corrected in 1974/75), when it erroneously concluded that Pentecost had to be kept on a Monday. Others count the 50 days leading to Pentecost from the Sabbath (not Sunday), which falls within the Days of Unleavened Bread. Still others reject the concept of postponements relative to the Hebrew calendar, and have therefore created alternate dates when to keep Pentecost. (And then, there are some who have changed the dates strictly because of “convenience”).

We should easily see that these different approaches have led to confusion and disunity in the body of Christ, rather than to “the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:13). When we are wrong in our understanding, we must change; but unless we can *clearly* see from Scripture that we are mistaken on a given point in doctrine, we are to “hold fast what [we] have” (Revelation 3:11) and to even “contend earnestly for the faith which was *once for all* delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

We read that the disciples “were all with one accord in one place,” when the Day of Pentecost arrived (Acts 2:1). With the approach which some are taking today, they would *not* have been all assembled in one place at the same time, and they would *not* have received the Holy Spirit on that day (Acts 2:4, 33).

God’s Spirit gives us the right kind of knowledge and understanding of His Truth. It bestows on us the power to overcome our shortcomings, and it replaces in us the pride of the “revelation” of perceived special knowledge with the humility of a willing acceptance of God’s unsearchable riches of divine wisdom. And, it gives us a willing heart to seek peace and to reconcile with our fellow man.

Unity, reconciliation and peace go together. In fact, there cannot be true unity without reconciliation. We understand, of course, that it takes two to tango—lasting and peaceful reconciliation can only be achieved when all parties are willing to bring it about. We read that some are not interested in peaceful relationships, and recognizing this fact, Paul admonishes us in Romans 12:18: “*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*”

On the other hand, there should never be an excuse for converted Spirit-begotten members within the body of Christ, not to live in peace with each other. As we are to *preach* the “gospel of peace” and reconciliation to others (Romans 10:15; Ephesians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20), so we must learn how to reconcile with our brother (Matthew 5:23-24) and to *live* in peace among ourselves. We are to be *peacemakers* (Matthew 5:9; James 3:18), *pursuing* “the things which make for peace” (Romans 14:19).

With God’s Holy Spirit dwelling within us and motivating and leading us to live God’s Way of Life, we must not continue to harbor grudges or have resentment against our fellow brethren, who have likewise received God’s Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God, which we all desire to inherit, is defined as one of “righteousness and peace and joy *in the Holy Spirit*” (Romans 14:17). In fact, Paul tells us in Hebrews 12:14: “*Pursue* peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”

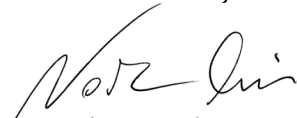
God is the *author* of peace—not of confusion, which is the opposite of unity (1 Corinthians 14:33). God gives us the ability, through the gift of His Holy Spirit, to really *want to make* peace with others. Paul prayed that the “Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way” (2 Thessalonians 3:16). We are *called* to peace with our fellow man (1 Corinthians 7:15). Paul admonished the brethren to “let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were *called in one body*” (Colossians 3:15). He also beseeched the church in Ephesus to “walk worthy of the *calling* with which you were called... endeavoring to keep the *unity of the Spirit* in the *bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:1, 3).

As mentioned before, unity, peace and reconciliation go together. We cannot be unified, as we ought to be, when we neglect to hold fast what we have been taught, thereby creating disunity and confusion within the body of Christ, and when we refuse to reconcile and live in peace—and especially with those in the household of God.

Dear brethren and friends, let us all resolve to celebrate this Pentecost with a Spirit of joy, thankfulness, reconciliation, unity and peace. It is possible to do so, and as true Christians, we must! Paul tells all of us in 1 Thessalonians 5:13-22: “... Be at peace among yourselves... be patient with all... always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit... Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”

If we apply and live by these injunctions, then the “God of peace” (Hebrews 13:20) will in fact be with all of us (Romans 15:33)—and that for all eternity.

With brotherly love,



Norbert Link