
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.” – Mathew 24:14

February 19, 2002

Dear Brethren,

We are excited to tell you that we have just completed our first Ministerial Conference since the formation of the Church of the Eternal God (CEG), where we were all able to come together and discuss important issues and to plan for the coming year. It has been our practice in the ministry of CEG to have a weekly meeting via telephone, just to stay in touch with one another, to keep us all apprised of what is happening in the various areas of the Church, and to make plans for continuing activities. Now, the North American ministers were able to meet for the first time, face to face, since the inception of CEG. We wish to give you a full report of this most successful Ministerial Conference.

From the outset of this small work of God, it has been our purpose and intent to provide a service to God's people who wish to adhere to those beliefs we hold dear, which were taught to us through the Holy Scriptures by God's end-time apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. We asked God, at the inception of this work, that He give each of us in the ministry an extra measure of His Spirit, so that we would be able to discern error, and to help us avoid walking in a way contrary to Him. We also asked that He help each of us in the ministry to be led by that Spirit, to help us be humble in our dealings with one another and with the brethren, and be submissive to one another in all things.

We are sorry to have to tell you that one of our founding ministers has refused to continue to walk with us in this important endeavor. We have had disagreements for several months now, and it appears there is no place for reconciliation. The scripture asks the question, “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” (Amos 3: 3). Of course the answer is, they cannot!

Mr. Warren Zehrung and his wife chose not to attend the conference and, thus, to discontinue their participation in CEG. We are sorry they have come to this decision, which resulted in Mr. Zehrung's dismissal. In an effort to make clear the Church's position in the matter of a ministerial dismissal, we're enclosing herein a copy of Mr. Armstrong's writing on the subject published in the Pastor General's Report dated February 19, 1982. Although not everything stated in the article is applicable to the situation at hand, many of the spiritual principles described therein are applicable, in our judgment. Mr. Armstrong never explained all the details leading to these decisions in depth to the brethren in order to protect the minister who was being corrected. We will follow that example.

We are also compelled to tell you that, in accordance with Biblical commands, the doctrine and long-standing practice of God's Church, Mr. Warren Zehrung has been disfellowshipped. The reason for the disfellowshippment and the necessity of this notification is based upon a spiritual and ecclesiastical determination by the ministry of CEG. Certain scriptures you might be desirous of reviewing in this regard are as follows: Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14. God's command to disfellowship and to notify in certain cases, is not to punish, but to lead the person to repentance and to spiritually protect the flock. The Church does not, and you should not, bear any ill-will toward Mr. Zehrung. Rather, we should pray that God will grant him repentance.

We are happy to be able to announce that for some time now, Mr. Rene Messier has been under consideration for ordination in the ministry of the Church of God and that ordination was performed this past Sabbath. We welcome Mr. Messier, a long-time deacon, in this new capacity, which will allow him to more fully serve the Canadian brethren.

Concerning the meetings, which lasted for three full days, we were able to come to agreement on a number of issues of importance relative to the ongoing activities of CEG. Following is a summary of the conclusions we have reached.

We have made an inclusion in our Statement of Beliefs, which will explain our understanding of Mr. Armstrong's role and function in the Church of God. This concept was included in our bylaws from the inception of CEG, but is now being added to our Statement of Beliefs so that there is no misunderstanding as to our position in this matter. The inclusion we are adding to our Statement of Beliefs is:

The major doctrines of the Church are those, which were taught by Herbert W. Armstrong, derived from the biblical teachings as followed by God's faithful servants, and originally established by Jesus Christ through the founding of His Church in the time of His chosen early apostles. Since we are to increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we are committed to review and alter any of our teachings, if and when proven to be wrong by the Bible.

As to our plans for preaching the Gospel to the world utilizing our limited physical resources, we continue to examine our options. A plan was outlined for the writing, review, production, and publishing of nine new booklets for the calendar year 2002. Five booklets were distributed in the first six months of the existence of CEG. Presently, we have booklets on "Europe in Prophecy," "The Meaning of Evolution," "The Gospel of the Kingdom of God," "Don't Keep Christmas," and "Is God a Trinity?".

For the calendar year, 2002, we plan to produce booklets on "Do We Have an Immortal Soul?," "Marriage and the Family," "Inspiration of the Bible," "What is the Church?," "God's Sabbath," "God's Annual Holy Days," "Baptism," "Prayer," and "The Meaning for Today of the Old Testament Sacrifices." Edwin Pope, Norbert Link, Dave Harris, and Rene Messier will write these booklets. Additionally, we plan to publish for distribution numerous articles on various subjects of interest throughout the year.

Relative to the utilization of the Internet, the CEG website, and television; we have determined that the most effective use of funds available to us at this time dictates that the programs produced for television will be posted to our website, along with written materials produced by CEG. We will, of course, continue to produce hard copies of all written materials for those desiring them, and will be using these publications in various ad campaigns.

The Canadian brethren will be running half page ads in Readers Digest in which they will be advertising the "Evolution" and "Europe in Prophecy" booklets. The Readers Digest edition with the current ad will hit the newsstands in Canada on March 18. The British brethren have had a successful ad program in recent months with the "Europe in Prophecy" booklet. Our brethren in Canada have agreed to finance five booklets for the coming year and the British brethren have agreed to finance four booklets.

We will continue to perfect the live broadcasts of sermons and Bible studies, as well as making our sermons available on the web, in addition to our regular audiotape program. We regularly use the Internet for live Holy Day services. Our plan, this year, is to also use the Internet to make available to those with computers and not able to attend the Feast, live services throughout the Feast. Additionally, we will be producing audiotapes relative to the Holy Days for those unable to receive the Internet services. We will also have available videotapes of Holy Day services for groups preferring them. A Passover audiotape will be available for individuals and groups without a minister and will be posted on the web.

A travel schedule for ministerial visits throughout Canada and the US was discussed and tentative plans have been established.

The topic of Divorce and Remarriage (D&R) was discussed in depth in response to recent inquiries questioning the present understanding of the Church. Our position on the D&R question remains unchanged and reflects the teachings of the Church at the time of Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986. A detailed statement will be published in the near future.

After studying the scriptures along with past decisions of the Church relative to women writing biblical, prophetic, ecclesiastical, or spiritual articles, we have come to the conclusion that the Church's decisions of the past were accurate and that women should not write such articles. It would be appropriate for women to write articles in addressing topics such as child rearing, homemaking, cooking, or other matters relating more to our physical lives, thereby avoiding a possible conflict in writing about spiritual matters.

The Bible tells us; "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." (I Cor 14: 34, KJV). And, in I Tim 2: 11-13, KJV, we are told; "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve."

We discussed how one is to keep God's Sabbath and what type activities would not be appropriate for the Sabbath. Additional research and discussion will follow. A booklet on the Sabbath and God's Holy Days will soon be in the works.

The subject of baptism and what a new convert needs to know and understand before baptism was discussed. A booklet will be written on this subject later in the year.

We discussed potential cooperation with other Church of God groups who are reported to believe and practice as we do. We have made tentative plans to meet with one such group in early March and will report our findings to you after that meeting.

Finally we have determined, at this point, that we will have one feast site in North America this year and that site will be in Penticton, Canada. Penticton is a long-standing feast site of the Church, and is known for its beauty and serenity, picturesque vineyards, gentle mountain slopes, and dramatic clay cliffs.

From the standpoint of practicality, it would certainly be a hardship for our Canadian brethren, with the exchange rate at its current level, for them to come to a US feast site. They would have to spend \$1.5697 to acquire one US dollar. In contrast, there is a great advantage we in the US have going into Canada. One traveling into Canada with US dollars can take \$1,000.00 and purchase \$1,569.70 Canadian. A US dollar goes a long way in Canada.

But more than that, we are a small organization. It does not seem feasible for us to try to maintain two feast sites with such a small group. Therefore, after considering all the facts, God has led us to place His name for CEG in Penticton as the site for the Feast of Tabernacles—2002.

In Christ's Service



Edwin Pope

ATTACHMENT (Mr. Armstrong's letter):