

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

March 5, 2003

Dear Brethren and Co-workers:

We have just completed our second annual Ministerial Conference since the inception of the *Church of the Eternal God*. From the U.S., Edwin Pope, Norbert and Johanna Link, and Dave and Peggy Harris attended. In addition, Rene and Delia Messier from Canada, and Brian and Jill Gale from the United Kingdom were able to attend as well, as were our Webmaster, Wray Zehring, and – for portions of the conference – his wife Jule.

We discussed numerous important issues, including matters of doctrine and administration, as well as different ways to preach the gospel and to feed the flock.

All of us are thrilled by the possibilities that are set before us. In order to accomplish our part in this God-given task, we do strongly believe that God will revive His Work one more time, just before the coming of Jesus Christ to this earth. Habakkuk 1:5 tells us: “Look among the nations and watch—Be utterly astonished! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you.” This will happen at the time when the beast power in Europe is about to rise (vv. 6-11). This prophecy is referring primarily to our time, and speaks mainly of the preaching of the gospel. In Acts 13:38-41, Paul quotes from Habakkuk 1:5 and applies it to the preaching of the gospel.

God’s great and powerful end-time Work will need to include a warning message to the nations of this world, before calamity strikes (compare Ezekiel 30:1-3; 38:1-11). Although the two witnesses and the third angel will undoubtedly play a major role in fulfilling this prophecy (compare Revelation 11:3; 14:6-7), God’s warning message must begin to reach the nations of this world *before* the two witnesses and the third angel appear (since their preaching will only commence *after* the Great Tribulation has begun).

The carrying out of God’s commission to the Church will also bring about a revival of the hearts of God’s people (Malachi 4:5-6). Many of God’s people have become careless and far too indifferent to all of the manifold aspects of God’s truth. We are living today in the Laodicean era, but we must not be Laodiceans. They will not be protected from the Great Tribulation to come. We must be on fire – zealous and determined to perform God’s Will – even though many in the different Church of God organizations today do not seem to see a need to continue to preach the gospel to the world. They do not understand the prophecy of Matthew 24:14. In becoming lax and non-committed regarding this vital aspect of God’s commission, they also lose zeal in regard to their personal lives. Mr. Armstrong taught us consistently that those who have their heart in the Work are those who overcome the most and the fastest. Those who don’t may even become guilty of actually delaying the return of Jesus Christ. Compare 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise [of Christ’s return], as some count slackness, but is longsuffering *toward us*, not willing that any [of us] should perish but that all [of us – those who have been called for salvation in this present age] should come to repentance.”

We cannot afford to fall into the trap of complacency. So, our conference reflected the consensus within the ministry to DO the Work – as much as God allows us to. How could we carry out our part of God’s commission, small as we are? Amazingly, God has set before us an open door of possibilities and potential, which was not even available in Mr. Armstrong’s days. (Revelation 3:8: “I know your works. See, I have set before you *an open door*, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept my word, and have not denied My name.”)

This open door to preach the gospel (1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12) includes the marvelous invention of the Internet. We in the *Church of the Eternal God* have already, for many months, taken advantage of this powerful tool by broadcasting live our weekly sermons on the Sabbath, and by posting the sermons, as well as all of our literature, on our Webpage. Through the invention of communication by email, we have also sent out 82 weekly Updates to our subscribers, informing them about important events in the world in light of biblical prophecy, as well as instructing them in the word of God through Editorials and Question and Answer sections. (If you don’t receive our Updates and would like to receive them, please let us know. If you don’t have email access, we would be glad to send you our Updates in hard copy form.)

These Updates have been enthusiastically received by many of you. This has led to the idea to produce a weekly telecast, to be posted and distributed via the Internet. These several minute programs will be presented by Norbert Link (an elder for several years, who was ordained during the conference to the rank of Pastor), who will speak about current world conditions in light of biblical prophecy. The production of these programs is scheduled to begin in April, after Mr. Link has returned from his trip to Germany.

We also discussed means to advertise these programs, as well as all of our literature. We are convicted of the need to reach beyond the confines of the greater Church of God community. We are already doing so, to an extent, through our Webpage, but much more needs to be done.

In order to be successful tools in God's hands to do our part in preaching the gospel message in all the world and to feed the flock, we ourselves need to be pure. That is, both our individual lives and the official teachings of the *Church of the Eternal God* must be in harmony with the Will of God.

We, therefore, spent a considerable time during the conference to discuss questions that we had received from some of you pertaining to certain doctrines. These discussions included the understanding of divorce and remarriage, the use of gelatin, makeup, birthdays, and the use of the symbol of a heart. They also included the practical application of the command not to be unequally yoked together, and how to apply the command to eat unleavened bread for seven days during the Days of Unleavened Bread. We will address these issues shortly in more detail in our Question and Answer sections.

Another important event during the conference to foster unity and harmony amongst all of our ministers was the appointment of Rene Messier from Canada and Brian Gale from the United Kingdom to our Board of Directors. The *Church of the Eternal God's* Board consists now of the following persons:

Edwin Pope – President and Director;  
Norbert Link – Vice President and Director;  
Dave Harris – Treasurer and Director;  
Rene Messier – Director;  
Brian Gale – Director.  
In addition – Margaret Adair is serving as our Secretary.

We also discussed various subjects to be covered in future booklets to be written and published this year. The next booklet, titled, "God is a Family," has been written and is presently undergoing review. It was felt that the most important booklet to be written next is one on Baptism. Other topics will include "born again"; the sequence of events until the return of Jesus Christ; what is the Work of God?; Satan and the spirit world; and proofs of the existence of God. Additional subjects will be addressed in our weekly Updates, including questions such as, why do innocent people die in accidents?; what is a true Christian?; and what is the meaning of salvation?

Sometimes we receive questions as to whether or not we will be producing a magazine. Although we would like to do so, we are presently not able, due to our manpower and finances. However, it was pointed out during the conference that we already have a magazine of sorts – in the form of our weekly Updates. These unique Updates consist on an average of seven to ten pages each. Taken together, our weekly Updates now constitute a forty- to fifty- page monthly document or magazine.

Another question was raised whether we might start a Bible Correspondence Course. Again, we feel that we have already begun the equivalent of such a Course with our booklets. These booklets are very detailed and we recommend that the reader check and read the Scriptures for himself (herself), in order to understand these in-depth publications. (The same is true, by the way, for our Editorials and Question and Answer sections in our Updates). We have received comments from some of you, pointing out that the biblical depth of our literature cannot be found in other publications. To grasp and internalize the depth of our literature, however, it is necessary for one to study and re-study the quoted Scriptures.

We also discussed the danger of listening to, or attending with those who teach wrong doctrines. Long-time experience has proven that this is not the right course of action, as spiritual influences can and do affect the doctrinal soundness of the individual. Some think that they are so strong that they could not be influenced, but this idea has been proven to be a regrettable self-deception.

Another important topic during the conference was the means of advertising to new readers and listeners our literature and the upcoming broadcast. Several very good proposals were made, which we will be investigating. We are convinced that God wants us to use the most effective and least expensive way in doing so, and we believe that He has already revealed to us several options. More information on these exciting possibilities will be soon forthcoming.

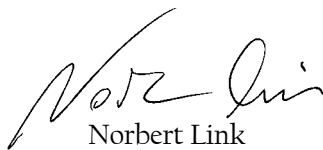
As you can see, our part in God's Work is cut out for us. Now is not the time to sleep (Romans 13:11), but to be sober and vigilant (1 Peter 5:8). This world is waiting for the manifestation of God's children (Romans 8:18-23; 1 John 3:1-2). The time is short. Paul tells us, "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 4:15).

While this world grows darker and darker, God's light will shine in and through those who are truly His. This light cannot and must not be hidden. God's Work of light must shine into this dark world. We have all been called to participate in it. Let us not shrink away from our awesome responsibilities.

With brotherly love,



Edwin Pope



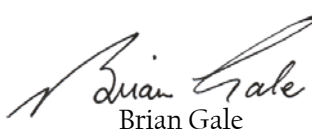
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