

CHURCH OF THE  
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*"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*

October 25, 2004

Dear Brethren and Co-workers with Christ:

My wife Johanna and I have just returned from Europe, where we kept the Feast in England. Afterwards, we visited with our relatives in Germany. In my last member letter to you, dated July 13, 2004, I wrote this:

"... I reflected on the awesome job, which God gave His Church – the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God in all the world as a witness or testimony – so that Jesus Christ can return to this earth. Do we realize how much this world needs to hear the good news or gospel message – the same message that Jesus Christ preached, when He was here on the earth?"

It may sound like a broken record, but I want to continue with this theme in this letter. There is a reason for doing so. Some have apparently forgotten what the commission of the Church of God is. Over the years, some have even left our fellowship, because they no longer believe that we are to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God into all the world. They allege that the Work is over and done with – all that is left for us to do is to prepare, individually and collectively, for the return of Christ.

There can be no doubt that the Church – the bride of Christ – is to make herself ready (Revelation 19:7). The ministry has an awesome responsibility to assist in this regard. It's another way of saying that the Church has – and always has had – a two-fold commission: to preach the gospel and to feed the flock. Both aspects of that one commission go hand in hand. But do we realize, dear brethren, that we prepare the best – overcome our weaknesses the best – if our heart is in the Work; if we are involved in the preaching of the gospel? If all we are concentrating on is how to get into the kingdom – how to get salvation for ourselves – then we are acting selfishly, lacking the outpouring godly love for the welfare and benefit of others.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God is the BEST NEWS that this world can ever hear. *Why would a person led by God's Holy Spirit NOT want to participate in announcing this precious and priceless truth to a spiritually starving and destitute mankind???*

The idea that the Work of preaching the gospel is over and done with is biblically insupportable. Those who believe and teach this teach biblical heresy!

Notice the clear instructions and teachings of God's Word, regarding *the end* of this present civilization and the beginning of the Kingdom of God:

Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a *witness* [or *testimony*] to all the nations, and then *the end* [of this present civilization] will come [not before then]."

Matthew 28:19-20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in[to] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to *the end* of the age [this present civilization].”

Mark 13:10-13: “And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations... And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to *the end* [of this present civilization] shall be saved.”

Time and again we are being told that the preaching of the gospel and the teaching of those who are being called must endure *until the very end*. There is not even a hint that this task would have to stop prior to Christ’s return. Quite the contrary is true.

Notice Matthew 10:22-23: “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to *the end* will be saved. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel [let alone the rest of the world] before the Son of Man comes.”

Christ expects His disciples to be involved in the task of preaching the gospel in all the world, when He returns. They will not even have reached, by that time, all the cities of Israel! Are you willing to believe these clear statements, as they have been preserved for centuries in your Bible?

IF it were true that the Work of preaching the gospel has ended, what about the role of the two witnesses, who will still appear on this earth, prior to Christ’s return? Revelation 11:3, 7 tells us that they will prophesy [including preach under godly inspiration] for 3 ½ years, and when they have finished “their *testimony*” or “*witness*” of preaching the gospel [compare again Matthew 24:14], they will be killed. But even then, the gospel will still have to be preached. Revelation 14:6 reports that at the time of the fall of modern Babylon (verse 8), the “everlasting gospel” must still be preached “to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue and people.” Note, too, that this Scripture does not necessarily say that the third angel will preach it. It is the angel who has the everlasting gospel that must be preached. The preaching itself will probably be done *through the Church* – as this has ALWAYS been its commission.

Now see the proof that God intends the CHURCH to preach the gospel, which INCLUDES warning the nations of impending disaster. We read in Isaiah 62:6-7: “I have set **watchmen** [notice the plural here!] on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD [His Church!], DO NOT KEEP SILENT, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

Isaiah 52:7-8 describes the ongoing DUTY of God’s Church to proclaim the gospel as God’s *watchmen*: “How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news [the gospel], Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings [the gospel] of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’ Your **watchmen** shall lift up their voices, With their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye When the LORD brings back Zion.” They will be there when this happens. They will see and experience the return of Christ. And they will still be His watchmen at that very time, LIFTING UP THEIR VOICES! In Romans 10:14-18, this passage is quoted in the context of *preaching the gospel to Israel!*

We also read about the responsibility of the modern-day watchman – a reference to the end-time Church of God – in the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the book of Ezekiel. Again, it is emphasized that the Church – the watchman – is to WARN the nations of disaster and WAR because of their sins!

Isaiah 58:1 adds: “Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the HOUSE OF JACOB [modern Israel, including the United States of America, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand] their SINS.”

God EXPECTS of His Church to blow the trumpet – to warn the nations! Joel 2:1 tells us: “Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the DAY OF THE LORD [of Christ’s RETURN] is coming, For it is at hand.” This “trumpet message” must also be addressed to the Church membership, as verses 15-17 clearly show.

Hosea 8:1 enjoins the Church, too, to blow the trumpet to warn modern Israel of impending disaster, because they have violated God’s covenant and law. Those who claim that the Work is over and REFUSE to fulfill the responsibility assigned to them *by God*, will have to give account *to God* for their disobedience!

God’s true ministers are especially charged by God to do, what Paul told Timothy, a “fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ” (1 Thessalonians 3:2): “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: **Preach the word!** Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

We, in the *Church of the Eternal God*, the *Global Church of God*, and the *Church of God, a Christian Fellowship*, take this charge very seriously. We say with Paul: “Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel” (compare 1 Corinthians 9:16). We cannot but do what God commissioned us to do – even if some don’t approve of it and a few may even leave our fellowship. With Peter we say, We must obey God rather than man (compare Acts 5:29).

That the end-time Church must still be engaged in preaching the gospel cannot be in doubt. Jesus Christ told the Philadelphians in Revelation 3:8-10: “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door [which includes the door of preaching the gospel, compare 2 Corinthians 2:12], and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word [including His word to preach the gospel], and have not denied My name [telling the nations that Christ’s name is the ONLY name by which we can be saved, Acts 4:12]... Because you have kept My command to persevere [to do what we ought to do, even in the face of resistance], I also will keep you from the hour of trial [or Great Tribulation] which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

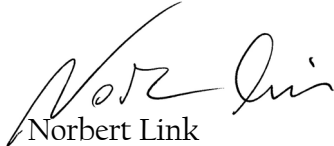
Since Christ will protect Philadelphians from the Great Tribulation, there must still be Philadelphians around when the Great Tribulation begins. And as long as we are Philadelphians, Christ has given us an open door to preach the gospel, and He expects us to go through that open door! From 1933 forward, God provided radio and television as well as the printing press as an open door for the message to go out. Today, He has also made available the technology of the Internet. As long as we remain faithful, He will see to it that a door is opened to us.

Christ said that the harvest is plentiful and that we are to pray that God will send laborers – true ministers – into the harvest (Matthew 9:37-38). The harvest is indeed plentiful. It will include 144,000 from the modern houses of Israel and Judah (Revelation 7:4-8), in addition to the great multitude of ALL tribes and nations (Revelation 7:9). They, too, will come to repentance PRIOR to the Day of the Lord (compare Revelation 7:14). They will have HEARD the gospel preached to them – otherwise, they could not respond and repent (compare Romans 10:14-15).

Dear brethren, don't become shaky in your persuasion of what the Church of God ought to do today. Don't listen to those who are of a different persuasion. They will have to give account for their false teaching, but we don't want you to fall prey to their error and perhaps stumble and fall.

Let us abound in the Work of the Lord! And if we do it wholeheartedly, as to God and not to man, we will receive our reward in due time. Let us never forget the promise of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one *according to his work*" (Revelation 22:12).

In Christian love,



Norbert Link