
CHURCH OF THE
E T E R N A L
G O D

“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 7, 2005

Dear Brethren and Friends,

The annual conference of the *Church of the Eternal God* was held in San Diego, California, starting on Friday, February 18th and ending on Wednesday, February 23rd. We would like to summarize for all of you some of the very encouraging events and decisions from our meetings.

On Friday morning, reports were given on past church activities in Canada by Rene Messier; in the United Kingdom by Brian Gale; and in Colorado by Dave Harris. Edwin Pope addressed some specific aspects of the headquarters church in Southern California.

This year, additional reports were presented by an expanded number of individuals who have been adding greatly to the scope of our work. Wray Zehrunge spoke of the steady growth and vast improvement of the church's web sites. It was decided to post a list of Updates and Editorials and a new reprint format for the Q&A presentations on the church webpage. Wray also addressed the need for more help in maintaining what is becoming a very powerful and important part of the work of the church.

Wisconsin church members, Eric Rank and Michael Bannen, also participated in Friday's session. During this period the technical crew (those who help maintain and develop the various web pages—*StandingWatch* and *Church of the Eternal God* in the USA, *Church of God A Christian Fellowship in Canada*, and the *Global Church of God* site in the U.K.)—made suggestions for expanding and improving this most vital aspect for preaching the gospel and for serving the church.

All of us were tremendously motivated by the possibilities for growth in these areas as we were presented with many ideas for this year—expanding French and German sites; continuing to refine and upgrade our current sites; placing ads to point others to the information on our site; and more fully developing the *StandingWatch* website.

This area of the church's efforts presently relies on volunteers. We are indeed blessed to have within our membership individuals who are dedicated and zealous and who tirelessly add their assistance to the work we have all been called to accomplish! We understand that these achievements have required, and will continue to require, much personal sacrifice. It is encouraging to see so many applying this principle found in Colossians 3:23-24: “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”

One important topic considered Friday afternoon regarded ordination of higher ranking ministers by ministers of lower rank. This session was one of several that was reserved for the ministry (and, in some cases, ministers' wives). Looking to Scripture and asking God to lead us, we came to understand that the Bible reveals that such a procedure was followed in the early church. It is God Who selects someone for the ministry. Furthermore, He has established

different offices for His purposes, and in that light, He uses His established ministry to convey His Will through recognizing fruits in the lives of those who should be ordained or elevated in position and responsibility. We call your attention to Update #183, dated March 4, 2005, in which a thorough Biblical explanation of this matter is addressed in the Q&A.

On the Sabbath, following a sermon from Rene Messier, Edwin Pope, Senior Pastor and President of the *Church of the Eternal God*, led the ministry in ordaining Dave Harris as Pastor, and Norbert Link as Evangelist. Following that very emotional ceremony, Brian Gale gave the second sermon. This extended service was broadcast live over the Internet, and a number have already given their heartfelt congratulations and support.

Sunday was set aside for social activities with the brethren. On Monday, the topic of public meetings was discussed. As a result, we are planning three such meetings with the first one scheduled for May in the area of Arcadia, California. Also, San Diego, California, and Denver, Colorado, are proposed for the following meetings. We have chosen these locations in order to facilitate support and follow-up. Norbert Link intends to speak about the rising kingdom in Europe and the growing nearness of Jesus Christ's return and the establishment of God's Kingdom.

In attempting to help those members of God's Church who have been scattered by events in the recent past, these meetings will focus on the momentous fulfillment of prophecy, along with a call to everyone to zealously turn to God for His guidance!

Plans to complete and distribute our newest booklet, *Should YOU Fight in War?*, before Passover and Unleavened Bread were finalized. Additionally, we have plans for at least three other booklets to be published this year (*Ezekiel Warning Message*, *Authority of the Bible* and *Teach Us to Pray*). Due to our limited income in the United States, we note that the cost for printing these publications is currently being borne by the members in the United Kingdom and Canada. We also discussed the possibility of writing other booklets and "publishing" them by having them posted on our Internet web page; however, even though we now have very limited budgets to produce printed copies, all agreed that "hardcopies" were the most effective for those who desire to deeply study the material.

In light of our growing presence for the live Internet services and in order to train new speakers, we discussed the format for sermonette speakers following a presentation by Brian Gale on this topic.

On Tuesday, our international endeavors targeting expanded French and German translations were reviewed. Even here, it seems that doors are opening up for us. Although the growth may still seem small, we have translated enough material to be able to respond to those individuals God may call.

Paul Voss, a deacon from San Diego, presented examples of recorded sermons made during Sabbath services in Ramona, California. These are DVD recordings—with both picture and sound, and the results were outstanding. The initial use will be to send these recordings to the United Kingdom to assist Brian Gale and the membership. At this time, we are simply limited by manpower and budget to make this service broadly available, but we plan to offer this service to some additional areas where we have small scattered groups. Due to different time zones on an

international basis, DVD recordings will have a much greater impact, and they will help establish a broader sense of fellowship and unity.

On Wednesday, we followed up previous discussions. Because our material is freely available through our webpages, some have distributed our material in their own fellowships. It was decided that such actions would, for the most part, add to propagating the truth and not hinder it. We will handle requests on a case by case response.

Other topics discussed included the role of deacons and deaconesses; a new column for and by youth and young adults to appear occasionally in the Update (the first article is being developed by Michael Link, who also attended the conference); and plans for the U.S. Feast of Tabernacles in Los Osos, California. Several closed sessions among the ministry dealt with issues relating to church administration.

We feel that this conference will prove to be pivotal in the coming months, and we are already seeing a leap ahead in enthusiastic support among the participants. However, this conference involved the entire church, and we fully recognize that your faithful prayers for our successful meetings have been answered.

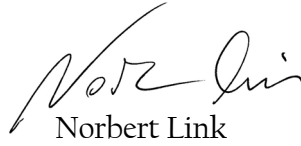
We all have a continuing responsibility to follow-up and to seek God's ongoing guidance through His power—His Holy Spirit and the mind of Jesus Christ (that is, His approach in all things!).

We must seek to go through the doors He opens to us, and it now appears that the public meetings are already creating interest from even those outside our immediate fellowship. Pray earnestly that God will help us to boldly and convincingly proclaim His truth and to sound a warning of urgency for all!

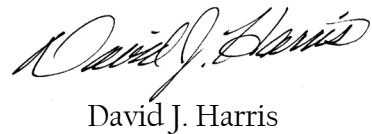
In Christian Love,



J. Edwin Pope



Norbert Link



David J. Harris



Rene Messier



Brian Gale