

December 14, 2006

Dear Brethren and Friends,

We are writing this letter following the death of Edwin Pope, Senior Pastor and President of the Church of the Eternal God in the United States, the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship in Canada, and the Global Church of God in Great Britain. Mr. Pope died on December 7, 2006, following complications from a heart attack four weeks earlier.

This traumatic loss has and will continue to leave an impact on all of us. We all recognize that someone such as Edwin Pope, who remained a faithful minister throughout the upheaval of past years, will be greatly missed. Mrs. Joan Pope and we have received many messages from friends and relatives, as well as ministers and members from different Church organizations all over the world, expressing their heartfelt condolences and their recognition of the great loss of such a fine minister as Mr. Pope. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their prayers, thoughtfulness and kindness.

Edwin dedicated his life to God's Way. In doing that, he was especially committed to holding onto and preserving God's truth. He understood that his role might end before the job of preaching the Gospel was finished—and so it has. He also sought to GROW in understanding as God revealed more knowledge.

Mr. Pope has given us a legacy of perseverance in trying times. His dedication for the truth of God is most assuredly a shining example for all of us to embrace and to follow. And Edwin would be the first to tell all of us to CONTINUE in the Work of our great God.

In his Editorial in *Update* #271, December 8, 2006, Rene Messier stated, “We pause but do not stop. We reflect but keep going.” Also, Norbert Link wrote in his Editorial in *Update* #272, December 15, 2006, “But even though we mourn, we do not despair. Even though we reflect, we do not lose hope.”

This is the way we all must face the death of a faithful Christian—especially one who has set such a gentle and loving example for all these many years in the Church of God.

To lose such a fine minister like Mr. Pope will have an impact on all of us. His contributions to the Work of God will have to be carried forward by others. But God WILL provide for necessary helpers, and for this we are truly thankful. At the same time, Christ asks all of us to pray that our Father send us more laborers for His harvest.

We must understand, brethren, that this is NOT the work of men. Rather, we are part of the Body of CHRIST—and it is Christ, the Head of His Body, Who directs and leads us. We prayed earnestly for Mr. Pope's healing, but God decided otherwise. We know that God has all the answers—even when we don't—and He does not forsake us, as long as we don't forsake Him. Edwin did not die because of time and chance—God is in TOTAL control, and He decided that Edwin had run and completed his race, to be resurrected in the next second of His consciousness in indescribable glory and awesome power in the very Kingdom of God! Edwin has finished his part within the Work of God, but our part in God's Work continues.

Brethren, because Jesus Christ is the living Head of His Church, we can and will go forward in confidence. New opportunities to build on the firm foundation that has been laid are opening to us. We are especially pleased that younger members are being used more and more powerfully in God's service. Certainly, that provision was something Mr. Pope had a hand in developing, and he strongly encouraged and supported it.

Recently, new readers have contacted us after they read some of the comprehensive booklets we offer. We have placed sermons and *StandingWatch* commentaries on Google Video. We should soon receive our new booklet on suffering from the printer and intend to distribute it to all of you within less than a month. A booklet on the meaning of the Feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread and Pentecost has been written and has entered the first review cycle. We hope to be able to publish this new booklet well ahead of Passover of 2007, to assist in the preparation for these important Festivals. A booklet on the Fall Holy Days and Festivals will be written and published later in the year of 2007. The weekly Updates will continue with important news and in-depth Biblical teachings—and Church members and non-members alike are expressing their gratitude for this unique and helpful publication.

We are planning our annual Conference for early next year, and will soon announce the time and place for a Memorial Service for Mr. Pope. We have also selected and contracted for Feast of Tabernacles sites next year in both the USA and the UK.

More and more, we are using the Internet to publish and proclaim the Gospel, and we have a very talented group who have gone over and above in volunteer service to create, maintain and develop our websites in the USA, Canada, Great Britain and Germany. People anywhere in the world, who have access to the Internet, can hear sermons, study our in-depth booklets and literature and participate in Sabbath Services. In addition, those who do not have access to the Internet can receive our audio tapes and hard copies of our literature.

But all the credit for what we were granted to already accomplish, and what we will continue to accomplish, goes to GOD. And we DO believe Christ's promise which He gave to His Church: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12).

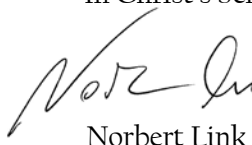
Brethren, our part in God's Work is before us!

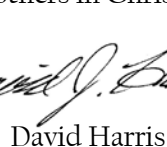
When all of us regrouped a few years ago, we found comfort in this statement from God in Zechariah 4:10: "For who has despised the day of SMALL THINGS?" In the same chapter, in verse 6, we also found our strength to continue: "'Not by might nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT,' says the LORD of hosts."

And so it is NOW, brethren! Even in the face of such great personal loss to all of us in the Church of God, we are going forward! We just have no choice in this, if we want to follow God's directives. We MUST continue to be involved in His Work.

Thank you all, for your loving faithfulness to the Truth of God!

In Christ's Service, your brothers in Christ,

  
Norbert Link

  
David Harris

  
Rene Messier

  
Brian Gale