

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*

February 15, 2008

Dear Brethren, Co-Workers and Friends,

We are Family. What does that mean to us? Is it just a phrase that has lost its meaning due to an over proliferation within the Church as a whole? Has it lost its effectiveness because of a perceived banality? Whatever our current state may be, we must keep coming back to the incredibly awesome understanding with which we have been so richly blessed.

God is a Family. A simple truth that most have not been able to understand. Their minds are closed to the reality that not only is God a Family now, but that it has been this way backwards through eternity and will continue to be this way infinitely into the future. This is where we come in! We have the opportunity, NOW, to become a part of this very Family.

The process begins when we accept the calling that God has given us (John 6:44), repent of our sins (Luke 24:47), believe in Christ's Sacrifice for us (John 3:15; Acts 10:43), are baptized (Acts 2:38), and then have hands laid upon us by one of God's true ministers. It is at this point that we receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:12-17; 19:6). This small measure of the essence of God, is a guarantee of the fullness that we have every reasonable expectation to receive at Christ's Second Coming. It is at that time when we are born into the Family of God—NOT before.

Most of the "Christian" world think that once anyone says that they "believe," or once they are baptized, they are born again at that time. The fact remains that there is much more to the equation than that. The reality is that once we are on the right track and are faithful to God and receive His Holy Spirit, we are begotten of God—NOT already born of God and His Spirit.

The analogy is akin to conception. A "child to be" initially receives the spirit of man and then has the rest of the pregnancy to grow and become a viable human being outside the confines of the womb. In a similar way we receive the Holy Spirit, but are merely begotten—not yet born of the Spirit as Christ was when He was resurrected to eternal life.

An interesting aspect to all of this is that true converted Christians are in this spiritual womb TOGETHER. They have been begotten by the same Spirit and have the same Father—this makes them, at this moment in time, brothers and sisters in the Family of God. When a couple are expecting twins, they begin to call the unborn, their children. They also recognize that the begotten twins are brothers or sisters as well. In much the same way, we too are children of God, as soon as we are begotten of the Holy Spirit.

Christ confirmed this in the account of Mark. In Mark 3:31-35 Jesus was told that His physical mother and brothers were calling for Him. So Jesus took the opportunity to tell those around Him who were doing the Will of the Father, that THEY were His Family. Do we have the same perspective that Christ has? We must be approaching this subject in the same manner because it defines who we are.

In John 13:34-35 we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” If we are to be a member of the Church of God, it will be evident in our actions towards the brethren. When the word “brethren” is used, does it register with us that this is another word for our brothers and sisters—the ones that we are striving to be with for ETERNITY? If we do not exhibit this Christian behavior, then the question remains as to whether we are truly a disciple of Christ.

In speaking to His disciples regarding the times that we are living in now, Christ said, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12). You might want to read or re-read our free booklet on this topic, titled, “*And Lawlessness Will Abound.*” Are we immune from this problem? Absolutely not! In actuality, because we know and understand this, we are being held to a higher standard. Not only can we not allow our love for one another to wane, we must take every opportunity, to do good to all, AND “especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

If we are led by the Spirit of God, then we are now sons and daughters of God. We are no longer strangers to one another, but Family members of the HOUSEHOLD of God (compare Romans 8:14; Ephesians 2:19; 2 Corinthians 6:18).

As we approach the Pre-Passover season—a time of self-examination and reconciliation with others—we need to ask ourselves if we strive to make every effort to show love for our Family, as we have been commanded, because brethren, THIS is our Family now AND forever.

In Christian love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wray Zehrung". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent 'W' and 'Z'.

Wray Zehrung