
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

September 29, 2003

Dear Brethren and Friends,

In this third and final season of the dramatic master plan of God as revealed in His commanded Holy Days, we will soon be assembling together to observe these deeply meaningful annual Feasts. This is a time when we as brethren appear before God with both an attitude reflecting the seriousness as well as the joyous aspects of what lies ahead for all of humanity.

In particular, this is a very special time for Church members to come together in *unity*.

As never before, this world is divided. In Matthew 24 Jesus prophesied of this time in which deception would reign and in which there would be wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. He also warned of betrayal and persecution for those who believed in and followed Him. Just as we now see, truth is overwhelmed and violence among men and even in nature is the order of the day—all things that will increase more and more in the days immediately ahead. Obviously, we are all in one way or the other touched by these things.

We must rise above these events. One very important help for us in this regard is to keep these Feast days with a whole hearted attitude—just as God desires of us. Brethren, when we consider what has happened to the people of God during the past few decades, we know that we have been turned inside out. Due to doctrinal heresy and confusion and an increasing lack of interest in and zeal for God’s truth, the great unity of earlier years has now given way to a scattering of the people of God. Many scriptures specifically point out that this was to occur, but note the great underlying ultimate purpose as revealed in Daniel 12:10: “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.”

Whether or not *we* understand is reflected in part in *our* continued faithful observance of God’s Holy Day plan. Especially in these times when brethren are scattered literally around the earth, these Days are times when we can come together to establish a bond of deep friendship and brotherly love. Of course we each have an individual relationship with Jesus Christ and our Father through the Holy Spirit, but we must also develop a relationship with each other.

Paul explained this continual need for the Church of God in this way in Ephesians 4:13: “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” He is here explaining the role and responsibility of the ministry as it relates to the body of Christ—the Church. However, he goes on to make this point in verse 16: “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together *by what every joint supplies*, according to the effective working *by which every part does its share*, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

What, then, is your role or your individual responsibility? Can you affect the unity of the body of Christ? The answer is yes—you absolutely have a role in establishing unity in the body of Christ! Note the scripture again that was just quoted—“*by what every joint supplies*” and “*by which every part does its share*.” These statements are beacons of understanding as well as challenges for each of us!

So then, how will this relate specifically to the upcoming Festival season—for each of us, individually? First, we must come with the *goal* of being a unified part of the body of Christ. Second, we must *do what we*

can to add to unity, and we must make every effort to avoid causing disunity. Finally, we must always *take our lead from God*. In John 17, in verses 11, 21 and 23, Jesus very directly asked the Father that His disciples would experience the oneness that He and the Father had. Verse 11 has this very insightful comment: “Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.” That name, the name of the Father, is in the Church of God. You see, we do have a role that involves our Church relationship if we are becoming unified as are the Father and His Son.

Just as we are about to assemble to picture future events in God’s plan, it is especially timely to note what God is planning. Notice this prophecy in Ezekiel 11:19: “Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh.” Again, in Jeremiah 32:38–39: “They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.”

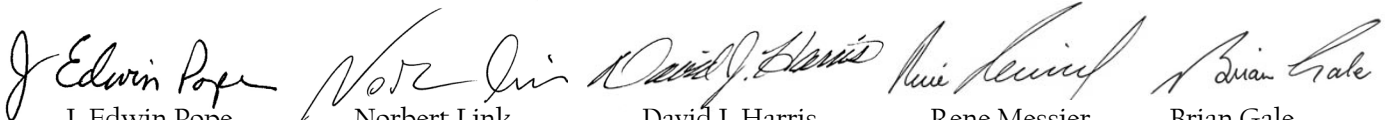
Brethren, our calling is to be forerunners of this very thing! We have been given God’s Holy Spirit as ambassadors of that future way as revealed in the life and work of Jesus Christ. Like Him, we have a job to do—a great responsibility to fulfill! Let us not forget or neglect something else that Jesus taught in Matthew 24. In verse 14, He said: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” For us to effectively fulfill our part of this charter, we must be unified! Now is a time of renewal. As we observe the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, we must be ever mindful of the great and over-riding purpose of God’s calling. It is God Who calls each and every one of us! Let each and every one of us strive to answer that calling by serving one another and by seeking to become unified in the bond of the love of God!

In Ephesians 4, Paul was inspired to write that each one of us should “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” (verse 1), and in verse 3, this challenge: “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Let each of us keep these Feast days with this Psalm of David in mind: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing—*Life forevermore*” (Psalm 133:1–3).

Brethren, it is our fervent desire that each of you are able to greatly rejoice before God and with your brethren in these upcoming Feast days of God. As you do, may you also experience the kind of unity that Jesus requested for us when He established the Church of God—a unified Church. Let each of us do what we can to preserve that timeless unity that surely does picture the wonderful coming Kingdom of God!

In Christ’s Service,


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