

May 2, 2018

Dear Brethren and Coworkers in Christ,

When God called us out of the world in this day and age, He did it according to a plan that He had for us since before time began, having predestined and known us long before we were born (compare Jeremiah 1:5, Psalm 139:16). He knows that each of us has what it takes to fulfill the mission of being a Christian, and He is confident that we can do it (compare Philippians 1:6). He has given us the raw material of His Truth and the Holy Spirit as a down payment, investing in our success to abide by the Truth (compare Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 5:5). God has gone so far as to offer up His Son as a Sacrifice for us, so that our sins can be forgiven! (Compare John 3:16.) He has done all of this because He challenges us individually with a huge goal, which is more important than anything we could imagine accomplishing in our human lives. If we want to succeed, we need to earnestly commit ourselves to God's vision and submit to His Will in obedience. When we get discouraged, frightened, overwhelmed or anxious, we have to remember that greater purpose for which we are really working. God has given us a meaning in life that is much greater than anything we could contrive on our own.

Knowing this, we need to find the will within ourselves to ensure that this godly purpose for our lives is real and attainable to us. It is far too easy to read these words, nod our heads in agreement, and then carry on with whatever is immediately demanding our attention, without taking a moment to comprehend the depth of the Truth. If we are going to succeed in enduring through trials, we need to believe in God's purpose for us with all faith. The Truth is this—we are children of God, called out of this world to live a life of righteousness through Christ living in us, and we will inherit God's Kingdom, becoming rulers and priests forever. These are awesome statements that many in the world would consider delusional. But they are plainly declared as Truth by the words of the Bible. Do you believe with your whole heart and mind that these words describe your life? When your answer is "Yes," the rest of life's difficult circumstances become trivial by comparison, and much easier to endure.

We need to remember what lies ahead of us. We must find strength in understanding our role and significance in God's plan. Paul's words to the Philippians need to become our own: "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). We are working on something big, and we are doing it together.

During the conference this year, the ministry reiterated the grand scale of this purpose. We all shared expressions of acknowledgment that the work we are doing has a tremendous significance to billions. The mission we have collectively as the ministry and as the body of Christ is to serve God by ensuring that our best efforts are spent preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world as a witness. We have been blessed with individuals who have gifts of skill and knowledge to do so. With this mission in mind, it was encouraging to see that our reach spans the globe, with individuals in nearly every country on earth visiting our websites. With the little strength we have, together as coworkers in Christ, we all have a role in promulgating the Truth. The conference this year involved discussions about how we will continue.

These are some of the topics we covered:

- We discussed the ongoing work of the ministry from each location of our Church and international affiliates in the U.S.A., Canada, U.K., and German-speaking countries, including the successes and challenges we continue to face.
- Doctrinal differences with other Church of God organizations were discussed. We concluded that on the surface of core doctrine there are appearances that the Church of the Eternal God and its international affiliates are perceived by some as being no different than other Church of God organizations, yet we reaffirmed that there are significant differences in detailed doctrine. Differences include, but are not limited to, doctrines and teachings on the third temple, the falling away, the false idea of a secret rapture and its different modifications, the false insistence on the necessity of a future king of the south, the unbiblical assumption of a seven-year contract, marrying outside the church, voting in governmental elections, jury duty, and military service.
- A number of doctrinal topics were discussed as well; covering past baptisms performed by ministers who subsequently fell away from the Truth; seemingly delayed healing; when to refuse acceptance of donations; questions pertaining to the second Passover; how to understand the coming great falling away; how to communicate the urgency of preparing for prophetic fulfillment (while recognizing that even though we do not set dates, we believe that we are in the time

of the beginning of sorrows and that God does reveal to His true servants insightful information relating to the fulfillment of prophetic events); how long Israel dwelt in Egypt; and whether the second war in heaven has already occurred or begun.

- Plans were made regarding upcoming booklets on Christian living and Q&A's for the year, to include the topic of the Ten Commandments.
- International activities were discussed, including how to handle requests for baptisms in Africa.
- A Skype meeting was conducted with Elder Paul Niehoff and his wife Tine from Melbourne, Australia, during which time we unanimously agreed to accept and accredit his ministerial ordination, welcoming him into the ministry for the Church of the Eternal God.
- An update was provided by the technical team, summarizing continued efforts to improve live video broadcasts. We noted that we had a 20% increase in new users visiting the website, and some growth in the global reach of our online media.
- We discussed possibilities for improving live video broadcasts and services in Germany with Christoph and Monique Sperzel in a Skype meeting.
- We discussed the possibility of video-recording sermons in Canada and the UK, to be played in Sabbath services in the USA, as well as recording short videos for the UK and Canada, focusing on national matters.
- We analyzed behavior statistics regarding how our websites perform in search engine results and discussed renewed strategies for online advertising. Plans were made to leverage the website content that performs the best, and material that we believe is important to promote.
- Some graphic design topics were covered as well, including the need to update the letterhead to use the current logo and design, and update the email template used to send StandingWatch notifications.
- Feast site planning was discussed, including plans for 2018, 2019 and 2020 Feast sites and possible solutions for handling translation workloads in Germany for the future Feasts.

We all left the conference strengthened and encouraged, acknowledging the importance of the Work we continue to do. We are excited for what lies ahead, and we wish to pass this excitement on to you. The Work of God that we have been commissioned to perform is not only a duty of the ministry, but it must be supported by the body of Christ—the Church—in order to bear much fruit. While the tasks we perform involve individual efforts, when they are combined, they add up to accomplish the great goal that God has for us to perform. Each prayer, each offering, each encouraging word of support, performs a meaningful purpose to glorify God and fulfill His awesome plan.

We hear a lot about endurance in messages that are written and spoken, reinforcing that it is important for us to finish the race (compare Hebrews 12:1; 2 Timothy 4:7). We know that we will face great challenges as the time of Christ's return draws ever closer, and we know that the Kingdom of God will soon be established. Let us, as Jesus did, finish the Work which God has given to us (John 17:4)—and we can do this together when we serve God and place our confidence fully in Him!

With love from all of us in the ministry who participated in this year's conference:


Norbert Link


Dave Harris


Rene Messier


Brian Gale


Eric Rank


Robb Harris


Michael Link


Kalon Mitchell