

951010 Fishers of Men__How to Reach Others HLH Pentn CAN

Good morning to guests, members, children, relatives, and all the rest of you.

The subject today out of a series of elections prepared by the headquarters in Pasadena left options.

More were prepared than the number of topics available.

And by the nature of my particular experience, I asked for one entitled, Fishers of Men.

Now, I'm also concerned about women, and I have never fished.

But at least I can comment on what others tell us about fishing and then explain how I do in terms of neither hunting nor fishing.

We always had fish in our pond, and we always had our own livestock.

But Fishers of Men, a term known throughout the English language, is essentially a description of what our individual jobs are seen to be with respect to the world around us, beginning with our families, to nations far distant.

It seemed to me, among the various topics that were available, since I was given first option, I took that one which perhaps could give you as much insight in terms of my experience as any one of the topics available.

Those who will be speaking on other days will address topics that I simply did not choose.

Of the three, this was the only one of my choice.

The others were assigned to particular days, and I was assigned to those days.

I should like to address the fundamental question, and that is how we reach the minds of other people.

In this last decade of the 20th century of the Christian era, because there are other systems of numeration, the Jews have their own numeration, Buddhists have theirs, Muslims have theirs, Hindus have theirs, and then there are those who reckon from some recent revolution.

We are nearly 2,000 years since the birth of Messiah, nearly.

What has given us here is an outline from the point of view of the experience from all those who are at headquarters, from all those who are around the world.

Obviously, two things that we could all take for granted in how we communicate with other people is to learn from experience and to have good judgment.

That pertains, of course, to fishing.

It also pertains to most any other source of communication.

To understand what has happened in the 60 years of this particular work of which we are the result and the prime movers today, it is wise to go back and to reflect on what has happened.

I, without seeing this, have touched upon this topic on other occasions, just as a subject itself, in order to explain why certain fundamental changes are or have occurred.

There was a time, tents were used in the 1930s, the time of the Great Depression, the time of the Dust Bowl, the time when many people from the Midwest of the United States moved to the West Coast.

I was reared in California, the state of the future, as my grandfather perceived it when he brought my father, then six years of age, to the United States in 1889.

But being in the state of the future, we did not know to what extent Oregon, north of California, was spiritually the state of the future.

For there, the largest number of people arrived who were members of the churches of God's seventh day and were fundamentally in the field of agriculture, though in agriculture quite different from that of the Midwest.

In that period of time, entertainment was quite a different thing than we would think of today.

In fact, movies were young.

We had reached the point of movies with voice.

But most towns were interested in people who came to town to speak, or if there were forms of entertainment that came to town.

In fact, public speakers were commonly listened to, a time for speaking, a time for reading.

It was a different world than going to the news rack, going to the movie house, the video store, or high-class musical entertainment.

It was a world that wondered how we ever got into the condition we did.

It was a world that had already in the 1920s given us Benito Mussolini, and even before the 1920s, and during that, the beginnings of Marxism in a most unusual form in what came to be called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

A Soviet, of course, is a committee.

The reason the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics collapsed is as much that things were done by committees, which committees could never solve all the problems.

Too much was concentrated in committees, not enough on the shoulders of the individual.

And in Germany, there arose a National Socialist Party that made the single nation the greatest military power on earth up to that time until the United States became involved.

People wondered about the world around us, and it was possible, therefore, to address some of these basic questions of the League of Nations, of another war, of what had happened in the economy of the world, and what did Scripture have to say about these things.

Not everything was clear with respect to the concept of time, and often a speaker such as the founder, Herbert W. Armstrong, of the work of the Church of God in Eugene, one often sees events in one's own lifetime.

Great changes had been wrought in the United States in 1917 with entry into World War I.

These changes affected the morals of the country, so people were concerned also about morality.

The joy of the past was gone from that time, and in the 1920s a certain kind of hedonism had entered society.

That, of course, met a disastrous collapse as a result of the stock market that sent many businessmen out the windows of multi-story buildings who could not face their economic disasters.

However, at this kind of time, Herbert W. Armstrong took leaflets that he had printed.

He was an advertising man, as you remember, in his background, and he went to various homes in the countryside and sometimes spent much of the day leaving a flyer inviting individuals to hear what he would be speaking about this week.

It brought people to the meetings.

Being religious meetings, there were also people who came to be interested in the bigger message as well as their own problems.

It was a time, in fact, when people were wondering if religion has a message, because, if we may speak as historians sometimes, World War I brought the death of God.

God no longer seemed to be real to many people.

World War II brought the death of civilization as we knew it.

The disaster to civilization was greatest in World War II, but the death of God, so to speak, had already been accomplished.

God was out of mind, out of sight for many, and therefore dead.

And people didn't realize that the death that they were perceiving was in themselves.

And so what had to be brought to their attention was a new sense of life, of eternal life as well as a different kind of life here and now.

But as time went on, tent meetings ceased to have the same role over the decades as the century went by.

World War II provided a gasoline shortage sufficient to make it impossible to do many of the things that were available in the 1930s.

Then new opportunities arose, which I need not address to you, the founding of Ambassador College in 1947, to train young people, because Herbert W. Armstrong found for one man to do certain things with the help of older and younger people and families did not allow for adequate training of people who could follow up as Mr. Armstrong went from city to city.

Though he lived in one basic area, you could travel to the various towns and cities in Oregon, and so the need of trained personnel.

At this time also was the beginning of radio, and radio reached a very critical point in World War II because it was a means of the government to communicate with the people.

It was at that time that the United States provided very few possible radio stations for us to use.

In fact, the bulk of the radio stations we could use were in northern Mexico, from Baja California eastward.

It was interesting that the United States was primarily reached over a period of time in the English language from stations outside the continental United States.

With the growth of radio, new technologies were introduced, and we have television.

Television has provided a new kind of audience, a new way of communicating, and so this work grew greatly in the 60s and 70s of this century with the impact of both media and the utilization of the printed word, or magazine, booklets, too.

So you understand that we have passed through a particular period in which it was possible to communicate publicly on a mass scale through mass media.

And many things that men invent become also self-destructive.

From clear channel radio stations and a half dozen primary television stations available in particular communities, we multiplied so the number of radio stations and the number of television stations that people could be entertained, communicated with by so many that instead of saying being one in five, or one in seven, or even one in ten, it became a matter of one in scores.

And we consider now all the television channels and all the radio stations on AM and FM, not mentioning shortwave.

So people had a choice of all sorts of things to listen to.

We used the newsstands at a time when people said fewer and fewer are reading, but fewer and fewer reading is a nonsensical view, because it overlooks the many who still read as the population was growing.

And in fact, at the time we were told that we need to read less and less, we have other means of communication, is the very time that those prophets failed to realize that we would be multiplying magazines and multiplying magazines so we have not a magazine on half a dozen or a dozen topics.

We have half a dozen or a dozen magazines on a single topic, because when the population grows it's possible to produce a publication on a single topic and still have it pay.

But the population has to grow, and it did, from 150 to 250 million plus in the United States.

And so the newsstands don't make sense for us anymore.

Spot ads in television could, but that's now financially for us a thing of the past.

They're moving, therefore, under the leadership of headquarters in Pasadena, and therefore under Jesus Christ, for those who recognize this is the Church of God and he has not abandoned it to more personal and relational evangelism as this lectionary addresses it.

That is personal relationship and personal not public media to the same extent.

We have the printed word in support, we have tapes and videos in support, but those become used in the private home, not through the public media primarily, but we must not of course neglect new opportunities that may arise through public television, etc.

So now we move to circumstances that should tell us more about what it means to be here as a group and what we should give serious thought to before we leave.

The basic mission of the Church has not changed.

It is to preach, to announce, to teach the good news or the gospel to use an old English word that has come down to us, a translation from the Greek, Evangelion, which means good news, and to make disciples.

That is to help people become students of the one who is Messiah, the Christ.

Perhaps I should stop here and point up to what extent many have chosen not to become students or disciples of the teacher, the Messiah.

They simply sit on the sidelines, some sit on the sidelines in the church, some sit on the sidelines outside the church watching what is happening.

I met people like that in the late 1940s.

They were here in the 1930s.

They might have cheered to work on, but they didn't really participate.

Some of them did participate financially or in prayer, for that matter.

But there are many ways in which we can participate much more and be a part of a greater whole.

The Bible does not tell us specifically how, though it gives examples throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament.

I do not have time, and we're asked to stick fundamentally to the examples, and so we limit ourselves primarily to the New Testament examples, but you can examine sometimes how individuals in earlier times in the Hebrew nation or otherwise communicated and made a message clear.

The question here is how it's not what the message is, and we need to learn sometimes how best to do it.

Sometimes Jesus sent ministers out two by two.

In that day, it was a very effective way because there were traveling teachers.

It always was wiser to have two and not one.

That's why a family is at its best with two and not one, meaning husband and wife, not husband and two wives or three.

This is not the day, candidly, where two by two is as acceptable.

We have to be very careful about that.

So there are sometimes cases where we cannot follow the biblical example because it is no longer the circumstance.

Paul went to the synagogues.

We cannot do that in the first place.

Most of us did not come from the Jewish community.

I have been from time to time, but rarely in the synagogues, usually when a Gentile, as the Jews would look at it, would be honored on the basis of being a righteous Gentile, having rescued Hebrews and many others.

As I mentioned in the opening evening comments on the person of John Weidner, who gave his life ultimately to this cause in Europe, becoming to the United States well after the Second World War, a man who was twice captured by the French secret police, twice by the Gestapo, and who escaped three of the times was released one other time.

The last time he escaped, he was to be executed the next morning, and he was reading the Bible, and he noted God's strong and clear promise when Peter was imprisoned and how he escaped.

And he thanked God for that example when his mind remembered John the Baptist, whose head was brought to Herod on a platter.

But he had faith, and he didn't know what was the answer.

I can only tell you he escaped.

He won't take more time.

But he was a man of remarkable faith and of a strong constitution.

We're not asked to go through those kinds of trials or to put ourselves in places we are not wanted, to upset people by going where the result is like in fishing.

There are no fish there.

And at this point, we have to realize that there are vast parts of the world where fish are not, and other areas to use this analogy with fishing, where there are.

I am privileged to work with a man of Welsh background who grew up speaking English and Brazilian Portuguese, Mr. Graham Davies, and is responsible for Brazil, Angola, and not fundamentally Mozambique.

The fish are primarily in Mozambique.

I'm sorry, I want to correct that in Angola.

It's remarkable that in an area where a particular language and various dialects may be spoken, Brazil for us offers comparatively little.

The middle class is not fundamentally interested.

The lower classes have already been significantly reached, where the Church of God's seventh day with headquarters in Meridian, Idaho, and we do not seek to build on others' foundations.

But in Angola, the response is astonishing by the hundreds.

So we have to know when a form of medium is no longer usable.

When we no longer go out, let's say wisely, two by two, unless that is a new accepted way in a community.

So we're talking not only about the right bait, so to speak, that is message that needs to be mentioned with the right way or place where to fish.

And sometimes we do not know, but we learn.

Thus at this stage we do not find the fish biting in what may be called orthodox Judaism.

We find very few fish biting in orthodox Greece.

We find a greater interest in reformed Judaism, but not significantly.

And let's say in an area like Mauritius, we find that the primary people who are being called are reformed, not orthodox Hindus, individuals who have set aside their idolatry.

And in a place like Fiji, we find that although 45% of the island are peoples of Indian background, at least Indian, whether mostly Hindus, sometimes Muslims, yet the fact remains most all, but not all, most all church members are native Fijians whose ancient history is remarkable orally.

For the Fijians have a tradition that tells us they were part of the mixed multitude who left the land of the south and were at Sinai when the ark was built and migrated not to the promised land where we find no further reference to them.

But their own tradition speaks of coming south, south, south on the east coast of Africa to Tanganyika, from which over 1,400 years from the days of Herod to the time of the Portuguese discoveries in the Indian Ocean, they migrated back and forth to the island of Fiji and some neighboring regions.

You can believe the tradition or not, it doesn't matter where you are, but when you meet a member of the church and ask how this tradition was handed down, it is interesting to see how the story is introduced, which in a sense tells you why Christianity has made some very remarkable headway among Fijians.

I asked Peter Dakuni to tell me on one occasion he was at a festival in Tonga nearby, could he tell me some of this background that I have quickly summarized for you? Yes, he said, and his story began, our fathers told us.

Now in educated countries where we know better, the immediate comment would be, that is, if they didn't lie to you.

But sometimes simpler people believe these things because they never got into the habit of lying.

Anyway, we have a significant number of people in Fiji.

We have a massive number, by contrast to Europe, of brethren from the Philippines, of all the groups of people, the Filipinos, were the most and are the most responsive in numbers, circumstantially without a question, but they responded much more from the beginning.

There are other places where Islam is dominant, where Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism would be dominant, where native religions are.

We are building on a groundwork of people who first brought an oral message and then a written message.

That written message was the Bible, so we must be grateful for translators, grateful for the societies that have distributed Bibles, grateful to people who have introduced European languages, where this work came from.

We speak a European language, English, and English has been introduced into Fiji.

It has been introduced into the Philippines, despite the fact there are many native dialects there.

And of course, in Fiji, for example, Indians and Fijians wouldn't be able to communicate at all unless they learned one another's language, so they have learned English as the means to communicate with each other.

Now as we go about this task of communicating with other people, we need to know where, where that interest is.

We need to know what the message is, and we need to know how to vary the approach.

We have responsibilities individually on the job.

We have to be discreet at school.

We have social opportunities more often on weekends.

Or as they mentioned, here are places of leisure.

I don't know where those are.

My wife and I find our weekends are rather busy.

But some of you have opportunities in terms of sports or health activities to be an example.

We have to learn to attract others by being friendly and non-threatening, warm, and of a winning spirit.

Those are nice phrases.

Now we were non-threatening when two of us, I was one of the two who met a Jewish Byzantine scholar, and he wanted to know about us, and so we explained about ourselves.

And he saw that we were heirs of the Jerusalem Church.

If we weren't, we wouldn't be here today.

There was a pause, and he said, come to think of it.

I'm not sure I like that idea, because you see it meant that Abraham's inheritance might include others than Jews.

Because for him, we were clearly Gentile.

The one was an Englishman, and my ancestors came from Germany.

I told a Jew once, a member of the church and a faculty member, that he was a typical Jew.

That was meant to be friendly.

I got along with Jews.

My father got along with Jews.

I had Jews as friends in World War II in school, though it was not primarily a Jewish community.

He said, what do you mean a typical Jew? I said, you in fact would never be taken for an Italian, a Russian, a German, an Englishman, a Frenchman, and certainly not anybody else.

I said, it's like the Jew in our Tehunga synagogue.

We live in Tehunga, California.

When he saw me, he said, you're a typical Gentile.

Well, now we had something equal, because Jews think that way too.

We don't always like to think of it the other way.

And so we took the Jewish Byzantine scholar to dinner that evening.

This was some years ago.

He ordered his dish of seafood, and we each ordered lamb.

And the Chinese waiter stepped away from the table.

Our friend said, a moment, a moment, I would like to change my request.

Make mine lamb too.

I thought how interesting.

The impact of one's example can change the mind, even of a reformed Jew.

We have numerous Buddhist friends, many of them in the field of business or education or real estate.

If I go to San Diego, I am known by reputation in the Tehai community.

If I'm in Los Angeles or if I'm in Phoenix.

Because throughout the Tehai Buddhist world, Ambassador College or university, the World Wide Church of God and Ambassador Foundation are known as in the state of Israel.

Our example does not bring many fish.

The Israelis as a whole know of us, know of our example, want our students to participate.

The ties the same way.

Their time of responding will be on another occasion.

And once in a while, a fish will bite.

It usually is by personal example of a young Thai Chinese lady, Chinese background only, who came in 1988 to our festival site in Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand.

She came to see the people.

She did not come, and I certainly, though introduced, did not go any further.

Because knowing the ties, there must be something for the Chinese in them to make them want to respond.

Now, the reason she came is that she met our Thai students since they graduate and founder of a language school in Northern Thailand.

And was introduced to the Bible and to us as a result of his morality, not his words.

She didn't know his religion, but he was different from many Buddhist or secular youth.

And so he explained, and she wanted both to learn what book it was that taught him this morality, and what kind of people we were.

And when she met us later, she said, I saw sincerity in their eyes, genuineness.

That's not enough, but that is something very important.

You can be sincere and sincerely wrong.

But if you were not sincere, you're always wrong.

She later married the young man, and they both are responsible for founding the school.

She was introduced to the Bible and said to me she first thought it would start out with history like the Chinese records, the Shou King.

But she found it was not history in the traditional sense, too many things were missing.

These were stories.

And as soon as she saw there was a story, she also saw in each story instruction, morality, a purpose.

One of the things that has attracted her to us also is she found that I like Thai food.

And she always tells me when she or her husband write that I must come, because whenever I am there, she will prepare a Thai meal.

This tells you that maybe you can influence people by the kind of cooking you do, men or women.

In social occasions, it's important to know how to influence others.

It may be by your morality, it may be by your example, introducing people to others of like faith, introducing them to the differences which we need to with respect to the Jewish community and non-Christian communities, or in many cases, to often overlook the similarities within the Christian community, because there are people who know certain things about Christianity but are upset by the morality they see.

And so our example becomes important in emphasizing different matters.

I fish in waters where there are no fish.

My primary purpose is that, because I am privileged to lay foundations for a matter not discussed in this paper, which means preparing the fish for the world tomorrow, if you please.

Preparing educators, I have been privileged as no one else in this work to address the equivalent of 750 Buddhist bishops if you use the sense of bishop in the Western sense.

It was a retreat in which all the leading monks of all the temples in Thailand occurred at a time that I was in the country.

I always stayed away from contact directly from the royal family which fell into the hands of Mr. Armstrong and his staff and Mr. Leon Sexton and his wife.

And it occurs to me that there are other areas.

I have a nice relationship with faculty members of a number of universities in Thailand.

And immediately after the feast, the following weekend, we will be going to Miami in connection with the International Palm Society.

Now, it's not palmists.

This is palm trees.

The International Palm Society, because faculty members of Chiang Mai University are interested in this particular field, and we are concerned for the agricultural welfare of Thailand.

And those people come to know of us by different things that may never occur to you or need to occur to you.

But the time will come when they will remember, because we have been in contact.

They will discover that in fact some of the very people they knew in this world or heard about, some that they will continue to hear about depending on how long time goes to the coming of the Messiah, they will find indeed that we were, may I put that term, in the first resurrection.

And some of their religious leaders were not.

It will come as a shock to some nations to discover, for example, those who are Buddhists, that we have become Buddhists because we are coming from another world, the world of the resurrection.

Can you imagine what it is to find a government under a Jewish Messiah being set up by people who are Christians, with a Jewish nation becoming Christian, and so many in this century of some of the countries around the world who have known of this work to discover that the people they met, whether in Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, or Syria, are in that government, are going to participate at a very significant depth in fishing in waters so much different than we fish today.

What will our Muslim friends think? What will our Jewish friends think? When there is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and you and me, and their Jewish rabbis are not yet alive in the resurrection, except one they wanted to dispose of, Saul of Tarsus.

That will make people think.

Today we're here to make known clearly we are Christians.

Our Buddhist friends say, why do you do so many Buddhist things and are not Buddhists? Well, the answer, of course, is there some Buddhist things we would not do.

We have the closest relationship.

We are honored.

I will be returning the day after the festival to Pasadena, well to our home, and then to the office in Pasadena, which will not be open for next week.

When I get there, Tina Kuo, who's Chinese and a member of the church, and someone else, I believe, and I, will show approximately 100 people from Thailand around headquarters.

And we most certainly will participate in some of the activities that may take place at Wat Thai or the Thai temple in North Hollywood, which is really that part of Los Angeles where the Thai community meets.

And that comes in between our trip to the Palm Society, of which our faculty member friend, Chiang Mai University, is a life member.

I do not know whether he will come, but I do know that people from around the world will come because this is an international symposium, quality of speakers, the like of which are never assembled once a decade.

We are not to remain padlocked.

There is a criticism internally of the church, by the church, that we were exclusive away from the world and padlocked.

I cannot imagine that that could ever be said.

Mr. Armstrong wasn't padlocked.

He wasn't away from the world.

I was never padlocked.

I did not have to pull rank to do these things.

Others did not have to.

The Burbeck family did not.

Their son graduated from, I think it was, the business school at Chulalongkorn University with top honors the first time a Farang or foreigner did in the history of that school.

We would not be in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Mozambique.

We would not be in the various countries of the world, including this one, if we had stayed away.

If people misunderstood, it was part our fault and part theirs.

And those who say that this was everybody's perspective, except those who pulled rank are wrong.

And I think sometimes we have to say publicly that some did what was right.

Or we would not have been around the world with our offices, with South Africans coming to Los Angeles to see two areas.

Disneyland and Ambassador College, the headquarters of the Worldwide Church of God and the Foundation.

Government officials of South Africa said, why is it that after Disneyland we're the most popular in that country? Not because we had padlocked the place, we're excruciating, we're friends of George O and Marilyn Kelly Buchelotti.

The Buchelotti family are silversmiths.

And in case you notice, I'm over time, I know it too.

George O Buchelotti brought his mother on one occasion to Southern California.

And it was over the Christmas season, and on January 1, there is the Rose Parade, sometimes the day after it, depending on the day of the week.

And since we happened to live where the Rose Parade began, we invited them into our home to see the parade.

George O Buchelotti has never forgotten the courtesy we extended to his mother, who died in her 70s, I believe, later 70s, in bed, reading the lives of the Christian saints as many Catholics are want to do.

How we fish may vary greatly, but fish we must.

It has been nine years since my wife and I were here last, that was in 1986.

I would like to again publicly state that on that occasion, there was a crisis in the area of the Ituri Forest in the eastern Congo, now called Zaire, because the Bubonic plague was moving from Uganda westward into this region.

Normally the Worldwide Church of God, supportive of crises such as this, concern for people involved would make donations as we regularly do through the Ambassador Foundation.

In that particular case, however, Joseph W. D'Coth was newly responsible for the administrative duties of the work and the budget was set, and there simply was no part of the budget available for such a critical need, that is transportation, refrigeration for medical supplies to prevent the spread of the plague.

It was, in fact, at this site in 1986 that I did ask for the brethren for what we might call that extra amount of cash that you do not absolutely need, and I want to thank the brethren as I have in local churches when coming to Canada since that time for the fact that that made possible the survival of the Aphepygmes in the Ituri Forest, and it was as a consequence of the thoughtfulness of all the brethren who were here that that was done.

And I want to extend the appreciation of the founder of the Pygmy Fund, Jean-Pierre Allay, of Belgian background who was reared in the Congo, who lived with the Pygmies in 1957, which happened to be the same year that I first visited them in my life.

And through all your efforts, there were some 7,000 American dollars, almost 10,000 Canadian dollars, the equivalent that all of you voluntarily gave who were here then and others may no longer be living or who are attending other festival sites contributing.

I think it is appropriate to make a statement like that on behalf of Jean-Pierre Allay and the Ambassador Foundation as a token of appreciation that we never forget what has been done and there has been, of course, a stability in the population of the children, the elderly, and those in the middle years, so that there is a survival of the Aphepygme despite the problems in Rwanda and Burundi.

It is, however, a very serious matter.

This is not a matter of fundraising, but I do want to say that that area of Zaire is now so unsafe that Jean-Pierre Allay cannot himself enter it as a foreigner, that is a non-local resident, and even if he could, it is impossible to go through by the normal means of even four-wheeled vehicles.

As part of the world, the army is not paid.

The army simply lives off the land.

Anybody who had bicycles among the pygmies or otherwise has means of transportation.

If they were metal bicycles, they have already either been hidden or confiscated, and so the local people make them out of wood, and you know what that would mean.

But this is the kind of problem that people in the world face.

Here in Canada, we have no such great difficulties, but I thought it would be appropriate to begin this festival of faith to tell you what it means for those who do trust in God and seek His will, and for

those who are, as Jean-Pierre Allay, not members of the world, the family is not related to the Worldwide Church of God, but he is very cognizant and has said for year after year that members of the Worldwide Church of God have made the largest contributions year after year to the work that he has done.

Recently, this past calendar year, we republished and updated and revised version of the original article to save the people that he wrote.

We updated it over a period now of 25 years and printed enough copies that should last not only at the end of the century, but for the rest of the life of Jean-Pierre and others perhaps on the Board of Trustees will make further decisions at a later time.

And that was contributed out of the editorial budget in terms of time, that is, it's possible always to have those three minutes, that quarter of an hour, that half an hour between projects, and between publishing and editorial, this was put together at essentially no cost to the work and the pygmy fund paid for the printing.

So we constantly have opportunities to be of service.

It would be interesting for some of you to become acquainted with what is available about the life of the people who live in Canada for no small number of you come from outside this remarkable country.

I happen to pick up a publication, The Life of a Person Who Came to Canada, called Eyewitness in Tobolsk, T-O-B-O-L-S-K.

This was printed in British Columbia, it's the story of Holder Heepner, the youngest daughter of a German Lutheran farming family that was in Russia, Tsarist Russia in 1914.

This is the story of what happened in that war to the immediate years after the First World War.

She was living in Tobolsk and was in fact across the street where the Red Army, still in civil war with the White Army, held the Tsar of Russia and the Tsar's family prisoners.

What of course was of interest is that this is the kind of person who made Canada what it is in terms of its multi-ethnic and multicultural background.

Perhaps more interesting is that her family name was my wife's mother's family name.

Coming from the same Lutheran church when they were in Germany.

This year we have been asked to make choices, of course this evening is no choice because there is only one introductory evening, but there were a number of outlines presented by church administration at headquarters in Pasadena to give general themes from which our speakers might choose, more than enough topics.

This one of course does not allow me to have another choice because it simply is the opening night address.

The suggested title is the Celebration of Salvation.

This of course has been fundamental to this time of year in our assembling, in this case sometimes late in the end of summer, early autumn, sometimes holy within early autumn.

In connection with this I would like to read a statement that is given as background so those who are new here and different perspectives within our fellowship may understand more clearly what the church is in fact teaching.

The parent congregation of what became the Worldwide Church of God, that parent congregation was in Eugene in the state of Oregon, began observing the festival of tabernacles in Oregon in 1934.

The church originally took the position that justice observation of the festivals was obligatory for Old Testament Israel.

New Testament Christians were also required to keep these days.

We now understand that our presence at this festival is not required under the new covenant.

Under the new covenant the Christians access to God's grace is made possible through faith.

That of course has always been the understanding of the church.

As traditional time honored celebrations of the Worldwide Church of God, the festivals are full of meaning for Christians because they focus us on our Lord and Savior.

Thus we have the opportunity to come here not out of obligation or to earn God's favor, which the church never said we did, though some may have assumed that in any way, but to worship Jesus Christ.

I would like to put a footnote, we do more than worship Jesus Christ, we also worship God the Father lest there be a misunderstanding.

From the first festival in Oregon, which only a handful of believers attended, the festival of tabernacles has grown to tens of thousands of brethren annual attending at scores of sites worldwide, including more than 20 in the United States.

Now to clarify a point, and I think it important that we do understand, because not everybody does understand the present position of the church, for those who regard that the festivals have in fact been set aside, this is a festival of faith.

For those in our fellowship who regard it as the thing that Christians have done, and so read it in the scripture, it is the festival of tabernacles.

So what we are celebrating here, for some is the festival of tabernacles, and for others it is a new way of looking at it without any reference to the Old Testament festival other than the same time of the year.

This is also known as the festival of ingathering in the Old Testament, because it pointed to a time when many would be spiritually gathered in at a future event, following the return of Jesus Christ.

That event is a matter of salvation which we traditionally have understood, that after Messiah comes there is going to be a period when many who have yet to learn, as we find in China, India, the Muslim world, the Buddhist world, and in the secular world, both of Judaism, that is the state of Israel, and the secular world of Christianity, a new understanding of salvation that they never have had.

So in a sense, this is for some the festival of tabernacles, and for others the festival of faith of 95.

To illustrate that point, which I want to make clear, because it is time not to leave things unclear, in the same way as we meet annually, and the church says that we did not have to meet at this time, but could meet at any other time decided by the church fellowship, the same is true of the weekly assemblies.

So for many we gather on Saturday, the Sabbath, for others it is simply Saturday.

Thus you will note in page four of your festival of faith brochure, the term Saturday is used under ambassador, alumni, and under AU prospective student meetings.

That is from the point of view of those who understand that whatever we do is voluntary, and it is not essential, and it is not the Sabbath day as it used to be.

On the other hand, for those who do understand it still, as the Sabbath, it is so written on your opening center, Sabbath service October 7th.

That is, is it possible for brethren with different perspectives on this subject or on other subjects still to be here and to share fellowship and not to judge one another or to divide the church, thus for some the envelopes that are sent out are festival envelopes, but not holy day envelopes.

The write up will depend on perhaps the background of the author who wrote the section for instance under festival offerings page eight.

You need not be concerned whether your envelope says one thing or another.

You simply have to give an account and the judgment to God before Jesus Christ of why you hold the views you do, where the authority is for the conclusions you arrive at, and how you work and cooperate with others within the fellowship of the Worldwide Church of God of God to get a job done that cannot be done without our working together.

The time has been and is that we need to pull together, as I said, the Israelites needed to learn to work together.

Whether they thought Moses had wisdom or not as they were approaching the Red Sea, surely there were many who thought he didn't because there was no way across, yet together they all did escape.

Any other way than crossing the Red Sea through a miraculous event would never have saved them because Pharaoh's army could have caught up with them on the other side if they had attempted to circumvent this problem and go down on the east side of the Red Sea.

So in this celebration of our salvation in which we focus on the promises of the new covenant, which covenant has always been the teaching of the Worldwide Church of God even though some may have thought it not to be so, focuses on faith.

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Without faith it is impossible to obey him.

What you may be asked to obey depends on your understanding of the Bible.

There are some people who understand less and some more.

Some of us come to an understanding of what is in Scripture when we are in our teen age or 20 or 30 or 40 or 50 or 60 years.

And there was a black man many years ago in the church who could neither read nor write who taught himself how to read in his 70s in order that he might understand.

God did not ask as much of him if he lived another 20 years as he would have asked and does ask of me since I learned about this work.

When I was in the teens and here we are now many decades later.

So the younger you know the more time you have to read and study the greater your responsibility.

If you do not know it is not sin to you if there are things that you overlook and simply did not understand.

But to him who knows to do good and does it not to him it is sin.

That should never be forgotten.

Paul tells us in the book of Ephesians something about this fundamental perspective that we are asked to have at this festival season.

It is defined in simple terms because of his great love for us God who was rich in mercy made us alive in Christ when we were dead in transgressions.

It is by grace you have been saved dead in transgressions because to transgress is to create the wages of sin which is death.

You cannot earn salvation you do earn the death penalty salvation eternal life immortality is a gift of God.

There is in fact no way for anyone for example to say that by honoring father and mother we earn eternal life but you can lose eternal life by not honoring your father and your mother.

Let us understand that clearly the wages of sin or transgression that's what you earn wages is what you earn for transgression you earn death for obedience you don't earn life because all your life whether you assemble here every year or whether you honor your father and mother all your life you will still die that does not make you immortal obedience to God is what you ought to be doing because it's good for you but salvation is a gift of God he gives it to those who are willing to call Jesus Christ Lord and master Jesus asked the question however some why do you call me Lord which means master and do not the things that I say so it becomes important for you to know what Christ has said and when you have discovered what he has said when you know to do good and do it is not sin and when you know to do good and do it not it is you therefore are accountable before God as we all are and it's very important to recognize that for why we do and think what we do and how we behave to one another and to the world around us and how we set about working together even if there are differences in perspective so as not to break rank.

Mr. Decoch Joseph W. Decoch senior in the August 1995 plain truth said with each passing year we draw closer to the hope of all Saints the resurrection of the dead and the second coming and glorious reign of Jesus Christ was not more than about a month and a half when this came into print that Mr. Decoch died his son Joseph W. Decoch junior is now responsible I was there when he was placed in the office of pastor general and we all were responsible for the decision there was no other proper decision Joseph W. Coch did not know when he wrote this that in so few weeks he would be dead so life for any of us can be much shorter or much longer than we may imagine but in any case we draw closer to the hope of the Saints the resurrection of the dead and the second coming and the glorious reign of Jesus Christ we celebrate this time of great salvation during the feast each year that

has been our custom the feast is also a picture he said of our spiritual journey toward our promised inheritance made possible by our Lord and Savior now out of respect of course to our dear friends who have known Joseph Decoch junior by the name Joe may I say publicly here that I feel in respect to the office that he has at age 43 he came to a responsibility as Theodore Roosevelt in the United States as Bill Clinton president of the United States did in the early 40s as John Kennedy I think it appropriate that we refer to him as Joseph Decoch junior as a simple and plain term he normally never used his the middle initial W which in his father's case was used that I think is appropriate to the office and I would like to encourage all of us now who may have known him an essentially the same age group by his first name to consider this matter of respect in fact when this occurred and it was read to us by his father Joseph Decoch senior read the announcement that came in the coworker letter by the word Joe and afterward Mr. Decoch asked are there any questions or comments and I said yes I do not know what was written on the text but you used your son's first name may I suggest if the text has not been written that way that's fine but if it is it should read Joseph Decoch junior I was very pleased that the other men who were there recognize that that is a very important matter in terms of respective office in the transition at this period of time the scriptures that we should think of for the festival one of which is given here is found in Romans 116 I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes first for the Jew then of the Gentile we are here not only to recognize that we are in training for responsibilities in this life and in the life to come but that there is a time of salvation that has not yet come to millions who have died in the past or shall we say billions and millions more to be born in this century and into the next salvation has not yet profited the overwhelming majority of human beings for out of the five and a half billion less than two are in the Christian communities I think it important for us then to realize that we must never forget that traditionally the church has associated this time of year with the significance of Jesus gospel called the gospel of the kingdom of God which is the gospel of grace which is the gospel of salvation which is the gospel of Christ the gospel of grace is the gospel of the kingdom let us understand that to choose one word intentionally and not another is to misrepresent the full scope of the message Jesus brought the kingdom of God is not something just yet to come or just here now in fact the kingdom of God is the realm of God and since God reigns over all and always has the kingdom of God has always been here and God is the head of that kingdom it is an eternal kingdom it manifests itself in the church and in church government in the family and in family government it manifests itself in calling people individually step by step and it will manifest itself in the world that is yet to come bringing salvation to people in another resurrection to judgment and those who live into the world tomorrow when Jesus Christ returns Jesus said through the apostle John in 1st John 3 2 to 3 dear friends now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known now here he is telling us today and here is what we will be telling others tomorrow now that we are children of God we still have to consider that when the apostles touched Jesus Christ they touched a human being God in the flesh raised from the dead but physical flesh and bone and he said spirit does not have flesh and bone as you see me have we are told we shall have a spiritual body Jesus disappeared and no longer exists in the natural realm the uniqueness about salvation is that it is not an eternity in the flesh what we will be has not yet been made known but the fact that Jesus was alive from the dead was made known now we do know this from his teaching says John that when he appears we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is is John writing after Jesus had disappeared into the heavens so what Jesus now is we shall be like him everyone who has this hope in himself purifies himself both by his action and by the fact that our shortcomings are forgiven by Jesus Christ who is Savior we should be pure as he is pure is his summary in 1st John 3 2 to 3 so if we are here celebrating salvation we are thinking of times to come for people who have never understood not yet been born and we are thinking of the future of those who have lived and died from patriarchal times through the New Testament church till now we

obey and worship Jesus Christ and live as much as lies within us like he did this is not because we seek to earn God's favor or somehow that will make us quote good in his sight by our own deeds we are good in God's sight only in so far as Christ lives his life in us God having saved us from sin is saving us from day to day through the sacrifice of his son which was made once for all as the knowledge of sin and shortcoming of every sort come to our attention when we pray so we should respond in humility and thanksgiving dedicating our lives together however different some of our perspectives may be looking forward to the future time when the promise of salvation we will be fulfilled for all I would like to make a statement here we're not to add the scripture so this will not be another scripture this will be an observation there are those who have drawn a faulty conclusion who were no longer assembling with us today their conclusion is that if someone such as my wife or myself at Pasadena remain there in support of the work and if our view should differ on one point or another and Jesus said through the apostle Paul that we should grow into unity so he presumes there are differences of perspective yet there are people who have said to remain with the work whether it headquarters at Kelowna or Penticton or wherever you become in a sense an accomplice with what you might not agree with and you become a compromiser I would like to answer that question because it has been said of me and it has been said of others I know how to cooperate I do not know how to compromise but that's not the point compromise in their sense of the term when I should know better then we don't compromise but we can properly cooperate to get a job done let me illustrate a point if a husband does not agree with his wife does he become an accomplice with her mistake if it's hers if a wife does not agree with her husband should she leave him because she's an accomplice of an error or a mistake of judgment that he makes am I an accomplice to remain a citizen of the United States do I become responsible and an accomplice for what that country south of this nation did in Vietnam should I change citizenship and come to this country and be an accomplice of the mistakes of this land and there are a few just a few this is a blessed land the answer is we learn to cooperate my grandfather brought my father when he was six years old to the United States because he foresaw in 1889 the coming of world war one as a result of the Franco-Prussian war nearly two decades previous to that we've had to live with the fact that our nation has made mistakes and it has also made remarkable contributions to society it has shouldered ultimately the umbrella of freedom and protection as no nation in any century has at the most critical time in the history of the world with nuclear warfare possible so let those who say if you remain in our fellowship but you may not wholly agree at every point Mr. Armstrong never asked me two administrations to go to agree at every point nor did I that didn't make me an accomplice of mistakes that existed in the church nor did it make the church an accomplice of mistakes that I might have made this is a very important area in which the vast majority of those who wish to leave or have left have in fact intellectually and spiritually erred I want to make that so clear because if one has to leave in any arrangement in any group whether of two or thousands because you don't agree with something because it may be serious in your eyes then we would have to have many more divorces and in fact it's like someone said if you want to find a perfect church you have to found your own and then I couldn't join because you know I wouldn't be perfect let this be the message and let us focus on the responsibility through this festival of what our duties are as a collective body under the government of Jesus Christ with our administrative headquarters scattered here and there in the world but the fundamental headquarters on earth is in Pasadena subject to the government of Jesus Christ at the throne of God in heaven who has chosen this time not to use radio and television and publishing on a mass scale but to test us all to see what we have learned from top to bottom have a good night's rest and come back for the other messages tomorrow and the succeeding seven days thereafter you