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Date: 2/19/97 10:58 PM
Priority: Normal
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TO: Steven Andrews at United-Remote
Subject: Israel in Prophecy Booklet

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Hello from Michigan.

Attached to this message and the two which will follow, I am sending you the booklet draft of "ISRAEL IN PROPHECY: Where Are the Lost Ten Tribes?" (my working title). This message will come with chapters 1-3; message two with chapters 4-6; and message three with chapters 7-8.

I send it with a mixture of satisfaction and disappointment. I am pleased to be done with a working document. . . but as with most projects I have done of this scope and size, I am painfully aware of the limitations of one individual to present material which is so expansive and important.

With these thoughts in mind, I want to draw your attention to some of the warts so you will be expecting them before you begin to read. Some of the feedback I received before completing the draft indicated that the information you will find in chapters 2 (about the history of the B-I movement) and 3 (regarding hermeneutics) is not of value to our undertaking. This may well be true. However, if the information (or part of it) can be used, it is there for the taking. If not, there will be a need to create some new transitions between chapters.

Another concern I have is the extensive use of quotations from authoritative outside sources. Believing it better to put in such information (which might otherwise be time consuming for our editors to find themselves), I decided to incorporate these quotes as part of the initial draft. As you encounter each quotation, please ask whether it would be more beneficial to say these things in our own words or invoke the authority of a reputable scholar. In that connection, I have tried to label the denominational affiliation of those whom I quote--a practice which might cause offense in some quarters. . . but which might also present an openness and honesty which will be appreciated by others.

On a somewhat different note, one reviewer suggested that we omit direct references to Raymond F. McNair's "American and Britain in Prophecy." This is probably the best thing to do. I chose, however, to leave these references in the draft on the assumption that if they are of value, they will be there. . . and if not, they can be easily excised.

In terms of general approach, there may be a need to recast the presentation in places to provide the reader with a stronger and more directive tour through the ideas and issues. I have framed many of the arguments in a less assertive way--yet hoping to lead the reader to the obvious conclusions with all their implications about "what I should be doing". I decided on the more subtle type of delivery in hopes that it would better suit a 21st century audience that is more well-educated and more likely to be critical of the kind of style which was appropriately used during the years which Mr. Herbert Armstrong presented the same information. If (as some messages on the Elders Forum would like) we need to blow back the hair of the reader,

then some sections (particularly the conclusions in chapter 8) will have to be vigorously strengthened.

Speaking of Mr. Armstrong, I have included some quotations from his work in my booklet draft. One individual who read through my review of December 1996 advised against such direct quotations. There is a good deal of merit to his argument: if an idea is true, we need invoke no one. My decision to include Mr. Armstrong's quotations was in large part to show where he (and we as a Church) fit into the broad stream of thought and discussion about Israel's identity in modern times. If the editors decide that the former approach better serves our interest, Mr. Armstrong's words can easily be recast on our own words.

You will also find that the document abounds with text boxes. For example, Chapter 7 contains more text box material than text content. I have no illusions that all of the material included in the text boxes is usable. Indeed, I reserved much of the highly subjective information for just this purpose, hoping that those ideas which are of lesser value can be easily dispensed with.

If there is an interest in including a short selected bibliography as part of a UCG publication, I will be happy to put something together. My B-I bibliography is over 100 pages long, and I can quickly isolate those titles which are most appropriate. If we make use of this, I recommend that we preface the bibliography with a carefully worded disclaimer distancing ourselves from wholesale support of any of the works we cite.

As an aside, I should mention that the attached files are less than error-free than I would like. This is the result of two factors. My MicroSoft Works system no longer has a functioning spell checker. Moreover, for the past seven weeks, I have been thoroughly immersed in producing the booklet draft. I fear that I am so close to the forest I may have missed seeing a few obvious trees. Hopefully, I found most of them.

At the risk of being presumptuous, I would like to make a request concerning the by-line for any forthcoming booklet. If the material in this draft is usable for a UCG publication, it is my preference that my by-line be used only if I am in the full-time employment of UCG. My request is for professional reasons and relates to my marketability in academe (which is my principal fall back position should a job in UCG fail to materialize).

Finally, as you will quickly see, a significant danger in my style is that my work tends to read in many places like a history book (sorry. . . it's a professional hazard). If the editors decide that this will work against us, we may have considerable work left before UCG can produce and publish an acceptable booklet.

As for any parting thoughts, I have tried consciously to err on the side of providing far more material that we can (or, for that matter, should) use. I've based this approach on the premise that it is easier to edit/cut out than it is to create. My apologies in advance to those editors who must now clean up what is best left unpublished. I remain willing and eager to help with the continuing development of the booklet, and need only be contacted if you would like me to do so.

Thanks for allowing me to contribute to this particular project. Best regards,

Rick Sherrod