



United Church of God *an International Association*

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Chairman

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Dear fellow elders and brethren,

As we enter the fall festival season I wanted to take this opportunity to remind us of the great spiritual significance of the Holy Days that we are about to observe. Each annual Holy Day represents a vital step in God's great plan of salvation for all of humanity. I am sure that you will give and receive several messages that explain the deep spiritual meaning of each one of the Holy Days. These days have great spiritual meaning for each one of us now. As I have said so often, we must live the Holy Days now. These days are not just a shadow of things to come for us.

We have exercised faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as our Passover, and when we fall short and sin we must go before the throne of God and ask for forgiveness. It is the blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). After Satan is cast down and goes about to destroy true believers, note how they overcome him: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11, King James Version throughout). We are living the days of Unleavened Bread by continually exercising judgment, mercy and faith and walking in a reconciled relationship with God, Christ and each member of the Body of Christ.

We are renewing the inward man daily, the person of the Spirit, through obedience, prayer and feasting on the Word of God. We are living the Feast of Trumpets now by living the resurrected life and walking in newness of life. We are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us.

We are living the Day of Atonement now as we can live in the Holy of Holies through a new and living way as the apostle Paul writes in Hebrews 10:19-22: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." We have been given the power through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to cast Satan out of our lives and live the victorious life now.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the Kingdom of God and the time in which God's government will bring peace and prosperity to the earth and the universe. We have the opportunity to live under God's government now. In this case, I am not referring to God's government in the sense of Church authority, but rather governing our lives according to God's Word. When all is said and done we are daily standing individually before the judgment seat of Christ, and we must personally give an account to God. Note the inspired words of the apostle

Paul: “But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:10-12). Remember the words of Jesus in Luke 6:46: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

If each person on the face of the earth would begin to live according to the Word of God we could indeed have peace on earth. Note the inspired definition of the Kingdom of God: “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17). We can now live and enjoy the three major aspects of the Kingdom of God: righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Spirit of God and Christ.

Then comes the Eighth Day and a time in which all the peoples of all ages, having been given an opportunity for eternal life, will have the opportunity to go on to perfection. The seven great doctrines of Christ are given in Hebrews 6:1-3: “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.” Going on to perfection begins with the first Holy Day when we exercise faith in the sacrifice of Christ as our Passover. Then as we progress through living the Holy Days now we are going on to perfection. So going on to perfection involves living the Holy Days on a daily basis now.

We can ask ourselves, “Am I living the Holy Days now, and am I going onto perfection?” Hopefully, our reply is a resounding, “Yes, we will do.”

I hope all of you have a most inspiring festival season.

In the service of God and His Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald L. Ward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Donald L. Ward