

David C. Pack
Vs.
A Sabbath Test

An analysis of and rebuttal to the arguments proffered by the Restored Church of God in defense of dining out on the Sabbath.

David C. Pack Vs. A Sabbath Test

Dear Friends,

On June 16, 2005, Mr. David C. Pack of the Restored Church of God issued a scathing indictment of a book entitled *A Sabbath Test* which is showcased in our library. Additionally, Mr. Pack assailed the book's co-authors, accusing them of being "self appointed critics" and "pharisaical Laodiceans" driven by a desire to discredit Mr. Herbert W Armstrong. He also claimed that the motivation behind Messrs. Braidic and Fischer was a desire to exploit the brethren for profit and spearhead a movement for their own aggrandizement. His condemnation of the book and its premise, as well as those who wrote it, appears on his web site, <http://www.thercg.org/articles/doots.html>.

In the fall of 2004, *Blow the Trumpet* sent a copy of this book to him, and other leaders of God's Church, in hopes that he, and they, would prayerfully examine its message. Based on the tenor of his response, this COG leader appears to have chosen a different course. The vitriol unleashed in his essay reflects an extraordinary lack of maturity as well as a total absence of intellectual honesty. In essence, Mr. Pack was doing little more than throwing a tantrum in print. Furthermore, his approach made it clear that he was genuinely frustrated by the powerful logic presented in a book he so passionately condemns. As a result, instead of addressing the avalanche of scriptural evidence presented in *A Sabbath Test*, Mr. Pack's rebuttal was limited to a series of human arguments and circular reasoning followed by a stream of personal attacks and insults. In truth, his defense of dining out on the Sabbath was not remotely based on "scriptural facts" as he had promised.

In one particular argument this Church leader had the audacity to advance a stunning distortion of Sabbath life in the temple—one that is thoroughly contradicted by both secular history and the scriptures (see: Argument III, "Millennial Restaurants"). Mr. Pack's position on this subject even contradicts the teaching of the Church under Mr. Armstrong. His error on this point was so glaring that it prompted the authors of *A Sabbath Test* to write a very respectful rebuttal to his "new understanding" (see: Argument IV, "Millennial Sacrifices").

Mr. Pack also argued that God only prohibited the Israelites from gathering manna on the Sabbath, not food altogether. Therefore, His people were free to acquire other Sabbath meals and prepare them on the seventh day (see: Argument XXIII, "No More Manna"). Additionally, he claims that restaurant personnel actually perform a role similar to Levites who served in the temple, and as such deserve the same consideration from God concerning their Sabbath labor. Here is how he expressed it.

"If God can make—and always has made—allowances for His priests when they worked on the Sabbath, is it not possible for Him to make allowances for others who serve God's people?" (see: Argument III, "Millennial Restaurants")

Perhaps the most glaring distortion advanced by Mr. Pack regarding this issue, was his repeated insistence that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* and those who agree with them, want to condemn God's people. He promotes this assertion without offering one scintilla of evidence to support it. To him, it's true because he said it was.

Why Are We Doing This?

Although Mr. Pack is a recognized leader in God's Church, we feel compelled to address his characterization of *A Sabbath Test* and his representation of its message. Quite frankly, we think it's SHAMEFUL.

With this said, it is important to understand that ***Blow the Trumpet*** derives no pleasure out of what you are about to read. Furthermore, it saddens us to engage in what many may construe as just another fight in God's Church. Quite frankly, it is not our style. One only has to examine our web site to see the deference we show to all of God's Church and its leaders. However, we were truly shocked that Mr. Pack would be so disingenuous in his essay. We sincerely feel that such an approach is beneath him and the dignity of his office. But there is more.

We at ***Blow the Trumpet*** are now convinced that God's Sabbath cries out to be heard on this issue. Furthermore, its voice will not passively accommodate those who think they can call the holy profane and the profane holy (Ezk. 22:26, see also: Isa. 5:20). As you proceed through our response, you will hear that voice thunder, and it will be blunt, to say the least. Also, because we believe the ministry has the power as well as the responsibility to correct this sin, which has infested God's Church, our indictment is directed at them—the leaders.

Taking the Test

Throughout his essay, Mr. Pack used numerous anecdotes and tangential points to counter serious issues woven throughout the scriptures regarding God's people seeking out unbelievers on holy time and purchasing their goods and services. Perhaps he believed that if he protested loud enough, he wouldn't have to take this test. But lo, now that test has taken him. What follows is a comprehensive examination of his arguments versus those presented by *A Sabbath Test*.

Respectfully,

Blow the Trumpet

PS Shortly after the release of our initial rebuttal, we at ***Blow the Trumpet*** extended an invitation to Mr. Pack to publicly debate this issue at a time and setting of his choice. His office declined the offer saying he had better things to do than debate this with "gnats and ankle-biters" like us. Our invitation still stands.

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Argument I Mr. Armstrong Sanctioned it

In his defense of God's people seeking out unbelievers on the Sabbath and purchasing the fruit of their labor, Mr. Pack invokes the memory of the late Herbert W Armstrong. He implies that because Mr. Armstrong occasionally dined out on the Sabbath and never formally addressed the issue, the matter is settled. Furthermore, this COG leader attempts to eviscerate anyone who would suggest that Mr. Armstrong may not have possessed all knowledge in all things. Here is how he expresses this view.

David C. Pack:

"In researching Mr. Armstrong's member/co-worker letters and literature, dating back to 1947, nothing was found in reference to whether Christians should avoid eating at restaurants on the Sabbath—either for or against. Though restaurants were mentioned quite often in Mr. Armstrong's personals, articles and letters, they were virtually always in reference to his dining with various dignitaries such as the Mayor of Jerusalem, the President of Hebrew University and others. Nothing was written against dining out on the Sabbath—rather, other sources supported it. For example, when discussing special events at Spokesman's Club, the Pastor General's Report stated, "Such occasions are often held at a banquet room in a restaurant where the Club members and their wives or dates simply sit down to a served meal and fellowship until the end of the Sabbath" (Sept. 3, 1982).

In order to promote their theories, advocates of **this new movement must discredit Mr. Armstrong** and portray him as having compromised on this issue. As a result, he is presented as having fallen short on their "yardstick" for measuring righteousness.

We must ask: Do you see how **utterly ridiculous their thinking is**? Are you able to see why Mr. Armstrong never bought into this confusion?"

Our Response:

For this Church leader to suggest that those who question the practice of going to restaurants on the Sabbath are somehow attempting to "discredit" Mr. Armstrong is simply not true. In all due respect to Mr. Pack, his words actually dishonor the man he respect so greatly. Here's a news flash for all who share his view! Mr. Armstrong was not perfect. This is a fact that even he was more than willing to admit. His invocation, "Don't believe me believe your Bible," was not some marketing ploy. It was real. His words declared to all who were affected by him to "prove all things" through the scriptures. Furthermore, Mr. Armstrong was willing to change when proven wrong. With that said, let's examine Mr. Armstrong's relationship to this issue.

Mr. Armstrong and A Sabbath Test

It is indisputably clear that Mr. Armstrong NEVER made an exhaustive study of this subject. Mr. Pack's own words acknowledge this truth. For him to conclude that even though this great teacher NEVER commissioned one ounce of research addressing this subject, he has somehow spoken powerfully on it, is utter nonsense and reveals the lengths some COG leaders will go to when attempting to prove the unprovable. With that said, we have a question for him (Mr. Pack). Do you sincerely believe that Mr. Armstrong would have dismissed this topic if it had exploded on the Church as it has today? If yes, why didn't you ignore it as well?

However, if God's people truly desire to seek Mr. Armstrong's wisdom on this topic they need to honestly ask themselves how this true and faithful servant would see this issue if he had made an in-depth study of it today? We at ***Blow the Trumpet*** sincerely believe he would be astonished at how the Church has bought into this practice. Furthermore, we are absolutely convinced by recent history, that if confronted with this debate Mr. Armstrong would see dining out on the Sabbath as HUGELY symptomatic of a laodicean attitude that has infested God's Church today.

College Days

To illustrate how God's Church has changed over the past few decades consider the following. When Mr. Pack was a student at Ambassador College in Pasadena (1967-1971), there was a restaurant less than a block away from campus. It was called "Gwens." It was a very popular spot for students to visit on Saturday nights after a basketball game. We are sure Mr. Pack went there as well. Our question is this: Did he ever (EVEN ONCE) go there on a Friday evening before Bible study or on a Saturday afternoon after services? Did he ever take a co-ed there on a Sabbath morning date just to make the day more special? Furthermore, does he ever remember any student doing such a thing? Our guess is NO!—because to do so was unthinkable back then. At that time the Sabbath was far more respected by God's people and His ministers than it is today.

David C. Pack continued:

"Additionally, there are two individuals at the headquarters of The Restored Church of God who knew and closely worked with Mr. Armstrong—one of them going back as far as 1963. Both stated that Mr. Armstrong never communicated, in any way, that God's people should avoid dining in restaurants on the Sabbath."

Our Response:

A Question for Two RCG Employees

We have a question for these RCG employees. Here it is. During the sixties there was a market right across the street from Ambassador College's Pasadena campus. It was called "El Rancho." Students and employees would flock there on Friday afternoons to purchase Sabbath snacks and meals, making sure to be back on campus before sunset. If you served Mr. Armstrong for any length of time, you would have gone there as well. Now for our question. Did you ever shop for your Sabbath meals on Friday evening after sunset? Furthermore, if you told Mr. Armstrong that you occasionally did, how would he have responded? Additionally, during the early and mid 60s did you ever make reservations to dine out on the weekly Sabbath other than during the feast? Our guess is NO. Once again, Sabbath behavior in the Church was much different then.

An Acknowledgement Regarding Mr. Armstrong

At this point it is important to understand that we are acutely aware that Mr. Armstrong occasionally dined out on the Sabbath and that he never spoke out against this practice. He even acknowledged that it was done on occasion by spokesman's clubs in local congregations during special meetings (Ladies' Nights). However, for Mr. Pack to argue that this is a definitive doctrinal statement is an insult to Mr. Armstrong. Furthermore, this man would have been furious at him for advancing this characterization of his words.

We are also aware that Mr. Armstrong made some brief comments regarding dining out on the Sabbath at a Bible study in the early 80s. However, even then he acknowledged that he hadn't given the subject any thought before that evening. For Mr. Pack to embrace Mr. Armstrong's "off the cuff" comments as an official doctrinal pronouncement of the Church is bizarre. Just out of curiosity, can he

name one other doctrine of the Church that Mr. Armstrong only commented on for less than 10 minutes in his entire life?

The absence of any clearly definitive statement on this issue by Mr. Armstrong is clearly due to the fact that what takes place in the Church today is light years from what took place during the life of that true and faithful servant. Clearly this issue was NOT what it is now. If it was, Mr. Armstrong certainly would have addressed it. This is not to suggest that we think his occasional dining out on the Sabbath was appropriate, for indeed it wasn't. However, the circumstances surrounding Mr. Armstrong's Sabbath dining were so unique he never detected this as a potential problem. We at ***Blow the Trumpet*** sincerely believe that if he heard the position articulated in *A Sabbath Test*, he would be genuinely moved—and yes, he would have repented.

Satan's World

Here is something for all of God's people to think about. This is Satan's world. As such, what takes place in it is not intended to enhance our worship nor draw us closer to the true God. Satan has one agenda when it comes to God's people—to push them away from the source their hope. With that said, it is interesting that the practice of dining out in restaurants is relatively new. Just a few decades ago families would rarely, if ever, engage in this activity on any day, let alone the Sabbath. Today however, the world Satan rules has made dining out so much a part of our daily lives that we have come to accept it without thinking. Some even regard it as a necessity in our complex world. Even Mr. Pack contends that without going out to restaurants and buying their Sabbath meals, God's people would be deprived the basic necessity of nourishment that comes from food (see: Argument XIV, "Eating is a Necessity"). He also argues that without going to a restaurant on holy time it would be impossible for some brethren to fellowship (see: Argument XX "Rehabilitating Evil").

Whether Mr. Pack likes it or not, the very thing he thinks we need so much actually requires God's law to be trampled on. Imagine that! In order to dine out on Holy time God's people must go back into spiritual Egypt and proactively seek out Sabbath-breakers. They then must pay them for their Sabbath labor. Why?—because like Dave Pack, so many have been lulled into accepting their Sabbath-breaking behavior as just another part of our modern culture. Can you say "Laodicea"?

Just a Suggestion

Here is something for Mr. Pack to ponder. Is it possible that God never intended for Mr. Armstrong to address this issue? Is it possible that He reserved it for the last era of His Church? Is it possible that the Great Creator of Heaven and Earth has allowed His "Sabbath Test" to be thrust on this generation to "prove" whether His people will "walk in His law or not" (Ex 16:4)? Furthermore, will Mr. Pack truly honor the memory of the greatest servant of God in his generation by blowing the dust off his Bible and letting God's wisdom fall where it may.

Final Thought

Our suggestion to Mr. Pack, and all of God's people, is to trust scripture on this (Pro. 3:5)—not some convoluted theory that claims, "If Mr. Armstrong didn't address it, we shouldn't address it either." The stakes are simply too high to cling to a practice that actually requires us to ignore every part of a command that was intended to set us apart.

Argument II

The Authors Have an Agenda

Throughout his essay, Dave Pack portrays the authors of *A Sabbath Test* as evil men driven by sinister motives. At every turn he assumes the worst in them. However, never once does he provide any proof to support his claims. He simply levels an accusation and then declares it a "Biblical fact."

Although others have vigorously opposed *A Sabbath Test*, no COG leader has been so mean spirited and intellectually dishonest concerning the motivation behind it. What follows are some of Mr. Packs accusations followed by a response offered by Dennis Fischer, co-author of *A Sabbath Test*.

David C. Pack:

"It appears that the writers of the book sensed that a movement was beginning in the splinters without a spearhead. Hence, it appears that these followers aspired to the lucrative position of quasi-leaders of this trend, by virtue of offering a much bigger publication expounding their idea. Since they so obviously desire to lead this movement, one must ask, are they "teaching things they ought not for filthy lucre's sake" (Tit. 1:11), and thus making merchandise of (II Pet. 2:3) unsuspecting brethren?"

Response from Dennis Fischer:

Few observations could be more consumed with hate and less filled with truth. I honestly wonder if God were to ask Mr. Pack if he would be willing to stake eternal judgment on his words. I am prepared to do just that on the words that follow. Neither Mr. Braidic nor myself have ever drawn one cent for our labor on *A Sabbath Test*. Furthermore, our motivation has never been about "lucrative positions." On this I will stake the second death. I am not now, nor ever have been the slightest bit interested in leading some splinter movement. What Mr. Pack has engaged in, with this comment, is totally antithetical to Philadelphian Christianity (Jn. 13:35).

David C. Pack continued:

"This towering question arises from the outset: Would Christ allow His apostle to be wrong on such a crucial point and then to be set straight or corrected, after the fact, by self-appointed "leaders" (actually lay members) arriving in the age of Laodicea? Such a prospect would be laughable, were its effects not so serious. Yet, significant numbers of weak or relatively new brethren across the landscape of God's people seem to have bought in."

Response from Dennis Fischer:

By the words, "His apostle," I assume that Mr. Pack is referring to Mr. Armstrong and not himself. If this is the case he is making a great assumption. The fact of the matter is that Mr. Armstrong NEVER presented a definitive study on the subject of dining out on the Sabbath. Therefore, he was neither right nor wrong on this issue. No matter how hard some may try to argue that Mr. Armstrong spoke powerfully on this, it is simply NOT TRUE. Even he acknowledged that he never gave the issue any thought.

"Now I had never thought until this evening when the question was brought up to me about whether it was wrong to go to a restaurant to eat." HWA 1981.

Once again, I am fully aware that Mr. Armstrong dined out on the Sabbath and never spoke against the practice. However, for Mr. Pack to cling to the notion that this true and faithful servant spoke definitively on the subject is wishful thinking and a disservice to his memory. Certainly, this is not a "Biblical fact," and Mr. Armstrong would be furious at anyone claiming it was.

Furthermore, despite what Mr. Pack believes, we are not "self-appointed" in this issue, nor are we even "leaders" of some movement, for that matter. This might come as a surprise to him, but we do not now, nor have we ever sought a following based on this vital truth. Personally, I am a member of major COG organization and am honored to be so. If you were to speak to those who know me, including my pastor (who was personally ordained by Mr. Armstrong), they would paint a far different picture than that offered by Dave Pack. Once again, our purpose in writing *A Sabbath Test* was to chronicle God's wisdom on this vital truth. I know these words gall the RCG and its leader, but they are true nonetheless. What is totally untrue is Dave Pack's assertion that we are some type of "self-appointed" profiteers. You can't imagine how desperately we wished someone else had done it

David C. Pack continued:

"It appears that the leaders of this thinking have extended mercy "to whom they would show mercy," in this case Mr. Armstrong, because they know this makes their doctrines more palatable to independent-minded potential converts, many of whom view him favorably and who are the ones most likely to send contributions. Yet, the facts are that they have leveled character assassination (John 8:44) at any who dare bring their doctrines to the light of the Bible, as would Mr. Armstrong."

Response from Dennis Fischer:

Once again Mr. Pack looks into the hearts of others and delivers his judgment. Unfortunately, despite all the practice, he is not very good at this.

NOW FOR THE REAL TRUTH!

As has been said before, I have not drawn one cent from this very important project. Furthermore, I am not now nor ever have been compensated by any COG organization or affiliate, including ***Blow the Trumpet***. To suggest that this is my or my co-author's motivation is a tale borne out of some distorted Church view. I'm just curious, but did it ever occur to Mr. Pack that there are people who are driven by things other than wealth and power? Once again, a question needs to be asked here. Dave Pack, are you willing to stake God's eternal judgment on the accuracy of your statement? I am prepared to stake everything on the total absence of its accuracy.

Furthermore, Mr. Pack's assertion that he has brought this doctrine "to the light of the Bible," is simply not true. Throughout his essay, this COG leader has repeatedly misrepresented scripture and distorted the historical record. Here is just one example of each. On at least three different occasions, Mr. Pack claims Jesus picked grain with His disciples as they walked through a field on the Sabbath. This is TOTALLY false. The scriptures very specifically state that only the disciples picked the grain--not the Messiah. This, by the way, is very telling with respect to this issue (see: Argument VI, "Jesus Condoned It").

Additionally, Mr. Pack claims that ancient Israel brought sacrifices to the temple on the weekly Sabbath and that these offerings were prepared into great feasts to be consumed by the priests and God's people. This is also TOTALLY false. Both the scriptures and the historical record declare that the children of Israel NEVER brought offerings on the weekly Sabbath (see: Argument IV, "Millennial Sacrifices").

David C. Pack continued:

“One reason some advocates of particular doctrines react with viciousness when their positions are brought into question is that their single-issue doctrines often represent 95 percent or more of what makes them unique, and thus their identity. Those condemning Sabbath dining out are primarily single-issue religionists set to defend their turf against any who would bring their lone doctrine into question.”

Response from Dennis Fischer:

I assume the reference to “viciousness” is based on certain observations offered by **Blow the Trumpet** when rebutting Mr. Pack’s article. However, if one examines this rebuttal carefully, he will find that it courageously addresses Mr. Pack’s arguments, as opposed to attacking God’s people.

Single Issue Religionists

With respect to the suggestion by Mr. Pack that my co-author and I are “single issue religionists,” this is nothing other than a bad guess disguised as hard evidence. There isn’t an ounce of truth in it. Sadly, Mr. Pack actually could have ascertained the fallacy of this accusation simply by employing a standard established by none other than Jesus Christ. Notice His words: “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Lk. 6:45)? This being the case, consider what I and my dear friend and co-author have spoken out of the abundance of our hearts and decide for yourself if this sounds like a “single issue” doctrine. First consider Mr. Art Braidic.

Mr. Braidic is one of the most prolific writers in God’s Church today. In addition to co-authoring *A Sabbath Test*, he has written or co-written over 25 other works. Many in God’s Church regard his 300 plus page book *The 144,000*, to be the definitive statement on the identity of those described in the seventh and fourteenth chapters of the book of Revelation.

In addition to that, Mr. Braidic has delivered virtually hundreds of messages to God’s people and only ONE has addressed the issue of dining out on the Sabbath. Furthermore, in his weekly television broadcast, *The World to Come*, Mr. Braidic has presented scores of messages on a wide range of topics but has yet to cover *A Sabbath Test*. Based on this alone, it is clear that if he is obsessing about anything, it is God’s work and not “one issue” as Mr. Pack falsely asserts.

Although my credentials are not nearly as comprehensive as Mr. Braidic’s, I too have stayed very busy with numerous projects that go far beyond this debate. For example: I have written two books and co-written several booklets as well as over one hundred articles appearing on various COG and non-COG websites. My first book, *It Came Without Warning*, addresses the importance of preaching the gospel as a witness. It is interesting that there are some who believe that to be my “single issue.”

“A Vision, A Plan, and A Destiny”

However, if you ask me, my faith is declared in a book entitled *A Vision, A Plan and A Destiny*. I completed this endeavor in 2004 and it is my greatest joy as far as any project I have ever been associated with.

The point I am trying to make is that the “one issue critic” accusation leveled by Mr. Pack is not based on evidence, but rather on emotion. It is simply an attempt by him to define me and my co-author as extremists, and therefore not to be trusted. This is not a “Biblical Fact,” it is a non-biblical deception. Once again, as with the vast majority of his evidence, this COG leader shows a total disregard for the truth. By the way, I’m just curious, but where did Dave Pack get his 95% statistic? Or, was that just snatched out of thin air as well?

David C. Pack continued:

“This particular false doctrine is already resulting in the “fruits” of division within various groups and congregations, creating factions within the two largest splinters, and among other segments of God’s people. While the book’s authors feel thrilled by this “progress,” and feel validated as a result of this growing turmoil, seeing it as more coming to the truth of their thinking, they are actually sowing division and bringing an ocean of blood on their own heads.”

Response from Dennis Fischer:

This is an extraordinary accusation. It is even more so in light of its source. There isn’t a COG on earth that should understand more about division than the Restored Church of God. Mr. Pack caused enormous division when he spoke out powerfully against the WWCG and their apostasy. Mind you, I’m not complaining, it was the right thing to do. What has apparently been lost on him is that down through the ages truth has often been a great divider in God’s Church. Whether it was the first century under the apostles, or the last era of God’s work, the truth has always been a line in the sand. When it comes to this line, Dave Pack stands on one side and I stand on the other. However, I am confident this will not always be the case. I changed—so can he.

Setting the Record Straight

Furthermore, contrary to what Mr. Pack claims, my "validation" comes from something far greater than any book I could write or any cause I could engage in. The fact of the matter is that I come from a spiritual bloodline of Kings. My brother is Jesus Christ and my Father is His Father. These are not just fancy words. I know them to be undeniably correct. To think that any true Christian needs to be validated by a community of followers is simply immature. I am amazed that a man who claims to respect the truth so much would actually advance such an accusation.

David C. Pack continued:

"Once again, we cite a particular comment from the book, *A Sabbath Test*, page 30: “There are some who have suggested that Nehemiah’s indictment is against those doing business with merchants selling food in open markets, not specifically restaurants. Therefore in a very technical sense, God appears to be silent on the subject of dining out on the Sabbath.”

Notice their admission that God is silent in prohibiting Sabbath dining out."

Response from Dennis Fischer:

Once again Mr. Pack makes another representation that is NOT TRUE. Our point in offering the words quoted by him is that it is the people who engage in going to restaurants on the Sabbath that are making this assertion, NOT THE AUTHORS of *A Sabbath Test*. Mr. Pack keeps suggesting that my co-author and I are claiming this, but it just isn’t true. Perhaps I can illustrate what we mean a different way. Suppose Mr. Pack is asked during a question and answer Bible study why he goes to restaurants on the Sabbath in light of what Nehemiah says. Mr. Pack then answers:

“Nehemiah’s indictment is against those doing business with merchants selling food in open markets, not specifically restaurants—so technically the Bible doesn’t address the issue one way or the other. Next question please!”

David C. Pack continued:

"Ironically, the same scriptures upon which these modern critics base their beliefs were also in the hands of Paul and all other apostles and ministers of the early Church. When people traveled in those times, they did not always bring all their food along with them. The modern critics might consider Paul and other ordained leaders guilty of negligence for not addressing such issues in their letters."

Response from Dennis Fischer:

This is a bizarre stream of logic. Unfortunately it is very typical. Did it ever occur to Mr. Pack that Paul didn't write about buying and selling on the Sabbath because people weren't practicing it? Let's ask this question another way. Can Dave Pack cite one Biblical example where people purchased food on the Sabbath without being indicted for it (See: Neh. 10:31)?

Argument III Millennial Restaurants

Do you believe there will be restaurants operating on God's Sabbath during the Millennium? Apparently, some of God's leaders do. Oh, they won't come right out and admit it, but this idea has subtly emerged in arguments presented by certain COG leader's in defense of dining out on the Sabbath. One such leader is David C. Pack of the Restored Church of God.

In an article commissioned by Mr. Pack entitled *Dining out on the Sabbath*; a very interesting stream of logic is presented. He claims that because great numbers of God's people will be fed at the temple when His Millennial Kingdom is established on earth, true Christians may now dine out at restaurants on the Sabbath and holy days. Mr. Pack even likens the labor performed by restaurant employees to that performed by Levites serving in the temple. Therefore, according to him, because Levites engage in profane labor on this day and are held blameless (Mt. 12:5), restaurant personnel serving God's people today should also be held blameless for their labor.

At the conclusion of his point, Mr. Pack employs what can only be described as standard operating procedure for the RCG—he smears and belittles anyone and everyone who believes contrary to him. With that said, let us examine this Church leader's argument and ask some very important questions concerning the "Biblical facts" he claims authorizes him to seek out Sabbath breakers and purchase their good and services. Here is how this he begins his point.

David C. Pack:

"During the Millennium, throngs of people will come to the temple complex on Mount Zion and offer sacrifices, **especially on the weekly Sabbaths and annual Holy Days**. Yet, the writers of the previously quoted book [*A Sabbath Test*] make this blanket statement: "In the millennium there will be no restaurants [implying dining facilities in general] operating on the Sabbath" (p. 10)."

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack distorts the clear meaning of *A Sabbath Test* by redefining the term "restaurants" to mean all "dining facilities." He then suggests that this is what the authors were "implying." However, the authors meant no such thing and anyone with an ounce of intellectual honesty knows it.

When the authors of *A Sabbath Test* refer to the term "restaurants", in their book, they mean it in a traditional sense. In other words, there will be no commercial restaurants open for BUSINESS on the Sabbath during the Millennium—the same restaurants Mr. Pack patronizes today. What is clearly being conveyed by Messrs. Braidic and Fischer is that in the Millennium Mr. Pack will not be able to go out to dinner at a fine bistro on a Friday evening. This is because that type of "dining facility" will be closed in accordance with God's commandment.

Mr. Pack's Obvious Motivation

By making no distinction between a "restaurant" and a "dining facility" such as a Church "social room" or even a set of picnic tables in a park, Mr. Pack intentionally blurs the line between what is an appropriate Sabbath dining practice and what is not. In other words, according to Him there is no distinction between the Church hosting a "pot luck" after services and him (Dave Pack) seeking out unbelievers at a restaurant and paying them to prepare his meals. Furthermore, he doesn't want you to make that distinction either. This is because he wants you to believe that because you may do one without compromising God's law, you may also do the other. What he never admits is that the "other" will

NEVER take place in God's kingdom. That's right! Although Mr. Pack attempts to hide it, the fact is that there will be NO commercial restaurants operating on the Sabbath during the millennium. By resorting to his semantical trickery, this Church leader demonstrates the lengths he is prepared to go to in defense of his sin.

A HUGE Distortion

Furthermore, although Mr. Pack argues that great meals will be prepared and served in the Millennial Temple on the weekly Sabbath, this is NOT true. Although such meals will be prepared on designated annual holy days, they will NEVER be prepared on the weekly assembly (See: Argument IV, "Millennial Sacrifices"). Both the scriptures as well as thoroughly documented history reveal that even work by the Levites was kept to a minimum on this day. Despite this fact, Mr. Pack argues his point by incorrectly merging temple activities that took place on the annual festivals with those performed on the seventh day. Notice how he does this.

David C. Pack continued:

"This [the statement in *A Sabbath Test* that says there will be no restaurants open on the Sabbath in the Millennium] contradicts what is described in the book of Ezekiel. In the huge temple complex, four large kitchens in the outer court (Ezek. 46:21-24) will be in operation, providing food for many thousands who will dine in 30 separate dining rooms, each about 6,400 square feet. The kitchens provide a place to cook the sacrifices that people will bring to the temple. They will be allowed to have a portion of the offerings they present; a portion will also be reserved for the priests."

"Just as this was done in ancient times, it will also be done in the world tomorrow. The future temple will be a huge complex that will accommodate the many thousands—and later, millions—who will come to worship there each year. This complex will need to accommodate far larger numbers than Solomon's temple or the temple that was renovated in the days of King Herod. In the future, certain types of service will be done on the Sabbath—and this will be done with God's full knowledge and blessings!"

"While privately owned restaurants are different from Church-operated dining facilities, both require labor. The millennial temple complex will involve specialized workers who will serve in distinct capacities, meaning they will be compensated."

Our Response:

First, let us repeat that Mr. Pack's claim that God's people will be fed at the millennial temple on the weekly Sabbath is TOTALLY FALSE. Such a practice has never happened in the past, nor will it ever happen in the future. This is because although offerings were brought on certain annual festivals they were forbidden on the WEEKLY Sabbath (See: Argument IV, "Millennial Sacrifices"). Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, the Church under the leadership of Mr. Armstrong never taught otherwise.

Levitical Chefs

Additionally, while Mr. Pack acknowledges that there is a difference between a retail restaurant and what is being described in Ezekiel, he seems to dismiss the difference. As a matter of fact he never mentions any differences at all. However, he does expound on the similarities. For example: according to him, both require specialized labor and that like restaurant personnel, Levites serving in the temple are compensated. Therefore, according to this COG leader, restaurant employees have more in common with Levites than one may think.

While this COG leader argues the similarities between restaurant personnel and Levites working on the Sabbath, we would like to present the differences—and they are significant. Consider just a few.

- Those who perform Levitical duties in the temple serve the God of Heaven. Those who work in restaurants on the Sabbath serve the god of this world (2 Cor.4:4).
- Those who serve in the temple are committed to assisting God's people in honoring His Sabbath and holy days. Those who work in restaurants have no idea what those days are let alone what they mean. They will however, wish you a "Merry Christmas" or a "Happy Easter."
- Any compensation extended to Levites is provided by God Almighty from tithes and offerings given to Him. By the way, the same is true today. Meanwhile, those who work in restaurants are compensated by patrons in the form of tips as well as a salary paid by their employer who generates revenue by selling products.
- Those who perform Levitical duties on the Sabbath are held blameless before God. However, those who work in restaurants on the Sabbath are commanded to REPENT!

The idea that anyone would characterize serving God's people a meal on holy time, from His temple no less, as tantamount to what is done at a commercial restaurant is reckless, and a huge distortion of the scriptures. But that is exactly what David C. Pack is doing. Once again, remember that his entire reason for this article is to argue that God approves of His people proactively seeking out Sabbath breakers and paying them to prepare their meals. He does this despite the fact that God specifically and emphatically prohibited them from acquiring or preparing these meals when they were wandering in the desert (Ex. 16).

A Matter of W-O-R-K

Mr. Pack then explains how those serving in the temple on the Sabbath are engaged in profane labor through their service to God's people—often very strenuous labor. The implication here is that if God's people can cause Levites to W-O-R-K on the Sabbath, why can't they cause restaurant employees to do the same? As you read this section of Mr. Pack's argument it is important to understand that it is based on a false premise—one that claims great food preparation takes place on the weekly Sabbath. Once again, this is NOT true (See: Argument IV, "Millennial Sacrifices").

David C. Pack continued:

"The food menus at the millennial temple will not solely consist of meat (beef, lamb or goat). Ezekiel 46 also mentions meal (grain) offerings and baked bread. Certainly, God will allow vegetables, fruits and various trimmings to make the dishes attractive, as well as nourishing. Again, all these things spell W-O-R-K. Much of it will be pre-assembled on the preparation day, but also much will be done on the Sabbath. During the Millennium, as the world's population escalates into the billions, only a tiny fraction of the people will be present at the temple at any given time. There will be hundreds of other locations in which Sabbath services will be held. Provisions will be allowed for people to eat. This means that there will be dining facilities to accommodate larger groups numbering into the thousands. Perhaps on many occasions, the people might bring potluck meals prepared the day before. But there will be times when potlucks for such large gatherings will not be practical."

"Ezekiel's vision of the future temple gives us a glimpse into how God will conduct things in the world to come. From this, we can readily discern that feeding large congregations on the Sabbath will entail a degree of real labor. **If God can make—and always has made—allowances for His priests when they worked on the Sabbath, is it not possible for Him to make allowances for others who serve God's people?** Those

who condemn brethren for dining out on the Sabbath do not think so. Nevertheless, the glimpse that God inspired Ezekiel to record, along with many other scriptures, shows us a more realistic picture."

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack offers an interesting, but very humanly contrived argument. Notice again what he offers as a Biblical fact:

"If God can make—and always has made—allowances for His priests when they worked on the Sabbath, is it not possible for Him to make allowances for others who serve God's people?"

When Mr. Pack rhetorically asks "is it not possible for God to make allowances for others who serve His people in the same way He makes allowances for His priests?," he is attempting to put words into God's mouth. But they are not God's words, they are Dave Pack's. He knows that Jesus explained that profane labor performed by the priests on His Sabbath is exempt from God's judgment, therefore he attempts to take it further. What his argument is saying in effect is:

"If God will allow His priests to work for His people on the Sabbath and not be held accountable for it, why wouldn't He extend the same consideration to others who serve them as well—you know, like waiters and waitresses who profane the Sabbath every week? God could surely give them a pass when they wait on His people, can't He? Perhaps not when they serve others, but certainly us. Furthermore, if God will forgive them for their Sabbath labor, then what they are doing must be a good work, and if it is a good work then employing their services must be a good work as well."

This argument reeks with self-justification. Furthermore, it is designed to extend a form of amnesty to those who profane God's Sabbath with impunity. At this point it is important to understand that what takes place in restaurants every Sabbath is a CAPITAL CRIME in God's eyes (Ex. 31: 14-15), not a levitical function as Dave Pack claims.

Additionally, it is interesting that in this argument Mr. Pack acknowledges that restaurant personnel are serving God's people. However, elsewhere he asserts that they are only serving their masters—the restaurant owners, NOT GOD'S PEOPLE!

David C. Pack continued:

"Let's understand: There are circumstances under which God says that work on the Sabbath is wrong and other times He makes plain that it is not. Thus, it comes down to: What are the circumstances involving the work?—who is doing the work?—why, for what purpose, is it being done?—who is being burdened and who is being unburdened?"

"God always answers these questions in principle, but does it through His faithful leaders (Tit. 1:9), not through any "Tom, Dick or Harry" who gets a notion in his head about the who, what, why, when and where of that work according to his personal opinion or feeling."

"Here is why following personal opinions of misguided, unqualified, self-appointed teachers becomes a truly serious issue."

Our Response:

Mr. Pack is actually correct here. There are circumstances under which labor on the Sabbath is wrong and other times when it is permissible. Working in a restaurant on the Sabbath falls into the former category regardless of how hard this Church leader tries to rehabilitate it. Mr. Pack, You can claim restaurant personnel are Levites if you want, but in truth they are slaves to sin (Ro. 6:16) and the great slave master (2 Cor. 4:4).

Perhaps the biggest error in Mr. Pack's argument is that he believes it is up to him, as a minister, to decide what is appropriate behavior on God's Sabbath. However, we couldn't disagree more. We believe it is God's decision. Furthermore, we are absolutely convicted by His word that He has spoken loudly here. The Lord God Almighty declares that we are not to compel the servant or the stranger to labor on our behalf on the Sabbath. He even provided the reason for this when he reminded His people that they were once slaves (Dt. 5:14-15).

A Final Thought:

Dear Mr. Pack,

We appreciate the fact that you believe you are eminently qualified to render such wisdom and that any "Tom, Dick or Harry" who claims you are in error should just butt out. However, we don't agree.

In our view, the authors of ***A Sabbath Test*** have seen what you apparently have chosen to ignore—a steady erosion in the honoring of God's Sabbath. Furthermore, it sickens them, and us, to watch this wonderful day being contaminated by those seeking out a place where God's Sabbath is being trampled on by slaves to sin and asking these slaves to trample on it for them. As a leader you should know that such behavior dishonors God's law. If you can't see that then God will work through Tom, Dick and Harry, and anyone else for that matter, to proclaim this vital truth to His people—and there is nothing you can do to stop it.

Furthermore, in all due respect, your argument doesn't inspire much confidence in us, and we are definitely not prepared to offer it before the Holy One of Israel in defense of any behavior endorsing God's people proactively seeking out the Sabbath breaking services of unbelievers. Quite frankly we can't believe you offer it now. God's judgment in this matter is crystal clear. His people are not to acquire food on His Sabbath, they are not to prepare it on His Sabbath and they are not to go outside their place on His Sabbath (Ex. 16). You may dismiss this injunction given by the Almighty through His servant Moses, but we will not.

Respectfully,

Blow the Trumpet

Argument IV Millennial Sacrifices

In his attempt to justify the sin of seeking out Sabbath breakers in restaurants on holy time and paying them to prepare his meals, David C. Pack contends that because the priests in the millennial temple will feed thousands of God's people from the sacrifices they bring, the temple serves the same purpose as restaurants today. Therefore, God is perfectly content with His people purchasing the goods and services of these unbelievers because it is so similar to what will take place in the world tomorrow. This is a stunning assertion—even more so because it is anchored on a belief that is diametrically opposite to the teaching of Mr. Herbert W Armstrong—not to mention the Bible as well as numerous works of highly respected scholars.

In the aftermath of Mr. Pack's claim, Art Braidic and Dennis Fischer (co-authors of *A Sabbath Test*) wrote an essay addressing this particular point. We at ***Blow the Trumpet*** believe it is one of the most compelling rebuttals offered in this highly charged issue. Quite frankly, its honesty is refreshing. As you read it you will easily see the difference between the approach taken by Mr. Pack and that taken by Braidic and Fischer. In truth, Mr. Pack's argument actually disproves his own point. Read on...

Millennial Sacrifices

By

Art Braidic and Dennis Fischer

Recently, the Restored Church of God published an emotional condemnation of a book entitled *A Sabbath Test*, which we co-authored. In their essay, a team of writers under the direction of RCG director, Mr. David C. Pack, advanced numerous arguments in an attempt to prove that God's people may dine out on the Sabbath with His full blessing. Although none of the RCG points reflected a reasonable Biblical view, one actually struck us as most surprising. Quite frankly, we are mystified as to why they would advance a point that directly contradicts both the Biblical and historical record, not to mention a long-standing teaching of God's Church.

According to the RCG, dining out on the Sabbath today is similar to what God's people will be doing every Sabbath during the millennium and beyond. Furthermore, these writers claim that *A Sabbath Test* is unequivocally wrong when it asserts that there will be no restaurants open on the Sabbath in God's Kingdom. They do this by suggesting that because the temple will feed God's people from the offerings they bring, it is a type of millennial restaurant. Notice how they introduce this particular point.

"During the Millennium, throngs of people will come to the temple complex on Mount Zion and offer sacrifices, **especially on the weekly Sabbaths** and annual Holy Days."

Here the RCG begins this phase of their argument by proclaiming that sacrifices will be brought by God's people on the *weekly Sabbath* as well as the annual feasts. They also claim that we, as the authors of *A Sabbath Test*, have contradicted the scriptures when we state that there will be no restaurants operating on the Sabbath. Here is how they put it.

"This [the statement in *A Sabbath Test* that there will be no restaurants open on the Sabbath in the Millennium] contradicts what is described in the book of Ezekiel. In the huge temple complex, four large kitchens in the outer court (Ezek. 46:21-24) will be in operation, providing food for many thousands who will dine in 30 separate dining rooms, each about 6,400 square feet. The kitchens provide a place to cook the sacrifices that people will bring to the temple. They will be allowed to have a portion of the offerings they present; a portion will also be reserved for the priests."

“Just as this was done in ancient times, it will also be done in the world tomorrow. The future temple will be a huge complex that will accommodate the many thousands and later, millions who will come to worship there each year. This complex will need to accommodate far larger numbers than Solomon’s temple or the temple that was renovated in the days of King Herod. In the future, certain types of service will be done on the Sabbath and this will be done with God’s full knowledge and blessings!”

The RCG writers then suggest that because God does not impute guilt to the Levites who labor for His people on His Sabbath and holy days, He would certainly extend the same courtesy to those who serve His people in a restaurant.

“Ezekiel’s vision of the future temple gives us a glimpse into how God will conduct things in the world to come. From this, we can readily discern that feeding large congregations on the Sabbath will entail a degree of real labor. If God can make and always has made allowances for His priests when they worked on the Sabbath, is it not possible for Him to make allowances for others who serve God’s people? “

In these four brief paragraphs (quoted above), the RCG writers present what is arguably one of their strongest “Biblical facts” in support of dining out on the Sabbath. After all, if the Sabbath pictures God’s millennial Kingdom, and if thousands and later millions will be fed by Levitical chefs preparing delicious meals from the sacrifices people bring on the Sabbath in that Kingdom, then the similarities between dining in the temple and going to restaurants today are pretty compelling. However, there is a HUGE problem with this representation of God’s temple and its function on the Sabbath.

It Isn’t True!

For Mr. Pack and his team of writers to suggest that God’s people will bring sacrifices to the temple on the weekly Sabbath during the millennium is **TOTALLY FALSE**. Furthermore, despite what they claim, there is virtually no scriptural authority or historical evidence suggesting this was ever done in the past.

It is true that while the temple worshipers partook of the meat and grain offerings on the annual Holy Days, they did NOT do so on the weekly Sabbath! Furthermore, the real Biblical facts declare that the conduct of the priests on the Sabbath not only contradicts the RCG view, but actually proves why going to restaurants would be forbidden by God. To illustrate this point let’s look at what the scriptures really say?

An Important Distinction

God’s word declares that He makes an important distinction between food preparation on the weekly Sabbath and food preparation on the annual Holy Days. First, notice His instructions concerning food preparation on the Sabbath as given through His servant Moses.

Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which you will bake to day, and seethe that you will seethe; and that which remains over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. Eat that to day; for to day is a Sabbath unto the LORD: to day you shall not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. (Ex. 16:23-26)

God’s command concerning labor on the weekly Sabbath is similar to His instructions concerning labor on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:3, 28). According to His law total abstinence from work is the steadfast rule. While God’s people were permitted to eat food on the weekly Sabbath, they were to perform absolutely no work on that day. This even included meal preparation.

Furthermore, when God gave the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai He specifically addressed the issue of labor on the Sabbath. His words were clear and direct. They were all encompassing. Consider what God Almighty commanded His people.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates: (Ex. 20:8)

At this point it is important to understand that God specifically forbade labor to be performed on His weekly Sabbath. Furthermore, He instructed His people that the food eaten on that day was to be prepared the day before. With this in mind, the scriptures make it absolutely clear that contrary to what the RCG writers assert, there were never sacrifices prepared by the priests and eaten by the common people on the Sabbath day. Furthermore, there is absolutely no evidence this practice will change in the millennium.

What About the Annual Festivals?

With respect to the annual holy days, God made an exception when it came to the work of meal preparation. He explained that on the annual feast days, no “servile work” (the work of business or custom) was to be done (Lev 23:7, 9, 21). However, when speaking of the work needed to cook meals, God said that this was allowed.

And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. (Ex. 12:16)

Because God made an exception regarding food preparation on the annual holy days, His people were permitted to bring their personal sacrifices at that time, provided it did NOT fall on a weekly Sabbath. It was there that they could eat a portion of them with the priests and with God. However, once again this was NOT the case on the weekly Sabbath. The throngs of people described by the RCG writers that present their sacrifices on the Sabbath have never, and will never exist!

It is true that people will worship on the Sabbath in accordance with the command. But they will NOT bring offerings on that day because the very same command prohibits it?

The Historical Evidence

The fact that God's people will not come to sacrifice on the weekly Sabbath in the millennium is also made clear by historical example. Consider the observation of Dr. Alfred Edersheim (1825-1889), an internationally recognized scholar who has written prolifically on Jewish practices. Dr. Edersheim is regarded as one of the foremost authorities on the temple and its service during the time of Christ. Here is what he says.

“The only directions given in Scripture for the celebration of the Sabbath in the sanctuary are those which enjoin 'a holy convocation,' or a sacred assembly (Lev 23:3); the weekly renewal of the shewbread (Lev 24:8; Num 4:7); and an additional burnt-offering of two lambs, with the appropriate meat and drink-offerings, 'beside the continual' (that is, the ordinary daily) 'burnt-offering and his drink-offering' (Num 28:9,10).”

Notice that there were NO OFFERINGS given by God's people on the weekly Sabbath. There were only the daily sacrifices performed by the priests as well as the addition of two lambs for a burnt offering, and these were done only according to the direct command of God. Once again, despite the assertion of the RCG, there were absolutely NO offerings performed by the priests on behalf of the common people on the seventh day. Furthermore, we know of no evidence that God's Church has ever taught

otherwise—until now. But there is more. As has been mentioned earlier, the historical record also contradicts the RCG claim. It paints a far different picture of the temple on the Sabbath than do the RCG writers. Notice what Dr. Edersheim continues to write.

“The ancient records of tradition enable us to form a very vivid conception of Sabbath-worship in the Temple at the time of Christ... the Sabbath commenced at sunset on Friday, the day being reckoned by the Hebrews from sunset to sunset. But long before that the preparations for the Sabbath had commenced. Accordingly, Friday is called by the Rabbis 'the eve of the Sabbath,' and in the Gospels 'the preparation' (Mark 15:42; John 19:31)

No fresh business was then undertaken; no journey of any distance commenced; but everything purchased and made ready against the feast, the victuals being placed in a heated oven, and surrounded by dry substances to keep them warm.

Early on Friday afternoon, the new 'course' of priests, of Levites, and of the 'stationary men,' who were to be the representatives of all Israel, arrived in Jerusalem, and having prepared themselves for the festive season, went up to the Temple.

The approach of the Sabbath, and then its actual commencement, were announced by threefold blasts from the priests' trumpets. When the priests for the first time sounded their trumpets, all business was to cease, and every kind of work to be stopped. The second time the priests drew a threefold blast, to indicate that the Sabbath had actually begun. But the service of the new 'course' of priests had commenced before that. Then the outgoing 'course' handed over to the incoming the keys of the sanctuary, the holy vessels, and all else of which they had had charge. Next the heads of the 'houses' or families of the incoming 'course' determined by lot which of the families were to serve on each special day of their week of ministry, and also who were to discharge the various priestly functions on the Sabbath.

The first of these functions, immediately on the commencement of the Sabbath, was the renewal of the 'shewbread.' It had been prepared by the incoming course before the Sabbath itself, and--we might almost say, invariably--in one of the chambers of the Temple, though, in theory, it was held lawful to prepare it also at Bethphage. For, although it was a principle that 'there is no Sabbath in the sanctuary,' yet no work was allowed which might have been done on any other day. Even circumcision, which, like the Temple services, according to the Rabbis, superseded the Sabbath, was deferred by some to the close of the festive day. Hence, also, if Friday, on the afternoon of which the shewbread was ordinarily prepared, fell on a feast day that required Sabbatical rest, the shewbread was prepared on the Thursday afternoon.”

Both history and the scriptures make it abundantly clear that the Sabbath was a day in which no business was to be conducted, no food to be purchased, and no work was done even if it was to prepare meals. When reading Dr. Edersheim's words, as well as the words of God Almighty, there isn't even a hint that people brought their sacrifices to the temple, while Levitical chefs would labor over them to prepare and serve spectacular meals on God's holy Sabbath. IT JUST DIDN'T HAPPEN.

Furthermore, it is abundantly clear that by following God's word as well as considering the historical record, there were absolutely no people ever bringing their sacrifices to feast upon during the weekly Sabbath. All Israel, including the priests, prepared their food in advance according to God's commandment. Even the shewbread for the temple service was prepared in advance. The point here is that virtually all work that could be done was accomplished the day before the Sabbath so as to keep the Sabbath holy.

Is There Something to Learn?

At this point it is important to understand that this article is not about finding fault with the Restored Church of God, its leader, Mr. Pack, or his writers. We are pointing accusing fingers at no one—for good reason. We once believed as they do. It was not until we honestly examined the scriptures that God's wisdom became obvious to us. However, with that said, there is a purpose to this on-going debate. And even more important, there is something that can be learned by this particular aspect of the argument.

The fact that God's temple has never been a hub of intense labor on the weekly Sabbath speaks volumes about how His people should conduct their lives on this day. The Bible reveals that God's Sabbath is a day that can be contaminated by profane labor. Furthermore, God's people have known this throughout history and so have the Levites. This is why they will refrain from preparing great meals for God's people on the weekly Sabbath in the millennium. It is also why commercial restaurants will not engage in their business either. The argument by the RCG writers that God gives those working at a restaurant the same consideration as those who work in the temple is a huge leap in logic with one exception. Just as the Levites refrained from preparing meals for God's people on the weekly Sabbath, so should those who work in restaurants.

A Final Thought

It is difficult for us to understand why the Restored Church of God would argue that God's people will bring their offerings to the temple on the weekly Sabbath during the millennium—especially in light of the fact that the scriptures, as well as the historical record, say otherwise. Perhaps in their zeal to justify the RCG's current practice, these learned men simply got carried away. We honestly do not know and we make no accusations. What we do know is that their description of temple practices on the Sabbath is simply a distortion of the Biblical facts.

We also know that the Sabbath in the millennium will be given the great deference and respect it sorely lacks today. At that time the labor that consumes the lives of so many will cease. Commerce will cease. The harvesting of crops will cease. The gathering of food will cease. The purchasing of food will cease. Instead God's people will enjoy the wonderful meals they prepared on the sixth day, the day of preparation. They will then share them with family and friends and will celebrate the great freedom the Sabbath pictures. This is what will be done in God's kingdom—and it is what should be done by His people today.

Finally, the Bible declares that the Kingdom of God will bring about the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21). When it comes, Jesus Christ will restore all that is right including the proper observance of His Sabbath. Until that time God's people everywhere should be mindful of the wonderful blessing the knowledge of the Sabbath contains. We should respect this day and honor it. But most of all we should "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy."

PS If God's people brought their offerings to the temple on the weekly Sabbath as Dave Pack claims, then why doesn't the RCG take up an offering every Sabbath as well?

Pardon the Interruption

The Devil's Diner

Open 24 Hours

"NOTICE"

This restaurant rejects God's law and profanes His Sabbath.
We serve another god. He is our master.
So come on in and enjoy the best food and service in town.

Dear Brethren,

Imagine that you and some friends decide to go to your favorite restaurant after Sabbath services and enjoy a delicious meal and some wonderful Christian fellowship. This has been a long standing tradition of yours and you never once questioned it. As you pull into the parking lot you immediately notice something different. The name of the restaurant has changed. You then proceed toward the entrance and see a small announcement board with a notice that informs all customers that this is a God rejecting, Satan worshipping restaurant. Aside from that nothing has changed. The personnel are all the same and the menu is identical to the one that was there before. Now here is our question:

Would you feel as comfortable eating there
as you did prior to this "renovation"?

If your answer is "no" then you are simply the victim of good advertising. You may never find this sign or the accompanying announcement, but every Sabbath you will find the restaurant they describe. It is the one many of God's people visit every week.

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is
Transformed into an angel of light."
2 Cor. 11:14

Respectfully,

Blow the Trumpet

PS

The point in presenting this "hypothetical" example is to illustrate that what takes place in a restaurant on God's Sabbath goes entirely against His great moral law. On that day, restaurant personnel serve the god of this world, and do his bidding, whether they are aware of it or not. In a very real sense, restaurants

that profane God's Sabbath are, for that day, "The Devil's Diner." Simply because they don't post this fact on a sign may provide consolation for Dave Pack, but such an omission carries no weight with the Almighty. Both Israel and Judah went into captivity because they forgot about His Sabbath. Is it possible that the same fate awaits His people today, if they continue to engage in this sin? Certainly that was what Nehemiah suggested (Neh. 13:17-18).

What Mr. Pack apparently fails to grasp is that a real God-rejecting devil has blinded the minds of those who profane the Sabbath by laboring in restaurants on this day (2Cor. 4:4). Furthermore, that devil has also blinded the minds of those in God's Church who see nothing wrong with seeking out these unbelievers and paying them for their services.

The bottom line is this: Satan desperately wants restaurant personnel to reject God's Sabbath, and he desperately wants Dave Pack to purchase the fruit of this sin. So far, he is having his way with both.

Argument V They're Not Our Servants

According to Mr. Pack, going to a restaurant on the Sabbath is permissible in God's eyes because it does not go contrary to the fourth commandment's prohibition against compelling servants to work. He reasons that those who work in restaurants are technically not his servants—therefore, no trespass has taken place. At this point it is interesting to note that he employs a letter written in 1988 by the Worldwide Church of God under the leadership of Mr. Joseph Tkach Sr. as a proof source. Here is what the letter states.

“Those waiters, waitresses, chefs, and the like, who may serve in a restaurant, are not our ‘servants’ in the way described in the Fourth Commandment. They are the employees of the owner of the restaurant. They would be working regardless of whether or not we ate there. God does not hold us responsible for their working on the Sabbath just because we use their services—unless we were the only ones who ever ate in that restaurant on the Sabbath. Obviously, we make up a very small portion of the customers served in restaurants on the Sabbath or Holy Days.”

Our Response:

The crux of Mr. Pack's argument is driven by his belief that God doesn't care if someone else's servant labors on your behalf on the Sabbath—even if you personally solicit and direct that labor. He reasons that God is only interested in “your” servant, not the servants of others. In other words, here is how Mr. Pack renders the meaning of the fourth commandment.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant. *However, you may seek out unbelievers who profane my Sabbath and compel their manservant and maidservant to labor on your behalf.*”

Surprisingly, there are many in God's Church today who, like Mr. Pack, believe the fourth commandment is limited in scope. In other words, although it prohibits God's people, or those who work directly for them, from engaging in labor, it does not prohibit His people from orchestrating the labor of an unbeliever's servant for their benefit. As a result of this thinking, many contend that when God gave His law regarding the Sabbath, He actually made provisions for His people to be the beneficiary of the labor of Sabbath-breakers.

Although many may write the amended command differently with respect to style, those like Mr. Pack who go to restaurants on the Sabbath concur with the substance of this modified rendering of God's law. The question is: do you? Ask yourself: do these words really sound like they express the wisdom of the Holy One of Israel? Was it God's intent to simply shield His people from profaning the Sabbath by their labor? Or was He expressing a greater eternal truth about His Kingdom? The authors of *A Sabbath Test* see God's Sabbath law much differently. Notice their words.

A Sabbath Test

It is true that the decision to work on the Sabbath rests solely in the hands of restaurant personnel. But it is equally true that the decision to support that labor rests solely in the hands of those who purchase their goods and services. With this in mind, ask yourself one question: would Jesus ever compel them to work on His day even if He knew they would do it for someone else? The bottom line regarding this argument is really quite

simple: You may not be able to prevent restaurant personnel from working on the Sabbath. But you most certainly can prevent them from working for you on that day! (A Sabbath Test)

Returning to Egypt

Consider for a moment what dining out on the Sabbath requires of God's people. First, they must consciously go out into the world (spiritual Egypt) and seek out unbelievers who are profaning holy time. They must then orchestrate the Sabbath labor of these unbelievers by placing orders. Finally they must be willing to pay these Sabbath-breakers for their WORK. Tragically, some, like Dave Pack, actually rationalize that the restaurant personnel are performing a service that is worthy of their patronage. How do you think God views this service?

Today, Mr. Pack and all too many in God's Church advance an endless stream of technical arguments in an attempt to circumvent the enduring moral principle contained in God's law. In this case, he has built his argument around the word "your." However, can you imagine him applying the same logic on the ninth or tenth commandment? Those commands only refer to "your" neighbor, not someone else's neighbor. Think of the implications of this.

A Critical Omission

Furthermore, what this COG leader failed to mention in his article is that when God gave the Ten Commandments, including the one pertaining to His Sabbath, He had already made provisions that would have made it unlawful for Israelites to avail themselves of the service of those outside their community of faith. He did this immediately after delivering them through the Red Sea. At that time God specifically prohibited them from going out on the Sabbath to any place His law was not in force (Ex. 16:29). In other words, the Israelites were only permitted to be with God's people on this day—a place where Sabbath labor would soon constitute a capital crime (Ex. 31:14). When God made reference to "your servant" in the fourth commandment He was doing so because he had already prohibited them from being with the servants of those outside the community where His Sabbath would be kept. Regrettably, outside the camp is right where Mr. Pack wants to lead his people.

In the final analysis, God's word is clear. When He told His people they were not to work on the Sabbath, He was declaring that labor profanes the day He made HOLY! Even God Himself ceased from working on this day. Does anyone sincerely believe He would seek out those who profane His Sabbath and solicit their labor for His benefit?

The point God was making when He uttered His great Sabbath law was that Israel was not to be a party to profane labor in any way, shape, or form on this day unless it specifically related to a levitical duty (Mt. 12:1-5) or it was driven by circumstances beyond a person's control (a genuine emergency). Contrary to what Mr. Pack may argue, working in a restaurant on the Sabbath is not a levitical function and patronizing a restaurant is not beyond a believer's control. Furthermore, he knows it. Certainly there can arise genuine emergencies when it becomes necessary to do what the law did not normally permit. But this is not what Mr. Pack is advocating. Make no mistake about it, this Church leader contends that it is perfectly acceptable with God when he makes reservations to dine at a fine restaurant on the Sabbath three weeks in advance. After all, those who work there are not his concern.

While Dave Pack passionately argues that it doesn't matter if God's people solicit labor that is performed in clear violation of God's great moral law, the authors of A Sabbath Test have a different view. It is one driven by reverence for God and compassion for those who do not yet know Him. Here are their words:

A Sabbath Test

Consider what lies ahead for those who work at restaurants on the Sabbath. The day will come when they will know about God and His Great Kingdom. At that time, they will understand God's purpose for the Sabbath and they, too, will honor this great commandment.

Additionally, when God's Kingdom is established on earth, its citizens will understand why God's people today did certain things and refrained from doing others – including purchasing goods and services on His Sabbath. They will know that by refraining from buying and selling on the Sabbath, God's people were not only honoring the Great Creator, they were also expressing a genuine hope for all mankind – a hope that all people would one day enter into God's Sabbath rest. This is the true witness God's people must proclaim. It is one that will be affirmed by the very government of God when His Kingdom returns. The gospel is NOT proclaimed by your presence at a restaurant on the Sabbath. It is, in fact, proclaimed by your absence. (A Sabbath Test)

Argument VI Jesus Condoned It

In an attempt to justify the sin of seeking out unbelievers and paying them for their Sabbath labor, Mr. Pack invokes the story of Jesus' disciples picking grain on the Sabbath. However, when doing so this COG leader shows a total disregard for the truth. Under the heading "A Misunderstood Teaching," Mr. Pack offers the following "Biblical facts" when making his case.

David C. Pack

"In Matthew 12, Christ and His disciples were immediately accused of breaking the Sabbath when they acquired some grain: "At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat" (vs. 1).

Critics of those who dine out on the Sabbath might suggest that Jesus and His disciples should have prepared their food on the day of preparation. After all, the critics might argue, was it not their lack of diligent planning that led to them becoming hungry in the first place? As the following verses show, there is never a lack of detractors to point out where others *appear* to fall short.

Now read verse 2: "But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, Behold, Your disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day."

The Pharisees condemned them for merely gleaning on the Sabbath. But gleaning was not (and still is not) wrong, unless the quantity that was harvested was so much that it had to be stored in crates or hampers. Gleaning food on the Sabbath was permissible as long as the person gathered enough food to be eaten on the spot, and therefore did not break the *spirit* of God's Law."

"...As we conclude the topic of the Pharisees condemning Christ and the disciples for gathering food on the Sabbath, we repeat the fact that their main objection (evidenced by the subsequent replies by Christ) was their "servile work" in the gathering of food. It is significant that these carnal Pharisees were savvy enough not to invoke Exodus 16 to bolster their position. It was obvious to all familiar with God's laws that the prohibition against gathering manna did not apply to gleaning on the Sabbath to relieve hunger."

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack contends that what the disciples did when they picked grain on the Sabbath is the moral equivalent to him making Friday evening dinner reservations at a five star restaurant. But is this true? Consider some obvious differences: First, noticeably absent from this act was any attempt by Jesus or His disciples to buy the grain. Furthermore, at no time did they try to hire others to pick it for them and prepare it. Additionally, no one was commissioned to serve the grain to them or to clean up after the meal. Despite these glaring differences Mr. Pack clings to the idea that what the disciples did and what he wants to do, a perfect match.

In truth, Mr. Pack advances several distortions of the Biblical record concerning the actions Jesus and His disciples took when walking in a grain field this particular Sabbath. To illustrate our point, consider the following.

Distortion I

Contrary to what this Mr. Pack claims, Jesus NEVER picked, nor ate, anything Himself—only His disciples did. Here is how Matthew records this truth.

At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat (Mt. 12:1).

Luke's account of this event is even more explicit.

And it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands (Lk. 6:1).

Additionally, the accusation advanced by the Pharisees centered on the disciples' behavior, not the Messiah's. Their exact words were:

Behold, Your disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day (Mt. 12:2).

At this point it is interesting to note that this is not the only time Mr. Pack suggests that Jesus participated in gleaning on the Sabbath along with His disciples. When presenting his explanation of Nehemiah's condemnation of Jerusalem's Sabbath behavior he interjected the following comment.

Dining out at restaurants...is comparable to **Christ and His disciples** gleaning corn to be eaten on the Sabbath...

Why this Distortion?

This now brings us to a very important question. Why would a recognized leader of God's people argue that Jesus participated in gleaning on the Sabbath when the scriptures clearly state that He did not do such thing? The answer is simple but very telling. If Dave Pack can somehow convince God's people to accept his assertion that Jesus picked grain along with His disciples, it would prove his claim that acquiring small amounts of food on the Sabbath does not go contrary to God's law. After all, Jesus did it. However, if the Messiah never did such a thing, this leader's argument loses its most powerful exhibit—the Lord of the Sabbath Himself.

Why Didn't Jesus Pick the Grain?

In truth, the reason Jesus would not pick grain with his disciples was that that to do so was UNLAWFUL and the Messiah never offended in one point of the law. And although He gave the disciples dispensation in this one instance, He wouldn't give it to Himself—for obvious reasons.

Distortion II

Mr. Pack claims that because the Pharisees never mentioned Exodus 16, they never considered it in their accusation. However, what he subtly omits is that the Pharisees never mentioned any verses, nor did they identify any specific trespass. Their accusation was simply that Jesus' disciples did that which was "Not Lawful" (Mt. 12:2).

Distortion III

Mr. Pack asserts that the issue in the minds of the Pharisees was labor. He claims to base this view on Jesus' response to their accusation. What he omits to acknowledge is that when the Messiah defended His disciples He invoked two examples—one involving Sabbath labor (the Levites) and one

involving the acquisition of food (David and the shewbread). In truth, based on Jesus' response, it is reasonable to conclude that the Pharisee's accusation included both prohibitions.

Distortion IV

Mr. Pack claims that the Pharisees' indictment centered on "servile" work. However, what he fails to acknowledge is that the fourth commandment does not mention "servile work" but rather ALL work—servile or otherwise (Ex. 20:10). In that regard the Sabbath command is identical to the command regarding the Day of Atonement, which also says, "NO WORK" (Lev. 23:28, 30-31). Furthermore, God warned that anyone who performed any labor on that day (with the exception of the Levites) would be "destroyed from among His people" (vs. 30). When it came to the weekly Sabbath, all labor was a capital crime as well (Ex. 31:14-15).

Distortion V

Mr. Pack contends that "the prohibition against gathering manna did not apply to gleaning on the Sabbath to relieve hunger." He even claims that this "fact" was obvious to all who were familiar with God's law. What he fails to acknowledge is that Jesus implied just the opposite. If what the disciples did was lawful, why would the Messiah cite the examples of David and the Levites in their defense? Jesus readily acknowledged that both David and the Levites did that which went contrary to God's law (Mt. 12:3-5). If this wasn't also true of the disciples, why did Christ invoke these particular examples? Why didn't He simply argue that no law had been violated?

Something to Think About

At this point, it is important to understand that although the Pharisees were treacherous, they weren't stupid. These men were acutely aware of the provision in the Torah permitting gleaning by a stranger or the poor on another man's property (see: Lev.19:9, Deut. 23:25, 24:19). However, they also knew that this provision did not extend to gleaning on the Sabbath, regardless of how little was gathered—and Jesus understood this as well. Mr. Pack's assertion that everyone understood that some gleaning was permissible, is categorically FALSE. No one knew any such thing, because it wasn't true. There isn't a syllable in God's word that says otherwise.

Furthermore, contrary to what this man and others imply, Jesus never challenged the Pharisees' understanding of the law, but rather their understanding of MERCY. The truth that seems to be so elusive to so many today is that the Messiah considered His disciples "guiltless," not because of what they did, but because of why they did it. These men were genuinely famished, just like David—and like David, what was done to remedy it was unquestionably a once-in-a-lifetime act, not something that could be planned out and done periodically, as Dave Pack and others do today.

How Hungry were the Disciples?

The actual story of David and the Shewbread provides some keen insight into what was taking place when Jesus defended His disciples against the accusation leveled by the Pharisees. It most assuredly makes a powerful statement regarding dining out on the Sabbath. Consider the following.

When David ate the shewbread he didn't simply take it and start eating. He first approached the priest and asked for permission to do so—and he had a very good reason for asking. The scriptures tell us that at that time David was being pursued by King Saul who wanted to kill him. His flight required him and his men to hide out in order to avoid capture and certain execution. In all likelihood, their escape was so swift they didn't have time to take provisions with them. Some commentaries suggest that they may have gone 3 days without food when David finally sought out the priest for help. Jamison, Fausset and Brown's commentary describes David's plight as "an emergency." They would go on to write:

“David and his attendants seem to have been lurking in some of the adjoining caves, to elude pursuit, and to have been, consequently, reduced to great extremities of hunger.”

In short, they were famished. This was not a simple case of the “munchies.” Nor were they looking for a nice place to fellowship. Their need was REAL and their situation was desperate.

However, even then David sought permission from the priest before taking the shewbread. And although his need was truly GREAT, Ahimelech, the priest, still inquired of God as to whether he could give David the food. The scriptures tell us that God showed mercy to David and consented. JFB put it this way.

“A dispensation to use the hallowed bread was specially granted by God Himself.”

This now bring us to an important question. Why would Jesus invoke the example of David at this time if it didn't parallel, to some degree, what was taking place with the disciples? After all, if the need of the disciples wasn't comparable to that of David and his men, the analogy wouldn't work. In other words, if what the disciples did was simply a part of a normal Sabbath day then their reason for plucking the grain would have been driven by convenience while David's reason was driven by desperation. It is interesting that the word used to describe the disciples hunger (Mt. 12:1) was the same used to describe the hunger experienced by David (v. 3). It was also the same word used to describe the Messiah's condition when he fasted for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness (Mt. 4:2).

Based on Jesus' invocation of this story, it is reasonable to conclude that what the disciples were experiencing was truly unique. This was not a typical Sabbath in which these men were simply acquiring a normal meal. These men were genuinely hungry, perhaps even famished. You don't know why, but like David, they must have had a very good reason for having not eaten. As a result they inquired of the Messiah to see if they could gather a small amount of grain to eat. Jesus consented.

The Lesson of David and the Disciples

The story suggests that Jesus was making two points by using David's example when defending His men. The first was that the Pharisees were quick to judge the disciples without knowing all the facts. By invoking the story of David, Jesus put the situation in perspective. In other words, there is more here than meets the eye.

The second point Jesus was making is truly extraordinary. He was telling the Pharisees that the same God who gave David permission to eat the shewbread gave the disciples permission to eat the grain.

Jesus was that God.

This is why He said, “For the Son of man is **Lord** even of the Sabbath day”

The bottom line is this. God's judgment of David as well as His judgment of the apostles was based on a unique circumstance at a unique time.

For Dave Pack to hold this example as proof that God's people may now make plans to pay Sabbath-breakers to prepare their meals on holy time and also be held guiltless is disgraceful. In a very real sense such a belief turns the grace of God into license. In other words, it rejects the true meaning of the words "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," and represents them to mean "If the disciples can acquire their Sabbath food once, because of a genuine need, then I can do it on occasion because of the pleasure I derive from it." In a sermon defending dining out on holy time, a long standing pastor of another major COG actually referred to this practice as a “TREAT.”

Do you think that is why David ate the shewbread?

Or, why the disciples picked grain?

A Final Thought

The assertion that it has always been permissible with the Lord of the Sabbath for God's people to acquire and prepare their Sabbath meals on holy time is **TOTALLY FALSE**. Jesus never said any such thing, nor did He imply it—in either word or deed. Furthermore, the attempt by some to misrepresent what actually took place in Matthew 12 is nothing less than scriptural trickery. It is a cynical attempt to manipulate God's word as well as His people.

P.S. To those who hold the view that it was permissible with God for his people to glean on the Sabbath to relieve hunger, ask yourself why He absolutely prohibited gathering manna on the Sabbath to relieve hunger. Was He simply interested in protecting manna? Or, is the entire notion of this argument False. We think the answer should be obvious.

Argument VII A Day of Preparation

When defending the practice of seeking out unbelievers and purchasing their goods and services on holy time, David C. Pack goes to great lengths in claiming that such an activity is actually beneficial because it relieves women in the Church of the burden of Sabbath labor. Under the sub-title: "Should Women Never Get a Break?" Mr. Pack even accuses the authors of *A Sabbath Test* of being inconsiderate "chauvinists" for failing to appreciate the degree of labor imposed on women every Sabbath. Here is how he advances this argument.

David C. Pack:

"These modern critics seek to make the Sabbath a burden, especially upon the women. They fail to recognize that their misguided zeal in not adding to the burdens of restaurant employees on the Sabbath automatically transfers over to their wives, mothers and daughters—who labor in cooking, re-heating, setting up tableware, etc. Like chauvinists, these critics do not take into consideration the fact that their wives, mothers and daughters would appreciate an opportunity to occasionally have their burdens lightened on the Sabbath. Ironically, the critics give this consideration to the restaurant employees—unbelievers who have no regard for, or understanding of, this holy time!"

Our Response:

This might actually be a new record in distorted logic. According to Dave Pack, the issue here is WHO should labor on the Sabbath. His wisdom suggests the burden should go to the unbeliever, because they don't know about the Sabbath anyway. This "Biblical fact" is offered up by a man who just acknowledged that God's people may burden their women with exhausting labor on the majority of Sabbaths because he only believes it is appropriate to dine out occasionally. Just who is the chauvinist here?

Although this COG leader may draw consolation from this argument, God Almighty isn't the slightest bit impressed. The scriptures indicate that God was so opposed to His people engaging in profane labor on the Sabbath that He actually designated the sixth day as a period to prepare for this holy time. Even the Great Creator prepared for His Sabbath. Notice what He did.

Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, **that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or not.** And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. (Ex. 16:4-5)

Here, God declares that He rained a double portion of manna on the sixth day with the specific purpose of "proving" the Israelites. In other words, He did this to see if they were truly committed to obeying Him. If they were, they would gather enough food on Friday to satisfy their needs for both that day and the next. They would then cook all of it on the preparation day.

The Importance of Preparation

Contrary to Mr. Pack's approach, God never intended for His people to be engaging in the Sabbath labor he (Mr. Pack) described being done by the wives, mothers and daughters he mentions (see: Ex. 16:23). The point this leader apparently fails to grasp is that the Sabbath is to be treated differently. It was, and is HOLY TIME. Furthermore, the scriptures declare that the Almighty would personally make

sure His people had a way to keep it HOLY and His remedy did not involve soliciting the labor of unbelievers at restaurants. The authors of *A Sabbath Test* understand this truth and present what just might be the most insightful observation in their book. They offer an idea regarding the significance of the "preparation day." Tragically, it seems to be totally lost on Dave Pack.

A Sabbath Test

But what about the Israelites who failed to prepare adequately? What were they to do? Were they to go out and buy food from someone else on the Sabbath? Absolutely not! God did not give them an alternative food source when they failed to prepare on the sixth day. The scriptures state "they found none" (Ex. 16:27).

Is there a lesson for God's people today in the action He took so very long ago? It would certainly seem so. Based on His clear instructions to the children of Israel, perhaps we should ask ourselves a very important question: Is it right for us to go outside our spiritual camp and buy from others on the Sabbath if we fail to adequately prepare for this day?

Today almost all of God's people understand the great significance of His Sabbath and holy days. These appointed times declare a great plan that was envisioned by Him before the world was created.

With this in mind, consider what God could be teaching His people with a preparation day. If the Sabbath pictures God's kingdom (Heb. 4:9-10), could the sixth day reveal that His people must properly prepare themselves in order to enter into that kingdom? In other words, if we do not make ourselves ready for God's millennial rest, will God allow us to be a part of it? Additionally, will we prepare for that kingdom by following His instructions, or do we think we can forge our own path and do it a different way? (*A Sabbath Test*)

It is clear that Mr. Pack places little significance on the day of preparation as evidenced by his admission that the mothers, wives and daughters of his members toil over meals on God's HOLY Sabbath. However, the authors of *A Sabbath Test* have a different view. They take this day very seriously. They also offer a warning to Mr. Pack and others like him who place such burdens on their families and teach their members to do the same.

A Sabbath Test

Furthermore, does the convenience of dining out on the Sabbath actually make the preparation day somehow less meaningful to God's people? After all, today there is no sense of urgency with respect to preparing food for the Sabbath. This is because it is so convenient to gather brethren and head off to a popular restaurant on this day. **Furthermore, if God's people refuse to prepare for His Sabbath, why should He think they would prepare for His Kingdom?** These are serious words and should not be taken lightly. (*A Sabbath Test*)

It is interesting that Mr. Pack completely ignores one of the primary reasons presented by the authors of *A Sabbath Test* when explaining why God's children should refrain from going to restaurants on the Sabbath. According to the authors, God gave a clearly defined command to the Israelites pertaining to the acquisition and preparation of food on this day. Here are their words and the real "scriptural facts" that supports them.

A Sabbath Test

Notice what God said to Israel because of their cavalier attitude regarding His Sabbath and how they prepared for it.

“How long refuse you to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you the sixth day the bread of two days; abide you every man in his place. Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.” (Ex. 16:28)

Here, God is rebuking the children of Israel for their failure to honor His Sabbath. Specifically, He was condemning their lack of preparation. In essence, God was conveying to His people three critical elements concerning eating on the Sabbath. These elements were as follows.

- 1) Food was not to be acquired on the Sabbath
- 2) Food was not to be prepared on the Sabbath
- 3) His people were not to leave “their place” on the Sabbath.

Notice that God said, “let no man go out of his place” on the Sabbath. With these words, He did not mean that individuals could not leave their tent for any reason as evidenced by the fact that they left their tents when Moses assembled them on the Sabbath and holy days. Additionally, Jesus Himself dined at the homes of others on the Sabbath (Lk. 14:1-6).

The point God was making with these instructions was that the Israelites were not to leave the community where God’s people were camped. Furthermore, they had no need to do so. God had already provided food on the sixth day. Now consider this. If God prohibited the Israelites to go outside their camp to acquire food on the Sabbath, why would He permit that practice today? The answer is HE WOULDN’T!

In reality, those who dine out on the Sabbath are breaking every aspect of God’s command with respect to eating. Consider what they do. They acquire food on the Sabbath. They have it prepared for them on the Sabbath. And they go outside the community of faith to procure the food as well as to consume it. Tragically, many of God’s people rationalize every one of these practices. (*A Sabbath Test*)

Based on Mr. Pack’s assertion that refraining from going to a restaurant on the Sabbath is not scriptural, we at ***Blow the Trumpet*** have a question for him. What did God mean when he gave these three directives as recorded in Exodus 16—and what relevance do they have for God’s people today? It is clear that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* have an answer. Mr. Pack, do you?

Argument VIII I'm Not Responsible

In his ongoing effort to justify the practice of dining out on the Sabbath, David C. Pack advances a very interesting argument. He claims that he is no more complicit in the sin of restaurant personnel who labor for him on the Sabbath than God is in the "sin" of gentiles eating unfit food that He permitted the Israelites to sell them. He does this by implying that there is no moral distinction between these two behaviors. Therefore, if God can be a party to one, then he (Dave Pack) can be a party to the other. But is his understanding correct? Remember, although God permitted "strangers" to eat food that was compromised, He absolutely prohibited these same strangers from working on His Sabbath (Ex. 20:10, Deut. 5:14).

This prominent COG leader then argues that because God holds unbelievers who profane the Sabbath to a lower standard prior to their conversion, He must also view His people's use of an unbeliever's Sabbath trespasses differently as well. In essence, he is suggesting that God sees dining out on the Sabbath as: "no harm, no foul." He advances this idea by challenging *A Sabbath Test's* view of a "stranger within your gates."

A Real Eye Opener

We encourage you to read what follows very carefully. It's a real EYE-OPENER. As you do, never lose sight of Mr. Pack's goal in every one of his arguments. He wants you to believe that the Lord of the Sabbath approves of His people seeking out unbelievers on holy time and paying them for their goods and services, including their LABOR. This particular argument is based on a premise that claims if God's people can't prevent unbelievers from working on the Sabbath, they are free to soliciting that labor.

David C. Pack:

"At this point, they [the authors of *A Sabbath Test*] proceed to make analogies between the "strangers" in the days of Moses and the "strangers" who work in restaurants today. At first glance, their position appears to be plausible. Nonetheless, we need to understand how *God* viewed the strangers or foreigners of Moses' day. To what extent did He hold them accountable for His laws?"

"If dining out on the Sabbath causes employees to sin, then we must conclude that God contributed to the sin of foreigners when He decreed that animals that die of themselves should be given or even sold to "strangers" among the Israelites!" (Deut. 14:21)

Our Response:

Consider Mr. Pack's stream of logic. According to him, because an Israelite was permitted to sell a gentile food which was unfit for them (Israelites) to eat, God would somehow permit these same Israelites to go outside their camp on the Sabbath and purchase a meal from unbelievers, just as Mr. Pack does today. Does anybody really believe this? Here is a clue: Once again, consider what God specifically commanded these very same Israelites to do regarding food on the Sabbath.

You shall not acquire food on the Sabbath.

God actually rebuked the Israelites when they attempted to engage in this practice. His exact words were: "How long refuse you to keep my commandments and my laws?" (Ex. 16:26-28). He uttered them after the Israelites went out to gather food (manna) on the Sabbath.

You shall not prepare food on the Sabbath.

God specifically instructed the Israelites to do their meal preparation on the sixth day (Ex. 16:23). Furthermore, at no time did He suggest that they could commission others to prepare it for them on the Sabbath. He actually indicated that the preparation day was given to "prove" the Israelites and to test their obedience (Ex. 16:4).

You shall not go outside your place on the Sabbath.

God revealed this specific aspect of His command because the Israelites went outside the camp to obtain food on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:29). Furthermore, God was furious with this practice and He made that fact abundantly clear.

Mr. Pack may see Deuteronomy 14:21 as proof that God would have permitted His people to dine out on His Sabbath, but Exodus 16 clearly contradicts his conclusion. With that said, some may wonder why God would permit the children of Israel to sell others meat that died in such a way as to make it unfit for His people to consume. Here is the answer.

The REAL TRUTH about Deuteronomy 14:21

At this point, it is important to understand that God was NOT instructing His people to sell gentiles unclean animals (i.e. swine, cats, dogs etc) as food. The animals He permitted them to sell were clean. However, because of the nature of their death, God declared them unfit for His people, **but NOT unfit for others**. The question for us to consider is: WHY? Why does God state that Israelites are not to eat meat that dies of itself while those who are not of God's faith may eat it if they wish? In order to understand what the Eternal was conveying in His instructions, let's look at His exact words.

Deuteronomy 14:21

You shall not eat of any thing that dies of itself: thou shall give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or you may sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God. You shall not seethe a kid in his mother's milk (Deuteronomy 14:21).

Notice that although an animal that died of itself was not to be consumed by God's people, it could be consumed by unbelievers—even unbelievers within the camp where God's law was in force (the "stranger that is within your gates"). Although Dave Pack implies that for a gentile to eat food that had been compromised was, this is not true. Actually, it was not a sin at all for them. That's right! Those "strangers" will never be judged for this, in this life or the next. If it was a sin for them to eat such things, then God would have been complicit in it. However, that is clearly NOT how He works (Jas. 1:13).

Here Is the Point

With this said, what did the Eternal mean when giving His instructions in Deuteronomy 14:21? What was His intent and motivation behind this directive? The answer is actually found in the verse itself. The issue is HOLINESS. In truth, He was speaking about how His people are to behave because they belong to Him.

Clearly, the relationship between God and His people is unique. However, the same cannot be said about the relationship between God and unbelievers. The point here is that God was not making a distinction between sin and righteousness, but rather a distinction between those who are His people and those who are not. Now here is the striking lesson God is teaching.

The True God is Different; You MUST be Different, Too

Throughout the scriptures it is abundantly clear that the True God is not like other deities. He is a HOLY KING. He is divinely pure—the epitome of dignity and majesty. He would never think of eating food that dies of itself or even that which has been cooked on a stove in which an unclean animal had once died (Lev. 11:35). The Great Creator and Sustainer of the Universe is so connected to moral purity and dignity that He would never boil a calf in its mother's milk or eat garbage out of a trash can.

When God gave these instructions, He was exhorting the children of Israel to appreciate the unique relationship they had with Him. In short, the Holy One of Israel was telling His people that they are to be holy as well. They are to be different from others. They are to be cleaner, more hygienic, more dignified, more modest and proper. They are not to dress in a way that is unseemly, nor behave in a way that lacks self-respect. They are not to mutilate their bodies with excessive piercings nor deface it with paintings. Their pagan neighbors may choose to behave in such a way, but God's people are to be different. Why?—because He is different.

A Lesson for God's People Today

In a similar manner today, Christians are God's children as well. As such, they should not eat food that has been tainted by being dropped on the floor, thrown in the trash, or that which has been set out too long before being cooked. This enduring moral principle is brought out at the beginning of this chapter.

You are the children of the LORD your God: you shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For you are a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD **has chosen you to be a peculiar people unto himself**, above all the nations that are upon the earth. You shall not eat any abominable thing (Deuteronomy 14:1-3).

If Dave Pack sincerely desires to be like the True God, he would never seek out "strangers" and pay them to labor for him on holy time. Instead, he would seek to be holy—different from those in the world—not go back into the world and partake of its sin. In other words, he should not do what the unconverted allow themselves to do. The point in God's instructions in Deuteronomy 14 is NOT that if an unbeliever breaks God's Sabbath, he is exempt from God's judgment—for indeed he would be subject to it. Remember, the Sabbath was made for man at the very beginning, not just for Israel in the Sinai Desert. Additionally, unbelievers were bound by God's Sabbath law (Ex. 20:8-11) even though they did not know God. The real point being expressed in Deuteronomy 14 is that everything about us and our way of life should reflect the dignity of our calling. In essence, God is saying: "If unbelievers want to eat garbage or food that is unseemly, let them do it. However, My people must be different because I am different."

David C. Pack continued:

"Today, God is working with spiritual Israel; His judgment begins with His Church (1 Pet4:17; Eph 2:19). Colossians 2:16-17 and Ephesians 1: 22-23 show that God's government within His Church has authority in how those within the Body of Christ keep the Sabbath and Holy Days. However, that authority does not extend to people in the world, those whom God is not yet calling."

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack is making two points. First, he claims that the ministry is responsible for determining how God's people keep the Sabbath. Therefore, because he is a minister, he is making an administrative judgment that permits God's people to do what the scriptures PROHIBIT. This sounds just like an

argument that could have been advanced by the nobles of Judah when Nehemiah, a lay person, contended with them for engaging in business on the Sabbath (Neh. 13:17-18). With that said, consider the following:

Does Dave Pack have authority to legislate disobedience?

The short answer is NO! Furthermore, the idea that he can mandate Sabbath behavior that flies in the face of scripture is a teaching of the Catholic Church, not the Church of God. Here is how the Mother of Harlots expresses it.

Sunday is our mark of authority. The church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact. (The Catholic Record, Sept. 1, 1923)

When Dave Pack claims to have the authority to teach that God's people may go back into spiritual Egypt and purchase the Sabbath labor of unbelievers, he is placing himself above the Bible. He may deny this fact, but his actions speak for themselves.

The second point this prominent COG leader is making is that because he does not have authority over unbelievers, he bears no responsibility for their behavior—even the behavior he specifically directs. Therefore, he teaches that because God's leaders can't shut down businesses on the Sabbath, they may now solicit those Sabbath-breaking services and teach others to do so as well. This is human reasoning run amok. It is not only self-serving, but also totally antithetical to everything the True God stands for. With that said, we have some questions for all who agree with Mr. Pack's assertion that he is not complicit in the sin of restaurant personnel who profane the Sabbath on his behalf. We will present them using three hypothetical scenarios. Here they are.

Scenario I "The Assassin"

Imagine if Dave Pack wanted someone killed. However, he knows that God's law prohibits murder, so he decides to enlist the services of a professional "hit man." This seems like the perfect solution. By doing this, he would not have to commit the act himself.

After soliciting the assassin's service and negotiating the terms (location, method, as well as price and how it is to be paid), Mr. Pack waits for the "dirty deed" to be done. While waiting, he reasons that he has done nothing wrong. After all, the assassin is unconverted and is totally ignorant of God's law. Therefore, God holds him to a lower standard. Additionally, the assassin is a highly skilled professional. If he doesn't kill for Mr. Pack, he will kill for someone else. That's what he does. He is a killer. It isn't as if Mr. Pack can prevent him from this line of work.

The Confession

After the "hit" is carried out, the assassin is unexpectedly caught and confesses to everything—revealing all the details. This leads the authorities to serve an arrest warrant on David C. Pack. Here is our question:

Does God Almighty consider Dave Pack complicit in this murder?

We realize that Mr. Pack will consider our hypothetical as outrageous and grossly offensive. But is it? Consider how closely the facts of our "murder for hire" scenario resembles his "Sabbath food preparation for hire" behavior.

- Both acts require God's law to be violated. Murder violates the sixth commandment. Labor on the Sabbath violates the 4th.
- Both acts (murder and Sabbath labor) are identified as capital crimes in the scriptures. The penalty for both is DEATH.
- Both acts involve people who don't have a clue regarding the True God. At least we hope that's the case.
- Both acts require skilled labor to be contracted.
- Both acts require specific conditions to be met. In the case of the restaurant: the type of food, how it is to be prepared, when it is to be served, etc. In the case of the assassination: the intended target, as well as the time, location and method of "hit" etc.
- Both acts require payments to be made.
- Both acts involve the pro-active involvement of God's people. In this case, without the involvement of Mr. Pack the specific target won't be killed and the specific meal won't be prepared for him.
- Both murder and Sabbath labor are CONDEMNED by God Almighty.
- Both murder and Sabbath labor are acts that require those involved to REPENT.

Now we will readily admit that there is not any possibility of Dave Pack succumbing to murder as reflected in our scenario. He knows full well the horrific nature of this act and can appreciate the gravity of this sin. However, we offer it to illustrate that his rational for dining out on the Sabbath lacks the same moral clarity as that which was reflected in the "Hit Man" scenario. Whether this COG leader wants to admit it or not, every time he seeks out the services of restaurants on the Sabbath, he is soliciting a capital crime. The fact that they are habitual Sabbath-breakers changes nothing. With that said, let's try a different example.

Scenario II "The Thief"

Imagine if Dave Pack wanted to purchase a large screen plasma television and was looking for a real good deal. A friend refers him to a small unassuming shop in a remote area that "specializes" in such things. After selecting the features he wants and negotiating a price, Mr. Pack is advised that his new TV must be acquired from the company warehouse and that he may pick it up on Thursday. This is great news because he will have it just in time for the NBA finals.

However, while waiting for the big day, Mr. Pack does some research and discovers that the televisions being sold at this shop are stolen. There is no doubt whatsoever that this is true. Although he can't prove it, his information is totally reliable. During his investigation he even determines that his particular TV was going to be stolen from a warehouse of a large well known retail chain. Unfortunately, he didn't know which one.

What Should He Do?

It is undeniable that the price Dave Pack had to pay for his TV was fantastic—less than half of that charged by others. However, he now knows that the merchandise will be "HOT"—"RED HOT." This COG leader then ponders his dilemma. What should he do? Hmmmm. Let's think about this.

Mr. Pack then reasons that although his television is stolen, he isn't the one stealing it. As a Christian, he would never do such a thing. Furthermore, the real thief is ignorant of God's law and truly can't appreciate his crime. Even after being confronted, the thief rationalized that he did nothing wrong because no one got hurt. After all, some rich insurance company will pay the retail chain for their loss.

This COG leader also reasons that because of the thief's lack of conversion, God holds him to a different standard. This man will have his chance after he is called. Therefore, if the thief is held to a lower standard by God for his "act," then God must also hold him (Dave Pack) to a lower standard for accepting the merchandise. Now for the question.

Does God Almighty consider Dave Pack complicit in theft if he (Mr. Pack) knew that the TV he ordered and paid for, was going to be stolen?

Once again, we are certain that Mr. Pack would not succumb to the temptation portrayed in this scenario. He can easily detect its moral defect. Furthermore, we are confident that he would be furious that we would offer it. In all likelihood he would claim that it is totally manufactured by apostates who don't know a thing about the True God or His Sabbath. Well, in fairness to Mr. Pack, let's try one more time.

Scenario III "The Restaurant"

Imaging Dave Pack is dining at an exclusive Five Star Restaurant on a Friday evening. He made reservations three weeks ago and was truly looking forward to sharing this time with a few close friends from the Restored Church of God. He realizes that the menu is a little "pricey" but it is more than worth it—the food is superb and the service is legendary. Additionally, the atmosphere is wonderful—soft music, candlelit tables and a very sophisticated clientele. Add to that, this was God's Sabbath and NOTHING is too good for God. That is why Mr. Pack selected this particular bistro. He honestly thought it would be the perfect setting to ring in holy time.

The Conversation

After ordering wine and selecting dinner the fellowship begins. At some point, the conversation turns to dining out on the Sabbath. Mr. Pack knows his companions are sympathetic to his view so he boldly explains why he, and they, are totally innocent of any trespass of God's law. He reasons that even though his server is working on the Sabbath, at least he (Dave Pack) is not. Additionally, if Mr. Pack wasn't there his server would be assisting someone else. Therefore he (Mr. Pack) has not added to his server's burden. Additionally, although the entire staff at the restaurant are laboring on the Sabbath, they don't know any better. They are unconverted and totally ignorant of God's law. Because of this, the Almighty holds them to a different standard. That being the case He must hold the one who solicits their labor to a different standard as well. Anyway, it isn't as if Dave Pack can prevent his server from profaning the Sabbath. There is not one thing he can do about it. Additionally, by dining out Mr. Pack and his guests won't be burdened with their own meal preparation on holy time. Therefore, no trespass has been committed.

Here is our question. Actually, we have a few questions.

- Are restaurant workers breaking God's law when they labor for Mr. Pack by preparing his meal and serving it to him on the Sabbath? If no, was the assassin or the thief breaking God's law when they performed their service?
- Is it possible for Dave Pack to prevent restaurant workers from laboring for him on holy time? In other words, if someone offered the RCG one million dollars if

Mr. Pack could prevent restaurant personnel from working on his behalf this Sabbath, is there something he could do to insure they wouldn't? We can think of one thing.

- If Mr. Pack insists on soliciting the services of restaurants on the Sabbath, would God Almighty consider him complicit in the labor they performed for him?

This COG leader may argue all he wants that he bears no responsibility for the Sabbath labor performed for him by restaurant personnel, but this is simply NOT TRUE. He directs that labor and benefits from it. That is why he seeks it out and pays for it! Although the employee(s) would be working for someone else if Mr. Pack wasn't there, so would the assassin and the thief.

David C. Pack continued:

Here is the point: While all men should repent "yesterday," so to speak, God will only truly judge them when they are called.

Accountability changes altogether when one's mind is opened and becomes convicted to the truth: "Therefore to him that *knows* to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin" (Jms. 4:17; Heb. 10:26).

Our Response:

It is difficult to understand why Mr. Pack would ever draw consolation from these words. This is because although eternal judgment is not on an unbelieving world at this time, it is on God's Church—including its leaders. The point here is that the world may be ignorant of God's truth, but Dave Pack isn't. He knows full well what the Lord of the Sabbath thinks of the sin he promotes. He is simply too proud to change. The bottom line is this: Every time Dave Pack solicits the Sabbath labor of unbelievers, he adds one more exhibit in a case against himself. The only way he can escape God's judgment is to REPENT. Arguing the "I'm not responsible" defense simply WON'T WORK.

Argument IX Nehemiah Never Bought It

When advancing his case in defense of dining out on the Sabbath, Dave Pack offers an interesting slant on what Nehemiah meant when he prohibited the Jews of his day from buying and selling on holy time (Neh. 10:31). According to this COG leader, Nehemiah's indictment was only against God's people setting up businesses on the Sabbath as well as spending the entire day purchasing goods and services. Here is how he presents this phase of his case. We encourage you to consider Mr. Pack's argument in the context of Nehemiah own words in which he prohibits buying any products regardless of the volume.

And if the people of the land bring ware or **any** victuals on the Sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the Sabbath, or on the holy day: (Neh. 10:31)

David C. Pack:

"A growing number of people equate dining out on the Sabbath with ancient Judah buying and selling on the Sabbath. They point to the account of Nehemiah, who confronted and drove off nomadic merchants who sold their foods and wares on the seventh day. They conclude that exchanging money for a restaurant meal during the Sabbath is no different than how the Jews violated the Sabbath in Nehemiah's day.

Yet, there is a significant difference between these two situations!

Buying from an open-air market during Nehemiah's time would more accurately be equivalent to shopping at an open farmers market or perhaps a super market today. In a restaurant, one buys a meal that is consumed *at that time*—which is *not* the same as shopping for food and taking it home to be eaten later. Dining out at restaurants, as opposed to shopping in volume for the next day's meals, is comparable to Christ and His disciples gleaning corn to be eaten on the Sabbath, as opposed to gleaning enough for tomorrow's meals."

Our Response:

Here, Dave Pack contends that what took place in Jerusalem during the days of Nehemiah involved turning the entire Sabbath into a market day and therefore, doesn't apply to God's Church today. His reasoning implies that Nehemiah would never have a problem with Israel proactively seeking out unbelievers to acquire and prepare their Sabbath meals for them even though Exodus 16 reveals that God excoriated them for doing that very thing themselves. He even declared that any attempt to acquire one's meals on the Sabbath was an act of defiance against His and His law.

Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, **that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.** And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. (Ex. 16: 4-5)

Later, when some Israelites attempted to acquire their Sabbath meal on the seventh day God expressed His disfavor this way.

And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, **How long refuse you to**

keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place. (Ex. 16: 27-29)

Seeking out a Loophole

In all due respect, what Mr. Pack has attempted to do with this argument would make any criminal defense attorney proud. His strategy is really quite simple. Find a way to prove that it is impossible to obey God in this matter because the scriptures are not specific enough to address his particular situation. This tactic can almost always work if one is creative enough. For example, if the Jews during Nehemiah's day were only eating lunch at a restaurant on the Sabbath, Mr. Pack could argue that the scriptures are silent about going out to breakfast or dinner. After all the Bible only mentions lunch. Or, if people were buying meat on the Sabbath when Nehemiah rebuked them, he could argue that it doesn't say you can't buy vegetables. Or, if they were spending the entire day playing golf he could argue it doesn't mention spending an hour or two at a driving range.

Adding Clarity to Nehemiah's Rebuke

At this point it is significant to note that the word "victuals" used in Nehemiah's rebuke (Neh. 13:15-21 & 10:31), comes from the Hebrew word *tsayid*. This word means, "game," "lunch," or that which is "taken in hunting." This being the case, Nehemiah was excoriating the Jews for buying FOOD on the Sabbath. Mr. Pack may assert it was great amounts of food, but that is pure speculation, not to mention totally irrelevant. As was just stated: when God first introduced the Israelites to His Sabbath, He specifically prohibited them from acquiring any food on the Sabbath, not to mention preparing it on that day. Furthermore, the Almighty also prohibited His people from going outside their place on the Sabbath for the purpose of obtaining a meal. Today, David C. Pack claims that God's people may do all of these things

Regarding Unbelievers

It is also important to note that those who were selling food on the Sabbath were "non-believers" just like those who work in restaurants today. They were from the city of Tyre.

There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. (Neh. 13:16)

These vendors did not know God. They were totally ignorant of His law and His plan for man. However, this "shortcoming" was irrelevant to Nehemiah. To him, ignorance was no excuse. This truth is born out in the action he would take. He expelled every merchant from the city and warned them in the strongest words possible to NEVER come back on the Sabbath or holy day (Neh. 13:17-20).

A Final Thought

The example of Nehemiah's uncompromising love of God's law is a great lesson for all Christians. This champion of faith boldly confronted those who were complicit in causing God's people to profane His Sabbath. His remedy was forceful and reflected God's thinking about engaging in commerce on the day He made HOLY. Furthermore, God not only abhorred this practice then, but His opinion on the subject has not changed to this very day.

Despite all the parsing of words, the real point Nehemiah was clearly making in his indictment was that God's people should NEVER solicit the services of any commercial business on the Sabbath. Any other understanding is simply manipulating the scriptures in an attempt to advance one's personal preferences.

Pardon the Interruption
“The Pyramid Café”

Dear Brethren,

Imagine that it is one year into the millennium and you are serving with thousands of the faithful under the reign of Jesus Christ. However, not all of mankind has yet submitted to God's government. Some continue to assert their own will and refuse to honor the Almighty's great moral law, including His Sabbath and holy days. One such pocket of resistance is the nation of Egypt. God has already begun to deal with this rebellion by withholding rain from them. This was done in an attempt to encourage their repentance, but as yet they continue their defiance.

Now imagine that you have been dispatched to this land to speak to a small group who have begun to turn from their ways and to honor the true God. At one point during your message someone in your audience asks you the following question.

"Your Majesty, as you know our nation refuses to honor God's Sabbath and annual festivals. One way they profane them is by engaging in business during these holy times. Our question for you is this: May we purchase their goods? For example, may we dine out at restaurants on the Sabbath? We know that God does not approve of what they are doing at such places. One only has to see the affects of the drought He has brought upon us to understand that. But what about buying their goods? It isn't as if we are making them work on the Sabbath. They would be doing that anyway. What does your God desire of us in this matter?"

How would you answer this question? Remember, you now speak for Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath. Therefore, your words must reflect His perfect will.

If you believe that God would permit these recent converts to continue to buy their Sabbath meals at the very restaurants that are defying His law, our question is: WHY? Why would your God permit His people to purchase the fruits of the very labor He abhors?

For Dave Pack to suggest that God would actually embrace a practice that relies totally on someone else's sin is nothing short of stunning. Everything about it goes contrary to God's very nature. Throughout the scriptures God's people are admonished to come completely out of sin—not come out and later return to partake of someone else's sin. The example of Lot's wife strongly suggests that God doesn't even want His people to look back at sin, let alone go back and solicit it from others. The apostle Paul put it this way:

Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph. 2: 2-3)

We at ***Blow the Trumpet*** think it is inconceivable that the Almighty would actually condone a practice that requires His people to return to the very sin that once gripped their lives—in this world or in the world to come. Sadly, Dave Pack believes God honors such behavior.

Respectfully,

Blow the Trumpet

Argument X A Little Pleasure on the Sabbath

At one point when defending the practice of paying unbelievers to acquire and prepare his Sabbath meals, Mr. Pack accuses the authors of *A Sabbath Test* of painting a very dark, almost sinister, picture of Sabbath observance. He even accuses them of condemning ALL PERSONAL PLEASURE on this day. This of course is not true, but truth is not something that comes easy to Dave Pack in this issue. We encourage you to carefully read his words and compare them to those offered by *A Sabbath Test*. Then decide for yourself which argument you would want to lay before God Almighty.

David C. Pack:

"God tells His people to rejoice at the Feast of Tabernacles—even including the high Holy Day. For the critics, it becomes somewhat of a "catch-22" to pretend that, although God commands His people to rejoice, His people are warned not to experience any personal enjoyment or pleasure on the Sabbath. When one keeps God's command to rejoice, it will be pleasurable."

Our Response:

According to this argument, Mr. Pack believes that seeking out unbelievers and soliciting their Sabbath labor is one way God's people can rejoice on holy time. He then accuses the authors of *A Sabbath Test* of being caught between a rock and a hard place by refusing to embrace his behavior. He offers this wisdom despite the fact that God specifically forbids His people from acquiring their food or preparing it on the Sabbath (Ex. 16: 5, 23). Additionally, the Almighty prohibited them from soliciting Sabbath labor from anyone (Ex. 20:8-11, Deut. 5: 13-15) as well as forbidding the purchase of all goods and services on holy time (Neh. 10:31).

Despite this fact Mr. Pack promotes the idea that proactively seeking out and paying for the services of Sabbath breakers is in total keeping with the scriptures. This is a striking view that credible scholars openly acknowledge could never have occurred during the time of Christ and the apostles. One such authority is Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan. In his book *Sabbath—Day of Eternity* he explains that the Sanhedrin, which was the governing judicial body of the Jews at that time, saw engaging in any business as a clear breach of God's law.

The Sanhedrin legislated a prohibition against all forms of buying, selling, trading and other commerce for a variety of reasons. The Sabbath must be a day when all business stops. 1 Kaplan, Rabbi Aryeh, *Sabbath—Day of Eternity* (Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America: New York, New York) 2002.

Furthermore, according to the renowned scholar Dr. Alfred Edersheim one of the functions of the priests serving in the temple was to announce when all business was to cease on the Sabbath.

"The ancient records of tradition enable us to form a very vivid conception of Sabbath-worship in the Temple at the time of Christ... the Sabbath commenced at sunset on Friday, the day being reckoned by the Hebrews from sunset to sunset. But long before that the preparations for the Sabbath had commenced.

"No fresh business was then undertaken; no journey of any distance commenced; but everything purchased and made ready against the feast, the victuals being placed in a heated oven, and surrounded by dry substances to keep them warm.

The approach of the Sabbath, and then its actual commencement, were announced by threefold blasts from the priests' trumpets. When the priests for the first time sounded their trumpets, all business was to cease, and every kind of work to be stopped.

However, according to Mr. Pack, God's people may engage in business if they derive pleasure from it. He does so by offering innocent examples that require absolutely no buying and selling, after which he claims that if God's people may derive pleasure from beholding a beautiful landscape they may also solicit the labor of Sabbath breakers—because that gives them pleasure as well.

David C. Pack continued:

"God does not forbid pleasure that is appropriate for the Sabbath. It is not profaning the Sabbath to listen to pleasing classical music. Neither is it sinful to appreciate a beautiful landscape or to walk out into God's creation to better enjoy His Sabbath. Certainly smelling the fragrance of flowers or taking in fresh mountain air is pleasurable—would God have us abstain from enjoying these things on the Sabbath? Does enjoying a delicious, wholesome meal profane the Sabbath? Of course not! Even in I Corinthians 7:5, in which Paul instructs husbands and wives to abstain from the pleasure of marital relations while fasting, he does not command them to refrain from this on the Sabbath. Clearly, God does not condemn pleasure that is within reason and within His Law.

Yet, statements from the book *A Sabbath Test* paint a much different picture. After quoting Isaiah 58:13, the authors write, "By this statement, God makes it abundantly clear that we are not to seek personal enjoyment on His Sabbath. It is true that the Sabbath was made for man (Mk. 2:27), but it is God's day (Ex. 31:13-17). Therefore, His people are to honor His instructions regarding how it is to be kept" (p. 34).

They then conclude, "Therefore, God was instructing His people to avoid physical activities which cater primarily to personal pleasure. Tragically, this is exactly what dining out on the Sabbath is. It is something that is geared toward personal pleasure. It is what millions of Americans and Europeans do for entertainment and recreation every single day and especially on the Sabbath."

Do you grasp what these authors are saying? They are equating the physical necessity of eating—ingesting food in order to obtain necessary nutrients for life—as entertainment and recreation. Who is missing something here? Should such a rift in logic or judgment not serve as a warning flag?

As with all the other "proofs" used to support their unstable hypotheses, this "proof" is tailored to fit the authors' predetermined conclusion."

Our Response:

Here Mr. Pack is advancing an argument that employs an extraordinary level of deception. Consider what he has done. He suggests that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* are opposed to participating in such Sabbath activities as taking walks and enjoying the beauty of creation. He then suggests that music is also on their list of Sabbath taboos. With this accomplished, this COG leader unleashes his "unrighteous indignation" with the following accusation.

"Do you grasp what these authors are saying? They are equating the physical necessity of eating—ingesting food in order to obtain necessary nutrients for life—as entertainment and recreation."

Notice that instead of mentioning dining out at restaurants on the Sabbath as the issue, Mr. Pack cleverly attempts to con his audience into believing that the monsters who wrote *A Sabbath Test* are

actually opposed to food altogether on holy time. In other words, Messrs. Braidic and Fischer want God's people to go hungry every seventh day.

This argument is not only dishonest, it's a joke. Mr. Pack knows full well that both the authors and the scriptures are in total agreement with the role of food on the Sabbath—they are both in favor of it. This is why God rained a double portion of manna on the sixth day (Ex. 16:5). However, both God and the authors are equally opposed to seeking out unbelievers and paying them to acquire the nourishment Mr. Pack speaks of. This is why the Eternal prohibited the children of Israel from acquiring any manna on the seventh day (Ex. 16:25-26). What Mr. Pack is suggesting is that restaurants are more considerate of the physical needs of God's people than God Himself. After all, God wouldn't rain down manna on the seventh day and wouldn't allow His people to prepare their Sabbath meals on that day either. He wouldn't even allow them to hire others to prepare it for them. But Dave Pack will. Wow! Forget Fischer and Braidic—that makes Dave Pack more righteous than God.

Going Hungry

It is also interesting that when some Israelites attempted to gather manna on the Sabbath, because they required the "physical necessity of eating," God was furious (Ex. 16: 27-29). Furthermore, the Almighty did not provide an alternate food source for them. The scriptures say, "**They found none**" (verse 27).

Tragically, this COG leader attempts to make his case by twisting the words of men who deeply respect God's Sabbath law. In essence, he is using "sleight of hand" to distort what they are conveying. Fortunately, we have their own words to ascertain the REAL TRUTH. Here they are.

A Sabbath Test

Perhaps the most important instruction recorded by Isaiah concerning the Sabbath is that God wants His people to call this day a "delight." Regrettably, some have put a unique twist on these words. Many have interpreted them to mean that we are to do things to make the Sabbath a delight. In other words, find something that gives pleasure and do it on the Sabbath. After constructing such a premise, many in God's Church contend that going out to eat causes them to do less work, and thus makes the Sabbath more enjoyable. Therefore, going to a restaurant on this day is a delight and is in keeping with the words recorded by Isaiah.

Such an interpretation is a HORRIBLE DISTORTION of the scriptures! God did not create the Sabbath to insure that man would have one day of personal enjoyment every week. He created this day so that our natural pursuit of personal desires would not so consume our lives that they would estrange us from the very God who made us. In other words, the Sabbath is not a day to seek personal pleasures, but rather to reject them. It is a day dedicated to embracing that which is holy.

But what does it mean to call the Sabbath a delight? What is the delight? To better understand what God was conveying with this instruction, consider what He specifically said:

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words... (Isa. 58:13)

Here God is not telling His people to make the Sabbath a delight. He is instructing them to call it a delight. God's people should delight in the great Kingdom the Sabbath pictures. That Kingdom will be a time of unimaginable abundance. The Sabbath is evidence that

God will deliver that Kingdom and establish it when Jesus Christ returns in power and glory. In that hope is the delight He spoke of.

Those who believe they need to go to a restaurant on the Sabbath to “delight” in this day fail to grasp the great joy of this sacred time. Consequently, they feel a need to do something “worldly” on this day to make it more joyous. What a terrible mistake.

God created the delight that fills each Sabbath. His instruction to His children is to recognize that joy and celebrate it in their worship of Him. The Sabbath is a day to look forward to with great anticipation. It is not a day of inconvenience. It is a day of joy and hope when God’s children assemble together and appear before their King. (*A Sabbath Test*)

The authors then offer a splendid explanation of how our behavior should reflect the God ordained purpose of the Sabbath.

A Sabbath Test

The Sabbath pictures liberation and freedom from bondage. It pictures the great hope of God’s Kingdom. It is a unique day in which we can finally stop doing the labor, chores, and mundane activities of life. On the Sabbath we can come out of this world for one day, and picture a time when this world will be delivered into the hands of the King of kings.

The Sabbath is a delight, not because we are out having fun, amusing ourselves and being entertained. It is a delight because we have a special time set aside to seek our Maker. In a very real sense, the Sabbath is a time when the bride shares moments with the Bridegroom. (*A Sabbath Test*)

Additionally, Braidic and Fischer outline Sabbath appropriate activities that embrace God’s purpose for His holy time. As you read them ask yourself if these men are opposed to delighting in God’s day.

A Sabbath Test

Although God’s law outlines certain prohibitions concerning the Sabbath, it also outlines numerous activities that enhance the honoring of this great commandment. In reality, the command to honor God’s Sabbath is among the most affirmative in the Decalogue. Here are just some of the things you can engage in on that day:

Rest from your labor.

Fellowship with God’s people.

Study His word.

Pray to Him.

Refrain from worry.

Meditate on His way.

Sing praises to Him.

Be nourished by His servants.

Anticipate His Kingdom.

Celebrate God's plan with family.

Teach your children.

Delight in the great hope He has given you.

Serve God's people.

Comfort the weak.

Encourage the strong.

Embrace the lonely.

And in all of this, God's word instructs His people to DELIGHT in this day, knowing that the Sabbath stands as evidence that God's hope for all mankind will one day be accomplished!

The Sabbath pictures God's great millennial Kingdom. It is a day filled with hope and rich in meaning. God's people should see it as nothing less. The Sabbath is a day that provides a glimpse into a Kingdom that will be absent of suffering. That Kingdom will be a time of great peace, great prosperity, great health, and great hope. It will be a time when ignorance and superstition will be replaced with the knowledge of a loving God and Father. Honoring the Sabbath that pictures that Kingdom is nothing less than a tremendous privilege and blessing. It should fill all of God's people with a sense of purpose and hope, and most of all, it should fill them with THANKSGIVING. (*A Sabbath Test*)

A Final Thought

Does God want his people to rejoice in His Sabbath and holy days? Of course he does. The Almighty specifically instructed His people to "DELIGHT" in them. However, the Creator did not instruct His children to "MAKE the Sabbath a delight, He told them that they are to "call it a delight" because of what it means. He also cautioned against seeking our own pleasure and disguising it as something HOLY. Sadly this is exactly what David C. Pack is doing. If God's people are truly honest with themselves the words He spoke through Isaiah should be pretty clear. At least they are to us.

If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor him, not doing your own ways, nor finding you own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: Then shall you delight yourself in the LORD... (Isa. 58: 13-14)

Argument XI The Utility Defense

In his defense of God's people seeking out unbelievers on the Sabbath and purchasing the fruit of their labor, Mr. Pack argues that if it is permissible with God to use electricity in your home on the Sabbath then it must also be permissible to seek the services of a restaurants on that day. After all, both require unbelievers to labor.

Here is how he expresses it.

David C. Pack:

"By their standard, should a Christian not refrain from turning on his lights or air conditioning (electricity) because someone at the power plant must be on the job for this to be possible?

Similarly, what about gas heat in winter? Should not a kerosene space heater—or heating by wood—be used instead? Then, should a Christian refrain from turning on the water, including showering, on the Sabbath so that others are not further burdened (the water is heated by supplied energy)? What about not flushing the toilet, and using a bucket instead, to eliminate any kind of additional work at the sewage treatment plant?

These examples are all under our control. Utility workers must be there to make available the services you are taking advantage of. In doing this, why are you not, therefore, "a partaker in other men's sins"?

Our Response:

It is amazing to see the lengths some people will go to when justifying themselves. In the case of Dave Pack, he attempts to blur the lines between acceptable Sabbath behavior and his sin. He does so because he desperately wants to believe that the Lord of the Sabbath respects the fact that he teaches God's people that they may go out into spiritual Egypt, on a day consecrated by the Almighty, and purchase the fruit of its sin. Remember, when one dines out on the Sabbath, he or she must consciously seek out unbelievers and pay them for their Sabbath labor. This is done despite the fact that God specifically prohibited His people from soliciting Sabbath labor from anyone (Ex. 20:10). Additionally, the Almighty also prohibited His people from acquiring their meals on the Sabbath, preparing their meals on the Sabbath, and going outside their place (community of faith) on the Sabbath (see Ex. 16). He also prohibited them from buying any food on the Sabbath (Neh. 10:31). Why?—because the Sabbath is HOLY.

The Real Truth

While Mr. Pack insists that there is no difference between using energy for one's home on the Sabbath and going to a restaurant on God's day, this is simply NOT TRUE. Consider the obvious differences. First, God's people do not, or at least they should not, seek out utility companies on the Sabbath. In other words, they should not subscribe to utility services on that day. However, when it comes to dining out on the Sabbath that is exactly what must take place. Those who engage in this practice must willfully seek out, on holy time, unbelievers who are profaning the fourth commandment and place an order for the fruit of this sacrilege. We think this represents a HUGE difference in these two behaviors.

Secondly, God's people do not, or at least they should not, pay their utility bills on the Sabbath. However, when it comes to dining out on this day that is exactly what they do. They are purchasing a specific service that was provided for them, at their request, on a specific day—GOD'S DAY! We think this also represents a HUGE difference in these two behaviors.

Thirdly, when God's people subscribe to a utility service, they are not requiring that labor be performed for them on the Sabbath. That is not how utilities work. It is not as if someone at a power plant must crank a generator so that your home receives its power on God's day. As a matter of fact, power generated by utility companies can be sustained for considerable periods of time without the aid of any manpower. When one subscribes to receive energy, his home, which is already connected to a power source, is simply allowed access to that source.

The bottom line is this—when it comes to utilities, God's people do not require Sabbath labor any more than they need their bank to be open on Saturdays for their checking account to work. However, when it comes to dining out on the Sabbath, the opposite is true. Manpower is absolutely essential. Those who engage in this practice depend on that labor—without it they don't eat.

Finally, we at Blow the Trumpet believe it can reasonably be argued that utilities are a necessary part of the operation of a modern home. However, no such argument can be made about restaurants. Furthermore, although the Bible is silent on the issue of using utilities on the Sabbath, it speaks with great force regarding Mr. Pack's Sabbath meals. God's word specifically states that food is not to be acquired on the Sabbath, prepared on the Sabbath and that God's people are not to go outside their community of faith to procure it on the Sabbath (Ex. 16). However, instead of heeding the scriptures, David C. Pack cites the "utility defense" to justify his defiance of God's command.

Argument XII Creating Hurdles

In his defense of dining out on the Sabbath, David C. Pack accuses the authors of *A Sabbath Test* of manufacturing a "new threshold of righteousness." But just who is guilty of what this COG leader claims? Below is his accusation followed by our response.

David C. Pack:

"The Bible is explicit and straightforward about what is allowed and what is forbidden. Some attempt to attain a new threshold of "righteousness" by setting up a unique hurdle of their devising. Such is the case with this recently-contrived issue of avoiding restaurants on the Sabbath. We have seen that it was necessary for the advocates of this belief to subtly trash Mr. Armstrong, since he was "out of step" with their newly established definition of righteousness."

Our Response:

First, with respect to "trashing Mr. Armstrong," Mr. Pack can't furnish one syllable in *A Sabbath Test* that does any such thing. The truth of the matter is that both of the book's authors have the highest regard for him and consider him one of the greatest champions of faith in the history of God's work. Furthermore, both Braidic and Fischer maintain comprehensive libraries dedicated to Mr. Armstrong and his work. It is interesting that Mr. Pack does not have one of Mr. Armstrong's writings posted on his website.

Secondly, with respect to his comment regarding the Bible's straightforward statements concerning what is allowed and what is forbidden on the Sabbath, we are in total agreement. This is why we are so mystified that this minister would defy God's word so brazenly. Consider what the scriptures say regarding his Sabbath dining practices.

You shall not acquire food on the Sabbath

Exodus 16:26

God actually rebuked the Israelites when they attempted to engage in this practice. His exact words were, "How long refuse you to keep my commandments and my laws?" (Ex. 16:26-28). He uttered them after the Israelites went out to gather food (manna) on the Sabbath, in clear violation of His command. Tragically, Mr. Pack somehow believes he may hire others to gather it for him.

You shall not prepare food on the Sabbath

Exodus 16:23

God specifically instructed the Israelites to do their Sabbath meal preparation on the sixth day (Ex. 16:23). Furthermore, at no time did He suggest that they could commission others to prepare it for them on holy time. He actually indicated that the preparation day was given to "prove" the Israelites and to test their obedience (Ex. 16:4). However, Mr. Pack teaches that God only prohibited the acquisition and preparation of manna on the Sabbath—not food altogether (See: Argument XXIII, "No More Manna"). Therefore, he may now seek out unbelievers and pay them to prepare his "non-manna" Sabbath meals.

You shall not go outside your place on the Sabbath Exodus 16:29

God revealed this specific aspect of His command because the Israelites went out to obtain food on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:29). Furthermore, God was furious with this practice and He made that fact abundantly clear.

At this point, it is interesting to note that the only way God's people today can avail themselves of a restaurant on the Sabbath is to go outside "their place." They must literally go out into the world where God's Sabbath is being profaned and seek out the services of unbelievers and their sin. It is even referred to as **"going out to eat."** Despite this fact, Mr. Pack believes God somehow condones this sin in today's world.

You shall not labor on the Sabbath Exodus 20:10

God first addressed the issue of work on the Sabbath when He made the seventh day. At that time, the Great Creator of Heaven and Earth rested from His labor (Gen. 2:2-3). Later, when giving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, God made reference to this rest (Ex. 20:11).

Additionally, God knew that there were only two broad sources of labor relative to the fourth commandment—the work you perform and the work that is performed on you behalf. The fourth commandment addresses both types (Ex. 20:9-10). First, "you shall not do any work" on the Sabbath. That addresses your part. Secondly, no one who comes into your sphere of influence shall be compelled to labor on your behalf. This includes family, servants, strangers, and even livestock. That portion of the command addresses all others His people would come in contact with. Everyone else on earth was outside the camp and God already forbade His people from going there on holy time (Ex. 16:29).

God's Point was clear

When God gave the fourth commandment, His intent was very clear: work profanes the day He consecrated—to engage in such a practice is to desecrate that which is sacred (Ex. 20:8-11). To pay others to do it for you is no different. Mr. Pack may try to claim that because he is powerless to prevent unbelievers from laboring on God's Sabbath, he may now solicit and pay for that labor, but this is NOT TRUE. Nehemiah was well aware that God's people would encounter Sabbath-breakers selling food and other things on holy time. However, that didn't prevent him from forbidding the purchase of ANY thing they sold (Neh. 10:31).

You shall not direct a servant to labor on the Sabbath Exodus 20:10

God's plan for man is that he will ultimately be free from the tyranny of ignorance and sin. The Sabbath pictures that freedom. It is not by accident that when giving the fourth commandment, God reminded His people that they were once slaves in Egypt (Dt. 5:15). It is for this very reason that every Sabbath, God's people are to be liberators. In other words, they are to declare everyone they come in contact with as FREE. Nowhere in the commandment does it remotely hint that God condones His people going back into "Egypt" to avail themselves of the very sin they were once a part of (Dt. 5:14-15). The Sabbath is about liberty, not slavery.

Mr. Pack may argue all he wants that because unbelievers would be working anyway he may now go back into spiritual Egypt and avail himself of their sin, but he does not have the force of scripture on his side. God's word forbids such things and actually warns of its consequences (Rev. 18:4).

You shall not direct an unbeliever to work on the Sabbath

Exodus 20:10

Contrary to what Mr. Pack teaches, God's prohibition against Sabbath labor extends beyond His people. Even the unbeliever is not to be compelled to labor on this day. Although this Church leader thinks he bears no responsibility for the work they perform, it is he (David C. Pack) who is placing the order and paying for it.

The point God was making when giving this portion of the fourth commandment was that whether one is a believer or a skeptic, bond or free, rich or poor, young or old, family or stranger, God's people are not to solicit them to labor on their behalf on His Sabbath. Why? Because we were once slaves in (spiritual) Egypt as well (Dt. 5:14-15).

Those who are ignorant of God's law may not understand why the faithful would be so considerate of them. But God's people do understand. By symbolically releasing the unbeliever from labor on the Sabbath, they are acting out what their King will ultimately do when He returns to earth. At that time, He will declare all the slaves FREE.

You shall not buy or sell on the Sabbath

Nehemiah 10:31

Throughout history, there has always been an inextricable link between money and labor. Furthermore, God is very much aware of this link. For this reason, He inspired both Nehemiah's words (Neh. 10:31) and his actions (Neh. 13:15-21) when dealing with the issue of buying and selling on the Sabbath.

When this great instrument of the Almighty commanded the Jews to refrain from engaging in commerce on holy time, he was not introducing a new aspect to the fourth commandment. He was reminding God's people of where this sin can lead—CAPTIVITY (Neh. 13:17-18)! That one word should carry enormous weight with God's Church today. The Great Law Giver was not bluffing when He indicted the nations of Israel and Judah for profaning the Sabbath. History bears out this painful truth. We sincerely hope Mr. Pack will not have to learn this lesson the hard way.

Argument XIII Preaching Bondage

One of the most common arguments advanced by those who teach that God condones the practice of dining out on the Sabbath, is that those who oppose this sin are preaching bondage. Mr. Pack is no different when condemning *A Sabbath Test*. The real question is: Just who is preaching bondage? In other words, who wants God's people to go back into Egypt? Below is Mr. Pack's accusation followed by our response.

David C. Pack:

"The article you have just read was written to give people—both older brethren and those new to God's truth—an advance warning, so that they will not be captured by the cunning arguments of those who appear to be standing fast for the truth. In reality, the advocates against eating out on the Sabbath are teaching a new form of bondage that appears to follow the letter of the law, while ignoring the weightier matters. As the apostle James wrote, the Law of God is not a surrender of liberty; it allows us to continue in God-given liberty (Jms. 1:25; 2:12)."

Our Response:

This is a very interesting observation. There is only one thing wrong with it. IT ISN'T TRUE! Mr. Pack may shout this accusation until the cows come home but it will not add one ounce to its voracity. Furthermore, he offers no evidence to support his claim. It is simply a tirade cloaked as a voice of authority. However, being that he brought it up, let's see who is teaching bondage and who is teaching liberty—and when we do, let's present REAL PROOF..

A World in Bondage

Today, those who work on the Sabbath, whether in a restaurant or anywhere else, are truly in bondage. However, it is a very unique bondage. In truth, they are slaves to sin (Jn. 8:34, Rom. 6:16)—a sin that has been sold by mankind's greatest enemy (2 Cor. 4:4, Rev. 12:9). This being the case we believe it is reasonable to conclude that those in God's Church who avail themselves of this sin are condoning both the slavery and the SLAVE MASTER. This is what God was conveying when He gave the fourth commandment.

This Great Lawgiver actually explained why His people were to release their servants from labor on the Sabbath. Notice the commandment:

But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor your ox, nor your ass, nor any of your cattle, nor the stranger that is within your gates; that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. **And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt** and that the LORD your God brought you out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day. (Deut. 5:14-15)

Here, God is telling His people that labor on the Sabbath is a form of bondage. This is the very bondage He freed them from when He delivered them out of Egypt. This being the case, it is hard to understand why anyone would want to return to that bondage—even to look at it. Now think of this in terms of our own lives and what is being taught by Mr. Pack.

The Miracle of Deliverance

The scriptures reveal that just as the children of Israel were enslaved in Egypt until God miraculously delivered them, those whom He has called in this present age were also once enslaved in “spiritual” Egypt. God’s people today were once in bondage. We once believed the things the world believes, taught the things the world teaches, and practiced the things the world practices. We even profaned God’s Sabbath and holy days. We did so because we served the same Slave Master the world serves today.

However, our calling reveals that a Great Deliverer has again rescued His people from a world that does not know Him or His way. For this reason, God’s people today should never compel the unbeliever (a slave in Egypt) to work on their behalf on the Sabbath. We must refrain from this practice because we were miraculously delivered from this very BONDAGE ourselves. Remember God’s words, “YOU were once a SLAVE in Egypt” (Deut. 5:15).

With this in mind, God’s people must understand that their Great Deliverer would no more permit His people today to return to this world and avail themselves of its sin, than He would permit the Israelites of yesterday to return to Egypt and avail themselves of their sin. As much as Dave Pack may want to go back into Egypt, God forbids it and warns of its consequences. Notice what He says.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. (Rev. 18:4)

Consider these words in the context of dining out on the Sabbath. In order to engage in this practice, God’s people must literally return to a world that does not know Him—a world that tramples on this great day. In the Old Testament that world was called Egypt. In the New Testament it is called Babylon. But make no mistake about it; these worlds are one and the same.

When God commanded His people to cease from working on the Sabbath and to not compel others to work on their behalf, He was making a powerful statement. He was commanding His people to COME OUT OF EGYPT, to COME OUT OF BABYLON! In other words, God’s people are not to be a part of the very sin that once gripped their lives. This is because they are now FREE! For Mr. Pack to teach otherwise is to promote BONDAGE!

Proclaiming a Great Hope

Although the world today is truly in bondage, God’s people stand as proof that it will not always be that way. By refusing to allow the slave of this world to labor for them on God’s Sabbath, His people are proclaiming a great hope – a hope that one day all who are enslaved will be FREE. At that time they, too, will “remember the Sabbath and keep it HOLY.”

Unfortunately, those who think that people like the authors of *A Sabbath Test* are leading God’s people back into bondage, are actually doing that very thing themselves. They are teaching God’s people that it is acceptable with their Deliverer for them to go back to Egypt. We on the other hand want them to COME OUT OF EGYPT!

In truth, God’s word identifies the sins of the world as “things past.” In other words, they are a part of a world that once enslaved His people. Here is how Paul put it.

Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience:

Among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph. 2:2-3)

The application of these words to the issue of dining out on the Sabbath couldn't be more clear. What takes place in restaurants (whether done by personnel or patron) is a sin that was directed by none other than Satan himself. No matter how Dave Pack or others try to sugar coat it, God's people **MUST** abandon it—relegating it to a time prior to their conversion.

Argument XIV Eating is a Necessity

There are times when certain arguments come across as so contrived they are actually offensive. What follows is an example of that very thing. Like other points offered in his defense of dining out on the Sabbath, Mr. David C. Pack manufactures an outrageous position and then attributes it to his doctrinal opponent. His intent is to discredit others by associating them with something that is TOTALLY false.

In this particular phase of his case, Mr. Pack implies that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* actually want God's people to go hungry on His Sabbath. He does this by asserting that this debate is about food—not restaurants. We aren't making this up. These are his words. Although this point was included a part of a prior argument, it bears repeating.

David C. Pack:

“Do you grasp what these authors are saying? They are equating the physical necessity of eating—ingesting food in order to obtain necessary nutrients for life—as entertainment and recreation. Who is missing something here? Should such a rift in logic or judgment not serve as a warning flag to reasonable, spirit-led minds? Should it not also be painfully obvious that the authors simply do not know and understand the true God?”

Our Response:

Whether Mr. Pack wants to admit it or not, dining out in restaurants is universally regarded as a form of entertainment. It is an activity often associated with special occasions and events. It is undeniably pleasurable and can be the source of great comfort. For this COG leader or anyone else to suggest that such an activity is about nutrition and not indulgence is simply dishonest. This is not to suggest that the delicious appetizers, entrées and deserts have no food value but that is not why people dine out. Most engage in this activity as a source of enjoyment. A member of the council of elders of a major COG group actually referred to it as a “treat.” Furthermore, we are confident that numerous couples in the Church place it high on their list of things to do as a form of entertainment. Suggesting that people dine out to obtain the necessary nutrients for life is comparable to claiming people go to casinos to practice their math skills—or, go dancing for the exercise. At this point it is significant that on most expense reports in corporate America, dining out is reported on a line item identified as “Travel & Entertainment.”

Now for Some Honesty

Although Mr. Pack may trivialize the point being made in *A Sabbath Test*, he does so because he wants you to believe dining out is an essential component to human survival and therefore an appropriate Sabbath practice—thus invalidating the point advanced by Messrs. Braidic and Fischer. However, the real truth with respect to *A Sabbath Test's* position regarding eating on God's Sabbath is actually quite simple. Art Braidic and Dennis Fischer are NOT against food. That is just silly. They are against Dave Pack acquiring it on the Sabbath. Come to think of it, so is God (Ex. 16: 4-5). They are also opposed to Dave Pack having his Sabbath meals prepared on the seventh day. Come to think of it, God is opposed to that as well (Ex. 16:23). What this COG leader is suggesting is tantamount to saying that the reason God prohibited His people from gathering manna on the Sabbath or, preparing it on that day was that He wanted to deny them the necessary nutrients for life. Does anyone honestly believe that?

Argument XV Raising the Bar

In this portion of his argument in defense of seeking out unbelievers on holy time and paying them to prepare his Sabbath meals, David C. Pack gets personal. He argues that because the authors of *A Sabbath Test* are flawed men, their position on dining out on holy time must also be flawed. What he fails to realize is that the prohibition against dining out on the Sabbath comes straight from God Almighty, not Braidic and Fischer. It is God Himself who commands His people to acquire and prepare their Sabbath meals on the sixth day (Ex. 16). Dave Pack however, offers a new understanding concerning how the Sabbath may be kept holy.

This long time minister begins his argument by labeling those who concur with *A Sabbath Test* as "easily confused and fooled by seductive thinking." Here is how he puts it.

David C. Pack:

"Likewise, the majority of those who have bought into these cunning restaurant-Sabbath arguments appear to be relatively new brethren—and thus candidates to be more easily confused and fooled by seductive thinking (II Tim. 3:13). Many of them have turned away from the truth even before becoming grounded in the most basic understandings. The "modern Pharisees" have come across as "wonderfully" righteous to such unsuspecting novices. These teachers usually state facts and present them in an accurate manner, but proceed to draw their crafty conclusions by weaving webs of convincing deception."

Our Response:

This is a striking accusation. However, because he brought it up and characterized *A Sabbath Test* as a "DRCEPTION," let's examine the facts to determine who is being deceptive here. Throughout his essay David C. Pack misrepresents facts that would be easy to prove if he wasn't blinded by his own bias. Consider just a few.

- He contends that God's people brought their sacrifices to the temple on the weekly Sabbath. This is totally false. (see: Argument IV, "Millennial Sacrifices")
- He contends that levitical chefs will prepare huge amounts of food on the weekly Sabbath when God's kingdom is established on earth. This despite the fact that the scriptures say just the opposite. (see: Argument III, "Restaurants in the Millennium")
- He likens restaurant personnel to levites and argues that they should be held blameless for their Sabbath labor when serving God's people. (see: Argument III, Restaurants in the Millennium)
- He argues that Jesus and His disciples picked grain on the Sabbath even though the scriptures clearly state that Jesus NEVER did such a thing. (see: Argument VI, "Jesus Condoned It")
- He argues that because Jesus' disciples picked a handful of grain on the Sabbath, once in their lives, he may now make Friday evening reservations at a five star restaurant every few weeks. (see: Argument VI, "Jesus Condoned It")
- He argues that dining out on the Sabbath can take the place of the preparation day as far as meals are concerned. (see: Argument VII, A Day of Preparation")

- He argues that if God's people don't dine out on the Sabbath then the labor provided by restaurant workers will "automatically transfers over to their wives, mothers and daughters—who labor in cooking, re-heating, setting up tableware, etc." (see: Argument VII, "A Day of Preparation")
- He argues that God only prohibited His people from acquiring manna on the Sabbath, not from acquiring food altogether. (see: Argument XXIII, "No More Manna")
- He argues that Nehemiah was not opposed to all buying and selling, but rather spending the entire day doing so. Never mind that Nehemiah prohibited God's people from buying "ANY" wares or victuals on holy time. (see: Argument IX, "Nehemiah Never Bought It")
- He contends that there is no moral difference between turning on a light switch and taking your family out to a five star restaurant. (see: Argument XI, "The Utility Defense")
- He claims that because some of God's people may pay for public transportation to attend Sabbath services because they have no choice, then he (Dave Pack) may now hire Sabbath-breakers to prepare his meals because it gives him pleasure. (see: Argument XVIII "An OX in a Ditch" and Argument XXIV, "Yeah Buts & What Ifs?")
- He claims that God permits him to dine out on the Sabbath because eating satisfies a physiological need. This despite the fact that God Almighty commands His people to prepare their Sabbath meals on the sixth day. (see: Argument XIV, "Eating is a Necessity")
- He claims the authors of *A Sabbath Test* are preaching bondage and that God now permits His people to go back into spiritual Egypt on the Sabbath to purchase their meals. (see: Argument XIII, "Preaching Bondage")

This is just a partial list of the mountain of excuses Mr. Pack parades around as "Biblical facts." In each one of his points, he quotes scripture and then makes stratospheric leaps when attempting to explain what they mean. Even a casual examination of his arguments expose them as manipulative and contrived.

At this point it is important to understand that we at ***Blow the Trumpet*** derive no pleasure from our strong criticism of Mr. Pack or the RCG. In truth we have a great deal of respect for their work. However, when it comes to this particular issue they have bitterly defended a practice God ABHORS.

Returning to the Argument

Although Mr. Pack accuses the Authors of *A Sabbath Test* of "drawing their crafty conclusions by weaving webs of convincing deception," it is actually he who is doing it.

David C. Pack continued:

"It usually turns out that false teachers who raise the bar to the highest level of conduct do so in the most hypocritical fashion. This is because their own personal track record falls abysmally short of what they expect of others. For example, those demanding the highest level of expectations of others have rarely attained that level in their personal lives or in their past inconsistent track record with the Church. Yet they readily set the bar for others to follow their projected image of righteousness while they live by a different standard. False teachers have consistently followed this type of pattern. Again, Christ says of them, "...for you laden men with burdens grievous to be borne, and you yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers" (Luke 11:46)."

Our Response:

If David C. Pack is suggesting that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* actually dine out on the Sabbath while demanding that the rest of God's people stay home, we have a proposition for him. Provide proof of this claim and ***Blow the Trumpet*** will publish a blistering condemnation of these men as well as publish a 1000 word apology to Mr. Pack. We will then shut down our website.

The sad truth about his claim is that he doesn't care one lick if it's true or not. He just wants to justify a sin he embraces. To do this Mr. Pack resorts to personal attacks. The last time we read anything like this it was spoken in a prayer by a Pharisee (Lk. 18:10-14). However, because he brought it up we have some questions about Mr. Pack's observations regarding the authors "inconsistent track record."

Judging History

We're just curious, but what does Dave Pack think about people like Peter, who forsook the Messiah during the last hours of his life. Or, King David who stole the wife of a loyal soldier then orchestrated his death in one of the most cynical orders ever given by a leader. What about them? What does Dave Pack think of their "track record"? And what about Samson, who brought shame on his country—or the prodigal son who brought shame on his family? What does he think of these people? What about the disciples who turned and ran when Jesus was being arrested in Gethsemane? Or Jonah who ran when his God chose him to be the instrument of His mercy?

What does Dave Pack think about men like Abraham who lied about his wife in order to protect his own skin, or, Moses who struck a stone in anger? How about Jacob who resorted to stealth and guile to gain his birthright? And what about Paul who confessed that he struggled with sin his entire life (Rom. 7: 15-25)

We're just curious Mr. Pack, but based on your comment, who do you think loves God more, you or Art Braidic and Dennis Fischer? Jesus asked that question once to a man not unlike yourself (Lk. 7: 36-50). That man was a Pharisee by the way.

It strikes us as strange that a person who is so profoundly dishonest in his essay would present this kind of an argument. These words are more than cruel; they are sadistic and perverse. The fact of the matter is that if Mr. Pack wants to poison the air with such waste, we thought we would provide him with some other things to attack. They are included in a letter written by Dennis Fischer upon reading Mr. Packs comments. It is a very candid confession regarding past mistakes.

The Confession

By Dennis Fischer

I, Dennis Fischer left God's Church for about six years (1975-1981). I am profoundly sorry I did. There are other things I have done that also disappoint me. I would guess that my list of personal sins would fill volumes.

But my life has also been blessed with wonderful friends and great experiences. I have spoken before two Supreme Court justices. I have addressed two political conventions. I have met and spoken at length with one Lieutenant Governor, as well as scores of congressmen, state senators and mayors. I was actively recruited by a major political party to run for a seat in the House of Representatives and was virtually assured that I would win. I declined the invitation. I have met people that have met kings and I don't mean Mr. Armstrong. I know an Ambassador of a foreign government so well that if it

were possible, he would take my call at a minute's notice. Furthermore, I have worked personally with numerous leaders of fortune 500 companies, at their invitation—and was compensated handsomely for it.

However, I have also had my share of failures. I have disappointed people I greatly respected, betrayed friends I deeply loved, and lost huge sums of money. I have lived in large estates and have been homeless. If I don't measure up to the standards of Dave Pack and the Restored Church of God, then so be it. If they want to take bows for their righteousness, I will not object. Personally, I can do no such thing—for obvious reasons.

With respect to Mr. Art Braidic I will say this: I have never known a man I respected or admired more, including Mr. Armstrong, or even my own father for that matter. This highly flawed Christian is more than decent. He is good. I have watched him humble himself in ways that would terrify self-righteous hypocrites like those who would rather slander him than forgive him. I for one would bet a fortune that he has even moved God Himself to tears of joy.

Art Braidic has quietly comforted the weak, cared for the poor, counseled scores of disenfranchised casualties of God's Church, and has never asked for anything in return. In addition to that he has been my friend beyond measure. To say that I love him is an immense understatement.

I realize that this is just my opinion, but I think Art Braidic is made of something worthy of kings. I know he will beg me to delete my words regarding him, but he will just have to stand down on this. Sorry, my friend.

Argument XVI The Authors are uneducated

In this argument, David C. Pack assaults the intellectual prowess of the authors of *A Sabbath Test*. This particular denigration is based on the premise that because the Pharisees never cited Exodus 16 in their condemnation of Jesus' disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath they never saw it is an issue. In other words even the religious leaders of Jesus' day were smart enough to know that the Messiah's apostles did not violate God's injunction in Exodus 16. Here is how this COG leader orchestrates his point followed by our response.

David C. Pack:

"The Pharisees were smart enough not to cite the Exodus 16 prohibition to condemn Christ and the disciples for Sabbath gleaning. Do any doubt that they would have overlooked this point, had it applied? The modern critics who use Exodus 16 **reveal themselves to be uneducated**. Outdoing their counterparts, these modern Pharisees "rush in" where even the original Pharisees would have 'feared to tread'."

Our Response:

In all due respect to Mr. Pack his explanation of this event as recorded in Matthew 12: 1-8 does not comport with the facts. To illustrate this point consider the following. First, this leader claims that because the Pharisees never mentioned Exodus 16, they never considered it in their accusation. However, what Mr. Pack subtly omits to say is that the Pharisees never mentioned any verses, nor did they identify any specific trespass. Their accusation was simply that Jesus' disciples did that which was "Not Lawful" (Mt. 12:2).

Additionally, Mr. Pack never mentions that when the Messiah defended His disciples He invoked two examples—one involving Sabbath labor (the Levites) and one involving the acquisition of food (David and the shewbread). In truth, based on Jesus' response, it is reasonable to conclude that the Pharisee's accusation included both prohibitions as recorded in the fourth commandment (Ex. 20: 8-11) and the manna miracle (Ex. 16).

Furthermore, Mr. Pack failed to acknowledge that when Jesus offered the examples of David and the Levites when defending His men, He readily conceded that that both David and the Levites did that which went contrary to the law (Mt. 12:3-5). This now brings us to an important question. If what the disciples did was lawful, why would the Messiah cite the examples of David and the Levites in their defense?

At this point it is interesting to note that contrary to what Mr. Pack teaches, Jesus NEVER challenged the Pharisees' understanding of the law, but rather their understanding of MERCY. The truth that seems to be so elusive to him is that the Messiah considered His disciples "guiltless," not because of what they did, but because of why they did it. These men were genuinely famished, just like David—and like David, what was done to remedy it was unquestionably a once-in-a-lifetime act, not something that could be planned out and done periodically, as so many in God's Church do today.

For a more detailed explanation of this extraordinary event see: Argument VI "Jesus Condoned It."

Regarding Insults

David C. Pack is free to call Fischer and Braidic stupid ("uneducated") if he wants, however, we would strongly recommend against it. We offer this advice because this COG leader does not shine when

it comes to Biblical "smarts" in this issue. Quite frankly, he has demonstrated a remarkable lack of acumen when presenting his case. If you doubt this read on...

Throughout his essay Mr. Pack has consistently misrepresented both the scriptural and historical record by offering a host of distortions he claims to be "Biblical facts." These are not small boo boos, but rather world class blunders. What follows is a short list of this Church leader's attempt to advance his case at the expense of truth.

Deception Distortion and Misrepresentation

- Mr. Pack claims that Levitical chefs in ancient Israel prepared great meals on the weekly Sabbath for God's people (see: Argument III, "Millennial Restaurants"). He makes this assertion despite the fact that both history and the scriptures state no such thing ever took place. There isn't a hint that anything close to it ever occurred.
- Mr. Pack claims that God's people brought sacrifices to the temple on the weekly Sabbath (see: Argument IV, "Millennial Sacrifices"). However, this assertion is totally FALSE. It NEVER happened. Furthermore, well established Jewish history bears this out. Additionally, the absence of offerings being presented on the Sabbath by the common people has rightly been cited by the Church under Mr. Mr. Armstrong as a reason for not taking up offerings on the weekly Sabbath today.
- Mr. Pack claims that Jesus AND His disciples picked grain on the Sabbath when the scriptures specifically state that Jesus never picked, nor ate anything Himself, only the disciples did (see: Argument VI, "Jesus Condoned It").).
- Mr. Pack claims that restaurant personnel actually perform a levitical function when they serve God's people and therefore should be held guiltless just like the priests who served in the temple (see: Argument IV "Millennial Restaurants"). He offers this view despite the fact that God Almighty prohibited His people from preparing their Sabbath meals on the seventh day (Ex. 16:23-25). Furthermore, such Sabbath labor was considered a CAPITAL CRIME by God (Ex. 31:14-15).
- Mr. Pack claims that God's prohibition against gathering food on the Sabbath was limited to manna. Therefore, God permitted the children of Israel to go outside their place and acquire other food stuffs (see: Argument XXIII, "No More Manna"). This assertion is made despite the fact that God Almighty specifically forbade the Israelites from "going outside their place" on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:29).
- Mr. Pack claims that God's people spent money on the Sabbath when they traveled to the Feast of Tabernacles. He makes this assertion despite the fact that both the scriptures and the historical record say no such thing ever took place (see: Argument XXI, "Hiding Behind the Feast").
- Mr. Pack claims that he bears no responsibility for the Sabbath labor restaurant workers perform on his behalf even though he specifically sought it out and paid for it (see; Argument VII, "I'm Not Responsible").

A Final Thought

Mr. Pack may proclaim that what he advocates as appropriate Sabbath behavior is no different than what Jesus' disciples did once in their life. However, this is just wishful thinking disguised as wisdom. Furthermore, this COG leader may call Fischer and Braidic idiots if he wants. However, if he thinks this strategy is working we encourage him to think again. By the way, why doesn't Mr. Pack debate these men and expose their stupidity.

Argument XVII The Mark of the Beast

David C. Pack's hostility toward *A Sabbath Test* and its authors may have reached new heights in this phase of his argument. In it, he implies that the men who wrote the book are perilously close to the lake of fire and all that it brings with it. This is because the authors present a very interesting connection between buying and selling on the Sabbath and the Mark of the Beast.

At this point it is important to understand that Messrs. Braidic and Fischer are NOT saying that going to restaurants on the Sabbath is the Mark of the Beast, but rather a symptom of it—because to engage in this practice seriously compromises God's Sabbath law. This observation infuriates Mr. Pack because it directly touches on a behavior that is such an important part of his Sabbath observance. After all, Dave Pack engages in buying and selling every time he patronizes restaurants on holy time. Furthermore, he advocates this practice as a legitimate form of honoring the fourth commandment.

As with virtually all his points, this COG leader doesn't refute the authors' words with proof, he simply screams out his condemnation of them. Apparently he confuses "Biblical facts" with railing accusations. On the other hand, the authors of *A Sabbath Test* present a very compelling and unemotional Biblical case concerning this particular point. Notice the difference between these two approaches.

David C. Pack:

"Let's pull no punches. This problem illustrates why Christ told the Pharisees that they were in danger of the unpardonable sin—of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Regarding misguided teachers, to be Laodicean involves lethargy, but it also indicates that one has God's Spirit—and thus at least a degree of sound mindedness (II Tim. 1:7). Yet, Christ also said that by their fruits you know them! The thinking that assigns the Mark of the Beast to dining out on the Sabbath is so wrong—so alien—so unrelated to God's true test at the end of the age—so confusing to His great purpose—so far from biblical reality!—that it is in the same category as the mindset of the apostates who left God's way completely. To call such teachers "Laodicean" is to pay them an unmerited compliment."

Since there are no explicit biblical explanations that exist for what they conclude is the single most important issue facing the Church of God today, the authors have to fill in the blanks with their own abundant, then redundant, and then even tediously repetitious explanations. Just as much explanation is required to lay the groundwork for their interpretation of the Mark of the Beast, they have to be very careful and allow their readers to "fill in the blanks" and "connect the dots" themselves. An explicit explanation by the authors, here, would be all too transparent and would risk exposure."

Our Response:

It is clear from the tone of this accusation that one particular chapter of *A Sabbath Test* cuts Mr. Pack deeply. Therefore, he resorts to name calling and insults when expressing his rage. Noticeably absent is one relevant scripture. Instead, he simply goes on a tirade in an attempt to deflect a very credible argument. Here is what Mr. Pack was so offended by. As you read it ask yourself whose position honestly reflects Biblical facts—the authors of *A Sabbath Test* (seen below) or Dave Pack's (seen above)?

A Sabbath Test

The book of Revelation describes an event in which a powerful political leader—known as the "beast," and an apostate religious figure—known as the "false prophet," cause the

vast majority of people on earth to receive a special mark (Rev.13: 16). Those who refuse will suffer great persecution and even death (verse 15). However, those who receive this mark will suffer the wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 14:9-10).

God's Church has rightly understood this mark to be a rejection of the true Sabbath and holy days and the embracing of false religious customs and festivals. This understanding is drawn in part because of the remarkable contrast that can be drawn between God's Sabbath and this "mark." The mark of the beast even has the appearance of being a counterfeit Sabbath.

To illustrate this point, consider the following: one is called a "mark" (Rev. 13:16), the other is called a "sign" (Ex. 31:13,17). The mark of the beast is placed "in the right hand and the forehead" (Rev. 13:16). The Sabbath, which is a part of God's law, is placed "in the right hand and as frontlets between the eyes" (Dt. 6:6-8). The mark of the beast is very popular: "all received it" (Rev. 13:16). The Sabbath is very unpopular, almost all reject it. Those who refuse the mark will be persecuted by the Beast (Rev. 13:15-17). Those who receive the Mark of the Beast will be punished by God (Ezk. 20:13, Rev. 14:9).

But there is more."

The Mark of the Beast

The Sabbath	Sunday
Sanctified by God (Ge. 2)	Sanctified by the church at Rome
Called "a sign" (Ex. 31:13)	Called "a mark" (Rev. 13:16)
Kept on the seventh day (Ex. 20:10)	Kept on the first day
Worn in the forehead, hand, and heart (Dt. 6:6-8)	Worn in the forehead and hand (Rev. 13:16)
Don't buy and sell (Neh. 10:31; 13:15-21)	Permitted to buy and sell (Rev. 13:17)
Persecuted by the beast (Rev. 13:17; Dan. 7:21-22)	Punished by God (Rev. 14:9-10)

Perhaps the most unique quality of the mark of the beast is its connection to buying and selling. Notice what the apostle John writes when describing it.

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark..." (Rev. 13:17).

With these words you almost get the impression that while God is commanding His people to refrain from buying and selling on the Sabbath (Neh. 10:31), the beast, under the direct authority of Satan the devil (Rev. 13:2), is doing the very opposite. He is declaring that unless you reject the Sabbath, he will make it impossible for you to ever buy and sell. With this in mind, is it possible that the rejection of God's Sabbath is defined more by engaging in business on this day than any other activity? After all, commerce drives so much of man's physical existence. A leading industrialist once put it this way, "nothing happens in this world until something gets sold." The point here is that the exchange of money represents a huge part of man's profane existence. This practice touches virtually everyone on earth."

This is a fact that is undoubtedly not lost on Satan the devil. He knows all too well what makes the world go 'round. This being the case, it is almost certain that this great deceiver (Rev. 12:9) will use commerce to persuade God's people to reject their Creator. In essence, he will attempt to seduce them into profaning the Sabbath by buying and selling on that day. If they refuse, they will never be able to buy and sell. What an incredible test of faith that would be! It is true that Satan will use the beast to deceive all the people on earth to accept his mark, but the real target will be God's people. (*A Sabbath Test*)

At this point, it is interesting to note that the great Mother Church used the power of buying and selling in the past to pressure opponents to yield to it and its authority. In 1163, Pope Alexander issued an edict at the Council of Tours regarding the treatment of those considered to be heretics. Notice the sobering words of this edict.

Whereas a damnable heresy has for some time lifted its head in the parts about Toulouse, and already spread infection through Gascony and other provinces, concealing itself like a serpent in its folds; as soon as its followers shall have been discovered, let no man afford them refuge on his estates; neither let there be any communication with them in **buying and selling**; so that, being deprived of the solace of human conversation they may be compelled to return from error to wisdom. (History of the Christian Church, 1879, Mosheim)

A Warning of Captivity

Although Mr. Pack dismisses the connection between God's prohibition against purchasing goods and services on His Sabbath and captivity, it is clear that Nehemiah saw it much differently.

Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?

Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath. (Neh. 13: 17-18)

The word "evil" employed by Nehemiah comes from the Hebrew "*ra*" and means CALAMITY. The point he was making was that their current circumstances as subjects of the Persian Empire was the direct result of making the Sabbath a day filled with profane labor and business.

When this great servant of the Almighty rebuked the leaders of God people, he was also making a direct reference to a warning issued by Jeremiah a century before. Here is how that rebuke was expressed by God's prophet prior to their Babylonian captivity. As you read these words consider their application today.

God's Warning to Judah

Tell the kings and all the people of Judah and everyone who lives in Jerusalem and enters these gates, to listen to what I say.

Tell them that if they love their lives, they must not carry any load on the Sabbath; they must not carry anything in through the gates of Jerusalem

or carry anything out of their houses on the Sabbath. They must not work on the Sabbath; they must observe it as a sacred day, as I commanded their ancestors.

Tell these people that they must obey all my commands. They must not carry any load in through the gates of this city on the Sabbath. They must observe the Sabbath as a sacred day and must not do **any work** at all.

But they must obey me and observe the Sabbath as a sacred day. They must not carry any load through the gates of Jerusalem on that day, **for if they do, I will set the gates of Jerusalem on fire. Fire will burn down the palaces of Jerusalem, and no one will be able to put it out.** (Jer. 17:20-22, 24, 27 Good News Translation)

Tragically, the leaders of Judah refused to heed God's word and they would pay dearly for their defiance. Both the scriptures as well as secular history reveal that a powerful Chaldean army would attack Jerusalem and leave it in ruins. Here is how Jeremiah described its utter destruction and the price it had to pay for not heeding God's warning.

Now on the tenth day of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who was in the service of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the Lord, the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; even every large house he burned with fire. So all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. (Jer. 52:12-14)

A Tragic Consequence

The book of Lamentations bewails what happened to this once great city. Here is how Jeremiah expressed his sorrow at its destruction.

How lonely sits the city
That was full of people!
She has become like a widow
Who was once great among the nations!
She who was a princess among the provinces
Has become a forced laborer! (Lam. 1:1 New American Standard Version)

"A forced laborer"

God's people were thrust into captivity because, like Dave Pack and a host of other leaders, they thought they could trifle with the Sabbath. They did so because they would rather embrace their traditions than listen to the truth. They thought they could decide for themselves how the Sabbath could be

observed. They thought they could make up their own rules concerning this holy convocation. But in the end all they got was bondage.

This is what **Jeremiah** was warning Judah about during the Days of King Zedekiah.

It is what **Nehemiah** was warning the nobles of Judah about during the days of Artaxerxes.

And it is what "**A Sabbath Test**" warns God's leaders about today.

The point to this is simple. When Nehemiah contended with the nobles of Judah he made a direct link between them allowing merchants access to their lives and the CAPTIVITY Jeremiah warned of prior to their fall. Dave Pack, on the other hand encourages that access, and by doing so invites the CAPTIVITY and the fall.

Argument XVIII An Ox in a Ditch

In this phase of his advocacy of dining out on the Sabbath, Mr. Pack provides a genuine exception regarding God's prohibition against buying and selling on holy time (Neh. 10:31). He then asserts that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* don't believe in any exceptions. Furthermore, he claims they are totally indifferent to the needs of the poor. This of course is not true and he knows it.

Mr. Pack offers this exploitation of the less fortunate in an attempt to convince you that because God permits spending money on the Sabbath under certain circumstances, He must permit it when it comes to his circumstance. Here is how this COG leader expresses his point. As you read it remember that the issue at hand is whether God now approves of His people paying unbelievers to prepare their Sabbath meals when He actually prohibited them from being prepared by anyone (See: Ex. 16).

David C. Pack:

"In the Philippines, some brethren in Manila must take taxis get to services—which requires exchanging money for services rendered. These “taxis” are more like short buses, and hold well beyond the maximum number of passengers allowed. Riding in them can involve a considerable amount of risk, not to mention the discomfort brethren must endure during long rides through the city."

"It is always convenient for critics, who live in the modern nations of Israel and benefit financially from the birthright blessings, to proclaim the “errors” of brethren who live in less affluent regions. Apparently, these detractors are unaware that the world actually extends beyond the borders of North America—they do not comprehend the kind of sacrifices that so many brethren around the world make week after week in order to attend Sabbath services."

Our Response:

In all due respect to Dave Pack, there is a huge difference between having to take public transportation to Sabbath services because there is no alternative, and him making Friday evening dinner reservations at a nice restaurant for the pure joy of it. To suggest that these two behaviors are morally equivalent is not only untrue, it's insulting, and mocks the very Savior he claims to worship. Sadly, this is typical of Mr. Pack's approach concerning this issue.

Jesus Himself taught that there are times when genuine emergencies may require us to alter our Sabbath behavior. Furthermore, the authors of *A Sabbath Test* dedicate an entire chapter to that very thing. However, when advocates of dining out on the Sabbath attempt to blur the lines between those emergencies and what they simply want to do on Holy time, God's purpose is never served. Sadly, this is exactly what Mr. Pack does--HE BLURS THE LINES. This servant of the ALMIGHTY wants you to believe that if one may pay for the right to sit among non-believers on a bus, because they have no choice, then he (Dave Pack) may pay for the right to have non-believers serve him in the comfort of a Five Star restaurant. Personally, we would not want to present this argument before God Almighty.

At this point it is interesting to note that this specific issue was addressed by Dennis Fischer (Co-author of *A Sabbath Test*) when responding to a letter written to him regarding this very situation. Although Dave Pack claims Mr. Fischer desires to “proclaim the “errors” of brethren who live in less affluent regions,” this is simply not true. But don't believe us, here are his words. They were written in response to the following question.

If you believe it is wrong to dine out on the Sabbath why do you permit taking a bus to services. You have said that Nehemiah would shut down all restaurants on the Sabbath and holy days. Why wouldn't he shut down transportation services as well?

Response from Dennis Fischer

“Personally, I believe that if Nehemiah was in charge of Sabbath observance today he may very well see a legitimate need for public transportation in larger metropolitan areas. If such was the case, local governments could facilitate a solution. For example: they could arrange for shuttles to be operated by part time volunteers and offered without charge. These shuttles would be used exclusively to convey God's people to their places of assembly. The point here is that it can be reasonably concluded that transportation, in some parts of today's world, represents an essential service—even in a Sabbath keeping society. This would also be the case with respect to security, fire and rescue, emergency care and other functions operating for the public good. Certainly, the ancient Israelites must have applied this principle. It is virtually inconceivable that they didn't have security forces guarding the camp—including on the Sabbath. Even Nehemiah dispatched sentries to protect Jerusalem from Sabbath breaking merchants (Neh. 13:19). Certainly these services would function differently on holy time but I am confident that they could operate without compromising God's Sabbath law.

However, the same argument cannot be made for restaurants. Nehemiah would have closed them down in a heartbeat. Not only does God's law prohibit what they do on the Sabbath (see: Ex 16), but their services are not designed to cater to need, but rather to pleasure. This is not to suggest that if there was a natural disaster impacting the people's access to food, Nehemiah would still keep restaurants closed, for indeed he wouldn't. This would constitute a genuine emergency and would require unique action to ensure the public good. However, this is NOT what this debate is about. The discussion at hand is whether God's people may engage the services of a commercial business on holy time simply because it's an enjoyable activity. If God's people are truly honest with the scriptures they would have to conclude that the practice of seeking out Sabbath breakers at restaurants is absolutely excoriated in God's word.”

- Dennis Fischer

Argument XIX Fine Dining

In this phase of his argument, Mr. Pack acknowledges that certain behaviors go contrary to appropriate Sabbath conduct. However, according to this COG leader, dining out at a commercial restaurant is not one of them—provided the restaurant meets certain standards of quality. Here is how he expresses this "Biblical fact."

David C. Pack:

"...God condemns things that detract from or cheapen His Sabbath day. Today, this could include such things as going to sporting events or amusement parks, shopping, or to the beach to swim or sunbathe. It could also include going to a restaurant that provides an inappropriate environment—for example, a congested restaurant that places diners in a rowdy atmosphere of worldly chatter, cigarette smoke or loud, intrusive music. (Of course, there are some restaurants that a Christian should not visit on *any* day of the week.)

A more acceptable atmosphere would be a restaurant with spacious seating, subdued lighting and quiet, sensible background music."

Our Response:

Mr. Pack is not the only one to advance this argument. Another prominent COG group offered the following in a letter defending its position in favor of dining out on holy time.

"It is important to consider the atmosphere of the establishment: Is it elegant and uplifting? Is music played and, if so, what kind? Is the air clouded with cigarette smoke? (If the establishment caters to those who smoke, this is something you should consider.) Are there wall-to-wall televisions? Will you be surrounded by loud, boisterous conversation?

If the atmosphere is conducive to a continuance of edifying fellowship with other brethren, in keeping with the intent of the Sabbath day (to rest from our day-to-day activities and to learn more about God and His ways), then it is perfectly fine to plan such a gathering. But if it were to last several hours – due to extenuating circumstances or certain cultural traditions – you would be in danger of breaking the Sabbath."

Putting this in Perspective

Although this argument may appear to reflect good judgment, it omits something critically important to the scriptures and the God who inspired them. It bases its conclusion on the premise that you can determine if a behavior is appropriate simply by employing your physical senses. In other words: what does something look and sound like. The fact of the matter is that appearances can often be deceiving—and when it comes to dining out on the Sabbath they most definitely are. To illustrate this point, consider the following:

Example I "Working Girls"

Suppose that this elegant restaurant was a gathering place of numerous prostitutes. However, these "ladies of the evening" are not the typical "hookers" one might see on street corners in sleazy parts of town. These particular women are high priced "call girls" with very influential clients. Each of these "ladies" is highly educated. Most have graduate degrees and may speak several languages. They enjoy the opera and are well versed in literature and the arts. They can converse intelligently about politics and philosophy. Additionally, they command as much as \$10,000 an evening for their services. To put it mildly they are very sophisticated. But they are prostitutes nonetheless. Furthermore, at this particular restaurant they are everywhere—engaging in their craft, making contacts and networking. Add to that, dining with these very expensive "escorts" are men whose wives are at home with their children totally unaware that tonight their husbands will be spending some "quality time" with someone else.

Now here is our question. Is such a place conducive to honoring God's Sabbath? Or, would you recommend that God's people choose another place to dine?

Most would have to admit that such a restaurant is not an appropriate place to dine on the Sabbath or any other day for that matter. After all, regardless of how you want to slice it, God's law is being trampled on with impunity by its patrons. Furthermore, adultery is a capital crime in the Bible. It attacks the very core of decency.

Now some may argue that such a hypothetical situation doesn't exist. And even if it did God's people would be unable to detect such behavior. After all, discretion is the stock and trade of such "ladies."

This may be true so lets try a different example—one a bit more real.

Example II "A Capital Crime"

Suppose you and your family are at another fine restaurant on the Sabbath and everyone there is desecrating God's holy day right before your eyes. At every table this sacrilege is taking place. Work is being done. Business is being transacted. The conversations all around you (even if you can't hear them) relate to the profane world. Even an occasional round of "Happy Birthday" is being sung by attentive servers. Now for our question. Is this a place that is conducive to keeping God's day holy? Furthermore, should God's people actually pay to be in such a place? In other words, should they do business with it, on God's Sabbath no less? Remember that profaning the Sabbath is also a capital crime in the scriptures.

Why do God's People Dine Out?

The reason most people in God's Church dine out on the Sabbath is either 1) they never think about what is really taking place all around them or, 2) they don't regard what is being done as an egregious sin. Tragically, we have become desensitized to what is really occurring at restaurants every Sabbath—and by never questioning what they do on this day, we never have to question what we do.

The bottom line is this. You can no more find a restaurant elegant enough to offset what is taking place in it on God's Sabbath than you could find a cathedral elegant enough to offset what it is doing every Sunday. No matter how fancy it is, no matter how exquisite its atmosphere, it is still POLLUTING what God Himself made HOLY! Here is the question we should HONESTLY ask ourselves. What does God Almighty think of what is taking place at this fine eatery every Sabbath and holy day? Furthermore, what does He think about His people seeking out such places and paying for their services?

A Final Thought

Mr. Pack's belief that the atmosphere at a restaurant on the Sabbath can somehow rehabilitate what God's people are doing there is born out of human reasoning. It is not close to a "Biblical fact." God commands His people to come out of this world, not seek out a nice spot in it and think they can benefit from its sin.

Argument XX Rehabilitating Evil

When defending the practice of dining out on the Sabbath, Dave Pack employs what is arguably one of the greatest insults to God's law in his quiver of points. This COG leader contends that seeking out unbelievers, who profane what God made holy, can actually be an opportunity to encourage the brethren as well as to facilitate Christian love and service. He also argues that for some, dining out "offers the only possible opportunity for fellowship after services." If that is true, what happens on the Sabbaths when no one dines out? No fellowship?

Mr. Pack concludes his point by claiming that no reasonable person could believe that God would not appreciate this practice. This by the way, this is the same observation made by Protestants when defending such things as Christmas and a host of other traditions it holds dear. Here is how Mr. Pack advances this argument.

Dave Pack:

"One of the greatest ways of encouraging one another and communicating sincere love for the brethren has been to share a meal upon coming together on the Sabbath. Someone who is single or a widower hardly ever has the opportunity to serve others a meal. Yet, they can use the liberty to invite other brethren for a meal on the Sabbath or high Holy Day at an appropriate restaurant.

Dining out on the Sabbath (in moderation) has always been a special treat for those honored to serve others, as well as for the guests. The motive should always be to lift up, encourage and show other brethren that they are appreciated. For many brethren, who are scattered in various locations, eating at a restaurant offers the only possible opportunity for fellowship after services.

No reasonable mind believes that the God who said that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" would forego wonderful, vital fellowship among His children on the Sabbath so that worldly restaurant employees will still render the exact same service anyway—but now at someone else's table."

Our Response:

What Mr. Pack is employing in this argument is human reasoning at its very worst. He concludes that if an act of charity can be integrated into an act of disobedience it nullifies the disobedience. Sadly, this line of thinking does not reflect God's word, nor does it express His wisdom. Instead, it is a desperate attempt to make something God hates look like something He loves.

The Bible declares that God takes no pleasure in sin (Psa. 5:4). Mr. Pack, on the other hand, not only embraces the sin, but asserts that partaking of its fruit advances the cause of true godliness.

Jesus warned against this type of reasoning and explained what God thought of Mr. Pack's argument. Suffice it to say, it is not pleasant. When describing a time of judgment, the Messiah explained that hiding behind good works to justify sin carries no moral weight with the Almighty.

Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? And in your name have cast out devils? And in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity. (Mt. 7: 21-23)

This is exactly what Dave Pack is promoting. He wants you to believe that seeking out Sabbath-breakers and paying for their labor pleases God because it is an opportunity to do good—this despite the fact that God prohibited His people from acquiring their Sabbath meals or having them prepared on the seventh day

It's Been Tried Before

Mr. Pack is not the first person to justify sin by cloaking it in an act of righteousness. King Saul of Israel did the same thing when rationalizing his failure to follow God's instruction concerning how to prosecute a war with the Amalekites. Consider the similarities between what Saul did three thousand years ago and what Dave Pack advocates today.

Justifying Sin

King Saul of Israel	David C. Pack
<p>God commands Saul to go to war with king Agag and the Amalekites</p>	<p>God commands Dave Pack to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy</p>
<p>God specifically instructs Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites and everything they possess. Nothing is to be spared.</p> <p>I Sam. 15:1-2</p>	<p>God specifically directs Dave Pack to acquire and prepare his Sabbath meals on the sixth day (Ex. 16) and to not solicit the labor of others (Ex. 20) or to purchase anything on holy time (Neh. 10:31).</p>
<p>Saul decides to spare Agag, and to retain the best of the livestock and other valuables.</p> <p>(I Sam. 15:9)</p>	<p>Dave Pack decides to teach that God's people may now seek out Sabbath breakers and purchase meals from them.</p>
<p>Saul proclaims that he has been faithful to the Lord and has obeyed Him.</p> <p>(I 15:13)</p>	<p>Dave Pack proclaims that he faithfully keeps the Sabbath and teaches God's people to do the same.</p>
<p>Samuel then asks Saul, "What is this bleating of sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of oxen which I hear?"</p> <p>(I Sam. 15:14)</p>	<p>God asks Dave Pack, "What are these sounds of business I hear all around—the sounds of labor and the words of the world all about? Who are these 'strangers' that labor for you? And why are you in this place on My Sabbath?"</p>
<p>Saul explains to Samuel, "We have kept the best things so that we may offer them in sacrifice to God. But everything else we have destroyed.</p> <p>(I Sam. 15:15)</p>	<p>Dave Pack explains, "I am here for your people. We fellowship and I encourage them. Surly you can't object to that.</p> <p>By the way, we do hold Sabbath services and worship you every week."</p>
<p>Samuel responds to the king, "Does the Lord delight as much in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obedience?</p> <p>Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."</p> <p>(I Sam. 15:22)</p>	<p>God's word cries out to Dave Pack. "Has the LORD of the Sabbath as great delight in your "acts of charity" as in obeying His commandments?</p> <p>Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than to do what you think is good."</p>

A Crushing Pronouncement

As Samuel prepared to leave, Saul he issued a final observation concerning what the King had done and the consequences he would have to suffer for his disobedience. Notice what Samuel says.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king. (1Sam. 15:23)

In these thirty-two words, judgment was pronounced on the first king of Israel. All that Saul had been given was going to be stripped from him because of his own pride and arrogance. Because Saul thought he had a better way of doing things than the God who made him, his throne was going to be given over to someone who understood that Israel belonged to God, not to a king.

We at ***Blow the Trumpet*** believe Mr. Pack should prayerfully consider that although the Sabbath was made for man (Mk. 2:27), it is God's Sabbath, not Dave Pack's. Furthermore, Jesus is its Lord (v. 28), not Dave Pack. This fact alone should inspire this COG leader to take serious pause before attempting to improve on God's instructions regarding holy time. King Saul thought he could do God one better as well and we all know how that turned out.

A Final Thought

As God's people consider the issue that is set before them, it is important to understand that the Almighty's position concerning profane labor on the Sabbath has never changed (Mal. 3:6, Heb. 13:8). He was opposed to it at the beginning and He remains opposed to it to this very day. Nothing more graphically illustrates the strength of God's view on this issue than what was expressed in His own law, which was introduced to ancient Israel after they were delivered out of bondage in Egypt.

When the Holy One of Israel first presented His great moral code to these emancipated slaves, it was His intent that no one would labor on the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11) with the exception of those He specifically designated (Levites in His service). To do so was a capital crime (Ex.31:14). Furthermore, He made no provisions for His people soliciting the labor of unbelievers on His Sabbath. This included those within the camp as well as outside the camp. Those inside the camp were bound by the same Sabbath law as the Israelites. And those outside the camp were declared off limits to God's people on the Sabbath. Simply because these "outsiders" now saturate our society does not mean God now permits His people to seek them out and purchase their goods on holy time. This is NOT how He thinks. Mr. Pack may believe that things are different now, but when it comes to God's Sabbath law, your Bible says otherwise. There is not a hint in God's word that suggests that what was once Sabbath breaking is now Sabbath keeping.

Finally, when God's Millennial Kingdom is established on earth, under the leadership of Jesus Christ and His saints, no one will be engaging in labor on His Sabbath. That includes the labor involved in running a restaurant. Why? Because God's great moral law forbids it—and in the Kingdom all will obey His law (Isa. 66:23). Today God's people have the distinct privilege of serving under that law. Mr. Pack may teach that we may take our lead from the world and its culture, however, as for us we will fear the Lord (Deut. 6:24-25).

Argument XXI Hiding Behind the Feast

In this particular installment of his defense of dining out on the Sabbath, Dave Pack invokes God's command regarding the Feast of Tabernacles. He actually presents two arguments in support of his claim. First, he contends that if God's people are responsible for the labor of those who serve them at a restaurant on the Sabbath then they would also have to be responsible for the Sabbath labor of hotel staff during the Feast of Tabernacles.

The second argument claims that because God's people were permitted to convert their assets to cash when traveling to the pilgrimage feasts, they must have been able to spend that money on holy time. In the interest of clarity, we will address these arguments separately, beginning with the first. Here is how Mr. Pack expresses it followed by our response.

David C. Pack:

“But let’s go further. Suppose one goes to the Feast of Tabernacles intending not to “sin” by eating out on the Sabbath. According to this standard, he would be sinning by renting a hotel room during that time. Even if he requested that his room not be cleaned on the Sabbath, he still benefits from what the hotel has to offer—water and electricity, security, heating, air conditioning, use of elevator, use of phone and daily updating of charges. These are all paid for, and require a support staff to do them.”

Our Response:

Dave Pack is not the only one to employ this stream of logic. One of the more prominent COG groups advanced his argument this way.

There are other areas that would be affected if one takes the position that eating in a restaurant on the Sabbath is a violation of the Sabbath. For example, when one goes to the Feast of Tabernacles, would we expect him to check out of his hotel room on Friday evening and not return until Saturday evening in order to keep from violating the Sabbath? By staying in a hotel on the Sabbath you are being served and you are being charged for that service. An entire staff of people is on duty 24 hours a day to serve your needs.

Here, both Dave Pack and others hide behind God's command to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in order to justify a practice that goes totally contrary to God's Sabbath law. Remember, although God does command His people to keep the feast, he also specifically prohibited them from acquiring and preparing their food on the weekly Sabbath (Ex. 16). Additionally, He prohibited them from purchasing any goods and services on holy time (Neh. 10:31).

Despite this fact, Dave Pack is convinced that going to a restaurant on the Sabbath or a holy day is the moral equivalent of staying in a hotel during the FOT. He then reasons that if God's people may do one, they may also do the other. But is this really true? Although Dave Pack makes no distinction between these two behaviors, it is clear that God does. For starters He permits one and forbids the other.

When making his assertion about hotel personnel, Mr. Pack omits an important point. Although a staff is there, God's people do not have to pro-actively solicit their service on the Sabbath any more than they have to pro-actively solicit the services of golf course personnel on the Sabbath. The fact that they are there to serve you is irrelevant.

However, when it comes to dining out on holy time, that is exactly what Dave Pack MUST do. He MUST pro-actively seek out unbelievers for the express purpose of Sabbath labor. He must do this because without that labor he can't do what he desires.

Something for Mr. Pack to Think About

The Sabbath is sacred. As such, it is to be treated with great deference and respect. It is not a time that should be spent engaging in the normal activities of the week. It is a time to come out of the world, not go back into it. The reason God's people should not dine out on the Sabbath is the same reason they should not check in or out of their festival housing on a Sabbath. The appropriate time for arriving at and departing from the FOT is prior to its start (a Sabbath) and after its conclusion (another Sabbath). Sadly, just as so many of God's people take a more casual approach when it comes to dining out on holy time, many of them also take a more casual approach to honoring this special festival.

Now for Mr. Pack's second point.

David C. Pack continued:

The Pilgrimage Sabbath

"Now notice God's instructions concerning the Feast of Tabernacles, which includes annual and weekly Sabbaths:

And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place which He shall choose to place His name there, the tithe of your corn, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks; that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. And if the way be too long for you, so that you are not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from you, which the Lord your God shall choose to set His name there, when the Lord your God has blessed you: Then shall you turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and shall go unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose" (Deut 14:23-25).

Food for the Sabbaths and annual Holy Days could not always be prepared on the day of preparation. Often, on long journeys, their food supplies were, of necessity, converted into money, which was spent upon arriving at the festival.

Verse 26 shows that finding pleasure, within reason, at God's Feast is actually commanded! "And you shall bestow that money for whatsoever your soul lusts after [desires], for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever your soul desires: and you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you, and your household..."

Our Response:

At the risk of sounding redundant, it is important to remember that Mr. Pack's purpose in this essay is to prove that God's people may solicit the labor of unbelievers on holy time. In this particular phase of his argument he wants his reader to believe that because God's people had money for the feast, they must have spent it on the Sabbath or holy day. This is not a "Biblical fact." It is an unbiblical fiction. Here is what the scriptures actually say about Mr. Pack's claim. It is very telling to be sure.

Nehemiah 10:31

"And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the Sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the Sabbath, or on the holy day:"

Contrary to what Dave Pack argues, God's people NEVER purchased their Sabbath meals on holy time. It just didn't happen. Furthermore they NEVER prepared their Sabbath meals on the seventh day either. Both the scriptures and history bear this out (see: Millennial Sacrifices).

It is true that God's people often converted their assets to money when traveling to His annual festivals. However, it is totally false to suggest that they spent their money on the Sabbath or the holy day. It just **WAS NOT DONE**. Upon their arrival God's people would purchase provisions for the feast. Jesus' disciples even thought that is what Judas Iscariot was going to do when he left to betray the Messiah (Jn. 13:27-29). They obviously drew this conclusion based on experience. In other words, it was their practice. Furthermore, virtually all scholars acknowledge that **ALL COMMERCE STOPPED!**

Argument XXII Caught in a Lie

In an attempt to buttress their case in favor of dining out on the Sabbath, the RCG argued that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* are dishonest and can't be trusted. To prove their point Mr. George Rogers, an RCG employee, claimed that Dave Pack never wrote the RCG essay on Sabbath dining and that Messrs. Fischer and Braidic knew this all along, informing him of this fact in a private Email. He then claimed that despite knowing this, the authors continued to use Mr. Pack's name in order to wage a personal attack against him. Here is how Mr. Rogers expressed this in a disclaimer that appeared at the bottom of the first revision of their essay.

"THE WRITERS OF OUR PUBLICATIONS"

By George Rogers
The Restored Church of God

"A final point of clarification must be brought to this matter.

Articles produced by The Restored Church of God that do not indicate an author—do not carry a byline—are usually written by several staff writers, with one primary author. Such is the case with this article.

Books, booklets and articles written by Mr. David C. Pack always bear his name. This alone declares that he did not author this article. The authors of *A Sabbath Test* already knew by other means that Mr. Pack did not write this article, and privately admitted this to us in an e-mail sent to point out their rebuttal, lampooning and ridiculing Mr. Pack. Yet, in the fury of having been exposed by a staff of writers in The Restored Church of God, they deceitfully attributed the article to Mr. Pack and chose to assassinate his character—even though they knew he did not write it. They recognized that most people could never learn what they knew!

Recall that Christ said, "You shall know them by their fruits." Apart from the error of their doctrine, in the above way, these men have also told you other of their "fruits." They have supplied you with additional crucial information about how you can "know" their character. Hebrews 5:14 explains that you are supposed "to discern both good and evil." This means that you are accountable for recognizing when evil men and seducers are in your presence (II Tim. 3:13).

Because of the controversial nature of this article, addressing such a volatile, divisive issue within the splinters, we feel that an exception needs to be made to our "byline" policy. The names of the authors are: George C. Rogers (primary author, now listed at the beginning), with Bruce A. Ritter and James F. Turck, contributing writers, all of whom contribute to The REAL TRUTH and other RCG publications.

Mr. Pack's only involvement was the final editing phase—a small percentage of the total man-hours involved. We mention this because many erroneously assume he writes everything listed on our websites.

This question arises: Why did Mr. Pack not write the article?

First, he knew this false teaching would not be taken seriously by serious people. Any who are familiar with our websites understand that he has much "bigger fish to fry"—that

he has been called to “shoot elephants,” not “swat gnats” and shoo “ankle biters.” While Mr. Pack has written 65 books and booklets, containing over 4,000 pages (plus countless articles), a sizeable and growing number of skilled writers exist in this powerful, worldwide Work. This article did not require the authorship of the leader of the Church. Mr. Pack could not invest his limited time. Mr. Armstrong knew when to delegate to others what he did not need to do.

Perhaps it is helpful to note that Mr. Pack’s time is primarily invested in directing the overall Work, recording broadcasts, and researching and writing publications, which address the big picture of the real tests that face God’s people today, as opposed to investigating the latest creative new ideas being conceived on the Church of God landscape.

As we continue to identify and counter false teachings, deviating from the restored truths delivered to the Church of God when it was on track under Mr. Armstrong, we expect continued negative repercussions from their promoters and sponsors, and we expect further attacks on us because of what has been explained in this expanded article and in this inset. Nonetheless, the truth will be defended, and this is why we addressed the counterfeit “Sabbath test.” We have done what God requires.

For those who desire to know what the REAL end-time test is, read Mr. Pack’s book “ANOINT YOUR EYES” – Christ’s Warning to His People.”

– George C. Rogers

Our Response:

This is the first time in the history of this debate that our antagonists have provided a better rebuttal to their accusation than we ever could. Here it is.

After reviewing the RCG essay in the spring of 2009, we at ***Blow the Trumpet*** discovered that the disclaimer cited above has been removed. Additionally, Mr. Pack's name now appears as its author of the RCG.

By the way, the Email referenced in the RCG disclaimer doesn't exist

Argument XXIII No More Manna

In an attempt to justify the sin of seeking out unbelievers who profane the Sabbath and paying them to work on his behalf, David C. Pack advances what just might be the most contrived argument in the history of this debate. According to this COG leader, God only prohibited the Israelites from gathering manna on the Sabbath, not from gathering food altogether. Furthermore, he contends that the Almighty's instructions regarding Sabbath meals were only in effect for as long as manna was being provided. Once it ceased, God's people were then free to do whatever they deemed necessary to feed themselves on holy time. Here is how he makes this point.

David C. Pack:

"By way of review, as manna was first given to Israel, the instructions were to gather enough manna on the sixth day to cover for the Sabbath, as well—enough for two days (vs. 23). Note this instruction specifically applied to the gathering of manna [nothing else]. Then, Exodus 16:25-26, 29 continued with further instructions to not gather manna on the Sabbath."

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack is suggesting that God's purpose in Exodus 16 was to protect manna, not His Sabbath. According to this reasoning God allows His people to dine out but prohibits them from ordering a coriander seed muffin with honey when they do (Ex. 16:31). Does anyone honestly believe such reasoning? However, this COG leader offers it in a desperate attempt to excuse his practice of seeking out slaves to sin (Ro. 6:16) on the Sabbath and paying them to labor on his behalf (Neh. 10:31). All he has to do is stay away from manna.

David C. Pack continued:

"As noted above, gleaning [other food] in order to fill one's hunger on the Sabbath was not forbidden for all time, especially after manna was to cease at some future time."

Our Response:

Mr. Pack is not the only one to advance this argument in defense of his sin. One of the largest splinter groups expressed this same view in a letter to Dennis Fischer, co-author of *A Sabbath Test*. Here is how they put it.

"You ask, 'Why would God allow His people to procure ANY food on His Sabbath when He actually prohibited the children of Israel from doing such a thing when they wandered in the Sinai desert (Ex, 16:16-25)?' The simple answer is that God does not deposit manna on our property six days a week."

What Dave Pack and other leaders assert in this argument is despicably arrogant and shows utter contempt for God as a provider. The fact that He no longer rains down manna does not mean He no longer gives us our daily bread (Mt. 6:11). In essence, what Mr. Pack is saying is: "God, if you want us to not acquire or prepare our food on your Sabbath, then you need to keep providing us with manna the other six days. Otherwise, we have no obligation to obey you in this matter." Can you imagine the audacity of such a statement?

God's command regarding the acquisition and preparation of food on His Sabbath is so clear that only the defiant would conclude otherwise. Furthermore, when David C. Pack advances his theory on this point, he must rely on his distortion of what took place when Jesus' disciples picked a handful of grain on the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-8). According to him what the disciples did was lawful. However, the Messiah acknowledged just the opposite (see: Argument VI, "Jesus Condoned it")

Argument XXIV Yeah Buts and What Its?

At one point in his essay, Mr. Pack offers a series of hypothetical situations in an attempt to prove that God's prohibition against acquiring your Sabbath meals on holy time is no longer in effect. When doing so he portrays the authors of *A Sabbath Test* as hypocrites who are brutally heartless and totally insensitive to the needs of the less fortunate. As you read each story remember this:—he is offering them in an attempt to prove that God's people may now seek out unbelievers on the Sabbath and pay them to prepare and serve their Sabbath meals. This despite the fact that God specifically prohibited such behavior just weeks before giving the Ten Commandments (Ex. 16).

David C. Pack:

“The Flagman” By David C Pack

“Consider the following analogy: Suppose that, while driving your car on the Sabbath, you approach a highway construction site en route to services. As you draw near, a flagman waves for you to stop. Then, a few minutes later, he waves you on through the construction zone and back into free-flowing traffic. By driving through the work zone, you caused extra labor for the flagman.

Though it might not be proportionate to the work that restaurant employees do in accommodating an additional customer, the fact remains that (in this analogy) you caused the flagman an extra measure of work—thus making you cause him to break the Sabbath. Work is work. This analogy cannot be dismissed.

Those who oppose dining out on the Sabbath yet would drive through a highway work zone on that same day would be guilty of utter hypocrisy! If one truly opposed eating out on the Sabbath on the grounds that extra labor might be produced, then he would be obliged to bypass all construction zones during Sabbath time.”

Our Response:

Here Mr. Pack claims that because a flagman labors to direct you as a motorist, God now permits His people to consciously seek out unbelievers who labor in restaurants, and actually pay them to prepare your meals. Through this blast of “intellectual wisdom,” Mr. Pack has discovered the perfect loophole. Because it would be impossible to not cause someone, someplace to labor in some form on the Sabbath, Mr. Pack believes he may now go out and hire people to work on his behalf. What a deal!

Well here is a hypothetical for Mr. Pack. “You are an Israelite wandering in the Sinai desert. While there, God Almighty informs you that you are not to go out and find food on His Sabbath. He then informs you that you are to prepare all your Sabbath meals the day before—not on the Sabbath. Finally, He informs you that on the Sabbath you are to stay within the camp of His people. He then explains that this command will stand as a test to prove whether you will “walk in His law or not” (Ex. 16:4). On the following Sabbath you ask Moses if he has seen your son. Moses points you in your son’s direction. Here is our question. Because you caused God’s faithful servant to work by lifting his arm, may you now go outside the camp and hire an unbeliever to gather and prepare your Sabbath manna?”

Mr. Pack knows full well that his hypothetical is totally contrived. He offers it in an attempt to blur the lines between something that we **NEVER** orchestrated (the flagman) and something that he totally orchestrates (the restaurant worker).

On the other hand our scenario perfectly reflects God's instructions to His people nearly thirty-five hundred years ago. Furthermore, there isn't a hint in the scriptures that He has ever changed His mind on this. When this prominent COG leader teaches people that they can go outside the community of faith on God's Sabbath and patronize businesses engaged in the desecration of that Sabbath, it is he who is the hypocrite. His "what if?" scenario is a cynical attempt to justify his own lawlessness. Furthermore, it employs the same arguments Protestants use when rejecting the Sabbath altogether. They reason that because it is impossible not to cause labor in some fashion on the Sabbath, you may now cause labor in any fashion on that day. In truth, Mr. Pack's argument holds about as much moral weight as suggesting that because a person's vital organs (lungs, heart, kidneys etc.) work on the Sabbath, it must be okay for God's people to do so as well.

David C. Pack continued:

"The Real World"
By David C Pack

"In many of the world's larger cities, such as London and New York, brethren must ride metro trains to get to services. This sometimes means having to invest hours traveling to and from services, and riding two or more separate trains. And of course, none of this is free! Sometimes, multiple cash transactions must take place. Early in his ministry, Mr. Armstrong rode streetcars—exchanging money—to get to Sabbath services.

Yet those brethren who pay these transactions—in order to obey God's Sabbath command and attend His service—are condemned by critics who forbid dining out on the Sabbath. In their minds, no exceptions are allowed."

Our Response:

Once again Dave Pack perverts the truth. His claim is designed to persuade God's people to believe that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* are cruel hearted men obsessed with condemning those whom God has called. However, he doesn't provide one ounce of proof that supports such a claim. Why?—because there is no such proof. Mr. Pack simply makes it up. Fortunately, there is evidence that proves the very opposite. Here is what Mr. Pack thought you shouldn't know. It comes straight from a letter that appears at the beginning of *A Sabbath Test*. As you read it you decide if the authors are condemning anybody.

A Sabbath Test

As you proceed through each point, it is important to understand that the authors are not trying to judge God's people. This booklet is not an attempt to condemn the wonderful community of believers who are called according to His purpose. Instead, it is written with the profound hope that these believers will carefully examine their approach to a day God Himself calls "HOLY." It is intended to challenge you to consider your attitude as well as your behavior concerning the fourth commandment.

Furthermore, Mr. Pack's assertion that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* are opposed to ALL buying on holy time is simply NOT TRUE. These men are acutely aware that there are circumstances that may require money to be exchanged on the Sabbath and holy days. They even provide examples see: Argument XVIII, "An Ox in a Ditch"). However, dining out at commercial restaurants does not fall into that category. Mr. Pack engages in this practice because of its appeal, not because of necessity.

David C. Pack continued

“The Toll Booth”

By David C Pack

“Suppose a Sabbath service was being held in the downtown area of a large U.S. city, such as New York City, Chicago or Los Angeles (which was done in Mr. Armstrong’s day), and you decided to drive your car. Where would you park? Most, if not all, major American cities are notorious for their lack of parking space. More than likely, in order to park in a safe and convenient location, you will have to use a parking lot or a parking garage. This means having to pay a parking attendant, which is condemned in the eyes of those who oppose dining out on the Sabbath.”

Driving your car to services could also involve using toll bridges and taking toll roads. For those who use them, traffic tolls are mandatory business transactions. Sometimes toll areas can be avoided. However, in many cases, detouring around them could amount to extra travel time, as well as additional fuel consumption.

Do you begin to see a trend here? For many brethren, there are legitimate expenses that must be paid in order to attend God’s commanded assembly—and these have nothing to do with fulfilling personal pleasure or profaning the Sabbath.

Ask yourself: Would Christ understand the necessity of having to pay traffic tolls, parking fees, and transportation expenses for trains, buses or taxis? Would He understand His brothers and sisters paying for food and drink as they travel to Sabbath services? Is Christ scrutinizing whether a transaction becomes one too many, immediately condemning that person for profaning the Sabbath? Does He eagerly stand ready to enforce “yardstick Christianity” and punish us for such “oversights” or “infractions” (particularly, in this case, when it was He who commands Sabbath fellowship and assembly – Mark 2:28; Heb. 10:23-26)? Or, does Christ measure our *intent* in context with the spirit of the Law?

Man is not to be deprived of attending to his physical needs, such as hunger, finding warmth from the freezing cold, or even being denied the opportunity to assemble on the Sabbath because it might involve exchanging money when traveling.

The Pharisees of today see only two alternatives: Keep the “letter of the law” or abandon it. They mistakenly view “the spirit of the law” as a Protestant platitude translated “the law is done away.”

Our Response:

Here, Mr. Pack hides behind a host of legitimate reasons that may require money to be spent on the Sabbath and misrepresents the authors of a book that never once hints at what he (Mr. Pack) is suggesting. He knows full well that *A Sabbath Test* is not about third world countries or situations that are unavoidable. In truth it’s about him (Dave Pack) as a contemporary “noble of Judah.” This “noble” has the gall to suggest that those who honor God’s command to refrain from going to restaurants on His Sabbath actually want God’s people to suffer on this day. He does this to justify himself when making Friday evening reservations at an exclusive bistro and dropping \$200 on an exquisite meal. However, being that he brought it up here is ***Blow the Trumpet’s*** response:

The Bible doesn’t address tollbooths. It doesn’t address parking lots in modern cities. It doesn’t address electricity, water & power or Mr. Pack’s phone service. The Bible doesn’t address a host of issues that may require money to be spent in our contemporary world. Furthermore, to employ such arguments and represent them as “Biblical facts” is an act

of extraordinary cowardice. Additionally, to suggest that the authors of *A Sabbath Test* want to make the Sabbath a burden is to suggest that this was God's motivation in the Sinai desert.

However, there is good news. The Bible is not silent on everything pertaining to this issue. For example: IT DOES ADDRESS DINING OUT ON THE SABBATH AND TEACHING OTHERS TO DO THE SAME! Furthermore, the scriptures declare that Mr. Pack's attempt to dignify this practice is a reproach to both God Almighty and His Sabbath. That Sabbath is SACRED! It is HOLY! And both Dave Pack and others who think they can defend their position by parading a plethora of "Yea buts and what ifs?" would be well advised to take their dirty feet off of it (Isa. 58:13).

In conclusion, here is what God Almighty is telling Dave Pack and anyone else who thinks he can engage in this practice, and teach God's children to do the same:

David C. Pack, You shall NOT procure food on My Sabbath. If you do, you profane My day and you FAIL my test!

David C. Pack, You shall not prepare food on My Sabbath. If you do, you profane My day and you FAIL My test!

David C. Pack, You shall NOT go into the world to acquire your meals on My Sabbath. If you do, you profane My day and you FAIL My test!

A Final Thought

The Sabbath is God's day and He doesn't need Dave Pack or anyone else to improve on it. It is just fine as it is. Furthermore, Mr. Pack should understand that those who refrain from dining out on the Sabbath are not Pharisees. They are people who are honoring God's word powerfully spoken nearly 3500 years ago and later affirmed by a wonderful servant named Nehemiah. However, the same cannot be said about Mr. Pack. This COG leader makes the law of God of none effect through his tradition. This modern day Pharisee spent his entire essay presenting a collection self-serving arguments intended to justify the sin he so brazenly promotes. Furthermore, although he presents himself as God's end time champion, there was not one thing courageous about his arguments. One the contrary, they exuded fear. Once again, if this COG leader is genuinely confident in his case, we challenge him to step up and prove it. Our offer to debate this critical end time issue still stands. We are prepared to meet him on this anytime and in any place.

In the conclusion of *A Sabbath Test*, the authors offer a simple tribute to a day all of God's people share. It is a tribute of hope and inspiration, NOT condemnation. Here are their words.

A Sabbath Test

The Sabbath is a day with profound meaning. It was created by God as evidence that He has an incredible plan for mankind. That plan reflects a great wisdom and an infinite love for His children. God made the Sabbath so that His children could know Him and the hope of His Kingdom. The Sabbath pictures that Kingdom. And those who honor it honor what it pictures.

When God gave the command to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy, He wasn't simply instructing the children of Israel to be aware of when this day occurs. It is not simply a cognitive test of knowledge. The Sabbath is a test of faith—a test to see if His people will declare their loyalty to Him and His kingdom (Ex. 16:4).

Honoring God's Sabbath is done by acting out that kingdom every week. In a very real sense, God's Sabbath is His signature on a great moral code Jesus described in one word: LOVE. Honoring this day as God instructed is the profound responsibility of every true Christian. But there is more. To keep the Sabbath as God commands is also a great privilege—one that is known by so few. God's people should see it as an honor bestowed upon them by none other than the King of Eternity.

To that, we at ***Blow the Trumpet*** say: Amen