

SOME ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

THE CHURCH OF GOD (SEVENTH DAY)

HEADQUARTERS, Denver, Colorado

and the

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

HEADQUARTERS, Pasadena, California

Frequently, agencies of the Church of God (Seventh Day) receive inquiries about the differences between the Worldwide Church of God, with headquarters in Pasadena, California, and the Church of God (Seventh Day), with headquarters in Denver, Colorado. The information given here is brief. It is meant to offer no more than an introduction to the issues and direction to those who wish to investigate the doctrines more comprehensively.

Before discussing the differences between the Worldwide Church of God and the Church of God (Seventh Day), we note some similarities in teaching.

1. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.
2. The observance of the Lord's Supper once a year at the Passover season.
3. The soul of man is mortal and dies. The Bible calls the death of the righteous a "sleep."
4. Christmas and other days of pagan origin should not be celebrated.

5. Christ was in the tomb three days and three nights, being crucified on Wednesday and arising from the tomb near the close of the Sabbath.
6. We are living near to the second coming of Christ.
7. The literal, visible, glorious appearing of Christ at His second advent. It will not be a secret rapture.
8. The wicked will be annihilated, and there is no eternal burning hell.
9. Christians should distinguish between clean and unclean meats and should not eat those classed by the Bible as unclean.
10. When Christ returns, He will establish His kingdom on earth and will reign a thousand years. The eventual home of the redeemed will be the earth renewed.

DIFFERENCES

1. ORGANIZATION

The Worldwide Church of God of Herbert W. Armstrong is an organization with all control centered at its headquarters. The leaders are not elected by the membership, but are appointed. Local church groups do not choose their pastor or other leaders. The organization is basically autocratic.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) has a General Conference, general districts, state conferences, and local churches. The officers of each of these units are elected by the members. The General Conference is governed by a constitution and the

state conferences have charters and bylaws. Local churches have considerable local autonomy. They elect their local church officers. They work with the district administrations in selecting their pastor from among ministers documented by the General Conference. Everyone who desires is welcome to attend church services and take part in Bible studies.

2. ISRAEL

The Worldwide Church of God teaches the theory called "British-Israelism." This proposes that the term, "Jews," refers to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (House of Judah, Southern Kingdom) only. The ten "lost" tribes (House of Israel, Northern Kingdom) migrated into Europe from Mesopotamia, and names such as Danube, Denmark, etc., show traces of the tribe of Dan. They teach that Britain is the tribe of Ephraim and the United States is Manasseh. Many of the prophecies regarding Israel are considered to have their fulfillment in connection with the United States and England.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) teaches that the Jews represent all tribes of Israel and that the present-day return of the Jews to Palestine is fulfillment of Bible prophecy. It is a sign of the nearness of the second coming of Christ. Some of all twelve tribes returned to Palestine from Persia in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and their descendants are returning to Israel today.

For a study on this subject, write for our booklet, "Israel in Bible Prophecy" from the Bible Advocate Press, Denver, Colorado.

3. FEAST DAYS

The Worldwide Church of God teaches that in addition to the weekly Sabbath, there are seven annual "feasts" which must be observed as a continuation of the feast days given to ancient Israel. They teach that these feast days were not types, but memorials, and one must continue to observe them in our time. They observe these festivals with special church gatherings. They include Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles, Day of Atonement, Feast of Trumpets, and a special Last Great Day -- added to the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) believes that the weekly seventh-day Sabbath should be observed, as well as the annual Lord's Supper on the 14th of the Hebrew month, Nisan. The annual Feast Days given to Israel are part of the Levitical Priesthood to be observed with animal sacrifices, and are types which were fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ.

For a study of this subject, write for our booklet entitled, "A Study of the Feast Days Given to Israel," from the Bible Advocate Press, Denver, Colorado.

4. THE NEW BIRTH

The Worldwide Church of God teaches that the new birth described in the third chapter of John refers to the change to immortality which will take place at the resurrection of the righteous when Jesus returns.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) teaches that when Jesus said, "Ye must be born again," He was referring to conversion from a sinful life to a new life in Christ. The new birth is a contingency to receiving immortality -- not a description of it. After experiencing the new birth, one is a "new

creature," as described in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

The Bible Advocate Press, in Denver, Colorado, has a booklet on this subject entitled, "The New Birth."

5. THE EMBLEM OF CHRIST'S BLOOD AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Worldwide Church of God uses fermented wine to represent the blood of Christ at the Lord's Supper. They contend that grape juice is not pure. The fermentation process purifies it.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) uses grape juice to represent the blood of Christ at the Lord's Supper. It qualifies as the "fruit of the vine" referred to consistently and uniquely in connection with the Lord's Supper in the Bible. The issue of whether wine is more pure or "alive" than grape juice is moot and incidental.

6. DANCING

The Worldwide Church of God members engage in ballroom and other types of dancing, provided such dancing is done under church sponsorship and among members of the church. Dancing is a regular part of their church recreation.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) believes this type of recreation tends to lower moral standards. It lends itself to "the appearance of evil," and the Bible teaches us to shun such (I Thessalonians 5:22).

OTHER DIFFERENCES

There are other beliefs taught by the Worldwide Church of God which are different from the Bible teachings of the Church of God (Seventh Day). Many of these are not well known. Any minister of the Church of God (Seventh Day) is willing to discuss differences at greater length in an attitude of respect for God's Word and His people.

The differences which have been described are as we learned them through contact with members of the Worldwide Church of God, and from reading their literature. If any of the statements are inaccurate or if they give any false impression, it has been unintentional and will be corrected when brought to our attention.

We believe the differences are of great importance. We invite all Christians to fellowship with the Church of God (Seventh Day). Names of pastors and locations of churches are available upon request. Complete information about the Church of God (Seventh Day) may be obtained by writing to: The Bible Advocate Press, P. O. Box 2370, Denver, Colorado 80201.