

## WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD QUESTIONNAIRE

Some people are puzzled as to how to go about describing their WCG experiences. They wonder what is pertinent and what is not. To the end of helping those of you who are kind enough to help with this project, in formulating your ideas, I have constructed this questionnaire. Please answer as many questions as you feel you want to answer. If you have previously written to me and feel that you have covered the question, just refer me to your previous letter, which I have saved. If you know of anyone who might be willing to add their experiences to my files, I would appreciate receiving their names and addresses. I would also appreciate any statements you would care to make that might not be particularly addressed in this questionnaire. Thank you all for your help! Together, perhaps we can help others work through their own ideas about the Worldwide Church of God.

1. What was the thing that first attracted you to WCG?

Here was an organization that more closely resembled the New Testament church at the time of the apostles than any other I had seen.

2. What made you vulnerable to what Worldwide seemed to offer? What were you looking for?

It was what God had to offer, eternal life, that interested me. I viewed the WCG as the principal organization thru which God was working at present and that their teachings and help would be useful in attaining eternal life. Later I came to see that God's Church is a body of believers, not an organization. My lack of biblical knowledge obscured any "fatal flaws" from me (see 4).

3. What were your initial impressions of Worldwide once you began attending services?

The interesting, thought provoking, mind expanding sermons and literature, the zeal and friendliness of the people and the general sense of purpose and mission.

4. How did your first impressions change? Were there any particular incidents that caused them to change?

These impressions did change in regard to the sermons and literature. Perhaps it was the messages that changed, or my preception of them, but more likely both. Today the messages themselves have little value, but it is fascinating to observe how secular humanism and the human potential ideas are subtly interwoven into them. Until 1974 I never noticed this. At that time I heard a tape in which an evangelist made the accusation that the WCG believed in salvation by works. As you know this has always been denied, but from then on I began to notice a tacit underlying belief in this doctrine in spite of all the armwaving to the contrary. Attaining perfection was mainly a do-it-yourself project, built up slowly by practice like a habit, with the help of God's Spirit, instead of being a project of Christ in us thru God's Spirit. Instead of being the center of our lives, Jesus Christ

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has been relegated to a rather minor role in our lives, that of forgiving sin, after which He is pushed off into the peripheries of our thoughts and conversations in an almost casual, arm's length manner. In 1977 David Antion correctly observed that to watch the WCG members and listen to the sermons, "You'd never know we were Christians!"

The concept of God ruling Christians directly thru His Spirit will never be acceptable to the WCG hierarchy because this tends to undermine their concept of church government (God ruling the church thru the ministers). This concept downgrades the Holy Spirit to a mere "help" instead of the means by which God expresses Himself and exercises control of the Universe. I believe that the WCG's concept of church government and their mostly false view of God's way of perfecting the saints are the two most dammaging doctrines. Because of these, new converts are brought up to a certain level of growth (a rather low level), and sat upon. Further growth is discouraged and is in most cases prevented. This by itself would limit ones degree of usefulness and reward in God's Kingdom. However God sees to it that trials come and circumstances are brought about in the lives of those in which He is working, causing them to break out of the limitations the WCG places on their growth. In addition these two dammaging doctrines can produce a "false conversion" leading people to believe they are God's people and under His protection when they are not. Unless they wake up many will go right into the great triblation. Many may have to await a later resurrection. In my opinion the majority of the members are in this latter condition. I believe the WCG is being used by God, but for a different purpose than the stated purpose. It seems to be a perfect vehicle for the stripping away of the man-made trappings of the world's "church-ianity" allowing people to see uncluttered the simplicity and glory of God's plans and ways. The WCG has been very good at uncovering and publicizing many of these aspects of Christianity (other groups have since picked up on some of these and are spreading the word) that have been obscured by a lot of garbage and counterfits for almst 2000 years. Unfortunately they have added a lot of their own bilge and misunderstandings. It is also unfortunate that many, upon leaving the WCG have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. (One WCG minister commented several years ago that it is becomming increasingly difficult to tell the baby from the bathwater!) Many of the ex-WCG people writing books have done this. It is to John Tuit's credit that he has not.

A second possible purpose for which the WCG is being used is to demonstrate the utter futility of attempting a do-it-yourself salvation or self-perfection. My letter to Mr. Rice goes into more detail on this.

In general, it is my opinion that the WCG is an instrument God is using to call and prepare a group of people for a special purpose, but in quite a different way than it would seem.

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5. How involved were you in the activities in the Church?

Most of the time I was a college employee, working on the Ambassador campus in Pasadena. As such I was often involved in college and church activities. Since 1973 I have worked elsewhere, and my involvement in church activities was drastically reduced. It is now limited to Sabbath services and occasional social activities like a pot luck dinner.

6. Did you have any friends who had previously left Worldwide and were they at all instrumental in your leaving?

I have many present and ex-WCG members among my friends. None of them have attempted to influence me to leave or stay.

7. How did Worldwide affect you emotionally, spiritually, financially, psychologically, educationally, or in terms of your career?

I have suffered no spiritual, emotional or psychological harm from being in the WCG. My educational status was definitely enhanced not only from 3 years at Ambassador college, but being allowed and encouraged to get a graduate degree from UCLA, partly on "company time". I was adversely affected in financial and career terms, however. My career was set back 25 years. The job at Ambassador, tho enjoyable and fulfilling had no "real world" counterpart, so the experience didn't count.

8. How long have you been out?

I am still affiliated with the organization, but perhaps I was never really "in".

9. How long do you feel your "recovery period" was, and how did you know when you had "recovered?"

I never experienced any recovery period, nor the need for such. In addition I know of only a couple worldwidiers who experienced such a recovery period. Most are well adjusted people and very comfortable in their present situation.

10. Have you maintained any contact with old friends in Worldwide?

Lots of them. By and large they are a very fine people.

11. Did you seek any specialized help after leaving Worldwide? (Marriage counseling, minister, social worker, psychologist, M.D., etc.) Why?

No, had no need for counseling due to association with the WCG.

12. How much "WCG" doctrine do you still feel is valuable to you?

A lot. The deity of Christ, His atoning sacrifice, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, the purpose of life to become sons and daughters of God on earth, not Heaven, the plan of God as revealed in the Sabbath and Holy days, the resurrection as the means by which one becomes immortal, the post-tribulation "rapture", the Holy Spirit as the very power of God by which He directs the Universe, the annihilation of the incorrigible, the revelation that most are not now now called and will be given their chance for salvation in a later resurrection.

13. How do you feel, now, about your years in Worldwide?

Very good, now. It was a valuable, growing experience, altho some of the periods of growth were a bit rough. There was no other way I could have learned what I did. I have no regrets whatsoever.

I have maintained affiliation, among other reasons, because I see a need in many members. The WCG has taught them of the tools (prayer, bible study, etc.) but has not provided them with the vital key to overcome and deal with trials (see my 1982 letter to Mr. Rice). Many are therefore floundering and discouraged. People in this condition are hungry for change and are open to suggestions. So as long as I am allowed to stay I intend to maintain my affiliation. Anyway I would be a "spiritual misfit" in any other organization.

14. Do you desire confidentiality should any of the material you have written be published in this project?

Yes.

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, ALONG WITH ANY ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS YOU CARE TO MAKE, TO: BRENDA DENZLER, 600 OLD MAIN, NEWTON, KANSAS 67114. THANK YOU ALL ONCE AGAIN.

During my years in the WCG no one in an official capacity has ever asked of my beliefs except Gerald Waterhouse when he baptised me. He asked if I had repented and if I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour.

On occasion a member rants on about some doctrine. I respond by asking, "Who are you trying to convince, me or you?"

May 23, 1983

Robert MacDonald  
2470 Paloma St.  
Pasadena, CA 91104

Dear Bob:

Many thanks for your letter and request for the questionnaire. Enclosed please find the same, along with the material that was printed in the CFF newsletter. It's really not all that fancy, but I hope that it's succinct enough concerning WCG characteristics. I send it to all the places that I hear about that have the newstand distribution system, to let the proprietors know more about the organization that sponsors that slick magazine. In a cover letter, I will tell them that the WCG is monitored by the CFF, and that it has certain characteristics of a cult, and ask them that they review their decision about allowing the PT newstand in their establishment. I try to be as level-headed as I can, so as not to sound like some rapid disenchanted trouble-maker.

Thank you, too, for the letter you wrote, stating your position with regard to the WCG. It's an admirable position to be able to take. Frankly, I was too torn by the believing one way, and the having to pretend to believe another way, to stay in the WCG. I would be interested in knowing how long you have been in the WCG while trying to reach people as you have described. You certainly seem to have a reasonable enough approach and perspective on the whole thing.

I'll look forward to receiving your questionnaire and any other comments you might care to make.

Yours,

Brenda Denzler

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ROBT MACDONALD  
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May 18, 1983

Dear Brenda,

In response to your letter in the AR I would like to receive one of your questionnaires to answer. I expect you will get a wide range of responses reflecting a wide range of experiences in the W.C.G. For the most part, my experiences were positive and represented valuable aids in pushing me in the direction of Christian Maturity. I enclose a letter written to an author of an article in Cornerstone which may answer some questions for your research.

I enclose a SASE for the questionnaire.

Please, if possible, include a reprint of your article on the W.C.G. in the Citizens Freedom Foundation paper.

Sincerely in Christ

Bob McDonald