

THE MINISTERIAL FORUM

May, 1972

Publication of The Forum

The last issues of the Forum were printed in booklet form and contained the material of the Ministerial Manual. It had been planned to issue the Forum at least quarterly. Several months ago cards were sent to the ministers announcing publication and asking for material to be sent in. Only one minister, and the department chairman, responded. We still have very little more material but it is felt that this work may be stimulated by getting out this issue.

Since the close of the year for the Bible College, the editor has time to get out this issue. The stenographic help is gone and also the Multilith which was used to print the previous issues. And so we are mimeographing this and hope it may fill the need at this time. We would like to get out another issue in August and we hope there may be more material for this next issue.

Remember that the Forum is to contain Bible study articles in which opinions may be expressed pro and con. In this way we can determine how different ministers are thinking about some of the Bible prophecies and other Bible topics on which we at present have no general Church of God stand. The Forum is also to contain suggestions for the advancement of the work of the Church. Here new ideas can be advocated and reports of successful plans can be given so that others may also use them. The church needs a constant flow of creative new ideas for the promotion of the gospel work. Anything which may be helpful in the work or of special interest to ministers, is welcome for the Forum.

MINISTERS OR PAPER HOLDERS ?

By E. A. Straub

Many times I see brethren quite anxious to receive license or credentials. But with these sacred papers goes a great responsibility towards the organization by which these papers are granted. Sometimes I hear some one say, "I must please God, not an organization. This is something that the Church also wants to do. And where a man sets himself above the church as one who alone knows the will of God, I would say, let that man get his credentials from God and not from an organization.

When we speak to ministers or the Church of God we are speaking to busy men, or at least that is the way it should be. And I am sure that is the way it is with most preachers who want to do their duty. However sometimes we are causing ourselves useless work and are wasting precious time by not having our work well organized. Our daily work is not well planned. I was raised on a farm and while in ministerial training I was still farming. I had to do my main farm work in about four months of the year so that I could spend the rest of the months in practical field training for the ministry. I found in these years a good lesson in scheduling my work, not only for a day, but for a week at a time. And when I got ahead of my schedule I was happy and relaxed. I felt sure my work was done properly and I had time to fill in other things which were also necessary.

I am fully aware that we must expect the unexpected all the time and that our work schedule is often disrupted. In our weekly schedule we should always plan for just such emergencies but we should always have some of our regular work to fill in if the unexpected does not happen. This way we can keep our desks clear and our work done on time. People expect a minister to be prompt and to be sure he keeps his word. It is so easy to say, "Oh, I forgot", or "I got sick"

or I could not come for some reason or another. This may all be true but if it is a matter of forgetting, then a minister must do something about this. People will not stand for forgetting very often. If it is a case where a minister can not go or do something because of a valid reason, then he should make sure that the people will know about it as soon as possible by phone or any other means. I have seen occasions where it took days and weeks before a minister finally showed up or answered a call on some important matter. Sometimes he ~~did~~ never showed up at all and he gave no explanation. Ministers, of all men, must never make a promise lightly. He must think before he speaks and when he has spoken he must make sure that he keeps his promise, regardless of the inconvenience. The best and quickest way for a minister to hurt his reputation is for him to say he will do something and then not abide by what he has said, or for him to take his office lightly.

To save time and expense in a pastor's work good use should be made of the telephone. Many times a telephone call will do more good than a personal call to the home. Where personal home calls are necessary the phone should be used to arrange for such calls. This way the minister will know if the people are at home and the people will know that the minister is coming. This will often save some embarrassment from the minister dropping in unexpectedly. If it is just a call to cheer up or to show interest, that can and should be done by phone. Members should be trained to know that a pastor cannot make social calls every so-often. A phone call should be sufficient. It is better than for a minister to be barging in every so-often. Most of the ministers are paid mileage and that can run into a large sum of money quickly. This money belongs to the Lord and should be spent very wisely. We must not be guilty of squandering the Lord's money when it is so much needed to spread the gospel elsewhere. A minister once told me, "sometimes I just take my car and drive around to see if I can find something to do for the Lord. I told him that was "wild goose chasing". A minister should always ask himself "Now is this trip necessary?". A sticker on our windshield with these words might serve a good purpose if we would read it once in a while. Some ministers have reported as many as 15 calls a day. Such calls could not amount to much more than just sticking the head through the door and saying "hi". These calls would serve much better by phone and would be a lot less expensive.

Ministers should always be deeply aware of their work, not only for the local church but also for that of the District and of the General Conference and of the departments. Letters received from the Conference or from any Department should always be carefully studied. If an answer is expected then it should be done soon. If it is information being asked of us as to our congregation, then we need to see to it that we respond. If it is information to be given to the congregation, then we should understand our duty and see that the congregation gets the information. Pastors are agents of the church and it is through them that the church officials contact the people. If the pastors ignore the Conference or the Departments, then we are hindered in the work. The Conference should not always have to keep after us to get us to co-operate. We are all workers together and let us not "receive the grace of God in vain". 2 Cor. 6:1.

It is well and good each sabbath to say at least a little about the importance of the offerings and the special purpose for which it is being received. I have noticed many times when money is needed for local affairs, the pastor does not fail to make a very good announcement and even presses the people for a good offering. This is well and good and it needs to be done. But how about the needs of the work elsewhere? I have seen an Emphasis Sabbath go by and the people did not know what the offerings were for, much less there being any emphasis on the need. Instead of emphasis there was silence. Perhaps it was one of those times of forgetting. This is something that should be remembered. Even if it is printed in the bulletin it should be mentioned as it means more that way. How about that brethren? Let us co-operate so the work may be carried on smoothly and effectively.

THE WEA'K AND BEGGARLY ELEMENTS

By E. A. Straub

What did Paul mean when he said "weak and beggarly elements in Gal. 4:9? Did he refer to the Law of Moses or to the Gentile laws? It should be plain that Paul in no way spoke of the laws of the Gentiles through the book of Galatians. Paul spoke of something so weak and beggarly that Christ would become of no effect to us if we tried to observe it. Galatians 5:4. The subject is very clear. Paul wanted to learn one thing from the Galatians and that was, did they receive the ~~Sp~~ Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Gal. 3:2. What Law was Paul speaking about here? Was it the law of the Gentiles or was it the law written in the book of the Law by Moses? Was it some Gentiles who had come to Galatia to subvert them, or was it some false brethren from Jerusalem? The answer is clear in Gal. 2:4. Where did they come from? Again we see the clear answer that they came from Jerusalem. See Acts 15:23,24. The church did not send them and the apostle made this plain that they (the church) did not send them to the Gentiles. Ver. 24. These Pharisees took it upon themselves to go and teach these Gentiles to keep the Law of Moses and to be circumcised. They did not only teach the Gentiles to become circumcised but also to keep the Law of Moses. See acts 15:5.

This disturbance was great enough so that God revealed to Paul that he should go to Jerusalem to get this matter settled with the church lest his work might be in vain. Gal. 2:2. I wonder if it is not still a great matter of offense to God to teach the people that they must keep certain things of this "shadow" law. Paul was not speaking of a Gentile law or of the law of the 10 commandments. But rather it was the book of the law. (Gal. 3:10). These things were called a "yoke" by the apostles in Acts 15:10, which neither their fathers nor they were able to bear. It was these laws which the Pharisees wanted to bind upon the Gentiles and to bring them under bondage. Gal. 2:4.

Paul did not say that these subversive teachers were Gentiles. He said they were false brethren teaching the Gentiles to keep the law of Moses which was written in the book. Gal. 3:10. See also Deut. 27:26, and Deut. 31:24-26. After Moses had ended writing all these laws in a book he commanded the Levites to put this book in the side of the Ark. But the tables of stone were put in the Ark. Deut. 10:5. It was this book, not the tables of stone, that contained the shadow law, and this was the book which Paul referred to. These were the shadow of things to come (Christ). This is why Paul was so concerned about the Galatians. To live and to try to follow the law which was a shadow is to testify that Christ is not yet come and therefore Christ becomes of no effect to us. Gal. 5:4. The labor which Paul had bestowed upon the Galatians would be in vain. Gal. 2:2. It was these false brethren from the Pharisees from Jerusalem who told the Galatians they must return to circumcision and the Law of Moses, and thereby bring them under the yoke of bondage. Gal. 4:9; Acts 15:10. They would be keeping these beggarly and weak elements such as days, months, and years. This is speaking clearly of the feast days in the book of the law, which were a shadow of things to come. Col. 2:12-17. In the law of the 10 commandments there is positively nothing that would be a handwriting against anyone. All ten commandments are the love of God to man and they are good for all men. The 4th commandment was made for man because man needs a rest. Mark 2:27. This would be a much better world if all of us would follow closely all the ten commandments. But the ordinances were a handwriting against man and the apostles called them a yoke and Paul called it bondage. Gal. 2:4; Acts 15:10.

WRITING ** AN INDELIBLE MINISTRY

By Harvey Fischer, Chairman
Sabbath School Dept.

When a person becomes a Christian, one of the first things he discovers is that as a believer in Jesus Christ, he receives an assignment. This assignment is to tell others of the genuine joy and peace which can be theirs in this life, and of the eternal life of peace awaiting them.

It is with enthusiastic commitment that this assignment is accepted, without reservation, to "Go and teach all nations.". In fulfilling such a commitment, an individual may be requested to serve in numerous capacities in which he discovers the great satisfaction of sharing the faith with friends, neighbors, and contacts of the church.

As an individual, man converses with one or more friends; as a minister he speaks to hundreds of people; and by the written word he communicates with perhaps thousands. Very few, if any, publications of our church enjoy the circulation of our Sabbath School Quarterly. The Sabbath School Department is happy to announce its organization structure is rapidly spreading to foreign countries which further improves the circulation of the Quarterly. It is necessary that the lesson material provided in the Quarterly represent Church of God doctrine in depth and truth. For the Sabbath School Department to assume the fulfillment of such an assignment we find it necessary to appeal for individuals who will be interested in writing for this work.

Man's finest thoughts are expressed in written word. Think of the sermons you have preached from the writings of Paul--the writings that have reached millions. Paul was not a journalist. He simply identified himself as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Showing his concern for the Church of God, he took to writing. Paul did not make excuses, even though many could have been available; his dedication for the cause of Christ was uppermost in his life.

We appeal to the ministry of the Church as it studies the Word of God professionally. We believe the most accurate sermons have been preached from our pulpits, and we want to share this information with others. In preparation for the writing of lessons, you will systematically study subjects in depth, you will utilize reference materials, and by putting this information down on paper, you will have indelibly inscribed it in your mind. This comprehensive preparation for lesson writing will provide you with sermon material to stretch well past the allotted time of the worship service. And even beyond all of these benefits, you will be compensated by the Sabbath School department for the lessons you write.

The Sabbath School Department is aware of the "gifted" writers in the church, but we are aware that these writers are already "overassigned" in contributions to the total church program. Writing is not necessarily a "gift"; it is an achievement. Achievement takes devotion, interest, and hard work.

If you have never written lessons before and have an interest in doing so, we will be happy to work with you and help you. The Sabbath School Department does not apologize for lessons of the past. We are indeed very deeply appreciative of the expended contributions by our writers. They have done and are doing very well. We are simply interested in expanding our work. In order to do this we must expand our source of materials. We feel you can help. No one has time -- some simply make time.

Sabbath School Department Special Notice

Since the adoption of the revised plan of the operation of the Sabbath Schools the pastor and the church board are directly involved in the selection of the teachers for the various classes of the Sabbath School Program.

With the concern that the teacher is directly involved in the guidance of meaningful study of the lesson provided, the Sabbath School Department announces the curriculum for the next several quarters so your selections of teachers may be influenced.

ADULT QUARTERLY

2nd quarter, 1972	Plan of Salvation Part I
3rd quarter, 1972	Plan of Salvation Part II
4th quarter 1972	Stewardship

YOUTH QUARTERLY

2nd quarter 1972	Applied Christianity
3rd quarter 1972	Family Living (How to Put It All Together)
4th quarter 1972	Church Doctrines (Faith) Doctrine #1 through 6 and #23)

* We hope to be starting the Senior High Quarterly with the 4th quarter of 1972. This still depends on the possible completion of the Jr. High Quarterly as the two quarterlies need to start on the same date.

It might be well for you and your board to select a teacher who is willing to do some outside reading and preparation for the 3rd quarter of the Youth quarterly. With the promotions of the "new morality" in today's society it is very important that the youth of our church review the Bible's best answers on this important issue. Selecting good teachers is most important.

THE PURPOSE OF CAMP MEETINGS
by S. J. Kauer

The campmeeting began back in the early days of the church, in the horse and buggy era. The Church of God was made up of scattered believers who met on Sabbaths in homes. Ministers were mostly farmers and most of the preaching was done in the winter time when protracted meetings were held in country school houses. There were no pastors and no organized church programs. The summer campmeeting was planned to be held at the time when the farmers would be least busy. In the mid west it was held in August, after the small grain harvest and after the corn had grown too large to cultivate. Church of God families came together to have fellowship and to have a spiritual revival. It was the time when the young people were converted and many were baptized during or at the close of the campmeeting, in a nearby lake or stream. Since there were no spiritual revival meetings, the campmeeting was the great spiritual revival of the year. It was the place to bring the ones who needed to be converted and baptized. And it was a place where brethren could meet more than the 10 or 20 who attended their local Sabbath schools held in their homes. How times have changed since then!

Now most of our members attend services in our own church buildings and most of them have pastors who conduct an organized church program. Evangelistic revival services are held several weeks each year. Converts are baptized at the close of such meetings either in the baptistry of the church, or in the baptistry of the church of some other denomination for which arrangements are made. The local congregation hears a sermon from a qualified minister every sabbath. There are frequent fellowship meetings at which several congregations of the Church of God get together. There are very few "isolated" members because people think nothing of driving 50 miles or more to church. The automobile makes a great difference. For the young people we now have retreats and youth camps and many of them are converted and baptized at such services. With all of these things now being carried on in the program of the Church of God, the question comes, Why have campmeetings? And the answer must be that unless they provide something different from what is found in the other programs of the church, then they are an unnecessary expense. But there really is a great need for the campmeeting if it is planned and conducted in keeping with the situation and times in which we now live.

The Church Convention

The campmeeting of our time should be a convention of members of the Church, a gathering together of the people of God for the purposes of instruction and inspiration for greater missionary service for God. It should be planned and conducted with these purposes in mind. A special schedule of instructional services should be included in the plans. These should include methods of personal evangelism and of holding Bible studies by lay members. And there should also be special sermons on Bible prophecy and doctrine so that our membership is kept well informed and up to date. This will include special instruction on how to meet the various new doctrines being broadcast, such as the British Israel and Fast days teachings. And there should be sermons which give the listeners new inspiration and zeal for holding fast the truths of the Bible and for spreading them to others. We live in a very wonderful time and it is a time of great opportunity for the Church of God to ~~xxx~~ proclaim the Bible truth. There should be an atmosphere of urgency to get the work done and of consecration to do much more.

The ministers who speak at the campmeeting convention should be assigned definite topics or goals to attain. The messages will be different from those usually given in the home church. They will require much more preparation and planning. Specific plans and programs should have been worked out and presented along with duplicated outlines and other helpful materials.

There should be some evangelism at the campmeeting but this should be limited and the times especially announced. In our time most of the people who attend the campmeeting are already converted. Some altar services may be held at special consecration services, and at the evangelistic services. But this should not be every day. Even the night services should not be all evangelistic, especially when our campmeetings are held in campgrounds away from the city. It should not be considered that every sermon should close with an altar call. When this is done it results in the same people, usually the most pious, going again and again and the impression is given that these people must have many hidden sins or else it is a part of ones duty at a church service to pray at the altar. Surely we need to have been converted and filled with the Spirit of God and then be living victorious Christian lives, active in the service and work of spreading the gospel of truth. We should stress the importance of a personal time of daily devotion and of a family altar of prayer in the home.

The members should return from the campmeeting inspired and filled with zeal to live nearer to the Lord and be more useful in His service. They should also be encouraged to more sacrificial giving and more faithful tithing.

An important part of the instruction at the campmeeting should be the promotion and explanation of specific plans of activity for the Departments. Every member should be constantly interested in how we can do better in the gospel work. With the guidance of the Lord Church leaders need to be constantly devising specific plans and programs for the work. The explanation and demonstration of such plans will be of great interest to all.

We today live in a world which is much different than it was 20 years ago. We of the Church of God must adapt to the new conditions in order to carry on an effective work. We should make much better use of our campmeetings and make them really worth the time and expense for all to attend.

What Is Proper Dress?

by Larry Hadden

I would like to share my opinion with you about a touchy subject facing us today, but one with which we must deal. We of the Church of God are happy to have the highest standards of any church but there is one of ours which is being constantly violated due to lack of means of enforcement. It is that of the length of women's dress.

At the 1969 Huron S.D. Campmeeting a resolution was passed stating that we as a body stand opposed to mini-skirts and mini-dresses. But nothing else was stated with that resolution as to what constitutes "mini". As a result in many of our churches we have women and girls who dress like the worldly people, with very short dresses. And we ministers have no united backing for strong preaching against the "minis".

In Exodus 28:40-43, God made known how He wanted the priests to be clothed while ministering before Him. This included ". . . breeches to cover their nakedness; from the lions even unto the thighs they shall reach. . ." Research will show that this meant covering them from their knees to the trunk of their body. Evidently to God, nakedness of the body is from the knees up. Of course there was a coat to go with the uniform, but the breeches were the point of interest.

If those who ministered before the Lord in those days were required to be covered from their knees upward (regardless of a coat), to cover their nakedness, how much more so for Christians today who in church appear before the Lord. Does God's standard change from one dispensation to another and differ for men and women?

We are quite strict about teaching Sabbath observance with ministers teaching that no one should watch T.V. or engage in worldly pleasures on Sabbath. I believe we should be just as outspoken about dress code for our women and girls and be united on it. It does no good for one minister to condemn short dress as being nakedness and then have a brother minister say that we can't really say that because the church has not taken any stand as to what is the right length.

My opinion based on Ex. 28:42 is that women's dresses and skirts should be at least knee length, preferably to the bottom of the knee, but no shorter than the top of the knee. What do you say about it?

We wish to get out another issue of the Forum before next Council. This is the place to get out the announcement or material for doctrinal discussion at the council. You can send it out on your own, but this way will save expense to you. We need more definite and clear stands on the Mark of the Beast, the identity of the Beast and the 2 horned beast and the image; the 7 heads of Rev. 17, how much to do in avoiding swine products, and birth control and moral teachings. You may have others on your list. Write on them, or write up questions for others. Let us hear from you soon.