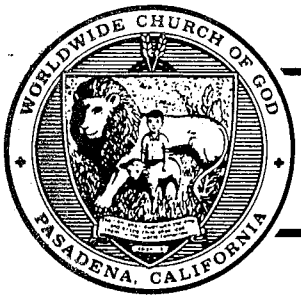
# Deacon/Elder Lecture Series




**WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD**
**PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

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WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91129

JOSEPH W. TKACH
*PASTOR GENERAL*

Dear Pastors of God's Church:

I am pleased and excited to introduce to you this new Deacon/Elder Lecture Series! Never in God's end-time Work has it been more urgently needed than now, as the Church is leaping ahead in growth in all areas.

Much prayer, thought and effort have gone into producing this material for the benefit of God's Church, and I want every one of you pastors to understand the importance of this program and give it your full support. It will ultimately be of tremendous benefit to you!

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong long ago saw the absolute need for an educated ministry in God's Church. That led to the founding of Ambassador College to provide solid leadership in the local congregations. Now, as Church growth again seems about to explode, we must reemphasize the necessity of having capable, trained, well-grounded men to care for God's precious flock.

John 4:35 has become a kind of rallying cry for God's Church. Here Jesus stated: "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

And in Matthew 9:37-38 Jesus told us: "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

This Deacon/Elder Lecture Series is for just that purpose -- to better train the laborers God has provided to reap His harvest in these closing hours of this evil world. God's Church must speak the same thing all around the world. Our procedures and policies must be uniform, our biblical understanding harmonious. This new program will help promote these purposes.

Now, I know that all of you pastors are extremely busy already. I know from personal experience the demands that are placed on the local ministry's time. You may be thinking, "Oh, no, not another set of classes to conduct." But this material will actually give you <u>more</u> freedom and flexibility, by training qualified people to care for many of the less critical needs you have in overseeing your congregations. This program is an investment we all must make in the stable, positive, growth-oriented future of God's Church.

personnel, even those who might be ordained in the near future), and to stress that it is a lecture program as opposed to other forms of instruction. Further, other titles that included phrases like "training" or "leader" were avoided lest people (erroneously) conclude it is intended to be a stepping stone to greater rank. It is intended rather as an aid to greater service to God's people in humility and meekness.

I am aware that some of you have already developed your own deacon or elder training programs. Generally, you have done a fine job with them. However, for the purpose of building unity, and to ensure that we all speak the same thing, it is imperative that you immediately cancel any such program and begin on schedule with this new lecture series from Headquarters. You will immediately see the value in having the entire leadership in the Church simultaneously receive the same instruction, and you will appreciate the enthusiasm that this generates among the men and women. If, however, you have created training materials which you feel are extremely valuable, please send them to us at Church Administration. We will review the materials and add to the new lecture series as appropriate in the months to come.

## III. Purpose

The purposes of the series are numerous:

A. To train the local deacons and elders how to serve God's people more competently.

B. To teach them how to serve with greater humility, meekness and in a more and more harmonious and supportive attitude toward their pastor.

C. To let deacons and elders experience the greater joy that comes through better service.

D. To gain more time for the pastor. This is done in two ways:

   1. By saving him the time he himself would need to prepare these lectures on important subjects.

   2. By, in time, allowing him to delegate in confidence those duties which can be handled by his local leaders if they are well-trained.

E. To build unity in the Church through us all speaking the same thing.

## IV. Goal

The goal is to complete this series of lectures in a time period of from two to three years, with each congregation teaching the same lectures at the same time.

## V. Participants

These lectures are intended almost exclusively for already ordained elders and deacons and deaconesses. (The obvious exception is the ministerial trainee. He should also participate.) A few lectures are limited to elders only. And one or two (only) allow you to include unordained sermonette speakers. Those lectures which exclude deacons(esses) or include speakers are marked with appropriate instructions. Please abide by these guidelines.

All Church-member spouses of deacons or elders should attend. Nonmember spouses are not included.

Every church area has leading men and women -- perhaps ones even very near ordination -- whom the pastor may want to include in the lectures. We are directing that this not be done. Experience has proven that allowing unordained persons to participate creates feelings that these meetings are stepping stones to ordination or perhaps a sort of social distinction. We wish to avoid such wrong feelings and have therefore chosen this policy with your overall best interests in mind. When and if they are ordained, they will be included in the program.

The question often arises about the husbands of deaconesses, when the husband himself is not ordained. The deaconesses' husbands should be invited to attend, as long as they are members of the Church.

## VI. Lecture Materials

This lecture series includes three basic types of material. The first is, of course, a series of lectures. These lectures cover a broad variety of important topics and have been read, edited and approved by Headquarters. (This does not imply they are perfect. Please see below for information on how to make suggestions.)

Some of these lectures are revised forms of certain lectures given in the former Leadership Training Classes. Many are brand-new material written especially for this series. Most will require one lecture to give; some will require two. If they require two lectures, they have been divided and will be sent in two parts at separate times.

The second part of these materials is the Difficult Scripture Outlines. These are simply what their name implies -- short, brief explanations of so-called difficult scriptures given in outline form. Their use will be explained below.

The third part of these materials is Doctrinal Outlines. These are short explanations of basic doctrines which will be used to help insure local church elders and deacons are on a sound doctrinal footing.

The basic format of this series is as follows. Beginning immediately, each pastor will receive one lecture, one difficult scripture explanation and one doctrinal outline each month. Each elder and deacon will receive both the difficult scripture and the doctrinal outline but not the lecture.

The pastor will hold meetings once each month to give the lecture and review the scripture and doctrinal outlines. Although he should normally be the one responsible to hold these meetings, he may OCCASIONALLY delegate the responsibility to his salaried associate pastor if he feels the man is ready for the task. Occasionally, you may even wish to share the class by giving the lecture yourself, and then have the associate take the remaining portion or vice versa.

1 Each meeting should be begun with prayer. Then the pastor should give the lecture from the outline in about one to one-and-a-half hours' time.

2 He should then review the difficult scripture outline in about 20 minutes. How he does this is a matter for his personal style to dictate. It is suggested that he use an interactive approach such as question-and-answer, by using mock visit questions, etc. These questions help to ensure that the men do indeed understand the problem presented in the scripture, as well as the proper manner in which to effectively and concisely explain the correct meaning.

3 Finally, he should summarize the doctrinal outline in about another 20 minutes, asking for questions, making clarifications and perhaps asking a few questions of his own to make sure that his men understand the material.

It is important that we remain within the time constraints listed above. The maximum length of the class will be two hours and 15 minutes. You must be careful not to add too much to the lecture, or talk extemporaneously so long that you run overtime, hence discouraging the participants.

Tests per se are not a part of this series. It has been felt that tests tend to intimidate some of the deacons or

elders, especially the less formally educated ones, and even then may not be a true gauge of one's knowledge or level of service. SELF tests will be included with some of the materials, but they are for the person's own use only and should not be gathered or graded. They are simple and are intended only for review. Please do not supplement the materials with tests of your own. Rather simply review the material with them, and periodically explain to them the importance of reviewing it themselves.

At the end of the meeting, not the middle, you should have a fellowship time which in most cases should include a potluck snack and refreshments. This will provide the class members the opportunity to visit with one another, as well as with you, and to share the valuable information that they have learned. This will be a very enjoyable time, but will have to be flexible depending upon the church area's schedules and activities, and the responsibilities of the participants. You may have a break in the middle but it should be brief and not include food, etc. This is to avoid becoming sidetracked before the working part of the meeting is done.

We strongly recommend that the first class be held, if possible, in the pastor's home. We realize there may be extenuating circumstances which would prevent this. The location of subsequent classes should be rotated among those class members whose homes are adequately large and have the proper facilities. This will depend upon the numbers in your church area. You might prepare a sign-up sheet and ask for volunteers. Please be careful not to offend anyone by demanding that someone host a class. Neither do we want to give the impression of favoritism by overlooking someone who would be interested in hosting.

## VII. Giving the Lectures

These lectures are outlines, not finished articles, and thus should be spoken from as if they were notes, and not read verbatim. They are on the whole quite detailed. Therefore, the pastor should set aside preparation time before the meeting to completely read, study and MARK the outlines so he is ready to deliver them effectively. Decide which scriptures you will read out loud, which you will only cite and which additional ones you might wish to add from your own experience. Pray about the lectures before you speak. Make them, as much as possible, your own. This, of course, will take time but it will take only a fraction of the total time that would have been necessary to compose them yourself.

Please use balance in your actual delivery. Since they are outlines, you should feel free to fit your unique personality and perspective and illustrations into the

framework. But you should not deviate materially from the basic content and change the lecture's meaning or purpose.

Every program such as this is, of course, designed with the "average" church area in mind. A lot of pastors don't have average church areas. For example, how can one pastor who has three small but widely separated churches deliver three lectures, etc. each month?

Use common sense in tailoring these instructions to your particular area. For example, if you have two churches many miles apart, consider meeting midway between them, or having everyone travel to one church one month and the other the other month. Or, perhaps you should tape the lecture and have an assistant play it in the other church area on alternate months -- they will have you "live" one month and taped the other. Other workable solutions exist to special problems. Use your imagination, but try to stick to the ideal as much as possible. If you have questions about your particular case, call Church Administration for advice. Mr. Tkach feels the pastor's personal involvement is vital here.

## VIII. Work Load

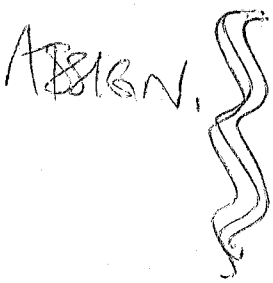
It is obvious that the implementation of this program will require an outlay of time each month. Some pastors will naturally feel that they don't have the time. Therefore here are some keys to finding the necessary time:

Priority -- Mr. Tkach strongly feels that this program must be a priority in the pastor's time schedule. If you make it a priority, then your schedule can be shifted appropriately.

Delegation -- Effective delegation is vital to a pastor's job in this busy era of the Work. Certain jobs simply must be handled by subordinates. When we have determined what our priorities are, then the decisions of what to delegate become more clear. But remember, delegation requires your overall direction and control. Mr. Tkach sets a strong example of balance here.

Long-Term View of Benefits -- This program is not intended to eat up your time. IT IS INTENDED TO SAVE YOU TIME -- LOTS OF IT -- IN THE LONG RUN. Well-trained helpers simply can and do make life easier for the pastor. Take this as an opportunity to invest in the future -- yours, your elders' and deacons' and the whole congregation's. You will be glad you did.

## IX. Unique Feature -- Sermonette Assignment



Another feature of this class will help to build unity into the Church as a whole. At least once a month, we will expect you to assign one sermonette during church services to cover the difficult scripture that is being studied and expounded in the class that month. In this way, as you can see, all church areas will be receiving the same material within the same time frame. This will also provide for interesting discussion and fellowship at Sabbath services, as brethren travel and visit other churches.

## X. Suggestions

We are confident that you will find this lecture series to be very helpful and of high quality. Further, it has been written to accurately reflect Church teaching, administration, doctrine and tradition.

Still, it is not and cannot be perfect. If you have suggestions, please write them up in a brief and diplomatic manner and submit them to Church Administration. We will be producing this program over a longer period of time, so feedback in the early stages will be important. Suggestions will be considered and incorporated when Mr. Tkach and those advising him think they have general merit. Of course, not all suggestions can be used, but all will be appreciated.

## XI. Final Comments

I hope you can be as excited about this new series as we are, and that you will display that excitement and enthusiasm as you inaugurate the program. Please encourage the deacons, deaconesses and elders, and their mates, to be very enthusiastic about this program and be wholeheartedly involved with it as they learn to better serve the brethren of God's Church, and to prepare for the potential future growth of the Work.

Thank you again for your diligence and hard work. We hope this material is very helpful to you and to God's people worldwide.

**Difficult Scriptures**


| | |
|---|---|
| Luke 5:36-39 | 12 |
| Ephesians 2:8-9 | 13 |
| I John 5:16 | 14 |
| Luke 17:21 | 15 |
| Acts 10:12-13 | 16 |


**Doctrinal Outlines** (for Lecture no.)


| | |
|---|---|
| Government in God's Church | 1 |
| Who and What Is God? | 2 |
| What Is Man? | 3 |
| What the Bible Says About Baptism | 4 |
| What It Means to Be Converted | 5 |
| God's Purpose for Creating Man | 6 |
| The Blessing of Tithing | 7 |
| Eternal Judgment | 8 |
| The Christian Calling | 9 |
| The Resurrections | 10 |
| Will You Go to Heaven? | 11 |
| Sin -- A Matter of Life and Death | 12 |
| Have You Really Repented? | 13 |
| The Truth About the Gospel | 14 |
| What the Bible Says About Hell | 15 |
| What Is Death? | 16 |
| Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath? | 17 |
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**Difficult Scriptures** (for Lecture no.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Genesis 6:1-4 | 1 |
| I Chronicles 13:9-10 | 2 |
| Proverbs 23:19-31 | 3 |
| Proverbs 26:4-5 | 4 |
| Matthew 3:11 | 5 |
| Luke 16:9 | 6 |
| Matthew 19:23-24 | 7 |
| Romans 3:28 | 8 |
| Romans 6:14 | 9 |
| I Corinthians 10:27 | 10 |
| I Thessalonians 4:17 | 11 |

7. I Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11-12 mention the office of "prophet." Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong stated that the office of a New Testament prophet is to reveal a message from God to an apostle. See, for example, Acts 21:10-11. Since no one has fulfilled this role in this era of the Church, none have been recognized.

E. Conclusions Regarding Rank

It is plain from the Bible that God is the author of rank, and that rank means an order of descending authority and responsibility. The teachings of some churches that all ministers are of equal authority is simply not biblical. On the other hand, it is quite plain from numerous scriptures that God's ministers should not "exercise lordship" in a condescending or high-handed manner over each other, but should love one another in a spirit of humility (Matthew 20:25-28).

They should be helpers of the brethren's joy and thus be gentle, patient, kind and understanding. They should follow Christ's example: "A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench" (Matthew 12:20, New King James).

In recent months, Mr. Joseph W. Tkach and Mr. Larry Salyer have repeatedly stressed that the ministry must deal tenderly with God's children. We in Christ's service must not fail to give diligent heed to these important directives. These instructions should set the tone of our job as ministers.

F. How Ministers Are Chosen

Governments of this world choose their officers by improper means, such as through voting, grasping power through force, showing favoritism or returning political favors. In the case of churches of this world, many allow their ministers to choose the ministry as a mere career, as one would choose to be a plumber or carpenter. Ministers in the true Church are chosen by God (Hebrews 5:1-4, John 15:16) by making their fruits and calling obvious to those already in authority (I Timothy 3:1-7).

Ministers are ordained into service through the laying on of hands by ministers of superior rank. This ceremony shows the submission of the newly-ordained to God's government, as well as the two-way bond of respect, humility and love among God's entire family of ministers. It also reminds us of the extra measure of God's Spirit He gives us as we serve Him (I Timothy 4:14).