

# Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

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MEETING no 2

## Lecture 2

### God's Government and Your Role in It (Part II)

#### I. Introduction

In the last session we covered differences between man's government and God's government, and defined the offices of authority in the Church.

In this session, we will proceed with the principles by which those in authority govern. Since God's government is His Family, we are really seeing how God's Family is to operate. Remember, too, Mr. Joseph Tkach stresses that God's government for His Family should be (love in action.) God's love plus His Family equals His government. \*

#### II. Underlying Principles of God's Government

Every government, be it of man or of God, has a philosophical base -- that is, underlying principles -- that the government works within. For example, a democracy upholds the principles of equal representation and majority rule. Communists believe in working as you are able and being paid as you need. God's government also has foundational principles. Here are some of the main ones.

##### A. Authority From the Top Down

God's way is not a democracy. The authority is not from the people or from the bottom up, like in the United States. Such a system has many evils, since in the end it responds to the bottom (Isaiah 3:12). Instead, authority is from the top down. Guidance, therefore, comes from the most qualified in the universe (God) down to those in the Church.

##### B. Teaching Is From the Top Down

God is the great teacher. He teaches through His government, and He does so from the top down. Truth is revealed to His apostles and passed downward by faithful men (II Timothy 2:1-2, 4:1-3). The ministers must see themselves as a conduit through which truth is to pass from God through Mr. Tkach and headquarters to those below, rather than as sources of truth independent of Pasadena. The people, in turn, are students of those above them, and not committees to vote on beliefs and determine Church doctrine.

This is a much-misunderstood point, even among elders. Elders and assistant pastors are not there to teach or educate the pastor, even though we all should be easily entreated and willing to learn from those under us. But when it comes to God's truth and way, He teaches from the top down. This does not mean that the man above is always more spiritual or even more knowledgeable than those under him (although he probably should be), but merely that the pastor is the conduit through which God's instruction will come, if the pastor, as he should be, is properly plugged into headquarters.

This analogy of a conduit is an accurate illustration of how God works, and should be deeply considered by all. It eliminates the need to evaluate the personality qualities of the one over you, since you can know you will learn what you should, providing the pastor is, in turn, faithfully passing on, not his own ideas, but the truth he learns from those in the spiritual conduit above him.

C. God Is at the Top

The important truth that the government is from the top down is anchored by the fact that God -- not men -- is at the top of the government. This fundamental truth should never be forgotten (I Samuel 8:1-9). As previously shown, God the Father is supreme commander of the universe, and Christ is the head of all things to the Church.

D. God Uses Men

One reason God uses men is to train them for responsibility in the world tomorrow. Another reason is to allow some imperfections to exist which test the faithfulness and submission of those governed. God wants to see if we will submit to men (within His law) even though none are perfect.

Although God is the head of the Church, He does indeed use men, and powerfully, in spite of the fact that all men are imperfect. Read the powerful statement of Moses in (Numbers 16:28). Again, consider the "conduit" analogy to understand how God can use an imperfect man as long as he is faithful.

E. God's Government Is Based Upon His Law (Romans 7:12, Deuteronomy 4:1-8)

This should be self-explanatory, but unless we force ourselves, we naturally tend to accept man's law as correct.

F.

God's Justice System Is Vastly Different From Man's, of Whatever Description

God's justice system is based upon reward, punishment, repentance, forgiveness, grace and faith. Man's system may, like in the United States, depend upon being caught, tried, being "innocent until proven guilty," convicted and punished (maybe). God's system finds a sinner guilty until he repents, then he is forgiven and made innocent. Meditate from time to time upon the utter superiority of God's way and see how it applies in the Church.

G.

God's Government Is Based Upon Love -- Outgoing Concern -- And Treating Your Neighbor As You Would Wish to be Treated (John 13:34-35)

Man's governments are based upon "the survival of the fittest," or upon the "adversary system."

H.

God's Government Is a Government of Faith

In man's government the people rebel or vote their officials out of office if they disagree with policies. The United States uses a system of checks and balances, watchdog committees and inquiries. In God's system, we view God as the real head and the one to set up our leaders and remove them if need be. We have faith that God is able to govern His people through those whom He chooses.

I.

God's System Is One of Perfect Representation

Even in a democracy, the people cannot always reach their leaders with problems. In God's government, the ministers exist to serve the people, and each person can get to his minister when need be. Also, any person can -- and daily should -- "go to the top" of God's government in his prayers to the Father (John 16:23-24). Indeed, communication between the Father and His children is so good that He can read our minds via His Spirit even though we may be in so much turmoil because of a trial that we cannot phrase our prayers properly (Romans 8:26).

J.

God's Government Has a Unique Purpose

Man's governments exist too often just to enhance people's standard of living -- to gain wealth, mostly. God's government has greater and different emphasis. It exists to educate God's people, to spread the Gospel and to serve as the embryo of God's government, which will spread over the universe and expand forever (Matthew 24:14, Isaiah 9:6-7). It exists to establish God's Family in love throughout the universe.

### III. God's Government and the Local Ministry

It is vital to the successful running of the local church that each minister fully understand how he fits personally into Christ's government. Here we examine the role of the pastor and his assistants and elders in the local church government.

#### A. The Pastor

The pastor is sent from Pasadena to administrate the church.

1. He must operate within God's law and the prescribed limits of his authority. He is given greater latitude than many members may realize, but his bounds are clearly defined in various policy statements from Pasadena.
2. He is to teach as he has been taught (Titus 1:9, Colossians 2:5-8). He is not the originator of new truth or new approaches, but a faithful steward entrusted with the truth of God (II Timothy 2:1-2).
3. He must do the will of those who have sent him. Even as Christ did not do His own will, but that of the Father who sent him, a pastor must seek, not his own goals, but the will of those who have sent him (John 4:34, 8:28).

Note: It is often assumed that a minister is sent to "do the best job he can." This is not the case. The best any human can do falls far short of God's way of doing things. A minister is sent to implement God's way, not his own way -- even his own "best." This is not merely a matter of semantics. Solomon said that even when men do their best -- that is, when they do what seems to them to be correct -- that their efforts will end in death (Proverbs 14:12). God has not appointed us to the role of minister because of our great intellect or insight, but because He believes we will implement Christ's way, although it seems like foolishness to the carnal mind (I Corinthians 1:18, 23).

4. The pastor, and all in the authority chain, must know when to pass a decision upward to men of superior experience and rank. In God's government, the judge himself is to be aware of his limitations and send a decision up the lines. Read Deuteronomy 1:17 and 17:8 regarding matters "too hard" to decide.

## B. Assistants and Elders

Assistants and elders likewise are not in the church area to implement their own ideas, to teach the pastor or to express their individuality. They, too, must:

1. Teach as they have been taught (John 12:49).
2. Do the will of those over them (who, in turn, are doing the will of headquarters, which does the will of Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, who does the will of Christ, who does the will of the Father). In this way, God's will is conducted faithfully from the Father through the pastor and elders to the people.

Note: For the pastor, assistants and elders to teach as they have been taught, and to faithfully carry out the will of their superiors through Christ, requires each man to humble himself and glorify God. The temptation for anyone in authority is to exalt his own knowledge, ideas and ways of doing things while, perhaps, gloating on his own accomplishments and qualifications. Even Jesus Christ did not dwell upon himself but upon the Father. He said: "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49). Further, He said, "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (John 7:18). And again, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). ✓

## C. Going Above Chain of Command

? When, if ever, should an elder or assistant or deacon go over the head of the man above him in God's chain of command?

From what has been said, it can be seen that the pastor is a key link in any church area. Therefore it is a rare case when an assistant or elder should go around his authority. Here are some guidelines for when it is proper:

1. An assistant or elder should not go over his pastor's head:
  - a. In matters of mere personality difference. For example, he is a sloppy dresser.

- b. In matters of administrative style within the broad guidelines headquarters allows. For example, he puts members' addresses on long sheets instead of neat cards like most men do.
  - c. When the minister has made an innocent mistake or slip of the tongue. For example, he gave a wrong answer to a tithing question but did so without intending to err.
2. An assistant or elder (may) go over his pastor's head:
- a. When the pastor intentionally teaches doctrinal error or heresy. For example, he says the Holy Days are nice but not commanded.
  - b. When the pastor clearly and markedly departs from the administrative policies outlined by headquarters. For example, headquarters says he can take two weeks off to see his family, but he takes two months without permission.
  - c. When the pastor commits a serious sin that threatens his spiritual life or the well-being of the congregation. For example, the pastor commits adultery and it comes to your attention.
3. Caution is in order here -- remember that when one goes over his superior's head, he should be in a good attitude and correct in his facts. No matter what the outcome of such a move, someone's reputation will be damaged -- either the pastor's or the one who takes such action (in case he is wrong). God's government allows such actions, for it is through this means that we can be sure we are never cut off from God by an intermediate weak link in the chain of command. Still, it is a serious move and should (not) be taken lightly or done capriciously.

An important passage in this regard is Matthew 18:15-20. These verses say we should go to a brother who sins against (us) and confront him diplomatically, before deciding it is necessary to go to those over him.

~~X~~ Strictly speaking, these scriptures apply to a case when a brother wrongs you (personally), not when he wrongs someone else. A minister of superior rank may conceivably misuse his role and sin without sinning against his subordinates. In such a case, it would (not) be appropriate to go to

him first. For example, a minister who commits adultery could be reported directly to Mr. Salyer. The sin is against God and the Church, not you. However, some sins do affect you personally, such as when he demands you to take some ungodly action. You should go to him first in such a case.

In summary, although Matthew 18:15-20 only demands that you confront a person who sins against you, it is almost never wrong, and often preferable, to go to him first even when he hasn't sinned against you personally. Doing so will almost always resolve the problem!

~~Note: Those in any position of authority in God's government should make it clear to those under them that they expect them to appeal to a higher authority when necessary.~~

#### IV. Conclusion

✓ In this lecture we have broached one of the most important topics of the entire Bible. It is impossible to cover every detail of Christ's government and to address every possible situation. Yet, with an understanding of these simple details and a submissive and proper attitude, God's Church can shine as a smooth-running beacon of solidarity in the midst of a world of chaos!

