

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

WORLD HEADQUARTERS
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
PRESIDENT and PASTOR

C. WAYNE COLE
Director of Church
Administration

June 12, 1975

Dear Fellow Ministers:

Enclosed is a copy of the paper, Race Relations in the Church. We are sending this preliminary draft to you for your evaluation and critique.

Mr. Ted Armstrong has gone over the paper and edited it to conform with his feelings on the subject.

To avoid unnecessary cost, and more importantly to obviate the extra time needed to procure 200-300 replies, we are sending this to only three or four dozen ministers. It is our belief this will provide the cross-section of criticism needed.

Please give this immediate, high-priority attention as we are anxious to get it out to the ministry as soon as possible. We value your opinion and comments!

Address the returned copies to me personally. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Very sincerely yours,



C. Wayne Cole

CWC:bmc

Enclosure

Race Relations in the Church

Twenty years have passed since the major policy decisions of the Church of God on race relations were set forth. A whole new generation has grown up. The educational level of ethnic and racial minorities in the Western world has remarkably increased. Job opportunities and political responsibility have, in significant ways, altered the way of life of a majority of underprivileged groups.

In keeping with these trends, Ambassador College swung open its doors by the mid 1960's to married minority students. By the end of the decade Ambassador accepted unmarried minority students of both sexes.

The new integration policy is found in the Ambassador College Bulletin, General Catalog, under Admission and Registration: "It is the policy of Ambassador College to afford equal educational opportunities to qualified individuals regardless of race, religion, creed, sex or ethnic background."

Basic Teaching of the Church

The following policy statement of the Worldwide Church of God supersedes all material heretofore published on this subject by the Church.

It now becomes imperative that the ministry of the Church and the general membership revitalize their understanding of interpersonal and interracial relationships as Christians. The teaching of the Church of God has been and will

always remain: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:19; Leviticus 19:18). Unfortunately, this second of the two great commandments has not always been the standard for each member's interpersonal relationships. It is not easy to forget past attitudes and hurt feelings.

Consider these principles. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35; James 2:2). He deals justly with all men. There is no double standard with the Almighty. "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you" (Exodus 12:49; also Numbers 15:15,16).

How to deal justly and how to love one's neighbor in living up to the New Covenant is set forth plainly by Paul in Philippians 2:2-4, "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye may be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." The giving of esteem one to another is a two-way street.

To love one's neighbor is to be concerned for the welfare of another -- his spiritual and physical welfare. To love one's neighbor means, also, to respect one another, to admire the accomplishments of others, to esteem fellow Christians better than yourself, because you know your own weaknesses in contrast to your brother's accomplishments. It is

this attitude of love and concern which is imperative if we are to have proper individual and group relationships.

Diversity in Unity

"God that made the world and all things therein," explained Paul to the Athenian philosophers, "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:24,26). God created a single human family, yet with remarkable ethnic and racial diversity, to dwell on and appreciate an earth clothed with geographic and climatic diversity. Moses was inspired to summarize this thought in Deuteronomy 32:8, "When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Had the nations heeded God and formulated their national policies accordingly, the mountain of woes from war, slavery and racial and ethnic jealousies would never have towered over the human landscape.

One of the great misfortunes that can befall ethnic or racial minorities -- whether the result of conquest in war or by slavery -- is to be psychologically conditioned with the concept of innate inferiority, or the inferiority of one's cultural and linguistic heritage. Equally threatening is the opposite misfortune -- whether the result of victory in battle

or masterminding the slave trade -- is for a people to vaunt their imagined innate superiority and their cultural and linguistic heritage. These human tragedies -- the world of animals knows nothing of this kind of experience despite its immense diversity -- have afflicted all human beings in some manner. Ethnic groups are sometimes made to feel ashamed of their names or their native language. Racial minorities are sensitized to color and feature differences. Dominant groups often treat with indifference or callousness the physical and psychological needs of underprivileged minorities.

Group Identification

That every human being is unique is not often fully realized. No two humans are exactly alike -- not even identical twins. Yet even in an integrated society we share physical and cultural traits more with some human beings than with others. And we tend to identify with these traits.

Culturally, we tend to identify more with those of similar backgrounds. Linguistically, we identify with those who speak our language -- unless one has been made to feel inferior about one's cultural or linguistic heritage. Ethnically and racially, we tend to identify with those of similar ethnic and racial background -- unless one has been made to feel inferior about one's genetic stock.

The natural tendency to identify with those of the same

sex, age group, culture, ethnic or racial stock, or religious conviction does not mean we should feel superior about our traits, whether cultural or genetic, and belittle those that differ. For in Christ we all become spiritually one and joint heirs of the promises made to Abraham (Galatians 3:28-29).

Yet in this life we are still male and female and have distinctive roles to fulfill. And we are in this life by cultural heritage speakers of different languages. We do not have to change our language to become Christian -- though we might need to add a language to become a better servant of Christ. We are in this life of differing genetic backgrounds and can no more change our color than we can change our stature (Jeremiah 13:23 and Matthew 6:27). But we can all become Christians and learn the true meaning of tolerance.

Spiritually, too, we identify with those of the same religious background. That is why marriage ought to be within one faith, and why marriages between individuals of different faiths may lead to grave problems. Paul comments on this matter in I Corinthians 7:12-15, in addressing divorce between the converted and the unconverted. The counsel of Moses was even stronger to fleshly Israel, when awaiting to enter the promised land: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy

son from following me, that they may serve other gods..."

(Deuteronomy 7:3-4). Religion, as opposed to ethnic or racial characteristics, is here addressed as the reason.

A thousand years later Nehemiah, the governor of Judah, faced the same issue. "In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them.... Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? ...even him did outlandish women cause to sin." (Nehemiah 13:23-26)

To marry into Ammon and Moab -- the line from Abraham's nephew Lot, or to marry with Edom (I Kings 11:1-2) -- Jacob's twin brother, as Solomon did, involved sin. This sin is not a racial issue, not even an ethnic issue. It is a matter of religion. For fleshly Israel to have married even near of kin, when of another religion, was sin under the Old Covenant. In the New Testament the prohibition against marrying outside the faith is continued (I Corinthians 7:39, last part).

Marriages Before Conversion

But what about marriages, prior to conversion, with those who are unconverted? Marriage, though a divine institution, is in this life a natural union. To violate the marriage con-

tract by adultery or by failure to provide for one's mate is sin -- spiritual sin -- because it violates a spiritual law. "For we know that the law is spiritual" said Paul in Romans 7:14. But to have been married to someone who is not converted at the time of one's own conversion is not a spiritual sin, in fact not a sin at all. There may be marital difficulties. The marriage may end in divorce, or the unconverted mate may become converted later. In any case, Paul advises Christians not to put away unconverted mates (see I Corinthians 7).

And what about marriages prior to conversion involving interracial or different ethnic backgrounds? Upon conversion of one or both mates, what is the status of such marriages? The Church of God, over the years, has recognized the validity of such marriages. No spiritual sin is involved, otherwise the Church cannot recognize them as valid.

Even under the terms of the Old Covenant, interracial marriages were not required to be set aside unless they clearly involved religious differences. We read in Numbers 12:1 "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman." In this instance speaking publicly against Moses was sin. The marriage is not defined as sin, nor did God ask Moses to put away the Ethiopian woman. Miriam and Aaron made no reference to the Ethiopian's religious conviction. They made

instead a personal issue of the matter. This singular marriage does not warrant, however, the belief that Israelites and Ethiopians should freely intermarry and lose their distinctive characteristics. Let us understand why.

God — the Great Husbandman

God is the Great Husbandman. And just as he required Israelites to be good husbandmen (Leviticus 19:19), so he has given us examples in Scripture of his care and concern for the human family he is shepherding, especially the family of Abraham. God purposed to produce from faithful Abraham a line of kings (the sceptre promise) and a people that would be a blessing to all other nations. But he also purposed to show that even the most selectively chosen human genetic traits are, by nature, unqualified to inherit his kingdom. That in the end the Lord God would have to pick from among all nations -- he looks on the heart -- to produce a "bride" for himself.

In animal and plant husbandry the way to produce pure lines (that breed true for one or more chosen characteristics, not referring to good and bad) is to inbreed a certain stock for a number of generations and continue to select the desired characteristics. New characteristics can be added to the chosen stock by adding other pure lines and once more selecting. We find this occurring in the lives of the patriarchs, whether they were aware of it or not.

We pick up the story in Genesis 6:9, where we are introduced to righteous Noah from whose lineage God chose faithful Abraham. "These are the generations of Noah. Noah, a righteous man, was blameless among his contemporaries..."

The original Hebrew of Genesis 6:9 contains two distinct words both rendered "generations" in the KJV. The first occurrence -- "These are the generations of Noah" -- toledot is used for lineal descent. The second occurrence -- "perfect in his generations" -- dor is used to denote "the totality of (adult) contemporaries; a time with its noteworthy events and people..." The Hebrew phrase is rendered "among his contemporaries" in A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament by William L. Holladay, editor, p. 69.

Noah was especially selected from among his "contemporaries" (Heb. dor) for his righteous character.

From Noah's line (Heb. toledot) God chose Abram, trained and tested him and then gave a son of promise, Isaac, from a particular wife, Sarai. From the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, a cousin, God chose Jacob. Wives from the immediate family added select characteristics.

In the family of Judah the process of selection continued longest, for from this family would come the Messiah, a kingly line and a people who would preserve the Hebrew Bible. We read in Genesis 38 that "Judah went down from his brethren.... and saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua;

and he took her, and went in unto her" (verses 1-2). Three sons were born from this Hebrew-Canaanite union. Two of Judah's sons were wicked (verses 7-10). The surviving son became one of the ancestors of the House of Judah, but he was not chosen for the kingly line. Instead, the kingly line was selected from the union of Judah and Tamar, his daughter-in-law (verses 11-30), because of the unusual intellectual traits that were introduced into the family from Tamar. Later, God selected Ruth, a Moabitess, for the kingly line, there being no prohibition on religious grounds -- for Ruth said: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16). And she is characterized as "a virtuous woman" (Ruth 3:11).

But it is not Israel and the line of David that alone are of value to God. The Almighty is concerned with other races and ethnic groups also. "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?" (Amos 9:7).

God has dealt fairly with Gentile nations as with Israel -- even though they have not known him. He judges the Ethopians for their sins as he does Israel. He brought the Philistines and Syrians into new lands as he did Israel.

The Bible puts emphasis on the development of families and nations. Each is important. These are finer divisions than the broad category of race, and, properly observed, would maintain racial qualities.

Family characteristics and rights are of such significance that God instituted laws to maintain family, tribal and national identity. When a question of loss of family identity arose in the days of Moses, God revealed the answer. When the sole surviving heirs are daughters, the daughters are not to marry outside the tribe, transferring the land to others. "Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry. So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe" (Numbers 36:6-7).

And as for the Gentiles who dwell in Israelite lands, and who through slavery or war have lost their original inheritance, or who through migration have entered Israel, we read, "And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it (the land) by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall be given him his inheritance, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 47:22-23).

When we combine Numbers 36 with these verses in Ezekiel, we have a positive, wholesome outlook on marriage and parenthood. Children would marry their own type. Minority groups would seek to preserve their God-given identity and inheritances, and the majority -- where racial variation is great -- would not have to fear gradual loss of its characteristics. Even now, in an integrated society filled with human prejudices, we as Christians can put these Biblical principles into practice among ourselves.

Learning How the Other Thinks

If we are to implement tolerance, love for one's neighbor and concern for each other's welfare, we must understand how different individuals and groups tend to think. Misunderstandings often arise from incorrectly interpreting another's words or motives. For instance, when the topic of race relations is brought up, the majority of the white community tends to think immediately of the question of racial intermarriage. Most blacks, by contrast, think immediately of equal opportunity for job and educational advancement and of equal justice before the courts. These are issues most ethnics think of first. It is imperative that we understand each other's concern, and not merely our own, if we are to create a new climate of spiritual harmony free of all racial bias.

Ambassador College policy seeks to implement this goal. The College instills responsible citizenship in the minds of its students. That is, every individual has a responsibility to his fellow man to do right by him. In addition, the College as an employer seeks to set a standard of conduct for employers everywhere in the Church. The College recognizes that employees, irrespective of their individual backgrounds, have the right to be treated equally in matters of recruitment and hiring practices, working conditions, promotion advancement, tenure, salary, fringe benefits, termination, grievance procedures.

In the turmoil of the 1950's, when minority voices were finally heard at the highest levels of government, the question of equal rights was often misunderstood. The demand to be treated as a brother was interpreted to mean brother-in-law. Inequities needlessly continued in job situations and educational advancement was often hindered.

Church and College found it difficult to implement a unified code of conduct because of the great differences of temperament in different regions of the United States. The Church and the College did assume the duty to positively prevent racial intermarriage among its members. But as the turmoil in the world over minority rights gradually quieted, and as racial and ethnic minorities in the Church gradually assumed widening responsibilities, a new atmosphere and emphasis

has developed and is in need of restatement.

One of the vital roles of the ministry is to help members focus on the areas that need our active participation in developing interpersonal and interracial relations. Especially among minority groups there is need to encourage improvement in job skills through adult education programs. Church members with past educational lacks must not become discouraged. Many older individuals of whatever racial background who lack significant education will find their greatest contribution to society as a Christian will come in encouraging young people to achieve in areas that they themselves were unable to. Spanish-speaking individuals should not seek to lose their identity in improving their education. They ought to speak, when possible, two languages fluently and thus open further to themselves the doors of employment. This is especially important for young men and women interested in the personal service areas and in education, where knowing a second language can be a great asset.

Great tragedy has befallen the father-image among blacks, the roots of which go back to slavery. Blacks were commonly assigned the most menial tasks open to them irrespective of their education. Though the civil rights movement corrected some of this, we all share a common responsibility in changing

what is yet undone. We owe it to one another as Christians, and as human beings, to help each brother and fellow human being rise to the highest level of personal achievement -- whether by our own example, encouragement, influence, impartiality, prayer, opening up opportunities, or financial help. This is the essence of Christianity when it comes to dealing with or relating to one's neighbor.

Dating Practices

In social areas, as distinct from employment and education, we have to be very conscious of human sensitivities. Each individual church member -- and the Church as a whole -- has a responsibility to avoid giving offense before the world and before one another. In seeking to avoid giving offense in heretofore segregationist areas, the Church, in fact, has given needless offense in nonsegregationist areas. It sought to resolve one problem but created another, not realizing to what extent shifts have taken place in the thinking of the majority white community.

In development of the social life of the Church diversity should continue to be allowed. For example, a Latin dance, a German night, a black social -- all can meet the various group needs within the Church. In areas with significant minority representation, there will also be social and athletic activities in which all participate. In sports, especially in integrated group competition, each individual should conduct

himself as a church member ought. Poor sportsmanship should never be thought of as other than an individual character weakness. It is an individual problem, not a racial or ethnic trait. It is very common to be a respecter of persons in integrated sporting activities, by assuming emotional responses that differ, or poor sportsmanship, are objectional group traits.

Mixed social functions, wherever they occur, fall into two broad categories. One, functions with large minority groups within which there is no major disparity in numbers with respect to sex and age. Two, those with small minority groups wherein are unequal numbers with respect to sex and age.

With respect to the first group in large metropolitan regions, there would normally be no problem finding dating and social companionship among one's own ethnic group.

In view of the grave importance of marriage for the stability of society and for the happiness of the individual, the Worldwide Church of God strongly urges dating and marriage emphasize similar ethnic/racial backgrounds.

Wise marriages are those which match compatible people. That compatibility can be determined by consideration of the many different traits of personality, cultural background, intellect, character, and even physical features. A marriage in which neither partner properly understands the other's language is not likely to be the most fulfilling! The same

general considerations come into question when people of two obviously diverse racial backgrounds consider marriage. Two people could, hypothetically, be completely compatible though of diverse racial backgrounds. In actual practice, though, racial differences usually imply other important differences which will clash rather than complement each other.

Marriage is for adults. Marriage is for people with their eyes wide open. If two people decide to marry in the absence of -- or contrary to -- wise counsel, they have to bear the responsibility of that decision, as we all must ultimately bear responsibility for all our decisions. We cannot forbid people of the same race or ethnic background to marry, though obviously unsuited for one another. And we do not put them out of the Church when no direct violation of God's law is involved. Consequently, we cannot forbid people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds to marry, however unwise such marriages may be. And no stigma must ever be attached to children that may result from such a union.

Concerning the second category of social functions -- with few minority people: there is still the need of having locally a reasonably full social opportunity for proper personality development. (Larger social gatherings at the annual festivals will supplement a lack at the local level for adequate dating with one's own ethnic or racial group.) Dating

is something shared for mutual social benefit and educational stimulus. We should not allow individuals to be socially ostracized at integrated church social occasions simply because racial or ethnic disparity in number occurs locally. It is the parents' responsibility to instruct culturally their children to see that no young single individual is denied normal social activities because of ethnic or racial descent.

For any young person to step forward and extend human companionship is Christian and proper. For others to interpret a singular act of social courtesy as some sudden romantic involvement is not only wrong-headed, but displays ignorance of proper social duty in such a situation. We should get our priorities and duties straight, and know how to distinguish between social courtesy and romantic involvement. It also solves the problem in small communities of two young people of the same minority background going steady, when they are clearly not suited for one another in marriage.

In both cases the key to proper social conduct is to recognize that social graces cross ethnic and racial bounds.

These situations should be expected and planned for in an educated and culturally mature society. To interpret them solely as romantic overtures demonstrates lack of understanding and compassion. It is in this latter area that Ambassador College seeks to train its students as examples, while at the same time advising them against inexpedient and inappropriate dating situations that could lead to unwise marriages.

The Meaning of Integration

Over the years both inside and outside the Church the term "integration" has been tarnished with the corrosive taint of "communist conspiracy," "interracial amalgamation," "satanic plot," "work of the devil," "end of white identity," "white/black sexual orgies," "social disintegration," and many more emotionally etched ideas.

Therefore, we must take into account when addressing the membership on the matter of the right kind of integration within the Church the need to repair these sentiments of mind.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines "integrate" in the primary sense to mean: "to make whole or complete by adding or bringing together parts.... (secondarily) unity..."

Many words have come to mean unfortunate things to many people. Take for example school integration and the much debated contention of racial differences in intelligence thought to be made more acutely apparent by integration. One psychologist Jane Mercer of University of California concludes

that, "What the IQ test measures, to a significant extent, is the child's exposure to Anglo culture..." (Or, the lack of it!)

God has integrated his Church -- brought together different parts (people), if you please -- to teach us his culture.

It is this cultural unity -- Christian unity -- the Christian Experience and the Mind of Christ, rather than the rigid ideas and entrenched biases of men which unites rather than separates us and which will determine how "integrated" or fitly framed together we (Church of God) really are (see I Corinthians 12:12-27).

Minority people perceive their struggle for justice, fair-play, and racial equality to be life and death attempts to stay "afloat" in a competitive society while "shooting the rapids" of racial prejudice and injustice.

Human cultures have their inherent weaknesses. So long as this present evil world stands, there will always be "unjust weights and measures" -- something God Almighty hates.

The Kingdom of God will be a Christian Culture, not distinctly Anglo, Negro, Latin or Oriental. The integrated Church of God is the herald of that Kingdom and New Culture.

Conclusion

The Church of God will continue to teach and the College administration and faculty will continue to emphasize that

interracial marriage is most definitely hazardous; that it may bring strains on intimate family relationships (from any cultural or racial source, from either parent); that it may place unbearable social strain on future children; that, given today's carnal society, it may be a handicapping social stigma which can place daily strain on any such interracial marriage.

"Interracial" may be a difficult word to define -- since many would wish to argue the various racial admixtures, such as 1/8th this or that minority, etc.; but we use it here in its broadest application to include the obvious, easily discernible racial differences which are quickly and normally identifiable in society. It is a racial admixture when white and Oriental marry; or when white and black, or Oriental and black. It is also obvious when various mixed-race individuals such as American Indians of whatever tribe marry members of a distinctively different race, such as black or Caucasian. This is treating solely with the physical differences, not to mention the social, cultural, and linguistic differences.

While (given all we have covered to this point) we reiterate it is not a SIN in God's sight for a Russian (a political term embracing many different races) to marry a Frenchman -- the cultural differences may mean serious problems in marriage. To the human eye, it may be all but

impossible to discern any interracial marriage in such a case if both are white. (But, one would be amazed to see the varieties living in the political entity called France, as well as amazed to see the host of racial strains in the Soviet Union.) In the case to which we refer there would be no racial mixing apparent -- yet, culturally, linguistically, and very possibly religiously, there would be a definite cross-cultural mixture that could affect marital success.

The Church teaches that persons of LIKE backgrounds, like racial origins, like social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds should seek mates among those of their own race, color, culture, those who share like interests and concerns. It most definitely teaches that racial mixture is not the best, but is fraught with serious physical, psychological, emotional and mental consequences. The responsibility MUST REST WITH THE INDIVIDUAL. The Church can only TEACH these principles which it holds to be self-evident truths, and WILL NOT EXERT PUNITIVE FORCE on any who, of their own voluntary will, choose to go contrary to such church teaching. The Church cannot, and will not, assume what should be parental influence; or the influence coming from relatives, friends, and peers.