

INTER-OFFICE

To: Mr. Antion

Date: August 15, 1972

Department:

Subject: "New Approach" in Field

From: Jim Morrison

We in C.A.D. have been thinking a great deal about and discussing what we call the "new approach" in the Field that has been initiated. It is, of course, a matter of a change in emphasis. The new emphasis is on how well the job is done rather than on the mechanical details of doing it. The men in the Field are beginning to realize that it is not the numbers of visits they log that is really important but the fruits of their work, which is shown by the lives of the people.

The men had been told before that the number of visits wasn't the thing that was most important, but because of a certain emphasis that seemed to be placed on the mechanics -- the specific "how to's" of being a minister -- many seemed to miss the point of what being a minister is really all about.

This "new approach" in the Field is a refreshing change, and in meditating on the principles involved, I have come to see some profound lacks in my own spiritual life. It all makes me wonder how many of us in God's Church have 'missed the boat' in understanding the real meaning of what Christianity is all about. I know I have, and what I experience in living and working in the "Headquarters atmosphere" makes me believe quite a few others have as well. (The same could no doubt be said of the atmosphere in many of our local churches.)

How many of us, I wonder, have tended to be mechanical Christians with a "do's-and-don'ts" approach toward Christianity. How many of us overlook the weightier matters of the law as we religiously conform outwardly to God's law?

I ask these questions because I also wonder if there is something lacking in the matter of emphasis regarding real Christianity. I don't question the Church's teachings, but since we are known by our fruits, the "Headquarters atmosphere" seems to indicate that many of us must have misunderstood the thrust of what "God's Way" is all about. Could it be that we have stressed so very much the mechanics of Christianity and keeping the law that many of us have overlooked the end or purpose of the commandments?

I hope none of what I saw here is construed to indicate I don't believe it is important to obey the law. I believe that, of course. But it is a matter of emphasis. One can feel so "righteous" because he is keeping the Law (in the letter); avoiding unclean meats; scorning Christmas, Easter and birthdays; and being "friendly" to others (because it's expected of us).

In thinking about how the "new approach" in the Field was initiated by a change in emphasis, I wondered if something might be done to change the emphasis in God's Church so that we become more concerned about what is actually going on in our hearts than we are about the mechanics.

That something is sorely wrong seems obvious when one looks at the fruits of God's spirit listed in Galatians 5 -- especially the first three -- and asks, does this describe the "Headquarters atmosphere"? Real love, joy and peace can't be faked.

I don't know what the answer is. It may have something to do with the contrast between the attitude of many of us toward our "religion" -- and that of many seemingly sincere but misguided unconverted people, including some "Jesus People." Some of them seem to have more real joy and zeal as a result of their belief in some of the simple statements of Christ about salvation than many of us have. Are we in God's Church under some kind of cloud or can we experience a similar (but more deepfelt and genuine) exultation or joy in knowing we have been called and given God's mercy. Can we learn to not just "show love" but to have it, deeply, for our neighbors (even those in the world), for our brethren and for our God. Wouldn't the result be that we wouldn't lie or steal, for example, but would keep the Sabbath as a delight and joy? Again, it seems to be a matter of emphasis.

Maybe it's just that I have needed to repent and that most of our brethren already understand this. But if, as it seems to be, the Galatians 5 fruits don't predominate in this Headquarters atmosphere, does that indicate that something is wrong, not just with us as individuals but perhaps with the emphasis in the instruction? If we have a lot of people who measure their "spirituality" and their "degree of character" by skirt length, sideburn length, number of minutes per day in prayer and study, etc., aren't they missing the point? And who is responsible? (I know we must be taught to pray and study and dress modestly, but does an over-emphasis on the means rather than the end itself cause some to lose sight of the real goal?)

I suppose the same principle could be applied to this matter of seeking a "position" in God's Kingdom. It is so easy to get overly concerned about our reward and to turn inward in trying to "build character" rather than looking outward and growing in love, joy, peace, etc., and letting the reward take care of itself.