Atmosphere of Fear and Intimidation  
1974 David Antion Memo to Garner Ted Armstrong

**WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD  
MEMORANDUM**

**DATE: February 18, 1974**

**TO: Mr. Ted Armstrong**

**FROM: David L. Antion**

**SUBJECT: Problems**

Dear Ted,

As you are well aware there is a great lack of confidence in the field ministry toward Headquarters in Pasadena. This has been building up for sometime. It is now intensifying to an explosive condition.

A look at the history in the Work over the last few years will give a background to what is happening today. The roots of Doctrinal problems go back to the mid-sixties when effective Ministerial Conferences came to an end.

Today, most of the ministers in the United States have heard of the Doctrinal problems. Some do not know what the questions are, but they do know there are questions.

A number of ministers have major questions with conscience in regard to certain doctrines and practices held by the Work. I am sure you will understand this since you have expressed some questions yourself. It has become widespread that you have doubts about the D & R Doctrine.

In the last year, I received many questions about the Doctrines now under intense scrutiny. I tried to assure the ministers that there would be Doctrinal discussions at Headquarters where we would go into there matters.

In the fall of 1972, I wrote a memo to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong stating the problems then extant in the field. I expressed at that time that ministers were losing confidence. They were in doubt on such matters as Healing, Prophecy, Divorce and Remarriage, Church Eras, etc. I strongly recommended that we hold regular high leveled doctrinal and judgmental conferences to consider the many questions that had been coming in. At my urging (and Mr. Portune's support) your father consented to hold some Evangelists meetings prior to the 1973 Ministerial Conference. At the time we took up Tithing and a couple of other topics. You attended a few of the sessions, but were busy with T.V. a good part of the time.

These meetings started November 1972 and continued until shortly before the conference in January 1973. Robert Kulm was instrumental in helping edit the material for the conference. We did go into Tithing, inviting people to Church, hair lengths, sideburns, etc. All minor issues, while as you said, "the major issues lie there screaming for attention." But it was the best we could do at the time. Even that took a lot of prodding and pushing to accomplish.

The meetings died after January 1973. Meanwhile, issues like "Sacred-Names" came up. In December 1972, it was announced that the committee was researching Divorce and Remarriage. This became widely known all over the country. Many began to look into the Doctrine. Also, in the first half of 1973, Pentecost came sharply into focus with at least one Evangelist in Pasadena observing it privately on Sunday. There were several other ministers who did the same. This news also got out to the field causing several to start looking in the matter for themselves.

Presently, these Doctrinal matters are absolutely critical.

Over the last year, but especially in the last six months, I have talked with ministers who have major questions on D & R and on Pentecost. I urged them to hold fast and that Headquarters was working on getting a Doctrinal meeting formed and that these things would be gone into and answered. As you know, I have been fully behind Doctrinal discussions. I have urged that full Doctrinal meetings take place.

Presently, there are two Regional Directors who feel that they probably cannot conscientiously handle D & R cases according to our present Doctrine. There are several other ministers who also feel the same way. There have been a number of ministers at Headquarters who have refused to sit in on D & R discussions, but who do not want it to be known. These Headquarter's ministers are glad they don't have to handle D & R problems, because they cannot do it conscientiously.

At the risk of losing my credibility, I have asked men to be patient, that something would be done. If only something had been done two years ago, or fifteen months ago, or even six months ago the problem would not be as acute today.

But here is what happened. John Mitchell, Tom Fish, Al Carrozzo, Barry Chase, and Bob Jenness have left; word of the issues has spread far and wide. Papers on Pentecost and D & R primarily (and other subjects secondarily) have circulated to people not only in Pasadena, but also over the country. Many ministers are fully informed on these subjects. Others have definite opinions of conscience.

It was good news in January for the men to hear that Pentecost was going to be looked into. But, it now appears that Pentecost is only the tip of a major Doctrinal iceberg. It is being watched mainly because it will indicate the climate in the Church for truth-seeking and change.

Even now, some feel that Pentecost is only being examined because the organization is being threatened, not because truth is being sought.

I must now bring other problem issues to you as I see them. The situation is so critical, a number of men will no longer be held back by asking them to be patient. You may wonder why I don't do something. I have less authority to tackle the real issues than you do, and you feel pretty powerless to get at the solutions sometimes yourself.

With Ernest teaching doctrine, word is spreading faster. Because we are looking at Pentecost, it has given rise to greater questioning in other areas of Doctrine.

Personally, I have had to do some preliminary study into D & R because of the questions from ministers. I am convinced there are major questions with our present doctrine as expressed in our booklet "Marriage and Divorce." These questions need to be resolved.

Not only are there Doctrinal issues, but also there are questions of personal accountability. In the minds of some ministers, questions of Pentecost is not a matter for one man to decide and everyone else to obey. It is a matter of what the Bible says and our responsibility as servants of God to accept God's word.

The same is true for D & R. The men who feel conscience stricken on the subject, feel that they are "hirelings" who are expected to carry out the administration of what someone else decides. They feel they are being asked to obey whether they agree or disagree without answer or explanation to questions. Of course, they know that to disagree is being "disloyal" and that they can be put out of the Church and out of the Ministry.

This brings up another subject which I must mention here. That is the general governmental atmosphere of the Work. Personally, I feel (and I think many others feel, or would feel the same, if asked) that the atmosphere is not conducive to seeking truth. It is not an atmosphere which produce honesty, candor, openness. Rather, it is an atmosphere, which by its very nature, intimidates, makes cowards of men, forces conformity to those in authority.

There have been many meetings in which I felt there was more to be discussed. But the atmosphere was intimidating. To bring up another point for consideration, there were times when one would have to fear for his job.

Witness our meeting of 1972 about the budget, when Mr. Herbert Armstrong decided that he would write the fasting and prayer letter to get the income up to 30 percent.

Whenever a man states his feelings, he is often made to feel guilty by the frequent quoting of Korah's rebellion or Miriam and Aaron's speaking against Moses.

Speaking one's mind is not necessarily tantamount to challenging the office of a superior. Yet, at times a person who speaks out is made to feel like a rebel.

There were cases of murmuring in the new testament (Acts 6), but it did not cause the apostles to react with authority and power. Rather, they looked into the cause of the murmurings. When they found the cause they dealt with it. The cause was not the murmuring itself, but the neglect of the widows. When they saw this they took the proper steps immediately to correct the situation (not the people).

I am sure, you yourself, have experienced this intimidated feeling at times. I feel that hundreds of people from Big Sandy to England, from Australia to South Africa, and from Canada to New Zealand could say the same.

I am coming to you with what is one of the greatest burdens of my life. There is no way to hold the field together without facing the problems honestly and courageously. We don't have enough ministers available to cover the loss if we don't solve the heart of the problems.

Here are the things that, in my judgment must be dealt with in order to save the Church from breaking up:

1. We must change the atmosphere to an open climate without fear and intimidation. The signs in the recent happenings in the field are signs of fear that the organization will not deal fairly with the local minister. That's why a minister will refuse to come to Headquarters for questioning. He is afraid that the organization will blacken his name. When people fear for their security, when they are fearful of being fired, they feel trapped and do things from fear, not from logic or loyalty.

If one person accuses another, what happens? The accused person is assumed to be guilty and must defend his reputation, justify himself, but yet he still suffers from a hidden under-the-surface suspicion that sometimes lingers for years. This atmosphere does not produce good fruit. And it does not produce loyalty.

Loyalty cannot be demanded or commanded. It is not produced by fear.

It must be given voluntarily by men who are unintimidated and who really believe!

2. Doctrine. D & R must be discussed for the sake of the ministry as well as the people. It must be discussed in an open, candid atmosphere where a man can express his feelings without having a stigma attached to him the rest of his life.

There are other doctrinal matters which must be discussed in the near future. These will become major issues as they become known. In fact there should be men appointed who devote almost full time to Doctrinal and judgmental issues. It would be good if some of them have field experience so that practical issues of the field can be represented.

I have spoken candidly in this letter. I have tried to be straight forward and honest with you for the good of the Work. I hope this letter does not stigmatize me as rebellious, resentful of authority, or disloyal. My intent is to inform you of the dangers I see and to try to be loyal by helping you the only way I honestly know how at this point.

I would like to request that your father be brought into the situation as soon as possible. It would be good for us to have an audience with him and to appraise him of the whole situation. Since he is the only one with the authority needed to make the changes necessary to resolve these problems, it seems we must take the crisis to him.

In any case, the situation is extremely grave. there is no way I can keep the field from coming apart though I have tried. I have introduced many projects to keep the men encouraged and to help them in their work. But that is not the answer. These are matters of Bible and conscience. We cannot ask or demand that men throw these aside for the sake of the organization.

I don't wish to add to your burdens at this time, but it is a crisis situation that I feel must be dealt with soon.