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What to do? We once told the Hungarians, for example, you go to the wall and we will cheer you on.

They went to the wall in 1956 and we cheered them on.

The Hungarians thought we meant to do something with our cheers.

And when the Russians thought after a week's time that we were going to do nothing and had clearly gotten diplomatic understanding that that was the case, they simply moved in and occupied it and installed another government in Hungary.

There was, in 1956, a failure to understand what our role is in the world in terms of whether we are willing to implement what we see ourselves to be.

That was one of the remarkable things which meant, essentially, that we had another 30-plus years.

And it's been more than that now that the status quo would be established from 56 to 86 is 30 years.

It was another 30 years, practically, from that time to the death of Mr. Armstrong.

And now the things are changing.

It takes a while when decisions are made that cannot be reversed.

And those decisions were made and it's taking another generation to alter the matter.

That generation is gone that made those decisions, both in this country and the Soviet Union.

Today it would seem appropriate that I should build somewhat on the material that Mr. Michael Fiesel presented one week ago, because there are many thoughts that inevitably come along as we enter new periods of time.

We're already in a period of time in which we could say three years have elapsed.

And you know, in 1934 to 1937, if you were to take that time frame or with the beginning of the Eugene Church in 1933 to 1936, there were many parallels with the state of affairs in association with previous administrations within the churches of God.

We should expect a certain continuity, and then we should also recognize in any period such as this the implementation of new decisions, goals, and policies in terms of the world in which we live and how we should deal with that world.

I think it's very important, therefore, that we have a reflection on the fact that the church lives in the world, though it is not to be of the world, but when you live in the world you deal with the world in different manners, because the world varies.

We are not like the Kingdom of Israel or the kingdoms later of Israel and Judah after the nation split.

They were people in the world, and in fact they were a part of the world.

Jesus described their kingdom in the following terms.

If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, and the children of Israel did just that.

The Church of God, on the other hand, is made out of people who are called out of the world and who are not to be participants in the world in the sense that the governments of this world become the governments that we participate in and that we become dependent on for the maintenance of the church.

There is a church, and many churches, in fact, who followed suit who have that view.

That's why Christianity has been what it is, and why many other areas of the world find it so remarkable that we have departed, speaking religiously, of the Christian world so far from the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The 1980s that we are closing out this year, and we have little more than three days, and we will have closed out one-twelfth of the whole year.

You may not realize how fast this year is already going by since the Rose Parade.

We will be entering the 1990s.

We will have, in fact, at that time removed ourselves practically 25 to 30 years from the events that began in the 1960s.

That's significant because the 1960s began a whole turn of events away from further events.

But let's look at this from this perspective because I think it important for you to realize why decisions have been made in the past, why decisions are being made today, and why other decisions will be made tomorrow.

Project ourselves one year from now into 1990 just to make it simple.

1990 to 1960, that takes us, in a sense, back 30 years.

1960, if we were to roll it back again to 1930.

Now, to me, 1930 to 1960 is a long time.

I experienced all of that.

1960 to 1990 seems very short by comparison.

For many of you, even to think back to 1960 presents a historic perspective.

And to dream of 1930 is even more.

Let's understand something that has changed the world and why some things are different today, why the church must recognize certain differences.

To go from 1930, this would take us back to 1900.

You know, I mean, this is remarkable.

And then that is historic for me because I would have to remember what my father and mother said of that period of time.

There was a different world in the United States, we'll focus on the United States, a different world in the United States up to essentially the impact of World War II on this country as reflected in the Americans who landed on the continent of Europe and discovered not so much the remnant, as they

might have thought, of a Victorian era as a world that already morally was far different than ever had been permitted or allowed in this country in the early part of this century.

This country was, in fact, more Victorian than the country which was the foundation of Victorian behavior.

Europe inevitably would affect Britain and vice versa.

Europe was far more advanced in many concepts of morality.

Beginning at that time, changes began to take place and were running counter to other changes for the remarkable thing is in the day in which morality began to be an issue.

The United States also went so far as to declare the need for an amendment to the Constitution to prevent the use of alcohol in the normal social situation.

Prohibition was introduced at the very time we began to have the breakdown of morals in the 1920s in this country a little at a time.

Let's call it a little at a time for what took place after the 60s were far different than what was taking place in the 1920s.

If you have any doubt, why don't you go to a used bookstore and look at the old books published in 1917, 20, 22 that deal with the subject of sex education.

Then look at 1972, let's say 75, and you will be astounded, simply astounded.

Now in used book shops such as in the Burbank Golden Mall, you can easily do this just as an education.

I have, let's say, a selection of volumes of both periods so that it's quite clear that we are dealing not only with a different cultural perspective, we're dealing with what frankly would be considered another civilization.

So far removed is one from the other.

As prohibition was imposed and at the same time morals began to be challenged in terms of family planning, in terms of education of sex beyond family and church, a crisis hit the nation, and let's say, though you think of it as 1929, we'll focus on 1930, but point up that the real problem did not begin economically to 32.

And by that time, something happened very seriously.

We entered into a period in which we can say that the world realized that the world in which we live, the prohibition, simply did not solve a problem, but created all sorts of social and sexual environments that were not good, that were done undercover.

And so prohibition after the Roosevelt administration was reversed.

But a certain amount of damage had been done because it tended to make people one way publicly and another way privately.

You know, you did things behind the locked door.

You drank when nobody was around.

Crime began to rise during that period also.

The Chicago gangsters, it was typical of the background for programs on radio and support of the FBI.

That's the time when people identified with the FBI and not with the enemy, not with the criminal.

But then that crisis, beginning in 1930, did something remarkable, and everyone recognizes the reality that when the economy goes down, so does the hemline of dresses.

This is just the way it is.

People suddenly become much more conservative, both in their thinking and morals.

I couldn't help but reflect on something.

It was most unusual.

There's a lovely young couple in our Imperial AM congregation, and I had in mind some things for this afternoon.

And the hair, these two people, I haven't mentioned at all to them because non-issues far as I'm concerned, but the young fellow had hair that if I had hair like that in the way it was cut back here, I would simply have been told to get a haircut before I would come back to public school.

But today, this would be considered relatively conservative in terms of what the world was like in the 70s.

His wife had hair that was more full on the top and actually closer in the back so that his hair was in fact longer over the collar than hers was over the top of her dress.

The church in 1953, let us say, would never have allowed it.

The United States has gone through cultural and stylistic characteristics that we need to think about.

When I went to school in the 1930s and through World War II, there was no doubt about the fact that only the uncultured and only the tragically poor, and this was often thought of in terms of the Filipinos, for there were some from the Philippines in the area in which I grew up in Northern California, didn't know how to have their hair properly cut.

In other words, there was essentially no one who had hair other than a certain style back here that meant that it was short and utterly distinct from a woman, and any woman who had hair like is typical today of the back cut that is short.

I know a lovely lady who was in real estate who had her hair cut like that, and it was thought in that day to be very, very managed today.

It is simply another feminine style.

But in that depression period of the 1930s, there was a tendency to become very conservative, a tendency for essentially men to have a singular style of haircut, and it came to the point in the 1940s that for practical purposes, when the old men died off, all the beards died with them.

So much so that when this work began, as distinct from the Churches of God in the 1800s, latter half of the 1800s in the earliest part of the century, by the end of the 30s and end of the 40s, beards simply were not extant except on a few people who lived in log cabins in the forest of Appalachia or somewhere else.

No one was permitted to be baptized or to enter the Church Fellowship in the United States who wore a beard because it was the symbol, listen carefully, it was the symbol not of Aaron who had a beard, it was the symbol of somebody who had cut himself off from culture and the proper conduct publicly and socially of men in the mid-part of the century.

Now you might think that very strange.

I remember a certain person, I think whether he has died since or not, he was a very nice individual and he cooperated and had his beard removed and he was baptized.

Now the Church simply had that as a private understanding, but it went hand in hand with the fact that religious prophets were seen in the 1930s and 40s and early 50s as coming around with flowing beards and we have to realize that the Church of God and the nation has gone through some remarkable turns of culture for both men and women.

The world was very, very conservative.

There was a time in the Churches of God in the 1930s that we had the near remnant, wasn't quite the end of it, the near remnant of people who chewed and spit tobacco.

That was one of the things that was not uncommon in the Churches of God of the 1920s and 30s because so many people did that where the Churches of God had been centered in the Midwest to Southern Appalachia.

The more cultured people like Mr. Armstrong coming from a different world smoked, let's say once a week or one a day or whatever it was, a cigar.

There was the cultured and the uncultured world.

In the Churches of God that Mr. Armstrong raised up, this question of smoking did become a matter to be considered.

I will not go into that material, but you know that Mr. Armstrong saw there that there was something fundamentally a question underlying a habit that becomes seriously objectionable in the presence of others.

These things vary in terms of how, these physical things, of how others are affected.

We try to work with people who do smoke.

Mr. Armstrong never felt that anybody who smoked who had a habit, and he didn't know it was a habit, but he knew it acted like a habit.

He felt that they should be worked with and should not necessarily be asked to break the habit before they were converted, because he saw that some people could and some people could not.

But you know it is only since the 1980s that it has now publicly proved knowledge that any smoker could have told you in the 1930s that smoking is selectively addictive.

Tobacco is selectively addictive.

And if anything is selectively addictive, it's not good for you if you're the person that's selected for the addiction.

Coffee for me would never be selectively addictive.

I would die of lack of sleep before I would become addicted.

I simply find that it would be sufficiently stressful, so I essentially only take it with my Middle Eastern friends.

Good, strong, Middle Eastern, Turkish, or Arabic coffee.

But I have to recognize that for some people it's possible easily to become addicted to different things, but not everybody.

So with tobacco.

But Mr. Armstrong said, look, there is a basic principle here that should not be overlooked.

And you need to ask why you do it.

Now he didn't know anything about the health problems at that time, which began to be learned in the late 50s and 60s, was already known two decades ago by the tobacco industry, but they didn't want it generally publicly known for reasons of business.

But he saw that in fact most people that he knew did it for reasons that we might call were self-centered.

And in fact it was the kind of habit that many people who smoke never realize how it affects others who do not.

And he drew the conclusion that in the end it was sufficiently a self-centered habit that it ought to be seen as something that the church does not do, contrary to many ministers in the world who take it as a symbol of Christian liberty.

Now Mr. Armstrong did not assume that the tobacco itself was the sin.

He never did assume that.

He agreed with me in the little story I told him once that, you know, see, I grew up in a family in which my father did not smoke.

My grandfather smoked a pipe, my father had delighted for him, which was the custom for anyone who was, let's say, a person of some class in Europe.

My grandfather was a mathematics teacher in the university in Europe, and it was custom at that level that you do smoke a pipe, it was also custom that you did not light it, so your son did.

And my father found it an abomination.

So I grew up without that in my setting.

But I said to Mr. Armstrong one time, since after all it isn't a tobacco that's the sin, that you know if it would bring a tribal group of Indians in the Brazilian Amazon to terms of peace, if someone would sit down and smoke a pipe of peace with them, I certainly would do that.

I was talking to somebody for whom tobacco was not a habit, or that I had ever smoked a cigarette or anything else like that.

And he thought it was rather amusing, but he agreed that in reality there is a distinction between something done of that nature of a ceremony such as they did, or you know, American Indians had

this story of the pipe of peace, this is, you passed it around, and when you all did it was understood that you shared in something and there was no knife or no arrow or bow in the other hand.

Nevertheless, one recognizes that sometimes decisions needed to have been made because it was a very, very serious problem that would have been offensive within the church, and it taught the church the importance of self-centeredness.

The question of the beard was a different kind of thing.

That was simply a cultural matter that was not permitted because it was regarded as simply substandard or very objectionable symbolically.

Now today, Mr. Armstrong would say, if he were to reflect back on it and were alive, things have changed.

And so there was no reason for such a decision any further to be implemented.

There was a time when in that period of the 1940s men began to wear a certain length of hair, usually it was found in the Latino community of Southern California, and it was a symbol of gangs who essentially wanted to have a certain power in their community that they utterly lacked for reasons of ethnic background language and the political setup.

And so long hair was looked upon as objectionable even as late as that time.

And by the 1960s there was a tendency under the new administration after Eisenhower to introduce new ideas.

We went through, in the late 50s you could see the movement, but in the 1960s we went through a kind of cultural revolution.

There was no longer one basic way to behave and to dress.

Now in a sense maybe I broke the barriers, I will put it this way though it might be laughable, I probably broke the social barriers in the Pasadena auditorium.

There was the first time I went there, I did something that no other man did.

I was the only young person there who did not have a tuxedo on for the social occasions.

Now you may wonder, do you mean that every single man in 1948 who went to the Pasadena civic auditorium, young or old, had a tuxedo? The answer is yes.

You were not culturally up to standard to go to that building unless you had a tuxedo in the afternoon or the evening.

And I felt quite out of place, but I couldn't afford one, didn't even know they wore them.

Okay you know what goes on there? Well people dress like you can go there, and in fact suddenly you would discover you're better dressed than many.

This world has changed remarkably, and I think we need to get that in our minds because if you just have a focus of 10, 20, or 30 years from 1960 on you really don't know what a transformation has taken place.

And when you see that transformation you can better understand some of these things that we have to face now because there was a time that when you moved from that shall we say starched view of

life in which you struggled in the depression and struggled in a war, World War II, what was then the classic American behavior began to be loosened.

Now don't assume that everywhere in the country they were like Pasadena.

Pasadena was of course one of those cities of high culture, but it nevertheless should illustrate to you how high that culture was and why Mr. Armstrong expected that the college and the church in Pasadena should set essentially a standard not less than the basic characteristics reflected in the city in which we were headquartered and still are.

Now I think we could say the church sets a standard above the community in which we live, but at that time we were the people with the little old cars and without tuxedos.

But we did our best.

Necessarily when you go from a world of the 30s, 40s, and 50s into the 60s, 70s, and 80s you create what is called a revolution.

Now very often revolutions can be from the top.

Sometimes you can have a peaceful revolution, a new standard being set.

And sometimes it takes place at the bottom in which conflict occurs because it's like saying some of it becomes a part of subculture or you are rebelling against those who don't want to change in the center or the top.

So much of what today the church does, much of what today the world does around here that we have never legislated against was not typical of what the 50s, 40s, and 30s was like.

In fact we're closer, I think Mr. Kelly could show you, is your grandfather with a beard in that picture on your desk? In other words, we are here, thank you, in the 70s and 80s much more like we were near the turn of the century.

My grandfather had a beard.

He could never have been baptized in the 1950s in the Church of God unless he took it all.

That's because he would have been so different from his contemporaries, but he died in the 1930s.

That was a past age.

So sometimes what became a symbol, the longer sideburns, the longer hair, that became a symbol of rebellion when 50 years before it was the cultural standard.

But when you depart from it and become something else in between, it wasn't the president, the members of the Supreme Court, and Congress that set new standards, it was people, many of whom were essentially rebelling against the rather rigid configuration of our society.

Now again, let me go one step further and show you how this rebellion takes place.

In the 1920s we reached a point in time in which it was generally viewed that women should not be nursing their babies at the breast because it was not sanitary.

Whether or not it was might have depended on whether there was water to use, but that was a medical presentation.

And so bottle-fed babies became typical of the late 1920s and 30s.

And on, the Church of God was in the lead.

The Church of God was in the lead in the 1940s, and as far as I know in the 1930s, of staying with a sound fundamental principle, and that is that women ought to be able to nurse their children at the breast.

We never changed that, and now the world came back to it.

But interestingly, the people who introduced natural childbirth in Northern California, essentially around the early 60s or almost 30 years ago, were well behind, well behind the Church of God, which never abandoned that.

But the people in Northern California were much of this rebellion started.

It started, let's name some of the things, it started by having dances that were topless in 1963.

Now in Africa, I was among people in Northern Nigeria, the only way I could tell the men from the women is to note the rest of the body, because they were all shaved.

Men and women without hair up here, it grew out, and then they shaved it all off.

This was in Kano in Nigeria.

And you're in that society and you hardly notice anything, I mean it's just a part of the way it is.

But in San Francisco, when this was introduced, it was done for the purpose of license, meaning immorality.

And it went hand in hand with other people who began to smoke marijuana.

It went hand in hand with other people who went into natural childbirth, with other people who said we should nurse our babies, at our breasts, with others who said we should live as we want to in a commune, or we should abandon marriage.

The whole world, after World War II, slowly moved and then exploded in a new direction in which new truths were recovered that had been rejected by a previous generation and new errors were introduced.

And not until you realize that this church, in a sense, has gone through a period in which the world has been in social turmoil, do you realize why some things had to be said? You know there was a time in the late 1960s that, in fact, in Britain, women's dresses in what we would call business or the afternoon purchases or the social situations during the day were little different than conservative swimsuits in terms of what was being worn on the street.

The church was moved, I'll use that term, to make a decision that what was happening in terms of women's dress was so radical that it was not proper for us to take the lead and go as far as many women were going in the world that was simply exploding into new ideas in the 60s, and it went into the 70s and turned around because of the economic problems of the 1970s.

The church made a certain rule that a dress, when a woman sits down, should appropriately drape over the top of the knee.

Now that was a cultural matter.

Whether sin was involved depended on two things, the state of mind of the woman and the state of mind of anybody else who decided to make up his or her mind about the state of mind of the woman who wore a dress.

There are some people who thought, as a result of the decision, that any dress at any time that didn't drape over the knee was a sinful dress, but that was not what the issue was.

The issue was what is appropriate in a certain setting.

Mr. Armstrong never thought that had anything to do with sportswear or on the tennis court or on the beach outings at the Pacific.

Every year you know when the new student body comes along.

What is significant, therefore, is that sometimes people confused.

No beards, confused dresses at a certain length with sin.

Now there was a man in the ministry at that time who left who also drew the conclusion that makeup had been defined by the church as sin.

This man was one of those friendly humanists who writes still in religious circles from time to time, and I explained to him that in actuality the church regarded the reason why you wear it sinful if it violated any of the basic principles of the Ten Commandments.

But the capsule, or whatever it is, is not in itself the sin any more than the tobacco leaf is.

But he thought that the church had another view, and that's one of the reasons he left.

It's unfortunate to realize that there were people who didn't understand, because he himself viewed it as nothing wrong with makeup in any sense of the word.

But he thought the church had actually pronounced the chemicals, the wax, and everything else that might be used in makeup as itself the sin.

So misunderstandings, in fact, did arise.

Because not everything was fully clarified, or, to put it another way, people often thought that a ruling was the ultimate ruling for all time without realizing the backdrop of the state of affairs going on in the world.

There was a time we ruled against wide belts in imperial.

That was administratively done, because out here it was the symbol of rebellion by students against teachers in the public school, students against authority.

That might not have been true everywhere else.

That long since ceases to be a reality, but some people then thought somehow the width of the belt determined whether it was a sinful thing or not.

So also the question of where you cut off, Mr. Arms, cut off your sideburns, Mr. Arms wrote a letter to the ministry and simply told them that he wanted them to wear sideburns not lower than so low, because beyond that he felt it was no longer a culturally appropriate thing for a minister to take the lead in all sorts of variations culturally of hairstyle, as well as, of course, dress.

Now after that he began to realize that it was no longer unacceptable to have longer sideburns and, in fact, beards.

And he never made an issue afterward with respect to the question of beards.

That simply dropped away as any requirement, because it was no longer a problem.

No longer a problem.

That is, the world had responsible people who wore beards and not only freaks.

And the world went back to the time, let's say, of Aaron and the time of Mr. Kelly's grandfather, and mine, when people did that.

These are things we must bear in mind in terms of recognizing cultural variations, cultural differences.

There are some verses in the Bible that give us insight into how leaders might have had to think these problems through in the past.

You might take an unusual case.

This is built somewhat on what you had last week when Mr. Feasel discussed the question of circumcision in Acts 15.

You see, there was a time when the question of circumcision of little babies came, and Mr. Armstrong was especially concerned that there should not be sex problems among teen ages, and it was typically the medical advice at the time Mr. Armstrong was writing the book then titled *God Speaks Out on the New Morality*.

He felt it advisable to very strongly recommend circumcision for every boy, baby, for health reasons, not ritual or religious reasons, as in the Jewish community where it is a ritual.

Today of course we recognize that at the same time that was written, that was not the view of the British medical profession or the Australian medical profession as a whole or the continental medical profession.

It was essentially focused on the United States.

And now we have toned down that because there was a time when any parent who did not circumcise a boy, baby, in the church was looked upon as being in a state of rebellion.

That itself should never have been the conclusion.

Now let us face the fact that circumcision is a personal matter in terms of health.

It has been recommended that consequences can often be bad surgery when doctors have not properly handled the matter.

That can happen.

Also baby boys that are not circumcised can have infections when parents improperly wash a certain area of the body without properly taking care of diapers.

Just be plain.

An infection can occur because of lack of circumcision.

What one needs to do is know the facts and make the decision yourself, and it is not a question of rebellion one way or another.

It is a question of using good judgment in terms of the person either performing the operation or good judgment as to whether you want it performed.

The question of circumcision in the New Testament, of course, never prohibited the understood rule, and that is that the Jews of that day and to this day, anyone of Jewish background in a sense would be expected, even in the church, to circumcise the children as a result of the tradition that the Jews themselves have preserved, which has been lost by the House of Israel.

David faced a question related somewhat to this because people have associated sacrifice and circumcision in Psalm 51-48.

David said after this tragic sin in verses 48 and 49, you have it in the songbook, if you don't have a Bible immediately open to it, Psalm 51.

God delights not in sacrifice, else would I give it.

Here is the king who had involved himself in adultery and murder, tried to get the man who was murdered drunk and who was brought up short when Nathan told him what he had actually done, Nathan representing God, and David prayed about this matter, and he really saw himself for what he had become.

He got so involved with the office of being king that he lost sight of his contact with God as he should have, and he prayed and he was a transformed person, but you know he recognized that he did not have to give a sacrifice for the sin that he had committed or sins, as he said, else would I give it.

Now David looked at the law, and I can guarantee there are many people today, if we had not had the New Testament, people who would say in reading the Old Testament, it is inevitable that he should have done so, because the law says, if a man sin.

Now what did David see that was not clearly enunciated in the law? Well the answer is, he saw that the sin that he had involved himself in was a spiritual matter and connected and severed the connection between himself and God.

The sin that the law was addressing is that sin which occurred within the nation, which in a sense was to bring to the attention of the people who had committed it, that they had violated the covenant that God made at Sinai, and that they now could continue to live within the community.

But in terms of the conscience, man's relationship to God and the kingdom of God, the children of Israel were not given any clear description other than those to whom God was revealing his truth by a spiritual calling.

The bulk of the people offered sacrifice, were accepted again in the community, they could live out their normal lives, they were not promised the kingdom of God, they were never promised that their consciences should be free, because all that animal did was to remind you of the fact that you had sinned.

And this was a public acknowledgement of the fact that you acknowledged that you had sinned.

It had nothing to do with whether you repented of it, because that could not be judged by the priest.

Could be if you deliberately did it again of course.

You knew that if repentance was something that you, you, by which you meant you turned around and would not do it again, and you firmly came to that conclusion, and you were looking forward to the kingdom of God, that that didn't require an animal sacrifice.

So you see, even in the Old Testament we have the remarkable thing, that you can go chapter after chapter after chapter, and David saw what most people would never see there in the scripture, that in fact, when it came to spiritual repentance and one's conscience before God as distinct from before men and priests, that it did not take an animal sacrifice of goat or sheep or bull or dove or sparrow.

Yet David said in the same chapter, 51 of Psalms, that there is yet David said in the same chapter, 51 of Psalms, that there is coming a time that the world will use sacrifice, but it will be understood there as acknowledging Christ's role as the one who gave himself, it would be like a public statement of the one who gave himself to pay for the sins of the whole world.

We also in the 1950s went through a different kind of situation that we ought to at least note.

It was a time in which there was great conflict in terms of the social environment involving the various ethnic and racial groups within the United States.

And so as it has been explained, the church had certain policies that were implemented based on the fact that the headquarters for the Feast of Tabernacles was in Big Sandy, Texas.

I can remember my first experience before getting to the feast, riding a bus to the festival site.

I thought in contrast to the experiences that I had and grew up in which an older man would always be deferred to by a younger man or in which women would be deferred to by men.

I was on the bus and black men and white men and black women and white women were on the bus in their, shall we call it, particular areas, and a black lady got on the bus.

This black lady had at least two bundles.

She was loaded.

She must have been shopping, and there was no seat, and she stopped next to where I was, and I noticed that not a single person rose for her.

That troubled me because when I was in Germany, younger men rose for me, and then I was only 30.

I thought the United States, and I still do in many ways, is an uncultured land when it comes to dignity between men and women.

I've had, interestingly, significant numbers of women comment that when you opened the door, you know, Mr. Partian does that of a car.

They had not had that done, just something that disappeared from our society.

Now, that doesn't mean you all sin when you don't.

That's simply a measure of the level of the culture of the Christian world in which you live.

But I asked the lady, I did not want to create an awkward situation because I was white and she was black.

And this was a bus, and everything was so far peaceful.

So I asked her, what is the custom here? Because I didn't see a single man rise, black or white.

And she said, just leave it as it is.

I expressed to her that I thought this was, you know, one of those regretful circumstances of our culture.

Reflecting on it again, I don't know what I would do or make recommendations.

Today, of course, it's essentially a non-issue.

I would rise for any woman or any older person if I had been seated first.

Race in this case is no longer the problem as it was there as a point of tension.

But many things that we decided on in the past in terms of imperial schools with respect to who could attend was based on the impact that the school would have in terms of the church as a whole because we also had a school in Big Sandy as well as here in Pasadena.

And the question is, what would be the impact of policy in that area? Those things have all changed today.

Because the circumstances of the world around us, circumstances have changed.

And we need to recognize how important these matters are.

Attitudes, of course, can be greatly affected.

Numbers 12, 1 to 16 is the story of the relationship of Aaron and Miriam and Moses.

Now the statement is that Moses had married an Ethiopian woman.

Of course, in Ethiopia you have more than one racial group, some of which descended from Kush, some of which did not even descend from Ham, just like you can be an American and be an Oriental, a European, or an African, or a Native American.

But we would assume, since there was a big issue raised between the sister and the brother on the one hand, and particularly the sister it appears, and Moses, that there was clearly some fundamental ethnic or racial difference.

Whether Josephus is true or not, Josephus pointed out that Moses had, in fact, earlier married the daughter of the king of Ethiopia, at the time in which as general for the ruler of Egypt he had brought the Ethiopians into submission.

Whether this is the same person or not who met Moses in the wilderness, I do not know.

It could have been.

That is a non-issue.

But what is interesting here is that whatever the problem, the far bigger problem was the attitude that Moses found, and God found, in the sister and the brother, in particular the sister.

And so interestingly, God actually had to publicly reprimand Miriam, who stepped beyond the normal circumstances, even beyond what her brother must have done as a woman in the community.

It is sometimes easy to say of a leader who makes a decision that you might not agree with, that God doesn't just speak through that person, see? God speaks through me, Miriam said, and Aaron suggested God spoke through him.

Well, indirectly, God did.

But God had never asked Miriam to play that role.

So it's important to look at this 12th chapter of the book of Numbers in terms of how easy it is to get caught off guard if you don't like something that you see being done.

Many of the decisions of the church in times past were to prevent problems from arising.

Moses didn't prevent this problem from arising.

Most of the criticism of church administration over the past 30 or 40 years might be because Mr. Armstrong's view was to prevent a problem from arising.

In order to prevent certain problems, he would often require certain decisions to be implemented such as when women might not have known what was appropriate for dress length, he made a decision so that the question would stop at that point, except that only later, when there was no longer needed, sometimes the question arose as to what the real policy should be.

We didn't always follow through and rescind something.

It was sometimes left to die or dry up on the vine, so to speak, and you didn't really know what the policy was.

I don't even know of any written policy statement prohibiting every man, or let's say, reversing the statement that every man would have to shave its beard.

I think it's simply dropped by the wayside under circumstances.

But with respect to dress length, that also dropped by the wayside only after problems had arisen where people got into bad attitudes about it.

Look at this story because it's very important that you see that how you conduct yourselves Miriam, how you conduct yourselves Aaron, that's the women and the men, is more important in God's sight than whether Moses had married an Ethiopian woman or not.

The attitude is more important.

The attitude about smoking, so you have a problem.

The church policy there is still firm.

If you want to go the way of those who have died from smoking, that's the problem you will have to face.

But we do expect you to cooperate, in this case for your own health good, as well as for the fact that the church expects us not to have this kind of potentially addictive habit any more than certain other drugs.

But with respect to the different styles, Mr. Armstrong once required every man coming to the church services even at the Feast of Tabernacles to have a tie.

The Filipino brethren were told that this applied there.

Mr. Armstrong never told the ministers it didn't.

So when Mr. Armstrong got over there in that climate and he discovered what they were doing, he wore what they ought to have been wearing, an open collar, formal shirt.

But that illustrates sometimes that we don't realize the circumstances of other parts of the world in which the church lives.

The church was very happy, therefore, to know that it was possible both to dress Western as well as to dress Philippine and still be converted.

Indian women regard wearing makeup on the lips as a symbol of a certain profession.

It's thought to be one of the oldest.

But Indian women traditionally have a little dot here.

Now that's typically regarded as a beauty spot that goes with the rest of the costume.

So our women over there simply recognize that they don't do what American women do in the world, some of which perhaps wear makeup over there when they come from here or from Britain to India.

Some of them would not.

We have to recognize that in different parts of the world there are different characteristics that would be regarded as cultural, cultural rather than just spiritual.

We, of course, my wife and I have been to the Festival of Tabernacles in the Kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific.

There, of course, women dress in a very, very conservative way.

Some church dresses even worn in church here in this auditorium would have been in years past regarded as scandalous on the streets in Nukuwalofa, the capital of Tonga.

But on the other hand, when the Tongans prepare their dances, what you will find is that they wear relatively shorter skirts and they will have bare shoulders.

It's interesting because suddenly it's different because the dance is a continuation of an aspect of culture that differs from the Victorian dress that is considered proper in other situations.

And they will cover themselves with coconut oil, really shiny looking.

And then they will let the hair down and have moa feathers.

You know what moas are? The chickens.

Moa feathers will be the decoration in the hair.

And this is simply the way it is done.

Some of you would look a slightly odd in this fashion, especially when your garment is made out of banana leaves, along with sometimes the fibers from the paper mulberry tree.

We should learn, therefore, distinctions between decisions as Mr. Fiesel told you last time, decisions that pertain to cultural matters that vary, even if the church may not have all together clarified that it

was a cultural matter as distinct from sin, because sometimes to make a point the church has, in the past, over-dramatized a case like parents sometimes do for their children.

We have sometimes over-dramatized matters.

I think we should recognize that fact.

In any instance, we are in a situation today where we should take note of some of the things that Paul says in 1 Corinthians, chapter 8.

If you have knowledge, verse 1, recognize that knowledge has its limitations.

This very important chapter, concerning things offered to idols, that's the particular subject, we know that we all have knowledge.

The knowledge puffs up, and that's something forbidden in the very meaning of the days of unleavened bread, but love edifies.

So we now have knowledge in the church about certain things, but don't assume that this knowledge cannot make you proud about the fact of Christian liberty or such things, and you overlook love in terms of what is good for the other person.

If anyone, by the way, thinks that he knows anything Paul said by reminder, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know in terms of how to apply this knowledge.

Now I make it quite clear.

We have a wonderful relationship with the Thai community, and there is a beautiful golden statue of the Buddha in Wat Thai of Los Angeles.

There are ministers I do not take over to the Thai temple, and there are ministers who do go over.

There are ministers who shouldn't go over because they would be emotionally shocked, and there are others who can.

And if the ministry has the problem, I can tell you so do people who are not ministers.

We try to be very careful about this matter because the important thing is not knowledge, but love and concern for other parties.

If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know, and we all need to recognize that in applying the principles of judgments that are being made today and have been made in the past, that we should recognize that maybe sometimes we have been too strict, maybe sometimes we have been too liberal.

Maybe sometimes we have only thought of ourselves.

Maybe sometimes we have never thought how the other person might see us.

If anyone loves God, this one is known by him.

The real focus is whether you love God and God knows you, not how much knowledge you know about such things as this, where there is deeper insight into the problem that some may have than others.

Now concerning the things offered to idols, that is what you eat, we know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is no other God but one.

With that knowledge, I have no problem with the Thai community, with the Buddhist community.

I have no problem in Nepal.

But even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or earth, and there of course are gods many and lords many in the eyes of many people, yet for us there is only one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we for him, the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we live, spiritually speaking as well as physically, when you know who controls the universe.

However, there is not in everyone that knowledge, for some with consciousness of the idol eat until now eat meat offered to the idol as a thing offered to an idol.

And their conscience being weak is defiled.

But food does not commend us to God in the sense of food offered to an idol or not offered because it really doesn't matter whether we do or do not eat it.

But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours expressly forbidden in Acts 15, but now clarified in the Gentile world by Paul, but expressly forbidden before, but clarified by Paul lest us become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols.

And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died.

Yes, it is possible, whether we realize it or not, that we can take Christian liberty to the point that some people are offended and it sends them to the lake of fire because they cannot handle that kind of understanding or information.

And that embitteres them and it cuts them off from contact with Christ and God because they think of themselves, how can this be? Or in this case it cuts them off because then they are emboldened to eat as if the idol is what they are serving.

When you thus sin against the brethren, sin is also against God and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

For if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat lest I make my brother stumble.

Here we have a very important point, and that is that even if we have liberty in certain areas, so we have more liberty in dress than we used to.

So we have more liberty in how men cut their hair or how women cut their hair because the world today is not one standard.

The world today has all sorts of variations that did not occur in the 1930s and 1940s and even the earlier part of the 1950s.

I can remember the first time I saw any woman wearing slacks, and from our percultrual perspective it was an abomination.

Now my wife wears slacks on occasion, especially when she is pruning roses.

Also when it is very cold, Mr. Armstrong once for bad slacks on Ambassador College campus, plain and simple, because it still was a kind of symbol.

I remember those sermons, a kind of symbol that represented an assault on the distinction between the dress of men and women.

I'm sure after Mr. Armstrong got to Japan this thought never again crossed his mind significantly, where Asians very typically wear some form of dress with pants.

And you see, he had never really been in the Middle East.

I have an Arab robe that is like, it's a gown.

I didn't plan to wear it today, but I had it in mind.

And I put it out of mind lest I offend some of you.

One of the ministers asked when I hosted the Supreme Patriarch in 1980 in the month of April.

Mr. Armstrong was not here that first visit.

Why I wore a short sleeve shirt? Why I said because this is formal wear for those who were Thai.

Now the Thais paid respect to me, Thai men wore suits like most of the men here are wearing.

But I wore a simple shirt, short sleeves, dropped over the pants.

And that was paying respect to them.

Because I was paying respect to them culturally as they were paying respect to our country culturally.

Mr. Hogberg, I believe, mentioned that in accompanying us, he saw some of the Thai men punch each other and point to my shirt, and he heard them, you know, very nice, very nice.

If I'd been wearing what everybody else was, it never would have crossed their mind.

But it was paying a certain respect.

And so I wear certain things when I go to Thai funerals.

And I have been at more than one.

The fact is, I guess it's been at least three now.

And you learn what you should do.

But you try to recognize the distinction between that which is expressly a violation of spiritual law that affects your own condition with respect to God and your neighbor.

And that which is simply a cultural difference.

And we learn that in different societies, there are different accepted standards.

But we must not let our liberty affect others.

We must not let differences, or if we want to be more conservative or more liberal, no, we have people of both types, God's calling a whole spectrum of people.

The majority perhaps are in the middle of the mainstream of variations of culture and some are on either side.

But look what happens.

Suppose you take a note of a problem in 1 Corinthians 6.

How do you get along with your brother? This is an excellent illustration.

Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Now if you have personal problems, how do you handle things? How do you get along with each other? How do you relate to one another? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world and if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters within the Church? Paul is saying, do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life should we be able to make decisions? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life or decisions that need to be rendered, do you appoint those that are least esteemed by the Church to judge? That is, what kind of standards do you use? Are you making an appeal to those who are least qualified to make the decision? I say this to your shame.

This is a revised New King James version.

Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? Now we may have differences, and this of course is perhaps talking about money, but it illustrates a very important point how we get along with each other.

If you have a question, ask somebody who is wise and experienced so you can understand.

But brother, I find here in Corinth, goes to law against brother and that before the unbelievers and asked the unbelievers to judge the matter.

Now therefore it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another.

Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded? Now suppose this was simply a financial matter.

That's not the point at issue here, but I'm applying this principle here.

So you know we had in 1978 and 1979 people who got all upset, and they got upset in many cases about how the money was spent, and they decided, let's say, to present, quote, evidence.

Then in the end, in January 3rd, the church properties here in the college were seized.

You know the story, or if you don't, you can of course learn what the church had to experience just more than 10 years ago.

How time goes by.

These people thought that something had been mismanaged.

But I'll tell you, I had to explain this.

Mr. Dacott said I could go over, I didn't intend to go this long, but I had to explain this part once to an editor of the National Geographic.

We were having dinner, and he asked a little bit of the church, and I commented on our legal problem, and he was smart enough to have said what the answer was.

I didn't explain it.

He said you know what you really should have done in advance was to tell the people far more of what was being accomplished.

Instead of that, he saw immediately what the problem was that we had not told them the things that were being done around the world with the monies that God had received from the tithes and offerings.

In making known the character and the purpose of the church, making known our views in terms of a world to come.

Instead of that, some of these people got embittered.

They thought their money should be used, notice their money, should be used some other way.

And so we had those who went to court more than 10 years ago, and they didn't bring the action directly.

The state made a decision on the basis of information that was presented.

That has all been rectified, but that's an experience.

Is it possible that people can be so upset with other brethren that they will go to court? Yes, it happened in Corinth.

Was this the church of God? Yes.

Were these people converted who did it? You answer the question.

What about those who decided to go to court in 1978? They're no longer here.

As Mr. Feasel said a week ago, yes, it was a week ago, that here were people who didn't want to have certain things done, didn't want to have certain changes made in terms of where the money should go, and they made the biggest change of all.

I thought that was a very nice summary.

They made the biggest change of all.

They decided to leap off the ship that Christ was supervising, and they're now in the waters of confusion in this world.

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, so don't be deceived? Now, fornicators and idolaters and adulterers and homosexuals and sodomites, thieves, the covetous, the drunkards, revilers, extortioners, none of these are going to inherit the kingdom of God if that's going to reflect their character, because that destroys the character of the person and necessarily cuts the individual off from God and ruins any societal relationship with other people.

But this is quite different from many of the smaller questions that the church has had to deal with and that the church will still have to deal with.

Such some of you were, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, and so we should not ever let these problems get to the place.

Never let them get to the place where they cut us off from the church through whom the Holy Spirit is still being given, because people are still being converted here and brought to an understanding of truth that you can find nowhere else.

So if you have problems, you take it to those and discuss it with those who are wiser, not with those whom you think will agree with you.

Now maybe they will, maybe they won't, but you should learn to go ask those who have been longer in the church, wiser in experience, who are essentially counselors.

Now they may be ordained, they may not be ordained.

I can tell you some very wise men and women in any congregation if I get to know them.

We had such a man in our church congregation years ago in Fresno.

We never ordained him as a deacon.

I said any office of a deacon was less than the office he played.

He was a kind of father counselor to everyone in the church.

He was simply a wise person, a man of whom the world around said, oh, that kind man when he died.

It's very important that you learn what Paul said here.

Don't go to the people who you think will agree with you or who don't have good judgment.

Not everybody does have equal judgment on every topic.

Go to those who might give you better understanding.

Go to those who can help you the most.

And above all, don't make the mistake of ever thinking that you have God's approval if you want to go before the courts of the land.

Because you don't like, you see, as some once did, and they failed for how money was spent.

You know when we meet people from Syria, when we meet people from Jordan and Thailand, when we meet them from Sri Lanka, from Nepal, I can only cite those of whom I have more direct contact and her many others.

I really know practically none.

I know more of these in the foreign countries, and Mr. Hume knows so many more in this country as well as in the media abroad.

He realized the tremendous impact this work is having through areas that some people would have faulted.

The same kind of people who said Mr. Armstrong should not move down to Pasadena.

The same kind of people who said Mr. Armstrong should not do these other things.

I hope that you will all have a lovely last few minutes of the Sabbath.

I want to thank Mr. Chakotch for the opportunity of being here, and thank Mr. Fikal for that matter, for being able to build on the sermon that he had given last week.