

## 900525 A New Way of Thinking HLH

This evening is one, in a sense, that you've read a certain amount about, though it was presented to a different audience.

It's one that we published in The Plain Truth, which Tina Quoe, who assists in a number of areas in television, wrote titled, A New Way of Thinking.

That's a very important perspective because, for many people, a new way of thinking is so new and so novel that one would emphasize the new.

On the other hand, if one has had access to revelation, such as we do, in many ways we might think of it in terms of the way thinking ought to have been from the start if we hadn't jumped the track as a society, as a civilization.

I'd like to take a look at the thoughts that ought to go along with it in terms of the church itself.

A new way of thinking, in reality, when the college motto was established, Mr. Armstrong was casting about for a new way of thinking in terms of education, and the approach he came up with stated very simply on the west part of the Ambassador Hall, which came to the college nine years after its founding.

And of course, it was added sometime after that, but the principles were already there.

That's what is on the west part of Ambassador Hall is a statement that the foundation of knowledge is the word of God.

On the other hand, what we are really saying, Mr. Armstrong said when the college was founded and that's to recapture true values, for what we find in the word of God are those true values.

They represent a foundation.

John faced the same question when he said, I give you a new commandment, yet he said on the other hand, I'm really giving you an old one.

Now this is a paradox in a way because it merely sounds like it.

What we are dealing with is a recognition of the source of understanding, of where we would look for it, and to consider that since we all came out of the world at some level, we all have to have a new way of thinking.

And that new way of thinking may be for some very new and for others who now, for one or two generations, have been reared in the church, is not that new.

But we must remember that perhaps the shock value of truth versus error enables us to perceive truth more quickly than the vague notion that what you discover as you mature as the teaching of the church doesn't differ that much from what you grew up believing when you were reared in the church.

After all, your friends did some things that didn't seem so bad in school, even if the teacher didn't like it, because others of your friends, and they all went to church, did the same thing too.

It doesn't seem that different because it wasn't quite that bad as it is in the world.

So we learn some important points that in the church it's possible to grow up, I don't like the term second generation Christians, personally I don't like the term, but it's possible to grow up so close to what is true that when you fully learn the impact doesn't hit you in the same way as when you grew up in the world, that is the shock value.

Mr. Mark Kaplan is here, I think he's a classic person, distinct from my background.

When I first learned of the holy days it had shock value, because I had never heard of them before except that Jews kept them.

Now he grew up, of course as many of you never thought to, because he grew up in a community where for generations this was done.

And what he might learn about holy days as an adult listening to parents and grandparents, listening to a rabbi or reading the scriptures, might not have the same shock value, the new things he learns in contrast to what he was already doing, as it would have had for me.

And I think you can understand that in life there are areas where there is shock value.

Now on the other hand, for someone who never grew up, one still has to ask regularly, but how do you do this or how do you do that? Because you never grew up that close to the church to know.

And so there is the other side of the coin, those who grow up to the church may miss the value of the shock of the difference when truth comes, but on the other hand you will have learned how to do things without having to stop and ask so many questions.

I think this is an important factor as well.

We notice it in terms of the difference between our daughter-in-law, who was not reared in the church, and our own daughters, not to discuss the difference between boys and girls in this case.

She looked into the Bible and saw that it described holy days, and she asked herself.

Before she ever heard of the church of God, she asked herself, why don't Christians do what's written there? Now that's not an ordinary question most people ask, but it is an important question.

And then the big shock came to discover that there was a church that in fact did.

And it has some greater significance to her as the holy days did to me than it might for our own children or for many of you who simply grew up among people who observed these things.

She might take it in fact more seriously, but regularly she would have questions, but how do you do it? What do you do now so that there is something to be gained by having learned a new way of thinking from childhood and not have to wait till later? But there is also the fact that it is sometimes more difficult to perceive bad habits established in association with those who are converted because you copy sometimes those who are not, among those who are, and sometimes the lesser habits of those who are converted who still have to improve.

And we must learn always ultimately to compare what we do with what is here.

Now I want to read a statement from a book that you may be familiar with.

You probably are more familiar with the author, a historian, Barbara W. Tuchman.

I am familiar with this work and I was happily, if I didn't have to go home once, I checked with television and Mr. Hulme gave me a copy.

I will tell you that I appreciate that he immediately followed because he had access to the book.

On page five of this remarkable work called *The March of Folly from Troy to Vietnam*, published in 1984, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, *The March of Folly from Troy to Vietnam*, while all other sciences have advanced, government is at a standstill, little better practice now than three or four thousand years ago.

Let's look at the world.

Everything is more unfair, she writes, as an English historian has well said, than to judge men of the past by the ideas of the present.

Whatever may be said of morality, political wisdom is certainly ambulatory.

That is, it doesn't move straight forward like the sciences in a certain direction.

Political wisdom that governs essentially how we manage things goes in any number of directions and seems to get nowhere.

We are still debating some of the basic ideas of democracy in the 20th century as we draw to a close that the Greeks thought they saw 2,500 years ago.

It led to the fall of Greece, it didn't solve their problems, we think it may solve the problems today and we are going to discover some rude things in the future.

Nothing is more unfair than to judge men of the past by the ideas of the present.

Whatever may be said of morality, political wisdom is certainly ambulatory.

To avoid judging, she continues, by present day values, we must take the opinion of the time and investigate only those episodes whose injury to self-interest was recognized by contemporaries.

That is, every generation has more or less understanding in different areas.

Sometimes we gain in one and lose in another and think that we have made progress in both.

And then we judge the past by the standards of the present.

She says we ought rather to analyze what was in fact in the interest of those who lived in the past and what was destructive and what did people do in the past to pay attention to what the contemporaries of the past saw and understood.

That is, if we were to pose the question in these terms, how should we judge the ancestors of those who are living here at the time of the American Civil War? Let's just take a classic, historic illustration.

What would have been the thing to do at the time of the American Civil War? What would you have done if you lived in Alabama? What should you have done if you lived in Alabama? What would you have done if you lived in New York? What should you have done if you lived in New York? Now it's very easy in the church to judge a generation that has passed to wonder why the brethren did what they did in the 1930s or 40s or 50s.

That's gone.

And of course we tend to think that our understanding today is always better because every generation has assumed that its understanding is better than the predecessor, only to come to terms

with history to discover that our descendants look at us and wonder in the same way we looked at our ancestors and wonder.

So maybe we ought to think of the question.

Before we make decisions to ask ourselves what would we have done as individuals? What should we have done? What would we have done as a church if we had lived at that time? Now we know what the church did.

We do have the record.

The record is that the church made a decision.

The church made a decision at the time of its organization as the Church of God formally called Seventh Day in order to distinguish from other churches of God, such as the Anglican, the Catholic, Pentecostal types, numerous groups had the name.

So the people of God, the Church of God, petitioned the government of the United States.

They came to the conclusion that it was not the duty of the church to go to war on either side.

It was not the duty of the church to enter into a military crusade, either to end states' rights as conceived in the South or to end slavery as conceived in the North.

The church concluded that as a body it had a duty, and that is to serve as an example of how men ought to have lived with one another, and not to enter into a military service and to shoot and kill other members and other people in the church.

Now whether that decision was right, that decision was the one that was made.

We have regularly people today who in the church in this more enlightened generation feel that we should take a stand militarily.

Most of these are on the periphery, but the voices are nevertheless there.

That we owe it to democracy, to take a political stand.

We should give some serious thought to just how God has guided the church.

Well, there is also another aspect.

Not only do we have the time, depth, and looking into the past, we have also the contemporary problem of geography.

The difference in the contemporary world differences are not unknown.

There are countries that disallow conscientious objection.

There are countries that require entry into military service.

There are countries that require civilian duty if you don't.

There are countries that require you to be shot if you don't.

How shall the church of God deal with this problem? And so the church has had to come to terms with the realities in societies that don't allow conscientious objection.

Conscientious objection is now permitted in the Federal Republic of Germany.

It is not seen as a citizen's right in Austria.

You will have certain rules governing living in the Republic of South Africa.

You will have other rules governing living in the various states of the Caribbean.

And we have to make decisions, and those decisions do not always lead to the same conclusions.

That is what we expect of one person we cannot expect of another in another country, because the options are not there.

In the time of the early Vietnam War, the after effects of the Korean War, the Church of God had to make some major decisions.

There were decisions to be made as to whether you should or should not become a member of the medical staff and serve on the battlefield in a 1AO classification, for example.

Now Mr. Armstrong made a decision in one particular case.

A man had only two choices.

He could go to prison, he could not have conscientious objector status, or he could enter medical service in a hospital.

Having weighed the question, he said that what the Church as a whole declines to accept.

That classification defined as 1AO or medical service in or out of military combat was better under the circumstances, that is, it's the lesser evil than being thrown into prison.

That was because there was a time of peace, even though the military conscription was extant.

What might happen in a time of war in terms of one's freedom would be rather different.

The probability there is a different situation would have occurred and civilian service would have been allowed instead of prison as an option.

But decisions have to be made and they're not always made in the same way, even at the same time.

I thought it would be good to take a look at a number of interesting illustrations in the Bible.

We draw the conclusion that we always know what to do, or we are always guided in the same way through time and through geography.

It might be interesting to compare some fundamental experiences that are in the Old Testament.

Jesus said on one occasion, when in a court, and he was referring to that, that if one who represents the disciplinarian in the court smites you on the one cheek, turn to him the other also and don't make an issue before the court of abuse of authority.

In the same book we read that Samuel hewed up Agag and chopped him to pieces as God's prophet.

Who are you going to follow? And why are you going to make the decision you do? And then there was that rather unusual personality called Elijah who gathered all the prophets of Baal together and challenged them.

And you know the story, of course.

The prophets of Baal in the end were all dead men.

When do you make a decision of this nature? How does God speak to different generations? There were those in 1979 who said that the Church of God is so enamored of the teaching of one man that if he asked you to slay or kill, I think was the word used, another member of your family, that you would go ahead and do it.

But brethren thought it was absurd because that's not either the teaching of the Church or its practice.

Yet there was a man who's called the father of the faithful who was asked of God to offer up Isaac.

The shock was that it was Isaac, not that there was a human sacrifice, whether you like to believe it or not.

The shock was that it was Isaac.

Abraham did not argue with God on the legitimacy or illegitimacy.

He grew up in an age when human sacrifice was not unknown.

We have grown up in an age when human sacrifice like that is utterly unknown.

Human sacrifices are offered every morning and every evening and through the night and through the day on the streets of our cities.

We do not do it in the name of religion.

We do it in the name of what? The freedom to have guns of all sorts, knives of all sorts, to be members of gangs.

The right to drive by, that's what it's exercised as, and to shoot the innocent and the guilty.

Our society accepts this every time we turn the radio on in the morning.

We never ask the question if it is wrong in religion to offer human sacrifice, why do we not set about in our neighborhood and put a stop to the non-religious sacrifice of men and women and children? Our society wouldn't see a reason to intrude so far because when people say, well, look, I want my neighborhood cut off so drug dealers can't come in, there are others in society who say, that is denying me the privilege of entering into your neighborhood.

The Phoenicians could have argued the same thing, you are denying my religious freedom.

Abraham did offer Isaac in his mind, and he intended to, having understood that God would provide a sacrifice but not knowing when.

He simply grew up in an age when to question deity making such a claim was unthinkable, whereas you and I know that if you had been asked the same thing, the conversation would be different.

The first thing is, who do you think you are asking me to commit a murder? You know that's what you would be thinking in general, or you would be asking if you had decided not to go that route, what has ever entered the mind of God now? Now I use this very strong example because we often overlook in the Bible what is written there and we say, the Bible is the Word of God, that is, it teaches us what God wants us to know.

And we should live by every Word of God, and so we read that David mutilated the Philistines whom he had killed and cut off their foreskins to get a wife from King Saul.

That's the part of the written Word of God.

The State of Israel must live in the Middle East today, being the only group of Israel that consciously is aware of its ancestry, the others wanted to be like Gentiles, that live among people who live like the ancient world, but they must live with the reality that the Promised Land was gotten by nothing less than the genocide of seven nations.

The children of Israel were told to put to death every surviving man, woman, and child of seven nations unlike other peoples, and none were to be left alive.

Their breath was to be snuffed out.

Deuteronomy 7, 2, and 11, that is a part of the Word of God.

We can apply it very smoothly and nicely today and say we don't involve ourselves in marriage with those of another faith, which is a part of the same statement.

But we never face the fact that the ancestors of the bulk of the people who are in this audience were also asked to put them to death so that the problem would never have to arise.

Have you given some serious thought to what is written in the book? And whether or not you know how to judge either this generation or Mr. Armstrong's generation or the generation of the Civil War or the generation of the apostles or the generation of Moses.

The Church does not teach today an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but in the Bible there is the clear statement, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Read the rest of the story in Joshua 6.21, Joshua 6.24 and 25, Joshua 10.30 and 35 and 40.

Now in the Middle East, of course, today are people who also live, the neighbors of the State of Israel, who live with the premise of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

How do you deal in this world? How should we look at the Bible? Mr. Halford was asked to answer a question because he said something in the plain truth and a person challenged him correctly, and we also have an answer.

He said, you say that we are to follow the premises of the Bible and the biblical law which give us the way to peace, the way to understanding, and yet he said, I can quote you parts of the law that you wouldn't want to fulfill.

The children of Israel were told to deal with certain nations in the way that when the Romans dealt with similar nations in a state of revolt, we find it abhorrent because the Romans are supposed to behave differently.

They went in and committed genocide too and left a solitude, and that's what it was, whether it was Gaul or Spain or Britain.

Were the Romans always wrong, were the Israelites always right, is it merely that God is arbitrary and told one nation to do so and another not to? I think it is time we take a bigger look at all the remarkable things in Scripture.

Let's look at another one.

Before you decide, you know all the answers in judging another generation.

When you see among the captives a beautiful woman of the nations not to be destroyed, you can bring her home to your house, and she shall have her head shaved, and you trim her nails, and if you don't find delight in her, you can set her free, but you mustn't sell her for money.

You shall not treat her brutally.

She's free to be married to somebody else if you didn't find that in living, whether she was pleasant to you.

Unusual, isn't it? We wouldn't look at marriage quite in the same way.

We know better, do we? We have an age in which there's more divorce in the church today as a percent, and there was twenty years ago, but we know better.

We are an enlightened people.

We allow things today that we didn't allow before because we know better, so the children of Israel didn't know any better than that.

But that's a part of what God saw that Moses should instruct the children of Israel about captive women who were virgins.

Yes, there's a great deal.

The law of Moses was once commanded, you shall put certain individuals to death under two or three witnesses, not under one alone, but if the person is guilty.

Then that person was to be put to death.

Paul said, we have a different law to administer.

We administer the Spirit of God.

We tell people how they can become immortal, how they can become like God.

Paul said that what the children of Israel had was glorious, but what we have today is more glorious.

Were the children of Israel wrong in administering the law of Moses? Should they have applied the principles of the New Testament to an age when the Spirit of God was not being promised? And in that time, the Spirit of God was not being promised.

How do you deal with the nation, with the people, with the church that wasn't converted? In the same way we should deal with the church that is, or were they being judged by different standards than we are today? Let me take the case of the apostle Paul.

He didn't say when he wrote to Philemon, I thought you would have better understanding than to submit to the idea of slavery.

You know, of course, the Roman view.

Now I want you to recognize that indeed what we need to have is a recognition that Roman law needs to be overturned, that slavery is an intrinsic evil, such an evil that it is worthy to go to civil war to stop.

No, Paul didn't say any such thing.

Yet today a generation is alive that would look back and say that anybody who wouldn't have gone to war to end slavery was somehow negligent.

You might like to read what Paul said.

He said, I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, who once was unprofitable to you as a slave, but now is profitable to you and to me.

He ran away.

He probably wasn't really one who made a good slave, so to speak.

I am sending him back.

That is, he is returning to servitude to you.

You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, whom I wish to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel.

Paul expresses his wish.

But without your consent to free him, that's the sense of it, I wanted to do nothing.

That your good deed might not be by compulsion, or the sword, or revolution, or civil war, but voluntary.

For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose that you might receive him forever.

That is, he becomes a better person and you receive him now as a spiritual slave.

No longer as a slave, but more than a slave.

As a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Now a rather remarkable insight into how to go about a problem when there was no way to solve the problem of slavery.

It was solved in this country only because there was war.

And that war would never have occurred if one man had not made the decision he did when Robert E. Lee decided that states' rights were paramount, and that the nation could not continue in another direction.

Without him there never would have been four years of war.

He was indeed perhaps in the history of the nation the greatest general this country has ever had or ever will.

He was the instrument that shed the blood of peoples on both sides to compensate for the blood that was shed when the slaves were brought over here against their will in the first place.

God called Abraham and he expected of Abraham according to what the general policies and understanding of the day were.

And that day people gave their lives in a way that there are many who ran away in the Vietnam War as cowards, not willing even to go to prison, they simply ran away.

That was society.

Abraham understood by faith what God would do.

On the other hand, you will note what he did when Lot was taken, he decided to arm his trained men who were equipped to deal with cattle rustlers, sheep rustlers.

And he went to the slaughter of the four kings of Mesopotamia.

What we have to realize is that Abraham was responsible, as later the kings of Judah and Israel were, Israel when they were a united nation, he was responsible and lived in a world in which the government was on the shoulders of a man.

The government was on the shoulders of the patriarch and the head of the family, not elected representatives in the republican form of government or a democracy.

Jesus said, the same one who said, if someone smites you on the right cheek turned to him the other, he said, if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight and we would butcher the Romans.

That's the sense of what he was saying.

My servants would fight if my kingdom were of this world when the Romans were ruling it.

But he said, my kingdom is not of this world.

So we have to learn what lies at the background and the responsibility of the time.

And that day God chose to do certain remarkable things, but he didn't choose to do other things.

He put the responsibility of the protection of the extended family on the shoulders of Abraham.

And Abraham went forth and divided his men into, I think it was three units, you read that in Genesis 14, 14, and 15.

And it was Abraham's responsibility to see that Lot and his family were retrieved.

So when Abraham heard that his brother was taken captive, that's his nephew.

And he was a church member, so to speak, because they were both individuals whom God was calling.

The New Testament speaks of Lot as righteous Lot.

Three hundred and eighteen trained servants born in his own house and they pursued them as far as Dan.

He divided his force against them by night.

He and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobbes, which is north of Damascus.

And they brought back the goods and everything.

But in the American Civil War, the Church of God decided that we must be conscientious objectors, that we could not enter into the debate militarily and by the sword over states' rights and slavery.

That was a decision they made.

There are those who would have lived 10, 20, 30 years ago or today who would have made another decision if they had been in charge.

But that was their decision.

God could have delivered, after all, He delivered the children of Israel more than two million people from the armies of Egypt.

But He had not chosen to deliver Lot.

And Abraham understood that when he had not chosen to deliver Lot, it was therefore his responsibility as the head of the family to do so.

Mr. Armstrong did not like to go to the courts.

But when he saw that God had not chosen to prevent the work of God from falling into the hand of court summons in 1979 and January, he knew that we had to defend the Church in the court.

That was not his wish, but it was his decision.

There was no alternative.

Abraham had no alternative.

God said plainly and simply, I have taken no action to deliver Lot or anyone else.

Now we know of cases of a woman in the church who was walking home with another lady, not in the church, an older lady.

They were being accosted by a man whom they were unaware of.

And the man, after the two of them separated, assaulted the older woman and not the younger.

And when he was arrested, the police asked him, why did you choose to assault the older woman sexually instead of the younger? That was what was involved, not merely a purse.

He said the older woman was by herself.

The younger woman had some other person with her.

The younger woman did not have some other person with her.

She was alone.

Who was it that this man saw? He saw the manifestation of an angel that she was unaware of.

God chose to act and protect her and not have her be abused and then try to find a medical solution to the problem of rape.

You see, God can do any number of things.

In the case of Lot, he chose not to act.

He let it happen.

And if Abraham would take no action, they would not only not be any longer in Damascus, they would be slaves somewhere in southern Mesopotamia or Iran or Asia Minor.

And they would be gone.

And so Abraham took action because he saw what God's decision was.

You might have found that not the thing to do, but before you decide that Abraham was wrong in what he did, you better ask yourself how God would judge you if you would have decided simply to let Lot go.

You are a conscientious objector.

You decide what questions God might ask you and hold you responsible for.

In the case of Isaac, Abraham lived in an age when such an expectation was not unusual.

The loss of life, the willingness to give up life, was an entirely different concept than it is today.

It's reflected also in the story when Hagar is presented to Abraham.

The church would say today to any man who would listen to his wife as Abraham listened to Sarah, whatever got into your head, and he would tell the woman whatever got into your head that you think that would be a solution to have a child by another woman.

But you know that was a part of the law in the custom of Mesopotamia from which Abraham's family came.

And so it was understood as practice.

The consequence we now see wasn't always good, but God let them make a decision, and he let them learn, so sometimes customs are not always the best.

God said, ultimately, I'm still going to give you a son by Sarah, and you'll realize that following the tradition of your time wasn't always right.

Like Barbara Tuchman's quotation, not everything we do ends up to good self-interest.

Common sense might have said such a law in the long run didn't make sense.

The consequences are with us to this day in the Middle East struggle.

So we have a situation where in following custom a decision was made that in the end led to conflict.

Wiser minds might have cautioned that such customs are not always advisable.

The case of Isaac, of course, and his sacrifice, that is the willingness to be sacrificed, there you have, of course, a great example that we will never forget to cite, because God the Father was willing to sacrifice the Son, Jesus Christ, and he was willing to offer himself as a sacrifice, and that's the lesson we get from it.

But you must never overlook the fact that, one, God would not have asked you today, and two, if he did, most of you would never have done it and would have argued back.

And to say anything else is to misunderstand or misrepresent yourself, because we now recognize that God never intended human sacrifice other than that of his son as the way one ought to go.

But there were different days in which people didn't look at things the same way, and God judged Abraham to see what his attitude was toward him in an age when this kind of thing was not the unexpected.

The case of the Canaanites, God, of course, had said that their time would come, and their time had come.

And what he was saying is that sometimes nations deserve such penalties, such awful things.

It would have been better, perhaps, for the children to be dead and to come up in the second resurrection.

That's what he is telling the ancient Israelites, than to have them endure the kind of activity, religious, political, much as you see going on in Lebanon today.

Modern Lebanon is a reflection of the attitude of the states in ancient Canaan.

I don't know of any country that better reflects it.

It happens to be the only country left where the Canaanites were not as a whole uprooted.

And they're behaving the same way today.

What is taking place tragically in Beirut, the butchery of Beirut, the Paris of the East or the Venice of the East, is unthinkable.

What one people is doing to another in the name of religion, in the name of politics, religion against Christian, Christian against Muslim, Muslim against Muslim, they're all sorts of factions.

And that's why God said finally that society like that has to be wiped away.

But somehow we fail to realize that other nations over many years later, who behaved in similar manner over the centuries, may indeed have been playing a role much like Israel did without realizing it.

We're coming upon 1992, the 500th anniversary of a man who is now being more and more painted as some kind of criminal for having come over here, Christopher Columbus.

Yes, indeed, the Spanish who came over here, I'll focus on that, we could apply to any of the others.

But there's a classic reason because Columbus represented Spain.

They are reaping today in Latin America the consequences of their own mistakes.

Look at what is going on in Colombia.

Look at what is going on in Mexico City with the misery and the poverty.

Yet if you were to look at society and ask yourself how come the Spanish behaved as they did to the American Indian, and then you asked yourself what was the Indian doing to himself and his neighbor, you might think twice before you judge the Spanish conquistadors.

People who cut out the hearts of others, who hacked each other up in manners that are unbelievable, a society so gross, much as later European powers as in West Africa at Benin found blacks cutting each other up in religious sacrifice, so unbelievably horrible that it was hard to imagine.

Yes, the innocent Canaanites died at the hand of the Israelites.

Yes, the Indians that were innocent about to grow up and think as their ancestors had thought were put innocently to death, shall we say, by the Spanish.

And the innocent blacks were sent into slavery, who and Benin as a classic illustration if they had grown up would be butchering each other in their own society.

And that is not a racist statement pertaining to Spanish, Indian, black, or anybody else.

That is the kind of reality as a whole that society doesn't want to face.

That many people have behaved so brutally to themselves that the judgment of other nations came on them as an act of God, whether they knew it or not, and the perpetrators of that later act like the Israelites, were also going to be judged by whether or not they lived up to what their enlightenment was.

So the Europeans came not to change the black man's society, but for greed.

And God has had to judge them in this country by a civil war.

The Spanish are learning what greed will produce in Colombia.

They're learning what it's like to have abused the Indians in Peru, who before the Spanish came abused each other.

But every generation, the Israelites didn't stay very long.

They stayed less than the Canaanites for a few years than the Canaanites, many of whom are still there today.

Because they did worse, they didn't know what they were doing.

They shouldn't be doing.

They copied the Gentiles around them and did worse because they knew better.

It's really remarkable to look at the Old Testament and to realize that when God dealt with the children of Israel as a whole, he was dealing as most people in the church should know and those outside don't.

He was dealing with an unconverted nation, and he gave them a law for the unconverted people.

It's called the Law of Moses, and it's defined very clearly and simply in 2 Corinthians 3.

It's a law that executed the death penalty.

It was not a law that told people how they could be repentant, believe, baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit.

In a nation in which God's Word was to be preserved in written form by a society that as a whole was not converted, not asked to be, God never judged them as He judges you and me, because we are asked to be of converted mind.

They were asked to live according to the letter of the law.

The letter of the law said that when a man is found to be guilty under two or three witnesses, we will not have a series of appeal courts.

We will not have a five or ten year postponement of the death penalty until we are sure that every psychiatrist has been examined for his own decisions.

That's modern understanding and wisdom.

Maybe you ought to ask whether the Law of Moses was that far off target when you look at the folly of today's justice system, systems around the world.

If you think we have it bad, you might be the pope who visited a part of the Holy Roman Empire in Corinthia, part of Austria.

The old Germans there had a way of justice a little different from ours.

It was not one that concerned itself for the protection of the victim.

It was something that we wouldn't know quite how to describe.

In fact, if there were four or five suspects, they were all rounded up and executed before the trial.

And when the trial determined who was not guilty, he was exonerated in public honors and given Christian burial.

And so crime, we assume, was stamped out.

Now, that's another way of going about it.

Mr. Kaplan can't imagine that a people like that could exist.

Not even the pope could, but he saw it and wrote about it.

The Law of Moses must be seen in its context.

Abraham's conduct must be seen in its context.

The Law of Moses was addressing how to administer justice.

Abraham's conduct with respect to law must be seen in how you handle the protection of a family.

When there is no police force, and most of you have no knowledge of when the police force idea arose, it arose at the close of the third decade of the 19th century in Britain, before which there was no such extant practice of a civil police force as we know it.

It's a very, very modern idea.

The Old Testament has, in fact, many indications that before the law was established.

A member of the family has been explained to the ministry in support material accompanying the pastor general's report.

A member of the family was the chief executioner, the Avenger of Blood, that when it was determined who was the criminal, it was his duty to find him and slay him.

Now of course, in the Middle East, among people who think like the ancient Canaanites, it has simply ended up as a blood feud because it has not focused on simply who is the guilty.

We simply punish the family in some way.

And this blood feud has gone on in Egypt to this day, it goes on elsewhere, it's tragic.

But God said to Noah at an earlier time, by man shall man's blood be shed.

There cannot be a society that has no governance.

It first starts out with the family as the unit.

Then it went to the extended family, then to the tribe, then to a confederacy of tribes.

And finally, of course, to imperial governments and to the modern nation state and its various legal subdivisions, provinces, states, counties, cities, whatever you have.

When you read the Bible, you must ask yourself, when the law is given, for whom is it given? Who is to administer it? And you will discover that indeed, there is a great deal of difference between David who was responsible for the safety of the church, the few who were converted, and the overwhelming majority who were not.

And as king, he bore the chief sword, because the kingdom of Israel was a part of that world.

If it were not, then the Israelites would simply have lived as scattered people and there would have been no Bible to be preserved.

It had to be preserved in an area where there was the ability to copy and reproduce it, to be able to meet in places of assembly later called synagogues, to be able to read and study it.

God chose that Israel should be a part of this world.

That is, their kingdom was a national kingdom.

It was given a piece of territory, and it was responsible for defending it.

The premise in the law of God Jesus himself stated, if my kingdom is of this world and has its territory and its inheritance and its borders, its government, then my servants must fight to protect it.

Now there comes a time when even human effort would not be enough.

After the ten tribes broke away, Judah sometimes found that was true.

Sometimes some remarkable things happened when they realized they couldn't do it and turned to God and said, we have no alternative.

It wasn't like in the days of Lot, God intervened, and the enemy fought each other.

And Judah was the victor without ever having to wage war.

What a remarkable lesson for a people who put themselves in God's hands when by their own hands they saw there was no hope to rely on their strength.

Only to see that a few years later, when a problem arose, the same people decided to hire neighbors to help aid them, and that was their undoing.

We come to an entirely different period of time.

The children of Israel and Judah had both gone so far from the law that now the people were living as essentially servants or slaves or sometimes free people that all depended on circumstances in the Persian Empire.

And the Jews had an unusual relationship with the ancient Persians or Iranians.

They had a relationship that was remarkable because they had, in a sense, sworn allegiance to the kings of Persia while at the same time were allowed to keep their law and didn't have to go to war.

But they had to set certain standards of absolute allegiance, and that was reflected when Alexander came.

When Alexander came, he found that the Jews would not change allegiance, and he decided to go to Jerusalem and put them there to the sword.

You know, of course, what happened? If you have ever read Josephus, this is not in the biblical account.

But indeed, Alexander was told he was going to be able to overthrow the Persian Empire, and the message came to him in a dream, presented by a man who was garbed in a way that he had never seen before.

Alexander had never noted anybody dressed like that before.

That is, until he met the high priest, and suddenly he realized that this man represented a distinct kind of people who on the one hand would not break their oath, and who on the other came out to the Greeks without swords and staves, who simply said, we have not chosen to go to war against you on behalf of Persia, and we will not break our alliance if you conquer Persia.

Then we pay the same respect to you, and we ask in turn that you respect our laws, that we may be able to keep them.

So it was a different period.

That was not a period when going to war would have made any sense.

And indeed, God guided the Jewish leaders in a remarkable way, and of course it was not very long before some Jews decided to go to war on behalf of the Greeks.

And there were all sorts of problems that we will not deal with tonight.

Then came the Romans on the scene, and of course the Jews had gotten involved in Roman politics, unfortunately, or they let the Romans get involved in the politics of the high priesthood.

It might be a better way to put it, and asked the Romans to make certain decisions, and the Romans of course were always willing to make decisions for their friends.

It simply meant that they stepped one step further into your house, and the Jews learned that as friends of the Romans, they were soon going to be servants.

The question therefore is how one should conduct oneself, and Jesus himself always stayed above the politics of the time.

You don't find that he says, we're going to have here a group of disciples.

They will join the zealots, and these others will join the Herodians, and that kind of thing.

There were people from all these groups, but when the time came, Jesus told his disciples after they had had two swords in order to fulfill a scripture, he said, simply put up your sword.

He who takes the sword will perish by it.

That is, he who decides that this is the way to go.

Abraham took up the sword and delivered Lot, but Abraham was not being judged by the same standard because he had a duty and responsibility.

He is not judged by the same standard as those in the days of the Romans who would decide that liberty is more important than service and servitude to Rome.

After all, we're not the children of Israel to be free.

So Jesus said very clearly there comes a time when you will discover how true freedom comes.

Is it possible to be free and a slave in Rome? Oh yes.

So the people had to learn what it was like to be free.

So we have the New Testament examples in 1 Corinthians 7, 21 to 23, Colossians 3, 22, and 4, 1.

It's possible to be God's free man and a slave in Rome.

It's possible to be a free Roman in exchange for becoming God's slave.

That's Paul's analogy.

Yes, it was possible to call people to the truth who were slaves, who had no chance of freedom.

God called in general people who were free, but it wasn't very long after Paul began to write that he is addressing the question of people who were slaves.

Not merely slaves of those who had been called, but as we find in the Scripture slaves of servants, as the usual translation, but the sense of slavery, slaves of those who are not honest bosses, those who take advantage of others, those who wouldn't give all sorts of Sabbath permission.

Before you decide that a slave whom God has called, who works for somebody whom God has not called, is not doing his duty because he doesn't keep the Sabbath as you or I do, reflect on the fact that you were free and he is a slave, and God is judging him as a slave and judging you as a free man.

Reflect on the fact that Mr. Armstrong said that when a young boy or girl residing at home who may be 13 or 14 or 15 and subject to parents and is not allowed to keep the Sabbath is not to go contrary to the parents and to run away, but must wait till he is of age, for the Sabbath is not held or its violation in the letter is not held against you if you are not a free person, but there are some who would judge differently.

This problem was written to Mr. Armstrong by two young men, the McNair family, because the father said, in this house there will be no Sabbath keeping and you are under 18 and they asked what to do, and Mr. Armstrong gave the correct answer.

They are not being judged as free men, 18 or 20 or whatever the age might be when they would be able to leave.

They are judged as young boys or girls whose judgment depends on their respect and attitude toward parents and the question of the Sabbath was a non-issue because they understood and God knew what they would do if they were free.

So we need to be careful how we think some of these things through.

There are other interesting aspects in the New Testament.

John the Baptist is certainly a remarkable man who if he came to the auditorium here would probably not be allowed entry because he was dressed so differently.

And you had heard that he ate grasshoppers and wild honey, and eccentrics like that don't belong in the Church of God.

He has to prove himself by changing his garments and using beef and substituting Haagen-Dazs or something else to be American, to show that he is willing to give up his culture because ours is the only standard for the world.

Many Americans think that.

The Russians who visited here had an interesting observation worth passing on.

Their observation was the Americans are among the most remarkable people in the world except for one thing.

They somehow have never learned that somebody else may happen to be right in some points that they have never considered.

We assume in our society, I'm not talking of you personally, but it rubs off because we live in society, that somehow the American way is always right.

It's no wonder the British have asked again and again, Church members, why did God ever start this work in the United States? Because they marvel at the things we take for granted as the only way to do it.

It never occurs to us to ask why the British don't have the same problems with the judicial system.

We have common law in this country administered by supposedly common wisdom and justice.

The British look at us even from so close at places Bermuda and ask why this society has to be so litigious, why in order to get everything done we can't sit down and have an agreement, why in order to affect a change at almost every level in society we have to go to court and sue somebody in order to get somebody to make a decision to force a change.

I doubt that the average person realizes that other judicial systems in the world don't operate on this premise.

That's the world in which we live.

Now John the Baptist was a man for his day.

I do not say that you should be dressed and eat what he did.

That was not the point.

But the point is, so often we say, why did John behave as he did? Surely he should have been more American than he was.

He would like to change John in John's own circumstances.

Now there is a time, of course, to recognize that maybe we should change.

As I said, there are cases very clearly with Hagar and Sarah that we have a classic illustration of some things that would be best changed.

Our society is getting freer and freer.

It is reflected also in the greater freedoms allowed in the Church of God, where the decisions today under Mr. Tkach and rather later also in Mr. Armstrong's own life were being placed more and more on the shoulders of the family and the individual.

Thus, the question of makeup was once administered as if the Church must make a decision regulating how one thinks.

Mr. Armstrong finally came to a realization, though it was never clear, even to the time of his death, but a realization that in the end women wear makeup for more than two reasons.

For more than vanity, because that is one reason.

For more than merely compromising with society, because we often feel it is easier to simply copy society.

We also wear it because in reality it is a form of decoration.

Whatever God may think or you may think, it is reflected in the fact that people do decorate themselves.

And so the Church has said, it is your decision what you do.

It is not going to be a matter for the Church to decide.

Mr. Tkach has not said that in order to please him you must wear it.

And he most certainly has said that you do not sit in judgment of others who do or who do not.

There is another area I would like at least to briefly address.

Long ago the question of decision making came with respect to when we should keep the Holy Days, which month, which day of the moon, and arguments arose in the Church of God's seventh day that Mr. Armstrong settled for their congregations and hours, because they once were essentially linked in the early 1930s.

Mr. Armstrong was, after all, a minister of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God's seventh day.

And he concluded that the function of the administration of the calendar shall not pass to God's apostle, that he has not been called to take upon himself the decision making of the calendar that here to for the Jewish people as a whole have seen as a function of the chief leaders representing the court that made decisions in such matters.

This is not a matter of simply looking at the new moon.

And I want to just settle some one or two points here to make you understand.

Those who would like to, and there are many different groups, almost every group that has gone in the direction of using Hebrew names, and all sorts of splinter groups, but not all of them, who have broken from us, have wanted to take upon themselves the regulation of the calendar.

And the one thing they, as far as I know, all take for granted is that it should be judged on the basis of observation at Jerusalem.

Now if the Jews are no longer the people who are responsible, or the court, let's say, more officially speaking, that made a decision and established the fundamental principles and ceased to function at that point at which no further decisions were required to regulate the calendar, and the court of the calendar continued as late as 1000 A.D.

The court of the calendar did not stop early because it was necessary to make certain decisions as late as that in order that the holy days would always be kept in season.

Today it is not a problem, and no such Jewish court functions.

It simply is based on the decisions made in the past.

What God said, I have not at this time chosen Jerusalem.

Headquarters is not now there.

Headquarters has been in many other places.

Jesus said the time is coming, people are going to worship here or there or somewhere else, and it now is in Pasadena, California.

The world headquarters.

Not only would you have to decide what it is you're going to observe, you would have to decide which new moons.

Shall it be the new moons of two months, or all twelve or thirteen? What are you going to do if you do go by observation and the day of atonement falls on Friday? Are women going to prepare for the Sabbath on Friday, a fast day, or on Thursday? That's another decision you will have to make.

Are we going to have 353, 354, 355, or 356 days in a year? Are we going to have 385, 384, 383, or 382? What are you going to do about the burial of the dead if you have two holy days following one another in the autumn? A holy day can be a Sabbath, that's the weekly one.

What if trumpets were a Sunday? What if trumpets were a Friday? What if atonement were a Friday? What will you do if the Feast of Tabernacles are? There are societies like ours where we just hire the world to embalm.

There are other societies where it would be absolutely impossible to take care of the dead in that fashion.

In the Kingdom of Tonga, you bury them either that day or you don't let more than a day elapse you must bury on the second day.

There are many, many questions, and we could add many more.

There are those who would like to judge Mr. Armstrong for having made the decision that the calendar was never historically preserved by the Church of God, that it always has deferred to the Jews in this matter, and shall also, in the same way that we defer to the Greeks when it comes to the examination of the text of the New Testament, and to the Jews and not the Greeks when it comes to the examination and the decisions that are made on the text of the Old Testament, that is, the Hebrew Scriptures.

There are many different things that if different people were to judge, it would be different today, but I would only point up that before we make some decisions we ought to think twice, the question of keeping the Sabbath between the Arctic Circle and the North Pole, which varies from winter to summer, from what you might call noon to noon and midnight to midnight.

If you want to know why the largest group of Jews are in New York and not in Oslo, Norway, you would understand that the Jews recognized that the law of God did not address every question

about Sabbath keeping when it came to the far northern climates, and decisions historically within the Jewish community have always been made.

The old tradition, of course, was made in terms of the Jewish community essentially within the Holy Roman Empire.

Today we make it in terms of the relationship of the Church of God to this region.

But there does rest, finally, with Mr. Tkach today, certain responsibility to make decisions.

Another generation will seek to sit in judgment.

It's very typical, as he said.

If he were to die, the generation from now will come along and ask why we did the things we did, the same as it's very prone today to want to ask why things were done in the fifties as they were.

Well, the answer is we were living in the fifties.

We were not living in the nineties.

Why Mr. Armstrong had to put a prod on himself on the Church? Because without the prod, we would not be where we are today.

Or why it is that Mr. Armstrong left the Church in the care under Christ of a man who doesn't need the same kind of prod, but needs to understand that the brethren are living in an age of inflation, the like of which we never saw in the fifties and the sixties.

And it's Mr. Tkach's duty to see in terms of the direction of this work financially that we have the care of the brethren and not alone the payment of radio and television bills.

So let us be careful and look at Scripture once again and ask what was the backdrop in which those people lived and decisions had to be made.

Or in more perhaps pointed terms, before our children sit in judgment as parents, they perhaps should reflect on what their children will say when they grow up about their parents, children today.

It's so easy to assume that others somehow didn't have the wisdom that we always assume exists in the contemporary world.

Do be careful when you drive home and take good care of yourselves and be back here for whatever services you attend.