

H009 Hoeh 3-14-92 Statement of Beliefs 3 Pasadena

Thank you.

Some weeks ago I visited the same congregation, Pasadena, East PM, and presented a introduction to the Statement of Beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God.

It was only later that I found out that the church administration had sent it out.

When I presented it, the idea was to give an introduction and have the local pastor follow through in whatever pace or whatever time would seem appropriate.

Mr. Joseph Tkach Jr. suggested, rather than at least for a number of areas, that we should have a second part and that I should attempt in this case to essentially cover all the material, which does not mean that the local ministry cannot in fact devote a sermon over maybe a three-year period to each one of these topics.

By way of summary, because in every congregation there are those who may not have heard the previous presentation, we took a look at the fact that there is a need in the nineties for us to have a summary or a statement of beliefs that can be made available on behalf of the church, on behalf of each of you, for those who may contact you, about the fundamental teachings pertaining to those things that people tend to see as a summary of Christian doctrine.

That is, we are not covering in a Statement of Beliefs all the particular areas that might be significant or important to us as individuals.

For instance, we do not address the question of washing one another's feet on the Passover.

We did not, and do not in this, address a question that many members think is very important, which of course it is, and that is the basic subject of the laying on of hands.

But on the other hand, what we did attempt to do in the 28 summaries here is to give an outline that would be useful if anybody were to ask you what is the general understanding of the church on such and such doctrines that others develop.

Because different people have different perspectives, and these represent what in a collective study by upwards of twelve people seemed the most important aspects that need to be clarified that others tend to make inquiry about.

We started out with the recognition that we have a high profile on television.

We are second in terms of the general audience in the United States.

We are known around the world in many countries from past publications, radio as well as television.

And we have people who, after years of time, begin to write up material on us, some of which has been carefully done, the majority of which has not been carefully done.

And so there is a need for us to have an area in which we communicate to the public.

And the material here was presented in such a way that in this narrow brochure, which all members, we presume, have received, if mail was delivered, we generally have three once in a while, four on a page.

You will notice that the material is very succinct.

We have enough here that if we were to look at the pages, two, four, six, almost nine full pages, that this would represent quite a number of columns, if there were also some commentary, in a local paper.

And during the Festival of Tabernacles, there are people who want to know something about the group that has come to the local community, and someone is likely to write up what we believe on different topics.

Now this could have been developed in three stages, and in a certain sense, this represents only stage one.

We, of course, in a sense handle any one of these topics at three different levels.

The third level might be a major article or a booklet.

The second level would be a more extended exposition, as one might receive in a memorandum or a lengthier letter.

What we have here are simple summaries, and we felt in discussion that, first of all, what was needed was a way to choose the right terminology for the 1990s in order to explain what we teach in such a way that those who read it without any further commentary would understand what was meant, if they are those who are interested in the theological or the religious summary of what the Worldwide Church of God believes.

There was a time that our presentation tended to take the format of a script from television earlier, a script from perhaps a radio broadcast, or an article in which you write, and Mr.

Armstrong used to write, others of us used to write, to the general audience.

The audiences it used to be was the ordinary person who communicated with us.

We were not writing to men of the press.

We were not writing to those who were thinking of writing about us, and we were certainly not writing to the theologians.

We were writing to people who listened to radio, television, and who also read the magazines.

And so doing, you use terminology that tends to reflect what would be expected in conversation.

And of course, if we wrote to brethren, there is always the possibility of, in fact, developing a certain terminology that reflects how we tend to communicate with each other.

By that I mean, we have in-house language, which you would immediately spot if you were to pick up a volume published by the Lutherans, published by the Catholics.

Certainly if you were to read something published by the Jews on the Sabbath, for example, every group develops its own terminology.

Men of the press and men of the cloth have all developed their own terminology.

Now theologians have developed a terminology to which they have given general assent as to meaning.

So the last time I gave the presentation, I said what you ought to have when you go through this booklet so that you can better understand what the church presents, both to you in summary and to the audience that is interested, is to have more than one translation of the Bible and, of course, a dictionary.

A dictionary doesn't have to be any than a simple handheld one, doesn't have to be definitive work, but one that gives clear definitions at the level that goes beyond merely the child's first or second level of whatever language you may be speaking.

In other words, the ordinary dictionary that we tend to find on a library shelf or on the school shelf after you have gone through the first maybe four grades or so, there will be a clarity of explanation in simple language, quite different from an encyclopedic article, but a simple summary so that you can generally understand what that word means.

And sometimes, of course, we have to expound it in terms of the scripture additionally.

So you have your ordinary Bible that you use.

I recommend that you have in mind two kinds of Bibles, one that which represents either the King James, speaking of those who use English, and then a more modern update of the grammar in the King James, which is the new King James, and then perhaps the dictionary, sorry, the Bible that you would commonly use, and maybe it is a new international version, maybe it is the revised English Bible, something that is well written in the modern language, and I also recommend that you try another version completely different from anything that you normally would use.

Now, this may or may not be your case, I chose the new American Bible.

It's a nice, modern translation, clear, has some footnotes, and is Catholic.

That way we can say that whatever the teaching, it is not something that reflects specifically an orientation of one particular area of the Christian world.

If the fundamental quotations were taken from the Old Testament, I would certainly recommend one of the Jewish translations, certainly the modern one would be the logical procedure.

In so doing, you have an insight into how hundreds of men and women who have studied both theological topics, religion, and the language, and the history of the language, and the history of religion would render the Word of God.

Now remember, the written Word of God has never been historically preserved by the Church of God, nor has it historically been translated by the Church of God.

It was received in the Church of God, and multiplied initially in the Church of God, and came into the public possession of the world as a result of that.

It was the literature of the Church the same as the Hebrew Old Testament, was the literature of a particular nation that finally centered in a particular tribe, and now, in fact, is a part of the public domain in the sense that the transmission and the transcription have been a function of the scholarly literary people among whom either Hebrew or Greek has been known for centuries, and now with access through language, the great minds in this field are able also to render it in fine modern versions of the great languages of the world.

So what we are doing is to say that the Church does not base its doctrine on some unique internal translation that no one else would agree with.

Because that really is not a valid premise at all.

We find indeed what this is saying to us in the language that we speak.

What it is saying to us, whether in a version done 400 years ago nearly, or one done only five years ago, and we can compare the Bibles, the material was drafted so that we have a few sentences under each topic, and as you know, we start out with the subject of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Now, we choose not to introduce that which might be construed as needlessly confrontational, and then from there we develop a summary of what we mean by the Holy Scriptures, without being confrontational over the question of why the New American Bible has books additional to the one in the New King James Version that I have, or why if I had a Jewish it would stop with Second Chronicles rather than stop with the Book of Revelation or the Apocalypse. So we define Scripture in non-confrontational, simple terminology. We look at the angelic realm, we examine, and I went through all of these, the subject Satan, then the subject of man, salvation, and grace.

We now have moved from the realm of deity to the realm of created spirit, to the realm of the human family, and to the realm essentially of the relationship of man to God in terms of the subject of salvation. And so I'm going to pick up in an area where in part I went over the material and we'll proceed and take a look at how we ought to study this in the home, in the family, and learn how perhaps with by reading the notes below which cover the verses that we chose, how we can make it clear to young people as well as those who are learned in the great societies when they meet. For instance, the subject that is next is sanctification.

Now I'm going to start with this because even though I did dwell on it, I think it is an appropriate introduction for the remainder.

Sanctification is a definitely long word based on Latin, it's certainly not Anglo-Saxon, and it was never a word that appealed to the church by the nature of the way many people understood or reacted to the term. This particular term more than most is in need of clarification and the appropriate awareness and use of it within the fellowship of the church of God.

Sanctification is a state of holiness, so at this moment you'd want to perhaps look at the term as it is defined in the dictionary, then you might want to look up that meaning holiness.

Now for decades, the message of God was in a sense presented from the perspective of someone who was in the advertising field who could grab the interest of the public.

Now if there are two words that don't grab the interest of the public, one is certainly a sanctification and the other is holiness.

Who wants a sanctified holy person as president of the United States? That's part of the problem. These terms have taken on unfortunate connotations in the thought of many people, but it is time that we recognize that the abuse of such terms is no more wrong than to use the word holocaust, which the Bible does in its original Hebrew in many places just because it was a term abused in the Second World War where humans and not animals were offered in sacrifice to a great or evil idea.

Sanctification is a very important term and it refers to that word in English that we associate with the word holy. That is something that you should next look up in a dictionary and you define, you will find that holy has the sense of being sanctified in terms of what the meaning of the Latin is. We associate the word saint with this term also in the Bible. It is a state of holiness where you are in a sense a reflection of the divine character and mind and you are set apart for a particular function. This state of holiness is imparted to the believer through the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit that it is

not natural to man. It enters into us this state as a result of a transformation by the Holy Spirit, God's Holy Spirit that dwells in us and it cannot dwell in us without imparting such a state.

Though Christians sin, not live a life of sin but do sin. The subject of sin is not addressed under a separate topic. That would be to take a negative subject, the subject of righteousness and the law. That is a way to present the topic of sin. But you would want to look up to see what people think sin is and to be sure you know what the Bible means by sin. Though all Christians sin we learn from the next sentence here that God's Holy Spirit leads them to a life of repentance and obedience. The spirit of God that's imparted as a result of baptism leads one to a life of repentance. That's a state of mind in which you are willing to acknowledge when you have been wrong, that you are teachable and one who can be instructed. It also leads us to a life of obedience. Now this is a very important additional word for there are many who talk about repentance but who never associate repentance with obedience. You'll note also that we do not use the word penance. You will recognize that penance generally does not find its presence as a word in Protestant translations. Though it may in some translations where the primary denomination is still centered in Europe, thus in translation universally the German translation out of the Greek or Latin would have given the sense of do penance. Now penance and repentance come from the same terminology, the same root, but have developed religious ideas depending on the realm in which one has grown up. Penance has a connotation in Lutheran and Catholic terminology that is not what is understood in general by the Greek word as reflected in the translation repent.

So we'll want to look at repentance. The dictionary is important as you go along perhaps more so under the word sanctification than many others because we're introduced here to terminology that we may take for granted in part or be unfamiliar with and that others also may use but sometimes not with the same connotation. But among theologians, sanctification, holiness, repentance, obedience are terms that cannot be misunderstood.

If anybody chooses to misunderstand them that is the fault of the person who makes that choice.

They are appropriately used. So the church does teach repentance and obedience, a life evidenced by the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is you should be able to see the result.

To put it in simple terms, children whose parents become converted after the children are perhaps in primary grades should be able to see that their parents are different people now than they were before they repented and were converted. Of course the same should be said the other way of parents to children. But you should be able to look back and ask yourself, am I the same kind of person today that I was two years ago? Sanctification follows conversion and is made possible by God's grace. So the means by which it is done is both the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and the grace of God, God's grace. It follows conversion because conversion is that which must precede this state. The state of holiness is impossible without repentance.

And repentance is a consequence, I should say conversion, is a consequence of repentance so that there are these different steps. Now God's grace of course is also through faith in Jesus Christ. That is we must believe. If you don't believe then of course you won't get the result.

Jesus stated it in other terms at other times, knock and it shall be opened. You'd choose not to knock, it won't be opened. So it requires faith on our part in what Jesus Christ did. That is to believe that there are certain things that historically were accomplished when he was on earth and are still being accomplished at the throne of God.

The reason for starting at sanctification is that this is perhaps one of the least understood or used terms in the church. It means the state in which the church collectively and the individual lives. It reflects one's attitude and conduct. We next notice justification.

This is God's gracious act of pronouncing a believer righteous in his sight. In a sense, it is like standing before a judge and being declared not guilty of past sins, that having been expiated through someone else having taken the penalty. And now since you asked for forgiveness, your attitude and your present conduct reflect a state of righteousness.

So justification is God's act, his gracious act, pronouncing a believer righteous in his sight.

It is dependent initially on repentance because there's no justification if we're unwilling to repent and is made possible also, I add, through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. That is, there had to be a penalty paid. That penalty was paid by Jesus. And so we discover that since the blood of Christ was shed to pay the penalty for our sins, and God has accepted that as the perfect sacrifice, we can trust that we can be forgiven and be made just in his sight if we in addition accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Now it's implicit in accepting the blood of Jesus Christ that he's Savior, but it also must, what must not be overlooked, is that Jesus Christ is Lord or Master in that sense. And hence the question of repentance and Savior and obedience and Lord should not be overlooked. If we are to lead a life of repentance and obedience, we not only have Christ as Savior, but we have him as Lord. He is the one who does tell us right from wrong, and he does lead us and discipline us both collectively and individually. The Church has had a general understanding of justification. There are many who assume that the Church had a different view than it did. Justification has always been a gracious act of God through what Christ did. It has never been by means of the law.

The law cannot make you righteous when you were unrighteous because you were a sinner before, but that is to get ahead of the story. Justification has been clearly understood by the Church.

Sanctification has been understood by the Church, but not always with the correct terminology, where we tended to think of that as perhaps defined by the word conversion. So this brings us now to the word conversion. Conversion is a turning away from, is a turning from the way of sin to the way of God. Now there is a distinction between the fact that a Christian may sin and living the way of sin. What we must do is abandon the way of sin so that we now live God's way, and when we fall short in sin, we have to reconcile ourselves to God and seek not to repeat that mistake again. And of course, Jesus addressed the person who stumbles seven times or 70 times seven. Some things are harder for some people to wrestle with than others, but there is a fundamental difference between the way of sin and to sin. One is an attitude of life simply going in the wrong direction. The other is to go in the right direction the way of God, even if from time to time you get off the path or stumble in it.

Conversion is a transformation, a turning away, and it leads ultimately to a state that is called sanctification. It is closely connected, conversion is, with God's calling. So we recognize that God initially takes action and chooses to bring himself in one way or another to your attention, and without the calling of God, whether it be by circumstances, by an accident, by a friend whom you have in employment, by listening to the program, finding a piece of our literature, whatever it may be, God may ask you or call you to follow his way by any number of means.

That is followed also by repentance and baptism, and is sealed by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So conversion involves a step that is God's initially, then it involves a step that is yours, which is repentance, then a step, shall we say, of the church, because the church conducts the ceremony of

baptism, and then it is sealed by an act of God again by the gift of the Holy Spirit. So we must repent as individuals, and in a sense, Christ is baptizing you through those who are his representatives in the church, and then he imparts the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a gift. It is not something that is earned.

Conversion becomes manifest through godly thoughts, attitudes, and actions that form the basis of the believer's life in Christ, and once you have the Holy Spirit and you discover your thoughts are now different, your attitudes and your actions all go together.

We often don't let our thoughts be seen by others. The thought is what's in your mind.

The attitude is very often reflected in how you communicate, you know, the cold shoulder, the warm and friendly person, and your actions, all those areas form a basis of the believer's life in Christ. Now that leads to what we defined earlier on this page as a state of holiness.

Sanctification follows conversion. It is the state in which you live when your thoughts, attitudes, and actions have taken on an entirely new perspective in contrast to what you were before you were converted. We turn a page to repentance. Now this one we would assume that we're generally familiar with, but let's listen to it carefully. Repentance is a change of mind and attitude toward God. We define repentance in terms of what is fundamental. It is a change of mind, but it is a change of mind that involves the attitude.

Can you have a change of mind without an attitude? Yes, you can. There are a lot of people who intellectually can change their mind, but whose attitudes don't correspond.

It is important to recognize that repentance is more than an attitude. It has to do with the change of mind, that is, it involves the intellect and the attitude. There are people who are devoted to God, who would think nothing of it to put to death a heretic.

That's the history of Christianity for centuries. So a change of mind is important. That's the intellect and a change of attitude toward God. Now you might not have known you had an attitude toward God that wasn't what it ought to be. An attitude toward God in this sense means that even though you may have thought you were honoring God, you discovered that what you were doing was following your own will or somebody else's will. So it is important that we recognize that a change of mind inevitably is essential because repentance means that there was something that had gone wrong, that needs to be corrected. It follows conviction by the Holy Spirit, that is, people go through an experience of some kind of mental, emotional, or even physical turmoil when the Holy Spirit convicts them that they have been wrong. That is made possible through the word of God. Now it might not be possible directly through the word of God because not everybody has access, but the word of God doesn't have to be printed, it can be spoken.

And so people may have heard it by the spoken word and not merely by the written word, which we often think of in that sense. We use lowercase w for word here to refer to the thoughts of God, not the person of Jesus Christ. Repentance entails an awareness of personal sins accompanied by, now the attitude is at issue here, the awareness, that's the change of mind area.

The remorse, accompanied by remorse, has to do with attitude. And it's not enough to merely be aware and to merely have regret. There is the need of a resolution, not merely on January 1, a resolution to respond to God's calling that is his initial act in bringing you to a new understanding. So a resolution means that you have resolved to do something that you didn't do before. This is the will. The resolution is the ultimate area of great importance.

For in this area of the will is where the decision will be made as to whether we decide ultimately forever to be submissive to Jesus Christ as Lord and to God as Father, or choose to go willfully our own way.

Rather than a temporary emotional response, now notice in most cases we didn't give the opposite. We simply gave the positive definition, but repentance is so often misunderstood.

We chose to define it in its negative rather than a temporary emotional response.

Repentance towards God results in an abiding change of thought.

Abiding because there is a resolution that you've chosen to change to resolve, that's what a resolution is, what is resolved.

An abiding change of thought, not something that deviates, goes back and forth, you're never sure, you're in doubt. It's a change of thought in the mind, behavior, which can include emotional behavior, physical, and the whole direction of life.

I'll add the word whole just as a sermon here, the direction of life.

That is, you are moving in an entirely different direction, where in a person resolutely turns to God, not weakly. If people were resolute in what they did, which was right, we would not have most of the world's problems we do today.

There could never have been a Nazi Germany if Christians in Germany had been resolute in terms of what they knew the Bible taught. The same would be true in the Middle East with respect to Islam and Judaism, or Christians and Muslims and Azerbaijan, Muslims and Hindus in India, Kashmir.

Being resolute is a very important thing. Someone who resolutely turns to God and purposes to forsake.

See, we're still defining repentance and purposes to forsake all sin and walk in all God's commandments.

This is a very important sentence. I've commented on it on the way, so let me now summarize it and just read it. Rather than a temporary emotional response, repentance toward God results in an abiding change of thought, behavior, and direction of life, wherein a person resolutely turns to God and purposes to forsake all sin and walk in all God's commandments. Commandments spelled with lower case, not just the 10. The 10 commandments represent a particular kind of law. There are commandments, capital C, the statutes, judgments, laws, and so forth. All God's commandments.

Now that's, I think, all inclusive. That's the teaching of the church.

Water baptism. Water baptism demonstrates a believer's repentance for personal sin and acceptance of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice. We chose not to make a public issue of adult baptism versus infant baptism. We're not here trying to be controversial, but by defining correctly what baptism is, it is impossible to understand in terms of infant baptism or even baptism of an infant in the uterus, which is also practiced, where the death of an infant was likely.

Water baptism demonstrates a believer's repentance. Now to have repentance means you must be at that level of mind that you're capable of repentance, of personal sin. Now little children can in some way begin to perceive this earlier than some parents imagine, but they're not necessarily ready for baptism. And it says, not only of that, but acceptance of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice, which means you have to understand the historic function of Christ at his first coming, what he sacrificed,

which was himself as Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice, and that it had an atoning effect that is it paid the price.

So that we could go free.

And in addition, reconciling us to God, it does take a mature mind to understand the significance of both personal sin and Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Baptism further signifies a commitment to a new way of life governed by the spiritual laws of God.

The example of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a child under parents or guardians is not in a position to commit to a new way of life governed by the spiritual laws of God because they are not wholly free and adult.

By definition, infant baptism is excluded, but we do not make it controversial or a doctrine expressed in those terms. The Worldwide Church of God practices baptism by immersion.

Now, we broke here and we tried to say it in the following way, that the Worldwide Church of God practices baptism by immersion. We didn't get into a controversy and say, baptism means in the Greek immersion. The Bible teaches baptism by immersion.

Now, it's true that it does, but it would have been much easier, and we chose the easier route here, non-controversial, merely to state what we do, which does not mean that if we, which does not mean that we're insulting others religious views, for if we said the Bible teaches this and somebody else practices something other than immersion, then you're putting them in a position of going contrary to the Bible, and that's not the intent when this was developed.

It is, in a sense, diplomatic to know when to say what the Worldwide Church of God practices, and when to say what the Bible expressly states. In most cases, we do not use the term what the Bible expressly states so that we don't put other people in a corner where they feel that they are being condemned because we chose another view. The one thing we have to learn in television is that television does not want to program and will not allow it. If we ourselves corner our audience in such a way that they feel trapped, if they want to read the Bible later and discover that, that's after, of course, the program has been given. But in the meantime, it is important to realize we do have to recognize that people want an out, a way of not having to face up absolutely at every point. God is not asking us to try to force people to make a decision against their will.

So we say in simple terms that the Worldwide Church of God practices baptism by immersion.

Now that we've gotten the individuals, we define the collective, the church.

The church is the collective body of believers who are called by God. Notice the repetition in these definitions. You cannot mistake the fact that the church recognizes God's action as fundamental, call by God and in whom the Holy Spirit abides.

Young people who are not yet baptized, in whom the Holy Spirit has not yet been imparted as a gift following repentance, belief, and baptism, share the fellowship. But it would be a mistake for young people here, and I'm addressing you as individuals or collectively as a group, not to recognize the fact that your responsibility before God begins by way of practice and habit forming now. But you don't really become fully responsible until you are in that adult state in which you are able to direct your life with respect to God, apart from someone else having jurisdiction over you. That does not mean you do not share in the fellowship of the body, which is the church. But it does mean you have a responsibility that you yet must recognize will be yours to make. In the meantime, you form habits

that conform to the basic teachings and instruction of Jesus Christ. The church began on the day of Pentecost. We're referring to the New Testament church, not the congregation of Israel, because we're speaking essentially of New Testament teaching. Pentecost nevertheless was the day on which the church formally was organized initially, the law having been given, and then the covenant which made the congregation of Israel God's peculiar church. Either way, it is true. But the New Testament church was commissioned to preach the gospel. That's the primary function. The reason there is a collective group is that it has a function, not only to preach the gospel, but to teach all that Christ commanded, to baptize, to nurture the flock, period, and to nurture the flock. In fulfilling its mission, the church looks continually to Jesus Christ. Let me read the sentence exactly as it is. I wanted you to hear it in terms of what it means. The sentence reads in context, in fulfilling its mission, it looks continually to Jesus Christ, the living head of the church.

So we discover that the head of the church is Jesus Christ, and we must look to him as being the head, as the husband is the head of the wife. That's a clear statement elsewhere. We don't develop extensively here, but it should be quite apparent, as the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the head of the church.

Now, that I think is one of the more straightforward, it tells us of our responsibility, and we discover that the head of the church is not a human being on earth.

I once read in my Sunday Missile, I read the entire Missile long before I came to Ambassador College, and I read a very interesting description. The head of the church, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, has returned to heavenly pastors, and he left Peter and his successors as living heads of the church in succeeding generations.

Christ, the Lamb of God, is munching away in heavenly pastors, but the shepherd, the head of the church, is down here on earth. That's the way it was pictured. Now that would not, of course, conform to the counsel that occurred nearly three decades ago, where some of these things were revised. The next topic is called church leadership. I want you to notice that we did not use the word government here. We simply have leadership. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. He guides the church in the will of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit in Scripture. Now, let me touch on that. Not only is Jesus the head of the church, but he guides the church in accomplishing the will of God. That is made known or revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Scripture.

We come to know it through Scripture by means of the Holy Spirit. The one who brings us to this state is Jesus Christ. The ultimate way we know what that will is, is what is in Scripture.

But how we learn it from Scripture is through the Holy Spirit. When we may, or in what manner we may learn it, is Christ's will. He hasn't chosen to reveal everything at all times, nor has all truth revealed in the earliest ages been preserved through all times. In the Worldwide Church of God of God, the decision-making process under Christ, because decisions have to be made under him, involves councils of ministers that report to the pastor general who holds the chief administrative office in the church. The Mr. Ducott wished, in a sense, to have it expressed in terms of input.

Decision-making process involves councils of ministers. There was a comment somebody made recently, and I'm going to deviate a bit. A little humor doesn't hurt. This is not a political statement, even though it is. President Bush has hundreds of friends, and he listens to them all, which is why he is never sure what the conclusion should be.

Was a comment made by a critic. But I am reminded that there is something to a very important point here. President Bush has made some wise decisions, as well as, like the rest of us, other decisions.

That's human. There is a wise man in whose home I was invited in Bangkok. I had known this wise man's wife for a long time, a teacher at Chulalongkorn University.

Her name was Kunying Punsap, Lady Punsap. I did not know that her husband, that I had not met him before, was the head of the King's Privy Council, which means his wise man. And this wise man said, probably the wisest statement he made in context of the function of such a council, it is never advisable that a king have too many wise men.

Now, you all know this as a homey expression in the kitchen. Too many chefs spoil the soup.

Too many chefs spoil the soup. Too many wise men. Now, Mr. Dukach doesn't want too many wise men.

A man of wisdom knows that it's better to listen to a select group, because you finally have too many conflicting opinions, and the weight of each one is too difficult to determine. So the description of church leadership is given without addressing whether we are congregational, episcopal, or papal, or any such thing. We simply address it in terms that most anyone can grasp. We use the word minister. We use the word councils of ministers and a chief administrative officer. And then below, we have among three verses cited Ephesians 4:11. And I'm not taking the time here to turn to these, but that's what the Bibles are for. If there was a controversial one, I read before coming here, I read in the New American Bible, the Catholic terminology, and there is no problem in that terminology.

It doesn't differ from the general Protestant translations of the Bible. By the way, there are many new translations of the Bible in which both Protestants, Catholics, and Jews participate, sometimes only Protestants. But there is no problem in terms of these verses cited. It was decided we should have a definition of the Christian.

Because people ask, well, how do you differ, let's say, from a Muslim from a Jew? What should a Christian be? The Christian is the person in whom the Holy Spirit abides, whose attitude and behavior are consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit therefore is the means, the Christian is born from above and maintains a right relationship with God and man through a life of love and service, beneath which are five books of the Bible cited, but not cited is Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, in which being born again is used.

We chose to assume that individuals who know of the verse would know where to find it.

We did not want to identify ourselves with the born again movement, because we are not a part of the born again movement.

Any more than we are a part of a Pentecostal movement, even though the church began on the day of Pentecost. So we use a correct translation, born again is not incorrect, it is not complete, and the real sense of the issue is not whether one is born again, but whether in being born again, one is born from above. So we now have a simple summary of what a Christian is, and it relates to the relationship of Christ and the Holy Spirit and with God. It's a relationship. It does not depend on a prophet, Muhammad. It does not depend on the culture of the family in Hinduism. It doesn't depend on being born of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob as in Judaism, which is of course the fundamental areas in which these religions tend to focus.

The gospel. The gospel is a message preached by Jesus Christ and by the church about the kingdom of God.

It is the good news of what God has done and will do through Christ and is the central message of the Old and New Testaments. The gospel message is called the kingdom of God.

Now we don't define the kingdom of God here, we want to wait till you come to that which happens to be the last one, but it involves the message, involves the kingdom of God, and in connection with that kingdom, what God has done and will do through its king, not defined here, but Jesus Christ.

The scriptures will indicate their number of them, and you will see who is to be the king of that kingdom, but it is taking a look at what Christ did, what God did through him, and it is found in the Old Testament scriptures as well as in the new. So to understand the kingdom of God and what Messiah is to do, we must look in both Old and New Testaments.

We chose not to make an issue of a typical mistake in which people think the kingdom of God is the millennium. Decades ago, Mr. Armstrong addressed that question and pointed up, the millennium is a period of time. The kingdom of God is not a period of time, there is a major distinction. We will define the kingdom of God later, but the gospel pertains to the relationship of Christ to that kingdom.

Prophecy is the divine revelation of God's will and purpose, that's the next topic. In prophecy, God reveals himself as one who supervises the course of history and reminds man that God is judge of all and that his judgment is surely coming.

Prophecy assures man of God's love, mercy, and faithfulness and motivates the believer to live a godly life in Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ. So we learn in prophecy that God reveals himself as one who supervises the course of history. It all is working out according to a great plan which is fundamentally summarized in the festivals. The details of prophecy are not summarized here because it is enough that they should know the reader, the nature, of prophecy and let them read. Whoever has the eyes to see, let him read, as Jesus said in the book of Daniel. The details of prophecy vary significantly in terms of what is important from generation to generation. The law. The law is a system of divinely inspired moral and religious precepts which in letter and in spirit define sin. Sin is defined whether by the letter or the spirit and to regulate human conduct. So we learn that the law defines sin. That's very important.

That's your fundamental summary. Christ magnified the Old Testament law. We use the term Old Testament because that includes anything of a nature of law in the Old Testament.

For Jews this was not exclusively written. This is not meant to be addressed to the Jewish community as such or we would have used other terminology. He magnified the law by revealing its spiritual intent and purpose. The Christian is not justified by the law but by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Whereas the Christian sins by breaking the spirit or the letter of God's law.

You sin whether you break the spirit. I'm sorry. Whereas the Christian sins by breaking the spirit or the letter of God's law sometimes it may not be in both. It may only be in one because the letter of the law does not always define sin in terms of the intent.

Thou shalt do no murder. An accident can happen. Someone is killed.

Sin is not chargeable. There was no intent. It was simply an accident.

In any case the spirit or the letter when broken is what we call sin. But a Christian is not to persist in a state of sin but must strive to exemplify the mind of God in every facet of his life.

So the law you see is to be understood in the spirit, in its spirit and intent by the mind of man comprehending that intent which is to say that we acquire the mind of God more and more as we see the intent of the law. The intent of the law is God's highest form of instruction.

Torah or law means instruction, teaching.

So in desisting from sin we learn to exemplify the mind of God in every facet of life.

Not like lawyers and judges sometimes but lawyers who want to have a loophole.

The Sabbath is an appointed day of rest and worship.

It was sanctified at creation because on the seventh day God rested from his work.

The observance of the Sabbath was enjoined in the Ten Commandments. The Sabbath preceded them.

It was enjoined in the Ten Commandments. At that time also it was given as a sign between God and his people Israel and was affirmed later by the example of Jesus Christ and the apostles. Following these scriptural examples the Worldwide Church of God continues to observe the seventh day Sabbath. We don't attack Sunday of the Christians or Friday of the Muslims.

We simply define that Jesus himself gave us an example in the apostles.

Now I am not taking the time to read all the verses. We cite Genesis, we cite Exodus, we cite Luke, Acts, and Hebrews. We could cite others but these are sufficient.

We cite nothing that is dubious, only the most pertinent. Now we didn't try to argue that the New Testament commands that Christians keep the Sabbath.

Because you know people say where do you find that verse in the Bible? The answer is sometimes you find only an example. So we say following these scriptural examples the Worldwide Church of God continues to observe the seventh day Sabbath.

We are being non-controversial and not attempting to attack the Christian community for having made the decisions that it did.

The festivals, the observance of the festivals and holy days and join on ancient Israel was affirmed by the example of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

Below I note John is quoted, Acts is quoted, and 1 Corinthians is quoted.

So I have some New Testament illustrations.

All right, the observance and join on ancient Israel affirmed by the example of Jesus Christ and his apostles. That's a thought pattern. They are holy convocations, memorials of God's great acts of salvation in history, symbols of the power of God, and types of the anticipated future fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. Let me clarify this just a bit.

They are holy convocations, they are memorials. Certain acts occurred in the past of which the holy days or memorials, even the festival of tabernacles, is a memorial of the way the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness to show that the ultimate inheritance of the promised land versus the wilderness is like inheriting the kingdom of God versus living in the millennium.

They are symbols of the power of God in bringing about his plan.

Types of the anticipated future fulfillment of God's plan of salvation, they are also types of certain parts of the plan already fulfilled. But let me state, even though Christ fulfilled the Passover, even though the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, it doesn't mean that the bulk of the result of that paschal sacrifice of the coming of the Holy Spirit has ever been fulfilled for the simple reason that the vast majority throughout time have never yet been converted, forgiven, or have received the Holy Spirit.

So in that sense, the ultimate future fulfillment of God's plan of salvation still awaits us in connection with the result of the Passover, the result of Pentecost in AD 31.

For the Christian, the festivals and holy days are annual celebrations of God's power, love, and saving grace. We choose here to emphasize what we have understood all along, that they do represent the spiritual plan of salvation, based on the fact that the initial festivals were patterned after a natural harvest, and human beings are going to be reaped into the kingdom of God. Tithing is given as the next one. Tithing is the scriptural practice of giving a tenth of one's increase to God. Free will offerings are distinct from tithes and are given as the believer is able. Tithes and offerings are commanded in the Old Testament, and were confirmed in the New Testament by Christ and the apostles. Now we cite Matthew 23, 23, and Hebrews 7, 4 to 14. We do not enter into any controversy as to how tithes were handled in the New Testament before the book of Hebrews was written. For there was a time that many priests were obedient to Jesus Christ, as we read in the book of Acts, a great company of priests were faithful. So there was an administration that certainly was transitional, as Paul recognizes, which is why he doesn't address the subject directly in most cases, because there was still a functioning priesthood. But we discovered Jesus' attitude and Paul's summary in the verses that are cited. I assume that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews.

If you have any doubt, ask him in the resurrection.

The Church uses tithes and offerings to fulfill its God-given mission to preach the gospel.

We have a function now. The Church has a responsibility. Tithing and giving reflect the believer's worship, faith, and love for God, the source of salvation, and giver of all good things. This is how we define the results that come to people who do tithe. Not that you're promised millions, not that you're promised wealth, but it reflects the believer's worship, faith, and love for God, who is the source of salvation and giver of all good things, however he may choose to give to you in return. We do want to keep away from the kind of tithing concept that is apparent in some of the evangelical programs on television. The second coming. Jesus Christ, as he promised, will return to earth to judge and reign over all nations in the kingdom of God. His second coming will be visible and in power and glory. That answers the Jehovah's Witnesses' question.

This event is the hope of the Church, because it inaugurates the resurrection of the dead and the reward of the righteous. Now, that would be completely incomplete. I'm using English correctly there to emphasize a point. If we did not follow up with another topic called the Millennium, because there are many people who assume when Christ comes, then comes the last judgment, and then it's hell or heaven. But we state that the second coming, the hope of the Church, and it inaugurates the resurrection of the dead. Now, when we say it inaugurates the resurrection of the dead, we use the term inaugurate to mean that which begins. It doesn't mean that we teach that all the dead rise at once. It inaugurates the resurrection of the dead, of which the first resurrection is the beginning. And the second resurrection or the rest of the dead who have not yet understood spiritual truth as they should, will be resurrected.

So, we carefully chose the word inaugurate without having to define how long it will take.

The Millennium now is the thousand, one thousand year period during which Jesus Christ and the resurrected saints rule the world in peace, justice, and equity. It begins with Christ's return as king of kings and lord of lords, where we then look at both the civil and the religious government to establish the kingdom of God over all nations. That's bound to get us in trouble later, but for the time being that's okay. The over all nations, that's why we're going to be hated of all nations, because when this message finally sinks in, at the time of the two witnesses, the nations won't want the government of God. At the beginning of the Millennium, Satan is bound, and the prophesied times of refreshing begin.

We use a, this is a general statement at the beginning of the Millennium, because we find Satan is bound, and then we find the Millennium described. So one immediately precedes the other.

After the Millennium, when all enemies will have been put under his feet, and all things made subject to him, Christ will deliver the kingdom of God, the kingdom to God the Father.

We have not stated anything there about what happens after the Millennium, but only note that when all enemies have been put under his feet, Christ turns everything over to the Father. We chose at the first printing not to go further than that, and beside the point is that we needed to have it published.

We come to the inheritance of the believer is eternal life in the kingdom of God. This inheritance is reserved in heaven, and will be bestowed at the second coming of Christ.

The resurrected saints will then rule the nations with Christ in the kingdom of God.

So here we define in the inheritance of the believer that it involves eternal life in the kingdom, and once we are in the kingdom, which is, which life is reserved for us now, we don't have that as the ultimate inheritance. We are still flesh, though we have been born from above, and there is a new inner man and woman, the new person, the inner person that grows to maturity. That is still only the beginning of the story. We are going to be made immortal, and once in that kingdom, we will rule the nations with Christ in the kingdom of God, which separates us completely from the teaching of the Adventists.

Certain things were made to separate us from the Jehovah's Witnesses and Adventists.

The fate of the unrepentant, since the time is a little longer, I will not bother to read this at the moment. We talk about the lake of fire, that second death, which is eternal.

We do that in simple terminology. Then I come to the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God in the broadest sense is God's supreme sovereignty. The kingdom of God is his absolute rule over all ultimately. God reigns in the church through Christ, through the ministry, through parents, and in the life of each believer who is submissive to his will.

The kingdom of God will be established over the whole world after the return of Jesus Christ, and will increase to encompass all things. Thus ends the first edition.

We already have developed a new section, which would be the 29th, not afterward.

It will be tucked in on that last page.

How far we will want to go to expand this? We thought at least on the basis of responses within the church that another area needed to be developed, which was summarized already here under the subject of the millennium. But we will be adding from time to time, depending on what would seem to be required by those who want to know more of the specific and helpful teachings of the church. We try to keep away from things that are so specific, but don't really have that much significance to the outsider. After all, if God told us all of this in a book with so many pages, the statements of belief cannot be as big as the Bible.

We have to make a choice, and we want it to be the most helpful, which means to clarify it in the most practical way for each of you in order that you can explain it to others. If it were written only for you, we would simply have had a different kind of commentary here and there.

But it's written so that you can explain it correctly to others, and that others who read on their own can have an accurate assessment of the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God.

You have a task to do now, to go over the whole thing, to look at all the scriptures in at least one or two versions. I think it would be good to note that we were very careful not to choose any secondary verses, but those which were so obviously addressing the question that there would be no way of misunderstanding why the church draws the conclusion that it does.

Okay.

Some weeks ago, I visited the same congregation, Pasadena East PM, and presented an introduction to the Statement of Beliefs of the Worldwide Church of God.

It was only later that I found out that the church administration had sent it out.

When I presented it, the idea was to give an introduction and have the local pastor follow through in whatever pace or whatever time would seem appropriate.

Mr. Joseph Tkach Jr. suggested, rather than at least for a number of areas, that we should have a second part and that I should attempt in this case to essentially cover all the material, which does not mean that the local ministry cannot in fact devote a sermon over maybe a three-year period to each one of these topics.

By way of summary, because in every congregation there are those who may not have heard the previous presentation, we took a look at the fact that there is a need in the nineties for us to have a summary or a statement of beliefs that can be made available on behalf of the church, on behalf of each of you, for those who may contact you about the fundamental teachings pertaining to those things that people tend to see as a summary of Christian doctrine.

That is, we are not covering in a Statement of Beliefs all the particular areas that might be significant or important to us as individuals.

For instance, we do not address the question of washing one another's feet on the Passover.

We did not, and do not in this, address a question that many members think is very important, which of course it is, and that is the basic subject of the laying on of hands.

But on the other hand, what we did attempt to do in the twenty-eight summaries here is to give an outline that would be useful if anybody were to ask you what is the general understanding of the church on such and such doctrines that others develop.

Those different people have different perspectives, and these represent what in a collective study by upwards of twelve people seemed the most important aspects that need to be clarified that others tend to make inquiry about.

We started out with the recognition that we have a high profile on television.

We are second in terms of the general audience in the United States.

We are known around the world in many countries from past publications, radio, as well as television.

We have people who, after years of time, begin to write up material on us, some of which has been carefully done, the majority of which has not been carefully done.

So there is a need for us to have an area in which we communicate to the public.

The material here was presented in such a way that in this narrow brochure, which all members, we presume, have received, if mail was delivered, we generally have three, once in a while, four on a page.

You will notice that the material is very succinct.