

Letter to Worldwide Church of God, Philippines

(On Apostasy--A Radical Proposal)

Las Piñas City and Baliuag, Bulacan

September 11, 2006

Mr. EUGENE M. GUZON
National Director
Worldwide Church of God Philippines

--and--

Pastors Andrew Teng, Rey Taniajura, Len Joson,
Audie Santibañez, George Escara, Rex Dela Peña, Pete Melendez

Dear Sirs:

This could be my last letter to you inasmuch as you do not reply to my emails. The three decades of my association and membership in the Worldwide Church of God speaks for itself as to why I have this earnest appeal before I finally cut myself off from you. I take your silence to mean that you do not want anything to do with me at all.

I am writing this letter not only in the spirit of Jude 3 but also in the spirit of 1 John 4:11. If I were indifferent I would just ignore what I know has been transpiring in the Worldwide Church of God for years.

As I said in my previous letters I am bringing to your attention only two things of concern: Amillennialism and Ecumenism. I see that you are not convinced of the gravity of error of this doctrine and movement, respectively. I think that you believe that the church is doing right by embracing the same. Therefore you feel sure that there is no cause for alarm whatsoever.

For several months I have been suspecting, from what I have been reading in WCG publications, that the church has adopted Replacement Theology which is an essential component of Amillennialism. Last week my suspicion had ended. I received an email which featured articles from "In Transition" magazine. The August 1995 issue had this quote from Dr. J. Michael Feazell (the interview happened during FOT 1992): "We cannot understand Revelation. It is filled with wild metaphor The advent won't occur like we thought THE CHURCH HAS REPLACED ISRAEL. Why would there only be a few survivors of one nation in the world tomorrow? . . . Physical blessings don't count if they are given 4,000 years later" (emphasis mine). An article on WCG's website has this to say: "It seems clear that the vision in Revelation 7 has the church in view, not the ancient nation of Israel . . . The church is the

extension of national Israel, or better, its REPLACEMENT, elevated to a spiritual plane" ("Who Are the 144,000?" 2000, WCG, emphasis mine).

It is undeniable, then, that the Worldwide Church of God believes in and teaches Replacement Theology. Now, you might say, what's wrong with Replacement Theology? I would say that Replacement Theology is not only a wrong doctrine or concept, foreign to what the Bible says -- it is a lie (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1,2 and Rev. 12 -- Satan [the father of lies, John 8:44] hates Israel as well as the Church). Surely, as a church we would not teach people a lie (see Rev. 22:15). Let me quote scriptures that prove Replacement Theology is a BIG LIE:

"Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD" (Jer. 31:35-37). God has not cast off Israel (Rom. 11:26), but the WCG has presumed that He has. The WCG does not see prophetic significance in the nation of Israel. If we teach Replacement Theology we are making God a liar. This is very serious indeed. See Zechariah 2:8.

"I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations . . . My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips" (Psalm 89:3,4,34). But apparently the WCG does not believe that; otherwise it would not have accepted Replacement Theology.

Dr. Feazell's statement notwithstanding, God had not reneged on His promises to Israel after a few hundred or a few thousand years. During Armstrong days we used to quote Abrahamic covenant scriptures and teach that God's promises to Abraham were everlasting (Gen. 17: 6-8; 26: 3,4; 28: 13,14). Postponement of God's promises doesn't make Him a renegade. If God can break His promises to Israel, then He may also break His promise of salvation for us. We would have no assurance of salvation then.

Of course we know that God cannot lie (Titus 1: 2; cf. Micah 7: 20). The problem is unbelief. Instead of believing the plain meaning of scriptures, we look for hidden meanings. Spiritualizing scriptures is a main cause of Replacement Theology and Amillennialism. It is not a purpose of this letter to argue for a literal approach to reading scriptures. I know that writers in Glendora have all their reasons for believing as they do. I would just point out that the New Testament shows that Old Testament prophetic scriptures were fulfilled literally. Therefore, the message of the Bible will escape us if we are prone to allegorizing or spiritualizing scriptures. It has happened to many, including WCG writers.

I cannot think of why the Worldwide Church of God has come to adopt heretical doctrines except that the Bible says apostasy will permeate Christendom in the last days (2 Thess. 2: 3; 1 Tim. 4: 1,2; Luke 18: 8; Rev. 3: 14-18, etc.). Looking at its history I could see that the WCG has been susceptible to deception. In the process of going mainstream the leaders in California did not discriminate among theologians and church leaders whom they went to for help and recognition as to who had sound biblical doctrines. The result is that the WCG has ended up espousing unbiblical doctrines and liberalism.

In WCG's doctrinal articles, the way the authors write casts doubt to the reader's mind instead of upholding firm belief in the Word of God. This is true with the articles on creation and science and on the Millennium. It looks like the authors write from Higher Criticism point of view, lending more weight to man's thinking instead of believing what the Bible plainly says. In this regard here's a startling statement: "Out of the 260 chapters in the New Testament, only part of one is about the millennium. I suggest that this shows its relative importance (Michael Morrison, "Three Views of the Millennium," 2000, WCG). Dr. Morrison is saying that part of God's Word -- Rev. 20: 1-10 -- is not important. He is saying in effect, "Lord Jesus, your revelation [Rev. 1: 1] that the Messianic kingdom will last a thousand years is not important. The fulfillment of voluminous Old Testament prophecies are not that important, are they?" That's Dr. Michael Morrison versus God.

I have said in another letter that the WCG downplays the Millennium. I'm not sure if I was correct in saying that. Maybe I should have said the WCG has written it off as doctrine of the Bible. Here are other testimonies to that effect: "Although the Worldwide Church of God has traditionally been premillennial, the church does not require its members to believe that Christ will set up a temporary kingdom after he returns . . . Millennialism is not a doctrinal point on which we must seek conformity" ("A Balanced Approach to the Millennium"). "Raising premillennial dispensationalism to the level of primary doctrine causes division in the body of Christ . . . Neither Jesus nor the apostles preached a millennial gospel" ("18 Truths Restored by HWA"). This is unity at the expense of doctrinal purity. More on this later. I have to comment first on the claim that the Lord and the apostles did not preach a millennial gospel.

Dr. Morrison also wrote, "No other scriptures [except Revelation, he says] speak of a temporary kingdom to be set up when Christ returns . . . The Millennium was not part of Jesus' gospel" (Discipleship 101, Unit 10A -- The End - Only the Beginning," 1997, WCG, insertion mine).

The Millennium not part of Jesus' gospel? On the contrary, the following scriptures will prove that the millennial kingdom was the main thrust of the Lord Jesus' preaching prior to His rejection by the Jews. (You well know these scriptures. I'm quoting them here to emphasize their literal meaning as opposed to their allegorized or spiritualized reading):

1) "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1: 30-33). It seems to be a belief of WCG writers that the Jewish hope of a Messianic kingdom was just a vain wish. But the angel who talked to Mary didn't think so. If the Messianic kingdom that the Israelites hoped for was just a figment of their imagination, why would the angel talk like that? Surely, Mary could not think of anything else but a literal kingdom over which the Messiah would rule. This is nothing less than an announcement by the angel Gabriel of the millennial gospel.

2) "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3: 1,2). "The kingdom of heaven" that the Baptist was talking about is not a kingdom in heaven. Rather, it is the same Messianic kingdom to be established on earth as prophesied by the prophets of Israel. John was Christ's forerunner announcing or preaching the millennial kingdom.

3) "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4: 17). Having proclaimed that the millennial kingdom was at hand, the Lord Jesus proceeded to elucidate the laws of the kingdom. Hence the Sermon on the Mount. It is to be noted that the offer of the kingdom was conditional: the people had to repent. We know the story. The Jews rejected and crucified their Messiah. Thus the kingdom was postponed. God's program for Israel was not discarded -- it was only postponed because of their unbelief. At the Second Coming of the Messiah, the people will believe (Zech. 12-14), and the millennial kingdom will be set up.

4) "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19: 27,28). The regeneration of the world will begin with the onset of the Millennium. Who says the Lord Jesus didn't preach a millennial gospel?

5) "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22: 28-30). The twelve tribes of Israel are on earth, not in heaven.

6) Matthew 20: 20-28 relates the story of John and James' mother requesting the Lord for top positions for her sons in the coming kingdom. The Lord did not question the validity of the request. There was indeed a kingdom coming; only, He said that "to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given for whom it is prepared of my Father" (v.23).

7) "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1: 6) From the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry, no clarification was needed as to what the "kingdom" was. It was the Jews' hope of a coming Messianic (millennial) kingdom foretold by their prophets. Again, the Lord did not censure the disciples' question; it was a valid question. His answer: "It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (vv. 7,8). Because of the Jews' rejection of the offer of the kingdom, judgment must first come, the kingdom being postponed until the Second Coming when the remnant of Israel will accept Him (Matt. 23: 39).

There are many more scriptures in the New Testament that prove that the Lord Jesus and His apostles preached a millennial gospel (Matt. 10: 5-7, etc.), contrary to Dr. Morrison's bold but false statements.

Now concerning the matter of Ecumenism. True, as a Bible-based cult we have been exclusivist in the past. But to go to the other side of the pendulum, I believe, is not warranted. The Bible upholds the doctrine of Separation. There is the biblical injunction to separate from those who hold heretical doctrines. TO JOIN OR ENDORSE THEM IS TO APOSTATIZE.

I have quoted from a WCG article a statement that says to raise the Millennium question to the level of primary doctrine is to divide the body of Christ. Here is Dr. Joe Tkach himself speaking of the same thing: "Christianity would be better if we can focus on the primary core issues, the

essential doctrines of the Christian faith and be more generous of the peripheral items. So often, the reason that denominations split is because they focus on secondary, peripheral items." ("Evangelicals Today," March-April 1998, Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches). In other words, doctrinal accommodation for the sake of unity. Unity at the expense of truth.

Does the Bible contain peripheral doctrines? Who has the right to judge which parts of the Bible are important and which parts are not? Should we tolerate false doctrines and false teachers?

1) Matthew 4: 4 and Acts 20: 27 do not say that some parts of the Word of God are negligible or "peripheral."

2) Acts 20: 29-31; Phil. 3: 2; Col. 1: 28 -- If we love the brethren we will warn them about false doctrines and false teachers.

3) 2 Tim. 4: 2-4 -- False teachers are to be reproved.

4) Romans 16: 17 -- Apostate teachers are to be avoided.

5) Titus 3: 10 -- They are to be rejected.

6) 2 John 10 -- Receive them not.

7) 2 Cor. 6: 14 - 7: 1 -- Separation from religious apostasy is commanded.

Warnings against apostasy are spread throughout the Bible. God does not take apostasy lightly. I am appalled, therefore, at how the Worldwide Church of God has adopted false teachings from individuals and organizations such as the following:

1) RICHARD J. FOSTER -- Dr. Tkach has announced that Dr. Richard J. Foster will be the guest speaker at WCG ministerial conference next year [July 26-29, 2007]. He will speak on "spiritual formation."¹ WCG ministers have learned from Dr. Foster. Headquarters probably distributed Foster's book "Celebration of Discipline." While I do not have the historical facts here, I know the current fact: that the church is being fed the teachings of a New Ager.² The members are perhaps unaware that Dr. Foster's teachings derive from Catholic mystics and are not biblical.³ He may quote scriptures, but he has his own agenda of spirituality foreign to the Bible.

The WCG endorses a 1995 letter that Richard Foster sent to those on his Renovaré mailing list regarding prophecy. At the conclusion of the letter Foster praised Augustine for opposing "the prophetic literalism of Chiliasm. Instead of the imminent material, millennial kingdom of Chiliasm, he helped his people see 'the City of God' . . . May something of the same faith-filled sensibility arise today." Augustine's Amillennialism/Replacement Theology has caused horrible tragedies in the world -- Roman Catholicism, Crusades, Inquisitions, Holocaust, Anti-Semitism, etc. And the WCG has chosen to believe Augustine . . . and Foster.

2) RICK WARREN⁴ -- The celebrity of Purpose-Driven fame. My sister received a copy of the book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, given to her by a church member in Bulacan. I also received a copy from a friend who is residing in California. I know that the WCG endorses the book head over heels. There are Purpose-Driven seminars based on Warren's spiritual growth strategy.

Little do the members realize that the book contains questionable teachings, suitable paraphrases from *The Message* of Peterson, mysticism [New Age], pop psychology, etc. Warren, out of his desire for church growth, uses marketing techniques to lure the unchurched to join the emerging church. It is my personal view that Warren is teaching his brand of salvation by works doctrine, which we know will not save anyone.

3) EUGENE PETERSON -- The WCG endorses his blasphemous New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs version. Blasphemous because he dared to alter the words and meaning of scriptures. How liberal can the church get? Peterson -- and those who endorse *The Message*⁵ -- have forgotten Revelation 22: 18,19. Not only does the WCG recommend *The Message* in its articles, it actually buys copies of the book and distributes them to people who are object of evangelization (e. g., at their youth summer camps).

The Message actually deletes some words of the Scriptures and puts in instead the author's ideas. Although most of the book may be just fine paraphrases, the watering down of key verses makes the book unworthy to be equated with other Bible translations. The author dared to distort moral and doctrinal teachings of the Word of God.

4) The GRAHAMS -- Last February WCG members attended Franklin Graham's festival crusade in Manila. Although I do not know much about Franklin, I know that Billy Graham has been apostatizing for decades. His cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church is well known. He has praised the Pope as the leader of the Church. He is number one promoter of Ecumenism, sharing the slot with the Pope.

5) HANK HANEGRAAFF -- One of the first Christendom leaders that [top WCG leaders went to for help in their quest for orthodoxy](#). Unfortunately they came to a confirmed preterist.⁶ Who knows how much of Hanegraaff's preterism was caught by Dr. Tkach and Co.

6) BRIAN MCLAREN -- Author of *A Generous Orthodoxy*. Recently *Christian Odyssey* ran a short article introducing the book. McLaren⁷ is another intellectual voice for Ecumenism. The WCG doesn't need to be convinced.

7) PROMISE KEEPERS -- One of their promises is to support one's pastor 100%. Mormons in this organization do that. So do the Jehovah's Witnesses and Roman Catholics. Seventh-day Adventists, too, etc. Promise Keepers is religious tolerance (Ecumenicalism) organization.⁸

I limit myself to sevens. There are others, of course.

A major problem with the Worldwide Church of God is that prophecy is not being preached from the pulpit as it should be -- another swing of the pendulum. Prophecy is a large part of God's revelation, therefore it is not hard to see that to refrain from teaching it to the members is amiss. One reason given as to why the present-day WCG does not give emphasis to prophecy is that of past debacle with "prediction addiction." But I think we should not be held back from teaching prophecy by the memory of past proclivities of Armstrongism that we did. We were a [cult](#) then, therefore our posture on prophecy at that time should not be considered as a reference point in deciding how we preach the prophetic Word today. The Bible is the guide.

Now, prophecy says that in the last days, a world religion will exist, called Babylon. During the Tribulation Period this world church will be a cohort of the Beast and the False Prophet. The

book of Revelation tells the story, a story that will be fulfilled as foreseen by the apostle John. I believe that today's Ecumenical Movement is the beginning of this end-time religious Babylon.

We had better be warned! More than ever we need to have DISCERNMENT. Let us not suppose that because the goals of this ecumenical movement are good in themselves that there is nothing wrong with it. Ecumenical churches are ripe for the picking. If we neglect prophecy we are wide open to deception by the enemy. The WCG, steeped in ecumenicalism and neglecting prophecy, is too close to the trees and it cannot see the forest, or, it is like the frog in a pot of slowly boiling water.

I believe that the foregoing is serious enough an expose to merit a doctrinal conference of the Philippine ministry. If you are concerned about doctrine -- and I know you are -- you will not ignore this letter. May I have a suggestion to make:

I have asked Mr. Paul Kroll for Dr. Tkach's email address, but my request was refused. I suggest that this letter be forwarded to the Pastor General himself. If he is concerned about doctrine -- I presume that he is -- he will make a reply. From there, you would know what to do next.

Based on track record, however, church officials in California would not readily listen to members or field ministers pointing out to them some doctrinal errors. It may be expected therefore that they will ignore letters of this kind.

Haven't we noticed that it is the "imperialists" who have [wittingly or unwittingly] deceived us in the past? This is not to prejudice other nationalities, but only to learn from past and present experience. Many of our brethren in the old WCG are right now being misled by non-Filipino leaders of UCG, PCG, LCG, CGI [ICG], RCG, WCG Remnant, etc. Can't we judge things with the Bible as our guide, independent of ministers from overseas? We don't have the Americans, or Australians, or Irishmen, or Germans, or Russians to interpret the Bible for us.

With the foregoing premise, therefore, I am proposing to the Philippine ministry of the Worldwide Church of God for them to at least for a while keep a distance from Headquarters and take time to review things for themselves.

If Headquarters will not change from their doctrinal errors, then Acts 5: 29 is the scripture to follow. To do otherwise would be treason to truth. Declaring independence from religious oppression by HQ is imperative if they will not listen to reason and revelation. Surely, an organizational connection is very little to give up when it is God who is calling us to His side.

I hope that this letter will serve as a whistle blower. Apostasy in the church must be arrested. You owe it to the members to be on the side of the truth, and most of all, it is to God that we have to account for how we respond to His Word.

Sincerely, in Christ,

EDGARDO S. MENESES

cc: WCG Bulacan

