

# An Internet Interview with Mr. Larry Salyer

by Ewin H. Barnett

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The following interview was sent to me by Henri Fortuin. This document has been modified slightly for spelling, grammatical errors. It has been reformatted to fit the stylistic preferences of this web site.

While I personally disagree with many of Mr. Salyer's doctrinal viewpoints, I present this for its historical merit as to the origins and events leading up to the doctrinal changes in the Worldwide Church of God.

I believe this interview to be largely accurate, based on other stories I have heard corroborating many of things contained herein, as to descriptions of activities and personalities within the Worldwide Church of God in the late 1980s to early 1990, it may or may not be so accurate as to Larry Salyer's role, activities and involvement in such situations. I leave it to the reader to make up their own minds based on what is presented here.

Bill Ferguson 2/9/97

This interview took place on March 2, 1996 in the Columbia, Missouri meeting hall where the local Global congregation meets for Sabbath services. After a potluck dinner, Mr. Salyer kindly consented to this interview. Several dozen of the brethren sitting around us as a makeshift audience. Mr. Salyer's wife Judy and son Jeff sat nearby.

Mr. Salyer is a Regional Pastor based in the St. Louis, Missouri area and serves on the Board of Directors and the Council of Elders of the Global Church of God. As this interview was being transcribed, it was announced that Mr. Salyer would be moving to the San Diego, California headquarters of the Global Church to assume the position of Director of Editorial Services.

Television interviews bring you the visual impact of the person being interviewed, but time is always limited. Interviews, which are printed, always have to be trimmed to fit into so many pages or column-inches. The Internet Interview format was developed to give the person being interviewed the opportunity to completely express their thoughts. As little editing as possible has been done to bring you this interview in its entirety.

**EWIN BARNETT:** Could you give us a thumbnail sketch of Larry Salyer's early years?

**LARRY SALYER:** Can I ask you what you mean by the early years?

**EWIN BARNETT:** Well, starting out when you wanted to be close to your mother.

**LARRY SALYER:** (Laughs) He wants everything from an icebreaker to a heart-to-heart!

Why don't I start with what a lot of us start with: when we come to the knowledge of the truth it's often because we have found ourselves floundering for answers in life which is where I was at 19 or 20. in a teacher's college not keeping the truth, not fully aware of the truth,

though my family was by this time involved [in the WCG]. I had a lot of personal problems in college. I had a lot of problems with my own ability to do what I wanted to do and having been an Honors Student in college and then flunking out of college, it kind of left me looking for some answers.

When I returned to my home area and started dating my previous girl-friend who later became my wife, we decided as soon as we started thinking seriously about marriage that we had to figure what life was about and at least figure out what we were going to do about church. She had been a Methodist and I was not practicing any religion per se, but my family was now involved in Worldwide. And so, at that point we started reading, looking and studying and within a very short time, in fact a week after we got married, we started attending services. We started attending Sabbath services the week after we got married and we have been there ever since.

Within two or three years we went off to Ambassador College in Big Sandy.

We already had one child, we had another child while we were in college, and then we graduated in '68. I was ordained the day after graduation. I was the only person out of my graduating class who was ordained at that immediate time, although there were several others within a few months, because the work was growing so fast, and there was a desperate need for ministers. I was ordained right then and sent to Houston as an Associate [Pastor] and within another six months I was made a Pastor and sent to West Texas. From that time on it has sort of been what ever comes down the pike- moves on a very short-notice basis and "troubleshooting" in places like Washington, DC and San Francisco. I was brought into Pasadena to pastor the Auditorium congregation in 1980, which was right after the '79 fiasco and a lot of rebuilding and repairing had to be done. I spent two years there working in the local congregation as a pastor. That brought me into direct contact with both Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Tkach at that point in time.

I made a few trips down to Tucson to visit with Mr. Armstrong and at one point I was assigned to go to Australia to direct the work down there, but 24 hours later that was changed. Then I was going to Canada, and a few weeks later that was changed. I ended up staying in Pasadena. Six weeks after I left Pasadena for San Francisco, Mr. Armstrong called and asked me to go to Big Sandy as the Dean of Students. He was restructuring the college. So I spent four years in Big Sandy as Dean of Students. Then upon the death of Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Tkach asked me to come to Pasadena to take over Church Administration, which I did and most of you know the story from there.

I had had some experience with Mr. Armstrong, especially the last few years of his life, working in the College. I knew Mr. Tkach and some of the administrative problems that we had been dealing with up to that point in time. So when I came in to take over Church Administration in the spring of '86, I had some idea what was facing us, but not a great deal of an idea.

I certainly didn't know where the church was headed at that point in time.

**EWIN BARNETT:** You were eventually assigned the job in Pasadena of being the personal assistant to Mr. Tkach. What was it like to work for Joseph W.

Tkach and what did you do for him?

**LARRY SALYER:** Well, first let me correct the title. I was never his personal assistant. When I was pastoring the church in the Auditorium in '80 to '82, I was actually the Pastor, but he used me a lot as a personal assistant and I went out and did a lot of the "troubleshooting". I even had to terminate a lot of men who were having various problems and so forth. I was seen as an extension of Church Administration. When I came in 1986, I actually was made Director of Church Administration, which was not a personal assistant to him. But in a sense Mr. Tkach treated the Director of Church Administration office as if it were second in command of the work. That's the way he had felt, working for Mr. Armstrong, and that's what he wanted me to do, when I took over Church Administration.

In fact, one of the first things he told me was that he wanted me to oversee this and this and this and this and it included Mail Processing, and all kinds of areas. I said,

Mr. Tkach, I have no knowledge or expertise in any of those areas, I'll have enough to do just to keep on top of Church Administration.

Mr. Tkach was always a likable, affable, fun person to be around. He liked to get together and have discussions and he liked to get together in his office after work sometimes and sit around, talk, have a glass of wine or whatever and there were some good times in the personal sense. Mr. Tkach was difficult to work for in the sense he was very unpredictable.

He did not have a vision, in my opinion, speaking now after historical perspective. He did not have a vision of where the work was going, why it should go there or how to get it there. He simply was flailing day to day in terms of 'where do I go from here?'. Often the answer depended on who got his ear on a particular day. He also focused way too much attention on trivial matters, with which I guess he was comfortable, such as lawnmower problems in Big Sandy.

**EWIN BARNETT:** What were the highlights of that job for you?

**LARRY SALYER:** The highlights, of course, were working with the ministry and trying to get programs in place that would affect the field. We worked with the refresher program which was not my idea, that had already been instituted years before by Mr. Tkach's administration and others. Working with the refresher program which gave us an opportunity to teach and refresh the ministry, was a highlight. Working with new booklets and Correspondence Course and things of that sort which Church Administration always had a hand in because we had to help coordinate how this would affect the growth of the church and the outlay of budget and this kind of thing.

Of course, working with the ministry on a day-to-day basis... We did some constructive things. For example, we put the new Graduate Club manual together during that period of time. We changed YOU and summer camp pretty extensively during that period of time. All of those things were somewhat within the purview of Church Administration, so I had a hand in all those things.

**EWIN BARNETT:** Recent statements by Joseph Tkach, Junior and Hank Hanegraaff, the president of the Christian Research Institute indicate the Worldwide Church of God has been working on doctrinal changes for several years, which could have extended back into the time

of your working for Mr. Tkach, Senior.

What activity did you see in regards to the status of church doctrines, who took part in those decisions, who pushed for the changes and who resisted those changes?

**LARRY SALYER:** (laughs) We are getting to the nitty gritty here! First of all- they absolutely not only extended into the time that I was there, but they started within a couple of years after I arrived there. To make sure the record is clear, I was appointed Director or Chairman of the Doctrinal Team when it was first reconstituted under Mr. Tkach after Mr. Armstrong's death. I was made the Chairman of the Doctrinal Team.

The Doctrinal Team at that time consisted of a very large number of evangelists and top leaders in the work, too numerous to mention here, but such personalities as Dr. Hoeh, Raymond McNair, Dean Blackwell, Harold Jackson, right on down the line, all the basic headquarters leadership that you could name were on the doctrinal team. We met every Thursday afternoon for a period of three or four hours and our initial mission was to repeat to some degree the style but not the purpose of the STP, the Systematic Theology Project. Our job, in other words was sort of to lay down some documentation of what the church believed in a wide range of areas. I want to say here, on behalf of all those men, that the motive was pure, to serve the Church and follow the directives of the Pastor General.

In order to accomplish that, we agreed in the opening meetings to create a prototype, and by that I mean, we would take a doctrine that I felt we could have pretty straightforward discussions on and we would write a document that then would become the pattern by which we would do all the rest of the doctrines. So, we started with the doctrine of baptism.

Well, we actually surprised ourselves by finding we had quite a bit of different varieties of belief even on the subject of baptism (laughs), but we were all of one mind on the major areas. Within a short time, we began to get pressure to start on other doctrines and the specific doctrine they wanted dealt with at the time was the subject of interracial dating and marriage. We worked on that doctrine for I would say a year, I'm guessing that it was very close to a year, without real success. There were all kinds of opinions, a wide range of ideas, a lot of scriptural discussion.

It was very heavily biblically based, and the attitudes were right, but we nevertheless couldn't agree on everything. And so we did not arrive at that.

Now, I bring that up because it was at that point that I was called in to Mr. Fezeall's office and he mentioned to me that he was now becoming the head of the Theology Department of Ambassador College and that as such he will also take over the Doctrinal Committee, which was fine with me. I said, great, no problem, I stepped down, he stepped into the role of chairman of the Doctrinal Committee and we began to push very hard, he did and others for getting that document out. So in the summer of that year, as you probably would recall, I don't remember now if that was '88, in the summer of that year, we produced the doctrinal paper on that subject.

I don't wish to discuss necessarily at this point in time, agreement or disagreement with that paper except to say there were a lot of things in it that a lot of us agreed with and there were a lot of things in it that a lot of us didn't agree with. At any rate, a lot of people see that as the beginning of the process. I don't see that as the beginning of the doctrinal disintegration,

except as it created an environment in which things were done somewhat contrary to the wisdom of the group, whereas before we tried to come to a consensus. At this point it was an approach of Mr. Feazell presenting various statements to the group, and if the group doesn't shoot it down in flames, then we will publish it in the PGR [the Pastor General's Report] and later in the Worldwide News. So, it was doctrinal decision by default.

Let me tell you a story that will illustrate the beginning stages of the problem.

As had become the custom, a preliminary copy of the Pastor General's Report came out for review with a bold new doctrinal position statement.

It was stated that our previous statements about God as a family had been misplaced and were false. I don't mind saying for anybody to hear that I stormed into Mr. Tkach's office and said we can't do this, we are destroying a fundamental doctrine of the church. He informed me that he had already received five memos to that effect from people who had read the preliminary paper, all members of the doctrinal team.

This meeting turned into a shouting match between Mike Feazell and me when he happened to call Mr. Tkach from Big Sandy. Mr. Tkach informed Mike that he had decided not to publish the new material until the doctrinal team was of one mind, even if it took a lot more study. Mr. Feazell felt we had to go forward with that doctrine immediately, saying the doctrinal team was in agreement with it and that Larry was simply missing some meetings and not up to date. I don't know how this was supposed to square with the memos from the other five. That made at least six of 14 members who had objected in writing.

I felt it would undermine the entire doctrinal position of the church because we were fundamentally changing what we had said and I even quoted, or paraphrased, Mr. Armstrong, in *The Missing Dimension in Sex*, in which he said, "Here's the greatest truth you can ever know. Man is created to become God". I said, Mr. Armstrong's saying it's the greatest truth you can ever know, [but] you're calling it making a mountain out of a molehill. Mike went on to say that Mr. Armstrong had started out to prove the fallacy of the immortality of the soul and ended up, "taking a flying leap at the moon". I knew then, as never before, that we were in for real doctrinal decay.

After this big discussion, I was assured by Mr. Tkach that this would not be published or printed in any manner until we could come to a complete doctrinal consensus on it. This is very clear in my mind, as I was leaving the next day on vacation and wanted to comfort the others who had objected. They felt that I, as Director of CAD [Church Administration Department], had to be the point man on this. Having done so, I drove to Big Sandy, only to find that the Pastor General's report had come out the day after I had left with all the same materials intact, in which we in fact had told the church that we no longer believed that God was a family.

This, I see as the clearest sign of the beginning of doctrinal disintegration for a couple of reasons. First, because Mr. Tkach had made a decision in my presence not to publish the material, only to change his mind as soon as the pressure from the "conservatives" was off. It made it clear that he was not really in control. Second, the doctrine itself is fundamental to resisting such later doctrinal error as the trinity and the immortality of the soul. This also showed a lack, on the part of the "progressives", of real spiritual understanding. Of course, that may be generosity on my part. Maybe they knew all along that they were knocking out a

huge piece of the foundation. This would fit in with your question about a long term plan.

After that it began to be the question of what was the nature of Christ, was Christ fully human, was He fully divine, how did those two fit together, could Christ have sinned, was it theoretically possible for Christ to sin or was he immune to sin and that of course became another huge doctrinal problem to me with which I confronted the "powers that be".

I remember going into Mr. Joe Tkach Jr.'s office and saying, "Joe, I have a question here from one of the regional directors in the international area and he has a problem with this Nature of Christ doctrine. I said I can't answer his question because I have exactly the problem he does". He said, "Well, what's the problem?" I said, "Well, the problem is, that we're basically saying that Christ couldn't sin, therefore in a sense did not have all of the same human capacity the rest of us have, therefore he really couldn't have functioned as our savior, or expect us to walk in his footsteps." He looked up at me, kind of blinked and said, "Well, Larry, I'd rather have a savior that couldn't sin, than a savior that didn't sin". That was the end of the discussion. He said "I'll pass it on to somebody else." So he took the memo from me and said he would give it to somebody else to answer.

But tampering with major doctrines had clearly begun. I think we're talking now as early as late '88 or early '89. We're already into some fairly major doctrinal issues, some of which may not have hit the church fully at that time. But I think if you went back and looked at the documentation, which I have not done recently, but I think you could see that clear back in '88 or '89 we were beginning to open the door to some major doctrinal disintegration.

**EWIN BARNETT:** Long before the doctrinal changes were formally announced, during his spring of '94 Ambassador commencement address, Joseph Tkach, Sr. said that the rumors that the church was making significant doctrinal changes were untrue. He also made similar remarks during a number of his church visit sermons up until the fall of '94. In one audio clip I have he calls the rumors "damnable lies". Knowing him as you do, how can you explain these statements?

**LARRY SALYER:** I was not personally aware of those comments at commencement, as I had already left the organization in February of '94. Even at the time I left, I had a conversation with Mr. Tkach in which he said that I was jumping to conclusions. He suggested that my problems were the result of reading the literature of others. I had read no one's literature, and I told him this. I said, "Mr. Tkach, my concerns are not based on what others have written at all, but they are based on what you have written." He continued, even at this late date, to try to convince me there had been no major doctrinal shift.

At any rate, Mr. Tkach at first, I believe was somewhat of a victim. I say "somewhat" because it's clear to me in my discussions with Mr. Tkach that he had held certain reservations about certain doctrinal matters for decades. He openly admitted for example, that he never agreed with the healing doctrine, etc. Now, I don't think anybody would have criticized him for say "I have some concerns about an aspect of the healing doctrine", or whatever, but he basically would make statements that he never believed this or he never believed that. But for the most part, there were times when Mr. Tkach seemed to be committed to retaining the basic doctrinal structure in the church. It was over a period of time, when a lot of material began to be printed in the PGR, and otherwise presented to the church, which he seemed to be completely unaware of, that he began to find himself in this position you're discussing, where he's making statements that are totally contrary to the facts. The PGR was always submitted

for his review and approval but it seems like the contents never sank in.

At some point, having been questioned frequently about his contrasting statements, it must have occurred to him that he had to figure out how to justify this. So he began to take the lead in the doctrinal matters, not in terms of initiating them, but in terms of announcing them and supporting them. In other words, my opinion is: Mr. Tkach had an inherent weakness in his doctrinal position to start with, but he would not have initiated all the massive changes that occurred. Once they began to be initiated and he saw that the ball was rolling very quickly down hill, he decided he would be the person who was pushing. So, he sort of jumped into the fray and said, "I'm responsible for all these doctrinal changes".

That was not true from the beginning, though I would say he never really resisted doctrinal change, because he was usually intimidated into believing he didn't really have any choice except to accept what his scholars said.

**EWIN BARNETT:** What changes did Joseph Tkach Sr. bring that the Worldwide Church of God needed?

**LARRY SALYER:** I think initially, Mr. Tkach's approach probably did bring a refreshing openness to the church. The church over a period of a long time had taken on somewhat of a heavy-handed, authoritative, judgmental, approach. This showed up in "the ministry will tell everyone how to live his or her lives" kind of a context. I personally still think that was overdone. I think we got way overboard in terms of the ministry controlling what people did. The ministry has to teach the truth and help people and even correct people, but the ministry doesn't need to go around telling everybody what to do. Nevertheless, it was also blown way out of proportion by the reformers when they wanted to sell their new doctrines to the church.

I think when Mr. Tkach first took over and people said here's a man who came up through the ranks. He knows what it's like to be abused sometimes by church government. He understands what it means to be a minister in the congregation and deal with the issues that come up day by day. I think a lot of people were encouraged that he understood their plight and I think the openness that was created in terms of people being able to give input. He would go out to churches and hold meetings with all vast numbers of deacons and elders and so forth and ask their opinions. He frequently would respond favorably to a suggestion made by a member in some remote part of the world. There was freshness and openness in that that people really appreciated, that was number one.

Number two. The initial comments about needing more love in the church, that is the outward expression and evidence of love was certainly accurate and in my opinion, right on. Now, love, of course is defined by God. Love is the fulfilling the law. God is love and God is not wishy-washy, sentimental, syrupy kind of emotion, but there did need to be more of a commitment to one another in the church, more of a sacrifice for one another, more open and honest discourse between brethren, in that sense, a more open expression of love than there had been in the church for some period of years. That doesn't mean love didn't exist in the church. I think the brethren often made tremendous sacrifices for one another, but I think that when those things began to be presented they were right, they were positive, even frankly the statement that we needed to be talking more about Christ and Christ's role in things. We didn't know at that time we were going to talk about going all the way to saying, everything happened on the cross and Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, but to say we needed to be more focused on Christ and his role in things, was also probably accurate, because much of the church had

become focused in the Old Testament Law only without the understanding of the magnification of the law. To some degree that is still true in the church and even in the Global Church sometimes we find people who are so focused in the letter of the law that they are missing some of the amplifications that Christ made that would enrich their lives and build the church. So I think that was a positive that could have been used very well.

But, in most of these cases, what happened was a good thing soon turned into a human idea with certain human vanity behind it. It got pushed beyond the normal limits and pretty soon it was a negative instead of a positive.

**EWIN BARNETT:** The publicly available WCG financial reports out of the United Kingdom show a very high average salary level yet it was widely known that the support staff were very modestly paid. What were the salaries of the top staff in Pasadena? What was the typical evangelist or field minister salary level when you were involved with it.

**LARRY SALYER:** When I was in church administration, again, I would have to say, I'll talk in general terms here because salaries are not always exactly the same at all levels. There is no doubt that there was salary disparity in certain areas because certain favoritism and so forth existed. In general, the church had approached salaries under Mr. Armstrong's administration that people in high administrative office who were bearing the brunt of the major judgments and burdens of heavy decisions and long hours and various things were definitely paid more than field ministers.

Field ministers understood that, everybody knew that. It was a salary structure not terribly unlike a corporate structure.

So the salaries in Pasadena were frequently considerably higher than the salaries in the field. I first assumed that the field was reasonably well paid, but I had gone through the transition of Dean of Students and pastoring in Pasadena, the things that had made my salary even a little higher than the average salary in the field.

I discovered as Director of Church Administration, that a lot of fellows were being paid what I considered a pretty minimal wage, though maybe high by the standards of certain regions of the country. Let's understand this - the nation as a whole is very broadly divided between expensive areas and low cost areas. Sometimes the reason we didn't divulge salaries was not because anybody thought they were not appropriate, but because some people do not live in a context in which they can accept or understand a salary of a certain level. If somebody is living in a part of the country where the mean salary is \$15,000 a year, they're hardly going to understand the minister making 35 or something much less understand an executive in Pasadena making 60 (thousand). So, the salaries were often not divulged for that reason.

**EWIN BARNETT:** Do you care to comment on an example of field minister's salaries in Worldwide. I realize this does not apply necessarily to Global. One of the questions has come up repeatedly including in this local area where a local Worldwide minister stated more than once that he was offered more money than he was earning in Worldwide in order to come to work for Global. I was though, trying to understand the fact that apparently the top people in Worldwide are being very well compensated while the average worker is being probably undercompensated.

**LARRY SALYER:** Let me address two or three issues here. First of all I think the person



you referred to, though I don't know the quote, but the person you referred to is in error in his statement that he was offered more money to go to Global. First of all, nobody that I know that came to Global was offered more to come to Global except for two people who were grossly underpaid, as you just described in Worldwide. When our officials saw their salaries they said, we can't pay these people to do this for this salary, we're going to raise their salaries. There were two men that I'm aware of that were raised.

I myself, for example, took a 25% cut in pay when I went to Global. I did not get an increase, I took a 25% cut in pay. My pay has since been increased somewhat, but I am still well below what I was paid in Worldwide. I will say that I had the high salary in the field ministry because, again, of my previous administrative responsibility. But I took a fairly severe cut when I left Pasadena and then took another 25% cut when I came to Global.

Money has never been the issue with any of us. In fact I can say honestly, and anybody who reads this can check it out. When Mr. Tkach first tried to raise my salary above what I thought was reasonable and proper in Pasadena, as Director of Church Administration, I didn't know what the job was worth. But when he raised my salary beyond what I thought was reasonable and proper, I said, "I don't need that". He said "Well, that's what we are going to pay you, that's what we want to pay you." I said, "I don't really need that salary, I can live on a lower level than that." Well, I learned later of course that he was paying several other people that same salary and including people who were not doing the kind of job I was doing in terms of the level of responsibility, so I think it might have been partly justification. In other words, if you are going to raise this one, you better raise these three or four so they don't complain. So sometimes salaries got inflated because of favoritism.

Now, again, I'm not saying that salaries were necessarily ever completely out of line, though I think we could have lived more modestly in Pasadena than we did. But often people don't understand either that the cost of living situation in a headquarters environment in terms of all you're expected to participate in and do as well as all of your travel and so forth. I can say this, I think before God without fear, that I have always lost money in doing the work, when I take the money out of my pocket and then get reimbursed from headquarters. I've traveled the world repeatedly in the last 15 or 20 years and I've never made any money on that, I've always lost money on that, I never get back everything I take out.

So, in some ways salaries were considered part of that as well. I mean, you have a lot more things you take money out of your pocket for.

It's also safe to say that most executives, including Mr. Tkach, gave a significant portion back to the work in offerings.

I missed the last part of your question, you'll have to repeat it...

**EWIN BARNETT:** But I really would find it interesting for example... the one of the reasons I'm pursuing this line of questioning is that when Joseph Tkach's estate is probated, that probate may reveal his estate to have several million dollars in net assets. Do you happen to know what his salary was?

**LARRY SALYER:** If his net assets are several million dollars, they far exceed what he would have accumulated with his annual salary, let me put it that way.

His annual salary would not have provided that kind of an opportunity at all. His annual salary at the last I understood and knew and this may not have been his final salary by any means because I was told by a certain insider later that there were lots of major salary increases after I left Pasadena. So I don't know what these salaries were. My understanding and I would not have considered it out of line, I would say that publicly, Mr. Tkach's salary as Pastor General of the church was probably \$150,000.

That sounds very high to people here who might be making 25 to 30, but again, you're talking about a major executive responsibility in a major corporation, be it church or non church and a tremendous number of responsibilities to carry. It was not outside, it was not at all out of line, with the corporate world.

We have a number of local elders throughout the church who are executives, CEO's and so forth of small companies who are making considerably more money than that. That was always considered when these salaries were set.

That salary, by the way, would have been pretty much commensurate with Mr. Armstrong would make.

There was something else...

**EWIN BARNETT:** Well, it pertained to the field ministry...

**LARRY SALYER:** Let me come back to that. I do know that today, when we hire a minister into the Global Church of God we try to set his salary pretty much at what it was when he was serving in Worldwide. However, what we find is, that Worldwide had not offered any across the board raises except the one in 1987, which was a 5% increase for most ministers. Now anybody that works in the corporate world knows that 5% increase over a 12 or 14 year period is not a great deal of raise.

At any rate, we would try to look at the cost of living in an area and say, this person has to have an increase. I know people today, in Worldwide, and even coming to Global, who have been in the ministry for thirty years, who are making a good salary by some state standards, but who are making a salary that is not uncommon for a new college graduate entering the work force. So we have people who've been working at the same job for thirty years. Who because of a lack of continual pay raises, have ended up in a pay bracket that's in my opinion is far too low. And which Global, I hope, will attempt to raise over a period of time. I think we have to be concerned with the people at the lower level and so do the executives at headquarters. I know you're not putting me on the spot, I just want to speak as a member of the Board [of Directors] and the Council [of Elders] here that we see that even the people we're hiring in at Worldwide levels frankly at the bottom levels are too low for the work they do and the number of hours they spend.

We must also keep in mind, and I'll say this for the local group as well, we have to keep in mind that in most cases when you hire a minister, you are hiring two people. You are hiring the minister and his wife. We have never paid the wives, and so they both basically work full time for that salary. So, if you look around at two income families, it is not uncommon for a two income family to be making 50 or 60 thousand dollars. Our ministers don't make that.

When I was Director of Church Administration, we hired new graduates at about 23-24

thousand dollars. That's about what a lot of beginning teachers make. There was a salary scale that considered the tenure, the rank, the work load and the cost of living in an area. Some pastors were still in the high 20s. Most were somewhere in the 30s, and a few in the 40s. It was the rare individual in the field, usually a man with a very long service record with supervisory responsibility who could be making around \$50,000. So we're talking well under 50 thousand dollars for virtually any of the ministry in the field. Some of them have been there for thirty years. So, I don't consider those salaries outrageous at all.

While it is true that there were some inflated salaries--the rumor I hear is that it got much worse in the last few years--the idea that the ministry is grossly overpaid compared to the average member just doesn't hold water, in my opinion.

**EWIN BARNETT:** What does the Worldwide Church of God's plan on receiving from the average US member over the course of a year. Surely, they must have some type of financial planning. What percentage of church income, for example came from members?

**LARRY SALYER:** The last I recall, I may not be right on these figures, about 85% of the income of the work came from members. That was a lower figure when Mr. Armstrong was writing his co-worker letters and so forth, it was more like 70 to 75% came from members and maybe 25 or 30% came from co-workers and other donors.

But, in the latter years of the church, I would say fully 85% maybe even up to 90% of the income of the church came from members. Still, that was never based on an arbitrary figure of what will an average member give. It was based upon a long history of documentation of how many people are giving divided into the number of dollars you receive gives you sort of an average for everybody. I can't tell you what that average was, but that average would be... generally it averaged out to a little more, considerably more than a tithe per family, so if you have five people in the family, you have to divide it by five to get your individual count.

Basically, there was a long history of projected income. You could almost tell within a few thousand dollars what the income was going to be depending upon how many members you had.

**EWIN BARNETT:** The present Worldwide publications and members often speak about "what we used to believe", saying that Worldwide was "legalistic" and that members could earn salvation by works. How does this square with your memory of Worldwide five or ten years ago?

**LARRY SALYER:** Well, it doesn't square at all with my memory of five years ago, ten years ago or even thirty years ago. When I came into the church in the early 60's, it was probably as disciplinarian and as law oriented as it ever has been with the possible exception of the 50's and I never, ever was lead to believe as a member, or a student in the college or as a minister that we believed in salvation by works. I don't know any ministers who really did believe that at the time. We never taught salvation by works! We taught that works were necessary, even as I've taught here today, that there is a part for us to play, but we never taught salvation by works.

This is a fabrication, dreamed up by people who got sick and tired of doing what needed to be done, and decided the easy way out of this is to preach a gospel of grace. To preach a gospel of grace, without getting in trouble, we have to show that the church was abusive in the past

and that is the word they're now using, that the church was abusive, that the church was legalistic and authoritarian, that the church worshipped the law instead of the lawgiver. The most ridiculous quote I've ever heard and you can quote me! They worshipped the law instead of the lawgiver has never been true of the Worldwide Church of God as a whole.

Were there individuals in the church who might have felt that way?

Probably, though they didn't understand what they were saying. They were probably those who looked so much at the law they lost track of why it was there. I do not believe that was the state of the church. I don't believe that was ever the teaching of the church. I went to Washington DC in 1974 to counter similar charges when various leadership back there broke away from the church, we lost thousands of people and they were basically accusing Mr. Armstrong of the statement that "you were not called for salvation, you were just called to do the work".

They said that basically church members were just cannon fodder to "pray and pay" and get the work done, and it didn't matter whether they achieved salvation or not. Mr. Armstrong's actual quote was, "You were not called only for salvation at this time, but to do the work". He meant that God wouldn't need to call the church at this time if it didn't revolve around doing the work. Similar statements are being made today. They refer to an abusive, authoritarian, legalistic church which frankly never existed except in their own imaginations. It's a straw man.

Some of these are second generation Christians who grew up in an environment where they were tightly controlled by parents, by school, by whatever environment they were in, perhaps even the church congregation.

As they matured, and became adults, they looked around and said we are now adults and in fact we're in charge all of a sudden, we don't have to put up with this any more.

**EWIN BARNETT:** How do you think that other Churches of God fit into the future of the Global Church of God?

**LARRY SALYER:** Let me first of all start with a definition. A lot of people hear the term, Churches of God, plural and they say, wait a minute, the Bible says there is only one Church of God. We all know that, The Church of God, the Body of Christ is a singular organism. There are, however, today various organizations put together by people who have been at one time or another a part of the Body of Christ, and they usually use the name Church of God in some form and so therefore we call them the "Churches of God".

That is not to say the Bible does not mean what it says or that there are lots of churches that are God's church. It means that God's church is in some ways at the moment divided, just as it might be geographically, it's now divided organizationally.

How does that fit in with the Global Church of God and what the future holds? We in Global believe we have a mission. We're not saying that God intervened years ago to set this up and call us in the way that he did, we're saying that when we stepped out and responded to the truth and resisted the apostasy that was taking place, God began to bless that effort, he began to bless the work when Mr. Meredith began to produce magazines and booklets and broadcasts. That is clear, that we believe we have a mission to preach the truth, to live the

truth, to teach the truth to the best of our ability, without regard to what others do. If those others are of one mind with us, we will eventually all walk together. But two cannot walk together, except they be agreed. In spite of the protestations of many who say, we are all alike, we all believe the same thing, the fact is, we do not all believe the same thing, though sometimes it is hard to nail down specifics. Its clear when we get together, that we do not all believe the same thing. It is also clear that we are different organizations and had we all really believed the same thing, then there never would have been the need for other organizations to start with. We would have all gone to whatever organization we agreed with.

I, for example came to Global a year and a half after it started. I came to Global because I looked at all the situations, looked at the facts, and said, this is where I see the fruits of the truth and the true Church of God functioning, this is where I want to be. Others chose not to come to Global and to go different ways and in some cases create other organizations. Now some of those same groups want to say to us, why can't we all be together? I say, we all can't be together because you refused to be together, you didn't come together, you went somewhere else.

So, what does it have to do with the future of Global? We will continue to proclaim the truth. We trust that God will bless that, we expect Global will grow without regard to what these other groups do. We expect to see new people being called and converted and brought into the church.

I expect that this congregation in which we are sitting today, in three year's time, will probably be doubled and the half that's not here today are probably people who've never even been baptized, never heard the truth. I look for that kind of growth to begin to happen in the Global Church of God.

If we're of one mind and these other groups choose to become part of what we're doing, then at some point we will all be able to walk together.

What I do not see, is any kind of an intent on the part of any of us, to start some kind of humanly devised negotiation, merger talks, compromise, and create some kind of an agreement so that we can sort of all pretend that we are all of one mind. We must all be of one mind spiritually, or we will not be able to walk together.

**EWIN BARNETT:** Judging from the attendance figures between Worldwide, United and Global, there may be several tens of thousands of people who no longer attend any church. Does Global have any specific plans to reach these people?

**LARRY SALYER:** First of all, it's true that there are tens of thousands who are not attending anywhere to the best of our knowledge. I recently had a conversation with a couple of high-ranking individuals in the United congregation. We discussed this very thing. They acknowledged that their cities as well as in our city that there are many, many people who are not attending anywhere. So, we believe that to be true.

Does Global have a particular means of reaching those people or are we targeting them, the answer is no. We are going to again proclaim the Gospel through television, the World Ahead Magazine, the local services to which people are welcome to come as long as they wish to come and worship peacefully with us. We are going to continue to do that and let that message be disseminated by word of mouth or whatever is necessary. If those people who are

not attending, some of whom are here today frankly, who've not been attending for a period of time, want to come and say, we want to see what you believe, and what you teach, and whether you are teaching the truth, they're more than welcome to come among us. But we are not going to target them as an audience any more than we do the average person on the street.

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