

*Church of God History Series*

**HERBERT W  
ARMSTRONG AND  
THE REFORM OF  
CHURCH  
GOVERNANCE**

**Craig M White  
Version 3.9**

**“The CHURCH must not be scattered.** It must not become scattered, because there is no COMPETENT, CHRIST-CHOSEN SPIRITUAL SHEPHERD, TO BECOME MEAT FOR BEASTS (human) OF THE FIELD! (See Ezekiel 34).”  
- Herbert W Armstrong, *Co-Worker Letter*,  
19 March 1981.

**“But Satan seems to tempt a minister more than the lay member...** Power can be misused and it can be very destructive and very damaging. Or it can be very good if it's used properly. Now God is not going to entrust us with the great POWER of all his glory until we have the CHARACTER to use it like God would use it.”  
- Herbert W Armstrong, *What is Christ doing?*  
24 April 1982 (sermon).

“Brethren, let us have the kind of cooperative FELLOWSHIP, based on LOVE, that was practiced by the early saints, as recorded in the Book of Acts. Let us work together, in unselfish effort to GIVE of the Gospel truth to the world -- to GIVE of the "waters of life" to as many precious souls as we can reach -- to GIVE out the last warning message with great POWER!

...

The CHURCH OF GOD needs more of the POWER OF GOD -- more of HIS LOVE -- of HIS HOLY SPIRIT, that the work may now begin to go forth IN MIGHTY POWER! **We ought to be ASHAMED of the pitiful, puny, weak, feeble work that has split up and divided brethren, reached but so very FEW with the message, with almost no real conversions!**”  
- Herbert W Armstrong, *The Good News*, Feb-April, 1939.



## **Herbert W Armstrong and the Reform of Church Governance**

Authored by Craig Martin White.

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## **Associated Readings**

- *A Genuine Minister with the Heart of a Shepherd? Or Fudging it?*
- *Are Ministers Priests or Elders? Questions and Answers*
- *Church of God History. Tending to the Past. Preserving for the Future*
- *Do Ministers sit on Moses Seat?*
- *Herbert W Armstrong. Man of God!*
- *Synagogue and Church: Comparative Structures*
- *Was Peter the Leading Apostle?*
- *What is Inspiration?*
- *What is Justice? The Biblical Requirement for Neutral Judiciaries*

## Introductory Remarks

### Abstract

The style of church governance or administration changed or morphed over time in the Radio/Worldwide Church of God. By the late 1950s into the early 1960s the style was in excess of the Biblical model and had to be reigned in and moderated. This article makes clear that Mr Armstrong attempted to modify what was going on, but the implementation of his wishes was not completely successful due to the lack of change management implementation methods.

It should be acknowledged that he never used the old articles on church government from the 1950s and 1960s again and there is no evidence he wanted the Church to revert to that type of governance. Yet some persist in an extreme form of administering corporate churches or congregations, based on Mr Armstrong's supposed stances. This is not being genuine or true to his instructions, the historical facts or records.

These sorts have been able to get away with their behaviours – they knew that Mr Armstrong struggled with his eyesight and hearing in the 1980s and found abusive situations reported to him difficult to handle; they knew that if they 'struck first' they would normally win with him or the hierarchy; and they knew that there was no 'court' system in the church to investigate matters in a neutral and fair manner. As such they could get away with abuse.

And by ignoring and hiding Mr Armstrong's attempts at governance reform, they perpetuated governance behaviours that contradicted Scripture.

**T**his article has been a long time coming. I actually commenced writing an article on this subject in 1996 but never completed it due to other writing commitments.

From the outset, it should be emphasised that what is discussed herein is not condemning any author of the articles quoted who changed their stances over time. **It should also be mentioned that abuses and rectifying governance is nothing new to churches – many Protestant churches had to fix governance, with much of this being undertaken in the late 1950s, but the problem persists in some quarters.**<sup>1</sup>

Further, the Churches have not been good at recording all of our history in a methodical and detailed way. This has led to ignorance of parts of our legacy; redacting; and 'urban myths' developing over time.

Many do not know or even want to know that Herbert Armstrong and some senior men in the Worldwide Church of God began to reform Church governance and associated policies in the late 1960s into the early 1970s.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Alexander Strauch wrote: "Despite our Lord's repeated teaching on humility, we still find lack of humility and the abuse of pastoral authority a substantial problem in the worldwide Christian community. At the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa (2010), the 5,000 plus delegates representing every country in the world agreed that lack of humility and the abuse of pastoral authority among pastors was a worldwide harm to believers and needed to be addressed urgently. Undoubtedly, pride of position and abuse of authority are innate problems of the corrupt human heart, but those indwelt by the Holy Spirit and obedient to the teachings of Jesus are to be different, radically different; they are to be Christlike leaders." (*Special Look at the New Biblical Eldership Coming in September*, [www.biblicaleldership.com](http://www.biblicaleldership.com) 10 Feb 2023)

Given what I am about to demonstrate, the reader may ask why Herbert Armstrong started reforming Church governance in the late 1960s and why was this not always carried through to the local congregations? Invariably, they are aghast when they find out that his directions were not always carried out. But there are those leaders who purport to follow him yet ignored his changes and reforms.

Many of these small groups bicker over who has the right form of Church structure, quoting what is convenient from Herbert Armstrong. This what they don't understand:

- The basic format stayed the same, but details changes as the need arose over time.
- The Bible has plenty of examples of changed formats to administration so the God's Work operates effectively in a given culture or environment – it was not 'stuck in concrete.'
- Whether one has a Council of Elders and the degree of its authority is not contrary to 'top down.' It is still top down, but with 'checks and balances.'
- 'Top down' does not preclude having systems in place, church courts/panels, policies, input from the side or the bottom.
- The Church is a family, not a military. They find it much easier to be militant rather than having than using God's spirit and all its fruits.
- As a result of their behaviours, they offend and turn away so many genuine people, but they will not take responsibility of this and change or apologise.

The real reason for the bickering, divisions, name-calling, accusations and fighting over points of points of doctrine is that bickerer wants to draw away members from other groups instead of growing their tiny church organically or from evangelising. They attract no one as it is all about themselves and their ambitions.

There is nothing new to this sort of abusive behaviour as one can find it in business, sporting clubs, schools and so forth.

The lack of integrity and believing and obeying what one is paid for is astounding, but I saw that early on in my youth, during my time in the Church of God and since.

I personally heard some announcements and read some. In addition, occasionally ministers would bring them up in a conversation. But generally, they were not announced and were reserved for Mr Armstrong and others lecturing the ministers in conferences or making announcements in the ministerial periodical (such as *The Ministerial Letter* or *The Bulletin*).

Members could not see these periodicals and it was up to the minister whether he would announce the changes or implement them. Many members were unaware of these and thought that the ultra-controlling was acceptable. If they found out and questioned or reported it, they didn't last long. Change management methodology would have ensured that most of these men would have been forced to adhere to the changes.

Some ministers would form groupings or cliques around certain regional directors and enforce their ways, hiding them from head office (this practice still goes on). These practices,

which caused massive hurt dissent and loss of members were not authorised by head office in Pasadena or by Herbert W Armstrong, and he evidently had some awareness of this:

"But now I do feel we must seriously consider God's warning message to our nations and to the ministry of HIS CHURCH through Ezekiel. This is of CRISIS importance right now..."

"But [even though you did not seek to locate the lost house of Israel, you were ministers AMONG THEM, unknown to yourselves, and] **with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered [spiritually into many sects and denominations]** because there is no shepherd... my flock was scattered upon all the face. of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

"Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD... Thus saith the Lord — ETERNAL; **Behold I am against the shepherds [be careful this does not apply to any of you]**; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall "the shepherds feed themselves any more..."

"For thus saith the Lord ETERNAL; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out [at Christ's second coming]." ("Now God speaks to you Ministers," *Good News*, Oct-Nov 1979, pp. 4, 6).<sup>2</sup> [emphasis mine]

So why am I writing this article? For two reasons:

One is to maintain a true and accurate historical record of events and the evolution of governance. Too many urban myths abound.

The other is, by virtue of the above, that we might be able to learn from history and not repeat it. Yet it is unfortunate that some wish to cover up Mr Armstrong's changes and rewrite history as if governance remained as it was in the 1950s/60s and into the 80s with a short interval in the mid-1970s. This is not the case at all as we shall discover in this article.

There is just too much confusion out there and we need a coherent explanation of what went wrong; why it went wrong; attempts to fix it; how this was not fully implemented; and what we can do to fix it now. It is really not all that difficult.

Finally, my fervent hope is that we learn from the past and endeavour not to repeat these behaviours and errors in governance. Unfortunately, some have not changed and continue

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<sup>2</sup> As one senior minister wrote: "As a personal anecdote, my wife's family moved to Pasadena in 1966 or 67 where her father had been hired as the first pressman on the newly purchased four-color press (though he had previously worked only on black-and-white newspaper presses running newsprint, but that's another story). She remembers HWA and Loma being very friendly with members and him even holding the door open for her family at Friday night Bible studies. She said things really changed after Loma Armstrong died. HWA surrounded himself with other people (who wanted power for themselves).

That was several years before I was called into the Church, but it makes sense to me. HWA had a bad track record as a judge of character (consider his years of trusting Stan Rader and his choice of Joe Tkach as successor). I think Loma was a better judge of people and helped him greatly in that regard. Once she passed from the scene, he made a number of bad decisions that she might've otherwise prevented." (e-mail, 15 Feb 2023)  
Comment: Mr Armstrong publicly admitted that he was not a good judge of character.



scattering the flock. They have a terrible fate because they have no excuse (Heb 10:31; Matt 18:6). NB: this article should be read in junction with *Are Ministers Priests or Elders?*

## Historical Background

In late 1933, the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) split and Herbert W Armstrong went with Andrew Nugent Dugger's breakaway group. Herbert Armstrong was a member of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) up until 1933 (their structure was to have conferences in the various States).

The reason for the split was chiefly over governance but there were some minor doctrinal disputes and personality issues interspersed within this overall issue. Herbert Armstrong was one of those that believed in local autonomy at that time.

One can research the history of Sabbatarians, and one would be looking through a glass darkly. For instance, little can be assessed about how they organised themselves over the centuries. From what can be gathered it seems that they were rather loosely arranged with elders in leadership and at times of revival, a leading figure arose.

The Church of God, as it re-assembled in the late 1800s, had a ruling board and elders. It then split in 1905/06 over those that wished to have local autonomy and those that preferred a bit more centralised leadership.

Similar battles emerged in the early 1930s. The two largest groups re-combined in 1949 with some few remaining separate from the combined body which is named the Church of God (Seventh Day) based in Denver, Colorado.

In this context we can see that Herbert W Armstrong changed his views on governance. His article on the subject published in the February 1939 *Good News* under the title "Did Christ Reorganize the Church" is well known.<sup>3</sup>

Much has been made of this article with this or that claim concerning it. Most notably, various ones see in this article an excuse to revert to local congregationalism. Yet the thrust of the article did not dwell on that aspect but on excessive control. In fact, with the omission of a few lines here and there, the article may be current today.

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<sup>3</sup> Some are "circulating an article which was written clear back in 1939 (and was the subject of fairly lengthy discussions during the recent Ministerial Conference) about church government; it was written long prior to the years when my father and early pioneer ministers in this phase of God's Church ever carne to understand the truth about church government as it really "should be"! Church government was one major doctrine which my father and others with him in this ministry grew into as NEW KNOWLEDGE! Now some are beginning to circulate this old article as if alleging that my father was guilty of some extreme 35 or 40-year-old plan of deliberate manipulation of the scriptures to further his own ends!

"NONSENSE! All of the early pioneer students know full-well that my father and those with him in those days grew into a broader biblical understanding of church government. In the first place, the type of church government which Mr. Armstrong was writing about in that article involved voting, pulling names out of hats in selection of ministerial duties, and every assorted form of chicanery and politics."

("Editorial," *The Bulletin*, 12 February, 1974, p. 9)

It was written in reaction to the structures being set up in other Churches and he noted the errors he perceived within those structures – the backdrop to the article should be considered prior to one wishing to revert to localism or changing modern structure.

There can be no doubt that HWA made some basic changes to Church governance in the early 1950s – due to the Church adopting a corporate structure some years after that article was written, it managed to perform a great Work. Local congregationalist structures do not produce major fruits nor a united, combined, efficient means to reach a huge audience. Nor consistency in doctrine. As he wrote:

“I had tried to fellowship with the Church of God which, in my early days of conversion, was located at Stanberry, Missouri. But their ministers fought me, did all they could to discredit me, break up the broadcast, hinder and stop THE VERY WORK OF GOD! Soon they became divided, with one group making headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.”

“But in my days of trying to work with them, between 1927 and somewhere around 1941 to 1947, there was so much controversy over what constituted God's CHURCH GOVERNMENT that I, myself, became completely confused on that point. I could see that their systems were so wrong that I assumed that God's Church is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, and not a church ORGANIZATION. I did not want to assume any rule or authority that I ought not, and consequently when troublemakers and wrong attitudes came into our little Church in Eugene, Oregon, I wielded no authority whatsoever, and the result was a church split in two.”  
 (“Personal From,” *Good News*, August 1969, pp. 5-6)

When God raises up a Work (eg Moses, Hezekiah, Ezra) under the helm of a strong leader who put the assembly and its teachings ‘back on the track’, a centralised administration naturally arises with this effort – but it does not always have to stay that way and the structure adjusts to needs. The purifying of the doctrine and increase in knowledge is an outcome. Today we would term this a ‘corporate structure.’ The only time that localism is of some use is when the Church is scattered due to persecution or there is an extended time of limited communications and must survive locally.

Therefore, those that wish to return to a 1930s structure must consider that such a structure would not have led to a great Work. In addition, HWA was still learning in those days. For instance, in the 1930s he believed in 6 Sivan for Pentecost; did not know the identity of Germany; did not understand the truth about the 'spirit in man'; or major aspects of God's Plan and such like. Should we revert to old 1930s teachings or reject newer understandings simply because he held to other positions in the 1930s? That just does not make sense.

As the United Church of God's paper *Godly Governance* states:

“Government, in the hands of God, is a tremendous blessing, insuring peace, orderliness, goodness and security for its subjects. Likewise, government,

when in the hands of humans guided by God, extends the same blessings to all social institutions—family, school, community, business, nation or church. **However, government, in the hands of self-serving humans, invariably ends in a curse, fomenting strife, abuse, fear, distrust, confusion and uncertainty”** ... (p. 2)

“The Bible nowhere outlines “God’s government” on earth as one monolithic, immutable, unchangeable structure in place from the beginning, to the present and into the future. On the contrary, **His Word shows that over time He has employed a number of systems which have altered somewhat as the needs and realities of His people changed.** It is simply inaccurate to state, “God’s government is . . .” and then outline a favored structure.” (pp. 4-5)

Pages 5-6 of the paper outlines serving vs lording.

When Church governance structures are established, there is much to consider, including the welfare of the children of God:

**“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”** (Rom 12:10)

“Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, **honor to whom honor.**  
Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.”  
(Rom 13:7, 10)

But do we fulfil these Scriptures?

By the early 1950s, Herbert Armstrong had accepted a more centralised form of governance. The influence of certain senior ministers, the effects of World War Two and knowledge of corporate structure was what led to the formulation of governance that, in many ways, emulated the sort of business structures of the day. Refer to **Appendix. Examples of old articles promoting Church Governance** and **Appendix. Select Articles on Church Governance 1950s-60s** for evidence of the sort of governance structure at that time. A centralised system does not have to be abusive and is indeed more effective than the local, independent (congregational) system in spreading the Gospel message.

This is how Mr Armstrong explained how this came about in an article published in the *Good News*, August 1969:

“I had tried to fellowship with the Church of God which, in my early days of conversion, was located at Stanberry, Missouri. But their ministers fought me, did all they could to discredit me, break up the broadcast, hinder and stop THE VERY WORK OF GOD! Soon they became divided, with one group making headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.”

"But in my days of trying to work with them, between 1927 and somewhere around 1941 to 1947, there was so much controversy over what constituted God's CHURCH GOVERNMENT that I, myself, became completely confused on that point. I could see that their systems were so wrong that I assumed that God's Church is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, and not a church ORGANIZATION. I did not want to assume any rule or authority that I ought not, and consequently when troublemakers and wrong attitudes came into our little Church in Eugene, Oregon, I wielded no authority whatsoever, and the result was a church split in two.

Perhaps the beginning of the Biblical KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION we have enjoyed since the college was founded was the clearing up of the Biblical teaching on CHURCH GOVERNMENT. Personally I had gotten so CLOSE to all the errors among the "Sardis" people - with a "General Conference" type government at Stanberry, and a "12 apostles - seven deacons - and 70 elders" type at Salem, West Virginia, that I was like the man so close to one tree he couldn't see the forest.

Ambassador College started with only FOUR students. The three male students were Herman Hoeh (now Dr. Hoeh), Raymond Cole (now District Superintendent of the New York District), and my elder son Richard David. The second year there were added Raymond McNair (now Deputy Chancellor of Ambassador College in England, and Director over the Work in Britain), his brother Marion, and Kenneth Herrmann (now Registrar of Ambassador College, Pasadena campus). Perhaps my son Dick and Raymond Cole had been, like myself, too close to all the confusion in Oregon. But the others were free from that, and God was able to reveal clearly, through them, precisely what is His form of Church Government.<sup>4</sup>

Once clearly seen, it was put in operation. I had to repent of neglecting to assume the responsibility God had charged me with in Oregon. God's government is always government from the TOP - GOD the Father - on down. Christ is the living HEAD of this Church. There is authority in the Church. Troublemakers, bent on dividing and breaking up God's Church, are not tolerated. THERE IS NO DIVISION, but happy harmony and order, in LOVE!" ("Personal From," *Good News*, August 1969, pp. 5-6)

It seems that the Church often sets up systems and accompanying policies or administration to operate effectively in the particular time period and culture it exists within. In other words,

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<sup>4</sup> Rod Meredith fills in some details: ""So please read this overview of Church Government with an open mind and heart. Yes, *many of us* have made terrible mistakes in this area, *including me*. **We have in the past often been too strict, domineering and sometimes unfeeling in dealing with others...**

Even after several years of guiding the college, Mr. Armstrong still did not understand much about Church Government, and said so openly a number of times. Consequently, in the early mid-1950's, Herman L. Hoeh and I each were inspired to write articles along this line. As hundreds of our older brethren remember, I wrote the article, "*Judging and Discipline in God's Church*" and, later, "*Whose Opinion Counts?*" and one or two other similar articles." (Letter promoting the *Church Government and Church Unity* booklet, 20 January 1993) [emphasis mine]

the Church reflects the world in some way, good or bad. Centralising functions was good and fruitful. Unfortunately, some took this to extremes, which Herbert Armstrong and others addressed by the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

A form or structure does not mean that one automatically becomes extreme or oppressive: local autonomy, centralised administration and a range in between all have their weaknesses.

During all of this, Mr Armstrong strove for balance when many others did not. For example he wrote a letter to the Letter Answering Department in 1958 (which probably also went to the ministry) and remains relevant today. Extracts below and the entire letter is in the **Appendix. Herbert W Armstrong's letter to the Letter Answering Department:**

"We seldom mention that experience of CONVERSION -- utter SURRENDER, total REPENTANCE, accepting CHRIST in living FAITH as personal Saviour, and receiving the HOLY SPIRIT.

We do not seem to stress sufficiently CHRIST as SAVIOUR -- faith in Him, and then HIS faith in us (living faith which is inseparable from obedience)... We must stress the WHOLE TRUTH more -- repentance, surrender, CHRIST AS SAVIOUR, being CHANGED by God's Spirit as God's GIFT, by GRACE, following our conforming to His conditions of repentance and FAITH IN CHRIST." (12 December 1958)

This lack of balance was a cause for the issues in governance that ensued.

## Problems and Issues

**H**ow did we get into having behaviours that were clearly not Biblical? Ministers in the know have said that this was due to the Church coming out of the World War Two period with people still having a militaristic mindset.

In addition, a number of younger men were ordained without life experience and, due to lack of training (the Church just did not have the means to do so properly), they were told they were inspired, which somehow made up for the lack of suitability and was supposed to take care of any subsequent problems that came up in their congregations or lack of ability at counselling etc. Their reports about problems and issues concerning members (behind their backs without knowledge of what was said) were just accepted as fact and truth. Any member objecting to what was said about them was told that they could not see their own problems, but the minister could. Many of these supposed problems they could not see were just made up or they were lied about by others. Forcing one to admit to something they didn't do is abuse and thus sin.

Then there was the issue of using scriptures concerning priests and Levites as if they referred

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<sup>5</sup> Abuses and disgraceful behaviour did occur. However, as someone wrote: "but not everyone is one of the walking wounded. It is a fact that some were sorely mistreated by either college professors or their local minister. It really depended on where you lived and who your pastor was."

to New Testament elders.<sup>6</sup> By basing decisions and behaviours on these texts and also being ordained for life as if one were a priest, it was almost impossible to deal with abuses. The abuser was believed and supported.

Below is a summary of the causes of the negative behaviours that resulted in harm to members:

- The belief that God created human nature in a negative form which had to be dealt with and purged from members. See the **Appendix. Did God Create Human Nature?**
- The post-WW2 generation (as explained to me by a local elder and others) were still in a sort of military mould and were used to excessive controls.<sup>7</sup>
- Elements that crept in unaware into the Church from strict backgrounds or worldly churches did not help the situation. In fact, the extremes they went to were cultic.
- Ordaining men too young or inept and backing them up regardless of performance or behaviours.
- The thinking that the Church was a sort of little Israel that was to have little contact with the world (e.g. having no or few friends outside the church) and laws were to be enforced (eg land sabbaths, mixed fabrics) was abandoned. These laws should have been taught but not enforced. As some evangelists explained, not all secondary laws can operate effectively in the modern world. Exclusiveness was practiced way beyond the Biblical examples.
- Ministers/pastors/elders were priests or sort of priests. Various Bible verses were used to equate them with priests and Levites long after Mr Armstrong eschewed such concepts and practices. While some principles relating to the priesthood in terms of guidance apply, ministers in the New Testament are not given the same level of control or intercession that a priest had.
- The Church was in the final lap and members were to be subject to a 'pressure cooker' environment (a term they used) to ensure they are ready for the place of safety.

In addition to the above, below is a list of some of the problems, excesses and overreach that occurred until Mr Armstrong's intervention and reversals or modifications:

- Fear religion eschewed (too much talk and sermons on the lake of fire, Tribulation, fear of ministers etc).

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<sup>6</sup> Here is one example: "...third ... tithes [is also for] the incidental needs of the Levite. **The Levite, or present-day ministry**, is supported almost entirely from your first tithes; but any additional help that is sometimes needed comes from third tithes in order to not burden the operation of the first commission. Some areas of ministerial support, however, come almost entirely from the third tithes fund!" (Frank Brown, "An Extra Blessing," *Good News*, Jan-Feb 1970, p. 13) [emphasis mine]

<sup>7</sup> Example: "Each dormitory is staffed with a House Monitor, a Monitor for each floor or apartment, and assistants in each room.... These students are dedicated to the ideals of the college and to serving you.... It is your responsibility as a Monitor to get to know ALL the students; to help and encourage them insofar as you are qualified, and be able to refer them to the proper channel for guidance; to see that the students are obeying college rules... to write a weekly report which is due at the Dean of Students' Office at 8:00 A.M. every Monday; to check sign out cards and record violations; to turn in special monitor reports on individuals who have significant problems or who have made special progress." (*Student Handbook (1968-69)*, p. 52). The Dean was to receive cards that were filled in with details about students such as their study habits, prayer habits, attitudes, social life and so on. This sort of spying is illegal and ungodly.

- Intimidation tactics and having fun harassing members then claiming that members have ‘imagined’ things about abuse. No, they didn’t - thousands didn’t have mental health issues that led to their cry for help when abused. What they experienced was true.
- Even if the minister is wrong, he must be backed up because God backs up the government. Almost no matter what the minister does to a member, it often cannot be held against him. Sometimes their colleagues do not want to do their job and choose to be lazy and abusive – so they cover for each other, then deny the abuses.
- Members denounced from the pulpit, often by name – this had to stop. But it continued on even in the groups that emanated out of the Church for years thereafter.
- Some would make-up rules and regulations not approved by head office and get away with it. That was particularly a problem in Australia and continues to be so. Cover-ups were the order of the day plus the unnecessary loss of members, giving the Church a bad name.<sup>8</sup>
- No more ministers telling members what to do, as if the Church was the military or as if members were employees. For example, asking for guidance on every detail of their lives such as what colour their new car should be and areas the ministers had little or no expertise in. Prior to that, ministers were regarded as inspired and experts in just about everything (such as history, child-rearing, geology, psychology, business etc. etc.). Instead, after the number of mistakes and errors over the years, it was finally admitted that they were only guides and could give very general advice on non-doctrinal matters. However, this problem persisted into the 1980s and after Mr Armstrong’s death, without authorisation.
- The idea that people struggling with mental health problems (such as depression) would no longer be interpreted that they were sinning or had demons and treated accordingly.
- No more the practice that elders sat on Moses Seat as judges. Previously, everyone had to accept their decisions – often made behind their backs – as they were inspired judges and even if you thought the decision was wrong there was no point appealing as there was no neutral panel or judiciary of sorts. Whoever struck first with the ministry was normally the winner. If you questioned the decision, you were regarded as questioning God’s decision and you were resisting the priest. “Don’t resist – just accept” they used to say. Making decisions behind members’ backs was not just unbiblical and contrary to Church policy, but also broke various of man’s laws (Rom 13:1-7).
- No more scaring members or using fear tactics and threats of excommunication. This practice was to be the last resort for major sins. As some ministers said, at least half excommunicated over the years should not have been. Around another 25% or so should have been warned or worked with. Perhaps only 20% or less should have been excommunicated – and in most cases only after they were worked with.
- No more intimidation tactics or little taps on shoulders by deacons or others to go see the minister about this or that. The congregation was always on edge.

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<sup>8</sup> One American gave a good example: “As far as Australia goes , I was aware something was particularly bad in Australia. One of my cousins went to Australia for the FOT and encountered a huge elitist attitude on the part of the ministers there. Ministers eating, feasting, separately from members, she actually had the door slammed in her face. Shocking. Never heard of anything like that in the US.” (e-mail, 13 February 2023)



- No more progressive interrogation techniques and trying to break down people for two hours or more. I have personally been told all about this by a number of sufferers and it needs to be admitted to and repented of.
- No more interfering with child rearing – only general advice was to be given. I recall the announcements and statements about this.
- Military service was still to be avoided, but instead of going to jail for refusing to serve, it would be better to serve in a non-combative role such as dog training or medical area. Listen to Herman L Hoeh's sermon on this dated 2 Feb 1980.
- No more queues on the Sabbath with members asking ministerial permission for every little thing and telling tails to the minister about members and automatically believed. Or spies reporting on members. Yet it continued on and I saw and witnessed it. One minister even told me that he told members to stop it when he took over a church from another minister who encouraged it.
- The disgraceful carrying on and shouting at people was to stop - as ministers confessed in public.
- Some went so far as to be suspicious of members asking Bible questions – they were considered as questioning the Church's position instead of innocently and sincerely asking a question. Such were considered to be potential troublemakers or without the spirit of God for not understanding something. Instead, some ministers didn't have the answers and couldn't answer them.
- Cronyism and nepotism and preference for the rich also was something that had to be addressed.
- If a minister felt that a prospective member was not really called, they would use tactics to put them off the Church. Such as telling them that the WCG "was Satan's church" and such like! Rather disconcerting but true and some have reported that. Or accusing them of asking too many questions and thus had a bad attitude. Or as some admitted publicly, they actually shouted at prospective attendees in their homes that they were Laodiceans then joked and laughed about it after the meeting.
- Advice was to be followed completely and you were checked up on. Advice (or any 'judicial' decision) was treated as if it came from Christ Himself. If the advice followed ended in disaster or did not work out, you would be accused of having a spiritual problem or secret sin. The advice was always correct. That was stopped too, but many didn't know and kept on suffering under bad advice.
- Exalting themselves over others and looking down at the members was to stop too. Mr Armstrong used to talk a lot about the 'spirit of competition' and competing for, or desiring positions.
- Attacks upon vegetarians were to stop. It was a personal choice and had nothing to do with anyone else. Yet, in the early 1980s, I personally heard tirades on this from the pulpit – without any authorisation from head office at all. I have heard attacks upon vegetarians even into the 2000s. That was also the case for a number of other issues such as music and so on.<sup>9</sup>
- Another example was the role of wives – taught without authorisation. I recall well a

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<sup>9</sup> I recall, around 1980, Mr Armstrong saying he was watching the youth dancing to modern disco music and it was fine. Especially that they were not dancing in the dark and not holding hands. A few weeks later a minister got up and lied to the congregation that Mr Armstrong was not speaking of disco music, but round discs! How on earth he figured that out, I shall never know!



minister stating in sermons that women could not get jobs; if married they had to stay at home until her husband got home from work because too much freedom would turn her into a 'loose' woman. This was rubbish, that Herbert Armstrong and head office did not promulgate.

- Some aspects of life and living were given 'laws' to abide by, but as this was overdone and in some cases were enforced; later they were modified to principles and guidelines (e.g. health, dating, child rearing, marriage, managing finances).
- Investing in the stock market no longer regarded as gambling.
- Husbands must always win in counselling sessions. And women treated sometimes like second-class citizens.
- The idea that spiritual gifts were reserved only for ministers was dropped but nothing more developed from there.
- The belief that current human families would continue on into the Kingdom of God as sort of mini families was abandoned. Too many took that to extremes and began to rule their families with an iron fist and bullying their wives.

What is it about human nature that it wants to control people so much? When all that time and effort should have been used in nurturing and encouraging members and utilising the talents and gifts in the congregation. As well as preparing in-depth and interesting sermons on a range of subjects. Dull, repetitive sermons have often been the case.

Much of this and more is already attended to in the article *Are Ministers Priests or Elders?* but in this article I wish to hone in on the reforms Mr Armstrong authorised.

I wrote the following some years ago, so I may as well repeat it here:

“Administrative changes began to be made to ‘loosen up’ from 1968-74: aspects of administration and governance e.g. dress (inc wearing more colourful clothing to church services); medicines; excess ministerial control (ie ministers are elders and pastors are not priests); no longer discouraging investing in the stock exchange or discouraging members being doctors, lawyers or actors; opposition to vaccinations dropped; excess disciplining of children by some; ministers are not Priests and Levites and are not to go into member’s homes inspecting them for tidiness or cleanliness; or give advice on areas outside of their expertise etc, etc.

In addition, Ushers (incl. Deacons) were no longer to wear arm bands (which were worn at large churches and large FOT sites in the 1960s to be able to identify them, control traffic etc) – apparently some took the symbol of wearing them too far. Some taught that God created evil human nature and this must be crushed in kids. Or that we should despise ourselves (rather than the old nature). In addition, the thinking that the Church was a sort of little Israel, separate from the world was dropped. It went too far, imposing ideas that made the Way too restrictive, such as not having friends outside of the Church. Thereafter, the Church taught

balance on this and other teachings.”<sup>10</sup>

The following may have been a special letter to the ministry or published in the *Ministerial Letter* in 1964 which was the precursor *The Bulletin* which in turn became *Pastor-General's Report*:

“Neither Jesus nor the early apostles ever were thrown into jail ' for entering into and helping settle human controversy. Some of us will be imprisoned for doing as Jesus and the apostles did. But let's let that be enough, without asking for it! Therefore I set it as Church POLICY-confine your ministry to the spiritual realm of preaching, teaching, counseling as to THE BIBLE TEACHING-never even advising a person WHAT TO DO. Merely expound the Scriptures-impart the TRUTH-but let them make their own decisions (as to healing, medicine, hospitals, doctors, also) and let them take their own actions. Don't ask for trouble. Teach WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS--but do not even advise what action to take-whether to call a doctor or not, or go to a hospital, or take medicine, or divorce a mate. DO NOT TELL THEM WHAT ACTION TO TAKE. Teach what the Bible says. The decision, and the action MUST BE THEIRS. Keep yourselves out of trouble of that kind. Jesus did. Paul did. That is the biblical teaching and example.” (quoted in the *Pastor General's Report*, 30 Dec 1986, p. 7).

By the late 1960s it became very clear to Mr Armstrong and others in leadership positions (such as Raymond McNair, Herman Hoeh, Leroy Neff) that many in the ministry were overbearing, harsh and extreme in the way they conducted themselves and their treatment of the brethren and other ministers.

In an *Interoffice Memo* dated 8 November 1971, Herman Hoeh wrote the following to Herbert W Armstrong:

“As late as the school year 1968-1969 **the Pasadena campus was very strict, so much so that the administration of student affairs was viewed as a kind of Gestapo affair.** The Office of Executive Vice President considered the problem and altered much of the spying system and administration of the Dean of Students office...

“I respectfully submit this important matter to your urgent attention and thank you for the fine sermon of last Sabbath on this subject.” (p.1) [emphasis mine]

However, why, one may ask, why were ministers left to their own devices to behave like some

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<sup>10</sup> There were a number of other minor changes such as finding out that duck was not unclean (late 1960s); dress was relaxed to not be too prudish (early 1970s); the use of 'Mister' in addressing ministers was dropped in the 1970s but partially restored by Mr Armstrong some years later; dating outside the church was permitted and Mr Armstrong, as far as I know, did not reverse that. However, it was taught against, but without penalties. The other was to do with leavening agents in relation to the Days of Unleavened Bread – at one time beaten eggs etc were considered leavening in accordance (supposedly) with the spirit of the law (late 1960s).

did and even to ignore the governance changes approved by Mr Armstrong and other senior ministers?

It was because they were considered to be inspired and priests of sorts sitting on Moses' Seat – an excuse to do whatever they wished. Many knew they weren't inspired but wanted to keep their jobs and would do anything to do so. As they said, they were "as Christ before you" as His representatives and what they said and did was as if it were Christ Himself. This was stated both privately and publicly.

That is why to this day some elders and pastors do not follow their church's leadership (such as their Council of Elders) and policies and are protected by other like-minded elders/pastors/Directors and get away with it – they believe that they are inspired to do whatever they please and do not need to follow and teach what they are paid to do. Is this not rebellion?

Not everything was reformed or updated, but there was a very clear move away from the excesses of the past – but you would not know that in some congregations (and Australia bore the brunt of this) as the local minister hid the reforms from the members. He and others would declare themselves priests, sitting on the throne of Christ (I kid you not), form cliques persecuting ministers going along with Mr Armstrong's reforms labelling them 'liberals.'<sup>11</sup> If the regional director thought like them, then they would get away with it and persecute those opposed to their extreme behaviours.

One more thing, some members would see what was going on and the tactics to be used to be able "to serve" in the congregation. That is, to commence a sort of 'Church of God career', advancing up the ranks. They would crawl to the minister and mirror him; then be given various tasks; followed by sermonettes and doing all sorts of errands; then they hoped to be ordained as a Deacon followed by eventually becoming an Elder. While this practice has been recognised, it hasn't stopped. This was well known to be especially problematic in Australia.

One of the scores of examples members can give is the one described below:

A minister was required to go to see a member to reconcile in accordance with Biblical principles, apologise and reverse his decisions and behaviours. He refused over a 12-month period to do so, but after a lot of toing and froing, relented and reluctantly met with the member. The lack of Christian behaviour, stubbornness and lack of humility was incomprehensible. The member requested that all members be included in the church and be given opportunities to serve in accordance with the church's policies, let alone the Biblical principles.

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<sup>11</sup> Actually, there were three factions, particularly in Australia: the cultic/Pharisaical abusive faction; moderates that followed the policies of headquarters and Herbert Armstrong (falsely labelled 'liberal'); and the real liberals – neo-Protestants that found their way into groups that continued from the old Worldwide Church of God. The latter were also well known for sexual misconduct at Ambassador College and in Australia; very dirty talk; cover ups (even of homosexuals and bisexuals); slandering Mr Armstrong and accusing him of what they were guilty of; defaming members and ministers; and other carnal behaviours. They detested doctrinal conservatives and went on a campaign against them. All these carnal behaviours continued on unrepented of after the fall of the old WCG.

The minister refused, preferring to appoint people that were loyal to him and his views on administration and doctrine that were not the church's position. He could get away with it as he was protected by some of his peers.

The minister was adamant and demonstratively wanted the member to be loyal to him personally and iterated the point three times. The member told him on all three occasions that he (the member) was loyal first to God, Christ, the Council of Elders, members of the church and also the minister. But God and the Church comes first. The minister did not proceed to adopt the Church's position and policy on member involvement, preferring members to come to them to do anything. Sign-up lists and work groups were completely ignored and aggressively prevented from going ahead.

How in good conscience one could bring themselves to do this sort of thing is beyond me. Of course, not all ministers or congregations were of this behaviour, but there was a preponderance of this sort of thing going on which took away the joy of salvation and especially in Australia as is well known. From the 1980s and continuing into various groups that broke from the old WCG, the behaviours continued, and the offenders protected.

The result was that the behaviours were perpetuated for decades with the consequent offences continuing and subsequent loss of members. This meant no growth – yet the necessary changes did not transpire because of the above.

Some would 'set you up' by going to other ministers or the regional director behind your back first without your knowledge. By the time you were trying to resolve the issue, they would already be 'primed' to take the minister's side.

If you told anyone about the injustice you were regarded as causing division and rebelling against authority and who knows what was reported back to other ministers and the regional director. Subsequent visits to 'help you spiritually'<sup>12</sup> with 'we will burn it out of you' followed by suspension or disfellowshipment was callous, unjustified, unsympathetic and swift - contrary to the Bible or church policy. Behind the back of the member thus treated (many of them completely innocent of any sin or problem) would have a report against them without their knowledge submitted to the regional director who would back up the minister. They would not be permitted to see the reports, so anything could be written about them.

These fabrications would follow one into other congregations and even into other groups. They would pass on this misinformation to ministers elsewhere, causing terrible problems behind the members' backs.

That is hardly justice and cannot be found in the Scriptures.

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<sup>12</sup> For example: "Enclosed is a supply of the new Visiting Cards.... Ideally, the cards should be filled out *immediately* after the visit in your car. Perhaps down the street and around the corner.... Think carefully and describe the *highlights* of the visit, the *problems* and *attitudes*.... If *deep problems* and *complications* arise, you may wish to *type* an additional 'Problem Report' on any one person or family occasionally.... Normally two *carbons* of these should be made and sent to Headquarters- one for us and one for the District Superintendent..." (*Ministerial Letter*, 24 Dec 1965, pp. 2-3)

Another example is if you were sick and needed an anointed cloth. You could find yourself in trouble. It went something like this:

The minister would visit and after a while would ask why you were sick. The answer he wanted was that you were a sinner and needed spiritual help. Whether he received that answer or not he would ask you to reveal your sins to him, which were the cause of the sin!

Woe betides if you didn't.

The fact is there is no Biblical requirement to reveal your sins to anyone; and there was no Church policy to do so either. It was something some did (and still do) to extract information to use against you. Or to make you feel bad, instead of happy that God heals.

They caused stress in members, and many fled their oppression for greener pastures. This was totally uncalled for behaviour but continues. Rather, a minister is meant to relieve you of stress, not be the cause of it.

As one minister noted about how the church was at that time, it "is a pressure cooker" (something he agreed with!).

## Authorised Changes

**A**s explained to me by ministers, one of the stages toward reform was the death of Mrs Loma Armstrong - that her passing triggered soul-searching and a rethink on a range of policies and controls including healing and medicines. These will be explored in this article.

An example of the changes is the policy announcement to not enforce land sabbaths (14 November 1973). I believe similar statements were made around or prior to this time on other agricultural/environmental laws, mixed fabrics etc. Similarly, circumcision guidelines and not being cremated etc were also de-emphasised. However, one must be careful not to 'throw the baby out with the bathwater.'<sup>13</sup>

It should be noted that the above and other commandments were not enforced or monitored by the policy of the church – in effect they were recommended, and guidelines issued – but

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<sup>13</sup> *Land Sabbath and its Application in the Twentieth Century* policy statement 14 Nov 1973. Two major doctrinal changes were made by HWA: Pentecost observance from Monday to Sunday. After studying the subject in late 1973/early 1974 Raymond F McNair brought further information on this to HWA than that brought in 1961 by Ernest Martin in a 93-page paper. It was officially changed 14 February. HWA also changed divorce and re-marriage 6 May 1974. He authorised a doctrinal taskforce to research doctrines and to advise (not a committee that can make the changes). Refer to the **Appendix. Approved Doctrinal Taskforce**. Sources: Pentecost change comments (R F McNair) *Bulletin* 1974 (Vol. 2 No. 12) 23 Sept, pp. 504-505; D&R change Q&As - *Bulletin* 1974 (Vol. 2 No. 12) 23 Sept, pp. 496-498; Healing change - *Bulletin* 1974 (Vol. 2 No. 12) 23 Sept, pp. 494-495; Birthday change - *Bulletin* 1974 (Vol. 2 No. 5) 21 Jun, pp. 196-198; Makeup change - HWA - *Bulletin* 1974 (Vol. 2 No. 13) 23 Oct, pp. 522-526.

the implementation differed from minister to minister and congregation to congregation. And when a minister moved to another area, he took his views with him. This caused confusion and division. But when the issue was raised with the regional office, the minister would be backed up and the members accused of causing division. Instead, the issue should have been resolved by encouraging a consistent approach.

According to Raymond F McNair's *Ministerial Conference Notes* (of which I possess 2 volumes), Herbert W Armstrong confirmed that:

"The Levitical priesthood analogy should not be overdone. We are ministers under the Melchizedek priesthood." (18 January 1973)<sup>14</sup>

"Mr HWA said some of these people [ministers] look upon ordination more as a coronation." (17 January 1972)

The idea that ministers were Levitical priests was dropped or repudiated by the late 1960s/early 1970s (it was believed by many and apparently taught behind Mr Armstrong's back) and there were no verbal or written statements that ministers are Priests and Levites from headquarters since that time, yet some still continue with this view and subsequent church governance practices.

However, it is true that all Christians are under the Melchizedek priesthood and are in training to become King-Priests in the world tomorrow. We are all supposed to be developing those skills now.

A church elder or pastor is not a priest or sort of priest and using Scriptures concerning priestly roles to apply to elders does not fit. Except in some sort of *very* general and *broad* way principle concerning leadership or teaching. But not much more than that.

Sure, there are a few principles from the Levites and Priesthood applicable to eldership, but eldership does not originate in the Priesthood. So why are some still teaching or inferring that ministers are Priests and using Scriptures pertaining to them as if they were applicable to elders? Or that the ministry is more-or-less based on that of Moses and Joshua's political leadership?

New Testament elders occupy an office that extended from ancient Israel, through the captivity of Judah, their return and the establishment of the synagogue. They do not have a lineage to the priesthood or Levites (though some priests did join the New Testament church that did not result in their continuing the priestly role at all). This is covered in the articles *Are Ministers Priests or Elders?* and *Synagogue & Church: Comparative Structures*.

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<sup>14</sup> HWA did not develop his thoughts on the Melchizedek priesthood concept further as far as is known. Presumably he was preoccupied by other matters, and this was perhaps considered less important than other tasks at hand. More than likely, he completely abandoned this idea as nothing was taught by him or authorized by him on the subject ever since. This does not mean that others did not continue to teach and believe that they were Levites and priests behind his back. This went on quite a lot and kept from him by certain regional directors and the groupings aligned with them.

Nor can one find anything in Worldwide Church of God literature supporting this since the early 1970s at the latest. Some continue to think that they are the *elohim* priests (based on Psalm 82:6), that they “are as Christ before you” and sit on Moses Seat – I know as I have heard them say that. Actually, saying that “ministers are the gods” mentioned in Ps 82! They have assumed positions and authority way higher than that permitted in the Scriptures or even their own Church organisation. They have no business doing so and the harm done to so many, creating a “revolving door” of members is the fruit borne. Yet, without Biblical backing or being taught this from their own Church leadership, some decided to form little groups that enforce their stances and keep it underground from their superiors at head office. This still goes on!

Previous to that, the thinking was that the New Testament eldership was the continuation of the Old Testament priesthood. This caused a divide between the general membership and the ministry – many of the latter assumed power not granted to them in the Bible or by the Church leadership. They were backed up by certain regional directors and their deputies; or their abusive tracks covered by colleagues.

I shall say it yet again: elders are not priests, kings, judges, prophets or have the stature or inspiration of apostles.

In the early 1970s, evangelist Herman Hoeh made a statement that the Church had wrongfully thought of itself as a sort of little Israel. We went overboard on that, he said. We over did separateness from the world to an extreme degree; enforced various Laws such as land sabbaths and third tithe which – while they should be taught – were enforced and caused a lot of unnecessary and unfortunate issues to arise. There are some laws that we don't understand today and others that are just too difficult to keep in the way it was in the time of Israel. Many of these laws we should apply in principle and intent and not necessarily in the letter. We should also try and understand them. Refer to the **Appendix. Third Tithe change.**

For instance, if you were a farmer and did not practice land sabbaths, you were dealt with (dependent upon the particular minister). If you practiced them and they did not work out, then you were accused of not being blessed because of some secret sin that you must reveal to the ‘priest.’

This continued behind Mr Armstrong's back for members who felt stressed or down, struggled financially or were ill. Some ministers harassed them and brow-beat them for not being blessed – they must have had a secret sin that had to be ‘purged’ or ‘burnt’ out of them.

Surely, there must be a balance on all these sorts of policy areas. Let's not go from one extreme to the other or try and enforce certain laws in the modern world.

Many years ago, it was explained to me by ministers that after the death of Mrs Loma Armstrong in 1967 the Church leadership eventually began to re-evaluate governance, policy, the healing doctrine and such like. Her death acted as a catalyst for rethinking the policies and control over the members leading to the reforms by Mr Armstrong and his team (or many of them) 1968 into the 1970s.

For example:



"On another matter, it recently came to my attention that in at least one Church area, an official "Church nurse" had been appointed. This should never be done! While it is fine for deaconesses and other Church ladies to help out from time to time when individuals in a local church are sick, we do not want to appoint an official Church nurse or even intimate that the Church provides any kind of medical assistance or advice. In matters of healing and medicine, our only responsibility is to inform our members what the Bible says with regard to faith and healing. **It is strictly up to them then, before God, what they do about their physical infirmities or sicknesses, and it is strictly up to them to seek medical counselor advice if they so choose.** Mr. Herbert Armstrong has recently made it clear that this is an area in which we must be very careful in order to avoid problems that could affect the entire Work.

"Although we continue to receive reports of many healings and miracles which God is performing, I would like to remind you in closing to pray fervently for a number of our brethren who appear to be dying of cancer and other maladies. Mrs. Curtis Cowan, Sr. appeared to be healed of one ailment, yet now we find that she has cancer of the colon and liver. She is in very bad shape and suffering considerable pain from time to time.

"Also, Mrs. Dennis Luker's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Livengood, are both suffering from cancer. Unless God intervenes, she could lose both her parents a few weeks or a few months apart.

"In addition, Mrs. Jack Francis—the wife of our fire marshal here at the College—is in extremely critical condition with cancer through much of her body. She has suffered considerable pain and those in attendance thought more than once that she was dying over a period of a few weeks now.

"Many, many others have serious cases of cancer or are afflicted with other serious ailments. And, as I mentioned recently this seems to be a growing trend in the Church. Although the booklet on healing in its present form has been canceled, we should continue to preach this doctrine to the converted members of God's Church with earnestness and fervency! **Remember to tell them what God says—not giving personal advice as to what they "have to do" in any particular case.**

"But we must remember that Jesus' commission was to: 1) Preach the gospel; 2) Heal the sick, and 3) Cast out demons. See Matthew 4:23-24, Matthew 10:7-8 and Mark 3:14-15, etc. More of us need to study and meditate on these examples—and to pray fervently that God will restore the fullness of the gifts of healing to His Church." (Rod Meredith, *Ministerial Letter*, c.1969)<sup>15</sup> [emphasis added]

To iterate from a quote a few pages above, administrative changes began to be made to 'loosen up' from 1968-74: aspects of administration and governance (eg dress including wearing more colourful clothing to church services); medicines; excess ministerial control (ie

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<sup>15</sup> In later years, in the Global Church of God and the Living Church of God, Rod Meredith continued teaching 'servant leadership' to the ministry. Some didn't like that.



ministers are to be elders and pastors – they are not priests); no longer discouraging investing in the stock exchange or discouraging members becoming doctors, lawyers or actors; opposition to vaccinations dropped; excess disciplining of children by some (and ministerial interference in child-rearing); no discouraging having friends outside of the Church (listen to Herman Hoeh's sermon on this dated 14 Aug 1979); tithing to be on net instead of gross in many or most regions; third tithe no longer required<sup>16</sup>; okay to honour birthday milestones<sup>17</sup>; ministers were no more to go into member's homes as if they were priests, inspecting them for tidiness or cleanliness; or give advice on areas outside of their expertise; hair length ruling to be relaxed; etc.

Here are some examples:

"I now have before me a letter from a prospective member who attended one of our churches only a few times, and then quit attending. He is undoubtedly a little biased and carnal but obviously upset because our local minister was unable to give him proper counsel before inviting him to church. Then, when he did show up at church two or three times, the minister did not greet him, the brethren did not come up and welcome him and the *only* man who shook his hand or said hello was apparently one of the deacons at the back of the room who let people in.

Although coming from an as-yet unconverted person, the letter does sound very sincere and based on fact. So let's remind ourselves that it is absolutely mandatory that the minister in charge of the church, or at least those elders whom he has directly appointed to do so, must be the ones to invite new people to church after proper counsel and knowing that they are ready. Then, he and his assistants should watch for them, greet them personally if possible, and in any case make sure that they are greeted, welcomed and counselled and perhaps even "sounded out" about their first reactions to our particular kind of church service.

Their attitude and reactions to the first Sabbath service or two are often *very critical* in determining whether they should be baptized in the near

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<sup>16</sup> It came to be understood that third tithe is *for* the poor and not *from* the poor; nor is it to *make* one poor. Wisdom and understanding the purpose and intent of this and all Laws was to be taught. For example, this commandment was taught in the 1980s but not enforced. In the 1960s there was much more monitoring of one's tithing. Compare for example Leroy Neff's article "Do you understand God's Plan for Widows and Orphans?" *Good News*, Feb 1984, pp. 2-6, 23-24 with Al Portune' "So this is your Third-Tithe Year?" *Good News*, Nov 1962, pp. 7-8. Although this doctrine did start off with a more balanced approach (see "Question Box. When Should Christians Begin Saving a Third Tithe?" *Good News*, May 1952, p. 10). See also *Ministerial Letters*, 26 February and 1 March 1968 where local pastors advised that they could check the private tithing records of members. Another was "Also, we are beginning to look into the tithing situation. Up until we had our computer, it was very slow and difficult to check the tithing record of brethren. We still don't intend to do this all the time and try to 'catch' people as some denominations apparently do. But, we are going to make spot-checks in certain church areas from time to time." Also, a statement was included in the Letter for ministers to check with HQ to find out if members were disloyal. (*Ministerial Letter* 28 January 1969, p. 69)

<sup>17</sup> Mr Armstrong in the 1980s commented how he gave his mother flowers on her birthday and said it was fine to do so for when people reached major milestones in their lives. Refer to the **Appendix. Birthday Observance Change**.

future and what steps to take in dealing with them in general. So all of you hear this in mind, and try to remind your members from time to time to be more friendly to new members and even to strangers or guests who may be attending from time to time WITHOUT, of course, telling them all the deep truths of God's plan and "jumping the gun" on the minister.

But the overall enthusiastic friendliness, warmth and welcome expressed to new brethren and visitors in many of our churches should be felt in all. **And the hypercritical, hesitant, fearful, defensive "police state" attitude and feeling ought to be erased from all congregations of God's people!** (Rod C Meredith, *Ministerial Bulletin*, 12 Nov 1970, p. 61) [emphasis mine]

"We have noticed in reading recent reports that **some of you ministers are still being very hard and extra critical of the men under you - - in some cases just waiting to "pounce" on them** if they make any mistake. You accuse them of having a wrong attitude when perhaps they simply were weak or did not understand and **some of you are simply overbearing in your attitude** toward subordinates in the ministry or local deacons -- constantly "putting them in their place" by your overbearing approach.

Perhaps all of us have made one or more of these mistakes in our ministry - - but we can and must CHANGE. I hope each of you will examine yourself carefully and ask: "Could just a little bit of this refer to me?" And I want you all to know **that we at Headquarters have been changing this approach for some years now, and intend to make even more progress on this in the future with God's help.** Also. I would like, again, to remind you all that we are beginning to stress management concepts in handling the work more than ever before and hope that all of you will begin to buy and study material along this line and use it. I have already sent out some material and suggestions to the District Superintendents, and we will be sending certain materials to all of you full-time ministers and elders within the next several weeks and should have an entire course in management ready for your use by the end of this summer - - if not sooner!

So for your good, and the good of those working under you, try to grasp these concepts - - **back off and take a good long, objective look at YOURSELF** - - and be willing to change and grow in this area." (Rod C Meredith, *Ministerial Bulletin*, 18 April 1972, p. 35)<sup>18</sup> [emphasis mine]

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<sup>18</sup> "One of the major problems I'm sure we'll discuss during the conference will be DEFECTIONS FROM THE MINISTRY. By now, you all know of SEVERAL problems relating to the ministry in various parts of the U. S., and the world. We have had not only an UNUSUAL (for GOD'S MINISTRY) amount of various sensual sins, but also just plain BOLTING THE RANKS of the ministry, LEAVING God's Church, and going right back into the world."

"... **but the continual LOSS of upwards of FIVE TO SIX HUNDRED ex "members" per year with the notations "NEVER CONVERTED" after their names really concerns me!**" (Garner Ted Armstrong, *Ministerial Bulletin*, 15 Dec 1970, pp. 70, 71) It should have concerned anyone that ex-members could have been labelled such. Actually, many of them were converted and needed some patience or loving care from a shepherd. Many were cast out based on rumours, false allegations, asking a question, trying to use their gifts and talents. They were often set up with

Many refused to repent for years, or decades, continuing to cause great harm and give God's church a bad name despite the church officially not teaching or sanctioning such behaviours. Some groups still continue as if they were in the 1960s ignoring Mr Armstrong's instructions. **Yet claiming that this is what he taught and wanted, pretending to succeed him and simultaneously give him a bad name.**

And the *Ministerial Letter* of 24 April 1969 admonished the ministry for not questioning a teaching that may need correction.

Due to various issues, from mid-1978 until his death, Mr Armstrong decided to impose stronger church governance – mainly over doctrinal issues and he did not reverse most of the policy changes he had previously authorized.<sup>19</sup> Nor did he teach that ministers must go to excess like some did, terrorizing their congregations and teaching that they were priests, "as Christ before you" as some proclaimed; or that Christ spoke through them in their sermons and judgments.<sup>20</sup>

Then in mid-1978 with the change of administration, he still never went back to the 1960s on doctrine or policy. He did tighten up doctrinal statements but did not implement the controls of the 1960s for most of those doctrines (eg healing or overly strict Sabbath observance). The exception was in make-up and a couple of other matters, but not in governance over the members. Others implemented these sorts of controls behind his back in outer areas or in the regions, far from his knowledge.

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'witnesses' arranged behind their backs and the regional director and other ministers were 'primed' about the member. So they had no chance when they appealed the penalties imposed upon them or the mental abuses.

<sup>19</sup> The make-up ruling was reversed in 1981. Refer to the **Appendix. The 1974 Change on Make-up.**

One member wrote concerning this: "I was at AC when it came in in 1981. It was somehow softened again because I could wear it to work back in Australia. In 1983/4 - I can't remember now- we were told we couldn't wear it anymore and it caused me a real problem in my job as an Employment Consultant in Sydney. Not wearing make-up was a serious problem for a woman in a job where a professional appearance was expected. I got married in 1985 and was not able to wear make-up. Later we were allowed again but the whole thing caused so much psychological stress that I generally didn't bother. I still don't wear it."

I know that make-up was permitted if one worked on a TV or movie set; or had skin blotches that needed covering. Hair dying was permitted if one experienced pre-mature greying.

<sup>20</sup> As if to reflect and agree with these behaviours, Joseph Tkach had the following inserted into the Church's Bylaws in 1986 but subsequently withdrawn the following year. It seems that many ministers continued with adherence to this ever since:

"Grounds for Suspension, Disfellowshipping and Reinstatement

**3.11 As the basis and reasons for suspending, disfellowshipping or reinstating are spiritual in nature, and in many cases may consist solely of subjective attitudes unaccompanied by even words or acts, and therefore ascertainable only by spiritual discernment, the determination to suspend, disfellowship, reinstate or refuse to reinstate, shall be an Ecclesiastical Determination.**

3.12 Without limitation upon the generality of the foregoing, the Church Authority may suspend, disfellowship or refuse to reinstate for fomenting strife or division; for continuing in the breaking of any of the commandments of God; persisting in a spirit of opposition, competition, or dissension; disloyalty to the Church, its mission, work or any of its institutions; or for any other act or attitude deemed contrary to Scripture, or in any manner whatsoever detrimental or threatening to the spiritual unity of the congregation or the spiritual welfare and growth of any of its individual members or prospective members.

3.13 The Church Authority, or the person authorized by them, may "mark" a disfellowshipped Church Member when they determine it is to be necessary. Such determination shall be an Ecclesiastical Determination." (*Bylaws of the Church of God (also known Worldwide Church of God) an Unincorporated Association*). [emphasis mine.

This is cultic and disgusting]

What Herbert Armstrong considered as "back on the track" was taken to extremes by certain regional directors and a number of ministers without authority. I recall the severity, setting people up, harsh treatment and oppressive way of enforcing the healing and Sabbath observance doctrines.

But have a read of How Mr Armstrong taught about Sabbath observance in the **Appendix. Sabbath Observance as taught by Herbert W Armstrong** and **Appendix. Brethren in Zaire permitted mild work on the Sabbath.**

Concerning the changes by Mr Armstrong, have a read of the **Appendix. Examples of Mr Armstrong's Approved Changes** which contains some additional information.

Further proofs may be found in the Ministerial Conferences held 1969-73. Here are some extracts from Mr Raymond McNair's conference notes to prove it. You can read further details from these *Notes* in the **Appendix. Extracts from Mr McNair's Ministerial Conference Notes 1969-1973.**

**17 January 1972 - Pastoral Instruction:**

"Be a leader, not a driver."

**HWA: A leader should be an example of serving, love, dress - in everything. He should lead, not drive.**

Men's hair: Beatles started long-hair fad. Now many business and professional men wear long hair, but it is not too long necessarily. If this hairstyle becomes so common among conservative men, (60% or 70% do it), he may follow it and encourage you to do so... "However I am not quite ready to do that yet." "I am not going to start it yet". He hoped none of us would begin doing this, but if we did, he didn't believe it was wrong.

**HWA: Ministers, inspire by your example. Lead, don't drive. Some begin to be overlords - heavy handed.**

If I want someone to do something, I say "Mell, would you do such and such ..." I don't just order Mell (my driver) around". "Would you mind doing ..." or "will you do ..."

**Be kind, learn gentleness and patience.**

One man in a position of leadership, beat down and discouraged all of those under him.

"Christ is love. Have an outgoing concern for those under Him. Be warm, friendly, sincere. Request.

Mr A said "I wish I could just quietly put someone in his place". Said he was working to overcome.

Be a servant. Christ was a servant. Don't over use those under you (Min. Assistants) having them serve his own personal needs or wants.

**If some are overlords - we might just jerk them right back here.**

Ministers must avoid running others lives, businesses for them. Don't make their decisions for them. Merely give them God's basic instructions.

Rod Meredith said - We have had tendency to have the people serve us too much. Some have deacons, deaconesses (or women members) serve them without pay. Lawn-mowing, maid services, baby sitting etc. Fix our cars, do our nanny act as nurse or sick maid.

Some church members like to do these things in order to "make points" so he can gain favours with the ministers - perhaps be ordained later.

Let us remember, we are there to serve them - not primarily to have them serve us.

**Mr A said he wanted the Supervisors to see some of these "squirts" and teach them humility - not to abuse these things.**

Mr HWA said some of these people look upon ordination more as a coronation.

A. Many ministers are not qualified to advise in business matters. We can only advise on spiritual principles.

Don't be afraid to say, "I just don't know" or feel free to refer a member to another knowledgeable member for business advice.

We used to be a bit extreme on the thing of church government - used to apply this too often in interfering in church family's homes.

Avoid giving the impression of being against the teenagers - not knowing the real facts of what is going on. Teenagers do live in a different world.

B. Must know what you are talking about. We don't want to encourage any "wild" music.

But it isn't always easy to know where to draw the line on music ... Show them that some of the Beatles music is ok. Don't just harangue against teenage music.

C. If you [ministers] aren't warm and friendly, sincere etc - then why? Lack of prayer? Study? We are entirely too rank-conscious. Many ministers have a wrong

fear ["perfect love casts out fear"].

E. Let us remember we are not policemen. Some try to legislate rules to prevent sin ... we need to avoid the two extremes of over- or under-policing. Don't feel that you have to police the Church's people's children ... we can make too many rules that we restrict people and their liberties.

F. HWA: we are not dictators. Christ did speak sharply at times, but only when he had to. Otherwise he handled everything lovingly and kindly.

An ordination is not a coronation. We have to rule - but wisely and in love.

Avoid slander, liable. or creating enemies unduly. Consider the welfare of the whole Work.

**Originally, the Methodist movement was very fervent - but after Wesley died, this fervency died out. This type of situation could be repeated with us if we are not careful. [an almost prophetic statement]**

Have monthly prayer meetings with the ministers in England so we can keep close to God.

Do some of you need to go to each other before you go home? I think some of you owe apologies to others.

**18 January 1973:**

HWA: The Levitical priesthood analogy should not be overdone. We are ministers under the Melchizedek priesthood.

Rod Meredith mentioned that in the past 1/4 or 1/5 of some congregations were unconverted.

Rom. 14:1-4 shows one can be baptized without knowing the finer points of life. "Mr Armstrong baptized some who were still smoking and eating unclean meats." But he knew they were so repentant they would obey when they understood.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> In his *Autobiography* Mr Armstrong wrote:

"About the time the Firbutte school meeting started, July 9, 1933, Mr. Ray began aiming his "anti-pork" guns directly at me. He demanded that I state definitely my stand on this question. I had written him a Biblical exposition of the subject, showing that it was a physical FOOD question, rather than a spiritual or Gospel subject. Unless a man broke the tenth commandment by lusting after it, the eating of pork did not violate the Ten Commandments, which constitute a SPIRITUAL law.

"I quoted Mark 7:15-23, where Jesus explained that sin is a spiritual principle — that which is coming out of the heart of a man — evil thoughts leading to actions of adultery, murder, theft, deceit, blasphemy, pride — violations of the Ten Commandments; but that nothing from without, entering in his mouth, defiles the man spiritually. Jesus was speaking of SPIRITUAL principles, and SIN as a spiritual offense.

"I explained that I was well aware that the unclean animals were unclean even before the Flood — not suddenly pronounced so by Moses. I also explained that I was well aware of the fact they are still unclean, and unfit for the

**22 January 1973:**

Medical questions: we cannot forbid people to go to doctors, hospitals etc. Christ said 'according to their faith be it unto you.'

You cannot live other people's lives for them – you cannot decide for them!

**Mr A said we must not give up or change our beliefs – the truth – just to please or appease those in the world, newspaper reporters etc.** [*try telling that to some folk who think we should ordain women to the ministry, who are going soft on homosexuality, refuse to speak out on abortion and euthanasia etc, wish to water-down British-Israel, do not see that the Gospel is to be preached as a witness and warning etc*].

We need to avoid becoming cranks re food, diet etc [*today, however, we have clearly gone to the other extreme*].

Herman Hoeh: Matt 18:15-17 – we are told to go to our brother if he sins against us.<sup>22</sup>

**Dr Hoeh says that many conclusions, judgments and decisions [by ministers]**

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physical digestive process; that Peter's vision of the sheet was given, not to cleanse unclean animals, but to show Peter that he should not regard a Gentile MAN as unclean (Acts 10:28).

"Also that I well understood that I Timothy 4:1-5 did not make unclean foods digestible and healthful, but only those which are "creatures of God," and "sanctified" which means SET APART by the Word of God and prayer." The Word of God does NOT sanctify the flesh of swine, or set it apart for holy use — but rather forbids its use for food. Undoubtedly millions of people have contracted disease from eating unclean meats.

"But, I pointed out, it still was a PHYSICAL violation, not a spiritual." (Vol 1, Chapter 30)

Apparently Mr Armstrong still taught into the 1980s that if you were invited to someone's home for dinner and they offered unclean food you can eat it. Though most in the Church did not go along with it and did not eat unclean foods even in the above situation. Further information is contained the **Appendix**. Herbert W Armstrong and Clean & Unclean Meats.

<sup>22</sup> The 1948 *Constitution and By-laws of Radio Church of God* actually stated:

"Section 3. Dismissal of Members: Since we are warned in the New Testament that even of our own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to cause division and draw away disciples after them; that "wolves" in "sheep's clothing" making an appearance and pretence of being true disciples or ministers will enter in among God's true Christians for greedy purpose; and since we are commanded to mark them that cause divisions and offenses contrary to the teaching of the Bible, and to avoid them; and since Jesus specifically taught that unprofitable servants shall be cast out of the Kingdom of God; and since the Scriptures instruct Christians in the procedure for disfellowshipping such; therefore it shall be the duty of every member of the Radio Church of God to follow this scriptural instruction, by first going to the guilty one and then if necessary telling it to the Church (Mat. 18); and the one guilty of fomenting strife or division, or of continuing in the breaking of any of the Commandments of God, or persisting in a spirit of opposition, competition, dissension or disloyalty to this Church, its mission and work, or any of its institutions, shall upon approval of the pastor and two thirds of the members present at any meeting be excluded from membership and disfellowshipped by the congregation, provided, however, that two weeks' notice of said meeting shall have been given the one in question and the congregation in advance, and the one involved shall have had the opportunity to appear in his or her own behalf, and provided **that the scriptural steps pointed out in Matthew 5 and 18 shall have been followed** in a sincere attempt to reconcile the offending member. In the case of a member-at-large, distant from and inaccessible to a local church, an offending member may be excluded by the general Pastor of this church upon approval of a majority of the directors, but only after a full and fair review of all the facts and evidence, the offending member having had opportunity to present his or her case in writing to the entire board, and after prayer." [emphasis mine] Unfortunately, this was seldom followed.

**are made without first establishing the truth of the matter.** One man said he didn't have any confidence in the ministry and didn't want the ministers solving his personal problems. "The relationship between the ministers and executives is like that of the nobility and peasants" said one woman in the Church. One person asked how often the ministers have operations – had heard of Dr Meredith's operation.

Go through the proper channels in ironing out a problem. Don't go to the top first. Go up the ladder of authority. "We have not first gone one to another."

Hoeh: "we have resolved the problem, but it has left a scar." Learn to go to one another.

**Mr A said in Oregon they used to study the Bible in private fellowship. But not so today [he lamented]. He said today there is a competitive spirit. "If we don't do something about it the Church will fall apart." [how prophetic]**

**23 January 1973:**

We want to avoid extremes – undue tolerance or too much letter of the law obedience.

We are not setting a definitive no. of inches for skirt lengths, but they must cover the thigh.

Mr A said he hasn't "cracked down" at HQ but he has preached a number of sermons etc, to combat wrong styles, fads etc.

GTA: He recommended that the local minister might visit a hospital once a month – visiting non-members. He said this may not *[always]* be a good idea. He said he feels the ministers could visit "half way houses" and learn what it is like to help people overcoming drug problems. He feels we need a more open, freer approach to people.

Mr A said if our hearts are right we will not be too picky about exactly defining every principle. Mr HWA said some women are bound to show a lot of thigh, but we are not to be overly critical or pounce. We are not to be too picky – "but I will not be specific to the exact no. of inches."

**24 January 1973:**

Mr A asked the Ministerial wives to examine themselves to see if they are doing their job – are a proper help to their husbands. A wife can be a very great help [in the ministry]. She can give constructive criticism to their husbands.

Neck ties: be stylish – but not wild or way out – not gaudy. We should not wear dull or dry colours.



## Mr Armstrong's Statements

**N**ote what Mr Armstrong wrote about what is the (or a) cause of scattering:

“The CHURCH must not be scattered. It must not become scattered, because there is no COMPETENT, CHRIST-CHOSEN SPIRITUAL SHEPHERD, TO BECOME MEAT FOR BEASTS (human) OF THE FIELD! (See Ezekiel 34:5).”  
(*Co-Worker Letter*, 19 March 1981)

The principle is clear ... Mr Armstrong was aware of these issues and problems, and this was related by men who actually knew him, including some leading evangelists.

How can one preach about and put into practice Church governance/administration by avoiding all the laws and requirements about eschewing favouritism, requiring fairness and justice (and therefore independent panels or judiciaries); and not operating in accordance with Biblical examples as well as not demonstrating the fruit of the spirit and beatitudes.

Here is another example of changed thinking, if not established doctrine:

“My wife worked all the 7 years I flew with HWA and the following 5 when she flew with us as secretary/stewardess, etc. She also went to Sawyer business school when I traveled and held several administrative positions inside and outside the church. HWA had no problem with her working or school (or getting radial keratotomy on her eyes in 1982 when many thought he taught no surgery). I also had discussions with him about wives working after one minister gave a sermon in which he wanted married wives to quit...and I disagreed. It wasn't always practical or ideal and was a choice. I explained the issue to HWA and he understood how society changed. I even wrote the article, which he approved for the WWN before he died on going to other colleges for degrees we didn't offer...

“I agree some had a hard time changing with the times, **and some men like the control aspects**, so many stories can be told about those who had a foolish perspective. Others did not, and many of our Ambassador Women, married or not, went on to do some remarkable things. My wife is one of them.” (Aaron Dean, *Pasadena Reunion Forum*, [www.acpasadenareunion.com/](http://www.acpasadenareunion.com/), 12 Aug 2022) [emphasis mine]<sup>23</sup>

Another article for example “Fear Religion,” *Good News*, March 1974 and authorised by Mr Armstrong, like everything was during that time-period:

“A person with a full measure of God's Holy Spirit will not only not be fearful of man - of man's persecutions, belittling and condemning

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<sup>23</sup> On the *Big Sandy Main Message Forum*, 11 February 2022, Aaron Dean wrote: “HWA did care about people, and when I told him of some of the things members had gone through (sometimes at the hands of ministers) he was very upset. I was quite open with him as his aid the last 5 years of his life as to many of the mistakes.”

accusations and attacks - but he will not be continually seeking status and importance among others - simply because he lacks that ingredient of fear which drives most men and women on.

The right kind of fear, then, is an outgoing love of God, coupled with a fear to do evil, like a great, "awesome awareness" of God's great power - but it is not terror, nor unnamed fright, nor fear of physical consequences.

The wrong kind of fear is fear of man; fear of failure; fear of having your vanity exposed; fear of what might happen to your physical being." (p. 3)

Some men thought that Mr Armstrong was too liberal on the above (I heard what they said or inferred); on Sabbath observance<sup>24</sup>, befriending worldly leaders, baptism<sup>25</sup>, clean & unclean meats, music, divorce & remarriage, healing and so on (see the **Appendix. Extracts from All About Water Baptism** and **Appendix. Herbert W Armstrong and Clean & Unclean Meats**). In fact, to this day there are ministers in various groups who think that ultra-strictness and control is what is needed. I know this to be true as I have talked with ministers and heard their sermons on what others experienced. The loss of members was often justified and backed up by others and the issue not resolved. The ingrained belief that ministers must be backed up regardless because they were priests etc prevented reform being completely implemented.

These ministers did not go along with Mr Armstrong's reforms, or they reinterpreted them. Some have said for decades that they were taught to be like this or that at Ambassador College. But that was not authorised by Mr Armstrong, and it depended upon one's teacher or lecturer – they were not all the same. In any event, a simple reading of the Bible shows one not to behave in such a fashion and there is no excuse to act like that – they of all people should know that. Or as some said, they were "on a power trip". But Mr Armstrong wrote (given his awareness of what was going on):

**"And you can't have that POWER if you're going to misuse it. Power can be misused and it can be very destructive and very damaging. Or it can be**

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<sup>24</sup> In the 1980s he mentioned that sometimes he would play solitaire for a break from Bible study and prayer on the Sabbath. On one occasion he even mentioned that if he is so tired, he would flick on the television to watch something for a short while.

<sup>25</sup> In checking with a number of ministers, and my own recollections of what was practices in the old Worldwide Church of God, the original baptisms of prospective members were sometimes accepted. One minister wrote: "Yes, it seems that HWA changed his beliefs about rebaptizing people. I don't recall seeing anything clearly stated in print, but I have heard the subject discussed since I was ordained an elder... Based on comments over the years, it seems he was much more lenient on that early on..."

In lectures and discussions on baptismal counseling I have heard ... we've been told not to totally discount if someone were baptized previously, but to ask some key questions like the following:

- Did the individual really understand repentance—what it is, what one is repenting of?
- Did the individual really understand baptism—what it means, what it symbolizes?
- Did the person doing the baptizing really understand baptism—what it means, what it symbolizes?
- Did the person doing the baptizing really understand much about God's truth?
- Did the individual have hands laid on him or her—did they understand that is how God's Holy Spirit is conveyed?

In most cases individual comes to the conclusion that neither he/she nor the person doing the baptizing really understood what it was all about, and therefore the person should be baptized by a Church of God minister. Sometimes, however, they conclude their baptism was valid and they have no need to be baptized again... I think this was the view on rebaptism taught in WCG before they apostacized." (e-mail, 16 Jan, 2023)

very good if it's used properly. Now God is not going to entrust us with the great POWER of all his glory until we have the CHARACTER to use it like God would use it." (sermon *What is Christ doing?* 24 April 1982) [emphasis mine. Refer to the **Appendix Extracts from Herbert W Armstrong's sermon *What is Christ Doing?*** for further information]

Where did Mr Armstrong use priestly Scriptures to refer to New Testament elders? Or say that doctrinal statements should be enforced with rigour and fear?

Here is an example of how some ministers have and still do act:

You might have an accident, be ill or not be doing well financially. The minister would visit you and say that you are not being blessed because of your attitude or secret sins and would accuse you of this or that.

If you protested, they would accuse you of having a bad attitude and that you are hiding something from them. That you had great pride like Lucifer. If you protested further and wrote to the regional office or Regional Director, they would return the letter to the minister and write to you saying that the minister can detect that you have an issue and you must agree with them. The penalty for protesting was hours of 'investigation' (misusing Deut 19:8), browbeating and then suspension from attending church. With statements shouted or even screamed that "we are going to burn it out of you." Or ghastly and evil statements shouted at members that "you hate God!" in an attempt to break them down.

This was abusive behaviour that could have been taken to court! Christ backs up government and His own laws (Rom 13:1-7), not cultic behaviours nowhere found in the Bible.

This is almost beyond belief, but did Mr Armstrong authorise this sort of thing? There is no evidence that he did. So why did it happen and why is it still continuing to this day?

Here is the reason:

It was some sort of unwritten policy that a minister must always be backed up and protected regardless and this still goes on in areas such as Australia. Because 'God backs up government.' Actually, God does NOT back up lying, abuse and sin which are contrary to His government.

IF or when a minister was disciplined (if at all) for these behaviours, it was often in a minor way such as a 'tap on the wrist' or they were moved to another area but there was no explanation or apology at all. No Matthew 18:15-17 and if you asked for it, that was regarded as rebellion because they were inspired to make decisions without following those steps.

Members were normally dealt with more severely – **but where is the proof that Mr Armstrong approved such an approach? Zero!**

It reminds me of what Queen Victoria was concerned about – abuses that went on at the edges of the Empire. She never sanctioned such behaviours but was rather anxious and angry when she heard reports of abuse. Unfortunately, the sins of a few can spread to others and

also give the larger community/church/Empire a bad name.

The principle is this:

“He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and **fall into the condemnation of the devil.** Moreover, **he must be well thought of by outsiders** [i.e., be of good reputation], so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”  
(ITim 3:6-7)

## Resistance to Change

**T**he sad fact is that many ministers and organisations still persist with the old 1960s policies. Either ignoring the authorised changes; or “interpreting” them; or are ignorant of them given the passing of time and not being taught the right thing.

They have no Biblical or legal sanction to resist change by their employer and not supporting what Herbert Armstrong taught. In many cases their own Church head office has not authorised their behaviours and local or regional policies which can only be labelled as ‘rebellious’.

For instance, from 1978 Mr Armstrong reversed certain doctrinal statements and policy decisions made. But he NEVER went back to the 1960s in most aspects (with very few exceptions). How do I know?

Simply this: Mr Armstrong wrote and said nothing from 1978 forward to indicate that he was going to do so. And why should he? After all, he was the very one who sanctioned the doctrinal, policy and behavioural changes from 1968-75!

There was just no hint of going back to the old ways of the 1960s in Herbert Armstrong’s articles, the *Worldwide News*, *Good News*, *Pastor-General’s Report* or in sermons. A list of these articles may be found in the **Appendix. List of Church Governance related articles 1978-1981.**

From 1978 until his death any changes or reversals he made on matters such as divorce and remarriage, marriage between believers and non-believers, voting, healing, birthdays, military service, having friends outside the church etc were the tightening up of the doctrinal statements. Probably the only exceptions were makeup, contact sports, voting and use of the term “mister” but even then, the teachings were milder than the 1960s.

Yet certain ones still persist that they were taught this and that at Ambassador College and took us back to the 1960s. They are either lying or were wrongfully taught such behind the back of Mr Armstrong. If one had spoken with the likes of Herman Hoeh, Leroy Neff, Raymond McNair etc one would hear something quite different.

For instance, Rod Meredith mentioned in a recorded sermon in January 1979 that he and the Work were strict and authoritarian in the 1950s and 1960s and that he had gone through various trials over the years leading up to the death of his wife. He asked God to help him work on that problem: to change, mellow, mature and have more empathy, consideration and thought for others. Later on, he stated that we had come to see that Christ rules us with a looser leash than we once thought.<sup>26</sup>

Around the 36 minute mark Mr Meredith stated that some have thought that he, Raymond McNair and others were going to take the church back to the old ways such as the stance on divorce and remarriage, Pentecost, makeup and so on: "Now nothing could be further from the truth" he remarked.

In that taped message, Mr Armstrong went on to say that we do not kick people out or judge them over healing because, in some cases, we are healed according to our faith. We do not receive the full amount of the holy spirit when we are converted – we have to grow in grace, knowledge and in faith – Christ's faith in us through the holy spirit. He then stated that he is no longer willing to take away members going to doctors and using medicines for healing.

To iterate, tightening up on statements of doctrine is not the same as control, fear religion, extremism and cultic behaviours.

**Where did Mr Armstrong write or say that members should be browbeaten or disfellowshipped, or accused of rebellion or for being full of pride for voting, using medicines, dating someone outside the church etc? Nowhere! He tightened up the doctrinal statements and expected members to adhere to this, but also did not expect this to be policed, enforced with cruelty and members dealt with rigour.**

In a sermon in 1984 Mr Armstrong actually mentioned, for instance, that we must not be liberal on one hand or strait-laced and Pharisaical on the other. Yet some men chose to ignore that and set up networks of extremists in various parts of the world and especially Australia in rebellion against church government. They persisted into the early 1990s and remnants of their appalling behaviour are still around to this day.

As I said to some back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, certain ones were operating contrary to the Church's policies that continued on from Herbert Armstrong. They wanted to take the Church back to a way that represented another time and culture and they were unauthorised to do so.

So, to get around church governance, they formed networks and cliques and backed each other up, hiding their actions from headquarters. Woe betide any member who stood up to their stance against church governance or reported their rebelliousness to headquarters.

What did Mr Armstrong write about these attitudes? Here we have his thoughts in his own

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<sup>26</sup> I kept the tape of that sermon and sent a copy of it to him soon after he started the Global Church of God. I did that to keep the sermon as an historical record and in the hope that there would not be a reversion to the old ways that caused such offences and the subsequent loss of members. He changed apparently, but not all under him did.

words:

"Two serious mistakes proved their ministers] undoing: 1) they wanted "the chief seat" for themselves and 2), **they wanted to be served instead of serving**. And back of both of these reasons is probably the fact, saddening and regretful as it is, they may never have been really converted in the first place. How many think that just being a "Church member" means being converted!" (p. 1)

"But some have apparently not been blessed with such a handicap or "thorn" to keep them humble, and so sought the chief seat as rapidly as possible. One who had a good degree of natural ability became a minister after graduation from Ambassador College. He immediately set a goal--not for humble service, but for SELF glory. He was going to become "Evangelist" rank, next to highest, by a certain year. When ordained Evangelist, he exclaimed proudly, "I MADE IT--right on schedule!" But, like some in Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed, he fell by the wayside. He no longer is in God's Church.

**"Others have wanted to be served, and not to serve. To serve was beneath them."** By sheer natural ability, after graduation from Ambassador, they rose to a fairly high rank, either in the ministry or at headquarters. One would never arrive at his headquarters office until around 9:30. He would be gone to lunch by 11:30. He would return around 2:00 or 2:30, and be gone for the day by 4:00 or 4:30. But he was good at delegating his responsibilities to others. Another, a minister of Pastor rank as area coordinator, preached a sermon no more frequently than once in six weeks, leaving all that to ministers under him. He was "too busy" loafing to bother to visit or pray for the sick. **But he was very strict with the ministers under him.**" (p. 2)

"Becoming a minister of Jesus Christ is a very serious matter... **One should never start in the ministry until he is fully converted, has received and is really being led by the Holy Spirit of God--has given his life to God to be used in SERVING, not GETTING--until he has come to really admit how wrong he is and has been, and wants to serve rather than be served. It's for LIFE--and for ETERNITY! ...**

**The motive must be to GIVE--to CONTRIBUTE--to help and cooperate, and not to GET rank or power or position, or money for SELF! And we must not TAKE credit to ourselves, but GIVE God all the glory, for He will not share that with anyone.**" ("Why some Ministers have failed," *Pastor General's Report*, 19 Feb 1982, pp. 1,2,3) [emphasis mine]

## **Doctrines, policies, guidelines and statements**

It should be pointed out that members and ministers have mixed up doctrines with policies, guidelines and verbal or written statements. This has led to different interpretations, policies, implementation methods, views and so on in different congregations or regional areas. Even counselling for marriage differed from minister to minister.

This confusing of doctrines with guidelines etc needs to be unravelled so that we understand the differences and how they should be handled:

- **Fundamentals** – these are the most critical and important truths that are important for salvation and Biblical understanding. They are regarded as eternal truths upon which all other doctrines and policies hinge;
- **A doctrine** – a basic or major belief or teaching that is proclaimed or taught by a group. It can be enforced by policy or taught as something one should strive to believe and practice.
- **Sub-doctrine** – a component of a doctrine. For example, a doctrine may be that there are Church eras. A sub-doctrine would attempt to identify groups that make up each era. From that there can be smaller components and even sub-components making up the sub-doctrine. In turn a series of sub-doctrines compose a doctrine. Note: some make too much of points of a doctrine so that it becomes abrasive about the issue that it can be irritating and even divisive.
- **Policy** – an overall approach, action or means to achieve an outcome. A policy is not a doctrine nor is it an eternal truth. They can change with time and society. They should be published for all to see and know, otherwise some individual ministers implement whatever they want and back each other up regardless of what head office or leadership teaches.
- **Guideline** – these are general rules or advice or thoughts on how to do something. They are not enforceable.

Turning policies and guidelines into doctrines or even fundamentals and enforcing them was not something Herbert Armstrong taught or wanted and there is no proof whatsoever that is what he intended. Sometimes he would make a passing comment on music, dress or other personal preferences – at no stage did he ever suggest or want these to be enforceable doctrines or “thus sayeth the Lord” – but certain ministers did, and they had no right to do so. If a member attempted to back up the official Church’s position, they would accuse you of something or pin something on you and report whatever they wanted behind your back. You would never see the report and have a chance to stand up for the truth. If you survived your name was mud. If you were pushed out, it was extremely difficult to get back in. But it meant one less person resisting the oppressors and who could report to headquarters.

The fruits were a cold, cliquy, stifling environment built on fear and intimidation – where is the love in that?

In a modern world, policies must be published in some form to enable:

- All to know exactly what the policies etc are. Thus, nor more hidden agendas and self-interpretations of policies. We all know that ministers who think the same way form factions around interpretations, but if all this was open, factions would find it difficult to implement what they want;
- Transparency – everyone knows what is expected and those ordained on the payroll must adhere to the same standard;
- To accomplish this, ministerial manuals and all policies and guidelines must be made openly available for members to view.

Functioning in a modern world in a very old way, causes conflict and distrust due to the differences and expectations.<sup>27</sup> In effect it results in the ‘clash of cultures.’

## Concluding Remarks

It is clear that governance within the old Worldwide Church of God was overdone. I have personally spoken with a number of ministers about that, and some are repentant; others didn't have to change their ways; and others refused, making all sorts of excuses or denying the past mistakes. Some evangelists openly admitted to the issues.

Due to the denials or being incorrectly trained or left to their own devices because they are ‘inspired,’ some ministers have continued the governmental mistakes and abuses of the past to this day.

Now the question must be asked: why were the reforms not completely successful and the behaviours persist – even into some groups that arose in the wake of the demise of the old Worldwide Church of God?

Here are the most obvious answers:

1. Mr Armstrong and those around him did not understand that announcing a change or preaching on it does not mean that these changes would be accepted and implemented. They seemed to ‘just trust’ those employed to follow direction and policy. And if any complaints arose, to believe the minister and to back him up regardless. The changes were ignored in many cases and then (conveniently) forgotten over time.
2. Change management and monitoring techniques were not utilised.
3. Manuals did not exist, and policies were not always laid out – they were often merely verbal or one-off statements.

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<sup>27</sup> Changing the way of governing is not the same as changing doctrines or the true Gospel. The truth must remain, but the way of treating members must change. I actually commenced writing an article on the clash of cultures in the church in 1996 but never completed it.



4. Pride led to one never apologising and to blame others instead – that continues to this day.
5. Many protected each other as mentioned above and if the regional director thought like them, they would be given support and their problems covered up.
6. Although it is a Biblical principle that there are supposed to be neutral, non-partisan panels or judiciaries to judicate and to bring about a right outcome, these were never established. The pastor or elder became jury, judge and executioner. In cases of accusations or conflict, often one never knew who the accuser was and you were not permitted to find out or to defend your position.

Solutions include:

- Recognising and admitting to the mistakes that were made.
- Pastoral manuals to include the relevant policies and how to run a local church.
- Make available to all members the policies and the pastoral manual so all know what the rules are, preventing some doing whatever they want. In other words operate in a modern way in a modern world (ie transparency).
- Training to include the above.
- Right selection of ministers (no more rushing to ordain someone; or cronyism and nepotism).
- Independent panels to judicate (even if it means engaging outside specialists).
- Reviews and feedback on ministerial performance to be implemented.
- Quit the idea that ministers are inspired like Apostles or prophets or priests and thus do not need supervision or policies as God inspires them. This is highly dangerous for any human to be taught or allowed to think that way, let alone to those under their care.

What is there to fear from such changes and its positive results? Some may not like it, but it is not about them – it is about those they serve, their happiness and church growth.

Australia was particularly badly hit over time, again in the 1980s and into the mid-1990s and these practices continued into various groups to this day.

Now that we are aware of what has gone on and the disgrace brought upon the Church, our prayer is for the necessary reforms to be adhered to and completed so that we can have happy and growing Churches. It is not that difficult to implement and achieve. And there is no excuse in not doing so.

## **Appendix. Herbert W Armstrong's letter to the Letter Answering Department**

### **RADIO CHURCH OF GOD**

**WORLD HEADQUARTERS**

**PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

PRESIDENT and PASTOR

Broadcasting

"The WORLD TOMORROW"

Publishers of

The PLAIN TRUTH

Palm Springs, 12/12/58

I have just noticed, in going over letters written in the Letter Answering Department, a tendency which -- as this reminds me -- most of us have unconsciously followed.

It is the habit of speaking of salvation only in terms of "living out a life of OBEDIENCE to God." We seem to have a tendency to speak ONLY and solely of OBEDIENCE -- commandment keeping!

We seldom mention that experience of CONVERSION -- utter SURRENDER, total REPENTANCE, accepting CHRIST in living FAITH as personal Saviour, and receiving the HOLY SPIRIT.

We do not seem to stress sufficiently CHRIST as SAVIOUR -- faith in Him, and then HIS faith in us (living faith which is inseparable from obedience). We must remember that the orthodox fundamental worldly churches and evangelists stress almost solely just CHRIST, and FAITH in Him and accepting his as personal Saviour. Our more or less general omission of this leads many automatically to assume we preach a gospel of EARNING Salvation by WORKS. To a world accustomed to hearing almost altogether about CHRIST and a "born-again experience" (which of course they do not understand), we put ourselves and God's TRUTH in a wrong light. Instead of speaking of being CONVERTED -- CHANGED -- by real repentance, surrender, FAITH in CHRIST, and receiving God's Holy Spirit, we speak of "coming into the TRUTH." A man may "come into the TRUTH" -- that is, let a certain amount of truth into his mind, and still be totally unconverted. We must not lead people to gather that we believe only in Commandment keeping (which to them means SATURDAY-keeping) and EARNING salvation by WORKS.

We must stress the WHOLE TRUTH more -- repentance, surrender, CHRIST AS SAVIOUR, being CHANGED by God's Spirit as God's GIFT, by GRACE, following our conforming to His conditions of repentance and FAITH IN CHRIST -- the CHANGE from carnality to Spiritual-mindedness -- being BEGOTTEN -- and THEN the overcoming and enduring and GROWING life of obedience and living faith, with Christ living HIS LIFE in us. Let's not leave CHRIST and GRACE out of our speech and letters.

With love, in Jesus' name,  
Herbert W. Armstrong

## **Appendix. Examples of old articles promoting Church Governance**

**A**s I mentioned above, there is no evidence that Mr Armstrong and many other senior men restored a 1960s approach in the late 1970s and into the 1980s and none of the articles below were reprinted to support such a stance. However, others restored the 1960s approach with fear tactics, severity, much stricter policies than was required by headquarters in various areas. They were sometimes supported by regional directors.

Although a more hierarchical approach was re-emphasised from mid-1978, that was administration of the ministry. It had nothing to do with oppressing members and willy-nilly harassment, suspensions and disfellowshippings over nothing or little and fear tactics. So much for a loving, caring, happy, relaxed family environment! All they did was cause stress.

To give you an idea of the old practices and thinking that Mr Armstrong eschewed, I have extracted pertinent parts of many articles on church governance below (emphasis mine throughout).

**Note also that many of the men who wrote these articles later on did repent of their stances and heavy handiness, so this in no way condemns them.**

Emphasis mine throughout all the articles below.

### **Make Ministerial Visits Profitable!**

*Good News*, May-June 1968, pp. 16-18

"In Acts 15, we find that Paul visited the brethren and the purpose was to help them. "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and SEE HOW THEY DO" (verse 36). The purpose was to help the brethren, NOT spy, pry and snoop!" (p. 16)

"But, in too many cases these all important personal visits, by God's chosen instruments to help you, are wasted! And when they are, you have lost an opportunity for Christ to FEED you! An opportunity to overcome these deep-seated physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and psychological problems has been wasted!

Why?

**Because you are so much a part of this rotten society and yet so carnal that YOLI WON'T bring out your problems! We are so steeped in the evils of this world, that in many cases, God's ministers are treated with the same suspicion and hostility that we see and experience in the world.**

Apprehensive Suspicious

Attitude Our minds have been trained to be suspicious, apprehensive and afraid. This carries over into our lives so that we are the: same toward God's ministers. **This carnal attitude is one of the greatest hindrances to receiving full value from the personal visits. All too often the attitude is that the minister is "looking for sin,"** if he finds sin and problems many suspect he will gloat and exude hideous joy of self-righteousness over "discovering" your sins and weaknesses.

Brethren, this is totally wrong!

They know you need help. They know you have problems to overcome. In fact, there are: NONE without problems! You are still human ... which means that you have human nature! As The GOOD NEWS long as you have human nature, you will have problems.

God's ministers or the visiting team are not coming to "get things" on you. They are not coming in a super righteous, haughty attitude to lord it over you by smashing you into the ground.

This is the attitude they have when they visit you. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual ... [that is ministers and visiting teams] restore such an one IN THE SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6: 1).

THEY ARE YOUR FRIENDS!

**They are NOT supersnoopers, detectives, 007 secret agents, nor the Nazi Gestapo! DON'T treat them as such.**

If you have this kind of suspicious, apprehensive, carnal attitude toward the minister or the visiting team, then you are only cheating yourself. If there are sins that need to be brought out, or the ministers know about, they are there to HELP YOU overcome them ... NOT TO CONDEMN YOU, or to spy on you. Yet some have actually criticized to answer the door, pretending to not be at home, when the visiting team came!

Brethren, this ought not be! If this has been your attitude, repent of it, get rid of it, and CHANGE. This is the first thing you can do to make a visit profitable." (p. 17)

**"I have known of people who have actually trembled because of nervousness when visited by God's ministers or visiting team.** Then others are so swelled in their own self importance that they barely recognize the visiting team is there. Here is how God is going to inspire the minister to deal with you in visiting, serving and feeding the Flock. "And the servant of the

Lord must not strive; but be gentle [that does not mean weak] unto all men, apt to teach, patient [that is forbearing], in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ... (II Tim. 2:24-25). So just RELAX! Don't ACT OR PUT ON! ! Chances are, you are not fooling the minister anyway." (p. 17)

"Many times members in God's Church will hide their problems, NEVER talk about them, NEVER mention them, NEVER ask for HELP. When the minister comes to visit, the "front" goes up. Inside you may be eating your heart out about something, but on the outside all is made to appear well." (p. 17)

"It could be that YOU are praying about the problems. In believing prayer you ask God to help you overcome. That is fine, and by all means YOU need to pray about them. But, God might not answer that prayer to help you the WAY YOU THINK! How literary FOOLISH to ask God for help, to open the way so you can overcome a particular problem; then when God sends that HELP - His ministers - to visit you, you REFUSE IT! How? You refuse God's help because when you are visited your problems are buried, hidden, disguised, concealed and suppressed. You HAVE WASTED A CHANCE TO OVERCOME!" (p. 18)

"Brethren, take advantage of Christ's personal interest in you. Christ sends his ministers, His chosen instruments to serve, visit and feed you. Work on these points. Get rid of any wrong suspicious attitudes. Don't hide your problems, rather open up and it will benefit for your own good, write down your questions, and finally act on the advice given. Make your next visit PROFITABLE!" (p. 18)

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**"How Far Does CHURCH GOVERNMENT Extend into YOUR Life?"**

*Good News*, January 1961, pp. 1-2, 8-12

The degree to which individuals accept God's government is illustrative of the degree to which they are converted and changed from their natural carnal mindedness to the mind of God and the Spirit of God. When people say, "Well, I think I ought to decide this for myself," when it is not their decision, they are merely illustrating carnal mindedness. And to be carnal minded is death...

Once you have proved this is God's Church, how far are you going to let GOD rule you? How far will His government extend in your home and into your life? What decisions are you, as an individual, to make? And how much is vested in the Church as a body? The Church, of course, authoritatively speaks BY THE MINISTRY when it comes to making decisions WHICH REGULATE THE WHOLE CHURCH. (Observe Acts 15, for example.)...

Once you learn to submit it is remarkable how soon you find that your MIND IS open so that you can see God's way is right. It is those who do NOT want to submit to the government of God who find they soon cannot agree with God or His Church!

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**The Visiting Program or GESTAPO... which?**

*Good News*, May 1964, pp. 3-4, 21-25

"I was absolutely dumbfounded by a recent monthly Church report, in which some of our men on the very large Visiting Program in the Southern California area had given some very saddening reports. **They told of families who would not answer the door when they came; of a woman who was seen peeking at them from behind the curtains as they approached the door**, and then who hid until the men finally had to go away; of families who are made nervous, who "fidget" all the way through the meeting, and are secretive with the men on the Visiting Program; of families who must rush to hide the ashtrays; of families who are just downright embarrassed to visit sincerely and seriously about the Bible! Shocking? I should say it is! In reading through these reports, asked myself, "Whaaaaaaaaaat? And these people are church-going people -GOD'S people-people who believe they are truly members of the Body of Christ?" I believe, brethren - and I address this to those who are truly brethren-the answer is most obvious they are NOT really converted and growing members of God's Church at all!" (p. 7)

**"The Visiting Program was established to HELP, to SERVE, to satisfy a definite need! It was NOT established as an "elite corps" of furtive SPIES who are busily engaged in "checking up" into the private lives of members to see what evils they can uncover."** (p. 21)

"We can't deceive God! Doesn't it seem to be a little ridiculous, then, that we should try to deceive one another? To quote from a recent Visiting Program Report, "More and more cases are coming to light of people "kidding" themselves and trying to deceive the Visiting Teams also, concerning their personal habits and lives.'" (p. 22)

"If so, then you are going to truly rejoice-and rejoice deeply to have an opportunity to SHARE your personal problems and Bible questions with those whom God has called and is using on His Visiting Program." (p. 23)

"Remember, these men are not already perfect-**they are not powerful overlords**; awesome, frightening personalities; members of a secret service; or spies!" (p. 23)

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### **How Church Government Really WORKS"**

*Good News*, March 1964

"Those brethren whom the Father is calling will know by the "fruits" whom God is using to faithfully preach His Word!

The members of God's Church are commanded by Christ: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7).

And again: "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Verse 17).

So it is that the Living Christ appoints and directs His ministers and elders. They are responsible to him! He has the wisdom and the power to correct them, chasten them or put

them out of office if that is ever necessary.

That is his job — not the job of the lay-members.

Their job is to find where God's true Church really is — where Christ is working — and to humbly and sincerely submit themselves to follow, learn from and be corrected by God's ministers as long as they are following the basic example of Christ Himself (Heb. 13:8)."

"Realizing who is really back of this, be sure you respond to Jesus Christ and His Church! **Learn to be obedient and responsive** — quickly and gladly — to His Government in His Church so that you may be there in His Kingdom to come!"

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**Is GOD the Author of Ceremony?**

*Good News*, October 1963

Is it proper to take photographs during religious services, baptisms, or marriage ceremonies? Here is an answer we all need to understand.

IS IT proper to have flashing light bulbs, strobe lights, tripods and general disturbance in order to take photographs during an annual holy day at the Feast of Tabernacles? — or on any other festivals or the weekly Sabbath?

When a minister is speaking from the pulpit, or in an ordination ceremony, should photographs be taken? Is this showing proper respect to the office in which God has placed that minister?

And what about baptisms and marriage ceremonies? While the minister reads the ceremony, when the couple kneel, or when one is buried in the waters of baptism, should pictures ever be taken?

**God's Decision**

The 1961 Ministerial Conference had to take up this question. It has been commonplace for members to take snapshots especially on the closing day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Usually individuals just have forgotten to take them earlier and have thought they had to do so that day. Often, during religious services throughout the week brethren have come near the platform to obtain a candid shot of the service.

Was this proper?

This past Festival of Tabernacles the same problem cropped up again. Some seem to have forgotten God's decision on the matter, given through His ministers.

What does God say?

First, we must come to realize that GOD is the Author of CEREMONY. He performed the first marriage ceremony in Eden when he brought to the man the woman who was to be his wife.

Would it have been proper to interrupt Him to obtain a candid shot? Since God's ministers are divinely authorized to perform the same ceremony today, is it showing proper respect TO THE CEREMONY GOD ORDAINED to distract the guests for a candid shot?

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### **JUDGING and DISCIPLINE in God's Church**

*Good News*, January 1966

[NB this is a reprint and update to the article with the same title published in the November 1953 *Good News*].

First, tell the other person his fault between you and him alone. Don't gossip or tell others. Don't become upset or bitter over your brother's sin. Just go and tell him about it privately. Don't pick at your brother or pester him about trivial matters. But if he sins, go and tell him about it with the attitude of helping him. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Secondly, if he will not hear you then take with you one or two other brethren and rehearse the matter again in their presence. Be sure they are mature Christians — men of understanding who will be able to make your sinning brother realize the seriousness of his mistake.

Thirdly, if he will not heed their warning to repent, then tell the matter to the church. Since there is order and government in God's true church, you should take the matter up with the pastor. **He will carefully review the case, probably have a long talk with the party in error, and will then bring the matter before the entire congregation if he deems this wise.**

If after all this the sinning party still refuses to repent, Christ said that you are to treat him as an unbeliever. Does this mean you are to hate him or to hold him in contempt. It certainly does not. It simply means that you are to treat him as an unconverted outsider and have no fellowship with him.

Naturally, you should continue to love your erring brother and pray that God will bring him to repentance. But you are not to talk to him about it or fellowship with him any more until he acknowledges his error and gives evidence that he has repented. If your brother finally does repent and turn from his error, he may later be readmitted into church fellowship. So his expulsion from the congregation is simply to wake him up before it is too late."

"Speaking of exercising church discipline, Jesus promised that He would be with His servants in carrying out this function. Christ himself will inspire and direct His chosen ministers in all such decisions. It is really Christ who is governing and judging God's church."

"All such judgments by God's servants will be bound in heaven. Christ directs His ministers in governing His church. Then He backs them up with His divine authority and power."

"Even the judges in the Old Testament were promised divine guidance in rendering their decisions. In II Chronicles 19:1-7 is an account of how righteous King Jehoshaphat appointed judges over the land. He was inspired to instruct them, "Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment." Seeing this example of how God directed his fleshly people, **how much more will He direct and inspire His servants today**



in directing and judging matters within His Spirit-begotten church? Christ will certainly guide His ministers in judging His people today. He intends to present the church holy and blameless before God. The Bible form of church discipline is one of the means Christ is using to keep His church free from corruption. **All such judgments by God's servants will be bound in heaven. Christ directs His ministers in governing His church. Then He backs them up with His divine authority and power.**

Are there further instructions on exactly how this should be carried out?"

Some churches of this world have forms of "excommunication" whereby the object seems to be to hurt and defame the one who has been put out of church fellowship. This is not God's way.

As we have seen before, a sinning brother is to be disfellowshipped in order "that he may be ashamed" and come to repentance. The object is to help these people — to wake them up — not to hurt them.

In I Corinthians 6:1-7, the apostle Paul commanded the saints not to go to law before unbelievers, but to bring any disputes before the saints for judgment. This would include disputes over material matters as well as the spiritual problems which we have already discussed. Paul wrote, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life" (verse 3).

Paul is not writing about cases involving outsiders who are unconverted. This chapter deals with converts only.

So when two converted brethren have a disagreement over some material matters — even converted people are still human you know — they should bring the matter before the leaders in God's church. Verse 4 of this passage is incorrectly translated and most modern translations show that it should be in the form of a question. Paul was asking them why they were bringing their disputes before those who were little esteemed by the church. He continues, "I speak to your shame." (Because they were doing this) "Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" (Verse 5.)

**It is the wise men, then, the ministers and elders in the church, to whom these problems should be brought.** Instead of going before worldly courts, Christians should want to have their disputes settled God's way, according to the principles of God's righteous laws. They are commanded to bring all such disputes before the church for judgment.

**God's judgment will ensure full justice for everyone concerned,** and will save the church from bearing any reproach over such matters in the outside world.

Each of you brethren will have a part in carrying out God's judgment and discipline in the church as He directs. You must be very careful to do it God's way. Be sure to follow all the steps Jesus gave when you warn a brother of a sin he is committing.

Church discipline must be exercised in LOVE. In any such matter, always try to help the other party — not injure him. Ask God to give you wisdom and to help you do everything His way.

Study carefully all the scriptures in this article. Realize that you have no excuse for continually criticizing or "picking at" anyone in God's church. You are only to go to them in love and point out their mistake if they are literally and definitely breaking God's law.

... People must be taught to respect and fear the authority God wields through His ministers. If a person refuses to obey (God's government now, how can he be expected to obey it in the kingdom?

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**Why We Have the Laying on of Hands Ceremony**

Good News, April-May 1965

"By submitting to the hands of God's human instruments, you willingly put yourself under their authority, and acknowledged that Jesus Christ — alive on His Father's Throne in Heaven — is ACTIVELY RULING HIS CHURCH TODAY!"

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**Are You SURE We Are GOD'S MINISTERS?**

Good News, December 1964

"As my father has said so many times, the decisions have always been 100 per cent unanimous whenever God's true ministers gather together to settle a question — or when doctrinal points are discussed in the annual Ministerial Conferences."

It is GOOD that God's people should talk about the Bible. It is right, just and godly that all of God's people SHOULD do this — but when certain ones try to set themselves forward as ministers, as teachers of the Word, then God's true ministers must exercise the all-powerful AUTHORITY God has given them, with the very POWER OF GOD, in putting down such false teachings in order to protect the flock!

Do not let yourself become an "interested" listener to damnable heresies, evil speakings and gossip against someone else, or against God's great Work, or against any of the ministers as individuals!"

"To cause another human being to LOSE SALVATION is the most dastardly act a person can commit! Notice what Jesus said of such an act: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences [causing another to stumble — and go back into sin]! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" (Matt 18:6-7.)

The well-known third chapter of James, the lesson on the evils of the tongue — of evil — speaking and gossip — is directed primarily to those who TEACH OTHERS — the MINISTRY "My brethren, be not many masters," is better translated, "My brethren, do not many of you become teachers!" (Verse 1), "... knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation [judgment]."

Why? Simply because, as Paul said to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:16). The minister can help SAVE people by the RIGHT, DILIGENT, FAITHFUL preaching of God's true Word! **He can also be responsible for sending people straight to Gehenna fire by the wrong use of the position in which God has placed him!**

It is because of that TREMENDOUS responsibility that James said, "Don't many of you become teachers!"

"I want you to think very carefully about this next statement! It constitutes a great principle of God's Word — and a vitally important KEY to be used in God's true ministry!

THERE IS NOT ONE SINGLE EXAMPLE — ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE, WHERE A CALLED AND CHOSEN SERVANT OF GOD CAME FORWARD AND VOLUNTEERED FOR THE OFFICE!

Moses argued that he was unfit for the job, Jeremiah said he was too young, Jonah ran away, Samuel was directly called of God, David knew nothing until Samuel announced it to him. All of the Prophets say, "The word of the Lord CAME unto... " them, not that they volunteered for the office!

Jesus called and appointed His true disciples. Paul was struck down by a miracle. Paul "took" Timothy unto him, and so it is throughout the history of God's Church. My father fought vigorously against the Truth of God before he was finally called."

## **Appendix. Did God Create Human Nature?**

**S**ome taught that God created evil human nature and this must be crushed in kids. Or that we should despise ourselves (rather than the old nature).

Herbert Armstrong reversed this by the late 1960s. Later he produced a booklet on the subject with a much more accurate understanding: *Human Nature. Did God Create it?* Here are pertinent extracts:

"Absolutely NO REBELLION is indicated here [when Adam was created]. We find, instead, the response that Adam gave names to all cattle, to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.

"This incident reveals Adam's attitude and nature as he was created, PRIOR TO his temptation by Satan (which is recorded in chapter 3). Notice carefully. Absolutely NOTHING in the account of this pre-temptation incident indicates in Adam the presence of an evil, hostile, rebellious attitude or nature. It does not reflect a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, as human nature is described (Jeremiah 17:9), nor a carnal mind that is enmity (hostile) against God and which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

"Nor, on the other hand, does it reveal a nature filled with the Spirit of God. Adam had not yet been confronted by Satan, had not disobeyed, nor had he taken of the "tree of life" to

receive the indwelling LOVE and POWER of God's Holy Spirit, which would have imparted the DIVINE NATURE (II Peter 1:4).

“So prior to the temptation by Satan, we have only the revelation that Adam's NATURE, as God created him, was not evil, hostile and diabolical. There may have been the physical and mental nature of self-preservation and such things. But NOT the evil nature of SELF-centeredness.” (pp. 3-4)

“We humans start out at birth all right. But soon we begin to absorb and ACQUIRE the selfish, self-centered attitude broadcast by Satan. But Satan's kingdom of angels — now turned to demons — rejected the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, and it was thus removed from earth.

“GOD'S PURPOSE in having created and put HUMANS on earth was to develop in them GOD'S own holy and righteous character. God wants a people who will REJECT and overcome Satan's WAY OF LIFE and turn to THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD — which is GOD'S WAY of life.” (p. 20)

But the old teaching was:

“Human nature is not instinct. Animals have instinct-humans have human nature. Animal instinct is virtually involuntary action, based not on reasoning, imagination, decision and will, but on instinct.

“Human nature is a tendency of attitude—a sort of gravitational pull of attitude in the direction of VANITY. The human mind, once aware of this pull, has power of reasoning, of understanding, of decision, and of will to resist it— power to see, comprehend, decide, and what one ought to do, instead of what he wants to do...

“A basic ingredient of human nature, then, is REBELLION-against all authority over one. And since all authority emanates from, or at least is allowed by God, this attitude of rebellion is actually rebellion against GOD” (Herbert W Armstrong, “How the Plain Truth is Different”, *Plain Truth*, May 1961, p. 2)

And

“GOD HAS SET IN MOTION A LAW WITHIN THE HUMAN MIND WHICH CAUSES IT BY NATURE TO BE *HOSTILE AND DISOBEDIENT* to God's commands. This law is a living, MOVING thing - just like the law of GRAVITY!

This LAW operates to pull man down into disobedience as surely as gravity operates to pull an object to this earth. Man's mind, having this natural downward pull toward disobedience, is called the “carnal mind.” It is said to be at ENMITY TO GOD—for it is by nature disobedient to God (Rom. 8:7).

PAUL RECOGNIZED THIS LAW WORKING WITHIN HIS OWN MIND. Because he was drawn downward into disobedience so often, he cried out in shame, “I find then a law [of disobedience], that, when I would do good, evil is present with me . . .” (Rom. 7:21 ). And Paul went on to lament, “I see . . . [this same] law [of disobedience] in my members [in my body], WARRING AGAINST the LAW OF my MIND [GOD'S LAW, WHICH PAUL HAD ACCEPTED IN HIS HEART AND MIND (verse 22)] and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin [disobedience] which is in my members” (verse 23). THUS, there is a WAR CONSTANTLY GOING ON WITHIN MAN'S MIND as to whether to be obedient or disobedient to God. EVEN THE RIGHTEOUS PAUL WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY in keeping temptations from getting the better of him!”

(*Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 21, "This Present Evil World", 1959, p. 1)

"Do you know that GOD HAS ITEMIZED THE DISOBEDIENT PULLS THAT HE HAS PUT WITHIN OUR MINDS? The pulls to which the vast majority of this world succumb at this time, thus making of it "This Present Evil World"?" (p. 3)

"Wasn't it God, Himself, who put within man the disobedient pull (which must be crushed out through the power of 9 the Holy Spirit) -to murder-war-kill? Mark 7:21" (p. 6. This is mentioned several times in the lesson).

## **Appendix. Extracts from Mr McNair's Ministerial Conference Notes 1969-1973**

**A** Minister provided me with two volumes of handwritten notes by Raymond F McNair from various ministerial conferences. Here are some extracts from the notes un-edited, which highlight the issues raised in this article. Emphasis mine throughout and comments in square brackets are also mine.

### **A. 1969 or January 1970:**

HWA - "we need to pull together - to respect each other ... we need to learn to go to each other and talk things over. There is the ever-present empire-building tendency among those in responsible departments ... and are very ambitious".

"Mr. A said if there is anything, any difficulty, talk it over - come out with it, don't harbour it!"

### **B. 13 January 1970:**

"just because one isn't in the ministry, it doesn't mean they aren't very valuable"

### **C. 17 January 1972:**

Mr. A said the ministers feel nervous when speaking before him. But he said he does not sit there judging, evaluating- unless there is something outstandingly bad ...

He said some felt he had wanted ministers only to wear a white shirt on the Sabbath - if speaking, but could wear a coloured shirt if not speaking.

He says he prefers to wear a white shirt on the Sabbath, but does not feel it is mandatory. He would wear a white shirt - if in the audience. But said this was merely personal preference.

HWA: watch events and pray. Things to watch:

- a. US of Europe
- b. militant Catholic Church

- c. watch US economic conditions
- d. Jerusalem and Mid East
- e. This Work

**17 January 1972 - Pastoral Instruction:**

**"Be a leader, not a driver."**

HWA: A leader should be an example of serving, love, dress - in everything. He should lead, not drive.

Men's hair: Beatles started long-hair fad. Now many business and professional men wear long hair, but it is not too long necessarily. If this hairstyle becomes so common among conservative men, (60% or 70% do it), he may follow it and encourage you to do so... "However I am not quite ready to do that yet." "I am not going to start it yet". He hoped none of us would begin doing this, but if we did, he didn't believe it was wrong.

HWA: Ministers, inspire by your example. Lead, don't drive. Some begin to be overlords - heavy handed.

If I want someone to do something, I say "Mell, would you do such and such ..." I don't just order Mell (my driver) around". "Would you mind doing ..." or "will you do ..."

Be kind, learn gentleness and patience.

One man in a position of leadership, beat down and discouraged all of those under him.

"Christ is love. Have an outgoing concern for those under Him. Be warm, friendly, sincere. Request.

Mr A said "I wish I could just quietly put someone in his place". Said he was working to overcome.

Be a servant. Christ was a servant. Don't overuse those under you (Min. Assistants) having them serve his own personal needs or wants.

**If some are overlords - we might just jerk them right back here. *[in order to discipline them]***

Ministers must avoid running others' lives and businesses for them. Don't make their decisions for them. Merely give them God's basic instructions.

All ministers should sincerely avoid going overboard in styles, dress lengths etc. Look to headquarters as the example.

Mentioned one minister who differed on certain points, but he had never taught these things to others.

You are not at liberty to teach or preach contrary doctrines. These must first be cleared through headquarters.

ITim 3:1 Some may desire office of an overseer, but most who want to be ordained should not be! - HWA said.

Rod Meredith said - We have had tendency to have the people serve us too much. Some have deacons, deaconesses (or women members) serve them without pay. Lawn-mowing, maid services, baby sitting etc. Fix our cars, do our nanny act as nurse or sick maid.

Some church members like to do these things in order to "make points" so he can gain favours with the ministers - perhaps be ordained later.

Let us remember, we are there to serve them - not primarily to have them serve us.

Some members give ministers food, presents, discounts at their business store etc.

There are many of these people who later become offended if they are not ordained - or if they are corrected.

Mr A said that he could not think of one time when he had deacons or members do these things. Mr A said this way is not of God, but is the way of Satan the Devil.

**Mr A said he wanted the Supervisors to see some of these "squirts" and teach them humility - not to abuse these things.**

Mr HWA said some of these people look upon ordination more as a coronation.

A. Many ministers are not qualified to advise in business matters. We can only advise on spiritual principles.

Don't be afraid to say, "I just don't know" or feel free to refer a member to another knowledgeable member for business advice.

We used to be a bit extreme on the thing of church government - used to apply this too often in interfering in church family's homes.

Avoid giving the impression of being against the teenagers - not knowing the real facts of what is going on. Teenagers do live in a different world.

B. Must know what you are talking about. We don't want to encourage any "wild" music.

But it isn't always easy to know where to draw the line on music ... Show them that some of the Beatles music is ok. Don't just harangue against teenage music.

C. If you [ministers] aren't warm and friendly, sincere etc - then why? Lack of prayer? Study? We are entirely too rank-conscious. Many ministers have a wrong fear ["perfect love caste

out fear"].

D. When Mr HWA said it was ok to have shorter skirts lengths on the cheer girls - this was not communicated to the churches.

E. Let us remember we are not policemen. Some try to legislate rules to prevent sin ... we need to avoid the two extremes of over- or under-policing. Don't feel that you have to police the Church's people's children ... we can make too many rules that we restrict people and their liberties.

F. In the US Blacks are the best-off financially of any Blacks in the world.

G. HWA: we are not dictators. Christ did speak sharply at times, but only when he had. to. Otherwise he handled everything lovingly and kindly.

An ordination is not a coronation. We have to rule - but wisely and in love.

Mr A admitted that he hasn't always corrected as he should. Don't have people fearing you in the wrong way - trembling before you.

H. Disfellowshipping is for the purpose of saving others - and of eventually saving the erring brother.

We don't have to "blow our tops" or make asses of ourselves. We want to help.

Don't do this disfellowshipping in such a way to make their name vile for the rest of their lives.

How to disfellowship? That depends. Sometimes, Mr A admits the hasn't done these things as he would like.

Try not to act under strong emotion - where you might do something foolish or irreparable.

Avoid slander, liable. or creating enemies unduly. Consider the welfare of the whole Work.

I. We need to be open, frank and we need to work harder at sincere cooperation among ourselves.

Don't crave status, position, honor - making points with the boss to get ahead.

Learn to communicate - to have a continual give and take of ideas, suggestions etc.

As the Work gets bigger, we can get more carnal if we aren't careful.

Be willing to lay down your life for your friends.

J. Loyalty is a 2-way street. Learn to appreciate and be loyal to those under you - especially in hard times.



Rod Meredith: Some ministers get in a smart alec, sassy, flippant attitude.

**Originally, the Methodist movement was very fervent - but after Wesley died, this fervency died out. This type of situation could be repeated with us if we are not careful.** *[comment: an almost prophetic statement]*

False prophets will rise up from our midst and will come in from the outside. We need to be serious, sober, grave - realize our serious responsibilities.

We want to please, honor God in dress, family, and all we do. Don't resort to "little tricks", machinations etc.

Have monthly prayer meetings with the ministers in England so we can keep close to God.

Certainly pray before meals and pray every night as a family.

K. Mr A said many in the room have had wrong feelings toward others. Even Evangelists against Evangelists.

Mr A said if we have anything against anyone - go to them privately and in love.

Satan would like to divide us. Pull together. Talk things over and work as a team.

**L. We are going to plan "as if we had another 100 years" - HWA**

We have never set dates officially.

Watch the Work.

Do some of you need to go to each other before you go home? I think some of you owe apologies to others.

**16 January 1973:**

Many in the Church of God have lost a sense of urgency.

The Work was built on 'bad' radio time and we are using 'bad' TV time now – but we will get on better TV time as we go along.

We need to learn to put Biblical truth in secular language.

Mr A said we are trying to get out one [new] booklet per month.

Doctrinal Team – Rod and others are now going into many doctrinal subjects.

Mr David Antion said he found our District Superintendents could do more work than they

were doing – didn't have enough to do.

Qualifications for District Superintendents:

1. an AC graduate
2. 5 years of experience
3. wisdom and perception
4. leadership and inspiration
5. outgoing personality
6. administrative and organisational ability
7. a good speaker
8. etc (incomplete list)

The biggest reason for cancellation of receiving Church materials is "I am now studying with the Jehovah's Witnesses" – 59%!

**17 January 1973:**

Mr A asked if we have had any problems, as ministers, with people in the Church criticizing our children. We need to guard against this and handle diplomatically – don't need to make a big issue of this.

GTA said the world is a powerful pull on our kids. He said we don't need to beat over the head, be suspicious of our children etc.

**18 January 1973:**

Mr A said the headquarters ministers (top) have been having a number of doctrinal meetings – to discuss any points in question.

Tithing:

HWA: We should tithe on gross income, but we can deduct legitimate expenses. One can deduct some types of traveling expenses.

In countries where tithes cannot be deducted, or where taxes are exorbitant, one may not be required to tithe on the gross income. Further research is being done on this.

HWA: The Levitical priesthood analogy should not be overdone. We are ministers under the Melchizedek priesthood *[comment: he never went on to develop this thinking further and nothing appeared in articles or sermons that could be construed in any way that ministers were regarded as Levites or priests].*

Rod Meredith mentioned that in the past 1/4 or 1/5 of some congregations were unconverted.

Rom. 14:1-4 shows one can be baptized without knowing the finer points of life. "Mr

Armstrong baptized some who were still smoking and eating unclean meats.” But he knew they were so repentant they would obey when they understood.

HWA: none of us have complete, perfect knowledge.

**19 January 1973:**

We are going to have to have “some kind of revival.” He said we are not having as many healings as we should have. “We are not having the miracles performed now that we did in the past.” HWA said we need a new booklet on healing.

Skirt lengths: women should not show thighs sitting or standing.

**22 January 1973:**

Medical questions: we cannot forbid people to go to doctors, hospitals etc. Christ said ‘according to their faith be it unto you.’

You cannot live other peoples lives for them – you cannot decide for them!

Mr A said let us find out if going to doctors, hospitals etc – is the same as Ahaziah going to Baalzebul.

**Mr A said we must not give up or change our beliefs – the truth – just to please or appease those in the world, newspaper reporters etc.** *[comment: try telling that to some folk who think we should ordain women to the ministry, who are going soft on homosexuality, refuse to speak out on abortion and euthanasia etc, wish to water-down British-Israel, do not see that the Gospel is to be preached as a witness and warning etc].*

Diet: Eat only those things which will spoil, before it spoils. Eat natural things, natural goods and avoid sauces, gravies, too many spices, dressings etc. Avoid too much sugar. But Mr A said he uses a little white sugar. Said he has eliminated most deserts from his diet.

We need to avoid becoming cranks re food, diet etc *[comment: today, however, we have clearly gone to the other extreme].*

Proof of the Bible: Mr A said we had taken our Babylon, Tyre proofs from a SDA booklet. But we have since come to see that we were in error by applying these scriptures to present-day Tyre and Babylon – when they really apply to “the Day of the Lord.”

Herman Hoeh: Matt 18:15-17 – we are told to go to our brother if he sins against us.

“I am not a liberal. I am a progressive” said one member-employee. We have gotten away from focusing in on a way of life and have concentrated on lifestyle.

Histories of Rev. 2 & 3 reflected the economic, social and religious aspects of the seven churches. **This is true of us today. We are being influenced by this world’s attitudes and**

**ways.** Righteousness, according to one student, was being tolerant of other's life styles. *[comment: that sounds like the liberals in the Churches of God today].*

Dr Hoeh says that many conclusions, judgments and decisions *[by ministers]* are made without first establishing the truth of the matter. One man said he didn't have any confidence in the ministry and didn't want the ministers solving his personal problems. "The relationship between the ministers and executives is like that of the nobility and peasants" said one woman in the Church. One person asked how often the ministers have operations – had heard of Dr Meredith's operation.

Go through the proper channels in ironing out a problem. Don't go to the top first. Go up the ladder of authority. "We have not first gone one to another."

Hoeh: "we have resolved the problem, but it has left a scar." Learn to go to one another.

Mr A said a number of Kings in Old Testament were zealous in their youth, but fell away in their old age. He said he fears – and does not want to follow their examples. Mr A said he feels he is making progress *[comment: with his spiritual life].*

**Mr A said in Oregon they used to study the Bible in private fellowship. But not so today *[he lamented]*. He said today there is a competitive spirit. "If we don't do something about it the Church will fall apart." *[comment: how prophetic]***

### **23 January 1973:**

We need a 'renewed sense of urgency."

HWA: "I don't know of any other church which teaches the truth re out being born into the God family. We will never be equal to Him in power and authority. What other church teaches the Gospel of the Kingdom of God?"

HWA: We need to be more alert to the fact that there is a devil, and he is broadcasting his evil ways. Satan is subtle and he is getting at many in the Church.

Personal Grooming, Style and Dress:

Are we setting our affection on things above?

We want to avoid extremes – undue tolerance or too much letter of the law obedience.

"Ministers' wives should set the example for others." *[comment: how about growing their hair – much too many women with man-ish short hair nowadays].*

We are not setting a definitive no. of inches for skirt lengths, but they must cover the thigh.

Mr A said he hasn't "cracked down" at HQ but he has preached a number of sermons etc, to combat wrong styles, fads etc.

New booklet on Proving the Bible thru 10 chapters coming.

GTA: He recommended that the local minister might visit a hospital once a month – visiting non-members. He said this may not *[always]* be a good idea. He said he feels the ministers could visit “half way houses” and learn what it is like to help people overcoming drug problems. He feels we need a more open, freer approach to people.

Mr A said if our hearts are right we will not be too picky about exactly defining every principle. Mr HWA said some women are bound to show a lot of thigh, but we are not to be overly critical or pounce. We are not to be too picky – “but I will not be specific to the exact no. of inches.’

The Church doesn’t have authority over our unconverted daughters [ie those not drawn into the Church]. But we (parents) do have.

These things are important but don’t get down to the exact fraction of an inch. Avoid extremism.

“If all men do it” – when “half or more” do it – wear side burns, then Mr A said he feels we could follow the styles. He said if 80% of Australians (according to Mr Cole) wear long side burns etc, it would be ok to do this.

We are ministers of the spirit of the law – not the letter. But Mr A said he likes to see a woman’s skirt cover the knee.

**24 January 1973:**

Mr HWA said he was amazed and dumbfounded to see mushrooming departments and lavish expenditure.

Mr A asked the Ministerial wives to examine themselves to see if they are doing their job – are a proper help to their husbands. A wife can be a very great help *[in the ministry]*. She can give constructive criticism to their husbands.

Encourage your sons to come to you. Be a good listener.

Mr A said some tend to drink too much. Most of Mr A’ drinking (99%) is wine. He drinks a little beer – especially after perspiring. Some have been put out of the ministry because of being unable to control their drinking. God’s ministers cannot be drunkards.

Neck ties: be stylish – but not wild or way out – not gaudy. We should not wear dull or dry colours.

## Appendix. Examples of Mr Armstrong's Changed emphases and stance

**M**r Armstrong approved changes to governance, Divorce & Remarriage<sup>28</sup>, Pentecost, third tithing and many minor areas referred to in this article. Even modifications to makeup, birthdays, having more positive articles in the publications (less on fear), emphasis on youth involvement, involving members in the church, child rearing, dating unbelievers etc.

The below extracts represent just a few of the changes to a number of approaches, policies and guidelines. Herbert Armstrong himself stuck to these changes. Others didn't and still do not to this day.

NB: just because some of the authors of the articles may have left the mother body (WCG) does not mean that what they originally wrote was wrong. They were clearly authorised by Herbert Armstrong and he followed these changed emphases himself.

### ***Techniques of Counselling and How to Resolve Problems*** **Old WCG Ministerial guideline (c1971) (author unknown).**

Comment: Quite good re counselling but gets too much into the role that is reserved for a panel of judges. In other words, the author mixes eldership with judges and counselling with judgment. The two are separate in the Scriptures.

Makes statements such as:

"Have genuine love and concern for the people." (p. 1)

"Be a servant and gentle shepherd -- - not an overlord who they fear." (p. 1)

"Be prepared to remain neutral and unprejudiced." (p. 2)

"Recognize your limitations." (p. 2)

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### ***Types of Sermons. Guidelines*** **by David Antion, March 1973.**

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<sup>28</sup> Guidelines on counselling and investigating divorce was very intrusive and reversed. The article in the *Ministerial Letter*, 18 July 1969 contained 10 questions to ask as part of this counselling and all of this was modified or eschewed by the early 1970s. "Appeal to them to be open-minded and candid about any pertinent information or intimate details of their past marriages. Let them know that you have gone into intimate details of dozens of cases and that you are not going to be shocked at all. They should not hold back anything about any "Pertinent romantic or sex relationships before marriage. Tell them—if these factors apply—that you are God's minister and are married, have children and know about sex. Also, that you are bound as God's minister not to divulge any of it to anyone, and that, in fact, you forget most details anyway as you go through more and more cases."

Teaching must be 70%; Inspire, exhort, encourage should be 28%; correct and rebuke 2.

“Avoid sarcasm and digging [at people] - - it turns people against you.” (p. 1)

“People are turned off if antagonized by you ...” (p. 1)

“Overall, 90% should be positive ... When properly executed, preaching will bring about unity, edification, faith and love.” (p. 2)

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***Area Coordinators Meeting***

**by Garner Ted Armstrong, 20 March 1978.**

“We have been almost "proud" of the fact that over the many years of our latter day existence we have baptized only 5096 of those who have come to us asking us to permit them to become members of the church. In case after case, I have had related to me how some of our men in the church (who may be in the ministry or top leaders in the Work today themselves) had to quite literally "beg" to be baptized!

“They were met with suspicion, almost resentment or hostility. The person to whom they first talked, cut them to ribbons—delves into their private life—demanded that they repent and apologize more than any Catholic priest ever thought of doing. And some of you know that. Hopefully, that belongs in the late 503 and early 603. Hopefully, that doesn't happen any more today. If it is still extant in the minds of some, then it could still be in the church today. It should not be.” (p. 4)

“Is not the requirement of years past to come before a human being, a minister, and confess practically every evil deed you ever did, the "putting forth of the finger"? Is not the current situation (which is often extant in the church) of enmity, hostility, vituperative attacks, gossip, lack of loyalty and brotherly affection, labelism, up and down the length and breadth of the church, the "putting forth of the finger".

“Is not the way of life as protested by many who became dissidents, and those who are now even on the fence, more like the "yoke," than the "delight" that it should be?

“And are not empty, meaningless, "routine," emotionless sermons "speaking vanity"? ...

“And the day of preaching vanity, of speaking emotionless, routine, meaningless sermons is really over. We just can't do that any more.” (p. 11)

“I'm just saying that unless the sermons at the Feast of Tabernacles are just one giant thrill after another, we're not doing our job. But the same thing should be true in the weekly pulpit. Not just the Feast - we get up for the Feast because it is a bigger crowd. It should be that way all the time. There IS and there has got to be room in the church for ministers to emerge from our midst who are some of the most inspiring, electrifying, interesting, exciting and powerful preachers in the world today. I am on no ego trip intending to "hog" the pulpit for myself.” (p.

15)

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**"Beware the Leaven of the Pharisees," Good News, March 1975, pp. 18-19**

**George P Ritter.**

"Dr. Pharisee feels he has a special mission in life. He can now impose his form of worship on others.

There's nothing really fancy about how he does this. **He simply insists that his statutes and judgments are binding on the rest of his congregation.** Dr. Pharisee might emphasize a number of rigorous physical requirements concerning what one should or should not do. Lest anyone take these injunctions too lightly, he quickly follows up with dire warnings about the consequences of failure to observe these rituals.

**The result of this shock treatment is duly "rewarding." His people are so mesmerized, pulverized and traumatized that they are utterly stifled by "fear religion."...**

In this uptight atmosphere, **Dr. Pharisee's people soon begin laboring under many spiritual upsets, traumas, personal doubts and fears. Subjectively and emotionally it becomes very difficult for them to accept the simple fact that God is their friend.** In their frantic desire to figuratively "tithe of their mint, cummin and anise" (Matt. 23:23), they have completely lost sight of the "weightier matters of the law." ...

**Yet for all his power and prestige, Dr. Pharisee seems strangely unable to find the time or energy to actually serve his fellowman. He mentally assumes his position of leadership allows him to be an overlord as well. He is loathe to accept Jesus Christ's definition of leadership** as found in Matthew 23:10-12

**And deep down, Dr. Pharisee may not realize he's not man enough to act like a human being around his flock, so he does the next best thing. He hides behind ceremony and ritual...**

**Nor were they happy about the fact that Jesus Christ challenged their flock to think instead of continuing on with the endless ritual of "knee-jerk" religion."**

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**Delegation paper.**

**c 1971, author unknown.**

"Why don't people delegate? ...

"1. Self delusion ...

"2. Lack of training ...

"3. Resistance to change ...

"4. Fear of competition ...

"5. Fear of having weaknesses exposed ..." (p. 3)



## Appendix. Select Articles on Church Governance

**N**B: most of the stances on control of members were eschewed by the early 1970s and therefore one should not use these articles in any way as a continuum of Church governance practice or policy, though some have without authority to do so. There is no evidence that Mr Armstrong himself did so or commanded others to do so in the 1980s.

This was done by others behind his back.

- "Are You Sure We Are God's Ministers?" *Good News*, Dec 1964
- "Christ Did Put Authority and Rule in His Church," *Good News*, Jan 1957
- "God's Government Works!" *Good News*, Feb 1959
- "Government In Our Church," *Good News*, Aug 1953
- "How Church Government Really Works," *Good News*, March 1964
- "How Far Does Church Government Extend into Your Life?" *Good News*, Jan 1961
- "How God Calls His Ministers," *Good News*, Sept 1957
- "How To Keep Unity in The Church!" *Good News*, April 1962
- "Judging And Discipline in God's Church," *Good News*, Jan 1966
- "Make Ministerial Visits Profitable!" *Good News*, May-June 1968
- "Must God's Ministers Be Ordained by The Hand of Man?" *Good News*, May 1954<sup>29</sup>
- "Must God's Ministers Be Ordained by The Hand of Man?" *Good News*, Jan 1960
- "Must God's Ministers Be Ordained by The Hand of Man?" *Good News*, Oct 1962
- "Heart to heart talk with the Editor: Which Minister Would You Hire?" *Plain Truth*, Jan 1957
- "Q&A: What Are the Offices in God's Church?" *Good News*, June 1975
- "Should You Assemble Without a Minister?" *Good News* Oct 1957
- "Should You Assemble Without a Minister?" *Good News*, June-July 1954
- "Should You Assemble Without a Minister?" *Good News*, Jun 1959
- "Should You Assemble Without a Minister?" *Good News*, Mar 1957
- "Who Should God's Ministers Be?" *Plain Truth*, Oct 1958
- "Is GOD the Author of Ceremony?" *Good News*, October 1963
- "The Visiting Program or GESTAPO... which?" *Good News*, May 1964
- "Why We Have the Laying on of Hands Ceremony," *Good News*, April-May 1965.

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<sup>29</sup> The tradition in the 1920s and 1930s was for both elders and members together laying hands on the person being ordained. This occurred with Mr Armstrong at that time: "It was decided by the officers of the Conference that on the next all-day meeting I was to be ordained" (*Autobiography of Herbert W Armstrong*, pp. 426-427).

"I shall never forget that moment of my ordination.

"The meeting was being held outdoors. I do not remember where--except it was in the general rural area of Jefferson. I do not remember other circumstances.

"But I do remember the ordination itself. It was one of those once-in-a-lifetime experiences like being married, and being baptized. Only this seemed to me to be the most momentous event of my entire life.

"**All the brethren--as many as could get their hands through to my head--laid their hands on me--on my head, my shoulders, my chest and my back**" (p. 427). [emphasis mine]

## **Appendix. List of Church Governance related articles 1978-1981**

- “Christ Puts Church on Bible Form of Organization,” *Good News*, 5 June 1978
- “Christ Now Leads to Rejuvenate Church,” *Good News*, 19 June 1978
- “Christ Moves Swiftly to Put Ambassador College Back on Track as God's College,” *Worldwide News*, 3 July 1978
- “How Christ Now Sets Ambassador College Back on Track. The Deadly Leaven of Higher Education,” *Good News*, 17 July 1978
- “The Great Majestic God Being Enthroned in Eyes of Church Once Again by Jesus Christ,” *Good News*, 31 July 1978
- “And Now - The *Plain Truth* Being Set Back on Track,” *Good News*, 11 Sept 1978
- “How Christ Gives the Church Its Beliefs,” *Worldwide News*, 20 Nov 1978
- “And Now Christ Sets Church Back on Track Doctrinally,” *Worldwide News*, 19 Feb 1979
- “What Is a Liberal?” *Worldwide News*, 19 Feb 1979
- “‘War Is Still On,’ Says Mr. Armstrong,” *Worldwide News*, 12 March 1979
- “And Now - Christ Sets Church on God's Organizational Track,” *Worldwide News*, 23 April 1979
- “Watering Down – Or Building Solidly Up?” *Worldwide News*, 11 June 1979
- “How Satan Injects False Doctrines,” *Worldwide News*, 25 June 1979
- “What God Never Did – Never Will - Allow to Happen,” *Worldwide News*, 25 June 1979
- “Would You Accuse Jesus Christ?” *Worldwide News*, 12 Nov 1979
- “How The Conspiracy Worked,” *Worldwide News*, 26 Nov 1979
- “How Ex-Member Dissidents Fill Their Minds...How About You?” *Worldwide News*, 30 June 1980
- “Just What Do You Mean - A Cult?” *Worldwide News*, 14 July 1980
- “Advisory Council of Elders Formed,” *Worldwide News*, 16 May 1981.

## **Appendix. Extracts below from Herbert W Armstrong's sermon *What is Christ doing?***

**T**hank you brethren. A number of things here today just warm my heart. All of these ministers; and they're just a small fraction of the ministers now of this church; and this wonderful choir. And you know it makes me think of the days up in Oregon when I was just fellowshiping with the Sardis era of God's church, **and they were God's church**. But they had lost the true gospel, they had lost so much of the truth, of the teaching of Christ, they had the name, they had God's law, they were keeping his Sabbath, they had the right day but there's so much they didn't have that they had lost.

They were impotent and it seemed like they were powerless, but they did have love in their hearts and they were sincere people, and I fellowshiped with them. I was the tail end of the ministers and I certainly felt like the tail end too. And then finally we started a service in a

little one room schoolhouse out eight miles west of Eugene, Oregon. And I'd been looking for the true church, I found, that everything I've been brought up to believe in the regular churches of established Christianity were preaching just the opposite of the truth of the Bible.

For a long time I couldn't understand it, then I found these simple people, who were not an educated people. They were not entirely ignorant, I don't mean that, but they were certainly not highly educated type of people at all, otherwise I don't believe they would have believed as much of the truth as they did.

But I could see that they had more bible truth than any church on earth, and still they had so little, and so little according to what God has revealed since, because he hadn't revealed all of it to me at that time, God has been revealing a lot of truth just in the last year, in the last six months, we haven't got it all yet brethren...

Brethren, how important is that, HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE WE HAD IN THE CHURCH that are no longer there. They didn't give that kind of earnest heed, they did let it slip. Now there are two kinds of sin, one sin of omission and one sin of commission. We have had ministers that have sinned, some by, even ministers, who have sinned by commission and others by omission, by neglect. Now you can sin by neglect just as well as you can by doing the wrong thing, you can sin by neglecting to DO the right thing.

You see, righteousness is not just doing nothing, righteousness is right doing, so there has to be doing. Now sin is WRONG doing. But there is doing and don't ever forget that. So we need to be very careful lest we let these things slip. It grieves me when a minister has to leave and a number of them have. And a number of lay members have. But Satan seems to tempt a minister more than the lay member, and I think you can understand why he would. **The Minister is one who is serving and ministering to the flock.**

**The Minister is the one that Satan is attacking first. And I'm reminded, of how, Rona Martin told me how my wife had said, oh within a year or so before she died. She said, "you know Rona, Satan would rather destroy my husband than any other man on earth, and I believe he'd rather destroy me second". Well, Satan didn't destroy her; she died in Lord not out of the Lord, now fifteen years ago and over. But Satan is also attacking the ministers.**

**And he'll attack a minister through the minister's wife if possible. That's one reason why a minister's wife is so, so very, very important. And some have been destroyed through their wives...**

**Brethren do we REALIZE what great salvation is offered us and why it must not be neglected.**

And why we have to persevere in it.

Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the... [now it should be creation this is a mistranslation in the King James translation. I think all modern translations have it creation] For the earnest expectation of the [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Manifestation is where we become visible and manifest, can be seen. Now let me give you another scripture. Just pause right there I'm coming back to that. But turnover here for a moment to Philippians. Philippians the third chapter and in verse twenty one,

Phil 3:21 Who [speaking of God or Christ here, who] shall change our vile body, [this is when we're born again, he will change our vile body] that it may be fashioned [I guess that's the word, yes fashion] like unto his glorious body.... what is Christ's glorious body like now. You read in the first chapter of Revelation. His eyes are like flames of fire; His whose face is like the sun shining in full strength, so bright it would put your eyes out. And we're going to share

that kind of glory with him, but it's more than that. Let's read on here in Romans now. In Romans eight again

Rom 8:20 For the [creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, (21) Because the [creation that means the universe all the planets, everything in space. The whole universe and everything God has ever created. The creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage [or thralldom] of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

It is in a state of corruption. I knew what they would find on the moon when they got up there because I've read it here in the word of God. And that's what they found, decay. Absolute decay. We finally got an unmanned spacecraft to land on Mars and it sent photographs back from the very surface of Mars. Right close up on the surface. All you find there is absolute decay. And that is the way the whole universe is.

Brethren, I am sure that there is enough indicated in the Bible to show that God did not complete His creation. He didn't finish the creation of man. First he didn't make man complete physically, he needed a mate so he could reproduce, so he had to make another... woman for him. He didn't make him complete spiritually, he made him with one spirit but he needed another spirit. And that other spirit, he is still not complete until he acquires, receives the knowledge of God and through the Holy Spirit comprehends that knowledge. And it is instilled into him; till he's stamped with the very CHARACTER of God and we have the KNOWLEDGE of God, the CHARACTER of God. And we think like God and we know like God and we have the power of God.

Now God is not going to entrust us with such great power until we have the knowledge to handle it correctly. It's like a man who owns an automobile and he has a son just coming on fifteen and a half years of age, and the son wants to drive that car. And dad says "no you can't drive it for six more months, till your sixteen and even then I'm not going to let you drive it until we teach you. And watch very carefully and see that you are going to be able to handle it. And so I can entrust it, the power when you get back to this throttle and a hold of that steering wheel. And of the throttle and the brake."

**And you can't have that POWER if you're going to misuse it. Power can be misused and it can be very destructive and very damaging.** Or it can be very good if it's used properly. Now God is not going to entrust us with the great POWER of all his glory until we have the CHARACTER to use it like God would use it.

So, back again to verse twenty-two,

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation [and here they got it creation] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. You see God did not complete the creation even of the earth. I know now that he intended the angels to work on the earth. In the earth is living matter, in the earth is energy. Even electricity, because part of the Earth is gaseous in the air and electricity is in the air as all that power. The Earth consists of the solid earth, the waters that cover the ground or the ocean and the air above." [emphasis mine]

## **Appendix. Sabbath Observance as taught by Herbert W Armstrong**

NB: there was a faction that decided to be much stricter than the Bible or Mr Armstrong and hid this from him, often via regional directors. Members were being hounded, excommunicated and brow-beaten by some men in Australia for not being home and on their knees by sunset. Yet the Church taught to down tools and leave the job at sunset. This faction became even more tyrannical and attempted to influence Mr Armstrong's chosen successor in 1986 for around 18 months. But after he saw all the damage, went in the opposite direction – this faction is, in part, to blame for this move by Mr Armstrong's successor.

"Now I knew a man when I was a boy, and I was brought up in a Sunday church; and, of course, he thought Sunday was the Sabbath. And this man would not ride on a streetcar because then he would cause other men who were working on that day to work to carry him. Of course, they were going to work anyway, whether he got on the car or not. He didn't stop to think about that. But he walked from way over on the west side of Des Moines to the east side of Des Moines, Iowa, to attend church every Sabbath. He walked about two or three miles over, and three miles back, to prevent riding where other men were working (that were going to work anyway, whether he did it or not). Well, that seemed like the height of foolishness. You see what I mean?

**If you go out to a restaurant on the Sabbath, that restaurant's going to be there; and that food's going to be prepared whether you go or not.** And the other people are going to be working anyway. They don't keep the Sabbath. They pay no attention to that. And I, ah, I don't see . . . God gives us a kind of a principle here, and I think that we can see how to apply it to a given circumstance. On the other hand, if you go out for lunch on the Sabbath ... Now, in a way, you can go to a restaurant after sunset. And many, many times on the Day of Atonement I have had a restaurant reservation for six-thirty in the evening. I appear at the restaurant at six-thirty, and I don't have to go to more than a Sabbath day's journey of work to get there. And the sun is setting at six-thirty at that time, and they don't begin to bring any food anyway for the first fifteen minutes or so; and so we don't eat anything until after dark. So I know that that's all right.

Now I had never thought until this evening, when the question was asked to me about whether it was wrong to go to a restaurant to eat ... And I know, when I travel, I have to do it or go without; and so I do. On the other hand, those who eat at home should do all the preparing they can — like baking and things that take time. For example: you could prepare a salad, a cold salad, on Friday. Put it in your refrigerator. And today they have these wax papers and everything, you know, the what-you-call-it wrap that'll keep it fresh. Reynolds's Wrap, is it? Whatever it's called. "Best wrap around" I think I heard one of the commercials say on television. Whichever one that is! And it'll keep it perfectly! And the refrigerator isn't "working." You don't have to worry about it working anyway. You don't have to turn it off on the Sabbath, because it's only a machine. It's not your manservant, or your maidservant, or your horse, or your donkey, or your son, or your daughter.

**THE SABBATH IS NOT A YOKE OF BONDAGE**

Now the thing I want to say is this: **On the one hand, we don't want to be so straight-laced that we make the Sabbath a yoke of bondage: God did not intend that. On the other hand, we don't want to go to the other extreme and get liberal** and say, "Oh well, it's all right. We can do anything on the Sabbath!" You can't do that! You've got to be careful to keep that day HOLY. Now maybe if you only go a short distance on a Sabbath, and you eat in a restaurant, and it saves you the work at home ... Well, I understand some of you were condemning one couple for doing that. And I say that you can't sit in judgment, and I don't condemn them.

You have to be honest in yourself. The Holy Spirit in you is an attitude in your mind, and it's an attitude of where you want to please God more than yourself. I'll tell you, there's a rotten attitude that most people have. They want to please themselves more than God. They want to please God as LITTLE as they can get away with. And we've had that in this Church — wanting to see "How far can we go in the Devil's way? How little can we obey God and get away with it?" You'll never get into the Kingdom with that kind of an attitude. Never! IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT, GIVE GOD THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT EVERY TIME. But what do you do in cases like that? ...

Now God said the Sabbath is made for man. It's made to be a delight, the holy of the Lord. It's a day of rest, and it's for our good. **It's not a straight-laced yoke of bondage. Let's get that straight! We don't want to go to either extreme.** Now this came to me: some want to invite others for an afternoon over to their home for socializing. Not for fellowship, but just for a social afternoon. **Well, it depends how are you spending your time? How far do you travel? How much work is involved? A lot of those things enter in. I'm not going to strain at a gnat or swallow a camel. On the other hand, I'm not going to be so liberal that I say that you can just get away with anything you want. Why can't we get a balance, brethren? Why can't we get a right balance? It depends on what you do and how you do it.**

Now I mentioned on one of the Friday nights, when I was talking on the Sabbath, where I had been preaching at another place, and **we were flying back; and it was still before sundown on the Sabbath**, and I was tired. I had been preaching the night before; I had preached at the afternoon, as I remember; and I had worked on the plane; and we'd had a meeting of ministers and their wives after the afternoon service in this other city; and now we were flying for some three hours or more back home; and I was tired. I had been working my mind and my mind was fatigued. I needed some physical exercise; but I couldn't get that on the airplane. Maybe I could run up and down the aisle a little bit? But, if I did, I think Captain Black would be calling in, telling me to sit down and behave myself; because, if you would run, that would jar the plane.

Incidentally, by the way, I noticed in my office today I felt myself rocking back and forth a couple of times. Did you ever notice? There was an earthquake here today, a very slight one; but I noticed at exactly ten thirty this morning, and then a little later again, a couple of times each time.

Anyway, coming home (And I've mentioned this once before.) I took out a deck of cards, and I was playing a little Solitaire at my desk in my office in the plane. I didn't know what to do. I was weary. I was mentally weary. I had tried to sleep, and I couldn't sleep. And I had to unwind, and I had to relax. And the most restful thing I could do was to play a little Solitaire. I wasn't trying to win! I was just trying to do something to rest my mind a little bit and relax. But, you know, a minister aboard sort of very subtly balled me out a little bit for that: 'I was breaking the Sabbath.' **Well, I'm not quite that straight-laced.** Now if I thought, if I were doing it for pleasure and for the excitement of enjoying it, I would say it was wrong. **A lot of it depends on what is your motive? What is your intent? What is your purpose? What's on**



**your mind? WHY do you do it?**

I couldn't get physical exercise. I was too tired to go back and talk with the others on the plane. I was just tired. I wanted to rest my mind; and that, for me, was rest. All right, I tell you I did it. And I tell you that I would tell you, under the same circumstances, you could do it. It would be right, and I don't think that was wrong. If I did, I certainly would never do it again. But I — unless someone can show me that was wrong — I probably will do it again.”...

Now I knew a turkey raiser in the Church (up in the original parent-church of this Philadelphia era) in Eugene, Oregon. He was a turkey raiser and, as soon as he was converted and baptized and began to keep the Sabbath, on Sunday he would ... He had to grind feed for his turkeys. He would grind one-seventh, no, one-sixth of the amount of feed that it took for a whole day's feeding on Sunday; and on Monday he would grind another sixth; and on Tuesday another sixth; and on Friday finally a sixth. And by that time, by Friday, he had six sixths or a whole day's extra feeding ahead. Now, he'd have to out and feed it to them; but the labour of grinding it he did, he spread it over the six days before he came to that so that he didn't work on the Sabbath day.

And it was for baptizing this man before he came to see the truth about the Sabbath that I was chastised by other Sardis ministers up there. **But I told them that the Scripture says baptize them and then teach the things that God had said.** Matthew 28, in the Great Commission: go into all the world and preaching the gospel and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have told you.

Well, they cannot understand these things until they receive the Holy Spirit; and they receive the Holy Spirit after they're baptized, and you lay hands on them for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. And, beside, that's when we're brought into the Church. We're not brought into the Church by water baptism. That's another thing I'm going to have to speak out on some of these days. **Water baptism is not entrance into the Church! BY ONE SPIRIT we're all baptized into the one body of the Church. We need to realize that. By one Spirit! Not by water. But water baptism is, nevertheless, commanded...**

We must honor God. Remember that He is in our presence in Sabbath services; and we should conduct ourselves accordingly, **not being either too liberal or straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.** I think you can apply it your own way and be sure that you're pleasing to God.

And remember, you're being judged NOW. And, if you do wrong, **God is judging you now. I'm not.**” (sermon, *The Sabbath Question*, 23 October 1981)<sup>30</sup>

## **Appendix. Brethren in Zaire permitted mild work on the Sabbath**

**H**WA's letter of 9 Jan 1976 to the ministry published in *The Bulletin*, 13 Jan 1976, pp. 3-11 explains why this was permitted.

"Members in Zaire (from the Belgian Congo) lost their jobs because of the Sabbath. They went

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<sup>30</sup> For examples of old teachings on Sabbath observance, refer to "How to Keep the Sabbath," *Good News*, Oct 1952 by Rod Meredith; and "How to Observe the Sabbath," *Good News*, Feb 1957 by Raymond Cole.

on unemployment pay. Part of the government arrangement was that they must work on community projects (part-time). One Sabbath they were asked to help collect garbage for a short time. They refused and were sentenced to jail for five years...

"Now , what about the case of some of our brethren under a jail sentence because they thought they should refuse to collect garbage for a few hours on the Sabbath?

I would have told them to acquiesce to this government order!

They are NOT voluntarily working for a wage--but were COMMANDED to engage in cleaning up garbage (probably very needful in parts of Africa) as the ONLY WAY BY WHICH THEY COULD REMAIN ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE GOVERNMENT AID IN THE FORM OF FOOD! If they collected garbage for a few hours, they received the dole the government offered. If they did not, they were JAILED.

But think about what God allows our own faithful deaconesses and brethren on a FEAST day! It is ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED that food be prepared; that tables be set up , food set out, and waste and garbage collected , cleaned up , and disposed of! WHY, then, would it be considered WRONG for the head of a family to STAY OUT OF JAIL by being FORCED (not because he sought it, or wanted to) to collect trash for a few hours, when it is NOT considered wrong for our large kitchens, sculleries, clean-up areas, etc., to be places of activity on the Feasts? Cleaning up after THOUSANDS of people, which this Church has allowed in the past, does take some effort!

So, as Jesus plainly set as an example, there IS SOME TYPE OF "WORK," meaning human, physical effort--not work for a wage--which is ALLOWABLE on the Sabbath! The SPIRIT of the law is obvious!

God does not want us to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, but to BE HONEST, to use right and sound judgment in applying the SPIRIT AND OBVIOUS INTENT of what we may and should not do on God's holy day. It is NOT a yoke of bondage. It is a joyous BLESSING. But transgressing it deliberately IS SIN!" (pp. 3, 10-11)

## **Appendix. Herbert W Armstrong and Clean & Unclean Meats**

**T**he following is extracted from the *Pastor General's Report*, 12 April 1988, pp. 4-5.

**Question and Answer**

**Question:** Mr. Armstrong stated on several occasions that he would, at times in the early history of the Work, eat pork when visiting the homes of prospective members. In view of these statements, should we today eat pork under these circumstances?

**Answer:** No, we should not. Mr. Armstrong privately qualified his statements about eating pork by saying this was something, in retrospect, he should not have done. The incidents



which Mr. Armstrong was relating took place in the early days of the Work. He incorrectly believed at that time that it was better to eat whatever was set before him rather than offend his host. This was based upon his understanding that eating unclean meat, unless lust is involved, is a physical matter. He did not want this physical matter to possibly interfere with the spiritual progress of someone just beginning to learn the truth.

But the biblical teaching not to eat unclean meat is a command of God. Therefore, to knowingly eat unclean meat is a violation of this command that ought not be done for whatever reason. We must also remember that we are lights to those around us by our proper conduct and obedience to God.

Mr. Armstrong came to see the error of this reasoning and on his later international trips, he was careful not to eat unclean meat. In fact, the menus at banquets were often arranged with the input of one of his aides to make sure the food was clean.

While Mr. Armstrong may have eaten unclean meat early in his ministry, he did not do so later, and we should not do so today. Often, the possibility of offense can be completely avoided by notifying the host ahead of time. However, there may be some occasions when we will have unclean meat served to us. When the unclean meat served is only a small portion of the entire meal, we can sometimes avoid it without even saying anything. At other times, we would have to politely decline. Some people assume a food is declined for medical reasons and never question it further. Except for rare occasions, we need not explain the laws of clean and unclean meats. Taking the occasion to preach on the subject might cause undue offense.

**Question:** *I have heard that the Jews have retained the knowledge of the seven year cycle. If so, shouldn't the Church adopt this cycle to obey God's command concerning the land Sabbath?*

**Answer:** It is true that the Jews have retained the knowledge of a seven-year cycle, although they have never applied it beyond the land of Israel and certain other areas of the Middle East. This is not, however, the biblical cycle because the jubilees are omitted. The ancient practice of having cycles of 50 years ended with the last of the prophets of the Old Testament, because in the late Persian period and succeeding centuries the Jews had no power to control fully the jubilee land titles.

The Jews keep the sabbatical years in the sequence 1979-1980, 1986-1987, 1993-1994 and so on. We are presently in the first year of a new cycle. But this does not mean that we should now all keep the land Sabbath at the same time!

The instructions concerning the land Sabbath do not have the same force as, for example, God's tithing command. When one does not pay his tithes, he is guilty of breaking the commandment against stealing. No such commandment is broken when we do not all keep the land Sabbath *at the same time*. Herbert W. Armstrong long ago recognized that this question for the Church of God is an *administrative decision just as it is for Jews since abandoning the jubilee*. It is the responsibility of each individual to put the general instruction concerning the land Sabbath into practice according to his circumstances.

The idea that blessings will come now only if all observe the same year as the Jews overlooks

the fact that the sabbatical years recognized by the Jews are out of sequence with the original jubilee.

## **Appendix: Extracts from *All About Water Baptism* by Herbert W Armstrong**

**T**he reason for quoting the below is two-fold: (1) to counter the idea that anyone can counsel and baptize whomever they wish without authorization; (2) to show that HWA was not as extreme as some made out. He is clearly showing here that members should be used in the Work. Presumably the baptism should be authorised by an ordained elder first.

### **“Must Baptism Be Administered Only by Ordained Ministers?”**

Finally, who is authorized to administer baptism?

Must the repentant believer be baptized only by an ordained minister? How much depends upon the goodness, or belief, or spirituality of the man who performs the ordinance?

First, let us look to the example of Jesus; next, to the instructions of Christ; and then, to the teaching and practice in the early New Testament Church.

Was Jesus Himself an "ordained minister"— that is, ordained and approved by one of the popular denominations around Him? No, He was despised and rejected of them — opposed, persecuted, belittled as a non-conformist. And He baptized more disciples than John. Even John was not recognized, ordained, or sponsored in any way by any popular group or church. He was in their sight a rank outsider.

Actually, as pointed out earlier, Jesus Himself immersed no one with His own physical hands — His disciples did it for Him, by His authority. And right there is the point which answers the whole question. The one qualified to do the immersing must always perform it in the name of Jesus Christ — which means by His authority, acting for Christ as His disciple.

**The principle is that it is Christ who is baptizing you. The man who puts you under the water is merely performing this physical act for Christ, in His stead. You are not to look to the human man, further than to conscientiously try to go to one you honestly feel is a man of God, called of Christ, and used of Him in the work of His true Church. And if later he turns the wrong way, your salvation does not depend on that man or any other mortal man, but solely upon Christ! There is no cause to be baptized again by another man.**

Always there is the chance that you may be deceived in the man you believe qualified to act for Christ in the act of baptism. If it depended upon this man, you would have to have divine powers of reading minds and hearts to be sure. You might have to be immersed fifty times before you could be absolutely sure of the man who did it — and even then, you could be mistaken. Just be as careful as you can, as God gives you to see, in the man who acts for Christ

in baptizing you — and then do not look at the man — look at Christ — consider that it is Christ who is baptizing you, by and through a human instrument. And even if the instrument turns out to be imperfect, remember all humans are imperfect, and it was done for, and in the name of the only One who ever was perfect. And since it was in reality done by Christ, it should never be done over by another.

### **Who Should Baptize?**

Now back to the example of Christ. In His own earthly ministry, He had this immersing performed for Him by His disciples. At that time they were not even converted — had not yet received the Holy Spirit — for the Holy Spirit was not yet given (John 7:39) because Jesus had not yet ascended to heaven to send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7), which first came to enter within and convert these disciples on the day of Pentecost.

Peter was their leader, and even after this baptizing, Peter denied Jesus three times. If you had been baptized by Peter in Christ's name, would you, on learning of his denial of Jesus, be baptized over again?

These men, who baptized for Jesus when He was with them in person, were not ordained ministers — were not recognized by any popular church — were merely students of Jesus at the time, being taught, not yet prepared to be sent out as His apostles and His ministers. And the indications are they were young men, perhaps not yet old enough to be made preachers or evangelists. They were not perfect, not even converted (Luke 22:32).

Consider now Christ's teaching. Those who go forth teaching, or preaching, His Gospel (most popular denominations preach a different gospel) are the ones He commanded and commissioned to do the baptizing (Matt. 28:19-20).

Consider the example of the inspired early Church. Philip was not an apostle, or a regular minister, but merely a deacon commissioned by the Church only to perform physical acts, such as waiting on tables (Acts 6:2-5). Yet he went down to Samaria and preached Christ and His Kingdom, and the people who believed were baptized (Acts 8:5-6, 12). The text does not even state that Philip did the baptizing — he may have had some of his new converts do it.

**If you study the New Testament on the point, you will see it does not appear to attach great importance as to which man puts the believer under the water**, since it is considered by the one baptized that Christ does it. The Holy Spirit sent Philip later to baptize the eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).

However, **notice that the one performing the baptism ceremony was a representative (though not necessarily an ordained minister) of the true Church of God in every New Testament case. This was the Church Jesus founded (Matthew 16:18).**" (*All About Water Baptism*, pp. 22-25) [emphasis mine]

## **Appendix. Third Tithe change**

**P**lease not that Mr Herbert Armstrong never reversed this change, though some ministers did without approval.

“CONCERNING THIRD TITHE: Reiterating what I said at the final plenary session about "relieving the heavy burden,~ remember, fellows, that if there is any individual in your local church area who contemplates entering his third tithe year by literally having to sell a home, sell a car or equipment, reduce the scope of his business, deprive his family of the essential elements of life, or go in debt or borrow money in order to pay third tithe, then such a person should not pay third tithe. This decision should be made both by the individual himself and the ministry in their mutual agreement that third tithe should not be paid.

I do not believe we need to be like policemen (as I went on and on about much earlier) to try to make sure that ~no one sneaks by and avoids" this responsibility! If someone wants to play games with God, wants to kid himself that the spirit of rebellion, resentment and reluctance can get him into God's Kingdom in the place of the spirit of giving, then he is kidding no one but himself; If a person is truly and fully CONVERTED and his whole heart is in God's Work and God's Church and he wants not only personal salvation for all ETERNITY, but a way of escape and protection for himself and his loved ones, in the troublous times ahead, then I do believe he will not be playing "funny little financial games" with whether or not he just has to ) give a certain number of extra dollars here and there into God's Work!

Regarding the administration of third tithe, it would take me another ten pages to tell you all of the circumstances surrounding the misallegations of the abuse of third tithe in the past, and to remind you all that the ultimate administrator of third tithe was, and is, in practical fact, the local pastor himself! Routinely, if one of the local pastors told CAD he approved the allotment of third tithe for this or that or the other person in an area, it was merely routinely approved and a check began to be issued! I do not believe there has been any “neglect of widows”!

Finally, let me reiterate briefly what I said about the support of relatives. We have ALWAYS taught (and if some few have gone out into the field without knowing it I can only but apologize for the sad lack of communications) that if ~any have widows, let them support them that the church be not charged. We have ALWAYS SAID that those who have needy relatives of their own should support those relatives out of what would normally be coming to Headquarters as third tithe. IF such support does not require a full ten percent of their income every third year (or 3 1/3% distributed over the three years, if this is the way they should choose to disburse it), and some is left over, then it should come to Headquarters to be disbursed nationally and internationally to those in need.

Whether this was ever spelled out in print I do not know, but I certainly do remember saying many strong statements about it myself in past years in Bible studies, sermons, and in classes.”  
(*The Bulletin*, 4 June 1974, pp 120-21)

## **Appendix. The 1974 Change on Make-up**

**N**ote that Mr Herbert Armstrong reversed much of this in 1980.<sup>31</sup> Makeup was still permitted for television presenters, actors/actresses, to cover up blotches and even to dye hair that was going grey prematurely.

“(Two of the most prevalent questions from the ministry are on the subjects of "make-up" and "birthdays." In a Bible study conducted in Pasadena on June 7th, Mr. Ted Armstrong explained our approach to these two questions. Following are transcripts of the original questions and Mr. Armstrong's answers, so please overlook any imperfect phraseology.)

### **Q. Will you please explain the Church's view on make-up?**

**A.** Well, my father wrote a booklet quite a few years ago and as I said in the conference, if there is some new information that ministers want to bring up about it, new studies we ought to go into, something that we ought to decide upon that is different, well then the avenues of communication are absolutely wide open.

The entire principle that was set forth back then I believe is a true principle, but the idea that not even any little bit of some kind of a base of some of the things that are available to conceal wrinkles, blotches, warts, blemishes, discolored skin, old tired leathery skin, freckles and what-not could never be used is a little silly, I think. Now if somebody wanders in and doesn't dare smile for fear the chips and flakes cracking and falling onto the ground or, you know, the lipstick that begins to kind of spread up the little wrinkles in the mouth when it gets a little moist or something like that; or using huge green eye shadow - that's an extreme, isn't it?

I think that many of the ladies in the Church are using any number of different types of cosmetics. I do not feel whatsoever that some of these pancake bases, for instance, are terribly wrong. People take exception to some of the Chorale girls in a campaign wearing make-up. One or two of them probably overdo it because of taking undue advantage of the opportunity. Anyhow, some people say, "If they do it, why can't I"? Fine, that's a nice argument. Would you believe that people have even said, "Since GTA uses it, why can't I"? (Once in a while I have to, in fact, I have to use it almost all the time when I do television. It's a kind of a stick, and there are about 17 to 20 different shades, and depending on the degree of tan or lack of it, I have to use that stuff on my beard, whether I just shaved or not. If you notice the latest cover picture of the Good News you'll know why. I probably didn't have it on and if I did it was probably late in the day or something. Then it's real dark and kind of beardy and whiskery, so it's only to cover up a little bit of beard for the sake of appearance on camera and not for any other purpose.)

I know that a lot of people are wearing clear types of make-up, but not heavy rouge and bright red lipstick and so on. All I'll say is that certain very moderate products of that nature, I can't take exception to that. I don't think using these is breaking any spiritual principle that I can

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<sup>31</sup> He had another look into makeup in 1983, but still considered it to be unnecessary (“Satan hasn’t given up on Make-up,” *Pastor General’s Report*, 1 July 1983). The original ruling was in 1955 (“Why the Church Ruled on Make-up,” *Good News*, July 1955, pp. 1-2, 5-6). A follow up article iterated the policy (“Should We Listen to Others?” *Good News*, May 1960, p. 4)

find in the Bible. Gaudily painting up one's face all kinds of bright colors of the rainbow is something else again. Human eyes aren't normally green from their eyelashes or eyebrows all the way to the eyeball. I've never seen a person like that in my life, and I've been in most countries in the world. If you're talking about natural human colors, and that's what I'm talking about - natural human colors of the face - well, that's one thing. Birds can have blue on their nose (mandrills too) and they're very beautiful - but humans with blue on their nose or green on their eyes just are not!" ("Q&A," *The Bulletin*, 21 June 1974, p. 196)

## **Appendix. Birthday Observance Change**

**A**round 1978/79 there was slight reversal of the change below, but Mr Armstrong did not go back to the 1960s on this doctrine. Nor did he say disfellowship people over this.

"(Two of the most prevalent questions from the ministry are on the subjects of "make-up" and "birthdays." In a Bible study conducted in Pasadena on June 7th, Mr. Ted Armstrong explained our approach to these two questions. Following are transcripts of the original questions and Mr. Armstrong's answers, so please overlook any imperfect phraseology.)

**Q. Please explain why we are not supposed to observe birthdays. I was recently asked this question by a relative who is not in the Church, and I felt very bad because J couldn't come up with any really convincing arguments.**

**A.** Well, it depends on what you mean by "observe. " I observe birthdays. I observe when my son is 18 as opposed to 17. I observe my gray hair and thinning, balding dome. You take note of the passing years. But the idea of a birthday party - making it a great event to which you command or you demand under the stigma of social disgrace that people come to, and if they do not come they are not your friends anymore and will be socially ostracized - is a little silly. And if you are coming, you had better bring a gift, hadn't you? I mean, it's not only a social custom, but it's a social demand.

Well, if you want to look upon the Bible as the ultimate talmud that answers every tiny little nuance and shading of meaning and every vagary of human behavior, then you are going to be disappointed. Without realizing it, many of us look at the Bible as if it were the perfect answer to everything when a lot of the time you read in the Bible about the horrible mistakes people were making back then. We need to look at the Bible as the divinely revealed Word of God containing the examples of human failings and frustrations, the examples of success as well as failures of God 's own choicest men, and look upon the Bible not as what God always wanted, but the way things really were. The Bible teaches by example. It actually teaches by omission in some cases. It is eloquently silent about some things, and you learn from that. As a matter of fact, that was a part of the input on D and R. The omission of any single case involving D and R in the New Testament is eloquent.

I think there are only two birthdays mentioned in the Bible. [What about Gen. 31: 1-2?] - when Joseph was in prison and the baker was hanged, and the other case of Herod and the famous dance of Salome when they beheaded John the Baptist. Now in each case you find a birthday

being observed by pagans. And if you look back into it you find that paganism is where birthdays originated. But, on the other hand, look, most every- thing originated in paganism! You hardly know of anything the pagans didn't originate. including the eyeglasses many of you are looking through. It wasn't the Christians who invent ed them. You can carry that to an extreme, you really can . You can get to the point where you say. "This is pagan," and that pagans invented it. Well, pagans invented almost everything in this world. Even the English language is from paganism; the English language is a pagan language. There are many, many bad words in the English language that we use like "Good-by". To get real technical about it, we probably shouldn't say that - "God be with you. " But that would be really silly because that isn't what "Good-by" means anymore. It just means whatever that phonetic sound means to people and we don't really disobey God in saying that at all.

Now Jesus' own birthdate is very closely guarded. You don't know exactly down to the day when he was born. (All Bible scholars know that He wasn't born on December 25 or anywhere near that. They do admit that he was born in the autumn. That is why the Bible says, "When he began to be about 30.") It's kept concealed because God did not want Jesus' birthdate to be observed. He knew the pagans would want to do it so He concealed it from them and they tried to do it anyway. So, that's rather eloquent.

This is the way I would rather explain it. I would just say that the Church doesn't have any rules, that nobody is going to be put out of God's Church if he decides to take special note of his birthday and sends out a lot of announcements and says, "Come on over we are going to have a party. (I personally think that it is kind of silly. I mean you've got all kinds of reasons to give people presents, not the least of which is simply a Chris1tian gesture from time to time because you respect them and love them, without having to do it under coercion or threat from social custom where you are blackballed if you don't.)

Now maybe we have had articles indicating or even stating that the observance of birthdays is a sin. But I don't exactly remember. All I can say is that we do not legislate the abolishment of birth1days; we do not ask people if they are willing to give up birthdays before we baptize them. Over a period of time, as they study the Bible, they are going to come to see the things I've just now explained; that, by example, on the only two birthdays murders occurred under the auspices of a pagan king, and that there is no example of a birthday celebration for any righteous person, for Christ Himself, for any of the disciples or the apostles. It is not set, therefore, by positive example, so we simply say - why bother?

But it does not say we shouldn't say, "Hey, happy birthday." I do! My son comes in and I say you 're 17 today. Boy, terrific, you 're growing up - and we take note of it. A passing year, I mean, ghastly, who doesn't? You know which day you were born on. So, I think it is just a matter of the wording sometimes. We certainly don't have great big pagan parties on birthdays.

Now the next question is should your child go to a birthday party when invited? Let's go into the subject a little bit. Should your child go to a birthday party? Sure, what's wrong with that? And take a gift, too, while you're at it! Sure - what's wrong with that? My Dad gives Steuben glass away to kings. Can't you give a little scented hanky to a little girl on her birthday? Now, I'm not kidding you, it's custom, right? And custom to whom custom! My Dad would not want



to go - and I wouldn't want him to go and I hope the Church wouldn't want him to go - into the presence of an emperor or a king without a gift. I wouldn't want my children to go into the presence of another person at a birthday party without a gift - a child bringing a gift to another child is just as innocent as he or she can be in doing it and does it just because it is custom. It's exciting to them. It's a big happy day. They're going to have their cake and about 6 candles and blow it out and everybody is going to sit down and eat ice cream and cake (and get all sick) and watch the kiddy programs on television and play games and just have a blast. Well, you know, it just looks like the biggest slap in the face in the world if some of our members say, "No, my kid can't go to that birthday party over there." And, I would say that I just don't see anything at all that is horribly disgraceful for a little kid to go to a birthday party.

Remember there are other positive things to emphasize. What you can do is make sure that you give your child presents, and that you certainly make the Feast of Tabernacles a time when you do so, and spend second tithe doing it. Now by that I don't mean a car. It seems that some people decide to give their child a present like a ten-speed bike that is going to last him about the next ten years. That's your "Feast bike," they say. And he leaves it at home. Doesn't even take it to the Feast! Find something that is used at the Feast such as clothing. That's a good idea. I think nice, new clothing for the Feast is exciting for children and certainly a very fine time to use second tithe on yourself and rejoice, and the children can get a new outfit. I certainly agree with that. Well, I don't want to beat the subject to death." ("Q&A," *The Bulletin*, 21 June 1974, pp. 196-98.)

## Appendix. Approved Doctrinal Taskforce

**M**r Herbert Armstrong approved a taskforce, not a committee to change doctrine. However he later regretted approving it due to certain research undertaken (see "Makeup," *Worldwide News*, 16 Nov 1981, p. 1 and *Pastor's Report*, 10 July 1979, pp. 1-5). He was not against having a taskforce or research, but not that which was unauthorised.

This taskforce or committee was for research and recommendations. It did not make decisions.

"...Brian Knowles (who then interfaces with Dr. Dorothy's area); Charles Dorothy, research coordinator (synthesizing new research and interfacing all material with established doctrine).

Charles Dorothy is supported both in the new area and in his on-going compilation and synthesis of church doctrine (this latter through a separate department. Theological Research Project, officially established several months ago by Mr. Ted Armstrong) by Lawson Briggs, Carl Franklin and Nina Provence as regular staff." (Extract from doctrinal taskforce details in *The Bulletin*, 21 June 1974, p. 192)

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"WHY A DOCTRINAL COMMITTEE?

By Brian Knowles



Whoever heard of a Church without doctrines? And whoever heard of doctrines that were formulated by no one? Can you envision theology without theologians?

Let's face it. The Bible is a mighty BIG book. It contains thousands of words, verses, chapters and subjects. It was written over a period of thousands of years in other languages and against long defunct cultural backdrops. Can anyone man hope to grasp the full scope and profundity of all divine revelation in his lifetime? Surely not. As the Ethiopian eunuch said to Phillip when asked if he could understand a passage from Isaiah, "How can I except some man should teach me?"

But you can't teach until you first learn. And you can best learn if someone before you has learned.

Nothing is more important to man than the passing on of knowledge from one generation to another. And God said that knowledge would increase dramatically in the end time . And it has - both in the world and within the Church of God. In the early years of this phase of God's Church, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had to carry the load of biblical exegesis virtually alone. Only his faithful wife was there to assist him.

Mr. Armstrong diligently burned the midnight oil for many months in public libraries with Bibles, translations, concordances, commentaries and various other helps digging out the original truths which are so important to us today. He studied by the hours, prayerfully, on his knees before God, seeking knowledge and understanding.

God abundantly rewarded these efforts. Mr. Armstrong was soon led to see the truth of the Sabbath day. He came to understand the error of pagan feast days and the truth of God's Holy Days. Other truths followed as he followed the leading of the Holy Spirit in his constant, prayerful study of the Scriptures.

God also blessed the Church with great numerical and financial increases. Soon the job became too large for Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong to handle alone. It became necessary to train more ministers and co-workers to share the load and help reap the bountiful harvest God was calling.

Ambassador College was born!

With the growth of the College and the addition of more and more ministers, knowledge was again increased. Other ministers were able to share the load of teaching, writing and preaching with Mr. Armstrong.

As a result of this continued influx of Bible knowledge an ever increasing body of literature was developed. The Plain Truth magazine, the early Good News, booklets, reprints, form letters formed a healthy body of printed material. The early and late 50's saw a tremendous increase of literature.

In the 60's the Work began to really grow up. New buildings were added. England and Big Sandy were added to the College program. The Work forged ahead with incredible growth.

Many top ministers were diverted from classes and ministerial responsibilities to shoulder the ever increasing needs of administration.

The early 70's have again seen astounding growth in knowledge of the Bible. Dozens of theses, papers and reports have been written on various subjects. More and more booklets and reprint articles were created. Tomorrow's World magazine soared from a beginning circulation of 120,000 copies to a startling 875,000 copies in just three short years! Millions of pieces were distributed by the mailing department. The demand for printed material has been tremendous. God has certainly blessed the Church with a massive influx of biblical knowledge since the College was first founded in 1947! As Solomon might have said (paraphrased version!) "Of the writing of books, reprint articles, PT articles, GN articles, TW articles, theses, dissertations and papers, there has been no end!"

It became obvious to Mr. Ted Armstrong several years back (would you believe nine?) that it was necessary to "get a handle" on all of this material. Somehow we had to pool our accumulated knowledge; clarify our teaching on various subjects and compile it in an organized manner. But who could possibly take on such a massive, yet needed, project?

A little less than a year ago Dr. Charles Dorothy was chosen to do so. He was placed in charge of a "Theological Project" which was to be given top priority and maximum support. He attacked the project with zeal.

A lot has happened since that time!

The Church has witnessed the defection of a number of ministers and lay members. Doctrine has been cited as one of the causal factors. Rather than patiently work from within the Church to bring about needed modifications in our teaching, some chose to leave and attack (directly or indirectly) from without.

As a result, some have interpreted the present round of continuing doctrinal meetings and discussions at Headquarters as a reaction to these defectors. True, the brethren need answers to questions raised by those who have chosen to attack our doctrines. But this is not the only - or even the primary - reason for the present doctrinal discussions!

The need for an ongoing doctrinal committee is obvious. Theoretically, the Church will never be without such a group - unless we stop growing in knowledge.

It will always be necessary to examine the new truths God is continually revealing to the Church. The present teachings of the Church are still not compiled and organized as they should be. Christ is leading His Church through a constant process of refining, improving, understanding, examining and confirming the truths we hold.

We are continually attempting to draw closer to the faith once delivered by Christ from God the Father. We are growing, maturing, developing all the time. New information is constantly coming to light as a by-product of the colleges and diligent personal Bible study on the part of many.

Rather than an attempt to question and undermine our body of beliefs, the doctrinal committee is an effort to strengthen our teachings - to reconfirm them! It is a means by which we can garner (no pun intended!) our materials, organize them and present them in the most logical and palatable manner.

The doctrinal group will continue to deal with all doctrinal questions regardless of their source , as time, money and manpower permit. Such doctrinal examinations and discussions will be dealt with in a spirit of constructiveness, order and peace. Mr. Ted Armstrong has done a fine job of coordinating doctrinal meetings so as to neutralize emotional polarizations and stick with honest, biblical objectivity. Great progress has been, and is being, made!

The H.Q. group is currently working on healing, tithing and prophecy. As you read in a recent issue of the Bulletin, committees have been established to deal with various issues in a decent, orderly manner. We are not out to protect or harbor "sacred cows" - nor on the other hand, to undermine intrinsic Bible truth. We are interested in supporting Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Mr. Ted Armstrong and all of our field ministry as they reach out to the world with God's precious truth. We are "running scared" of no one. Truth is truth - no matter where it comes from!

We welcome your input on anything of a doctrinal nature, pro or con, liberal or conservative, and we sincerely request your constant, earnest prayers for the continuing success of this endeavor!" ("Why a Doctrinal Committee?" *The Bulletin*, 17 July 1974, pp. 314-15)

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**“Bravery never goes out of fashion.”**

G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936. English writer, philosopher,  
Christian apologist, and literary and art critic)