

INTERDEPENDENT-INTERACTIVE, CHURCH OF GOD, SABBATH SERVICES,  
BIBLE STUDIES, AND OPEN FELLOWSHIP PLUS THIS NEWSLETTER  
March/April 2001--Issue No. 2

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We welcome all visitors. We welcome live speakers and special music--any week. For our out of town visitors, we have 1 self-service guest room at 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota. If you need it please call ahead to be sure it is open for the time you will be here. If there is anyone else in the Bismarck area who would be willing to volunteer a guest room for out of town guests, please let us know.  
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SABBATH SERVICES:

We plan to have Sabbath Services every week. If we do not have live speakers, we do phone hookup with Dave Havir in Texas, Ray Wooten in Alabama or Ken Westby in Washington. We rotate phone hookups to avoid a following of one man. If you know of any other phone hookups you would like to see added to our rotation please let us know. We also welcome Cassette Tape Sermons brought by others, and Video Sermons brought by others.  
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BIBLE STUDIES:

All of our Bible Studies are interactive, and if you have a topic to discuss, please bring it. We usually have Bible Studies approximately every 6 weeks. We usually have a pot luck meal before we start.  
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SABBATH SERVICES AND BIBLE STUDIES:

ARE HELD AT THE HOME OF: Darwin & Laura Lee  
320 N. Griffin St.  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
(701) 258-7172 (Please Leave a Message)  
Please use the upper door by the garage.  
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SCHEDULE FOR SABBATH SERVICES ON SATURDAYS:

12:00 NOON--Open Fellowship (Door unlocked, just walk in.)  
1:00 PM----Sabbath Services  
3:00 PM----Open Fellowship

This time may vary sometimes, so if you are coming from out of town, please call ahead, to be sure the times have not changed.  
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BIBLE STUDY AND POT LUCK MEAL ON FRIDAY MARCH 9, 2001

6:30 PM----Open Fellowship (Door unlocked, just walk in.)  
7:00 PM----Pot Luck Meal (bring food)  
8:00 PM----Bible Study  
9:00 PM----Open Fellowship  
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BIBLE STUDY AND POT LUCK MEAL ON FRIDAY APRIL 20, 2001

6:30 PM----Open Fellowship (Door unlocked, just walk in.)  
7:00 PM----Pot Luck Meal (bring food)  
8:00 PM----Bible Study  
9:00 PM----Open Fellowship  
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WE HAVE SOME SPACE FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER REQUESTS  
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WE APPRECIATE AND WELCOME VISITORS, LIVE SPEAKERS, AND SPECIAL MUSIC.  
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DEADLINE FOR OUR MAY-JUNE NEWSLETTER IS: 4-15-2001 THANK YOU  
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WE GET ON GOING HELP FROM THE FOLLOWING PLACES:

The Journal  
News of the Churches of God  
PO Box 1020  
Big Sandy, Texas 75755  
(903) 636-9974  
Dixon Cartwright Jr.

United Church of God  
Big Sandy  
PO Box 690  
Big Sandy, Texas 75755  
1-800-946-5545  
Dave Havir

Servants' News  
PO Box 107  
Perry, Michigan 48872  
(517) 625-7480  
Norman S. Edwards

Assoc. for Christian Development  
PO Box 4748  
Federal Way, WA 98063  
(253) 852-3269  
Ken Westby

The Churches of God Newsletter  
PO Box 30272  
Winston-Salem, NC 27130-0272  
(336) 774-2939  
Rick & Eileen Beltz

United Christian Ministries  
PO Box 361725  
Hoover, AL 35236-1725  
1-888-985-9066  
Ray Wooten

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John 13:34 & 35

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

I John 4:20

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Romans 13:10

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

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HUMOR VIA THE INTERNET--AUTHOR UNKNOWN

A PARABLE

Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark...

- # 1--Don't miss the boat.
- # 2--Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- # 3--Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- # 4--Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
- # 5--Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- # 6--Build your future on high ground.
- # 7--For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
- # 8--Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- # 9--When you're stressed, float a while.
- #10--Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- #11--No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

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SEND IN YOUR HUMOR, STUDY PAPERS OR POINTS OF INTEREST BY DEADLINE.  
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INTERDEPENDENT-INTERACTIVE, CHURCH OF GOD, SABBATH SERVICES,  
BIBLE STUDIES, AND OPEN FELLOWSHIP PLUS THIS NEWSLETTER

SEND ORDERS TOO:

Darwin & Laura Lee  
320 N. Griffin St.  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
(701) 258-7172

SEND TAPES OR LITERATURE TOO:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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THESE TAPES ARE FROM THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES 2000 HELD AT THE RAINTREE  
RESORT IN WISCONSIN DELLS, WISCONSIN.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. What The Feast Of Tabernacles Pictures--Garry Pifer 10-14-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Come Let Us Go Up To The Mountain Of The Lord--Mitchell Smith  
10-14-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Road Building--Hal Geiger 10-14-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Practice True Religion--Tony Stith 10-15-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Meaning Of Succoth--Hal Geiger 10-16-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What Is Your Future?--Dave Havir 10-17-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Listening To God In Attitude Of Service--Neil McIver 10-18-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Gift Of God Is Eternal Life And...--Garry Pifer 10-19-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Depression, Arrogance, And Ignorance--Dennis Mouland 10-20-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Tithing--Garry Pifer 10-20-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Greatest Risk God Undertook--Dennis Mouland 10-21-00

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THESE TAPES ARE FROM THE BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM SPONSORED BY A CHURCH  
OF GOD GROUP IN MINNESOTA. FOR INFORMATION ON THE BUILDING BRIDGES  
PROGRAM YOU MAY CONTACT DALE & DONA FEHR [DLFehr@compuserve.com](mailto:DLFehr@compuserve.com), TAPES  
MAY BE ORDERED THROUGH US.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. C. Wayne Cole--12-18-99
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Ray Wooten--3-25-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Wayne Speed--4-22-00--Includes Study Papers  
A. Wayne & Claudia Speed--4-23-00  
Marriage Seminar (4 Tapes)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Ken Westby--6-10 & 11-00 (2 Tapes)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Dave Havir--9-9-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Norm Edwards--11-18-00 (2 Tapes)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Steve Collins--1-6-01 (3 Tapes)

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THESE TAPES ARE FROM OUR LOCAL SABBATH SERVICES.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. There's Hope For Screw Up's Like You & Me--Ken Westby-12-30-00
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. True Christians Don't Judge Each Other--Wynn Skelton-1-6-01  
A. Paradigm Shift--Dave Havir-1-6-01
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Jesus Messiah--Fred Mobley-1-13-01
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. A New Start For The Administration Of Your Life And My Life--  
Ken Westby--1-20-01
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Looking To The Apostle--Dave Havir--1-27-01

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WE ALSO HAVE THE FOLLOWING LITERATURE.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Atonement--by Archie Faul--3 pages
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Why Were We Disfellowshipped By The United Church of God an  
International Association?--by Darwin & Laura Lee--111 pages
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Before Our Newsletter--Who Are We?--by Laura Lee--5 pages
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Is Disfellowshipping a Christian Practice?--by Arlan Weight  
--13 pages
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. January/February 2001--Issue No. 1--Editor Laura Lee
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. March/April 2001--Issue No. 2--Editor Laura Lee

7. Life After United AIA (Book #1)--by Darwin & Laura Lee--20 pages

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ALL OF THE ABOVE ITEMS ARE FREE OF CHARGE.  
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HUMOR VIA THE INTERNET--AUTHOR UNKNOWN

EVOLUTION

One day a 6 year old girl was sitting in a classroom. The teacher was going to explain evolution to the children.

THE TEACHER ASKED A LITTLE BOY: Tommy do you see the tree outside?

TOMMY: Yes.

TEACHER: Tommy, do you see the grass outside?

TOMMY: Yes.

TEACHER: Go outside and look up and see if you can see the sky.

TOMMY: Okay. (He returned a few minutes later) Yes, I saw the sky.

TEACHER: Did you see God?

TOMMY: No.

TEACHER: That's my point. We can't see God because He isn't there. He doesn't exist. A little girl spoke up and wanted to ask the boy some questions.

THE TEACHER AGREED AND THE LITTLE GIRL ASKED THE BOY: Tommy, do you see the tree outside?

TOMMY: Yes.

LITTLE GIRL: Tommy do you see the grass outside?

TOMMY: Yessssss (getting tired of the questions by this time).

LITTLE GIRL: Did you see the sky?

TOMMY: Yesssssss.

LITTLE GIRL: Tommy, do you see the teacher?

TOMMY: Yes.

LITTLE GIRL: Do you see her brain?

TOMMY: No.

LITTLE GIRL: Then according to what we were taught today in school, she must not have one!

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For this newsletter, Bible quotes or paraphrases are from the Layman's Parallel Bible, Copyright 1991 by The Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506.  
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When we put prayer requests in this newsletter, we won't publish the persons address for privacy reasons (unless they want us to), however we really think your cards and letters and E-mails are important for the sick and hurting, so send them to us and we will forward them to the sick or hurting person. Just write that persons name on the envelope some place, so we don't open it. We really feel that the Church of God has been lacking in this area of sending cards and letters to comfort the sick and hurting in recent years. You don't even have to buy a card, make it on your computer, or just send a short little note. Something which will help these hurting people to know that you really care and want to comfort them in their time of need. We Thank You Very Much for your concern in this area.

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Darwin and I request your prayers for a person within the Church of God who needs emotional healing and family healing--God knows who this person is, so we request your prayers anonymously. Thank You.  
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January 21, 2001

Thank you..I await your newsletter. I am e-mailing you asking if you would pray for me. I have fibromyalgia and I am at a low time in my life with it. I cannot sleep and my body aches so bad, my legs especially. I thank you so much..Karen Schluter

January 29, 2001--UPDATE

I thank you for your prayers----I could actually feel the prayers being said for me--I began feeling better that day and have been having more energy every day. It is so wonderful to have brethren who really care for others.....Thanking you from my heart.....Karen Schluter

Darwin & I want to thank everyone who has prayed for Karen Schluter, and we ask that everyone continue to pray for her full recovery. Any cards for Karen Schluter can be sent to us, and we will forward them to her. THANK YOU.

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Dave Fischer has requested prayers. He suffers from polio, and has had a few set backs in the last couple of years, one being that mobility is harder since they are unable to fit a leg brace, so he has to use crutches which are very hard on his shoulders, or a walker which gives some relief. Let's pray that God strengthen Dave's weakening body, and specifically pray that God will work out circumstances in Dave's life where he will be presented with a set of miracles from God, perhaps a leg brace that would work for him or better yet complete healing. Dave also lives on a fixed income, so this limits what he can do financially.

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Here's a miracle from God. Long time friend and Church of God member, Arlan Weight phoned us on Monday, February 12, 2001 from Med Center One in Bismarck at 9:07AM to tell us he was just admitted to the intensive care unit suffering from chest pains. We were shocked, we had just seen Arlan the day before and he wasn't even sick. Since Arlan was in intensive care, many of us who tried could not get in to even see how he was. Finally on Wednesday Darwin and I were able to get in to see him, once they transferred him into a regular room, and again, although he was hooked up to all that hospital stuff, Arlan just didn't even look sick. On Thursday morning they did a procedure to open up one clogged artery, and on Friday Arlan went home, and on Saturday, without skipping a beat he was back keeping the Sabbath. There is no way that anyone will tell us here in Bismarck that miracles no longer happen. I have never seen a person go through and recover from a heart attack this fast and with so little discomfort as Arlan did this past week. The Doctor has told him to take one more week off of work to just rest, and Arlan agreed to follow those orders. We want to give special thanks to everyone who prayed for Arlan's full recovery this week. Since this was an unexpected emergency, we sent a prayer request via E-mail, and we are all grateful that the response was so good. We want you all to know that God does intervene and heal people and your prayers are what makes that happen. So continue to pray that Arlan's recovery will continue and that he will be able to return to work as scheduled. THANK YOU.

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Please send your prayer requests by snail mail or by E-mail. Our E-mail address is Darwin-Laura@juno.com.

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DEADLINE FOR OUR MAY/JUNE 2001 NEWSLETTER IS

APRIL 15, 2001  
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## PASSOVER

Passover will soon be here. In order to accommodate everyone who wants to keep Passover with us, we will need to hear from you as soon as possible. We need to know which time you will be keeping Passover, and we will try to accommodate as many of those times as we can, right here at 320 N. Griffin St., in Bismarck, North Dakota. We don't want any of God's people to be without a place to keep Passover.

Church of God, Berean Fellowship, PO Box 215, Dousman, WI 53118, in their Bible Study group did a study paper called: Have We Passed Over The Passover? Passover Study 1. If you are interested in a copy of this study paper, you can contact them or write to us here.

### PASSOVER 2001

#### Opening Prayer

"How I Love Thy Law, O Lord" p. 41

#### THE HISTORY OF THE PASSOVER:

Abraham-Genesis 17:1-7, 18:19, 22:1-18

"Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" p. 4

#### THE EXODUS PASSOVER

Exodus-Ex. 3:1-2, 3:7-10, 7:1-6, 11:1-10, 12:1-42

"God Will See Us Through" p. 96

#### THE JERUSALEM PASSOVER

Luke 22:7-18 Thanks for meal & first cup,  
distributing of the cup

#### FOOTWASHING

humility the driving force of servanthood

John 13:3-15

#### MEAL

"Behold How Good It Is" p. 48-49

#### THE BREAD

Isaiah 52:14-15, 53:3-6, Luke 22:19

Thanks for bread, break & distribute

#### THE WINE

Isaiah 53:7-12, Psalm 22:14-17, Matthew 26:27-28

Thanks for wine & distribute

"Unto the Hills I Lift My Eyes" p. 42

#### SUMMARY OF THE EVENTS THAT NIGHT AND THE FOLLOWING 3 DAYS

John 15:1-17, 16:19-22,33, 17:1-5, Mt. 28:1-10, 18-20

"God Is Calling Children" p. 91

#### OUR FUTURE

Rev. 21:1-7

"O Worship the King" p. 37 & "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" p. 75  
closing prayer

The above outline of an actual Passover Service has been adapted from the format used in 2000 by some in the Church of God, Berean Fellowship, PO Box 215, Dousman, WI 53118--We changed the songs. The song book we use here is called "Songs for the Family of God", Edited by Mark Graham 1999. Any group or individual who needs books and/or music, contact Mark Graham, PO Box 770261, Lakewood, Ohio 44107.

## IS DISFELLOWSHIPING A CHRISTIAN PRACTICE?

by Arlan Weight, Bismarck, North Dakota

Is disfellowshipping and suspension a Christian practice? If so when should it be done? Who should do it? Can we prove it from the Bible? Is the Bible specific enough for us to know? How does it square with the teaching of Jesus? Have many people become confused?

From my first encounter with the Worldwide Church of God in the late 60's and early 70's disfellowshipping was a common practice. Not being close enough to issues I never really knew the details of why certain people were put out of the church, I only knew it was something that was done quite regularly.

As I recall the scenario usually went something like this. Trouble would brew between church members or some person would have a problem with something. Maybe a girl would wear too much make-up or wear clothing not appropriate. At that time an issue that usually was attributed to young men was hair length. Many people were coming into the church at that time and the Biblical teaching on these things was not familiar to some. Other issues such as questioning Sabbath day observances, Holy day observances, tithing and other things were being questioned.

So consequently, if someone questioned doctrines, the leadership, or some other issue that might be viewed as divisionary, the minister would contact that person to talk. It might only be over something that would be construed as a bad attitude. If the person didn't accept the ministers counsel he or she might be asked to stay home from services for a week or two. This is known as 'suspension'. If the person decided not to come back to services, no one would even know. All they would know, unless they asked the minister pointedly, is that the person decided not to come anymore.

If the person decided to push the issue, the minister might take one or two deacons with him next time. If the person was still not convinced he/she was stepping out of line, the issue began to get more serious. If, over a certain length of time the person might disclose some of the issues that were going on to some other person, the minister might look on the matter as divisionary and grounds for disfellowship.

The next time you hear of the person is one Sabbath you come to church and before the sermon or during the sermonette time the minister will announce to the congregation that so and so has been disfellowshipped. The discourse may go something like this:

In accordance with Biblical commands and the doctrine and longstanding practices of the church, it is my unpleasant duty as a pastor to announce the disfellowshippment of John Smith from the Worldwide Church of God for cause. As a result of this disfellowship, members are asked not to fellowship with Mr. Smith.

The Church does not bear any ill will toward Mr. Smith or his family but wishes repentance and reconciliation to the church and to this fold.

If the person became sorry for the offense he/she had caused, they could apologize and could be welcomed back into the fellowship once more. Sounds simple, sounds logical, but did it work? What were and are the fruits?

In all my 30 years of being associated with the church rarely have I seen anyone who has publicly been disfellowshipped, come back into the fellowship of the church under these circumstances. Most often the suspension turned into disfellowship and further alienation to the point where that person no longer was even heard from and was soon forgotten. In passing conversation that person's name might be brought up in conversation where the question is asked "I wonder why so and so never came back. I can't imagine what the problem might have been. Certainly it wasn't so bad as to stay away from church. Oh well. Sure hope he/she comes to see the light".

If this is a practice that God ordained to correct individuals, to bring them back into the fold, why does it seem so few ever return? Maybe it's just me, but how about you? How many people have you seen return to the fellowship of the church? If indeed the numbers are few, why? Furthermore, if it is supposed to be the method of the church to deal with problems, what are we to make of it? Is God a failure? Would He give us instruction knowing most of the time the person would turn away? Does He care? What is His attitude?

As I recall in those early years we were all very excited about learning new things out of the Bible and we all seemed to fall in line with the practice of disfellowshipping as well. All of us were in some way or other taught by Herbert W. Armstrong and Ambassador College. Most of what we were hearing and studying was honorable, was right, and was the truth. Mr. Armstrong continually said "don't believe me, just because I say it, believe what you read out of the pages of your own Bible." Again we were all so excited about it and were committed to go through anything to stay with it. Disfellowshipping was one of those things we didn't want happening to us.

As we look back now we must ponder and think about some of the things we, as a church, did. Did we do these things as a matter of following Christ's instruction or did we carry out some instructions taught by Herbert Armstrong as he understood the Bible? Mr. Armstrong often used the example of a crate of apples. If one of those apples turned rotten, it had to be thrown out or else the whole crate would turn rotten.

Let's stop right here and take a close look at this premise. Is this view of problems in the church and how they are to be dealt with, scriptural? Is this the way Christ would have handled them? Really? Before we answer that question we must be

sure. We can't simply trust our own human logic. We must read and study the things Jesus taught and lived. If what we're doing can stand up to that test, of course it's right. But on the other hand, if we see a misunderstanding or conflict here, we've got to find out what it might be.

Could it be possible Mr. Armstrong may not have understood everything and that he might have over looked something? Mr. Armstrong was a great religious leader of our time, but he was not God. He was not infallible. He made mistakes, but he always said one of the signs of God's true church was, that it would be willing to change once proved it needed to. Another thing Mr. Armstrong said was that if any issue started out on a false premise, any conclusions later on would have bad fruits and would turn out wrong. This too is most absolutely true and is scriptural.

But let's step back for a moment and take a birds eye view of the church in this 21<sup>st</sup> century and where it has come to. Look at the many splits and schisms that have occurred since Mr. Armstrong's death. Why? Why after his death? Why not before his death?

To me the answer is simple. Mr. Armstrong governed on this basic premise that this is the way church government ought to operate. Nip the problems in the bud before they have a chance to develop and get full blown. If you could do this you could maintain a pretty tight and smoothly run operation. So in order to do this a minister had to keep a close watch on things. He, may even have unwittingly encouraged informants to keep him abreast of goings on.

If he sensed the problems getting out of hand, he had to deal with them promptly, even if it meant getting rid of the 'rotten apple' causing it. This, again, was done in all sincerity in keeping with what Mr. Armstrong had taught. And it was carried out with all the more zeal when he deeply viewed it in the best interest of the 'flock'. He was to be the shepherd of his local congregation and it was his 'duty' and responsibility to God and to Christ.

So again the question, is it a right principal from scripture to remove someone from the fellowship of believers? Is it a thing that Christ delegates to someone on earth to do, to issue a directive telling someone, unless they change their way of thinking, they were not to attend services, and those who do attend are not to contact that someone. What scriptures should we turn to and prove these things? We must look at and evaluate every scripture that seems to give this instruction in the light of all others on the subject. In addition to that, we must evaluate everything in the light of which Christ taught and lived.

#### 'Marking' (Romans 16:17-18)

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

This verse usually accompanies any formal disfellowshipping. It is used to lend support to the practice. The context of the verse is in the closing part of the book, or letter to the Romans, that Paul wrote in about 56 AD. In the first part of the chapter Paul commends certain of the faithful people, even giving their names. And then at the last gave this admonition to be careful and avoid those who might be stirring up trouble. Lets analyze this verse closely.

To do so we must lay aside any preconceived notion about things. We must lay aside in our mind any thoughts we might still have, remembering how so often it was used in the past. And as Mr. Armstrong also said "it was much harder to unlearn error than it was to learn new truth." So then let's proceed to read this verse as if it were the first time we read it.

First of all we can see Paul is addressing the general assembly of all the church members at Rome, for he says "Now I beseech you brethren"...If he were writing to some evangelist or some other person he most certainly would have made that distinction. Proof of this is when he wrote the book of I and II Timothy. So then by saying brethren, he's saying. Look you all know what you've learned from me or the Old Testament scriptures. If anyone seems to be contrary to that, don't be taken in. A good way would be simply to avoid them. Because the very next verse he says why "by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple".

Is this anything different than what Christ said? Notice Mat. 24:5. "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many". Or how about Mat. 7:15 where he says "beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Same thing. Basically here Christ is speaking to his followers. He's not just speaking to one person to have that person warn the flock. He's speaking to those who would follow Him and His message. Paul simply told the people at Rome the very same things Christ foretold over 25 years before. This was not something new.

Secondly the word 'mark' comes from the Greek word 'skopeo', which simply means 'consider' or 'take heed'. We might say it this way to take note of those people and what they're saying. Again, hearken back to what Christ said. He said 'beware'. Paul said 'mark'. No difference.

But how has this word been used? Has it not been used in a most emphatic way? Whenever a person is 'marked' in this way that person is 'branded' by name. If some in the congregation were not aware of that person being a problem, they are now forewarned. It begins to color anything that person might say to you in the future. It imputes an evil motive might be lurking in that person and you best not be talking to them.

It also insinuates that the 'minister' is in the best position to know this and he's only doing it for your good. Both of these ideas could, more than likely, be false. He might, deep down in his heart, think he's doing it for your good, but what about individual responsibility. Both Christ, as well as Paul, laid the responsibility to 'beware' or 'mark' squarely on the shoulders of each and every follower...not to any individual leader only.

In other places Paul specifically names a person that may have turned aside from the faith, but Christ rarely did. In Luke



13:32 He called Herod a fox. But rarely did He forewarn anyone about some specific individual. He was so careful not to do that, even his own closest disciples didn't know who would betray him. Doesn't that sound a bit strange in light of this foregone discussion. Rather Christ spoke in generalities such as with the Scribes and Pharisees. Whenever Christ spoke of someone by name or singled them out, it usually was in praise of that person or to honor them in some way.

In summary, we should be able to see, that 'marking' someone in this way, as pointed out in Romans 16:17-18 is something all of us must continue to do. Take note of what any and all are saying. If it measures up, fine. If not be careful. The responsibility is ours. It's not given to any man who claims to represent Christ, or in Christ's service as a command to 'brand' that person.

### 1 Corinthians 5

This is another example that is used to support the disfellowshipping practice. It's the example of a man having an affair with his own mother. Let's examine this example closely.

First of all Paul again is writing this letter to the church at Corinth. It is thought to have been written prior to Passover about 55 AD. Notice the words "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth..." (1 Cor. 1:2) So the instruction is written to a body of believers, not a certain evangelist, such as Timothy. It was their collective responsibility to deal with the problem, not a specific minister.

Another thing we can glean from this first letter is that the church at Corinth had not grown that much, spiritually, since it's inception. Even though it had been over 20 years since Pentecost in 31 AD they still were carnal (1 Cor. 3:1-3) Knowing this, it must have been quite difficult to live in a city such as Corinth with it's temple prostitution and other sinful practices and not be affected. It could very well have been a city very much like the city of Sodom in which Lot lived.

Paul no doubt felt a deep responsibility to write a stern warning to wake them up. He had been told of the goings on in that city and probably understood the conditions there. None-the-less there could be no excuse for the kind of behavior of some man carrying on with his own mother this way. It had to be dealt with!

So he wrote the letter, and since it was prior to the Days of Unleavened Bread he also used it as teaching a lesson of how leaven works in our lives. Just a little can affect the whole lump. He was all the more disturbed about the situation because they felt good about themselves in that they were able to tolerate it. They were puffed up. So Paul proceeded to give them instruction of how we are to hate these kinds of things. Not that we hate people but the sinful behavior generated by the society around them.

Writing to the Church at Ephesus Paul basically said the same thing. This church area, no doubt, was afflicted with the same type of society at that time. In Ephesians 5:11 he admonishes them "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"...

Again the scripture is consistent in this regard that if you continually rub shoulders with people of a corrupt nature, it's going to rub off. You will eventually be affected. Take a look at 1 Cor. 15:33 Paul says "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners". The Greek word here for communications is 'homilia' meaning 'a being crowded together'. The word for manner is 'ethos' meaning habit. So a good rendering of this verse could be "Don't kid yourself, if you continue to tolerate evil, you, yourself can be corrupted and develop the same kinds of habits.

But let's be honest about it. This example of the immoral person in 1 Corinthians 5 is far different than most disfellowshippings you and I have been familiar with. Most of the problems in the church start small and grow over misunderstandings of doctrine or leadership and are perceived by some as leading to divisions. They are not one and the same and to use this as supporting the practice of disfellowship is misapplying scripture.

### 2 Thessalonians 3:6

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

This is another verse which some might use to claim it's okay to 'shun' a person in the church. It's also used in support of the practice of disfellowship. So again the verse must closely be evaluated on the context in which it was written and held up to the instruction Jesus taught and lived.

The Young's Concordance renders the meaning for withdraw as "to withdraw self, avoid, beware of. So Paul is instructing the Thessalonians again to beware of and stay away from the brethren who are practicing a certain manner of living. Those who "walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." What's he talking about?

The Greek word for disorderly here is 'ataktos' meaning 'unruly or out of order'. So what does this mean? The very next verse Paul explains that he had heard there were some who were not working and going about into everyone else's business but their own. He is simply saying stay away from that and don't begin practicing that kind of behavior. Again, very much like 1 Cor. 5, if you get too close to that type of person you begin to take on their habits. So Paul is telling the brethren there to 'beware of'.

And when Paul is mentioning the tradition he handed down to them, he's simply saying go to work and earn money to provide for yourself and your family. Don't mooch off others. Be productive. It was his example and was what he wanted them to do.

This instruction is not to shun or stay away from the people but rather from the behavior of those who were being disorderly. It's the behavior that is the problem not the people. Again, like Eph. 5:11, he says "have no fellowship with the

unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them..."

The fellowship one is not to have is with the unfruitful works of darkness, not people. So when this verse is used to support disfellowship, it's taken out of context and is wrong.

### Christ's Example

When it comes to disfellowship, how does it square with Christ's example and teaching? We must look closely because he says "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction and many there be that go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Mat. 7:13)

Furthermore he says "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Mat. 7:21)

So here Jesus is telling us to search diligently and follow after a certain way of life; a certain way that leads to life. He further indicates that it is only those doing God's will who are allowed to enter. (Mat. 7:21)

So what is God's will concerning disfellowship? Let's look at a key scripture. "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Mat. 18:14)

So who are these "little ones"? Is Jesus talking about children? Let's look closely. To get the context of what God the Father's will is concerning these "little ones" we have to back up to Mat. 18:1. In Mat. 18:1 it says the disciples came to ask Jesus about who would be the greatest in God's kingdom. By this time, being with Jesus day and night, they may have begun to feel a little exclusive as to their own importance and they wanted to find out. So Jesus began to teach them.

So He called a little child and set him in the midst of them. The Greek word for "little" is 'mikros' meaning small. It's no doubt the root word for microscope, microns, etc. Therefore the little child was small, possibly less than 5 years of age. But is it little children he is talking about?

In verse 3 he says "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. The word 'converted' comes from the Greek word 'strepho' meaning 'turn'. So He's saying a person must turn and become as a little child.

He goes on in verse 4... "whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child...and whoso shall receive one such little child in my name... but whoso shall offend one of these 'little ones' which believe in me...

There's the clincher...a "little one" who believes in Christ. Can a little child believe in Christ...a little child less than 5 years old? Well...maybe, but we can see from the previous verses it says "as a little child." It's quite obvious Jesus is referring to an adult person; a person new in the faith or someone who may not have grown very much.

Just because a person is a "little one", it doesn't mean he or she just started attending services. They may well have been attending for years. They may well have been persons very much like the person in Corinth where Paul said they had not grown very much...even in 25 years. He said they were in need of the basic essentials of a little child getting started in life. For Paul says "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." Notice John 16:12. Jesus is telling his own disciples He had something to tell them but said they were not able to "bear them now." Can we get the picture. The Corinthians as well as Christ's disciples at one point in time were small. They were adults, not children and yet they were small spiritually. They were yet "little ones"! (1 Cor. 3:2)

So if a "little one" seems to be questioning something and is viewed by some to be causing division, should he or she be suspended? Should they be disfellowshipped...put out of the church? Does a minister know the heart or intent of the individual having the disagreement? Is it his job to know? Could the minister be wrong? What if the minister offends one of these "little ones" by suspending or disfellowshipping someone?

Look at the example of David being anointed as king. Samuel, was ready to pick Eliab as God's anointed, but "the Lord said unto Samuel, 'look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature,...for the Lord seeth not as a man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'" (1 Sam. 16:7) Imagine that! Here was a man, Samuel, who was close enough to be able to talk to Christ, about to make a mistake in selecting a person to be king, whom God says he did not recommend. Can you fathom that? Now if Samuel could make a mistake like that do you not think it possible ministers, too, can make these kinds of wrong judgements concerning those they view as causing division? Think about it...

But you say, someone has to make these calls, these judgments...but...what about Matthew 7:1-5, where Jesus is giving instruction on judging. He says 'Judge not'. Is this for the rank and file member only? And does it mean condemn only? Some have said this word 'judge' should be rendered as 'condemn' and the statement in Mat. 7:1 should read condemn not.

The Greek word for Judge is 'krino'. It can mean condemn but it can also mean 'call in question, conclude, decree, determine, esteem, ordain, think, or my sentence is'. Out of 107 times where 'krino' is used only six render it as condemn or damn. The rest are those mentioned. When we look closely at Matthew 7:1-5 the context clearly indicates that it does not only mean condemn. In verse 2 He says "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." So clearly this is not only condemning people. This is "concluding, calling into question, decreeing, determining, esteeming, ordaining, thinking, or sentencing." It's a general statement of the way we deal with other people is the way we will be dealt with. In verses 3-5 Jesus gets a bit more specific when he shows how people are prone to look at the faults of others when the fault is with themselves.

So when a minister makes a decision to suspend or disfellowship, he is clearly 'judging' in the broad sense of Matthews

usage. Could this be a violation of what Jesus told us not to do?

All of the splits and schisms since Mr. Armstrong's death seem to be mute testimony to the judging mentality. Why can't we be more tolerant of each other?? Let iron sharpen iron. Have a little thicker skin and let people have the opportunity to express themselves. Let the congregation have the ability to be exercised to discern right from wrong and to grow thereby; to lay this responsibility on their shoulders instead of on the shoulders of the ministry. Laying this responsibility on the shoulders of the ministry often leads them to remove that person from the fellowship of the congregation. Why? The reason, as stated before, is to be able to nip the problems in the bud and get rid of the rotten apple before it has time to affect the other apples.

Look at the parable of the tares. This parable Jesus gave indicates there is danger in removing tares from a wheat field...even when you know absolutely which is a tare (weed) and which is wheat. Could there be a greater purpose for weeds and wheat to dwell together until the harvest? Leaving them together they both struggle for survival. It's possible some of the wheat can be choked out, but by the same token struggle produces strength. Do Christians need to be able to deal with these kinds of problems and build strength while doing? If we never have to answer questions of why we do what we do and do so without the minister intervening, what kind of strength are we building?

It goes back to our purpose for being? Why is God only calling some now? Why the firstfruits? Why is God teaching and training some now? What kind of training is going to be necessary to be on the team in developing a peaceful 'World Tomorrow'?

Think about it...When Christ returns to this earth His first mission is to go to war...to put down rebellion. But how will peace really come and how will it continue to grow and be maintained? That's where the saints come in. The people now trained in exercising forbearance, longsuffering and patience are going to be those Christ will use to build the peace. Can Christ use someone who is trigger happy or quick to remove people causing trouble? Is this the way He wants things done? Will peace suddenly happen when He returns?

Jesus says "blessed are the peacemakers"...We must be learning that job now. To grow in longsuffering we have to have something to suffer..long with. Much like a weight lifter. To build muscle a weight lifter must push against a greater and greater force. To build patience and longsuffering we need to be exercised also. The only way possible to build these character traits means being in an environment where you get hit on from time to time. Suffering wrongfully allows us to build strong spiritual muscle..Removing someone from the fellowship of believers who seems to be contentious, just because he or she may not understand something the way you do, only removes the opportunity to grow in that regard.

How many 'little ones' have been put out of the church since the church began? How many 'little ones' have been uprooted because some other member has been told not to come to church and they were offended by that? How many people have stopped coming when they see the hypocrisy in people shunning or avoiding contact with others because they've been told to do so. Young people especially are keen to see this hypocrisy the same way God does.

In Isaiah 65:1-5 God says those who He 'spreads out his hands to' walk in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts: a people that provoke me to anger continually to my face...which say to one another "Don't come too close, you'll defile me! For I am holier than you." (LB) Wow! Could this possibly be giving us a little insight to what God really thinks of how we suspend or disfellowship. Read on..."They stifle me...they infuriate me!" (LB)

What would we say if God tells us it makes him mad every time a person is removed from the body of believers. Especially if He hand picked that person to be called into the fellowship in the first place? How serious is it? God hates sin, but He does not hate people. His way is constantly seeking out ways to find that one that goes astray, just the opposite of disfellowship.

As stated above, most often when a person is disfellowshipped, 1 Corinthians 5 (LB) is used where incest was taking place and Paul gave the instruction to remove that person from their fellowship. But how often are you told the second half of that story? If Christ inspired the first letter to be written would he not have inspired the second. Let's see what he said.

"Remember that man I wrote to you about, who has caused all the trouble,...I don't want to be harder on him than I should. He has been punished enough by your united disapproval. Now it is time to forgive him...otherwise he may become so bitter and discouraged that he won't be able to recover. Please show him now that you still do love him very much." (2 Cor. 2:7-8)(LB)

Did you get that? Paul is saying to the congregation...not the ministry, that, just as with a united disapproval they removed him, they, unitedly need to contact him and forgive him. It does not say here that the man was sorry for what he had done. Maybe he had repented. Another view could be taken, however, in that by contacting the person, actively going to the person, being willing to put the past in the past, it might lead to his ultimate repentance...which is toward God.

#### Disfellowshipping-A Work of the Scribes and Pharisees

In Matthew 23:2-3 Jesus said, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not."

Jesus acknowledged their position...their proper role in teaching the people. They were the educated and rightly needed to be teaching the things Moses instructed centuries ago. And He said all that they tell you to do from that instruction, given long ago, was proper, was right, was from God and needed to be obeyed. But in the same sentence, when Jesus is telling them what to do he is also telling them what not to do. He says "do not ye after their works".

The word work comes from the Greek word 'ergon' meaning 'deed, doing, work'. So what were some of the deeds the Pharisees and Scribes were doing. The Scribes and Pharisees were good in making themselves look 'good'. But behind the scene, they were guilty of 'extortion' and 'excess' among other things. (Mat. 23:25)

When we think of extortion, we think of someone demanding something (usually money) from someone or else... Or else what? Well...there is a penalty. If you don't pay up we'll throw you in jail...or worse if like the mafia...blow you away. So extortion indicates using the position of leadership in a 'lording over' type way, intimidating the people to obey or pay the consequence`.

Look at John 12:42. Here was Jesus going about teaching people and doing good. He went to church, kept God's Holy Days and did all the things required, but He didn't fit the stereotypical person that the leaders thought, should be, of a true follower of God. Consequently there was a..."division among the people because of him." (John 7:43) And "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him..."(John 12:42)

Why not? Why not talk openly about something or someone doing good? What could be the harm in doing that? Well, you say nothing, but why didn't these leaders want to voice their belief? Read on..."lest they should be put out of the synagogue:".

Just like extortion for money, there was an extortion to remain a good church member. And in order to do so, you could not have any other opinion about any other person, no matter what good that person was doing. If it did not conform to the leadership's view, you were guilty of the infraction and would have to pay the consequences. In this case be put out of church...suspended or disfellowshipped.

In John 9:22 it says "the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue". In fact Jesus foretold this would happen in our day. He said "They shall put you out of the synagogues:". Hold on! It gets worse. He says "yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service".(John 16:2) Seems impossible that it would be possible. Hard to believe but there it is. Does it seem any less likely then that some minister could eject a person or suspend a person from attending church thinking they are doing right..."doing God's service".

Now think for a moment is Jesus saying true Christians would be put out of churches that plainly are not following the Bible as their authority? No way! In this society today many churches exist that call themselves Christian. They claim to be Christ's but don't even keep the same Holy Days as Christ kept, much less the Sabbath. True Christians would not be put out of a church they know is not the one Christ built and is building. True Christians would be suspended, and told not to come, 'marked' or disfellowshipped from the 'body of believers'.

But again, why would people be put out then as well as now? The answer is right there in John 12:42. The reason they, at least many of the leaders were tight-lipped about supporting Jesus, was that "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God". These leaders were concerned about their position...their status... and possibly their paycheck as well as their impression with the people. They were such a tightly knit group-so focused on every little detail, they overlooked the obvious.

Do you think times have changed that much from then to now? Take a look at the young man who was blind from birth and Jesus healed him. (John 9:34) The Jews were so steeped in their own self importance it was they who were blind and not the young man who was healed. Look at the attitude they displayed to the young man. Why do you think you are? 'You were altogether born in sins and do you teach us?' Don't you realize who we are and all the education we've had...how can you possibly know something more than we do? Why we know you, you've not gone to college. What can you know about the scripture? We're ministers, we're highly educated. We not only went to college, we were at headquarters and have pastored many churches since and you're sitting there trying to tell us something!! Ridiculous! 'and they cast him out'.

Again, I won't belabor the point but one of the 'works' they seemed to be involved in, in Jesus day was putting people out of the church. Now you or I can't put people out or suspend them. After all we are not the 'authority', but to be a good church member we must go along with the decision and shun them who are put out...or else that just might be our fate as well. It becomes a matter of intimidation and it was a 'work' of the Pharisees in Jesus day and something He told his followers not to have a part in.

#### Disfellowshipping Still Practiced-Long After Church Began

Were they still putting people out of church after Christ went to heaven? Apparently so. Take a look at 3 John 10. It says Diotrephes would not receive certain people in the church and to those who did receive them he cast them out of the church. What does this look like? It isn't specific about why he put them out except that Diotrephes 'who loves to have the preeminence among them'.

Apparently this had to be someone who may have been ordained at one time to such an office, because he claimed the authority to boot a person out of the church for one reason or another. This also couldn't have happened unless the people accepted the practice, or at least went along with it, fearing themselves to oppose it, lest they be the ones to be thrown out.

Now who were these brethren who were being thrown out? The answer to this question is all of 3 John. John starts out the chapter by praising certain of the brethren for receiving people for their courage "as", they, "walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth". Some, such as Diotrephes, didn't think they were walking in the truth but others did. And what did John say? He said they were faithful for receiving such. Notice verse 5. "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever you do to the brethren, and to strangers"...What? "to strangers". Apparently here you had some who were showing kindness to some people who were not even members of the church, and because of that John praised them for doing so. But, again, what did Diotrephes think of it? He ejected them from the fellowship.

Doesn't this have a ring of present day application? I think we can safely say it does. The reason being is that human

nature is the same today as it was back then.

#### Summary

We can see certain sections of the Bible that seem to indicate support for disfellowship, but when we hold them up to Christ's teaching to love and forbear with one another the answer is clear. His desire is for reconciliation and not disfellowship. Only then can we expect our prayers to be heard. "First be reconciled to thy brother..." (Mat. 5:24)

When we look closely also, we can see the Pharisees practiced suspension and disfellowship and it certainly looks like one of the 'works' Jesus said his followers were not to do. Therefore it is not a Christian practice to be part and parcel with. Many mainstream Church of God churches today talk a good line about going back to the faith once delivered but in actual practice follow in the footsteps of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus said "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." (Mat. 5:20) Therefore it should be something we look long and hard at and come away from.

The real essence of God's will is in Mat. 18:11-14. "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine and goes into the mountains and seeks that which has gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you he rejoices more of that sheep than the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these 'little ones' should perish."

God's will is to 'seek out'...look for ways to encourage and exhort. Our calling is to "walk...with lowliness and meekness with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love endeavoring to keep the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:1-3) This is our mission and part of the 'great commission' in "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;" (Mat. 28:20)

Let's be about our Father's business.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE EDITOR:

Arlan has put a lot of time and thought into this study paper, which is very well researched, gentle and to the point. It may be the thought of some people that Herbert Armstrong's name should be left out, and that probably past affiliations should have been called former associations, and I suppose that would be fine except for one problem; why does one have to hide those things, block them from view, or try to make it look as if they never existed. It is my opinion that one should not have to hide those things which brought us to where we are today. Just because we mention Herbert Armstrong, or the Worldwide Church of God, doesn't mean we are dwelling in the past. These are just facts from a persons past, and things which when one refers to them shows, ya, I was in Worldwide, Oh, so was I, small world. Referring to these landmarks of the past is what keeps us from forgetting where we have been, so that we know how to proceed in the future. It is what makes us all human and just like the next guy.

In about the 12th paragraph Arlan makes a couple of statements, he says "All" of us were in some way or other taught by Herbert W. Armstrong and Ambassador College. "Most" of what we were hearing and studying was honorable, was right, and was the truth." Darwin pointed out to me that some people might take offence at these statements, so I looked at them closer, and left them in, because the study paper is not mine, and because both of these statements are Arlan's opinion, and the way that Arlan sees it, and there is nothing wrong with that. The only reason I bring it too the readers attention is that I wanted to tell you all ahead of time, that I know that Arlan didn't write anything in this study paper with the intent of offending anyone. I guess the key words in those two statements would be the words "All" and "most". Darwin thinks a better word there might have been "much" and I think "All" is incorrect in that many heard about God by studying their Bibles, and had no contact with Herbert Armstrong, Ambassador College or the Worldwide Church of God. I believe, that anytime someone writes something, and you read it, you need to look closely, at which things are facts, and which things are opinion. We need to practice discernment, or we will all be in a perpetual state of being offended.

A good example of being offended, would be the fact that Darwin and I are both disfellowshipped from the UCG-IA, and today we were at Walmart here in Bismarck, and one of the people who are to avoid us was all of the sudden in the same aisle with us, and I'll tell you she couldn't get away from us fast enough. Should we be offended? We certainly have good reason to be, but, no, we weren't. I have great compassion for her. It looks like in my opinion that UCG-IA, told the local congregation to be nice, but avoid us. What a mind bender that is. As she rushed to get away from us, she said "Hi, there", with no smile on her face. I felt good about saying "Hi" to her, she was not happy. If she were happy about avoiding us, wouldn't she be smiling? We can smile, because we're not trying to avoid anyone, even those who we know don't want anything to do with us. Laura Lee

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#### PRAYER REQUEST

We are requesting prayers for Jean Prestbroten. She has a very serious eye condition. She has had 4 retina tears (3 on the left eye, 1 on the right eye). Because there is bleeding in the vitreous of the eye when this happens, blood droplets form "blobs" in the vision. when they dissolve in the fluid of the eye, it turns to "dirty water". Her vision is as if looking through a dirty fish tank. Surgery is not recommended at this time--too risky. Please pray for physical healing of her eye condition. Jean is also very down (depressed) and needs emotional strength as well to continue on. We also request prayers for Jean's emotional healing in regard to this serious depression she has due to her eye problems. Please pray also for her husband and family who have requested prayers on her behalf.

JUST JUDGMENT IMPORTANT FOR LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

LETTER:

September 16, 2000

Members, United Church of God-IA:

Dear Church of God Brethren,

The purpose of this letter to you dear brethren is for a conclusion of this matter as of the date of this writing.

RESPONSE:

This letter was included with about 100 other pages of correspondence between Darwin and Laura Lee and various ministers within the United Church of God, an International Association. In briefest summary, the UCG-IA became involved in their divorce and remarriage (D&R) case, and the Lees felt that they were treated unjustly and were not dealt with honestly in their efforts to resolve the difficulties. The UCG-IA felt the Lees were uncooperative and rebellious toward the ministry.

Judging just judgment is a very important issue in the scriptures (Deut. 16:18, John 7:24, Acts 17:31). So often, people "do not like confrontation" and the popular idea is to leave the issue of judging to "the government" or "the church authorities". Those who hope to reign with Christ should be learning to judge righteously, now.

The Lees believe that they have exhausted the possible remedies within the UCG-IA, so they are attempting to continue the Matthew 18 process and take the issue to the Church. The rest of the documentation for this case is available from Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502. Paul Luecke, the primary UCG-IA minister involved, may be reached at PO Box 7453, Bismarck, ND 58507. The UCG-IA headquarters address is PO Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254.

LETTER:

Laura and I also appeal to all of you who read this letter and the material sent to you--see 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. Is there a wise and just man or woman as well in our midst out there? "...no not one that is able to judge..." (1 Cor. 6:5). Most of you have been in God's Church for many years. Are you not able to judge righteous judgement? If Laura and I committed a sin by getting married without the ministry's permission, then hang us on the gallows. If the ministry has the right to do what they did with us [suspend them from services] because we asked brother Steve Nutzman [UCG-IA minister] to set up marriage counseling with us because, as he put it, "We already made up our minds", then we will hand you the stones that you may stone us. Also, as a reminder, the letter sent to Laura by brother Richard Pinelli [head of UCG-IA ministry] regarding her D&R decision clearly says that marriage counseling was recommended. Yet, we asked and brother Steve Nutzman refused.

RESPONSE:

In general, I feel that the Lees have done a better job at sticking to the facts and documenting the facts than the UCG-IA. However, the language about "hang us on the gallows" and "stone us" is a mistake. Judgment should be about facts and intent, not about emotion stirred up later. Neither the UCG-IA, nor the New Testament, nor our present civil government executes people for adultery or other marital problems. Anyone who would attempt to kill you for such a reason (even if you handed them the stones), would find themselves guilty of a crime under our country's laws.

However, I believe that you are right about the basic issue. If the UCG-IA ministry felt that your sins were so bad that they had to suspend you from services, then they should publicly state why, just like Paul did when he told the Corinthian church to put the man out who had his father's wife in 1 Cor 5. The UCG-IA letters continually stressed the need for confidentiality in D&R cases and how they did not want the Lees to have witnesses or tape recordings of conversations with their ministry. The UCG-IA approach seemed to be a continuation of the WCG's method: we are the ministers of God, if you oppose our decision, you are opposing the Church of God and ultimately God Himself.

They forget that the same logic was used for years by tyrants: we are the authorities established by God, if you oppose us, you oppose God. This thinking led to secret court sessions and trials where the authorities could simply threaten the person on trial with death or some other punishment in order to extract a confession, then go away from the trial saying, "see, we are in agreement, the person confessed to their crimes." And nearly everybody who heard the news believed it. How can the victim prove that he was coerced into signing the confession? The USA and many other modern nations have enacted many laws to make trials public, to guarantee that a person does not have to testify against themselves, etc. (We are gradually losing many of these blessings, but that is a separate issue.) I am not saying that the UCG-IA is behaving as an evil tyrant, I think they have the good of their church and the people in mind. However, their ministry is probably not used to thinking cases through and attempting to treat everyone similarly. They certainly don't feel comfortable with laying out all the facts so that others could make a judgment.

LETTER:

If we sinned because we dated before Laura's D&R decision was final, then judge us so having sinned, but the same judgement you use on us be sure you use on [Couple X, names removed] who also dated and got married without even going through a D&R process. Yet brother Steve Nutzman and Brother Gary Petty together conspired to marry them and went ahead and did just that in

spite of what they preach to us that everyone has to go through the D&R process. Then brother Paul Luecke in his September 13, 2000 letter to us said no less than four ministers were in agreement on this matter [suspension] with us and says we were cynical, insulting, had angry accusations towards the Bismarck brethren, issued ultimatums, threatened and had disdain for the local pastor, other ministers and UCG administration. If what we have presented to you in all this material proves these things, then judge it so.

**RESPONSE:**

I think there were places where your letters were cynical, insulting and showed disdain for the UCG administration. In some cases, I think they deserved it. It is very hard to uphold good character when in an important disagreement, but we can learn to do it--Christ did it and He should be in us. On the other hand, I think most of the substance of your disagreement was poorly addressed by the UCG-IA.

**LETTER:**

We were called adulterers. We are not just making an angry accusation. It was something that took place and a lie that was started by none other than brother Paul Luecke who, in our 5 1/2 hour meeting with him and brother Gordon Gueller on March 6, 2000, said that [Woman's name removed] said that in confidence to someone not in UCG-IA. That is all he could say about that lie and rumor that he and he alone could have started and the defamation of our character and he thinks absolutely nothing of it. What a travesty of justice and in his own words "at least none other than four ministers are in full agreement". All of the other things that took place mentioned in this material are not angry accusations either, they are things that took place and we went to the home office asking that this conduct be put to an end. If the ministry feels that was a demand from us, then so be it. The very spirit that God gave us demands us to love one another "as I have loved you" (John 13:34; 15:17). Taking care of that problem would have been love in action. "My little Children, let us not love in word neither in tongue; but in deed and truth" (1 Jn 3:18). If we have disdain for the ministry, then we truly are guilty because that conduct and other non-Christian conduct by ministry throughout this ordeal is disgusting to us by those who stand up and claim they are ministers of Jesus Christ. Is this truly what Jesus Christ ministers? You judge.

**RESPONSE:**

Big church organizations frequently take the approach that they need to "support their ministry"--which all too often means that if a minister makes a mistake, the headquarters will claim it was not a mistake or even say it did not happen. This is contrary to 1 Timothy 5:20: "Those [elders] who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all [everyone], that the rest [of the elders] also may fear."

Church organizations also tend to "support their leaders". The UCG-IA's claim that all four of their ministers agreed would be more meaningful if ministers regularly gave independent decisions. But the mood of most hierarchical churches is that whatever the highest-ranking minister says is right and the others ought to go along with him. I simply cannot recall ever seeing a disfellowshipment or disciplinary letter of some nature from a CoG group that acknowledged that some minister(s) disagreed with the action being taken. Yet this concept has worked for hundreds of years in USA appellate courts where a "dissenting opinion" will be written by a judge who disagreed with the majority.

**LETTER:**

As far as brother Paul Luecke claiming we issued ultimatums and threats, again, you judge. We brought the things mentioned in this material to church administration's attention in the name of decency to do something to straighten out the lie that the Bismarck Brethren were told and other issues, yet all we got from UCG church administration was agreement that what brother Paul Luecke was doing was O.K. with them and had their backing. They are all in agreement. Read it for yourself again. See the letter by brother Paul Luecke dated September 13, 2000, paragraph 2, line 3. One thing needs to be corrected here. Paul's next words: "...your response to our communications to you...". The correction here is that we communicated to the ministry what was going on here in Bismarck and they refused to do anything about it. Now they turn around and try to claim they can't teach us anything any more and that we're bad-mouthing the ministry. They created this problem and they refused to fix it and turn and twist the whole mess to make it look as if we were creating division. We ask you at this time, "what was the division?" Getting married? They said Laura was free to remarry. Not getting marriage counseling? We asked them to set it up and then we were refused by them because "we decided we were going to get married." Dating before Laura's D&R process was final? [Couple X] was free to date and get married without ever having to go through a D&R process. We did not appreciate being called adulterers and being told that our conduct made the brethren do it (TREAT US BADLY), so we are responsible. And brother Paul Luecke said we were causing division. Is this the real "twilight zone"? Now I suppose that is being cynical.

**RESPONSE:**

Yes, I think you are being cynical. Your case would be better presented if you concentrated on clearly stating the facts and stayed away from name calling (i.e. "twilight zone"). Your organized set of letters (you could add a "table of contents") is what states your case.

**LETTER:**

They never came to us about anything since we got married on April 10, 1999. Neither did brother Paul Luecke come and talk to Laura and myself about anything, let alone comply with the recently adopted Suspension and Disfellowshipping Policy of the UCG-IA dated August 30, 1999, before Paul suspended us. And he says we have disdain for the ministry! Any clues as to why that might be? Brother Paul Luecke never once at any time had any meetings with Laura and myself about any problems he had with us before he suspended us. Yet the twelve council of elders clearly gave him a directive not to suspend someone without two prior meetings with those he has a problem with. If we have disdain for the ministry, it's for a cause (MISPRINT IN SERVANTS' NEWS AND THROWS OFF MEANING--IT SHOULD READ "FOR CAUSE"--IT WAS MEANT AS A PLAY ON WORDS, WE INTENDED TO USE THE SAME TERM ON MINISTRY WHICH THEY CONTINUALLY USED ON US.) If they want us to respect them, then maybe, just maybe they should have respectable conduct while claiming to be ministers of Jesus Christ.

**RESPONSE:**

I cannot help but think, again, about the efforts of those who founded our country to insist that if a person were accused of a crime, that the charges had to be specific and made known to him. When I first studied this in school, I remember thinking, "how silly, leaders wouldn't accuse someone unless they had a good reason--and of course they would tell the person. Not so. If someone is making life difficult for a leader, but has violated no laws, leaders often have a tendency to punish the person. If there are no specific charges, or if it is a vague charge like "causing division", then it is difficult to defend oneself. Church leaders may say, "Your actions are causing members to think about leaving the Church, but we cannot tell you who the members are because that would be betraying ministerial confidence". Again, how can one refute such a charge when they don't know whom they have offended? This is why all parties and witnesses to a dispute must be made known to all--our nations' forefathers understood that.

**LETTER:**

So in closing, just one more thought. You are all being trained by Jesus Christ in and by God's word to be future judges as well as now. God and Jesus Christ will be watching how you judge this one and whether you will be capable to judge in His Kingdom. Also, for the record, we bear no ill will towards brother Paul Luecke, his wife, the Bismarck brethren or any ministers or church administration personnel of the UCG-IA. What was done by them was wrong. Why can't those who claim to be servants of Jesus Christ (ministry and member alike) admit error, and that to their own brethren? Is pride so deep within us that we just won't do it even if it puts our salvation at stake?

The ministry wants to be respected, trusted, honored, and held in high esteem by those he serves. Well, let me say this. I have a dog of five years. I'm its master. It respects me, trusts me implicitly. Why? Because I treat it with respect, love and care for her; indeed as Jesus who is our master treats us with respect, great love, and care, so in turn we trust and respect Him as our true Master. If the ministry wants and feels they deserve that position of master, then they need to fill Jesus Christ's shoes and live and walk as He walked and live the life they profess to teach others. Jesus the Christ said judgment is one of the main points of what He wants from His leaders to display and practice. he also said to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24). So now its in your hands. Will you judge righteous judgment?

Sincerely,

Your brother and sister in Christ's Service

Darwin Lee and Laura Lee

PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502

(701) 258-7172

**RESPONSE:**

I have written a number of letters and send many articles to various Church of God organizations about their methods of governance and/or specific cases, and rarely ever received a response. The root of the problem has been around for nearly 2000 years: denominationalism. Church groups seem to believe that their doctrinal statement and/or their organization are somehow just a little bit better than all groups and therefore as long as they are internally satisfied with whatever they have written or done, that it matters little what the rest of the world thinks about them. I could spend a lot of time reading everything available and talking to people about this case, but I do not see any value if the UCG-IA is not ready to listen. I wrote them a letter asking if they were interested in the brethren's opinions of your case, but have not received a response in two weeks.

The reason why you have had all of this difficulty in the first place is twofold:

1) The UCG-IA has replaced the instructions of Matthew 18:15-17 and related scriptures with their own policies. These policies allow a few ministers to decide to remove a person from their local congregation, rather than letting the brethren in that local congregation decide. The only way to solve this problem is for either the leaders or the brethren to insist that it be done.

2) The Bible does not give authority to ministers, priests, rabbis or anyone to bind marriages. Marriages in the Bible were handled by agreement of the parties or the parents of the parties. There is no Bible example of any kind of spiritual leader



counseling someone for marriage or performing a wedding. Leaders should teach what the Bible says, and, when brethren come together, they may need to remove someone from the congregation who has an obviously incorrect marriage (a man was married to his father's wife in 1 Cor. 5:4-5).

No matter how the brethren judge, it will probably not make much difference in your relationships with the UCG-IA. It may be hard to leave a congregation where you have many friends, but that is often the only solution when a specific case of non-biblical decision-making separates brethren. After everyone has learned what they can from this case, you will need to leave it rest until the eternal Judgment. In the meantime, you will need to look at the talents that God has given you, and see how you can serve other brethren until then.--Norman Edwards

#### COMMENTS FROM THE EDITOR:

The above LETTER, was written by Darwin Lee, and is part of a 111 page document titled: WHY WERE WE DISFELLOWSHIPED BY THE UNITED CHURCH OF GOD AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION, by Darwin & Laura Lee, and is available free of charge to anyone who asks for it. Norman Edwards of Servants' News, PO Box 107, Perry Michigan, 48872-0107 received this document, and chose the above letter to respond to. Norman Edwards did edit the above letter slightly, and in one area it did change our meaning, so I inserted a note in that spot, in one other area, it made a point unclear, but over all he did a very good job with the way in which he presented the entire letter. The above letter with RESPONSE written by Norman Edwards appeared in Servants' News, Vol. 6, No. 5, September/October 2000, starting on page 26. As I said, we felt Norman Edwards presented this fairly, and publicly pointed out why we were unable to get any place with the UCG-IA. He did state that we should not use name calling and then listed "twilight zone". Actually this term wasn't used for nor intended to call anyone a name. Most people maybe wouldn't remember this any longer, but the "Twilight Zone", was actually a science fiction show which was on TV back in the 50's or 60's. This show was about the weird and unreal, unimaginable, and the music that went with the show was different (weird). Some of the things which we saw and heard while dealing with the ministry in the UCG-IA, was like the "Twilight Zone", weird, unreal, and unimaginable, and many the times we sat discussing how they ever came to the conclusions they came to if they were truly using their Bibles. After a time we understood clearly that none of this was going anywhere, and that is when we took it to the Church as stated in Matthew 18:15-17. We thought maybe our brothers and sisters would go to ministry on our behalf, however, to date, we only know personally of 1 person who has written to the home office of the UCG-IA on our behalf, and that is Norman Edwards. We thank you for the time and energy you used in trying to help your brother and sister.

When Darwin was speaking of "hang us on the gallows", and handing people the "stones", Darwin meant this to be a metaphor, and not a reality. It was a rewrite on "...he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her..." (John 8:1-12) and no one could honestly throw the first stone based upon that statement.

As far as our character goes, neither Darwin or I have reached perfection, nor has anyone else at this time. We all strive to overcome, and we as others try to do the right things on a daily basis. It is really, really hard however to straighten any problem out with anyone, when you are not allowed to speak to the other person or persons. Try it sometime. So yes at times cynical may have come into play, and usually happened at the same time we heard the music playing in our minds from the "Twilight Zone". It is my opinion that in these situations, being cut off from other church brethren, can create an unbalance at least at first in those who are cut off, because in most cases you then have no one to discuss what's going on right now. We feel for anyone who is thrown out alone, at least we had each other to get the balance back.

Norman Edwards really did a good job in showing why we could not get any place with the UCG-IA ministry, and I believe it should be shocking enough to make those who are sleeping at least sit up and take notice. There is nothing in the Bible any place that gives ministry or anyone else the authority to change God's doctrines, such as Matthew 18:15-17. God put that in the Bible for a reason. It is clearly in there so that we as God's people know how to straighten problems out among ourselves, and if we actually were allowed to use this instruction given by God, there wouldn't be all of this splintering within the Church of God. I know of several cases where the UCG-IA ministry told the people they were suspending or disfellowshipping that Matthew 18:15-17 does not apply in your situation. Matthew 18:15-17 applies in every situation where there is a problem between brothers and sisters.

If there is one major lesson to be learned here, it should be that just because a minister says it, doesn't always make it true. I believe we have all been conditioned to think that ministers teach the things of God, and some do, but many do not. We are not to follow men blindly, for if we do, our fate will be the same as the one we followed. We are to search the scriptures to see if a matter is true. All this shunning and avoiding going on among brethren is not of God. God wants us to show love towards each other, but some how, some ministers have led brethren to believe that disfellowshipping people and banishing them from their midst is an act of loving kindness. How they conclude this is beyond me. We have Bible Studies here, and one gentleman said that if I would let him know that So and So wouldn't be there he would come. I said forget it, that isn't going to happen. He wanted to come, however, he couldn't because the other person was disfellowshipped from his group. This just isn't love in action and deed, and as long as the brethren in the Church of God sit by and let ministry teach doctrines of men, rather than doctrines of God, this splintering and in fighting among God's children will continue. Laura Lee

Date: Jan. 10, 2000

To: Rainer Salomaa, the U.S. Council, and others to whom this letter of appeal will be sent (the grounds for the circulation of this letter are: "if one neglects to hear witnesses, then tell it to the church", Mt. 18:15-17).

From: Ned Dancuo, UCG Toronto, Ont., Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, Ont., M9A 4X1; Home address: 26 Glen Castle Drive, Stoney Creek, Ont., Canada, L8G 2Z4.

Re: a. Appeal of Disfellowshipment by pastor Gary Antion on Oct. 16, 1999.

b. Submission of charge against Gary Antion for violation of church policy and of Scripture (noting this, that Scripture says that "against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses"; 1 Tim. 5:19). This charge is in regard to the statement he made on Oct. 16, 1999, namely, that "if one does not work, he should not go to the Feast". My witness is Ron Kearse, a deacon, who was present at the time this statement was made.

#### LETTER OF APPEAL

On October 16, 1999, a Sabbath day, I was disfellowshipped from UCG Toronto congregation for reasons that were unclear, unjust, and unjustifiable according to the word of God. In that meeting on the Sabbath, which was attended to by another elder in the church, Ron Kearse, a local deacon, I was told by Mr. Antion, our pastor and a member of the Council of Elders, for the second or third time in the past year, that certain members in the church had spoken out against me in regard to certain perceived offenses attributable to me, and that I would no longer be allowed to attend services with the congregation. As is normal, sound, and customary I asked to know the specific charges that were laid against me, to which he replied, "there is no specific charge". If a member has no specific charge laid against him, how is it possible for him to be condemned, much less disfellowshipped? I then asked for witnesses to be brought forward so that this could proceed in an orderly and Christian manner, in accordance with the commandment of Jesus in Mt. 18:15-17 but, by this time, Mr. Antion's patience toward me had already become exhausted, and he would not allow for this, stating to my utter amazement that "Matthew 18 does not apply here" and, instead, decided to expel me on the basis of hearsay evidence, choosing to base his decision upon the testimony of others against me without bothering to fully hear my own defense. I was now beginning to see that it was indeed possible for a member to be expelled from the church on someone else's petty whim, criticism or complaint (Yet my accusers would reply that my offences were not "petty". If this were true, why then did they leave these odious accusations hanging over my head for month after month, and not act upon them sooner for the good of the congregation, lest Satan should get an advantage over us? If you really care about "protecting" the church, show that you care by acting promptly).

To the best of my knowledge the "perceived offenses" and hearsay evidence of which I have been accused are as follows: a. Acting as a judge of the brethren contrary to the law, b. Being such a source of aversion that certain members were deliberately avoiding my company, and c. Driving away members from the church. And Mr. Kearse's testimony confirmed this when he said to me that I had been "very judgmental of the brethren", that he was one of those who had been "avoiding" me (which testimony surprised me, since he was one of a few who regularly would make himself available to me, for which thing I gave thanks to God), and that I had "used his name" in personal dialogue when he had given me no permission to use it (of which matter he refused to elaborate, as his words were coming out with rapid fire, but which I believed centered around my subscription to The Journal). I began to feel at this point as if I had just been thrown into a kangaroo court--similar as it was with the Lord who was bombarded with one accusation after another from the religious authorities--when I so dearly was looking forward to presenting my own testimony in a godly court. If these reasons for expulsion had been put to the charge of an unbeliever in the world, he would have laughed us to scorn or said that we're mad.

These charges which Mr. Antion was not willing to explain in full constitute in my judgment false accusations and are a result of "speaking evil against a brother" (Ja. 4:11), which today is happening quite frequently in the church, inasmuch that the guilty parties are not able to detect it when it occurs, having gone "past feeling" it (Eph. 4:19). A judge of evil thoughts (Ja. 2:4) judges according to the flesh (Ja. 8:15), according to the appearance of things, according to envy (Ja. 4:5, "phthonos", ill-will), according to prejudices, according to the fear of men, according to untrained intuitions, according to the desire to show partiality toward those whom he favours, according to what he hears through the grapevine (in trusting his own grapevine while despising that of another, just as Mr. Antion did toward me in that fateful meeting when he said to me in regard to the Journal, "Oh, is THAT where you get your information?", as if he were a state investigator tempting me and my knowledge of events in the church, as well as questioning the veracity of the Journal, which is published by a fellow brother in the church no less), with little mercy from God or reverence for the blood of Christ, wherewith he was sanctified (Heb. 10:29). We ought to know that when an alleged offense is not brought forward and corroborated by the testimony of at least two or three witnesses the matter cannot stand in court, much less in the courts of heaven where God is Judge of all (Heb. 12:23).

I testify to all that I have been accused of doing a good work, not an evil one. I have sought to be more outspoken and frank (Pr. 28:1; Phil. 1:14), I have sought to zealously uphold the gospel, I have sought to judge evil when I see it (Pr. 31:9, Lk. 12:57, 1 Cor. 5:12, 6:5, Jn. 16:7-11, 1 Cor. 2:15), and I have sought to punctuate the truth as firmly as my faith would allow (1 Cor. 12:9; Rom. 12:3,6; 2 Cor. 4:13; Each man receives a certain measure of faith, so he must act in proportion to it; he believes, therefore he speaks), but always with a spirit of meekness and fear (1 Pet. 3:15; though some in the church have judged my manner as evidence of aggression, arrogance, self-righteousness, and meddling. Such judges in the church, in not knowing the power and Spirit of our God, would have condemned even Phinehas, Stephen and Apollos for the work

they did in the Lord). It has been my aim, ever since I returned from spiritual captivity, to edify and encourage the brethren every Sabbath and to be an instrument in the hands of Christ to strengthen the faith of those with whom I fellowship, believing that this is the best way for me to show gratitude to my God for saving me from sin (1 Cor 1:18). With zeal and a renewed commitment to the Lord, I have sought to keep my conversation centered upon the Scriptures. When one does this, he is bound to upset a few who are easily given to offense (He who is easily offended or who is quick to accuse is one who is unforgiving and mindless of the sacrifice of Christ; for the suspicious mind is an unbelieving mind tainted with the spirit of uncleanness. As the Scripture intimates, "to the unclean all things are unclean", Titus 1:15). Yet some have judged my zealous deeds as offensive and have not recognized the fruit of my labour, which to my amazement has been regarded as even lacking by my own pastor, just as he testified to me in that final meeting on the Sabbath saying, "I have not seen the fruits of the Spirit in you, Ned", proving to me once again that many of us are still blind to the manifestations of the Spirit. But it is evident to me that my works have been enough to incite the devil to opposition (which I knew would come in time, as I had been making progress in overcoming the world, the flesh, and the devil), who has managed to incite a few of the elders in the church to fear and antagonism toward me. And though I am one of the poorer, neglected, and trial-ridden members of the church, this has not caused the elders to fear in raising up an evil report against me (Ex. 23:1,6), nor has it prevented them from refraining in giving credence to false accusations from the devil. But I have allowed myself to suffer this willingly, knowing that I have a much greater reward in heaven (Lk. 6:22-23, 35; Mt. 5:11, 12; 1 Pet. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 3:14-15). I speak the truth and I lie not (Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20; 1 Tim 2:7).

I testify to all that certain men in the congregation, who don't even know me (Mt. 7:23; 25:12; which was strange at first when I began to re-attend, since those who knew me best had apostasized), who have seen me as a threat to the church, and who have rushed to the minister with their complaint, and not to the source of their grievances, have judged me as a source of division in the church, yet have not been able to identify a biblically legitimate charge against me, together with the supporting testimony of two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6). For our law which is holy (Rom. 7:12) states that "You shall not raise a false report" (Ex 23:1), that you shall "not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" (Ex. 23:1), that "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2, that "you shall not wrest the judgment of your poor in his cause" (Ex 23:6), and that you shall "keep yourself far from a false matter" (Ex. 23:7). So I pose this question: Do we not hear the law? (Gal. 4:21) This is why a charge of wrongdoing must be according to truth, for not only does the false accuser bear greater sin than the one whom he accuses, but he himself makes himself an agent of the devil unwittingly (Jn. 19:11). Therefore, if a minister puts more confidence in his authority (2 Cor. 10:8) and in his rule (Heb. 13:7,17,24) than in the truth of God for the rendering of judgments in the church, he does evil in the sight of God and misuses his divine privileges--just as Satan did before he became the official opposition--thus bringing judgment upon himself to the strictest degree (Ja. 3:1, 2 Pet 2:4, 3 Jn 9,10; A pastor is not outside the law. He is ordained to carry out the law. He is to model a shepherd, not a policeman, an independent judge, or a dictator who carries out his own arbitrary judgments). Also I am well aware of the admonition of Rom. 16:17 which instructs us to shun those who cause "disunion" (dichostasia) and who "set traps" (skandalon), and of the teaching in 2 Thess. 3:14 which permits the brethren (v13; and not just the ministry) to "note" or "mark" (semeioo) any who walk in disobedience.

Again, I ask you, is not a minister of God by all accounts bound by the authority of Jesus Christ not only to teach the law but to keep the law himself? (Rom. 2:21) And is not a minister of God guilty of partiality when he brings forth accusations based on hearsay? (Ex. 23:1; Is. 32:7; Ja. 2:1,4,9) And does not the minister disobey the law of God when he refuses to hear out a man? (Jn. 7:51) And does he not circumvent the law when he rejects the admission of true and sufficient witnesses? (Deut. 17:6, Mt. 18:16,2, Cor. 13:1) And does he not sin when he refuses to have compassion on the poor? (of which I am one; Gal. 2:10, Ja. 2:6) When the poor cry out to God for justice, what does the Lord do? Does He sit idly by and ask "Why are you crying out?" (See Ex. 22:22-24) Or does He say "Go away from me, for you are guilty by rumour"? Or does He become tired at the "whining" of the poor? What do you think? Is He not a God of truth and justice, and does He not uphold the cause of the poor and needy? (Ps. 72:13,14; Pr. 14:31; Is. 3:15) If you say that you fear God, show that you fear by acting according to His Word!

For those members in the church who are easily offended or who are slow to forgive, do we gnash out with our teeth at anyone who offends our personal sentiments? If our feelings get hurt, are we then to leave the church? If we become offended at the word of God from the mouth of a lowly brother, is he the one who is to blame for our unrest and thus to be "spied out" with suspicion? If a member leaves the church over a spat based in the word of God, is the brother to blame for his departure? Was it his fault that his brother left? Yet how would Christ judge this? Would He not say to the departed, "If he has offended you why then did you not return and forgive him, and be reconciled to your brother?" (Mt. 5:23,24; 18:32-33,35) Again, did not James say that "in many things we offend all"? (Ja. 3:2) And if this is true, does it discount our obligation before God to forgive? If an ordained minister points out a hidden sin of ours, do we bow down in his presence and thank him profusely? But when a brother does the same, does he have no right or "business" to speak up? Brethren, is this not hypocrisy? Does it not show the sin of having "respect of persons" (Ja. 2:9; Pr. 24:23) when we choose to receive the word of God from one but not from the other "face"? (If you are willing to be corrected by one in authority but not by a "subordinate", you do sin and show respect of persons).

If a brother chooses to answer a brother, who has reprovved him, by saying "You're judging me", is he not preventing that brother from "admonishing him like a brother" (2 Thess. 3:15), and thus keeping him from fulfilling his scriptural duty to

"rebuke his neighbour, that he not suffer sin to fall upon him"? (Lev. 19:17-18) Does he not know that in accordance with the authority of the word of God that he bears this responsibility? Or do we believe that we are "above" that authority? Do we not teach from our own literature that we are to be our "brother's keeper"? Or is this more for the world and not for the church? Do we not know that when a brother goes to "judge" a brother, to correct him, that he is neither seeking to judge his salvation (as if he were in the seat of Christ) or looking to condemn him to death, but rather that he is seeking to help his brother who has roamed from the truth, in order to revert him back to godly ways? (Ja., 5:19-20, Gal. 6:1; What do you think brethren? Is there a greater work than this? Or are administrative duties, budget reports, media projects, dry seminars, tea socials, travelling the world, sight-seeing, or speaking idle chitchat in church a better work than this?) Much of our confusion derives from a feeble understanding of Mt. 7:1-2. This verse does not disallow that any judgments be made; rather, it states that we ought not judge lest we be judged by the same criteria. "Judge not (Why?) that YOU be not judged" (that is, by the same measure; Mt. 7:1-2, Lk. 6:37-38). Jesus also said that when you have sufficiently overcome to get the beam out of your own eye, "THEN you shall be able to see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother's eye" (Mt. 7:5; yet only Christ can remove the beam). Therefore when a brother chooses to judge a matter in the church, he should judge according to truth, according to the word of God, with the gift of mercy (Mt. 23:23), by the faith of Christ, with the spirit of justice (Is. 28:6), wisdom, understanding, and a fear of the Lord (Is. 11:2-4). But the ignorant and envious pastor who reprimands your right to judge righteous judgment (Jn. 7:24) is like the unconverted Israelite who blustered with envy to Moses saying, "Who made you a judge over Us?" (Ex. 2:14; God did, by the way), and like Joshua who asked Moses to stop the prophesying in the camp by ordering that he "Forbid them" (Num. 11:27,28 Mk. 9:38-39), and like a "lord of the flock" who desires to "have dominion over your faith" (2 Cor. 1:24).

But some who lack faith, who are held back by fears, who are ignorant of Christian duty (Lk. 17:9-10), or who idolize traditional or secular thinking will say "It's the pastor's job"--and not yours--to correct people and to give them advice". Yet this is only an expression of ignorance that is derived from worldly, carnal logic that see the minister in the image of an authoritarian "father figure", a "corporate executive", or a "military general" who holds absolute jurisdiction over the resolution of disputes, the issuing of edicts, and of the handing out of reproofs. This philosophy, in which the pastor lords it over the flock, reduces the lay member to the level of a servant of men who exercise stringent control over their subordinates, who is in need of the approval of a "superior" or a "conqueror" (Rev. 2:6, 15; 6:2; "Nicolaitan" means "conqueror of the people") before he is free to do a bolder work in Christ. Besides this, does the pastor really wish to have near absolute power? Does he really wish the right to arbitrate in every dispute? Does he really wish to reprove, to condemn, and to adjudicate in every suit? Does he really wish the right to confront every sin in the church? Does he really wish to judge every case? Does he really wish to right every wrong, correct every fault, try every spirit, attack every heresy, mediate every agreement among those who disagree, as well as enlighten every ignoramus? Does he really wish to keep such matters a jurisdiction exclusive only to himself, and to prevent the "unentitled" brother from doing his good and faithful work in the Lord? (Review, if you have forgotten, the gifts of the Spirit in Rom. 12:6-8 & 1 Cor. 12:8-11; also Eph. 4:8) So you really believe the pastor should play out the role of a "congregational Moses"? Those who believe such are ignorant of the Bible. They carry a worldly concept into the church while denying the words of Christ in 2 Thess. 3:15, Lev. 19:17-18, Ja. 5:19-20, Mt. 18:15-17, Gal. 6:1,6, Pr. 28:1, Pr. 14:25, Phil 1:14, Acts 4:31, Eph. 3:12, Acts 8:4, Heb. 5:12, 1 Cor. 5:12, Rom. 14:13, Jn. 7:24, Lk. 12:57, Pr. 6:16-19.

Therefore, if Jesus Christ died to make reconciliation possible for the church, why am I not being allowed by my pastor, who has rendered a verdict of guilt on my part, to be reconciled to those who think I have offended them? Such unrighteousness despises the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:27)--His blood, because it does not make possible forgiveness in a dispute--and His body, because he does not rebuke the false accusations stirred up by the devil, thus not allowing for the body to be healed (A false accuser poisons the body of Christ as much as he poisons his own soul). For he does not care enough to clear a brother's name until the stench of a controversy comes up into his nostrils.

And is this not all a sign that the end of the age is near? For did not Christ ask "when the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Lk. 18:8) And will not some of His servants be found with "guile" ("deceit" or "subtily") in their mouths? (Rev. 14:5) And will not iniquity abound and the love of many wax cold? (Mt. 24:12) And will not many actually hate the truth (2 Thess. 2:10) and turn to heresy? (1 Tim. 4:1-2) And will not some be smiting their fellow servants? (Mt. 24:49) And will not some be eating and drinking with the drunken? (Mt. 24:49; whether they be believers or unbelievers) And will not many be deceived and deceiving? (Mt. 24:4-5; 2 Tim. 3:13) And will not many become offended? (Mt. 24:10) And will not many betray one another, and hate one another? (Mt. 24:10) And will not many simply not know Christ? (Mt. 25:12)

#### HISTORICAL DETAILS

At a meeting with Mr. Antion in the spring of 1998 to discuss a critical doctrinal issue, to which I had submitted a carefully composed yet boldly written treatise, I began in my quest to follow through on the exhortation which is given to us in Gal. 6:6: "Let him who is taught the word communicate to him who teaches in all good things". The treatise that I had submitted was a handwritten exposition of the contradictions which currently exist between our official church policy on marriage outside the church and that of our current practice. But to my surprise, my boldness in sharing new truth became misconstrued by the pastor as an expression of an "attitude" problem, inasmuch that he was on the verge of threatening to disfellowship me from the church at the end of our heated discussion (Rather, he was the one who was heated while I remained

calm, hoping he would argue the doctrine and not any evil intentions on my part). I apologized for any harshness of diction that may have offended him (though I had edited the 20-page document numerous times before I approached him, and was especially careful not to offend in word or deed against an ordained minister of God; 1 Tim. 5:17), but I did not apologize for the thesis. Even he agreed in principle with the logic of my argument that the church ought not be approving or sanctioning marriages between converted, baptized members and unconverted, unbaptized attendees, which teaching indeed is in full accordance with that of church policy and of Scripture, though he refused to believe in my final conclusion that such a covenant constituted sin on the part of the member who enters such a covenant. In this whole matter Mr. Antion was to be blamed (as Peter was when he was approached by Paul, who "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed"; Gal. 2:11); first, for taking 9 months before finally staging a meeting with me to discuss this high-priority matter (having broken his word about 2 or 3 times, in breaking the ninth commandment) and secondly, for refusing to surrender the right to admit certain exceptions to the rule of this doctrine, when Scripture and policy revealed that no minister has the right in Christ to do so) and, thirdly, for not taking this doctrine seriously enough before sanctioning just such a marriage in the church, just a couple of months after I had broached the subject with him.

The pastor then asked that I re-submit my thesis to the doctrinal committee for review, which I did in that year, summarizing on one page the basic premises which supported my conclusion. This same one-page summary was then circulated to certain respected elders in the church for their perusal, for the sake of seeking counsel and for gathering a consensus of the Spirit, having no unclean, ulterior motives on my part for the purpose of causing offense or division in the church. But I knew of the risk that I was taking, being well aware of the lukewarm condition of the church today, that many brethren have fallen prey to the snares of the devil (2 Tim. 2:26), to indifference, to suspicions, to fears, to unbelief, to evil spirits, to evil-speaking, to pride, to arrogance, to rebellion, to revenge, to self-justification, to self-sufficiency (that is "I have need of nothing", as it states in Rev. 3:17, "to speak to me, to correct me, to lead me, to judge me, to help me, to teach me, to question me, or to answer me"), and to a love for independent thinking and opinion. For the most part my doctrinal discovery was not well received, with most of the discussions with the elders not being able to get past sentence number one (namely, "sin is the transgression of the law", which shows how backward some of us are). Therefore I did not hold out too much hope for the Council if this was going to be the prevailing view, but I was prepared for that too since I well know that we are nearing the end of this age, thank God, and that we must take comfort and hope in Christ--not in men--to restore all righteousness soon, regardless of what men are doing or not doing behind a desk or podium.

Months passed in '98, and with my concerns having come out in the open among several of the influential brethren, evil words began to circulate that I was causing offense in the church. Not only had I spoken to the aforementioned elders and deacons in the church about this doctrine, but I had also posed the question to a small number of lay members through informal discussions, who no doubt were able to make the connection in this matter with me and its recent application in the church. Loose lips added one to two to get three, and soon I was judged to be judging a brother in the church, contrary to the law of God, in addition to causing division among the brethren (the question that applies here is "What price truth?" But the reply, "Well, speak the truth in love", does not mean that we are to be "wise like the devil", blind guides, hypocrites, insincere, deceitful, double-minded, given to flattery, politically motivated, fearful of men, or lovers of friendship, unity, and acceptance at the expense and sacrifice of biblical truth. Ask yourself this question: What are you willing to give up to keep the truth of God? In the church, we only cater to the will of God--not to political compromise--for the end of the age is at hand; praise God. This means that it doesn't matter what you or I think--what matters is what God thinks). On one occasion when I was absent from church for several weeks, being jobless, penniless, weary, and distressed, I returned to services to the wonderment of two or three members who had assumed that I had left for another church. It later began to dawn on me that someone likely had planted a rumour. But I was too tired to be overly troubled by this, not to mention too grateful to be coming to church.

I missed attending the UCG Feast at Orford in '98, having failed to make arrangements with a number of brethren to accommodate me, so I knew I would have to brace myself over the coming winter, knowing that little movement was taking place in the spiritual arena. If one puts off critical issues in time, or continues to speak evil of a brother, the day of Recompense is coming soon (Gal. 5:15, 2 Thess. 1:6, Rom. 2:5-9, Heb. 10:30). When we fight among ourselves in the church, in reality we do not fight among ourselves or against "flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). The enemy is not your fellowman--it is Satan. I had forgotten this for a while when I had strayed away from God.

Time continued to pass, little spiritual progress was made, Passover '99 came and went. One way to judge your standing in Christ is to evaluate your conduct shortly before and after Passover. If your behaviour is gruff, frivolous, non-chalant, lifeless, cold, fleshly and the same old you, and your speech littered with worldly and drivelling talk, you may have forgotten your old sins were once purged (2 Pet. 1:9). If we do not partake of the Passover worthily, we will be judged unworthy of His grace and come under His wrath (1 Cor. 11:29-32, Rom. 2:1-6). Thus, today many of the brethren are falling sick, weak, dull, dying or dead (v30). As Jesus said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent" (Rev. 3:19). And balanced budgets, income figures, booklet printing, magazine distribution, TV & radio programs, chat forums, and dry attendance figures are not "progress". Godliness with contentment is progress (1 Tim. 6:6. Being perfect with the Father and Son is progress (Mt. 5:48, Mr. 6:33, Jn. 17:21, 23).

Finally, with little or no prospect of reconciliation in sight, and I becoming ever more jaded, distressed, and as it were

stretched out on a "torture rack", Mr. Antion, to my "relief", chose the day of Pentecost to accost me, having approached me with a sense of urgency and foreboding in his voice. Before this, my spirit was in agitation for part of the day, and I sensed that something was astir as I laboured to rejoice in the Spirit (Rom. 14:17). At that fateful moment I had been sitting in my usual place in the front row with the service having drawn to a close, leaning forward in my seat and with Bible in hand, eager for the fellowship of the Spirit, while desperately attempting to jump-start a spiritual conversation with a fellow brother, who was sitting beside me, spread-legged, dull-faced and unnerved near the disgusting and repulsive scent of urine that smelled nearby. Friction was in the air but I did my best to ignore it, as I delved into the exciting mysteries of the seventy-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9. Mr. Antion arrived at that moment showing some misgiving in his face, as he proceeded to denigrate my already tainted name by charging me with causing offense to certain brethren, while also insinuating that I was responsible for discouraging members from attending the church. I sought to defend myself but he pressed. I engaged my defenses again but he continued to press, without presenting a witness (cowardly refusing to identify even one) or showing me much mercy on his part. His words to me were: "I'm hearing things about you, Ned!...", "I know your personality...", "You rub people the wrong way...", "Your hand gesturing is offensive...", "And I remember your abrasive doctrinal treatise...", forgetting that in the latter case I had apologized for any slight of negligence on my part, whereas he seemed not to refrain from keeping me ever mindful of it, in shaming the gospel of the forgiveness of God through Christ. I replied that the accusers and witnesses had to be brought forward, as the law of God would have us do (2 Cor. 13:1), and that I could amply justify my actions by faithfully resorting to the Scriptures (and indeed for several months, I had been carrying along in my coat pocket a worn, folded sheet of paper on which were written many a scripture, as a defense against any good work of which I should be accused). But Mr. Antion ignorantly mocked me for this, blurting out, "Oh, right, did Jesus walk around thinking He was going to be accused all the time!?", to which I emphatically replied, "Yes, to His death!" But I sensed that his heart was hardened, and his eye evil toward me (for he was putting more faith in evil reports about me, and in his own evil view of me, than in the credibility of my own defense), as he was on the verge of blowing up at the end, of which emotion I was all too familiar, having myself a far more violent-tempered father with whom I live. At this point he threatened to disfellowship me again, saying "Ned, if I hear any more about you, that you are driving away members from the church, you will be gone" and, also, "Why do you attend with us anyway, as there are many other churches like you who like to 'point the finger'? Why don't you attend with them?" Also, in response to my criticism that a suspension is unjust in the church if the defendant has not been able to receive a proper hearing, he said, "Who do you think YOU are, buster!" Any such words beyond the simple "yay" or "nay" is sin (Mt. 5:37, Mt. 12:36, Ja. 5:12). Needless to say, when I sought to explain myself from the Scriptures, he did not have the time of day on the holy day to hear me.

Mr. Antion, in private conversations with me, was wont to speak like a carnal man of the flesh (Rom. 8:1,5) to the point where it made me shudder (as I have already shown above, when he said to me, "Why do you attend with us?" Mt. 18:5,6, Mk. 9:37, Jn. 6:44, 3 Jn. 9,10), but I kept quiet to save him embarrassment. On one occasion, I faintly recall a conversation over an obvious point in which I assumed it would be a matter-of-course that he would agree with me, in which I commented that it was not possible for him as a man to force a member to act contrary to his will, or to live the life of another member in his place, to which to my amazement he retorted, "Yes I can". It came out of his mouth so glibly and unexpectedly that I barely took notice of it, but afterwards the arrogance of the reply sank in when at first I did not want to believe it, that such an answer could come out of the mouth of an ordained minister of God. It seems to me that the bolder some of us become, the worse we become, in not having the grace, mercy or love of God to temper it. Such words are an affront to the person and authority of Jesus Christ, who is the head of every man (1 Cor. 11:3). I wonder just how many immature and insecure ministers we have in the Church of God today, who presently are killing their flocks with the sword (Jn. 16:2), or shooting them down with the bow (Rev. 6:2), to do "service" to God? (Jn. 16:2; this verse is being fulfilled among us in the church today, and not just among those in the world; those who "put you out of the synagogues" are the ones who are in authority in it).

On another occasion, just a few weeks prior to the '99 Feast, I had been informed a couple of times by our Toronto office that Feast assistance had run dry for that year and that there was little or no chance of any becoming available. Even Mr. Antion had made the announcement about a month earlier that the budget for festival assistance had become exhausted. But I was still hoping for about \$200 to be spared. I spoke to Mr. Antion personally just a couple of weeks before the Feast to persuade him to accept my application for assistance, which he gave me allowance to do, putting me under the assumption that there was a possibility that funds would become available (I was aware that they were over budget, but this obviously meant that a few were able to squeeze in). He faxed me the form and I was charged a fee for picking it up. After submitting my application to the office and waiting a couple of weeks for a response, I met him on Atonement and asked him about it. His flat answer was: "There are no funds; we're completely out". Then I replied, "not even a \$100 or \$200? But he said, "NO". So I asked, "Why did you have me apply in the first place?" It appeared to me at the time that there was deception on his part, in knowing all along that he would not release any funds, yet allowing me to go through this exercise in futility anyway. Meanwhile it annoys me that, at a time of distress in the church, our chief ministry goes plane-hopping with church funds from feast site to feast site (during the middle of the Feast) just to keep a speaking schedule, or to sample new food in a restaurant, or to do more sight-seeing, while putting themselves under the illusion that their all-important "live appearances" are somehow far more indispensable and invaluable to the church than its biblical responsibility to provide for every needy member to attend (With the church in such a fractured and dissolute state, unless your purpose is to mend differences, travail with the brethren, reprove, rebuke and exhort, it is a waste of church funds, as is giving feast

assistance to "able" transfers; Note "own" in 1 Tim. 5:8, the misuse of funds in 1 Tim. 5:9-16, and the ministerial charge of 2 Tim. 4:2). It also troubled me that at the Feast the church donated over \$800 to a local food bank, while I was left seeking to scrounge. I even called the treasurer at the U.S. office, Mr. Kirkpatrick, in the hope he would spare a few "tens" from his budgeted "thousands" (from his print, advertising, personal expense, or entertainment budgets perhaps?) but he was another useless case, giving me the typically cold, heartless, bureaucratic and politically mushy reply that I'm beginning to expect from many of our business-oriented officers in the church, "Be warmed and go in peace" (Ja. 2:16). Is it too much for a desperate member who is in need to ask a fellow brother to spare him a \$50, \$100, or \$200, especially if he requests it as a loan? How would you feel if even a bank refused to give you this amount? Is it not evil and faithless in the sight of God when one shuts up his heart and hand from giving? (Ja. 2:14-17) Or will you tell Jesus Christ that this is acceptable? "Whoso has this world's goods and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his bowels (thus many of us have been cursed in their bowels with cancer and other diseases), how dwells the love of God in him?" (1 Jn. 3:17)

After the tongue lashing on Pentecost, I began to realize the devil was seeking to expel me, which I had grieved about for a time well in advance (not about the possibility of being excommunicated, as that would be a worthy goal if it were for the glory of God, but about being misunderstood, misinterpreted, despised, stifled to a state of inertia, falsely accused, evil spoken of, judged as unclean and unworthy of the fellowship, when a godly reaction and not a carnal one was my hope; Jude 14-15), expecting that a backlash was inevitable as a result of the seeds I had sown. As a believer in Christ I sow good seed--not the seed of the devil (Mt. 13:27-28, 39).

I knew immediately that for my sake and for the sake of the church I quickly had to get this matter settled, as Christ would have me to do (Mt. 5:23-26), and to bring in all accusers and witnesses together to attain a godly and necessary reconciliation, for reconciliation is of God (2 Cor. 5:18-19). Yet this was delayed by Mr. Antion time and time again, from the day of Pentecost '99, on which he threatened to expel me, until the Feast of '99, just as it was from the moment I sought his counsel in the matter of the aforementioned doctrinal issue, which turned out to be an even longer delay (spanning about nine months), and involving a few broken appointments on his part. It was a strain on my spirit as I agonized over the matter. The pastor did arrange one meeting about 3 or 4 weeks in advance of the scheduled date but I was not able to attend, as I was either out of gas for my car and/or in a too weary and mentally-distressed state to attend. He also may have tried to arrange another meeting, but it perpetually seemed as if he was trying to find me when I was not present, while I was seeking him when he was just too busy (with "doing the work", I suppose, while forgetting that the "real work" is described in Jn. 6:29; therefore if that "real work" is to believe in Christ why am I being dissuaded from believing in Him and in His power to reconcile, when Mr. Antion is behaving in the way?) So it was left to reek in the cesspool of indigence and inertia, which is the way many of us seem to like it, lest our shame, fear and ignorance be exposed, in preferring to avoid controversy and weighty issues of the Spirit (Mt. 23:23). This reminded me of the publicized '98 incident involving the Minneapolis church, in which certain members were acting incorrigibly toward any possible reconciliation with the ministry. Yet the Council agreed to stage a meeting with a delegation that was being sent from Milford, with Mr. Antion being one of those sent. At that meeting they spent about 10 hours, almost the entire day, pleading for these rebels to return, to see their need to submit, and to open their eyes to the folly of their ways. When I first heard this announced, I just shook my head and thought, "What a pathetic waste of time!" If one is seeking to reconcile two parties, he should require no more than an hour or so before he ought to get up and leave. He should not be begging, pleading, articulating, pontificating, lecturing, psycho-babbling, diplomatizing, eternally counselling or cajoling rebels to return to church, especially when they show no sign of submission anyway. Meanwhile, as a loyal member of the church and as a regular attendee, I could not even arrange a prompt and suitable meeting with my own pastor (who fully agreed to travel afar to Minneapolis on "church business", in bowing to the request of the office and Council, to both his employer and colleagues, to mediate a hopeless reconciliation) in order to clear my name of false accusations, much less respond to them. And I am a supporter of the work of UCG. Yet I am not a "denominational" or "splinter group" idolater, as some are.

It became obvious to me that Mr. Antion was just too busy "doing the work", to busy for a man who later would be selected to head the new Bible Center to attend to a critical doctrinal matter with me, too busy to exonerate a fellow brother from unjust blame, to busy to investigate a possible "demon" in his pastoral fold who was wrecking havoc with church unity, too busy on Sabbath mornings, too busy on Sabbath afternoons (but not too busy to take a round trip flight on a double-holy day weekend to visit only a handful of members), and too busy rolling out the red carpet for fellow Council member, Victor Kubik, who would be arriving one Sabbath weekend for us to hear yet another political seminar on the lessons of the war in Kosovo, to a spindly, mailing list audience of just thirteen people! And later justifying it as a "success". Some of us in our attempt to flatter God and to save Him embarrassment will go to any length just to justify any work we do as a "success", while repressing the glaring evidence of mass deception, unbelief, disunity, lukewarmness and lawlessness in our midst, which has befallen many of our members in many parts of the globe, in fulfillment of 2 Thess. 2:3 (A minister can enjoy the sound of his preaching and piping all he wants, as per Lk. 7:32, but the brethren are not with him; otherwise they would follow; witness the size of constituents in a breakup). Meanwhile, Satan continues his deceptive work of sowing seeds of discord, suspicion, unbelief, evil speaking, lying (yes, lying!), filthy communication, blasphemies, false accusations, distortions, envyings, jealousies, discontentment, bitterness, wrath, anger, malice, and the "evil eye" (Mk. 7:22). Your eye is "evil" toward your brother when you consider him unworthy of your fellowship, your church, and your God, even though he has not been proven guilty of offense. Your eye is evil toward your brother when you take from gossip your source of the true image of that

person. Your eye is evil toward your brother when you hold him unforgivably guilty of a sin he has not committed. Your eye is evil toward your brother when you make him "anathema", accursed, or an excommunicate from Christ (Gal. 1:8-9), and unworthy of the fellowship of your right hand (Gal. 2:9). Such kind shun from taking their dark deeds and words to the light (Jn. 3:19-21).

When, on October 16, 1999, just days after the Feast had ended (and what did I tell you about behaviour at feast time?), and in the heat of answering irrelevant questions being directed at me, and having the sense that I was under interrogation by my own pastor, I announced, in response to Mr. Antion's decision to disfellowship me, that I would be taking this matter to both the U.S. and Canadian councils, his stoic reaction was one of not being perturbed. I had informed him previously on Pentecost of the same course of action I intended to take if he was intent upon following through with his threat. But on this occasion his response was different from that of four months earlier. On Pentecost, he responded with the blank, pensive look of one who seemed in fear of his judgment being overturned by the Council. On this day, with sins mounting and pride elevating, his look was one of smug and arrogant confidence. Mr. Antion's stunning reply to me was: "Ned..., you can take this higher up if you want, but it won't go anywhere". I perked up with the reply: "Higher up? If it goes up to Christ, He'll justify me". I sensed that the devil was about to cast me out.

Also, on October 16th, a number of other pointless, irrelevant and despicable thoughts were to emerge from Mr. Antion's mouth, such as, "Have you told members that you know who the two witnesses are?" (to which I responded within, "What does that have to do with the false accusations against me?" And, besides, wouldn't anyone want to know this anyway?) and, "(Man's Name Removed) told me that you asked him for money at the Feast; is that true?" (as if it were a sin to ask a brother for help, when a careful examination of Deut. 14, 16, Neh. 5 and Lk. 6:30, 34-35 makes it incumbent upon every member in the church to see to that very obligation) and, "How many other people at the Feast did you ask for money" (as if it were a sin for a poor member who was spending \$250 in Feast tithe and \$550 of his ONLY SAVINGS to ask for just \$50 more; which was in stark contrast to Mr. Antion's genuine concern of only two years ago, when he asked me at that time, "Ned..., have you got enough money for the Feast?... Are you sure?"). After he had asked this question he tempted me again saying, "Are you going to lie here?" Afterward, he made these conclusions: "Ned..., you just don't fit in with United..., you can find another church that's your type..." (which had me wondering for a moment just what constituted his "type"; and "you don't fit in" were the actual words he used, which had me smelling a "Pharisee"). At this time he even criticized the submission of suggestions I made for the improvement of worship activities at the Feast, which I made with the hope of making the Feast more of a devoted place of worship, of collective prayer, of spiritual ministry, of hymn singing, of music playing, of scriptural discussion and of informal fellowship, wherein the candles are always lit and the doors never close til late (rather than one in which our celebrations more closely resemble that of a worldly and secular holiday, where our main objective is to herd the brethren into and out of services, from one restaurant to another, from one tourist attraction to another, or from one vain party or listless seminar to another). But Mr. Antion's worst and most offensive statement to me was: "If one does not work, he should not go to the Feast" (which was a satanic distortion of 2 Thess. 3:10, similar to the devil's perversion of Scripture in Mt. 4:6), which I believed to be a reprehensible, subtle and merciless allusion to my status as an unemployed member of the church, whereupon I picked up my Bible and left, knowing that such a remark could only have come from the devil, and that I was dealing with an unreasonable person in a defiled place (with Mr. Kears showing full complicity by not saying a word, thus bearing false witness before Christ), remarking at the last that "We will not let Satan get the upper hand in this!"

#### SUBMISSION OF CHARGE

I am pursuing a charge of blasphemy against Mr. Antion for his statement to me of October 16, 1999, on which he uttered the damnable words: "If one does not work, he should not go to the Feast". I believe Satan entered his heart at the time he spoke these words, which are foreign to a believer of God in the church and contrary to our long-standing doctrine and practice of ensuring that all members be able to attend the Feast. Let us remember here the words of Paul in Rom. 15:18 who declared to the church that he would not "dare speak of any of those things which Christ has not wrought by me, to make the gentiles obedient, by word and deed". This teaching, if it is not censured, gives occasion to men to blaspheme the name of God, His doctrine, and His commandment that we all keep the Feast (Zech. 14:16-19), for they are not "wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ", and they are not a "doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3). In making such a claim before two witnesses, he not only shames all the poor and needy in the church but also the Lord Jesus Christ who is an avenger of the poor, the head of the church, and the Judge of the quick and the dead. Jesus Christ does not take this lightly, even if we do or the Council does. Therefore Mr. Antion ought to repent before God and recant these words, lest a greater evil fall upon him.

I urge the Council of Elders to judge righteously (Pr. 31:9), for not only have I not been judged according to the law in the matter, but I have been commanded to be smitten (Acts 23:3; tupto, "pummelled") contrary to it.  
by: Ned Dancuo, Canada (See Editor's Comments on the last page.)

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Thank you and please thank all the others who sent me cards--I received them yesterday and they made me feel good. What an awesome God who, in all his wisdom, teaches us to pray and intercede for others...God can do it without us but He shows us that we--humans need each other and we grow--by doing this!!! Love you all----Karen Schluter (Via E-mail)



## GO TO YOUR BROTHER...

by Arlan Weight, Bismarck, North Dakota

From my first encounter with the Worldwide Church of God in the late 60's and early 70's 'suspension' and 'disfellowshipping' were common practices. Prior to either one of these measures being taken, there was an effort to reconcile with the one involved in the infraction. From my perspective the effort usually involved the ministry, maybe not always, but usually.

Over the years I've always had this nagging thought that many people were never reconciled or encouraged in a right way such that they would return and consequently were disfellowshipped. Once disfellowshipped they rarely ever returned. Again, this is my view of things. How about you? How many people have you ever seen return to the local church congregation once they had been officially disfellowshipped?

In Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus gives a short and clear guide to solving problems in the church between brethren. Does the prescribed method work? Has it worked for you? If it works, why didn't the majority of cases become reconciled, or so it seems to me. Could it be we may have overlooked some things in the instruction that would have made all the difference? Let's take a close look at what Jesus said.

"Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear you then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto you as an heathen man and a publican. (Mat. 18:15-17)

Notice the word "Moreover" beginning the verse, which seems to indicate this instruction is adding to some previous discussion. The discussion in this chapter is dealing with offenses so you have to back up to verse 1. Here Jesus is explaining to his disciples that they need to be very careful not to offend the "little ones". He's letting them know how serious an infraction that is. In fact it's so serious he covers it twice in the same setting; verse 6 and verse 10. Then in verse 15 He launches into the discussion again of offenses and how to handle them.

Jesus stresses the importance and how to deal with a problem with your brother...or sister, which seems to imply someone close to you, maybe a family member, or from the context someone who has been called to the same hope...another church member. In a general sense, though it can also mean anyone because we are all brothers and therefore the prescribed guidance is for anyone.

Notice the most important aspect of dealing with issues of people having problems with other people and that is it should be between the two parties only and no one else. This seems to be the most vital part of the equation to guarantee the success of the reconciliation...keep the matter private...between you and the other person.

### Talebearing

Of course I was not close to many of the cases, but it always seemed to me that too many people knew of the problem early on. There were some times when I knew for certain, there could be no possible way the minister could know of the goings on, unless someone else informed him. Therefore this appears to be a clear violation of the instruction given. Even if it only involved one other person, namely the minister, this violates the instruction. So, could it be this was the first thing that limited the success of the reconciliation?

It most assuredly hinders the success, especially if the first time the person involved in the infraction, finds out, when the minister shows up at his or her doorstep. How often has this occurred? And then we wonder why the bad attitude. How would you feel if you're confronted by the minister of some perceived problem and its the first time you became aware of it? What kind of thoughts would run through your mind? What kind of feelings would it generate toward the people you suspect informed the minister? Would you have a bad attitude?

Look at what Proverbs 18:8 says "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly"...kind of like an ulcer. If you've ever had one, you know it's always a touchy thing from then on. So also is talebearing, it's always in the back of your mind of what someone else said about you. They may have thought they were doing right when they told the minister, but again it's not what the instruction says. It says "go and tell him his fault between you and him alone."

In fact the problem may just go away by itself if we give it a little time to let the dust settle. Take a look at Proverbs 26:20. "Where no wood is, there the fire goes out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceases."

So this is the first thing that went wrong in trying to reconcile a brother over some perceived problem. Instead of helping the situation, telling the minister introduced another problem, and maybe involved more people now. It's not hard to see how some simple little thing can grow and grow when this kind of thing takes place. Let's be honest about it, can we admit that this has happened, maybe we were even involved in the telling.

### Gaining Your Brother...

Going to your brother, one on one is for the purpose of 'gaining your brother'. One can see this from the context and the way it is written. If it is just for the sake of airing out your grievance with him, there would be no need to do the next phase of taking one or two others with you.

When coupled with Matthew 5:24 one can see Jesus' strong emphasis is on reconciliation and nothing less. One can see it is so important that unless you have spent effort to reconcile, you might as well forget your prayers being answered. He's saying don't even think about talking to me until you've settled matters with your brother.

With that understanding one can also see the frame of mind we should be in when going to our brother. Have we always gone with the frame of mind of Galatians 6:1-3? Have we always approached our brother by admitting our faults to him as well? How strongly have we desired him to be back in good terms with us? Let's be honest, and I think if we're really honest about it, we would have to admit many times we went to him in a grudging manner, where we say to ourselves "it says tell him his fault" and so here I am, I told him his fault and now it's up to him. Well now...really...did we really live up to the intent of the instruction?...hardly.

I think we can safely say, unless we recognize the 'beam in our own eye'...when speaking with our brother, the chances are slim on our reconciliation progress. But if we do go...acknowledging our own faults, we will be successful 99% of the time. If we do it right, there won't be a need to take one or two others with you. You will have gained your brother the very first time you go.

"Take one or two more"...

If you're not successful when you privately go to your brother, then tell it to the minister and take him with you. Is this what Jesus says? Let's read it again.

"But if he will not hear you then take with you one or two more". What? One or two more... no mention of a minister, not even a deacon? But most often isn't this the way it happens? If at first you didn't succeed, the idea is to let the minister know and he then, if he wants to, can bring a deacon along? Isn't this the way it usually is done. Isn't this the way you remember it? Maybe you've personally experienced this scenario.

This is just another area where we fail to follow explicitly the instruction. If it doesn't say take the minister, it means just that. Sometimes the Bible speaks as eloquently in what it doesn't say, as well as what it does say. We must not read into it something that isn't there! It says "one or two more", not necessarily the minister. But why not? Why not take the minister? Why not take a deacon?

Let's ponder this question for a moment by putting ourselves in the shoes of the person who committed the 'trespass'...the person with whom we are trying to reconcile with. How does he or she view your coming to him? Does he view it with disdain in that your coming to him to simply point out his mistakes or shortcomings? How did you present your case to him when you went to him privately? Did you do it with 'meekness, considering your faults' also?

As was mentioned above, most often if it's done this way, your success to reconcile is most often guaranteed. But because you went to him merely to point out his faults you were not well received. And now you're coming with someone who is viewed as having authority...the ministry. It can be intimidating.

Again, try to think of it in this way, by taking the other side. How would you want to be entreated? With a show of force? Or gently? By taking the ministry are we coming to him gently? Think about it...If we take the minister, deacon, or someone viewed by everyone to be an authority..are we coming with meekness? Hardly!

So this is the first thing. How are we approaching our brother, with meekness or with force? The second thing is this. What is the purpose of taking one or two others? Is it to make sure you have enough fire power? Is it an effort to make sure the one who trespassed is firmly convinced of his trespass? Let's look at the instruction again.

"Take one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established". Read it again. It's simply to witness...to record the words being said. As far as we can tell here the witnesses are not even needed to help out in the dispute. They are meant to be objective bystanders...to make sure "every word is established". Maybe some of the fault is with the one going to the brother. Maybe they can see some of the 'beam' in his own eye.

So let's say, up to this point you've done every thing explicitly the way the instruction says. You've gone to your brother privately first. As far as you know, no one even knows there's a trespass. And you considered your own faults and you really want to be on good terms again, but the person simply rejected you. So you persisted and took one or two others, maybe even friends of the person who committed the trespass, and still he or she is not hearing you. So what then?

"Tell it to the church"...

"And if he neglect to hear them, tell it to the church"... The word 'church' comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia' meaning 'that which is called out'.

Over the years we have all been taught that this is the time when you bring in the ministry. This is the time when you turn it over to him. But is it really? Look closely. The word 'ekklesia' is used 115 times in the New Testament. Three times it is translated 'assembly' and 112 times 'church'. It is the same word as 'church' in Acts 2:47 "The Lord added to the church"...Acts 5:11, "great fear came upon all the church"...Acts 7:38, "This was he that was in the church in the wilderness"...

In every case the word 'church', from it's context, cannot be viewed in any other way but by that of an assembly of people 'ekklesia', the called out ones. Could it be...could it really be that we have had a bit of misunderstanding here? All these years we thought, or so we've been taught that the "church" was to be the ministry. Could it really be that we have been wrong about this? Could it really mean tell it to the congregation of believers?

Telling it to the minister alone is like seeing him as representing the church. But does he? What is the church anyway? Is it not the body of Christ, (Eph. 1:23) having many members? (1 Cor. 12:12) Again let's not try to read into it something that is not there.

So in revealing the problem to the church how should it be done? Let's try to envision it this way as to an assembled group and as an effort to reconcile, not to establish your own position. What could be the advantage of this? First of all everyone hears the same word spoken, Secondly you have now harnessed the entire assembly in this effort, other friends and acquaintances, who are as interested as you are, to see the person back in the fellowship. Everyone knows the whole story, not bits and pieces and not done behind anyone's back.

Take a look at Galatians 6:1-2. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ".

Yes, indeed it makes good sense to tell it to the 'ekklesia'...the called out ones. There may indeed be someone in the entire group who is more qualified to go to him or her. Someone least expected who may be more spiritual who can make all the difference, maybe a more personal friend, not to mention now you've opened it up so everyone can pray for the reconciliation. So now what? What if all the effort is to no avail, the trespasser still remains cold? What then?

"Let him be to you as a heathen man and a publican"...

The key word here is Let. Cut him some slack. Let him have his own life. Don't force him into trying to be or do something he just doesn't want to do. Let him live his life in freedom to choose. This is God's way.

So then what should be our relationship to the person? How should we relate? Should we shun or avoid him or her? Think long and hard about this issue. What kind of thoughts does it engender in the other person?

Years ago I can remember it being said, if we avoid contact with persons disfellowshipped, it would make them feel ashamed or put them in a repentant mood and they will want to return. Think again!... Instead of pointing them in the direction of apology, it only hardened their resolve to stay away. Shunning or avoiding people sends a clear message to them. It says "Don't come too close, you'll defile me! For I am holier than you!" (Isa. 65:5) What does God think of it? "They stifle me. Day in and day out they infuriate me."

So then 'Let him be to you as a heathen man and a Publican' simply means let him alone, but treat him with the same dignity and respect you should have for all human beings. Don't shun him and don't carry a grudge.

"Don't take the law into your own hands. Instead, feed your enemy if he is hungry. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink and you will be heaping coals of fire on his head. In other words, he will feel ashamed of himself for what he has done to you. Don't let evil get the upper hand, but conquer evil by doing good." (Rom. 12:20-21)

If the intent is to bring awareness of the wrongdoing to the one who has trespassed, this is the way it is to be done, by doing good to them, not by shunning or avoiding them...just the opposite. Even after you've done all of the above steps, this last approach remains and is to be in force as long as you both shall live. It is the last attempt, but who can tell, if after a long time, the offender will really come to himself and he or she will have a change of heart.

Was all the effort worth it? Indeed it was! If, after a lifetime of effort...if it takes that long, will it have been worth it? Absolutely. Reread again God's will in seeking out them that go astray. What is the final end?...Great Joy!...greater than that of the one who went not astray.

"If a man has a hundred sheep, and one wanders away and is lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others and go out into the hills to search for the lost one? And if he finds it, he will rejoice over it more than the ninety-nine others safe at home! Just so, it is not my Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish."

#### Summary

When we look at Christ's instruction and compare it to our actual performance we can see why people feel jaded or betrayed. It comes down to the fact of not carrying out the instruction explicitly. Often, we put our own twist on it or read into it something that's not there.

If we deeply value the fact that it is God who does the calling and causes the repentance, and if we deeply recognize our own failures and need for forgiveness, we can then be useful tools in God's hands to..."Go to your brother"

#### COMMENTS FROM THE EDITOR:

As I read through Ned's letter of appeal, I found that he had written it in just such a way, that as I read it, I couldn't help but to put myself into his shoes, as it's happening to him. It was as if I could feel what he felt as this happened. Some may have a hard time putting themselves into Ned's shoes, and perhaps I had an easy time with it because I've been there. Much of what Ned went through and dealt with is the same as what happened in our case. Recently a woman wrote to us, and said; If you are going to be in a corporation church, then you have to go by their rules. The big problem I see with that, is this: A group of people in a congregation pay a group of men to rule over them. I know, that back in 1995, when United first started, I was under the impression that this group of 12 men were going to see that the rights of the people were protected, so they did all of this law making. They have an appeals process for those who have a dispute, so that people aren't thrown out except for good reason. Does it work? We have a copy of United's Appeal policy, and even though it is long, it does look good on

paper, and gives a person the impression that this group has it all together. However, according to Ned's letter of appeal, he was told flat out that he could appeal to both councils, but it wasn't going anywhere. What kind of a statement is that? Why even have all of these rules and policies, if they don't mean anything? Why throw your money away, by investing in paperwork that goes no where? My point is that even if a person in a corporation church did want to follow the man made rules made by the group of 12, they would be unable to do it, because what is written by them on paper is not how it is carried out or enforced. Which ever minister or man in authority, that you deal with, will change the rules on a person so many times in the long period of time that they harass you, that you soon see the writing on the wall, that, they want me out, and they will do whatever it takes to get me out. There just is no way to defend yourself because the rules they play by are in a perpetual state of change. Those who have been through this will know what I am talking about. Then, there is the major problem here, in that they delete God's doctrines and replace them all with the doctrines of men, and I am amazed at how many people go along with this. Is your fear of men greater than your fear of God?

Perhaps this looks like I am picking on United AIA and have an ax to grind. Sorry to disappoint you. If the ministers who are mentioned in either one of these appeals have anything to say in their defense, we would be glad to print it, if it isn't too long, in which case we would make it available to the church, to send for it. It is the opinion of Darwin and I, that one of the reasons the church keeps splintering is because many are teaching the doctrines of men rather than of God, right in your churches. Many people believe what they are told and don't look in their Bibles to see whether it is so or not, and many people also just do what they are told by those in authority, all too often even when they know it is wrong. Many believe the rumors which are spread widely about those who leave or are put out, and because people are not allowed by authority to even tell their side of what happened or to present evidence, people believe the rumors. Relationships are hurt, because people are cut off through suspension and disfellowshipment, and those who are left sit there and in many cases think, wow, what was it that they did to be thrown out. The reality is most people were not thrown out because they transgressed God's law, but because men in authority wanted them out, least they show people what the Bible really says, rather than what men in authority want you to think it says.

It's time to heal relationships, and come back to loving each other, even if we don't all see everything exactly the same. We made Ned's appeal available to the church, according to Matthew 18:15-17 as God instructs. It doesn't matter to us which organization you are in, if you have something to take to the church, send it here, if it is too long to print, we will make it available to the church. If you want to apologize to someone and are unable to, because you are cut off from that person, send it here, we will take it to the church. If you are in the ministry and have something to say in your defense, or an apology, send it here.

Darwin and I can't get you back into your fellowships or anything like that, but we can try to put to rest some of those nasty rumors which people have a tendency to believe since they are usually not allowed to hear a persons defense before they are thrown out or their reason for leaving a fellowship. We sincerely want to make this option of taking it to the church available to anyone who wants to do this, in an attempt to heal relationships between people and families. We know that many will say, "Let God take care of it". Quite frankly, God did take care of it. When God made man, and woman, He made them complete with a brain. Then God instructed people through His word the Bible. God left very clear instructions on how to reconcile relationships with each other. God's instruction on that subject is found in Matthew 18:15-17. So God did take care of it, and even left us a part that we must do.

If you do not understand God's instruction to his people as stated in Matthew 18:15-17, then please read Arlan Weights other article titled "Go To Your Brother...". Arlan does a very good job in simplifying this instruction so everyone is able to understand what it says. Study it, and feel free to ask us questions.

Ned in his letter of appeal mentions Gary Antion's involvement in the appeal meeting that took place in the Minneapolis Area with yet another group of people who were thrown out of United AIA. An account of this meeting was printed in "The Journal" in the June 2000 issue. The address for "The Journal" can be found in the beginning of this newsletter, if you want to get a copy of that article. "The Journal", at this time charges \$2.00 each for back issues. Ned also makes a statement that "The Journal" is published by a fellow brother, for those who don't know what that means, please look in the front cover of your "Good News" magazine under "copy editor", and under "editor & publisher" in "The Journal".

In conclusion, we sincerely hope that you have found things in this newsletter which you can apply to improve the quality of your life and the lives of others as well here on this earth until Christ returns. Perhaps many will disagree with our approach to helping people to heal and reconcile their relations with others, however, we believe that abuses which continue in secret, will do just that, continue. When abuses are exposed, as a reality for people to see how they participated in the abuse and what the fruits of the abuse are, then we believe people will be less likely to continue to participate in these abuses against people in the future. We here in Bismarck, North Dakota look forward to your comments over the next two months in regard to the things we have presented here before you. We want to help you take it to the church for the intention of reconciliation and healing. Laura Lee

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IF YOU WANT TO KEEP PASSOVER AND DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD WITH US HERE AT 320 NORTH GRIFFIN STREET IN BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA, PLEASE CALL US AT (701) 258-7172 (LEAVE A MESSAGE, WE WILL RETURN YOUR CALL), OR E-MAIL US AT "Darwin-Laura@juno.com.--FOR TIMES OF SERVICES. THANK YOU