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Dear WCG members and ex-members:

Brothers and sisters, in the August 1996 co-worker letter, Joe Tkach, Jr. writes, "Will you join with me . . . to let the Worldwide Church of God be a living testament to . . . Jesus Christ?" He asks why one would want to go elsewhere, hold back on financial support or focus on the WCG's "negative." In this, my third and final open letter to publicly confront the WCG's abuses and problems, I will bring a number of important reasons to light showing the reason why WCG accountability is so important. For, it is true that the grace of God is impacting the lives of numerous individuals within the WCG, and a large number of them are leaving for other fellowships. I believe strongly that the "living testament to Jesus Christ" is not an **organization** at all but the **individual** lives of each and every one of you as you personally follow the Savior's lead (2 Corinthians 3:3). You don't need to be part of the WCG to be "part of God's miracle" (ibid). You yourselves are God's miracle!

[If you personally would like help or counsel in regard to spiritual healing, please don't hesitate to contact me. Or you may request a newsletter that I am editing. It seems the majority who left in years past either gave up on religion entirely or joined offshoot groups. Crossroads: Finding a Church Home after the WCG will recount the stories, the struggles and the victories, of the many ex-WCG members now finding worship, fellowship, and community in various Christian churches. It takes time, but Jesus does bring spiritual healing, and a healthy church can be an important part of the process. Also, please see Appendix A at the end of this letter for a number of materials on a ministry of healing that I can send you upon request.]

"Listen to the words but trust the behavior" is an adage that has continued to bother me as I observed the WCG as a member and pastor. In the past few years I continually asked myself was it live or was it memorex? Were the "changes" genuine and sincere or a show to avoid confrontation and gain approval with evangelicals while misleading members? The words sounded good much of the time. But, I personally felt the behavior continued to include the dishonest and abusive tactics of the WCG's past approach. From January 1995, I beseeched the administration for an open and honest approach, a sensitive and compassionate ministry to those who had been hurt, an appeal for forgiveness to those who had been abused and an expressed commitment to place faith in Jesus regardless of where that took us. However, it seemed the duplicity of the past continued. I remembered all too well the approach.

When I attended my first Ministerial Refresher Program at the headquarters in Pasadena, California, in 1992, we had an entire session on public relations. We were instructed in how to deal with the difficult questions of television or newspaper reporters. I still remember the 45 second technique wherein one would "spin" the difficult question in the first 30 seconds and then point to something positive about our group in the last 15 seconds. It was called ending with a "sparkler," I believe. Some of the more senior men were actually chosen to go on camera for practice, and then we critiqued their responses. Difficult questions about our three tithes and Mr. Armstrong's excesses were used to test the pastors' use of the technique. And, I personally have observed this kind of approach continuing.

"Real people and their real needs are always the main concern for Jesus"
Healing Spiritual Abuse, Ken Blue, 1994, p. 91

This seems a stark contrast to the approach of the apostle Paul: "We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. . . . For we do not preach ourselves [or an organization such as the WCG], but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:2-5).

After finally disclosing the bylaws in the July 23, 1996 Worldwide News, Bernie Schnippert writes that all corporations have confidential and secret documents. He makes the analogy to a church member not giving out their credit card number: "You have nothing illegal to hide, you simply wish to . . . protect yourself from the illegal . . . acts of others. . . ." He concludes that the board has a duty that includes "protecting confidential information of the church against possible wrongdoers, even against those who might **masquerade** [emphasis mine] as loyal friends" (p. 12). But, is it true that the WCG has nothing to hide from you? While there are no doubt appropriate documents that need to be kept confidential in corporations, there are also individuals in society that do indeed have things to hide. I personally believe the WCG's lack of personal and financial accountability and its "strongly legalistic . . . church government" (Joe Tkach, Jr., March/April 1996 Plain Truth) have led to a vast number of "secrets" and abuses (see Appendix B for a series of examples).

In January 1995, I wrote a paper entitled 'Ministry of Healing' in which I detailed the need for help to those the WCG had abused. I sent the paper to Joe Tkach, Sr. and Mike Feazell. The paper contained 14 actual case studies of WCG members whose lives had been severely damaged by our teachings and/or administration of them and contained a guideline for a ministry of healing to them. Among them:

- One who related to me how he lost a \$65,000 per year job 15 years ago because he was told he must not work on Saturday to be a real Christian. He and his wife recently skirted bankruptcy and he has struggled along self-employed ever since becoming a member. Of course, thousands of members have been underemployed or lost jobs due to the WCG sabbath/holyday teachings.
- One who died of cancer, after following the ministry's counsel to have faith and not go through with the surgery that the doctors felt would be successful (and that after the "official" doctrinal change on the subject). Again, thousands of WCG members have suffered due to the WCG teaching on faith and healing, and many have died, including numbers of children. One friend of mine was called by her pastor shortly after her baby died and sternly charged not to implicate the church.
- One whose child was severely impacted by the grief of losing a parent in an accident. The surviving parent realized the child was experiencing a lot of problems as a result of the death and asked the pastor if they could seek professional help. They were told no. Later after some serious problems surfaced with the child, the person asked again and was told no. Later the child attempted suicide. Thousands of WCG members suffered due to the requirement to give up a very large degree of personal autonomy to the ministry.
- One who is angry at the way he was treated growing up in the WCG. A deacon once slapped him on the head because his hair was not parted "correctly." He resents the Nazi concentration camp films shown at the Feast as recently as the 1980s. He is like thousands of members who suffered from fear tactics and control but continued coming due to guilt and the WCG teachings that it was the only true church and that others would go through the terrible tribulation.

The response I received from the WCG administration was very revealing. Hal Orr wrote to me the following:

"Your article, 'Ministry of Healing,' was passed on to me for possible inclusion in 'Reviews You Can Use' [WCG ministerial journal]. I want to say that I have come to share much of your perspective. While I have not done so, I am certain that I could reach back into my 19 years of field experience and list many legalistic abuses similar to those you have listed."

"Not long ago, I had significant input into a position paper . . . deal[ing] with certain prophetic teachings. I and others felt that the Church should publicly apologize and ask the forgiveness of those that we have sinned against as a result of that former teaching. Unfortunately, some believed [presumably other administrators] that in our litigious society such a public confession would open the Church to serious lawsuits, which, because of our confession, we would lose. Therefore the confession and request for forgiveness has been removed from the paper."

"I am not certain that the fear of lawsuits is justified. **I believe that even if such were possible, we owe it to others to make amends** [emphasis mine]. Confession and appeal for forgiveness would seem appropriate. But in the . . . position paper, it will not happen."

"I think that many people would believe that the situations you describe in your paper are worse than any harm caused by the prophetic doctrine dealt with in the proposed position paper. That being the case, I cannot see how we can print your article in its present format."

"I am also concerned that because you speak of the Church in transition from harmful cult to healing church (a position that does not offend me) that many who could benefit from what you say will discount your whole article" (cc:mail correspondence, January 25, 1995).

Perhaps the fear of lawsuits is justified. Steven Hassan, a leading cult exit counselor, wrote the following in Combatting Cult Mind Control, "Former members of many different cults are beginning to initiate civil law suits. They charge fraud, negligence, involuntary servitude, and harassment. They also sue for lost wages, for money and property turned over to the cult, and for psychological damages caused by the group's programs. Right now, 550 former Scientologists have a \$1 billion class action suit against Scientology" (p. 194). It would also appear that the administration is concerned about the issue of lawsuits with ministers who leave our fellowship. One pastor wrote to me about the tactics that were used to discredit him. One member called him to let him know the regional pastor was telling members he was mentally unstable. Just months ago Pasadena offered him a financial consideration based upon his signing the waiver at the end of this letter (see Appendix C).

Listen to the words but trust the behavior. Ralph Orr wrote that he believed the WCG had a responsibility toward those who have been abused. So do I! While Joe Tkach, Jr. published an antiseptic apology in the March/April 1996 Plain Truth that mentioned legalism, prophecy, and exclusivism, it did not cite the specific abuses the WCG has perpetrated: people died, families were split up, jobs were lost, finances were destroyed, personal lives were intruded upon, mental breakdowns and suicidal attempts occurred, and, worst of all, people's faith and trust in Jesus Christ was often destroyed.

The May/June 1996 Plain Truth cover article, "The Healing Ministry of Jesus," was originally to possess two parts: mine and Norman Shoaf's. His article seemed to me to be very honest and heartfelt, and, more importantly, having the good of the members and Jesus' will ahead of that of the appearances of the WCG organization. In it he wrote, "Here's effective help for all who suffer from the grief and loss of spiritual abuse and legalism -- and a heartfelt plea from the Worldwide Church of God. . . . Even our best intentions -- and the best intentions of Herbert W. Armstrong, who, at heart, I believe, meant well -- paved the way to a hell of painfully misguided prophetic fervor and legalism." Unfortunately, this article was cut and did not appear along with my article in the 1996 May/June Plain Truth.

In response to the "Ministry of Healing" document the WCG administration requested that I facilitate 24 workshops on spiritual healing to the entire ministry at regional conferences across the United States.

This I did between November 1995 and April 1996. 600 persons participated. One half the workshop consisted of an opportunity for pastors and their wives to share stories of abuse that occurred to them personally or that they perpetrated on others. The hundreds of stories that were related are confidential, but I may say generally that in the WCG there has been the highest level of spiritual abuse, committed both by and against the ministry: sexual abuse, exploitation and domination by higher-ups, public humiliation, control over private lives, character assassination, arranged marriages, intimidation, fraud, severe discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity, and egregious betrayals of confidentiality. And, while I never once observed any indication of the brain washing present in some cults, there was overwhelming evidence of what is termed 'mind control.' Control of behavior, thoughts, emotions and information was achieved by manipulation through fear and guilt, an elitist mentality, a demand for strict obedience and phobias about other groups and "leaving the church."

These abuses are not only historical in nature. They continue to occur. They not only include immoral and ethical breaches, some of the actions were illegal. They were not isolated incidents committed by a few exceptions unknown to the administration; they were present at every level. And, while not everyone's experience was negative, the abuse was a significant part of the culture of the church.

At times I wonder if the control has even abated. In Greg Albrecht's open letter response to Janis Hutchinson (May 31, 1996), he stated that it was just "common sense" that "if a local church were to incorporate for some reason, they would by this act be removing themselves from the Worldwide Church of God." I responded in an open letter to him (June 14, 1996) that regardless of the common sense of it all, there were in fact congregations legally incorporated locally and continuing in affiliation with the WCG. An inside source reported to me that the incorporated congregations were ordered to unincorporate on threat of disfellowshipment. I have also heard that local areas that have building funds of their own have been instructed to send those funds to Pasadena.

Evangelist Carn Catherwood was sent to Roanoke, Virginia after my resignation and to Memphis, Tennessee after the situation with Mark Cardona. In both areas he spent a lot of time talking about the importance of a centralized church so that an evangelistic work in Africa could continue. However, to my understanding the United States Worldwide Church of God no longer subsidizes the work in Africa at all, apparently making Mr. Catherwood's arguments confusing at least and suspect at most. A significant number in the Memphis congregation are African American.

One member related to me her memory of one such headquarters representative's answer to a question regarding congregations keeping their money locally. She remembered his response along the following lines: "Now, you know that you guys have human nature. And, because of that you would have the tendency to spend that money on yourselves. I have heard that you have a problem with your air conditioning. You might be tempted to spend your money to have that fixed or to buy yourselves cushioned seats, instead of sending it to areas that need it like Africa."

Oh, but we all have a sinful nature! And, as a result, we need to hold each other accountable. Eph. 5:21 exhorts us to submit one to another. But in the WCG even administrative salaries are not available. Nonetheless, Ambassador Report related the following in May 1994: "**Tkach's salary is \$335,000 per year. Evangelist rank ministers get from \$120,000 to \$130,000 per year. Department heads and regional directors get \$80,000 to \$81,000 per year. . .**" (p. 5). And, recently, Joe Tkach, Jr. was given a raise in pay not disclosed to the membership ("Q & A session," March 10, 1996).

All that despite the fact that after the August 1996 co-worker letter one elderly member who lives in a retirement village complained the WCG keeps pleading for money but she is on a fixed income and just

doesn't have it to give. And, the field ministry finds themselves in an increasingly precarious position. One pastor told me before I resigned that he had found a part-time job to help out and was seeking government assistance for his family. Of course, their options have always been limited due to the atmosphere of control that was present. Most of them do not possess marketable skills that would gain them employment elsewhere. And, it seems to me that to some extent that was the orchestrated idea:

I believe that because at a planning meeting at Ambassador University in November 1995 for the now defunct Family Ministries, Drs. Russell Duke, Jim Kisse, David Albert, Mr. Kelly, and three field ministers were discussing a degree program for the ministry that would be 1/2 theology, 1/2 psychology. I spoke up and pleaded that we not create another degree that only had merit within the WCG. I urged them to either create a genuine counseling degree or a genuine theology/ministry degree with outside application and credibility. Evangelist and former telecast presenter David Albert spoke up against that saying we ought to avoid putting ourselves in a situation where the WCG ministry could do something else careerwise. "After all," he said, "they might leave the church."

Such a setup has always left the ministry, many of whom are now 45, 55, or even 65 (and without social security), in a very difficult situation where their loyalty to the administration was demanded, regardless of consequences to the membership. My former supervisor and his wife explained this to me. Mark Cardona, pastor for 25 years, and his wife Jana were at my house for dinner in early 1995. To my best recollection they brought up former pastor Earl Williams mentioning how he had preached the gospel before Mr. Tkach, Sr., and how wrong that was of him. I countered that if they had understood what he had that they could have done no differently. I was told I just did not understand government. I said that I understood government very well, "Jesus is my king, and I must follow his lead." I was told that if I had been around as long as them that I would understand. I said, "Let me get this straight. If you are asked by the administration above you to do something that you know is not in the members best interest and not according to the scriptures or Jesus' will, you do it anyway because of 'God's government?'" Again, to the best of my recollection, the answer was along the lines of, "yes, because God will take care of it." I found myself very frustrated at this point and asked about Peter and John before 'God's government,' the sanhedrin, and how they asked rhetorically whether one should obey men or God. Jana replied that, "we [the wcg] aren't set up that way." Of course, the conversation didn't get any better when I responded that there was no difference in that and the Nazis.

A cult is not so because a terrible event like Jonestown or Waco occurs, it is one because such incidents are always possible, in a climate where, for too many, there is no line one won't cross. This is why accountability is so important. And, I believe the dynamics I mentioned in my resignation letter of a totalistic hierarchy, lack of accountability and financial control (May 11, 1996) also exist by extension in local congregations. The pastor is in virtual total control and not accountable. And, the production of boards in local areas will not alter that problem unless genuine changes in the overall organizational structure are made. They will simply mirror the paper board in Pasadena: "6.3 The Pastor General shall have the sole power and authority to appoint and remove any singular member of the Board or the entire Board . . . He may exercise said power . . . at any time, with or without cause or notice. "

Until the pastor general himself is accountable to others in the organization the pyramidal problems will continue to run from top to bottom, and a local board will have no real authority. It is akin to King Hussein of Jordan, respected, but nonetheless a sovereign ruler, who has frequently dissolved his entire "democratic" parliament when problems cropped up or they threatened his position. Case in point:

In January of 1995, Pastor Mark Cardona asked a member, Linda Case, to do financial statements for the congregation. She prepared and posted statements on the bulletin board. Beginning in June 1994

she began to feel uncomfortable about the proceeds from the two to three annual fruit sales that were deposited in the YOU account instead of the Local Church Activity Fund and therefore not included in statements to the Memphis congregation (letter from Linda Case to Mark Cardona, January 6, 1996).

In August of 1995 Linda asked Mr. Cardona for the information so that she could include it. She later wrote to him, "You seemed a little reluctant . . . at the time but you did agree." He did not provide the information. "I asked you again just before the feast. . . . You assured me that getting me the information was a priority to you." Again, he did not provide the information. Linda called him again in December of 1995, and he explained that he was going out of town but would give it to her the very day of his return. She never received it (ibid).

Linda, and her husband Jim, coordinated the fruit sale for eight years. She told me that more than \$100,000 profit passed through these accounts during that time. Linda resigned her membership from the WCG in January 1996, one major reason being this lack of accountability of her local pastor. Another member Wendell Forrester "began to ask Mr. Cardona for the same information, believing that he as a church member had a right to know how church funds were spent" (letter from Linda Case to Janis Hutchinson, May 24, 1996). Eventually, Mr. Cardona began to say that he would give the information to Jim Case, Linda's husband and still a member.

Six months later on June 4, 1996, Jim Case wrote to Mr. Cardona, "My first instincts were to not get involved Especially if I am to become the 'new' delaying technique or excuse. . . . Unless you disclose all YOU records, you can take this as my resignation letter (2Th 3:6-15). I resign as deacon . . . 'book keeper' of the Finance Committee and . . . member of the WCG." Frustrated he wrote, "How, in the WCG, can a member follow . . . Mt. 18 and bring an issue before the church?"

I worked for Mr. Cardona for four years in Memphis until 1995. Shortly after I arrived he purchased a computer for about \$3,000 out of local church funds. He simply told me he had received permission from Pasadena to do so and we weren't going to be telling the membership. I felt there were a number of things he might not want to account for but did not believe that he had actually embezzled funds.

Yet, after almost a year of outstanding requests from both single individuals and groups, Mr. Cardona confessed from the pulpit: "I want to say as I bring this out that I am doing this of my own free will. **No human being, no amount of rumors has brought this about** [emphasis mine], that the Holy Spirit has convicted me to do this . . . I am through covering things, up as it were, in the minds of some at least. . . . In late 1994 and on through 1995 . . . I stole money from that account [YOU fund] for my own benefit. . . . I want you to understand that **I am publicly stepping forward under no pressure from anybody** [emphasis mine]. I could have continued to cover it up . . . the Holy Spirit has convicted me to come forward" (sermon tape, June 15, 1996).

Mrs. Cardona mentioned during the public confession that Pasadena did not require her husband to even acknowledge to the congregation that he had stolen from the local funds (ibid). No public apology has been made for Jim and Linda Case who held him accountable and resigned from membership when he refused. This fact has not even been made known. In fact, on one occasion before the confession Mr. Cardona chastised Linda for "questioning his integrity." She responded that she simply wanted to see the records. But, these still have not been disclosed. Rather, after his public announcement, Mr. Cardona sent Linda a packet on forgiveness with some 40 pages of copies from books on the subject.

The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse addresses the tactic of "just forgive." "[Mt. 18:21-22] can be terribly abusive if taken out of context and used . . . for the wrong reasons. . . . Misapplications of

this vary, including 'Don't notice the abuse,' 'What's wrong with you that you can't forgive?' and 'You have an unforgiving spirit, or a root of bitterness. . .'" (pp. 100-101). It seems the WCG is once again putting the burden on its members telling them to just forgive past problems and move on. Healing Spiritual Abuse also addresses the need for the perpetrator to avoid putting guilt trips on the person hurting, "If you were a real Christian, you would just forgive me.' I say, 'Yes, of course, I want to forgive you and I will forgive you, but we first have to talk about it. You must see what you are doing to me, and you must stop it'" (p. 101).

Mrs. Cardona also mentioned that headquarters had left the issue of whether her husband stayed as pastor in Memphis up to the congregation. This seems doubtful in actual fact. Earlier this year one couple returned home to find a note on their door from the pastor telling them never to return to services. Just over a year ago when I served in the area 330 attended but on a recent weekend one member counted just over 120 in attendance. It is my understanding that Mr. Cardona was suspended with pay for the summer but has now been returned to his former duties and given an additional congregation. Listen to the words but trust the behavior (sermon tape, June 15, 1996).

Mark sent me a personal note February 19, 1996 in which he wrote: "your depth and understanding made all the difference, and while God could have shown me his grace another way, he used you, and I want you to know I appreciate it." Yet, I was told by one of his congregants that one week after my resignation letter he passed out negative letters about me as well as suggesting I had spiritually abused my own congregations. What is more important: our Lord's saving grace or the appearances of an organization? This caused me to recall his and his wife's statements about loyalty to government.

Peter Ditzel is an ex-WCG member who worked as a Senior Correspondent in PCD and a writer for the Plain Truth for ten years. He wrote the following to a member: "Don't hold your breath waiting for the WCG to admit that you were right and a minister (or his wife) were wrong. When I worked for the WCG (and for many of those years I worked for Richard Rice), whenever a controversy such as yours arose, the presupposition was that the minister was right and the member was wrong. Even when the minister blatantly violated WCG policy, the minister might receive a private chastisement from headquarters, but this would not be publicized or told to the member involved. The member, on the other hand, would be made to feel that he or she was largely at fault. Even if the member had wrongly been disfellowshipped by the minister, the member would not be reinstated until he or she had apologized to the minister" (April 25, 1996).

This practice would seem to continue. A member in West Melbourne, Florida, Cathy Chase, wrote to me in November 1995, "A recent devastating and demoralizing experience had finally brought me to the verge of leaving the WCG this past summer. Mistakenly believing that the climate had become healthy enough already, I dared to respectfully question things that were hurting myself and others. A pastor's wife told me that I was unconverted and perhaps should leave the WCG because I conveyed to her the fact that I don't feel this church has ever truly met my needs the way a church should. She pounced on me and set me straight with the belief among most of the WCG ministers I have met: **'The church simply isn't here to meet your needs.'**"

After Cathy attempted to no avail to find some resolution to this matter through her minister and regional pastor, I became involved and asked Mike Feazell if the RP or a CAD representative could sit down with the two parties and try to work out a reconciliation. Nothing complicated, just seek out those who are hurting. Instead, over the next several months I found a continual defending of their own by the WCG administration saying this was a fine minister. Finally, Richard Rice wrote to me making a full circle to the original put-downs of the member by her pastor's wife. He wrote, "Why the screaming

of abuse? The reason is plain and simple: I want my way and no other way will do. Didn't Paul speak of some of the members in Corinth as being carnal?" (cc:mail correspondence, May 3, 1996). I have dozens of pages of correspondence regarding this situation, yet never was there any simple attempt to sit down with Cathy and her pastor and his wife to work the situation out. Rather, she was treated exactly as Ditzel describes with various administrators calling her but not involving her pastor.

A WCG member who finally left this summer wrote me regarding their situation (September 13, 1996). They wrote to their pastor "explaining [their] reasons for leaving and the hurt and pain [they] had been experiencing." The pastor wrote back saying that the member was the one "responsible, along with all members, for the church being a cult because [they] gave [it] power through [their] acquiescence." The person wrote further, "He also said that I had a responsibility to stay and help put things right, rather than 'ditch out,' as he put it." "He asked me to consider if I was thwarting the work of the Holy Spirit [by leaving]." I warned against this kind of control in my original "Ministry of Healing" document. I wrote, "It would be easy for us as a church to put the burden once again on the members and tell them they just need to forgive the church for past problems and move on."

I feel like the WCG is largely saying, "We in the church leadership have been wrong, so now you members have to change." No, the responsibility and burden is theirs. They are the ones who must change, but they refuse. The ministry are the ones who were wrong. I was one myself. We laid burdens on you we ourselves were not willing to bear. I am very sorry for the hurts we have caused you, and I take responsibility for my role in that. And, please understand that it was indeed people like myself who hurt and deceived you. We didn't intentionally do so (not in the majority of cases), but we were influenced by ignorance, selfishness, arrogance and the presumption to place ourselves between you and God. I was at times more interested in some policy, church program, or my own position. That was dreadfully wrong. And, for that I am very sorry. But, please understand that it was never Jesus' will nor intention. His main concern always has been the real needs of real people like yourself.

How do you respond to such events? Of course, when people are confronted by abuse, whether physical, sexual or spiritual, their responses are varied. On one end of the continuum are those who participate in the abuse. Close to them are the co-conspirators who ignore the abuse or suspect it but do nothing. Some have had a positive experience so they don't want to believe the abuse exists. And, in the middle are those who believe there is abuse but blame the members, themselves, or accept it as fate. They tell themselves they have no responsibility in the matter.

One Pasadena employee believes "self righteousness, lack of respect and lack of Christianity" are still significant problems but believes the best approach is to just put up with it. They wrote to me, "The Bible is filled with examples of patience and letting God work in His time frame — David put up with Saul for years, Joseph, etc. The Church [sic] put up with the immoral, unethical and unchristian acts of _____ and company for years. Many people were demoralized and crushed . . ." (July 15, 1996).

Ken Blue wrote: "Another trick used to keep leaders firmly . . . above accountability is to refer to them as the 'Lord's anointed' [or God's government]. . . The Old Testament command 'Touch not the Lord's anointed' is employed to protect these leaders from examination or criticism. . . . **When David uttered these words he was warning his men not to kill King Saul, whom the Lord himself had anointed. . . . David's warning not to kill the king has nothing whatever to do with our treatment of church leaders today** [emphasis mine]. Ancient Israel's class system, with its hierarchy of kings, prophets and priests, is abolished in the New Testament. We have one King, and the rest of us are priests. . ." (Healing Spiritual Abuse, pp. 28-29).

I believe I've done what I could do to publicly confront the WCG's serious problems. The best revenge is living well, resting in the grace at the foot of the cross, so I will be moving on leaving this part to others. I've told my story. But, I encourage you who remain in the WCG to continue asking for these issues to be addressed. Have courage and allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. Chuck Swindoll said, "The fainthearted aren't comfortable with rocking a boat. [Grace] rocks the boat. Traditionalism is assaulted, as are prejudices, judgmental spirit, **king of the mountain leadership styles**, and especially **modern-day pharisaism** [emphasis mine]." "Just put up with the abuse." No! Some believe it would be better not to say anything. This is denial. If you knew a child was being sexually abused, wouldn't you have a responsibility? If you had a small grandson whose father was burning with cigarette butts, would you turn a blind eye and say Jesus taught us to forgive? Forgiveness is the crux of Christianity, but I don't believe that means we don't hold each other accountable or be honest about abuse.

As Christians we certainly ought not retaliate out of vengeance but neither should we be complacent or passive. The best approach is to be responsible for our own role and act accordingly as God leads us. Sometimes that means confronting those in positions of spiritual authority. It always means Jesus' will and people come first, not somewhere down the line after organizational appearances. It also means we must accept the victim's anger. Joe Tkach, Jr. wrote, "Now is not the time to get angry about the past and leave the fellowship or withhold our gifts to God" (co-worker letter, August 1996). One would never dream of saying not to be angry to a victim of physical or sexual abuse. They need to work through their anger to reach forgiveness. I don't believe Joe's statement was in the best interest of the people who have been hurt or in the long-term interest of his church organization.

At dinner with Mike Feazell in Atlanta in January 1995, I mentioned I had heard of a loose federation of churches that was going to form and break with the WCG (which turned out to be the beginnings of the United Church of God). His response seemed very casual to my wife and I: "let them go." It seems to me the WCG is willing to sacrifice as many as necessary to make their goals come about. And, it would appear that these goals relate to the good of the organization first, not the members or Jesus' will. "You are part of a historic movement of the Holy Spirit. . ." wrote Joe Tkach, Jr (see [Appendix D](#)). I assure you that Jesus is a billion times more interested in your life personally and your spiritual walk than he is in any organization. Jesus' main concern is and always has been people. *He is most concerned about you.* The historic movement of the Holy Spirit is the one within your individual lives.

Albert Speer's autobiography Inside the Third Reich contains the following quote about the "temptations of pride and position" he faced. **"In the euphoria of history-making activity, unpleasant facts were ignored."** Please don't make the same mistake. Listen to the words but trust the behavior. Flowery, impressive words promising future change or masking current destructive behavior are not enough. Genuine repentance is reflected through consistent and positive behavior over time, or, to borrow from the Sept/Oct 1996 Plain Truth, the WCG needs, "real reform . . . [not] enlightened greed". 2 Cor. 2:17 says, "Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit." The NIV Bible comments, "Paul is referring to false teachers who have infiltrated the . . . church. Such persons--themselves insincere, self-sufficient and boastful--artfully presented themselves in a persuasive manner, and their chief interest was to take money from gullible church members. Paul, by contrast, had preached the gospel sincerely and free of charge, taking care not to be a financial burden to the . . . believers" (p. 1765). Regardless, please be open to follow the Holy Spirit wherever he leads you, within or without the WCG.

In Jesus' love, David Covington, NCC

"JUST TRY TO PUT ME IN SOME KIND OF CLOSET; SOONER OR LATER HE'LL KNOCK DOWN THE DOORS. YOU CAN SLANDER MY NAME IF YOU WANNA; HE WILL SEND ANOTHER AND THEN THERE WILL BE MORE. THIS IS MORE TO ME THAN JUST SOME STORY; THIS IS MORE TO ME THAN SOME SONG THAT I SING; I'D LAY IT ON THE LINE TIME AFTER TIME AFTER TIME; THEY CAN'T STOP THIS THING, THEY CAN'T STOP THIS THING CALLED JESUS" Big Tent Revival, "Thing Called Jesus," 1996.

Appendix A

The last two years that I was in the WCG ministry I developed a series of sermons focused on the spiritual healing that comes through Jesus Christ. The three volumes are called "Living Grace-Fully: Breaking the Bonds and Healing the Hurts of Legalism." Their ultimate purpose is to bring a solid foundation of the gospel message and further an intimate relationship with Jesus. I would like to make these available to all who would like them. Postage and copying costs prohibit my sending them through the mail (each volume is 100-150 pages and copying alone would run nearly \$10), but I can send you e-mail copies of individual sermons. They are all in WordPerfect 5.1, or you may request simple DOS files. And, please only request 3-4 documents at a time.

Volume one addresses the personal and spiritual application of the gospel in a Christian's life based on Search for Significance by Robert McGee and Healing for Damaged Emotions by David Seamands. Its purpose is to lay a foundation for a sensitive and compassionate ministry of healing to those who have been bound and hurt by legalism. In 1995-96 the WCG distributed well over 500 copies of this document to its entire field ministry, full-time as well as non-paid local elders (see #100).

Volume two examines the heresy Paul confronts in the book of Galatians and confronts the issue of spiritual abuse which Christ denounces in Matthew 23. It is based on commentaries on Galatians by John Stott and G. Walter Hansen as well as Classic Christianity by Bob George. The material on spiritual abuse is derived from Healing Spiritual Abuse by Ken Blue and Toxic Faith by Arterburn and Felton. The WCG distributed nearly 200 electronic copies of this series to its ministry (see #200).

Volume three addresses "the fullest, plainest and grandest statement of the gospel in the New Testament" (Romans, 1994, p. 19). These sermons examine Romans 1-10 and are derived from John Stott's new commentary and are supplemented with stories from books by Max Lucado (e.g. No Wonder They Call Him the Savior). These sermons do not contain *argumentation* about legalism. In Romans, Paul does not argue. He simply extends the gift. He explains our immense need and shows us the immensely greater power of the provision, the work of Jesus on the cross, available to all simply by faith. Over 100 WCG ministers personally requested and received this series via e-mail (see #300).

- #001. Crossroads Newsletter: Finding a Church Home after the WCG (Fall 1996, #1)
- #100. **VOLUME 1 LIVING GRACE-FULLY PACKAGE**
- #150. Introduction and Summary to Volume 1: A Ministry of Healing
- #101. #1. "The Chasm" from Healing for Damaged Emotions
- #102. #2. "Son or Servant" "
- #103. #3. "Not Part of God's Armor" — Performance or Christ from Search for Significance
- #104. #4. "Who's Carrying Your Sin?" — Guilt "
- #105. #5. "Who's In Your Bucket?" — Approval Addiction "
- #106. #6. "Lord, Show Us the Father" — Your Personal View of God "
- #107. #7. "Be Real or... Be Blown Away" — Anger and Hurt "
- #108. #8. "No Strings Attached" — Forgiveness "
- #109. #9. "Who Are You?" — Identity in Christ from Victory Over Darkness
- #110. #10. "The Gift" — What's a Christian and How Do I Become One?
- #200. **VOLUME 2 LIVING GRACE-FULLY PACKAGE**
- #250. Introduction and Summary to Volume 2: Galatianism and Spiritual Abuse
- #211. #11. "By What Are We UNITED?" Historical Setting to Book of Galatians from Galatians
- #212. #12. "By Faith . . . Sola:" Gal. 1-2 "
- #213. #13. "Two Roads" — Promise & Law: Gal. 3 & "PhD to ABCs:" Gal. 4:1-20 "
- #214. #14. Stand Firm in Freedom: Gal. 5:1ff & "City Dog/Country Dog?:" Gal. 4:21ff "
- #215. #15. "Only Thing That Counts" — Freedom to Serve in Love: Gal. 5:1ff "
- #216. #16. "Where He Leads Me" — Walking by the Spirit: Gal. 5:16ff "

- #217. #17. "It Is Finished! Galatianism Concluded" "
- #218. #18. "Intro" chp. 1 & "Because I'm the Pastor" chp. 2 from Healing Spiritual Abuse
- #219. #19. "Come Unto Me" — Pharisee Theology: chps. 3-4 "
- #220. #20. "Of Gnats and Camels" — Hypocrisy: chps. 5-6 "
- #221. #21. "Asking 'Why?'" — How Legalism Can Catch You: chp. 7 "
- #222. #22. "Gathering at the River (A Metaphor for the Church)"
- #251. Examples of letters of reconciliation from WCG minister to ex-members
- #252. Report to Joseph Tkach, Sr., Dec. 19, 1994: "Salvation by Grace Alone vs. WCG Doctrine"
- #300. **VOLUME 3 LIVING GRACE-FULLY PACKAGE**
- #350. Introduction and Summary to Volume 3: Romans 1-10
- #301. #1. "You Have Been Warned!" Introduction to Romans from Romans, John Stott
- #302. #2. "I Am Not Ashamed!" Rom. 1:1-17 "
- #303. #3. "On Trial!" Rom. 1:18-3:20 "
- #304. #4. "But Now . . . the Cross!" Rom. 3:21-4:25 "
- #305. #5. "Are You Where You Belong? (Adam, Christ and You)" Rom. 5:12-21 "
- #306. #6. "Having Died to Sin . . ." Rom. 6:1-23 "
- #307. #7. "Lazarus Unwound: Joyfully Alive in Your Spirit" Rom. 7:7-8:1 "
- #308. #8. "An Uncluttered Faith" Rom. 8:15-17 "
- #309. #9. "You Can Be Sure! — Forgiveness in Christ" Rom. 10:1-9 "
- #310. #10. "So Great Salvation — Our High Calling!" Rom. 9:1-10:21 "
- #311. #11. "The Place of Brokenness" (Romans 9:13) Genesis 32:30-31
- #351. Interviews with Authors Ken Blue and Janis Hutchinson
- #352. Toxic Faith: A Summary of Toxic Rules and Characteristics
- #353. Doctrinal Essentials of the Christian Faith
- #354. A Checklist for Responsible Christians: Is Your Church Cult-like?
- #500. **OTHER CORRESPONDENCE PACKAGE**
- #501. Original "Ministry of Healing," Jan. 1995. *Not available due to confidential nature.*
- #502. Ministry of Healing workshop handout for 1995-96 WCG regional conferences
- #503. David Covington's resignation letter to Joseph Tkach, Jr., May 11, 1996
- #504. Author Janis Hutchinson's letter to Greg Albrecht, May 20, 1996
- #505. Greg Albrecht et al open letter response to Janis Hutchinson, May 31, 1996
- #506. David Covington's open letter response to Greg Albrecht et al, June 14, 1996
- #507. David Covington's third open letter regarding WCG abuses. *This document.*

Appendix B

On July 25, 1995 I was in Greg Albrecht's editorial offices conference room in Pasadena with him and Norman Shoaf, Plain Truth senior editor at the time. Mr. Shoaf related to me a situation that occurred to him during the 1979 church altercation with the state of California and demonstrates one major incident of deception that took place in the WCG administration. Mr. Shoaf explained how several WCG administrators were going from office to office demanding that every employee sign a form stating they had proof the WCG was not hiding any materials or information from the attorney general. Mr. Shoaf explained to me that he had personally just finished following orders by shredding over 50,000 copies of the Worldwide News that contained a statement the WCG did not want the attorney general to see. When confronted by these men, Mr. Shoaf signed the paper anyway, concluding that it was after all the one true Church of God. He then watched as the next person, a secretary, refused, saying she could not possibly know whether everyone was or was not hiding something from the state. She was terminated on the spot. Mr. Shoaf wondered how many had met such a fate on that occasion.

Also during the course of these meetings Greg Albrecht and Norman Shoaf made jokes referring to the elaborate gifts, specifically steuben crystal, that Mr. Armstrong would give in order to gain entrance to various world leaders. Ambassador Report (March 1980) described Mr. Armstrong giving away \$500,000 in communist China. Such exorbitant gifts, financial and otherwise, enabled him to meet with various world leaders and groups where he would present a message on the value of giving instead of getting and God's wonderful future kingdom. It seemed to be a message designed not to offend. It did not focus on the sinfulness of humans and our need for the saving grace of our Lord Jesus. But, it seems to have been tolerated by the different dignitaries for the gifts or moneys received in return.

In January 1996 at a dinner in Atlanta the discussion was past abuses of the WCG. Joe Tkach, Jr. related to me and ministers Mark Cardona, David Stone and John Novick an incident that took place when Mr. Armstrong was speaking in the Philippines. What the WCG members saw on video after the event was a packed auditorium seemingly excited to hear Mr. Armstrong preach. Mr. Tkach, Jr. explained what we didn't see on video: how Ambassador Foundation officials stood on street corners giving away \$5 bills to whoever would sit in on the lecture.

I believe these deceptive episodes are symptomatic of a pervasive pattern, one not restricted to past abuses, but aggravated by a continuing atmosphere of duplicity. After the aforementioned meeting with Greg Albrecht in Pasadena, he and I went to dinner with a WCG regional pastor, Steve Botha, who was in Pasadena for a meeting. Greg mentioned to me as we were leaving for dinner that he didn't know how far along Mr. Botha was in his understanding and that I should be careful how much I said. After all, this regional pastor might be offended. I believe this approach is condescending and that it extends into WCG church publications in what sometimes seems to me like propaganda.

Appendix C

". . . in exchange for the consideration . . . below, [the minister] do agree as follows:"

"1. The consideration will consist of the following: [a total sum paid out in bi-weekly installments and a waiver of premiums for healthcare]. . . I understand that the above-mentioned discretionary assistance will cease if I become affiliated with a dissident church or organization. . ."

"2. I fully release, waive all claims against, and forever discharge WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD, AMBASSADOR COLLEGE AND AMBASSADOR FOUNDATION, all three of which are California nonprofit corporations, and AMBASSADOR UNIVERSITY, formerly known as "Ambassador College Texas", and their agents, employees, officers, directors, trustees, representatives, attorneys, subsidiaries, related corporations or unincorporated associations, assigns, successors, and affiliated organizations . . . , and each and all of them, from any and all liabilities, claims, causes of action, charges, complaints, obligations, costs, losses, damages, injuries, attorneys' fees, and other legal responsibilities, of any form whatsoever, whether known or unknown, unforeseen, unanticipated, unsuspected or latent, which I or my heirs, administrators, executors, successors in interest, and/or assigns have incurred or expect to incur, or now own or hold, or have at any time heretofore owned or held, or may at any time own, hold, or claim to hold, by reason of any matter or thing arising from any cause whatsoever prior to the date of . . . this Release."

"Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, and by way of example only, I agree to fully release and discharge each and all of the Released Parties from any and all claims, demands, and

causes of action that have been or could be alleged against any of said Released Parties based upon or in connection with (a) any oral or written contract or understanding for continued employment . . . (b) my employment or the termination of such employment by the Released Parties, or any of them; (c) any and all matters pertaining to my employment . . . including, but not limited to, any and all compensation, salaries, wages, bonuses, commissions, overtime, monies, pay, benefits, pensions, retirement pay, annuities, sick pay, severance pay, vacation pay, health care or health or life insurance, paid leave benefits, penalties, interest, damages, and promises on any and all of the above; and, (d) claims or rights under federal, state or local statute, law or ordinance regarding alleged discrimination on any basis, including, without limitation, discrimination on the basis of sex, age, religion, race, ethnic origin or disability." "IF I HAVE ANY SUCH CLAIMS OR BENEFIT EXPECTATIONS, THE PURPOSE OF THIS RELEASE IS TO EXTINGUISH THE SAME."

"3. That I understand that the aforesaid payment is not to be construed as an admission . . . of any liability whatsoever."

"4. Declare, covenant, and agree that I have not assigned any claim, demand or cause of action released herein to any other person or entity (public or private)."

"5. I expressly waive all my rights under Section 1542 of the California Civil Code. . . 'A general release does not extend to claims which the creditor does not know or suspect to exist in his favor at the time of executing the release. . ."

"7. To the extent allowed by law, I agree not to file any case, charge or claim against the Released Parties based on events occurring prior to the date of execution of this Release with any state or federal court, administrative agency, commission, division, bureau or department . . . and I agree if any such had previously been instituted, to dismiss the same with prejudice."

Appendix D

Joe Tkach, Jr. has made exaggerated claims that what is happening in the WCG has not happened since the New Testament. Actually, I don't believe the Holy Spirit has just appeared on the WCG scene. I believe he has been working in individuals all along to free them from legalism and cultic hierarchy and control, but that they were spiritually and reputationally assassinated by the WCG power structure. The following is just one such example. I do not endorse the beliefs of the following letter as thoroughly orthodox but they do demonstrate that the issues the WCG is now addressing have been on the table before, in this case over 20 years ago, as various individuals were led to confront the truth and stand up for the members. Of course, such people were considered spiritually shipwrecked by the WCG administration and were treated accordingly by the membership.

During my four year stay in Pasadena we students were consistently fed by the administration all kinds of negative information about what happened in the "seventies." I first began to wonder if some of that was propaganda when Roderick Meredith left and certain facts about his history were revealed by Mr. Tkach, Sr. While I am sure there were indeed many problems during that time, the following letter confirmed many of my doubts about not being told the whole story.

"June 12, 1974,

Dear Friends and Brethren of the Worldwide Church of God,

Many of you have written or called with questions regarding the events of the past few months or questions about our future plans. We regret the many misunderstandings that have arisen. In hopes of clearing the air as much as possible, we are writing this letter of explanation regarding what occurred and what our plans are for the future.

Is it true that there was a conspiracy to "split the Church" in order to get the tithes of the people? To the contrary, several of us felt the Levitical tithing system is clearly shown to be unscriptural for the New Testament Church. We desired open discussions within the leading ministry on this and other vital subjects. But what began as a sincere effort to bring to the fore for discussion many doctrinal matters that had been previously ignored or closed to discussion, was taken as a "collusion" to split the Church. The doctrinal problems were not in any sense trivial. They were major, many of them having direct and profound effect on the lives of God's people. Following are some of those questions . . .

Divorce and Remarriage: This had been a controversial subject for several years. When the new D & R booklet was published last fall without a complete and open discussion regarding the many major problems in our past teachings, many of us felt that somehow this had to be re-opened. Then, in January, the warning was given that anyone who questioned the Church's teaching on doctrine (including D & R) was in the "spirit of Satan." Many of us felt we had a responsibility to God and to His people to bring the matter up in a way that could not be squelched or ignored.

Tithing: Last year, a member of the editorial staff had written a paper in which some of the basic concepts regarding tithing as it has been taught by the Church were called into question by logical, scriptural exposition. Rather than being able to get an open doctrinal discussion on this, he was told to keep his paper out of circulation. No attempt was made to refute the proofs he offered. Rather, an effort was made to squelch any discussion and keep the whole matter quiet. Some of us felt this major subject deserved an open discussion. What does Truth have to fear and why should doctrinal discussions be suppressed or cloaked in secrecy?

Church Government: Two ministers who resigned in January had specifically cited, as the basis for their resignations, the doctrine of an authoritative Church government in the way it has been practiced. In spite of this kind of impetus, this subject was still not opened for discussion. No answer were given to the legitimate scriptural questions that were raised. It seemed obvious to us that something was drastically wrong if the governmental structure could suppress legitimate questions (in the case of Pentecost for thirteen years, in the case of D & R for several years and in the case of tithing for several months). The subsequent events that led to the branding of sincere ministers as "ministers of Satan," the imputing of motives and the blackening of reputations, have further demonstrated that the entire subject needs review. At any rate, this subject was specifically closed to discussion.

Does any man have the authority to legislate what sin is and bind his own personal views on the people as authoritative--whether it involves exact hair length, skirt length, make-up, or whatever? Can it be proved that there is an "apostle" today? What about the "signs of an apostle" Paul spoke of when showing he received his authority from Christ directly--that he had visions and revelations? Is God giving any many "special revelations" today, now that the Bible is complete?

Church Eras: Although the evidence is available that the seven churches of Revelation are not "eras" at all (and this has been acknowledged publicly by Mr. Ted Armstrong), it is still maintained by certain ones that in order to escape the tribulation, one must be a part of the Worldwide Church of

God which is the "Philadelphia era". It cannot even be shown that Peter Waldo, a supposed leader of the "Thyatiran era", ever kept the Sabbath. The so-called "dead" Sardis Church--The Church of God (Seventh Day) is very much alive today and has a fine group of converted, growing people, obeying and serving God. The booklet on this subject "The True History of the True Church" has been cancelled, but the doctrine is still taught publically [sic].

What is the Church (or the "We--only" syndrome): This ties in with the one above, but when you consider the implications of the "we only are converted" and the "we only are God's people" syndrome, this deserved separate comment. Brethren, isn't God Church a spiritual organism composed of those who have God's Spirit? And how does one receive God's Spirit--from any one organization? (Acts 2:38-39)

The Commission of the Church: Does the "gospel of the Kingdom" as revealed in the Bible have to do primarily with a futuristic, warning message, or does it relate, in every age, primarily to the here and now? Go through the book of Acts and Paul's Epistles and see what gospel the apostles preached. Though they were expecting the imminent return of Christ, nevertheless, the thrust of their message was Christ's sacrifice, His resurrection, and the need for personal repentance.

The "gospel of the Kingdom", although it includes teaching about the coming kingdom to the earth in the future, is really primarily a message that the way into God's Kingdom is now open to all of us through the sacrifice of Christ and repentance. The commission in Matthew 28:19-20 involves teaching ("making disciples" in Greek), baptizing, and then further teaching in the way of God. Feeding the flock, and personal development, are very much a part of Christ's commission.

For any group to set about specifically to fulfill the prophecy (not a commission) in Matt. 24:14 leads to assumptions and errors of every sort--whether it involves preaching that the events of the early 1940's would culminate in Mussolini's setting up his seat of government in Palestine just prior to the return of Christ or teaching that the Church would probably flee in 1972. God can fulfill His prophecies in His way--note Rev. 11:30-3-12 and Rev. 14:6 in relation to Matt. 24:14.

It also leads to a "warning" thrust or approach toward the world rather than a loving, serving, straightforward preaching and teaching of the gospel of Christ, repentance and the need for obedience to God's laws. It also leads to the illusion that correcting doctrinal errors is less important than "doing the Work"--when, indeed, the matter of seeking God's will in doing the kind of work He wants done is a major problem in itself.

The Identity of Israel: Much of the Worldwide Church of God's understanding of prophecy is based on a belief that the prophecies concerning Israel really apply to the United States and Great Britain today. Such a major, supposedly foundational doctrine should bear up under careful scrutiny when questions are raised. There are major questions concerning this doctrine that have not been answered. Just as the "Proof of the Bible" booklet, which was based on a Seventh Day Adventist book, "Prophecy Speaks," was found to contain many errors (and has now been canceled), the booklet, "The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy" was based on much British-Israel material that has proven unreliable and in many cases erroneous. In fact, some sections of the booklet were taken verbatim from Allen's work, "Judah's Scepter and Joseph's Birthright." This entire doctrine needs re-evaluation in the light of historical and Biblical evidence. If it is true, more proofs are needed.

The point is, brethren, the doctrinal problems are more far-reaching than many of you may have realized. In February the first seven of these points were being openly discussed among the ministry and some of us were fired as a result. We did not and do not seek to hurt any of God's people or the Worldwide Church of God, but merely sought to bring these problems to the fore so that the Church could grow in grace and knowledge.

Many of us who were terminated or who have resigned have now joined in a collective effort to preach Christ's gospel to the world and have embarked on an ongoing Biblical Studies program so that we can continue to grow in Biblical understanding. Most, but not all, who have resigned or were terminated in the series of events that has transpired since last November are now a part of the Associated Churches of God.

There have been various rumors and misunderstandings regarding the beliefs and goals of the Associated Churches of God. We cannot speak for those who are not a part of this collective effort, but to put to rest any misunderstandings, the following are some of our goals and general principles upon which we'll be operating.

We will seek to fulfill the commission Christ gave his Church in Matt. 28:19-20--directing people to Christ and the need for repentance, conversion and continual growth in Christ. Our first evangelistic campaign is scheduled for July 19-21 in Richmond, Virginia, to be followed by others about every other week for the remainder of the summer. We'll be using a three-man team to plan the evangelistic effort and will have a variety of speakers. We plan to have two or more main speakers each night of our campaigns. . . .

We now have 22 local congregations ranging in size from 30 to 400, served by 18 pastors, supported by many elders and deacons. . . . In dealing with people we will emphasize Christ as our mediator and High Priest, with no man standing between us and God legislating in matters of conscience. In the application of God's teachings and principles for Christian living beyond the specific ten commandments, each individual is responsible before God for obedience according to his level of understanding. Although we as a body have a collective commission, salvation is a personal, individual matter between each one and his God. . . .

All of us have suffered much financial loss and have been saddened to see our reputations besmirched as a result of our determination to serve God

The Directors, Associated Churches of God"