



United Church of God *an International Association*

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March 27, 2019

Dear fellow elders and brethren,

We are living in one of the most momentous times in human history. The times are analogous to the period of the Judges in which there was no judge in Israel and every man did that which was *right in his own eyes*. There is a reciprocal principle in effect when everyone does this. When everyone does that which is right in his own eyes, no one is in charge. And conversely when no one is in charge, everyone is in charge. Each person becomes his own arbiter of what is good and evil. And this creates God in the person's own image. That is, *their god* becomes whatever the person desires him to be.

Today there is *no* clear clarion call to *do that which is right* in the eyes of God. Yet God has ordained laws to govern the physical and social order of the universe. The heavenly bodies are governed by the God-ordained laws of physics. Social order is to be governed by the laws of God—which govern our relationship with God and one another. Time after time, through various forms of communication, the Church of God has emphasized the fact that God has provided humanity with the keys of living a life that is pleasing to God—through His Word.

We are living in a time in which the emphasis is on *toleration* and *praise* of all lifestyles. On the one hand, our leaders speak of “American values,” but in almost the same breath they praise the strength that comes from a diversity of lifestyles. People are led to believe that there are no absolutes and everyone should be free to do that which is right in their own eyes. The message is that *all lifestyles should be considered and accepted*. The result is strife and confusion on every aspect of human endeavor. The apostle Paul writes, “God is not the author of confusion but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Has that type of godless thinking influenced the thinking of our brethren in the Church of God?

The liberal thinking of our time

Time after time in Scripture God admonishes us to *look to Him* for the knowledge of good and evil. However, even those who profess to believe in God are pressured to compromise to embrace the thinking of the times. It seems that the majority are willing to “bend” the laws of God based on the social norms of the day. What does God have to say about the “liberal” thinking of our time?

There are several scriptures that tell us that God's and Christ's words are perfect and eternal. The prophet Malachi writes: “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of

Jacob are not consumed” (Malachi 3:6, King James Version throughout). The apostle Paul writes in Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever.” The psalmist declares: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7). From these verses we can clearly see that God does not change based on the social norms of any period of human history.

Furthermore, what does Scripture say about the words of God compared to the thinking of humanity? “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 55:8). The Word of God is clear on the outcome of humankind following their own desires and lusts: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

We must not let the thinking of this present evil age affect our view of God and His Word. When Joshua died, God did not choose anyone to replace him. The various tribes were to take turns in administering the government and dealing with the problems that the nation encountered. One could say that in those days there was *no king in Israel* and each man *did that which was right in his own eyes*.

However, that was not what God intended. God and Christ had led them out of bondage in Egypt into the Promised Land. Now that they were in the land, they were told to look to God as their king. They were to live by faith and trust God. However, they disobeyed God and intermarried with the surrounding nations who worshipped pagan deities. Furthermore, they made alliances with these nations and forsook the true God. The result of rejecting God’s instructions was catastrophic.

Look to God and Christ

God and Christ always deeply desire that we should look to them for the knowledge of how to conduct our lives. No, every opinion is *not* necessarily as good as another. Even though there are different ways of expressing the same truth, there is *one truth* and according to the psalmists: “The word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth” (Psalm 33:4). When discussing the Word of God we must not equate *opinion* with that which is *right in the sight of God*. Interactive sessions must keep the discussion true to the Word of God. Opinions may be sought, but knowing and abiding by the truth is our goal.

At the present time God is allowing humanity to choose whom they will serve. When all is said and done there are only two options: 1) the way of death led by the author of death. Or 2) the way of God which leads to life eternal. When God’s government is established on earth we will serve as kings and priests. Under God and Christ we will administer righteous, impartial judgment based on the Word of God. God, Christ and the saints will enforce God’s righteous ways.

Note the words of Isaiah: “And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:20-21). There

will be one way taught at that time—the way of God, the way of righteousness and truth. Personal opinion will not rule the day in the Kingdom of God. As ambassadors of the Kingdom of God, we should carefully consider what we are preparing to do in that Kingdom.

We, as the people of God, are facing great challenges that will sweep us away if we give in to the ways of this world. Our children are to a large degree innocent lambs being led to the slaughter in the name of love and toleration. Yet the world does not remotely know what godly love is. We need to keep in mind the biblical definition of love: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

Satan poses as an angel of light, while promising them liberty they become the servants of corruption (2 Peter 2:19). We must stand strong in these trying times and not be overcome by the wiles of the devil and of those who support his agenda. In summary, his agenda is the destruction of humanity. Satan is the merchant of death.

Examine ourselves

As we examine ourselves through God’s perfect law of liberty—the Word of God—in preparing to eat and drink the Lord’s Passover, let us not compromise with the truth of God. Remember the apostle Paul’s inspiring and encouraging words at the close of Romans 8. Those exhortations should serve and motivate us to re-dedicate ourselves to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Moreover, let each one of us remember Paul’s inspired words: “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8).

There is life and power in the Word of God. Jesus states: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). In that verse Jesus equates His words with spirit and life. Thus it is incumbent on each one of us to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

In the service of God and His Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald L. Ward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "D".

Donald L. Ward