

# Church Administration

**Church administration, or government as most would label this topic, is a major topic of concern among the Churches of God.**

**There are many different variations of church government even among the many recent splits within the Churches of God. Can this be justified?**

**Why so much confusion? Why are there so many varying opinions?**

**What form of administration did Christ really establish and how did the early New Testament Church put it into practice?**

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**Scriptures quotes have been added for reader convenience.**

**A few additions and rewrites have been made. These changes are printed in dark blue.**

**Edits to correct spelling and grammar have also been made from the original.**

**(All quotes are from the "The New Kings James Version of the Bible")**

## Christ's Overall Directive

### First Occurrence

**Matthew 18:1-5 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.** (parallel accounts in Mark 9:33-37 and Luke 9:46-48)

The question is the age-old question: "Who is to be the greatest?" or "Who gets to be in charge?" Notice in this first occurrence in the gospels where the disciples are concerned about who is to be the greatest, they are talking about who is to be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. Yet the other accounts indicate they were thinking that whoever was the greatest on earth would receive the highest position in the Kingdom. The first thing Christ said was that they first would have to be converted. Christ is telling His disciples that if they want to be in the Kingdom they are going to have to forget struggles for power and authority; they are going to have to humble themselves and serve, not be served. Christ's first instructions on church authority state that a truly converted person does not concern himself with who is the greatest or who has power over others, but is humble and serves. Such is a child. Children have their desires, but what is their basic attitude toward other children? They are usually unconcerned about who has authority. They could care less – as long as Mom and Dad are around to take care of them. Mom and Dad are in charge. They have no concern over money or power – they trust in their parents to supply their needs and look to them alone for guidance. It is the same in God's Church, the Father has the authority, not us children. We should have the same attitude toward our Father.

Christ sets up a basic principle in verse 4 that is reflected in all instructions on administration. Administration in His Church is the exact opposite in principle than in the Gentile governments. Here it is stated simply that whoever is the most humble is the greatest in God's eyes.

Notice God's concern with those who humble themselves and obey Him as described in the rest of this chapter. This whole chapter is in response to the disciples' first question of who is the greatest. Everyone (ministers, church members, others) who might offend such a person that has humbled himself before God, stands to experience God's displeasure.

**Mark 9:33-37** Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?” But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the greatest*. And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, “Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”

In verse 35 is the principle again that Christ's administration is the opposite of the norm in the world. The person first in God's eyes is the one who looks like he is last to the world, for he serves all others. Christ was the ultimate fulfillment of this in His first coming (and the Jews and the world despised Him for it). How many ministers in God's Church have fulfilled this? Or are they considered in the same manner as any other minister you might notice except that, of course, they're in a different church? People should not only notice that God's true ministers are in a completely different church but that they work with the church in a way that is the opposite of how "other ministers" function. They really do serve the church instead of being served by the church. It confuses the world because in some ways the minister seems the least and yet he is the minister. This makes it possible to understand some of the statements that the apostle Paul made, one such being **1 Corinthians 4:9-10**: **For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!**

Notice though, that at the same time Christ sets up an administrative principle opposite in nature to all other governments, He gives a little noticed, but very important principle that still establishes an administration procedure that avoids confusion. In verse 37 Christ states that those who humble themselves and are called of God to serve His people are to be received as the spokesmen of Christ. To reject one such servant of Christ is to reject Christ and the Father. The Church is to listen and receive the ministry. But it is not because they have been placed in authority over them, no, they are their servants. It is because God commands it to be so; the authority rests with God. If the people are obeying God they will listen to a true minister; there is no need for the minister to exercise lordship like the Gentiles do. If the people refuse to listen to a true minister then there is, in reality, no people for him to minister to; he can't force anyone to listen anyway.

**Luke 9:46-48** Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, “Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.”

How much authority does a child have? Yet we are to be like a child in considering the matter of who is to be the greatest. And these "children of God" are to be received as receiving Christ. Accepting a "child" of God as the spokesman of God is again opposite to all state and religious governments set up by men.

## **Christ's Overall Directive**

### **Second Occurrence**

**Matthew 20:20-28** Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, “What do you wish?” She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.” But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They said to Him, “We are able.” So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father.” And when the ten heard *it*, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (parallel account in Mark 10:35-45)

This happened shortly, it seems, after Christ said He would build His Church and that Peter would be one small stone built upon the foundational Rock. James and John maybe wanted to know if they or Peter had "top" position – for all

three from time to time did receive special recognition from Christ above what the other disciples did. Verse 25 again shows how God's form of administration is totally opposite of how the Gentiles rule. The Gentiles use authority, power, lordship to “rule over” and force and suppress their subjects. Christ said, “**Yet it shall not be so among you;**” Any and all forms of government that the Gentiles use to rule over their subjects are not to be used in any fashion, shape or form to govern the children of God. God's way is totally different, there are no parallels; it is not even close to being in the same image or likeness as to how the Gentiles govern. A minister is not to rule over, exercise authority over or lord it over any of the flock of God **like in any Gentile form of government**. No, he is their servant.

Yet we know there is still some form of administration to avoid confusion and to handle the problems that arise as Paul did. But we see here that it is not to be done as the state, business and religious governments of the world do it. The key to how this is done has already been mentioned in relationship to Mark 9:37. It is one of the many keys of understanding that Christ gave to His disciple to open doors for His Church. If you change the shape of the key in any way it will not open the door any more. We had better be sure not to change the key of God-given administration.

The extreme difference is stated again in the final three verses of this section. The greatest is to be the best servant, serving all his brethren. Christ set the example. He did not come at this time to set up a government or force people to obey. He did not set up a headquarters or give any guidelines on how to organize a world movement coordinated by one man or group of men. His ministers were to preach from city to city, each in an individual effort, yet working together in the oneness of God – as Christ did. Christ served, He did not rule. He served more than anyone else; He gave His life that all humans throughout history would have a chance for eternal life. That is really serving!

## **Christ's Overall Directive Third Occurrence**

**Luke 22:24-32** Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed *one* upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.”

This makes the third time in which the disciples are recorded as having contention over who was to be the greatest. And this time, during the very Passover service that pictured Christ's service to mankind by the giving of His life for our sins. Much is repeated here that has already been commented on. Peter was apparently the oldest disciple. Christ's instruction is for the greatest to be as the youngest, completely opposite to the worldly standard. Christ goes on to point out this difference. Usually the one who sits at the table and is served is the master and the greatest. But not so with Christ, He serves, and so did His disciples.

In verses 29-30 Christ says if you learn to humble your desires for power to lord it over the Church now, you will receive a position as a perfect spiritual ruler in the Father's Kingdom.

In verses 31-32 Christ told Peter that Satan had tried to “get to” him. Why is this mentioned in this context? Christ goes on to tell Peter that after he is converted by the Holy Spirit he is to strengthen his brethren. This did give Peter a responsibility not given to the others. Christ's ministers have a responsibility not given to all church members, but that responsibility is to spiritually strengthen them, not to rule over them.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Although there are other scriptures related to church government (which will be discussed later) these clearly set the overall principle by which His Father's Church was to be served. These clear statements by Christ should set the stage for all other scriptures on church administration. If you forget Christ's directive in explaining the

sometimes difficult-to-understand statements of Paul, you will end up with government in the image of the world. The writings of Paul, then, do not nullify, change or set up governmental organization in contrast to what Christ said. It will all fit nicely together because God is the author of the entirety of the Bible.

In all three cases where the disciples were discussing who was to be the greatest there was some sort of contention. Christ's instructions in this matter would negate any such strife or division because everyone would be serving the other. Church government in the worldly image has always lead to strife, contention and division or governmental rule from the top down that so strongly suppresses the individual that there is no such strife. But neither is there freedom to obey God when there is a mistake at the "top." Mr. H. W. Armstrong realized this when he wrote his Good News article dated February 1939, entitled "Did Christ Reorganize the Church?"

Religion is in confusion, torn by strife and division, in the grip of the GENTILE system of injecting ORGANIZATION and GOVERNMENT into the Church! Truly, in its every phase, our modern civilization is in BABYLON today! ... What has split and divided up the saints in the Church of God? Nothing but ORGANIZATION--which has led to politics, ministers lusting for rule and for power--striving against each other, lining up the brethren on THEIR side, against the other! It is SUCH PREACHERS who have split up and divided our brethren! ... Organization and church GOVERNment has brought us only strife, jealousies, divisions, bitterness! It is not of God, and it can bear no other fruit.

The fruits that are evident, whether in some cases it takes a great period of time or in others a very short duration, prove these statements to be true and inspired of God to His end-time apostle. It is time we ought to take heed and greatly examine the administration in the Church of God now!

## Overall Instructions by the Apostles on Administration

**2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.**

Paul states that he did not have dominion over the faith of the brethren. They stood before Christ on their own faith, not the minister's. Paul was correcting the Corinthians because of their many faults. His right to do so, he is stating, is not because he has the authority to rule over their faith, but because he is a helper sent by Christ to build their spiritual joy in striving for the Kingdom of God.

**1 Peter 5:1-3 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;**

Noticing verse 3, we see Peter repeating Christ's instructions for the ministry not to be lording it over God's flock. Yet, in verse 2, Peter tells the elders they are to feed the flock and take the oversight thereof.

**CONCLUSIONS:** These two scriptures again show that a minister is not to rule over God's people. But they do have certain responsibilities before God concerning the flock. Within these two scriptures we begin to see what that responsibility is – one that does not contradict Christ's overall directive. Christ's ministers are to feed the flock – indeed they do have authority to feed the flock (but what a difference between having authority to feed and authority to rule). Peter tells us the ministry has the oversight of the flock, but not lording it over the flock. They are to look after the flock, look into their needs, care for them, serve them with the spiritual food from God. And the best way they can oversee without overruling is to simply be an example before the flock.

What charge, what authority, what commission, specifically then, did Christ give to His ministers? And how do they carry that out without ruling over the flock?

## The Charge Given to God's Ministers

**Matthew 10:1-16 (parallel account in Mark 6:7-13) And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He gave them**

power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

Christ gave His twelve disciples power over demons and to heal the sick. Christ instructed them to preach – and He told them what to preach and where to preach. At this point in time He instructed them to stay with others and not to take money to finance their way. [It would seem this instruction was](#) for this one short mission only, and when they went to the world, Christ changed His instructions in Luke 22:35-36.

**Luke 10:1-20** After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me." Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

This concerns the seventy men that Christ sent out, not the disciples, yet Christ gives them the same instructions. They were sent to prepare the cities where Christ was to go. Christ told them, who were not among His twelve disciples, to pray for laborers, laborers that do not have to necessarily be ministers. These seventy were given the same charge – to heal the sick and to preach about the Kingdom of God. They had power over Satan's power and desire to hurt them. They were not to glory in this power but be thankful that their names are written in heaven.

In verse 16 Christ said that whosoever heard them heard Christ – they were, in that sense then, spokesmen for Christ. To reject these spokesmen was to reject Christ. Even though we see no authority given to rule over others it is a most serious matter for anyone who would want to be a member of Christ's Body to fail to receive His true spokesmen.

**Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Christ had now received all power (Did He have and exercise all power when He was God in the flesh? No!) Did Christ now give all power to His disciples? No, not yet, only when they too would be spirit would they have [similar power \(Revelation 20:4, Matthew 19:28\)](#). Christ does give the authority, His approval, a commission to: (1) teach others to observe what He had taught them, and (2) to baptize those who would obey into the Body of Christ. Christ then makes a divine promise to be with His ministry, His Church, unto the end of this age. This means He will be with us today in the exact same way in which He was with them, as illustrated in Acts – if we would just let Him by

following His doctrine and administration.

**Mark 16:15-20** And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Mark expands upon Christ's two-part commission. Included as proof that Christ was with His ministry would be signs of power over demons, healing, speaking in tongues and safety over powers that would hurt them.

Is it any wonder that the power to heal was lacking in the Churches of God! Even though it had the true doctrines of God, it practiced a Gentile governmental rule over the Church, the Body, that was evil in God's eyes. God did allow this misrule of Gentile government in His Church for forty years or so, to fulfill prophecy. Gentile rule, lording it over the Body, made it possible for a man to be the head in place of Christ to test the people. God wanted to know who they would follow, Christ or a man. He said the many would follow the wrong government, a head other than Christ.

**John 4:35-38** Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

Christ says that the fields are ripe and ready to be harvested. Those who reap will receive eternal wages. The sower and reaper will rejoice together. Yet one sows and another reaps. Disciples and ministers were to reap, but not in the normal sense of reaping. They were sent to reap where they had not done any planting. Before they were to step in, the grain was already white and ready to pick. All they had to do was work with that which was already beginning to bear fruit. Christ gives His ministers the right to receive and harvest the fruit of the grain. They have the authority to harvest.

This scripture could be specific to the fact that Jesus had done the planting with His three and one-half year ministry. Most of the harvesting His disciple would do soon after His death and resurrection would be the result of Jesus’ ministry, not the disciples’ efforts. Yet, on another occasion Jesus did tell His disciples to go to the “lost sheep of Israel” where the peoples of the “lost 10 tribes” would not have heard the message of Jesus directly from His preaching. And the apostle Paul said that he did plant and Apollos watered (1 Corinthians 3:6-8). In this day and age, most people in the free world have heard the message of Jesus – they just haven’t heard the truth about the Sabbath, Holy Days, etc. In that sense, Jesus’ true ministers work among those who already have the seeds of knowledge, they just need to be brought along to accept what the Bible actually says instead of what men say about the Bible.

**John 15:27** And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

The disciples were to be witnesses of what they had experienced with Christ. We today should also witness how Christ has worked in our lives, as long as it is to those whom God sends.

**John 21:15-16** So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Feed My lambs.” He said to him again a second time, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My sheep.”

Christ gives Peter and all His ministers the authority to feed His sheep. In the book of Acts Christ always told the apostles where to find those sheep when it was a new situation, and when to go to them.

**Matthew 16:19** And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in

heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Christ gives the keys of the Kingdom of God to His disciples. With these keys they had the authority to bind and to loose. Along with Luke 11:52 we see that the keys involve knowledge; how to make it into the Kingdom, which means the laws and instructions on how to open the way or the door to the Kingdom. The disciples did not have the right to change those keys. If they had changed any one key just a little bit, it would no longer work to open a door. What Christ does give His ministry the right to do, is to take those keys of the knowledge of God’s laws and determine how to apply them to specific human situations not already covered in the Bible. They are rendering judgments just like any judge takes the constitution and the laws of the land and applies them to a given situation; but no judge can change those laws, only apply them. Also note that there is more than one key. In John 10 Christ tells us that He is the door to the sheep and the only way into the fold is through that door.

**Matthew 18:15-20** “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘*by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

The binding and loosing is further commented on here. We see that the church has the responsibility to render decisions involving cases of differences among the brethren. Christ says that where two or three are gathered together in His name He will be there with them – so why do you need someone to rule over the proceedings; the Holy Spirit is in charge, the guiding authority. [More on this topic later.](#)

**John 20:22-23** And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.”

This would be in the same principle as Matthew 16:19 and 18:18. With the Holy Spirit to understand the laws of God, His representatives are the only ones who can teach the true way to repentance. They also have to at times decide if a person has really repented or not (as in Acts 8 with Simon the sorcerer) or who should be put out of the church because of deliberate, un-repented sin (as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 5).

**Acts 10:42** And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.

The disciples were commanded to preach and testify that Jesus was the Christ.

**Acts 20:28-31** Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

The Holy Spirit had made these men overseers. For what purpose? To feed the church of God. Paul did not make them overseers although he may have been an instrument involved in performing the ordination. Paul warned them that false ministers would come. Did he tell them to throw them out? No. He merely warned them and told them to warn the people. Why? Because neither he nor they had the authority to rule over any part of God’s Church. All they could do as ministers was teach the people, warn them and tell them what to do when it happens. There was no headquarters church or head man these overseers could appeal to for help. Paul is telling them how to handle the situation – warn the people. They, as elders, were overseers; there was no headquarters that oversaw all the churches.

As we’ll see later, ministers do have the responsibility to warn the congregation not to associate with someone causing a major sinful disruption or division within a church – “marking” an individual as it is sometimes referred to. There is

a significant difference in “marking” someone and “excommunication”. “Excommunication” as it is commonly practiced, involves the hierarchy of church government putting someone out of the church. “Marking” is more of a notification by an overseer of a congregation not to associate with an individual and a group decision by those in the congregation to take action accordingly in an effort to help the individual realize their mistake. The final result can turn out to be similar if the individual doesn’t respond, but the “marking” methodology is significantly kinder and has more of a chance at getting good results.

If there is a headquarters government or head man then the term “overseer” is meaningless. They would not be an overseer but “one who takes care of the flock as he is told by another man over him.” The word here for “overseers” is the same Greek word translated “bishop”. That Greek word literally means "I look" or "inspector." A bishop was to inspect the flock and then teach, guide and feed them according to their needs as he observes them. Remembering Christ's overall instructions we know this doesn't mean he had any power whatsoever to rule over God's flock.

**Acts 26:16-18** But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

Paul states that when Christ first appeared to him, Christ told him that he was to be a minister and a witness for Christ to the Gentiles. Paul was to be their servant for what purpose? To open eyes and ears, to turn people from darkness to light, to turn them from the power of Satan to the power of God that their sins might be forgiven, that they might be sanctified by faith and receive the gift of eternal life. There is no mention of any authority or power to be the ruling apostle or set up a headquarters church over all the Gentiles, Paul was just to minister, to serve all the Gentiles.

**Rom. 12:6-8** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Paul describes several gifts that God gives: 1) prophecy, 2) ministry, 3) teaching, 4) exhorting, 5) giving, 6) leading (KJV has “ruling”), and, 7) mercy. Adam Clarke says regarding the definition of the Greek word for "rule":

He that presides over a particular business; but as the verb also signifies to defend or patronize, it is probably used here to signify receiving and providing for strangers, and especially the persecuted who were obliged to leave their own homes, and were destitute, afflicted, and tormented. It might also imply the persons whose business it was to receive and entertain the apostolical teachers who traveled from place to place, establishing and confirming the Churches. In this sense the word is applied to Phoebe, chap. xvi. 2: 'She hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.' The apostle directs that this office should be executed with diligence, that such destitute persons should have their necessities as promptly and as amply supplied as possible."

Clarke's statement fits in well with the other scriptures describing responsibilities of each local congregation and is certainly within Christ's overall directive. Also note some of the surrounding context, verse 3, that you are not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to. And then in **verse 10: Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;**

The Life Application Bible Commentary has the following comment for verses 7 and 8:

Whatever gift a believer has, he or she should faithfully use it in gratitude to God. By focusing on the application of the gifts, Paul is removing the tendency toward unhealthy self-congratulation in the discovery of gifts. If we are busy using our gifts, we will be less taken up with concerns over status and power. Genuine service controls pride. When studying this list of gifts, one might imagine the characteristics of the people who would have them. Prophets are often bold and articulate. Servers (those in ministry) are faithful and loyal. Teachers are clear thinkers. Encouragers know how to motivate others. Givers are generous and trusting. Leaders are good organizers and managers. Those who show mercy are caring people who are happy to give their time to others.

MacArthur’s New Testament Commentary states the following relative to Greek word used for “lead”:

**Leads** is from *proistēmi*, which has the basic meaning of “standing before” others and, hence, the idea of



leadership. In the New Testament it is never used of governmental rulers but of headship in the family (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12) and in the church (1 Tim. 5:17). In 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul refers to the same gift by a different name, "administrations" (*kubernēsis*), which means "to guide." In Acts 27:11 and Revelation 18:17, it is used of a pilot or helmsman, the person who steers, or **leads**, a ship.

Although it is not limited to those offices, the gift of church leadership clearly belongs to elders, deacons, and deaconesses. It is significant that Paul makes no mention of leaders in his first letter to Corinth. Lack of a functioning leadership would help explain its serious moral and spiritual problems, which certainly would have been exacerbated by that deficiency. "Free-for-all" democracy amounts to anarchy and is disastrous in any society, including the church. The absence of leaders results in everyone doing what is "right in his own eyes," as the Israelites did under the judges (Judg. 17:6; 21:25; cf. Deut. 12:8).

Effective leadership must be done **with diligence**, with earnestness and zeal. *Spoudē* (**diligence**) can also carry the idea of haste (see Mark 6:25; Luke 1:39). Proper leadership therefore precludes procrastination and idleness. Whether it is possessed by church officers or by members who direct such things as Sunday school, the youth group, the nursery, or a building program, the gift of leadership is to be exercised with carefulness, constancy, and consistency.

There is a significant difference between "leadership" and "rulership". The apostle Paul said to "follow" him as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Leadership within God's Church among His people is endorsed by scripture and within the overall directive of Jesus Christ in serving the church. Ruling over the people of His Church is not. It seems many people never stop to consider the difference between being a leader and a ruler and how that not only should apply to relationships in their own life, but also how it should apply within God's Church.

**1 Corinthians 4:1-2** Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

God's ministers are His stewards to whom He commits the mysteries of how men become **members of God's family**. A steward is "one who manages another's property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another." according to *The American College Dictionary*. A steward is not the head man or a ruler; but he is responsible to the owner or boss to see that things are carried out in an orderly manner. God's ministers are the "keepers" of His Word and responsible to use that Word to guide and feed the flock.

**1 Corinthians 9:17** For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship (KJV – "a dispensation of the gospel").

A **stewardship** or dispensation of the gospel was committed unto Paul.

**2 Corinthians 5:18-20** Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

God has given some a ministry, a ministry of reconciliation, not rulership. The ministers are God's ambassadors, it is through them that He makes His thoughts known to others. An ambassador represents someone else to a "foreign" people, but he has no power or authority to rule over those people.

**2 Corinthians 8:23** If *anyone inquires* about Titus, *he is my partner and fellow worker* concerning you. Or if our brethren are *inquired about*, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.

Ministers are the messengers of the churches (it is not one headquarters church that stood for all, but each church stands individually). **Translations are divided on whether the meaning here is that Christ gives glory to His ministers if they are faithful stewards or the ministry helps bring Christ's glory to the Church.**

**2 Corinthians 10: 8** For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed —

A minister does have authority from Christ! But for what purpose? To rule? No! To edify the church – not to destroy

it. The Gentile form of government destroys people, whether it is done quickly or over a period of time. The Church of God has always watered down doctrine and eventually destroyed itself with Gentile government. God's administration edifies, builds up and preserves His doctrines.

**2 Corinthians 12:19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.**

Paul did all things to edify the people.

**2 Corinthians 13:10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.**

God gave Paul power to edify, not to destroy. Sometimes when you see a person hurting themselves, you edify him through correction, by teaching him what he's done wrong.

**Ephesians 3:7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.**

The ministry is a gift from God.

**Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-16 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.*" ... And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

God gives gifts to men, some of which are the different gifts of the ministry. What is the purpose of these gifts? To perfect the saints, edify the Body of Christ, bring unity in the faith and see that the people be not tossed to and fro by strange doctrines. Christ is the Head to which we all are to look. And in Him the whole body fits together and works together, each part doing his particular job, to make, increase and edify itself, the body, in love.

**Colossians 1:24-29 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.**

Paul was made a minister by God. God gave to him His Message which Paul was to give to the people. This message was the mystery of how God would make men into spirit sons. Paul had the authority to preach, teach and warn with this message.

**2 Thessalonians 3:4-15 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ**

that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good. And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Paul commanded the brethren to do certain things. What did those commands involve? They always involved what to do to obey the commandments of God. They never involved what he wanted them to do because he was some type of a ruler over them, for such was not true. And how did Paul force the people to obey? He didn't! Notice **verse 5**: "**Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.**" Paul told the people what they should do but it was the Holy Spirit of God that directed them to obey. If they didn't have the Holy Spirit, then they probably didn't obey and there was nothing Paul could do about it except tell the others, who did, not to associate with the disobedient.

**1 Timothy 1:11, 18** according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. ... This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

The gospel of God was committed unto Paul's trust. He was responsible to keep it and preserve it as a whole. God gave it to him for good keeping. Paul in turn turned this responsibility near the end of his life over to Timothy. Paul had the right to instruct those who ministered with him, that as ministers, they were now responsible to preserve and carry on that gospel.

**1 Timothy 3: 2-5, 12** A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); ... Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well.

The Greek word for "rule" more accurately means to properly preside over. Notice the literal translation from the **Diaglot, verses 4-5, 12**

**Of the own house well presiding, children having in subjection with all dignity; (if but anyone of the own house to preside not knows, how a congregation of God will he take care of?)**

**Servants let be of one wife a husband, children well presiding over and of the own house."**

To be an elder one has to properly preside over his own house first. What is family administration like? Each had his place and responsibility, the father has the prominent **leadership** position. Notice how God commands the family to function in Ephesians 5:22-6:4. Christ does not tell the father to lord it over the wife and the children. Christ instead tells the wife and the children to obey their husband and father. The father is in the position of authority, but he is not to exercise such authority like a Gentile dictator, nor should it be in the form of a democracy. According to Christ's instructions in Ephesians, the wife and children listen because they want to in love. The husband and father is nowhere here instructed to lord it over his wife and children. Instead he is told to love his wife as Christ did the Church, and not to provoke his children but teach them in love and firmness. A father does have the responsibility to manage, teach, direct and correct his family, but when done God's way he does not lord it over them like the Gentiles. An elder must properly preside over the church. But with the church he is not in the position of the father. God is our Father. An elder is one of the older children given a gift so as to make him able to watch over the other children. Before one can become an elder in such a position he must show he can properly preside over his family. This means either extreme would disqualify him to be an elder: 1) he can not control or guide his family, and 2) he rules over his family with an iron hand like a Gentile ruler.

**1 Timothy 4:6,11, 14** If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. ... These things command and teach. ... Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

A minister is supposed to continually remind the brethren of God's Word in order to be a good minister. He can do this through commands (concerning God's Word only) and teaching (of God's Word). This is a gift given to ministers.

**1 Timothy 5:20** Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

A minister does have the right to point out the sins that someone has openly committed before the Church and to rebuke that person that others might learn the lesson.

**1 Timothy 6:20** O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—

Paul tells Timothy to keep and preserve in its original state that gospel that has been given to him to carry on as a minister.

**2 Timothy 2:2, 14** And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ... Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.

Paul instructed Timothy, in turn, to commit the gospel unto faithful men to preserve it down through the ages. This is Christ's system to perpetuate His Truth. He has given His ministers the authority to ordain ministers after themselves. But because of men's weaknesses, Christ has often had to reveal His Truth anew to revive the process.

**2 Timothy 4:1-5** I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul charged Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. This involved preaching, [convincing \(KJV “reproving”\)](#), rebuking, exhorting with patience in the doctrines of God. God's true minister knows how to do so with proper timing so as to edify people, not crush them as a Gentile ruler would be prone to do.

**Titus 1:3, 5** but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior; ... For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

Christ manifested Himself through the Word which He had committed unto Paul to preach. Paul in turn instructed Titus to set the churches in order, ordaining elders. God does not want confusion in His Churches. He has given a system for order and edification – but remembering Christ's overall directive and other scriptures, we see that it is done completely different than the way in which the Gentiles keep order.

**Titus 2:15** Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

God's ministers do have authority, but not to rule. Here we see three steps that should be taken in the order they are given. A minister first speaks or preaches God's Word. Second, he exhorts or strongly encourages and motivates them to obey. And thirdly, he rebukes if they have not listened.

**Hebrews 7:11-12, 15-17** Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was *there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. ... And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: “*You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*”

(With context of whole chapter.) The word “changed” is better understood to be “transferred”. The high priesthood was transferred [back](#) to Christ. [The Melchizedek priesthood was from the beginning intended to be an eternal priesthood](#)

(Psalms 110:4). The Levitical priesthood was only temporary and was associated with rituals that were only temporary until the first coming of the Messiah Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:24-25; 4:1-5). We see here and have seen that Christ chose other men to assist Him in the "priesthood." Was the law of the priesthood changed? It was in the sense that it operates under the New Covenant instead of the Old Covenant and that Christ does not have to choose men of the tribe of Levi. Otherwise the law was not changed, it was transferred to Christ's ministry. Before, the law said Levites received the tithes, it was transferred back to the Melchizedek ministry who now receives the tithes. Likewise so were the other laws as to how the priesthood should function transferred to the ministry. Something to consider: the system of government that God gave Israel involved priests, Levites, judges, and tribal or family leaders. Israel chose to have the Gentile form of government of a king. God did not originally give them that. And how did the priests, Levites, judges and tribal leaders "rule" Israel? Or did they "rule" Israel? Where was the police force that enforced the "rule" of the priest? There was none! In this system of government that God gave Israel, the priests, etc., had no more right to rule the people than the ministry does today. They, too, were instructors in God's laws and rendered judgments according to those laws when new situations came up – just like Christ gave His ministry authority to do. The law was enforced by the people themselves – there was no outside force that made them obey, and indeed, when Israel grew forgetful, they did not enforce God's laws and there was no one to make them. They ended up in captivity until they came to their senses. Also, another important consideration – was that administration local or centralized in a headquarters? There was only one high priest and only one place to go for burnt offerings, true. But did that make the high priest ruler over all Israel and his location a headquarters government? Or were the people to consider the Levite within their gates? The latter is true. The high priest did not rule over the other priests. Each was local unto himself. The people gave their tithes to the local Levites who in turn gave them to the local priest. There seems to be parallels in the basic principles between the priesthood and the ministry. This subject would make an interesting study later on as time permits. However, one most important thing to remember in this parallel is that our high priest is Jesus Christ and His headquarters is in Heaven. Anyone who tries to centrally locate it on earth is in effect taking Christ's responsibility and only stands to be on the losing end of things.

**Hebrew 13:7, 17 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct. ... Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.**

The word "rule" gives the wrong connotation in both these verses. The center reference gives a better translation, "are the guides." The literal translation from the *Diaglott* in both cases is given as "leaders." The majority of modern translations use one of these two words: guide or leader. Considering Christ's overall directive we realize the minister does not have authority to "rule" but from other scriptures we have seen a minister does have authority to "lead" and "guide" the flock in God's doctrine. Which ministers are they to remember? Which ministers are they to listen to? Only those who have spoken the Word of God to them. Paul just told them in verse 6 that God was their helper and they had no need to fear men. But they were to listen to the Word of God as He gave it to His ministers as His spokesmen. In verse 17 Paul states the same principle as found in Mark 9: 37, receive, hear, submit to the true servants of Christ, for in so doing you receive, hear and submit yourself unto Christ. It is stated that the minister watches for their souls, the task of a steward. They watch over their souls, not rule over them. Paul says to listen so the minister can give a good report because if they do not listen he will have to give a bad report. If the minister ruled over their souls he could force them to listen to him and obey God; the only reason then he would have for giving God a bad report is because he did a bad job of ruling over his flock!

**1 Peter 5:1-7 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**

What is an elder to do? Feed the flock and watch over them. Peter makes it plain they are not to rule over the flock but are to be examples to the flock. A minister then: 1) looks over the flock to see what their spiritual needs are, 2) feeds them from the Word of God according to those needs, and 3) guides them by his example, not by ruling over them. Peter goes on to say in verse 5 that the younger should respect their elders. But then notice he says that “all of you” – including then, ministers, elders, youngsters, men and women, etc – “all of you be submissive to one another and be clothed in humility”. Let the ministers serve the people. Let the people respect and listen to the minister. This is God’s way and with it there is no need of authority to rule over someone. No, but by the Holy Spirit each individual respects and serves the other, each according to the gifts God has given him.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 28** There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ... God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

There is no real mention of administrations in this chapter. "Administrations" as used in verse 5 of the King James Bible should be “ministrations” meaning services by the ministers. “Operations” in verse 6 of the King James Bible refers to the results or “activities” of the gifts (vs. 4) and service (vs. 5) which God causes. “Governments” in verse 28 of the King James Bible is the only place where the Greek word is used and it is difficult to nail down its meaning according to its usage in the scriptures. Some say it means a very wise and prudent person. Others say it means those who help ministers, such as deacons.

This whole chapter is about gifts. Not gifts to rule over people, but gifts to help people. These gifts vary from person to person and gift to gift. In verse 5 it could refer to the different “offices” of serving given in verse 28. Or it could refer to the fact that each minister performs differently according to his personality. Or it could refer to the fact that because each church congregation was independent of all others, the way things were done would naturally be somewhat different than in other churches. This would have been impossible with current Churches of God where there was a headquarters and a head with one administration. All churches were administered in the same way, according to the "rules" or "policy" set forth by headquarters.

**Malachi 2:7** For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And people should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

In this end-time prophecy we see that a priest or minister should be responsible for the keeping of the knowledge and laws of God. For they are His messengers.

**CONCLUSIONS:** What is a minister? A minister is an ambassador of Christ. He is a steward of the mysteries contained in the Word of God. He is a steward or shepherd with the oversight of the Master's flock. As a minister with these responsibilities he has the authority from Christ to teach, preach, exhort and rebuke with the Word of God, not with the authority of a Gentile ruler. All ruling authority in God’s Church rest in the power of His Holy Spirit, the power to make each individual respect and serve the other. No man has that power.

Ministers are stewards and spokesmen of the Word of God. They are to rightly use it to instruct others. They are to see that those Truths are preserved without change by committing them unto faithful men after them. This is one major overall responsibility of a minister.

A second major responsibility is to watch over God's flock. Ministers are God's hired servants to take care of, educate, edify, and correct (when necessary) His children. They are not rulers over God's children free to do as they please. They have been entrusted with a great responsibility to care for the children in the Master's (physical) absence; the Master leaves behind His Holy Spirit to be the guiding power. The ministers have the authority to teach, guide, instruct, even discipline the children according to the Father's direction. But they are only servants caring for the children who one day will receive the full status of the Father’s Eternal Kingdom. The servants are subject to the Master, under His government the same as the children are – they are not free to set up their own ruling government. The good thing is

that in this case, the servants too are to [be born into the Father's Eternal Family](#). In that sense the ministers are like older children left in charge of the other children while the parents are out for an evening.

All the authority a minister has – to teach, instruct, rebuke, etc. – is for one purpose and one only: [to edify the Body of Christ](#) – not to brow beat or belittle and rule over the children of God. Since a minister has no authority to rule over another individual nor a church congregation, how could he rule over all churches everywhere? It is impossible for such to happen with God's administration. As an apostle, he has the right to preach in more than one location but not to rule over those churches. We will discuss these different responsibilities later.

Notice again that these same points are brought out in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's 1939 *Good News* article, "Did Christ Reorganize the Church?":

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority' --- for what? to GOVERN? To RULE the Church? Notice carefully! Let us have a BIBLE REASON for all we accept and do; ... '... and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he SENT THEM to' --- He sent them to WHAT? To rule and govern? To have supervision over the spiritual affairs of an organization? Notice it, IN THE BIBLE:" ... 'He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.' An apostle does not mean one IN authority, but one UNDER authority --- one SENT by the authority of another! The only power and authority Jesus ever gave even His original twelve was to heal the sick, and cast out demons. And He SENT them, not to rule, but to PREACH---not to BEAR authority, but to MINISTER, to serve! ... Our heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church!

God revealed His truth in doctrine as well as the truth about administration to Mr. Armstrong when God revived His Church. Let us not accept the originally revealed doctrines and reject the originally revealed administration! We need both!

## Financial Administration

**1 Corinthians 9:1-19** Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.*" Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings* of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel. For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

The commentaries say the Greek word translated "power" [in the King James](#) more accurately means "right" [and this is the word what most modern translations use in these verses](#). This same Greek word is translated "liberty" in chapter 8, verse 9. Paul did not have a governmental position in the church whereby he or any other minister could demand tithes. But according to the instructions of God, all ministers as the servants of God and the church, had the "right" to receive those tithes. What law would be referred to here when Paul says he has a right to eat and drink? What law provides for God's servants? When we put this chapter together with Hebrews 7 it is clear that God transferred the right the priests and Levites had to take the tithes to those ministers chosen under the New Covenant. And how was the tithing system

administered in the Old Covenant? Were all the tithes sent to one central location and then sent back out to each priest or Levite as the high priest saw fit? No! The Levite was to eat of the grain with his whole family in every place, not a centralized headquarters (Numbers 18:31). Israel was to remember the Levite within their gates (Deuteronomy 12:18; 14:27).

In verse 7 Paul states the principle that any worker should receive wages for his labor. Notice that in all the examples the wage is taken directly from where the work is being done. When you plant a vineyard you eat those grapes, not the grapes from some other vineyard. The one who takes care of the flock takes the milk from that flock. And in verse 9 Paul states the ox is to eat of the grain as treads out the corn. Then Paul states this was specifically written to set the principle for the ministry. Where a minister plows he should have hope, and when he threshes he partakes of that harvest. A minister is to partake of the tithes in the congregation where he is working – not from a headquarters payroll. The reason is not because they didn't have a faster mail system, it was because this is the God-given principle everywhere in His Word. This would keep a minister on his toes and trusting in God. He has to do a good job before God or there will not be much of a harvest. He has to trust God to supply the “rain,” etc., so that there is a harvest resulting from his diligent labors. If there is a headquarters payroll, he could take it easy and the paycheck would still roll in week after week.

In verse 12 we see that other ministers did take of their tithes. Who these ministers are is not here indicated. Paul did not take their tithes for a very special reason, to prove a point. This will be explained in the next few scriptures.

**2 Corinthians 11:7-13** *Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows! But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.*

Here was a situation where Paul was “damned if he did” and “damned if he didn't.” Some were saying that the apostle Paul was in it for the money (vs. 12) and he was going to prove he wasn't by not taking any of their tithes. But some people evidently were saying that Paul didn't think they were good enough Christians for him to take their tithes. Notice that Paul should have, under normal circumstances, taken their tithes, directly from them. The reason he didn't was because of what false apostles were saying about him (vss. 12, 13).

**2 Corinthians 12:13-19** *For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong! Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps? Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.*

Paul says he was a burden to all other local churches. The only two stated exceptions to this were Corinth and Thessalonica. Paul did take the local tithes; he was a burden to all other churches. Paul even states that it was wrong for him not to take their tithes in Corinth, but that for a greater spiritual result, for their edification, he would continue not to be a “burden” to them (vss. 13, 19). From verses 17 and 19 we see that none of those ministers working with Paul took of their tithes either. Yet we read that the Corinthians did support other ministers (1 Corinthians 9:12). Who were they? We have seen from the eleventh chapter that false ministers were involved in this. They probably supported their local ministers too, as did all other local churches. Corinth was a church with many problems.

**Philippians 4:10-19** *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am,*



**to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

The Philippians helped Paul when they could. Did their tithes go to a headquarters and then get passed along to the apostle Paul? No!

But it does seem that it is proper for all the churches under a particular apostle to send him care. The money is sent directly to him, not to one location which is a headquarters. Also notice that the money or food was always used by the apostle (and his fellow traveling ministers) himself. The money was not used in one central location to do a “work.” The only “work” Paul did was preach, and write letters at times. Paul's preaching and writing was done as he went from local congregation to local congregation; he didn't have a base operation from which he did a “work.” Paul didn't have a staff (small or great) that sent out the gospel. He went from church to church preaching. And that, plus what each local congregation did, is how the gospel was spread.

**2 Thessalonians 3:7-13** For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.

Paul did not take tithes from the Thessalonians. Why? To be an example to them that he practiced what he preached; even though it was his “right” to take their tithes.

**1 Timothy 5:17-18** Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, “*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,*” and, “*The laborer is worthy of his wages.*”

Again, the word translated “rule” means “presides over”. Which elder presides over a flock? – a pastor of course, unless a visiting evangelist or apostle happens to be there. The pastor is to receive a larger wage (as double is not an exact translation of the Greek), probably over what has been referred to in the preceding verses, taking care of the widows. How is he to receive that wage? Like the ox, he receives it from the location where he labors. Why does a pastor need a larger wage? Why in chapter 3 is a bishop supposed to be given to hospitality? One reason would be because he would most naturally be the one traveling evangelists and apostles would stay with when they were in that local church. This will be evident when 3 John is discussed.

**2 Timothy 2:3-6** You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.

The farmer [minister] laboring first, must be first partaker of the fruits. The minister must partake of the fruit where he has labored.

Hebrews 7 – As has already been stated, the right of the priest and Levites to take the tithes was transferred to God's New Covenant ministry. The laws concerning the tithes and the manner in which they were given (except sacrifices [and associated rituals](#)) is still the same.

**CONCLUSIONS:** All tithes and offerings were given to the ministers directly. The local church gave theirs to their local pastor. In cases of unusual need, when an apostle was working in a new area or a new church, help was sent to him. All monies were used by the minister himself to live off of or help other ministers as they were in his area. No money was used in some kind of work that involved the hiring of a non-ministerial staff or an organized organization. The minister, his preaching, and the church were the work. It was one body, each with his responsibility or his gift – as given by God's Holy Spirit. This is the message of 1 Corinthians 12. A ministry with their personally hired staff as an elite group above the body doing a separate work is wrong!! The whole body works together. When one is successful, they all are. And when one suffers, they all suffer.

This doesn't necessarily mean it is wrong to use modern means of communication like booklets, magazines, the

internet, radio and TV to spread the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But too often, it seems, the efforts of men are more in evidence than the power of God's Holy Spirit when such efforts are made from a central headquarters. It seems "doing a work" necessitates a coordinated effort from a headquarters. There is a misconception of the necessity of the church needing to do a "work" or what the real "work" of the church should be. That is another topic that will not be discussed in depth in this study paper. The church used to use Matthew 24:14 as a church commission. But most now realize this was not the correct usage of this scripture – that the timing of this scripture is between the fourth and fifth seal and likely will be fulfilled by the two witnesses. A better scripture for a church commission are the last words of Jesus in the gospels as in Matthew 28:18-20. Even here, there is a question of is this a commission to just apostles or any and all ministers down through the ages. The Churches of God seemingly ignore the Biblical definition of what the "Work of God" is. This can be found in the following scripture:

**John 6:28-29** Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

It could be possible for multiple individual church congregations to cooperate in publishing or using the air waves to spread the scriptural teaching of Jesus in order to bring new disciples into God's church. How to do this without building a Gentile form of government within those churches would be a difficult task and would have to be undertaken with a great deal of caution. There are also many other issues when a church starts to do a "work" of preaching to the world. Many individuals who are not ministers end up on the payroll receiving first tithe. Is that allowed? Can it be justified using an analogy that ministers are like the priest of the Old Testament and the office workers are like the Levites? I personally don't have all the answers to these difficult questions relevant to this day and age. I just know a headquarters doing a "work" has sooner or later always led to a spiritual watering down and changing of the originally revealed doctrines from the Bible.

Facing a situation in 1939 where one church wanted control of all the tithes Mr. Armstrong examines the problem, again quoting from the same *Good News* article:

WERE THE 'SEVEN' A FINANCIAL BOARD? And now a brief glimpse at 'THE SEVEN.' Were they set up as a FINANCIAL BOARD? Were they appointed to receive and handle the TITHES of the whole world-wide Church? Did they ever supervise the financial affairs of the ministry, hiring and firing ministers, and pay them their salaries, or 'allowances?' Were they set over THAT business? ... The business for which the seven were-appointed had nothing whatsoever to do with receiving and disbursing tithes for the ministry and preaching of the word! We should like to see any text in the New Testament showing that there ever was appointed any BOARD to act as a TREASURY for the tithes of the disciples, and to receive and disburse the money for the whole church! We say such a thing IS UNSCRIPTURAL and unless SCRIPTURE can be produced for it, such a practice ought to be discontinued! ... Our heavenly Father never planted any super-organization, or established any church GOVERNMENT, or set men IN AUTHORITY over either spiritual or financial affairs, in the New Testament Church! ... All such organizations and governments came out of BABYLON---and are today a part of BABYLON! ... But let us drop all effort to BUILD UP A MOVEMENT or AN ORGANIZATION. Let us quit working FOR organizations, and work FOR THE LORD---and the salvation of souls!

Again, let's accept God's original revelation to Mr. Armstrong in doctrine and administration or let's reject all of it – for to take only half as inspired is foolish.

## Members' Administrative Function

**Matthew 10:40-42** He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.

He that received the disciples received Christ. The same with prophets and any righteous man. Members must determine who are God's true and righteous ministers and then receive them, for in so doing they receive Christ.

**Matthew 18:5-6** Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned

in the depth of the sea.

**Mark 9:37** Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.

**Luke 9:48** and said to them, “Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.”

**Luke 10:16** He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.

**John 13:20** Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

All state basically the same thing: Whosoever receives those ministers sent by God receives God by so doing.

**1 Corinthians 11:1-2** Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you.

Members to follow ministers as they follow Christ. The minister is to be an example and the members should follow that example. Paul didn't say to obey him because he was lord over them. He told them to also remember and keep the doctrine he, as God's messenger, gave to them.

**1 Corinthians 12:7, 25-26** the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: ... that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*.

([Read context of whole chapter.](#)) As members of the body they are to use their God-given gifts to help edify the body (Eph. 4:16) not covet someone else's gift. ALL the gifts are to work together to do whatever needs to be done.

**1 Corinthians 16:10-11, 15-16** And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do. Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren. ... I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us.

Paul tells the people they should make Timothy feel comfortable in their presence. They should receive, submit and send forth in peace those ministers that work for God.

**2 Corinthians 3:1-2** Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you or *letters* of commendation from you? You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

The brethren were responsible to write letters of recommendation for ministers in their midst who were not well known in other local congregations. But Paul needed no such letter of recommendation, he had been the one used of God to raise up all these churches.

**2 Corinthians 8:23-24** If *anyone inquires* about Titus, *he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you*. Or if our brethren are *inquired about*, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

People were to show their love to ministers.

**Philippians 2:29** Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem;

Receive with gladness and honor ministers.

**1 Thessalonians 11-22** Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing. And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

Here are some major instructions for those members of the Body of Christ. Edify one another. "Know" those ministers among them. Esteem very highly in love those ministers who are the true spokesmen of God's Word. Warn other brethren that are disorderly. Comfort the weak. Be patient toward all men. Don't render evil to those who are evil toward you. Rejoice evermore. Pray all the time. Give thanks to God for all things. Don't let something take the Holy Spirit from you. Hear the inspired preaching of ministers, prove it, and then do it. Abstain from even the appearance of evil. These all are responsibilities of the brethren, but something they have not been allowed to do under a Gentile form of government. And it is still not in practice to this day even in the remnant as a whole. There may be an allusion to it, a form of godliness, but the full extent of these responsibilities by all the brethren everywhere are deemed impractical. And that is not much of an excuse for not obeying God.

**2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. ... And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

The members are to notice which brethren do not obey God and withdraw themselves. The minister doesn't do it for them. Only in extreme cases is a person "marked" and put out of the church.

**Hebrews 13:7, 17** Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow,

considering the outcome of *their* conduct. ... Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

The members should respect, follow, submit and listen to the ministers after considering the end result of the example that has been set before them with the Bible. *As we've discussed before, most other modern translations use a phrase that uses the word "leader" instead of "rule" in both verses.*

**1 Peter 5:5-6** Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

Humble yourselves and everyone submit to one another.

**2 John 1:10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;

Members not to receive anyone who doesn't preach the true word of God.

**3 John 1:5-6** Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well,

Brethren do well if they receive and help those true ministers who bear witness of the gospel.

**CONCLUSIONS:** All members are a part of the Body of Christ. God gives gifts to all and for a reason, not just for show. They work with the ministers. The ministers don't hire their own elite personal staff to do a special work apart from the rest of the body. They don't centralize and organize a physical corporation for the purpose of a work. The whole church is involved in a meaningful way other than just "pay and pray" (although they should be doing that too). Every word of **Ephesians 4:16** would have the meaning it was meant to have if such were practiced: **from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

## Minister-Member Relation

**1 Corinthians 16:10-11** And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do. Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren.

The minister should not be fearful of the people. (If God's form of church government were the Gentile form of government, it would be the other way around; the people would be fearful of the minister.) The people are to respect the minister in love, not despise him.

**1 Timothy 5:1-2** Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

This should be taken literally, but it never has been. There is no "reign of fear" – it is a family relationship. Timothy was told to treat older men as he would his father, even though he was their minister, an evangelist. He was to treat younger men as brothers. The elder women were to be treated as mothers and the younger as sisters.

**1 Peter 5:5-6** Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

Using this scripture again, we see everyone is to be humble and submit to one another.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The proper minister-member relationship has been put into practice very seldom, if ever, in the recent past. No minister was permitted to get close to the people, for it was thought the people would lose respect for him. That probably would be true in a Gentile form of government, but not in God's Church where all are brothers and sisters. With the Holy Spirit each will respect the other as he obeys God. There will be a closeness never experienced in the church before – a closeness that will allow each person to help the other and edify the Body of Christ.

## Minister-Minister Relation

**2 Corinthians 8:23** *If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.*

Paul thought of Titus as a partner and a fellow-helper. Even though Paul was an apostle he didn't look down on the other ministers; they worked together as partners, as the messengers to the churches.

**1 Thessalonians 3:2** *and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,*

Paul thought of Timothy as a brother and fellow laborer. When Paul refers to Timothy before the whole church, they are all brothers.

**1 Timothy 1:18** *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,*

In a more private situation Paul thought of the younger minister as a son and gave him fatherly advice from God.

**Titus 1:4** *To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.*

Titus was also thought of as a son.

**CONCLUSIONS:** How many problems could have been avoided in the past if the minister having the greater responsibility had treated all other ministers as his own sons? How much more harmony there would be if all ministers treated each other as brothers instead of climbing for power. Each would be concerned about the welfare of the whole family, not just his own personal needs. They would work together instead of saying, there is not enough, let me be in charge and you go do something else. No, if things were done God's way there would be a family atmosphere of harmony and peace in the whole body as everyone worked for the sake of the family [good](#).

## Solving Personal Differences

**Matt. 18:15-35** *Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell*

down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

We should remember that this instruction from Christ was given in the context of the disciples arguing over who was to be the greatest as stated in verse 1. The first step as we have always been told is to go directly to your brother when there is a problem between the two of you. A little common sense tells us you should use good sense and good timing – wait until both have “cooled off” if need be, pray about it first, pick a good time in a convenient setting, etc. Most of us are poor at this, we would normally, carnally, tell everybody about the problem but our brother. The second step, likewise, has very seldom been put into practice. There are to be two or three witnesses taken. It does not say whether or not these should be ministers, it just says witnesses. Then the third step has never, in our time, to my knowledge, been put into practice. It says to take it to the Church. We have always been told in the past that that meant the ministers. But it does not say ministers, it says “the church”. In the past it was unthinkable to let the brethren of the church help solve problems, they were just “dumb sheep.” But don't all the brethren have the Holy Spirit, aren't we all to “judge angels” – we'll examine this in a moment. Another major thing this would accomplish: think what a great prod this would be for the members to solve the problem first in private. Then, only when both sides were adamant in their belief that they were right, would it have to be taken before the whole congregation.

**1 Corinthians 6:1-8 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and *you do* these things to your brethren!**

The Corinthians were taking their problems to outside courts. Paul tells them this is wrong. They should take it before the church. Paul implies this should be done by picking out those men who are recognized by the church as a whole as having wisdom and spiritual maturity. Paul says that they should rather suffer wrong than take the situation to unconverted people. The Living Bible gives a good rendering of this, especially verse 4 which is poorly translated in the King James.

**1 Timothy 5:19-20 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.**

Ministers are involved in correcting others. People would naturally hold grudges if they were carnal. So, Paul says that Timothy is not even to accept an accusation unless there are two or three witnesses. Paul doesn't go into detail on how to handle the matter here. But verse 20 indicates very strongly that this is to be handled before the church, at least if the sin was committed before the whole church. The matter would be solved in much the same way as with other brothers. In such cases involving a minister, there should be another “older brother,” a minister who serves in a capacity over the accused. While there must be two or three witnesses in the case of a minister because the nature of his work sometimes invites trouble, there is no special treatment he receives over members if he has sinned.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Many of the problems in God's Church have been the result of giving preferential treatment to “special” people. Also, because the whole church was not involved, fair decisions were not handed out very often. This system has never really been properly practiced. If it were, then God's blessings would be experienced in ways we have never anticipated. Involving God's people would not only be handling it the way God commands, it would be more fair. It would also help unite the Body, not to destroy individuals but to help the “weaker” of the Church. With this thought



we should consider two scriptures:

**Romans 15:1** We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

**Galatians 6:1** Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

How different this is than the way the Gentiles would do it.

## **Examples of God's Administration As Practiced in the New Testament Church**

**Acts 1:15-26** And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, "Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry." (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the Book of Psalms: '*Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it*'; and, '*Let another take his office*.'" "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Peter took the lead. But he didn't make the decision by himself. The whole group, all 120 (verse 15), were [involved in choosing two men among many](#). Then they left it to God to make the final selection by casting lots.

**Acts 6:1-6** Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

The apostles knew that the brethren, by reason of having God's Spirit, could pick out seven men full of faith, wisdom, honesty, and the Holy Spirit. The Church was not just "paying and praying," they were part of meaningful and important church functions. The ministers are to serve, but mainly in spiritual areas; other men were chosen for physical tasks. These seven men are nowhere given authority over anything, but they are to serve the widows. Later, [some of them](#) were used by God to do other tasks.

**Acts 8: 4** Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

The brethren were involved in spreading the gospel. How, it does not say. It would not have been from street corners, etc. It could have been by example and conversation, by letting their light shine. The thing to notice is that God used them, they were not just in a lower supportive roll behind the ministers.

**Acts 9:30** When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

The brethren brought Paul down to Cesarea and sent him forth to Tarsus. There was no central work telling everyone else what to do. This action by the brethren would have involved their accompaniment and their money.

**Acts 11:4** But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying:

Peter gives a complete account from the beginning. He was not afraid that the people would not understand and therefore they shouldn't know everything, "We'll just tell them what to do." No, he shared with them and they did understand and glorified God (verse 18).

**Acts 11: 19 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.**

Again we see the scattered brethren involved in spreading the gospel.

**Acts 11:22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.**

The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch.

**Acts 11:29-30 Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.**

The brethren decide to send help to Judea. They didn't have to get a minister's permission; there was no red-tape to go through by sending a request to headquarters. The brethren even decided which ministers they wanted to take the gift to Judea.

**Acts 13:1-3 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.**

God used men in the local church at Antioch to officially separate Paul and Barnabas to the work of an apostle. The twelve apostles were not involved, no headquarters approval was needed since there was no headquarters except one: Christ in heaven. All of God's churches were local churches and ministered to by the power of God's Holy Spirit. God used prophets to make His will known.

**Acts 14:27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.**

The church was gathered to tell them ALL what had happened.

**Acts 15:3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.**

The members of the church provided the expenses for Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem.

**Acts 15:12, 22 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. ... Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely*, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.**

The multitude, the whole church was pleased and played a part in deciding who to send. They chose people from the congregation – "leading men among the brethren."

**Acts 16:1-2 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.**

Part of the reason Paul chose Timothy is because he received a good report from the brethren.

**Acts 17:10** Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

The brethren sent Paul and Silas away to Berea because of the danger. They made the decision and they gave them the provisions to get there; they didn't just turn them out of the city. There was no central group of men in one headquarters church that made all the decisions and sent all the expenses.

**Acts 17:14-15** Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

The brethren at Berea did the same thing. Which church group or ministers have yet allowed the brethren to play such an important roll in the church? Those at "the top" have always reserved such decisions to themselves, "The brethren wouldn't be able to handle such tough decisions." That is the way it is in a Gentile government, but not in God's government.

**Acts 18:27-28** And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

The brethren wrote a letter of recommendation exhorting other brethren to receive Apollos. There would be no need of this with a Gentile system. You would know if a man was a good minister or not if he were on the headquarters' payroll. Headquarters would tell you if he was a minister or not. No such setup existed in the New Testament church.

**Acts 19:30** And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him.

Paul wanted to enter into the assembly and talk to the people, but the brethren would not permit him to do so. [There is much additional meaning inherent in this scripture.](#) First, the brethren were not fearful to tell Paul he shouldn't do something he wanted to do because they felt it was dangerous. And second, Paul listened to them, accepting their advise – he did not correct or belittle them for telling him what was best for him under these circumstances.

**1 Corinthians 5** It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. For what *have I to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "*put away from yourselves the evil person.*"

When we really study this chapter we see that the people are the ones that enforced the corrective matters. Paul just instructs them, the people, what to do. He, as a minister, makes the judgment of what should be done, verse 3. And yet the people shared in this judgment, they had to judge if Paul was right according to the scriptures. Since Paul did speak the words of God, they enforced the decision when they put away from themselves the sinful person.

**1 Corinthians 16:3** And when I come, whomever you approve by *your* letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

The decision was up to the brethren. Whoever they chose would be the ones Paul would send along with their gift to Judea.

**2 Corinthians 2:6-11** This punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority *is* sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you *ought* rather to forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love to him. For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Paul had judged in 1Corinthians 5 that this man had sinned and it was not forgiven. But now the man had repented and Paul judged that Christ would forgive him and so should he and the people of Corinth. He instructs them that they should receive this man back and show him their love. The importance of this, and doing it at the right time, is stated in verse 11. If they don't show love to the man, it will hurt both them and him, giving Satan room to operate in their lives.

**2 Corinthians 7:12** Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did not do it* for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

Paul didn't write the corrective letter of 1 Corinthians to show his authority and point out everything they were doing wrong. He did it to show his love and concern for them. Paul was their guiding apostle; he was taking the oversight of them and caring for their spiritual needs. The first letter to the Corinthians involved changing some things that would eventually hurt them spiritually. Then in this second letter he encourages them unto greater perfection in God's "Way of Life."

**1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11** But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. ... as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children,

Paul served and treated the Thessalonians as a hired nurse maid would the children she cares for. He worked with them, guiding, exhorting and comforting as a father does his children.

**3 John** The Elder, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth: Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.* I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true. I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

Gaius, it would seem probable, was an elder in the church. John commends him for faithfully taking care of "brethren" and "strangers." Commentaries say this either refers to brethren in the local church and strangers are those ministers who traveled about, or, brethren are the well-known apostles and strangers are those less known who worked with them. John says in verse 6 that Gaius would be doing well to help these ministers on their journey. It would clearly seem then, that Gaius was an elder and was receiving at least some of the tithes of the local church. Surely his own tithes were not sufficient to help all the traveling ministers; and when the Bible says to "bring forward on their journey" it does not mean to speak empty words of blessings and then give them no help. **James 2:15-16** **If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?** With these tithes, it was his decision to make if he would help a [traveling](#) minister when he came into the area; depending on whether or not he thought they were true ministers of God. John did not force him to take care of these men by saying, "I'm your boss and you'd better do such and such or I'll cut you off the payroll and perhaps put you out of the church." John couldn't say such things because he did not have such power over local ministers or local churches. He was not a "headquarters" minister, as we have been taught in the past, exercising lordship over other men or churches. As an apostle, all John could do is to appeal in love to Gaius to faithfully do the right thing as an elder in the local church and with the tithes he therefore had.

Diotrephes was also an elder in the same church, maybe even the pastor. John had written to him, but Diotrephes had refused to acknowledge the apostleship of John. Diotrephes had puffed himself up in his office in the local church. Diotrephes also had control over which traveling ministers to accept and help, but it seems he helped none. In addition, he put out of the church any local brethren who tried to help any of these traveling teachers. It seems obvious that Diotrephes was not concerned about the "authority" of John, and that's because he, as local pastor, was in charge of the church and the tithes. John having first written Diotrephes without any response, then, is now writing another elder, Gaius, in the same church. He instructs Gaius to do that which is right and not to follow Diotrephes' bad example.

The church back then was experiencing corrupt ministers just as it is in the "last days." Within a Gentile form of government all you would have to do is "fire" such ministers. But in God's administration the situation has to be handled differently. The only thing one can do is appeal to God and hope the people will respond to the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives and not follow a man or an organization. Any such situation is a sad one – however, it is less damaging to have such happen in local churches where the percentage of people affected would be far smaller than if all the people were under the authority of one headquarters church. It is better to lose a few with God's administration rather than all with a Gentile headquarter organization that exercises dominion, control and lordship over all ministers, churches and people. Any such headquarters established in the name of religion will always, at some time in its existence, take responsibility that belongs only to Jesus Christ. Only when that central headquarters departs into error, as in doctrine, then the whole body, which has already submitted to a physical head in the form of a Gentile government, is committed to following the wrong "head".

**CONCLUSIONS:** There is much that could be said. Administration involves almost every facet of what is done in the church. It determines how people worship God together – whether they try to worship God in an image of government like all Gentiles or really do worship God as He commands in His Word. Since this has such wide effect on the Church, it is impossible to give all the examples of such in the New Testament in this study paper, for we would have to examine almost every scripture. But the overall principles have been given here, and the Word of God will not contradict itself in other places. The specific conclusions of the overall importance of having the God-given administration as opposed to Gentile government will be given in the overall conclusion.

## **CONCLUSION: What Difference Does It Make?**

Does it really make much difference how you worship God? As long as you obey His commandments on Christian living, what difference does it make how the church is run? Maybe it's even hard to realize what all the major differences are. The following chart will give some of these major differences:

### **GENTILE GOVERNMENT**

Set up an organization or "work" patterned in the same principles of business and all governments.

One central, headquarters church dominating all individual groups.

Headquarters doing a "work" of witnessing or feeding the flock.

Gather the people together to do a "work."

Only elite small group on headquarters' payroll really involved in "the work;" people pay and pray.

Ministers, all individuals conform to headquarters policy or are "out."

People tithe to central headquarters supposedly supporting God's work.

### **GOD'S ADMINISTRATION**

Cooperate together with Christ in charge, no visible power forcing people to help one another.

Local congregations cooperating together by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is no "work," just a ministry and the body edifying itself.

Be patient, wait on God, help those who come, but let God do His Work.

Whole local congregation meaningfully involved in the edifying of Body of Christ.

Ministers, all individuals free to obey or disobey God as they choose.

People tithe to local minister, directly support minister, see fruits of their tithes at work.

Ministers in positions of authority and power.

WCG and HWA have right form of government, only departed in area of doctrine.

Ministers, headquarters make all decisions because of their authority and power.

Only (top) ministers can discover new facets of God's Truth.

Government after Gentile image can successfully be used again to organize God's people.

It is not my purpose to re-examine all the scriptures, that has been done in the conclusions in each section. This is just a study paper; it brings no force upon anyone to do anything of and by itself. Each individual will have to ask God for a greater outpouring of His Holy Spirit in prayer and fasting and evaluate the scriptures presented as to what effect it should have on their lives.

There is one scripture from the Old Testament that does have great importance to this subject. It states in a different way the same thing Christ said in the New Testament – that we are not to serve or worship Him in the same likeness the Gentiles worship. I shall simply quote it: **Deuteronomy 12:30-31 take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.'** You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; ...

Minister serves people.

God revealed doctrine and administration to HWA in beginning of church; he departed from administration early, doctrine later.

Ministers ask for, listen to, advice of people in making decisions together. All have submitted to power of Holy Spirit.

All God's people who submit to Holy Spirit can discover Truth. While ministers are God's spokesmen, they don't have a "corner" on God's Truth.

God permitted wrong government once so prophecy of many to fall away could be fulfilled. Since no such other prophecies exist, to try and put it into practice again will result in disaster.

Some of Mr. H. W. Armstrong's earlier words, as God was revealing His Truth to him, again stand out in conclusion:

It is IMPOSSIBLE to have ORGANIZATION, or GOVERNMENT, without having a MAN as the actual and real head, even tho we SAY Christ in heaven is the HEAD, and continue to try to believe it that way.

Religion is in confusion, torn by strife and division, in the grip of the GENTILE system of injecting ORGANIZATION and GOVERNMENT into the Church: Truly, in its every phase, our modern civilization is in BABYLON today!

All authority and power to rule is limited solely to each LOCAL congregation. But there is NO BIBLE AUTHORITY for any super-government, or organization with authority over the local congregations!

The Church (under Leo I) set up, 'within the Roman Empire, an ecclesiastical STATE (government) which, in its constitution and its administrative system, was shaping itself upon the IMPERIAL MODEL.' Truly, an IMAGE OF THE BEAST! Thus was CHURCH GOVERNMENT introduced into the Western world a century after Constantine (the "BEAST" injected the idea of church BOARDS to decide what doctrines the rest of the church must believe). And thus the very PRINCIPLE of CHURCH GOVERNMENT becomes THE IMAGE TO THE BEAST! The whole thing is FALSE! It is NOT ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE! It is part of BABYLON! Those who are IN, and MEMBERS of such an organized church government, submitting to doctrine declared by unscriptural boards as a fellowship test, are IN BABYLON, and actually worshippers of THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST! And God is calling us, HIS people OUT of BABYLON today, before it is too late---before the PLAGUES fall!

Finally, what is the very PURPOSE of the New Testament Church? Is it to BUILD AN ORGANIZATION? ... The New Testament Church is not a kingdom---not a church government---but an assembly of individuals CALLED OUT--- Spirit filled individuals, and therefore a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, not an organization. The OBJECT of the Church is not to build up an organization, or a movement . . . But let us drop all efforts to BUILD UP A MOVEMENT or AN ORGANIZATION. Let us quit working FOR organizations, and work FOR THE LORD---and the salvation of souls!

Mr. Armstrong also makes the point that the church needs more of the power of God, His love, His Holy Spirit! Yet it seems we all get caught in the trap of wanting to see the efforts of the saints organized into a movement. Or we may try for, or wish we could have, some "higher position" of "authority" in God's church. Sometimes we reason that it is for the good of the church to do so, and it may be – from a purely physical point of view.

But we had better consider the lesson Saul learned the hard way in 1 Samuel 13. The people of Israel were scattered, verse 8. They needed to be gathered together for the good of Israel – it was God's will. But God was going to do it through Samuel. Saul couldn't wait. He didn't really have the ability to patiently wait on God. So he took matters into his own hands. Saul knew better, but he wanted to be the "big leader" so bad he forced himself for the benefit of Israel, he told Samuel. It was so important to Saul to gather Israel together to do a "work," a "work" of strengthening the flock of Israel so they could fight the enemy, that he forgot God. Saul wrongly assumed a responsibility that God had not given him. And because of it, he was removed from the throne of Israel. It is a most serious thing to take any position over God's people not actually given by God. It will result in failure, regardless of whether such failures come quickly or in the years that follow.

Instead of assuming positions and starting movements to gather people together to do a "work," there is something all Christians can do without fear. God does give gifts as described in 1 Corinthians 12 for the good of His church. But He gives them; it's wrong for us to take them. Yet, there is one gift we all can desire and strive for. In fact, it is even above all others. Why should we strive for "secondary positions" when we all can have the most important gift? The other "secondary gifts" may even fail or become useless, in fact they are empty without this most excellent gift. While it is not wrong to want to serve God's people, we must do it God's way.

We would do well to notice the last verse of 1 Corinthians 12 and then remember the words of the thirteenth chapter. Love is the greatest gift. Do we really believe that love is the greatest gift and then desire to live by it? Or is it just some nice sounding poetic words of Paul. No, it is the word of God! And if we would desire this gift above all other gifts, problems between people would disappear, people would stop trying to lord it over others, we would humble ourselves before each other. In short, we, as individuals, would worship God together the way God wants us to, which is what God's administration is all about in the first place.

**But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way. (1 Corinthians 12:31)**



# Appendix I

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The following is a digest from a project conducted in one of the Church of God congregations in Sonoma, California, in March, 1976. Each family turned in its response to the questions: What set of circumstances caused or allowed Mr. H. W. Armstrong to become the head in place of Christ? How did the government of God, the administration of God become an administration of man, the "Image of the Beast" as Mr. H. W. Armstrong wrote in the 1939 *Good News*?

I. Mr. H. W. A. was set in a position of responsibility by God. He understood that Christ was the only head (as he stated in 1939 GN). He claimed that he wanted correction at any time from anyone to prevent a departure into error. Yet with his dominate personality and a dogged determination to be right, he naturally set himself in charge. And in a short period of time no one dared tell him his faults. When men fear to tell a man his faults, that sets that man in charge, in a position above reproach, a place where only God stands.

II. Mr. H. W. A. took every new truth and understanding and appropriated it to himself by omission. When he presented a subject, he omitted reference to the author or source. Thus everything seemed to come only from Mr. H. W. A., that he was the only one God was using to discover these truths.

III. Mr. H. W. A. made all final decisions. He said he always sought counsel, but counsel he sought learned never to disagree with his opinion or they would not be sought for counsel again. He was surrounded by "yes" men, he was praised for his successes, success or not. He never made an error.

IV. Mr. H. W. A. and G. T. A. made "hasty" and "clean house" decisions. Seldom did they work with a program if minor problems developed. They'd drop it and start all over again with a new program of their own.

V. Mr. H. W. A. was treated as a very special person. (He did deserve respect as a minister.) But in time this caused people to idolize him and believe that he could do no wrong.

VI. Mr. H. W. A. made all final decisions concerning finances and was in control of all income. He sacrificed physically in many ways at times setting a good example. But he was in charge of all finances and no one dared offend him for fear of losing out on their only means of supporting their family.

VII. When others did at times disagree with Mr. H. W. A., his opinion was the only one that counted and the decision was made accordingly.

VIII. Mr. H. W. A. was an example of deep love and concern at first, giving of his time and money to help all, all those who accepted him as the head.

IX. Mr. H. W. A. felt he was the only one who could handle the important communications with the people, even to the exclusion of his own son until most recently.

X. Mr. H. W. A. often corrected and explained problems by being ambiguous. He didn't want to offend or appear that he had been wrong before the people, other churches or worldly establishments. As a result no one really knew what was happening or going on behind the scenes. The Church became a mystery religion and he was the only one that "held the secrets" of what was really occurring.

XI. Mr. H. W. A. would seldom admit to personal error. It was always someone else's fault, they had not given him all the facts. He scolded the people when things didn't live up to his expectations instead of admitting he had taken the wrong direction.

XII. A decision was not a decision until Mr. H. W. A. ruled on it. No matter the question, no matter what was found in God's Word, it was not officially recognized as the Word of God until he made it church doctrine. Thus he claimed superior spiritual understanding in all things.

XIII. Mr. H. W. A. reversed God's order of greatness. In Matthew 20:27 and Philippians 2:7, Christ said the greatest is the humblest and the servant of others. The people thought he was the greatest because everyone served his needs, the church became his servant. He did not really serve the church or the peoples of the church.

XIV. When Mr. H. W. A. spoke he did not really represent the body in its entirety. His statements represented only what he and a few at the "top" thought. There was a separation between the top and the people. Thus, in a sense, the head became the whole body and the people, the real body, were actually forgotten.

Many people, and almost all people not in the church, came to refer to the Worldwide Church of God for what it was or had become, Mr. Armstrong's "work" – his church, "Armstrongism." They saw it for what it was. Those in the church, for the above stated reasons came to both fear and trust in Mr. H. W. A. at the same time. They' trusted in a name and in an organization. Both became idols to the people. And the people followed their idols no matter what they did or where they led them.

Let us consider these points and be sure we don't make the same mistakes twice. May God help us to do it His way this time.