

The Wisdom Of Men And Faith

Are We Unified?

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My first 2 sermons [The Handwriting Is on the Wall (1997), Globalism and the Wisdom of Men] were given in order to give you the understanding that there is a spirit of considerable power, moving on, affecting the peoples of all nations of the world. It is not something isolated to the true church—religious organizations and philosophical organizations all over the world are being affected by what is occurring. The Germans have a word for this sort of thing; that word is *Zeitgeist*. *Zeit* means time, and *geist* means spirit, or essence, or even ghost, and it is loosely translated "spirit of the times." It indicates a prevailing attitude in a community that is strongly influencing people's outlook on life and therefore their decisions, and their manner of life as well. It can indicate both positive and negative attitudes, but it's generally applied to something negative—usually something like depression or anxiety—rather than something positive.

The cause or the source can vary. It might be something like the fear of war, or perhaps an actual economic depression. The important element for us is to understand that these things don't just happen. There is a cause behind these things that occur. Proverbs 26:2 says that "the curse causeless shall not come." There is action—reaction. There is motivation for the things we see happening either in our lives individually, or in the world, indirectly affecting us. But affect us they do, and there is a cause that is out there, and in many, many cases there is nothing we can do about it except react in the right way. We can't control the cause of the problem; we can only work: pray, fast, meditate, study, or whatever, to control ourselves within the midst of the *Zeitgeist*—the spirit of the times.

Something is causing religious organizations worldwide to be in turmoil and to divide. We understand that there is a spirit world, and at the base of this turmoil is a great, powerful, evil, malevolent spirit being, who is moving to dominate even more thoroughly than he already does, and at the same time to destroy the plan that God is working out. I want us to understand that we are not alone in what is going on—we are not the only ones who are affected by it, but of all people on earth we ought to be the ones who are able to control ourselves within the midst of what is going on. I think that as long as we know what is happening, it gives us a leg up on being able to do it. But if we don't know what is happening, then it is very likely that we're going to be affected by it to a much greater degree than we otherwise would.

If we were perfect, maybe this thing never would have happened to us—the church.

Maybe it never would have happened to us. But it **did** happen to us, because we're not ideal, we're not perfect. We're not ideal *individually* or as a *body*, and therefore we were affected by it to such a great degree that it drove us apart as well. I am sure that God, in His mercy and kindness, permitted it to happen. Maybe He even directly moved to cause it to happen (as He did with Job: sending Satan, or permitting Satan to do what he did) in order to bring things to our attention.

So here we are, left to deal with this situation in our imperfection, and now that we're aware of some of the things that have occurred, we're also aware that its not over yet—it is continuing to drive the church apart! Every indication is that its going to be driven further—much further—apart than it already has. Maybe indeed, brethren, we will get to that place where there will "not be one stone left upon another."

I know that some of you have speculated that there might indeed be a time when, because of the situation in the world, it may actually drive things to the place where we are cut off (not willingly) from each other almost totally. We would be in a situation where, "it's only you and me, God." And we would not have the choice to get together and fellowship (in some hotel or some hall) on the Sabbath day, because we simply can't get there, because everything has broken down. Maybe society is in such a circumstance that it is totally unsafe even to go out on the highways in order to have the fellowship that God commands.

I think in a circumstance like that, we don't have to be overly concerned about fellowshiping and obeying Hebrews 10:26, but we're not in that circumstance yet, and we should be fellowshiping together as God commands.

While this is going on, of course, the day is declaring what we are. Everybody is going to be tried by fire, and the day will declare it. That means that the day will declare what our character is. The day will declare whether we really do believe God. The day will declare whether we're going to have the perseverance—whether we're going to endure—whether we really have the faith to hang in there and to grow despite everything that is taking place around us. It can happen! We can reach that ideal! We can be a "Teddy Roosevelt" who charges up the hill in spite of all the flak that is flying around us (speaking figuratively here—not that we'd actually find ourselves in that situation).

It's my purpose in this sermon to continue to show a factor in our upbringing—right in our upbringing—that has had a strong influence in shaping the way we think. It has influenced the way we think about God, the way we think about ethics, and morals, and marriage, and sex, and crime, and punishment, and race, and justice (or the lack

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thereof); the way we think about economics—things that are important to relationships, to the purpose of life, to living successfully and abundantly. The key to understanding that message on Thursday is to grasp the essence of what Paul meant by "the wisdom of men."

At the beginning of I Corinthians, as Paul was laying the foundation for his correction for that divided, confused and very troubled congregation, Paul makes a contrast between the wisdom of God and what he calls "the wisdom of men." First, he makes the assertion that Christ is the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. Christ's life, Christ's death, and His resurrection, is God's answer to both the wisdom of the Jews (who considered Christ to be a stumbling block) and of the Greeks (to whom Christ was foolishness).

Both the Jews and the Greeks had their own notions about how life should be lived in order to produce the most, and the best in the way of an abundant life. Eventually Paul gets around (in chapter 2) to saying that he, too, preached wisdom, but it was to the brethren that he preached it—to those that he calls perfect—and this wisdom consists of what has been revealed by God by means of His Spirit imparting power to understand spiritual things. But, in between those points Paul draws us more directly into the flow of his message by asserting that, because of our union with Christ, we have direct access to God's wisdom in Christ.

Paul identifies this wisdom as *righteousness*—the King James says *holiness*, modern translations may say *sanctification*; they both mean the same thing—and redemption. These are expressions of the effect of God's wisdom as it applies in a practical way in our lives, so that they can have, or we can have abundant life. It was the Jews' and the Greeks' notion of how life was to be lived that earned Paul's scorn, shown by the title "wisdom of men."

This wisdom is very clear from that 10 to 15 verse section—it's clear that Paul is implying very strongly that the wisdom of the Jews and of the Greeks, about life, **did not come from God**. It did not have its source in God, regardless of how these men might have looked on the outside, regardless of the fine clothing they had, regardless of their age. They might have had nice, gray hairs on their head, they might have had very fine clothing, they might have had titles after their names—they were people of respect in the communities. People did deference to them. But, regardless of how they looked, their wisdom did not come from God!

He goes on (not directly right in that section) to show that the effect this had—the effect of the "wisdom of men,"—taken to an extreme, caused them to be **violently** anti-God,

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against God, to the extent that these "wise" Jews put God to death! That's where their wisdom—"the wisdom of men"—led them. Under the same circumstance, if the Greeks happened to be there, witnessing this, they would have laughed in scorn, mocking Him. Maybe they wouldn't directly have put Him to death, because their approach probably would have been, "*Well, those are **his** ideas...let's be real tolerant and let Him live. He's just a wild-eyed fanatic or, you know, a crank of some kind who has some crazy ideas that are foolishness.*"

They would have rejected Him too! But know and understand this: the wisdom of men doesn't affect everybody to the same degree. It doesn't have the same impact on everybody's mind—the same impact that it had on, let's say, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, where they actually, *literally* put Him to death. But everybody is affected by it—**NOBODY** escapes the wisdom of men. Brethren, it has affected me, it has affected you, and I would say it is entirely possible that maybe even though you are converted, your life may still be dominated by it and you don't even know it!

In I Corinthians 3, Paul is one chapter beyond the subject of "the wisdom of men" and "the wisdom of God." Notice how it was affecting the Corinthian church—converted people!

I Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual...

What an opening! These were converted people, and Paul said, "*I couldn't speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*" That shows you they were converted—they were "babes in Christ." But they were converted to such a thin, small degree that Paul still had to speak to them like they were unconverted!

I Corinthians 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

I don't know how old that congregation was. This was somewhere around the early 50s A.D., 52, 53 A.D., somewhere around there, and its entirely possible that the congregation had been established by Paul some seven, maybe even ten years prior to that.

I Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal...

Remember what Paul said to the Hebrews? They were still children in the faith, and he had to speak to them in terms of babes. This is something that happens all over—it wasn't confined to Corinth, it wasn't confined to the Hebrew people wherever they were, and it certainly is applicable to us as well.

I Corinthians 3:3 ...for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal?

That was the evidence, brethren: envying, strife, division. Brethren, are we unified? What is your conclusion about the church of God—not too long before the return of Jesus Christ—as we find ourselves blown all over the United States, and Europe especially? Doesn't that kind of give you the indication that we are yet carnal; that we are weakly converted; that there's not very much depth to our love; that our faith is hardly strong enough to hold us up—to have the kind of love that we should have for one another? We are divided, we are scattered, and I, from this, would have to reach the conclusion that we are yet carnal—despite what we may think about ourselves, in our pride! We have a long, long way to go.

But be hopeful. "Will Christ find faith when He comes on earth?" The answer to that is a very definite and resounding, "**YES!**" Or nobody would be saved! Salvation is by grace through faith, and your Father in heaven is going to "work His butt off," as we might say, to bring us around to the place where we can be saved!

He's a faithful God, and He can be relied upon. Please be assured, some of us may go through a great deal of pain before that occurs. God believes in spanking His children! He isn't like a modern psychologist, who tells you that kind of thing is abuse. *Carnality understands pain*. When nothing else gets through, **pain** gets through.

I Corinthians 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Please understand, brethren, I'm not pointing the finger at you only; there are three of them pointing back at me. And I have to include myself in this, and confess to you that I've got a long, long way to go. God has given me a gift; God has made me able to communicate things clearly to people, but I still have to live it, and evaluating myself as I go through this situation with you, I can see that I've got a long, long way to go, and I'm very dissatisfied with myself. And that's good, because dissatisfaction is the beginning of change.

As long as we're like the Laodicean, who's "rich and increased with goods and has need of nothing," *nothing will ever change*. But, added to *dissatisfaction* must be *motivation*, otherwise even though I might be dissatisfied, I might die in the Lake of Fire—dissatisfied with what I am!

Like Paul told Timothy, "Stir up the spirit that is within you." That's what we've got to do. That's what we're responsible to do. We've got to stir ourselves up. Nobody else can really do it. A speaker may be able to encourage us to do this, and that is great, but the speaker's responsibility ends there, and the hearer's responsibility begins, because we have to carry through.

My concern is that God's word is always valid. I Corinthians, chapters 1-3, is applicable to us today, so there is much work to do, because what is written there in Paul's day is just as applicable to us in our day. The only thing that has changed, with regard to the wisdom of men, is that man has lived another 2,000 years on earth. He's experienced things, he's added a great deal to the fund of knowledge that he has, and so it may alter or change the specific driving force—if I can put it that way—or elements of what we might call today "wisdom of men."

We understand today that much of the wisdom of men then—at the time I Corinthians—is that which came out of first century Judaism, and the thinking of the Greek philosophers. Eventually it developed into Gnosticism, which is behind the writings of I, II and III John specifically—Gnosticism is the wisdom of men. Today we've got other things that have been added—there are still elements of Gnosticism (in the religions of this world today)—but now we have a very subtle and deceptive teaching that comes as an "angel of light" to the aid of mankind.

Matthew 7:15-22 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day...

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I have to believe that the day that He is most specifically talking about is our day right now, because it's a very common phrase used in the Bible to indicate the end times. In the end time, people will come, saying,

Matthew 7:22-23 Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

The warning is to beware of false prophets. One of the things that I want you to learn from this sermon is that not all false prophets come to you in the ministry. False prophets may come to you in the garb of academia. False prophets may come to you in the garb of a business suit, and have as his profession, economics. False prophets are not limited to religion. So be aware of that.

One of the things we need to clarify here is that "a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit," and it is impossible for a corrupt tree to bring forth good fruit—***it's impossible***. Now what I want you to be aware of is the word "corrupt." We have a tendency to think of "corrupt" as possibly being a person—a teacher or a prophet—who was at one time good, but somehow or another turned bad. He was good in the past, but now he's not so good. That's not what it means. He's talking about a tree (i.e. a person) who was **never** good.

In regard to a tree, it is a tree that is corrupt from the roots. That's very important to understand, because of what is impacting on the minds of people in the end-time generation. What is creating an impact on people was **never** any good—any more than the wisdom of the Jews or the wisdom of the Greeks was ever any good—it was corrupt from the roots! That doesn't mean that everything within that wisdom was wrong, because you can understand that Satan's very subtle, and he comes to people with a mixture of good and evil. *But that mixture will never produce good fruit!*—because it is corrupt from the root. A mixture is not good. James 3:11-12 validates that. It's impossible.

Next I want you to note that these false prophets, in whatever discipline they happen to be, will use the name of Christ. They will refer to God. God will be part of their operations—their teaching, their words, their influence. They will make reference to God, but even so God is telling us right here that He is not necessarily involved with them, even though He may do a great work *through* them. By great, I mean something good.

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Now if He does something good through them, please understand that He did it for His own reasons, not to draw attention to the false prophet, but to simply act as God should act, as a merciful God who is kind, generous, good, and provident to His creation, and to those who may have a measure of faith in Him. "*God is to the just and the unjust,*" He says in the Sermon on the Mount.

He makes His rain to fall on everybody, and that's a good gift, but that doesn't necessarily validate that society, that civilization, or its teachers. God is just acting like God! He's a wonderful, giving, kind person, and it has not yet come time for that person's spiritual salvation.

I want to also direct your attention to the fact that this section here in Matthew 7 (beginning in verse 15) shows that the teaching of the false prophet does produce **a** faith—something that can be believed. Something that can be believed that can also contain a connection to God. But it will produce a faith in something.

Lets go back to the Corinthians again, this time in II Corinthians 11:4:

II Corinthians 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom **we have not preached**... [That makes it very clear, doesn't it? A person can come preaching in the name of Christ, but it's the wrong Jesus. A person can come making reference to God, and be completely off the track.] or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

A little bit of sarcasm there from Paul—he really, of course, doesn't want them to "bear well" with that other person at all. I'm reading this verse to instruct us, because we are in a position where we have to be **very** careful about what we allow into our minds.

I know many of you turn on these radio and television preachers, and you listen to those people, even though you know full well they are preaching a false message, and the justification is, "Well, every once in a while I get something good out of it." Let me be very blunt: **DUMB! FOOLISH!** You are putting yourself right in the line of fire, like Teddy Roosevelt. We have to be awfully careful about what goes into our minds, because whatever goes into our minds is capable of producing a faith. That's belief. You, brethren, and me, act on what we believe!

We don't say to ourselves, "*I think this is stupid, idiotic, and I think this is dumb—I don't believe it—I think I'll do it.*" No, we act on what we believe. That's where the danger lies

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for us. Because if what we are acting on **and** what we believe, is not right—whatever we sow, we reap. We have to be careful; that's the warning here.

But again, I don't want to lose sight of where I'm headed because all of us have been impacted by it, when we were absolutely defenseless. We didn't know, we didn't understand. But now we can be aware that this is a very pervasive influence, and that it is not good. It is not good because its roots are sunk in the world, and Satan the Devil, and not in God!

So we have to be careful about it, and at the same time recognize that it has already affected us, especially those of you who have gone through school in the last twenty to thirty years. Those of my generation—I'm sixty-four now—escaped a direct, frontal attack from it, simply because we got in at the very beginning, when the changes were beginning to be made that would affect the way that we behave.

Those of you who are 70 and 80 years old, and up into 85, you are blessed in that you have escaped most of it in your most formative years. It did not enter the school systems until a little bit later—you had already gone through most of your schooling before this began to impact on your minds to any degree. But you're still being affected by it, because it's all over television. I mean, you are being drowned in it—in entertainment and in politics.

Let's read II Corinthians 11:11-15; the subject continues, as Paul continues his argument here:

II Corinthians 11:11-15 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. [Who do they say they represent?] And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Galatians 1:6-7 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: [...another message.] Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

All I want to do here is to let you understand again that *a message, a teaching* will produce *a faith*—not necessarily in everybody, but it has that potential to be able to produce a faith.

I John 4:1-5 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test, prove] the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. [Again, John is saying, "Be careful." He's not saying "Don't," but he's saying, "Be awfully careful!" It's up to the individuals—the people receiving the teaching—to exercise the "Don'ts."] Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: [He's addressing there a problem that was specific to their time.] And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. [The mystery of iniquity was already working.] Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. **They are of the world...** [There's were the root of the wisdom of men is. And if it's in the world, the taproot will be found right in the midst of Satan the Devil. As this same book says Satan is over all in the world.] They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

Their message appeals to human nature—not to divine nature. The divine nature will reject it! It will recognize it for what it is, and reject it. But human nature accepts it. To human nature (to the carnality within us) it looks logical, it looks right, it looks like something we can apply and use as a part of personality, as a part of our character.

I John 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us [the true ministry of God]; he that is not of God heareth not us. [You see, the message of Christ is foolishness to human nature.] Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

I know that everyone here and within the sound of my voice does not think that the message of Christ is foolishness. We don't think that the wisdom of men is really all that wise. So we do have a tendency to reject it. But what the Bible shows is that we are *susceptible* to it. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." We should not willingly put ourselves in the line of fire. There is not a single one of us that is strong enough to resist Satan in the way that Jesus Christ did—it took **Christ** to defeat him! All that God asks us to do is *resist* him. If we will resist him, Christ will come to our aid and

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rebuke him. Don't ever be deceived that you can out think, out wit, out subtle, or spiritually overcome Satan. So don't put yourself in the line of fire.

Romans 10:16-17 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? [Now a conclusion:] So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

At this point, what is being heard (referred to in that first phrase "faith comes by hearing") is not specified. So if you just lift that from its context, without considering the rest of it, you still get a truism: faith, or belief, follows *hearing*. Or, faith and belief follows reading, if I can put it that way. But, the rest of the verse says, "And hearing by the word of God." This relates directly back to *faith*. The faith, the belief that God is interested in, is going to come from a specific message—a message that has its origin *in God*—not the world.

Therefore, it is the message of this book, because this is the word of God. It is not limited merely to what we have a tendency to consider the gospel—the New Testament—but the whole book is part of the gospel! There are a number of commentators who will say they believe that it would be more understandable if verse 17 was translated—the very last word—into the word "Christ". "Word of God" is not wrong—they don't mean to give that impression at all—but rather they feel it is more specifically correct to say "Christ" because Christ IS God.

In the context of the book, the gospel is called the "gospel of Christ," because it says, for instance, in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel *of Christ*." In other words, it is the message that *He* brought. Let's draw this out a little bit further: *It is the message that Christ brought that produces the faith that is going to save.*

Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

The first phrase—"these twelve Jesus sent forth." What did He give them? What's an apostle? It's one sent forth with a message. Thinking about the principle that's in Romans 10:17 again, that faith comes by hearing the word of Christ, and the same word (of Christ) in those that He sent forth! Those are the ones that have **the** message that will produce saving faith!

We won't go into this, because I said it in one of the other sermons, but when you start getting back into where the church was really breaking up there in the first century—James, I & II Peter, I, II, & III John, and Jude—you will find a direct or indirect reference, sometimes very strong, where the apostle is telling you, "*remember what **we** have taught you.*"

Other messages were coming into the church and people were falling for them because they were susceptible to them, because they were too weak to reject it, too weak to discern the deceit that was in them. They believed them, and then what is the result? Disobedience. That separates those who believe from those who do not. Those who believe will *obey* God. Those who do not believe will not obey God, because "the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

We find ourselves in a battle, a struggle, with the carnality that remains (that is attracted by false messages) and the truth of God (the right message, the right faith). Paul describes it in Galatians 5. He says that there is a **war** going on in us. By the power of God's spirit, we have to make the choice as to which one we are going to submit to.

I will say to you (given evidence of the circumstance the church now finds itself in) when God permitted this to impact upon the church—the false messages—we fell for them (by "we" I mean the collective body). So we began dividing.

How was the church split up? Was it not split up when false messages began to be preached from headquarters? That's all it took. People believed it, and the first thing you know, we began to find out that we could not walk together any longer. Those who were more carnal and who were dominated by that thinking, fell for the false messages. We began to peel away from one another.

None of us can excuse ourselves, because all of us fell for it to some degree—some more than others. But I'm happy to say that very many are recovering, and are beginning to get their balance once again, and are heading in the right direction.

It takes repentance—we've got to turn around and repair the relationship with God, first of all, before the relationship with the brethren can be repaired and God can bring us all together again. We're undergoing a pretty strong spanking right now, and it's not a happy thing because some of our families have been divided. We ate a meal one time with a family in Chicago and this particular family was with Philadelphia, while another brother or sister was with Global, and still another was with United. I think there was even a fourth group in there as well—the family was divided four different ways!!

So God is learning a great deal about us through this. The full implication, I think, if we begin to understand Romans 10, actually comes down to being very personal. That is, this thing about the message being in those who are directly chained and linked to Christ—in other words, Christ, and those He sent forth. Those He sent forth first of all were the apostles; down through the ages He raised up others that He also sent forth, and the true faith would then begin to grow once again.

In the end time, I sincerely, with all of my heart, believe that the one God raised up was Herbert Armstrong, and He was sent with the message around which people would be converted and a church (a group) would begin to be formed. God would begin to add the final jewels to His family before the return of Jesus Christ. But it didn't stop with Herbert Armstrong, because others were sent forth—men were ordained as evangelists, and pastors, and teachers, and *they* were sent forth with the same message, to pastor congregations or to supervise over areas, or whatever.

So when it comes down to me personally, I very strongly feel that God ordained me, He appointed me, He sent me forth to pastor, to teach, to shepherd those who were *converted* under Herbert Armstrong. That is my portion in the body—my responsibility. But does my responsibility include the responsibility of an apostle? That's a question mark. So far I have resolved it in what I am doing. God gives an analogy in I Corinthians 12 that He set people, members, in the body as it pleased Him? Now look at your own body: has your foot ever overtaken the job of your brain? Yes...sometimes those feet just walk us right into trouble. You see—that's the problem, isn't it?

God gave that for instruction, for you and me. But there is an overlapping of our responsibilities, there's no doubt about that and the Body as a whole (and therefore every part of the Body) has a little bit of overlapping even with the role of an apostle. I believe there is a responsibility for every one of us to preach the gospel as the opportunity might arise. But that does not give us permission to do the job, to do the work of an apostle. Do you understand what I mean, the principle I am talking about? There is a responsibility given to every person hearing my voice to *teach*—but does that give everybody the responsibility of being a pastor? **No.**

You understand the principle that is involved here? There is an overlapping of our responsibilities, and everybody has a little bit of everybody's responsibility, but there are also specific responsibilities.

In II Corinthians 4:3, I want you to notice that Paul said, "But if *our* gospel..."—Paul claimed the gospel as his. In another place he says it more directly, "that if *my* gospel..." What he was saying was that he was preaching exactly the same thing as Jesus Christ

did. In other words, there was a transference, a clear transference, right into scripture, from the message of Christ to the original twelve, then to Paul (by Christ directly) and then Paul claims it as his own, because it was now in him. He was living it, and he was delivering it, and it was the same message that had been given to him by Jesus Christ, and now it was *his* gospel. When he preached, people were *truly* converted to the true faith. In other places, people like John said basically the same thing.

I John 1:1-5 is very clear. He opens that book by saying, "Listen to *our* (he uses the plural—"we")." He says, "The message which *we* have brought." I don't know whether he was speaking in the royal "we," or whether he was alluding to the apostles and including them within the message that he was teaching. Of course the reason was at that time that Gnosticism was devastating the true church, because it was appealing to the carnality that was within people.

We have a wisdom of men that is alive and that is influencing many today in psychology and in psychiatry. It has been going on for quite a period of time—I mentioned 1850, and that was partly drawn from the rise of psychology which began just shortly after that. But its been going fairly strong now for just a little bit over 100 years, and it is deeply entrenched in society's thinking to such an extent that people think of it as normal, and Christians *accept it* as an acceptable guide to life. That is far too bad.

The problem is that psychology is by all accounts *materialistic* and *humanistic*—all the way to the core. Let me give you a definition—and I do need to clarify something here: the main culprit is not psychology *per se*, but rather its handmaiden psychiatry. But psychiatry had its origin in psychology, There is an honest and true psychology, but when it becomes psychiatry, it becomes devastatingly anti-God. But even psychology, as it is practiced as a discipline, is not founded in the Bible but in the world. There are parallels to Biblical principles that are deceiving.

How dangerous is it? This article is coming from *Christianity Today*, an article that appeared in 1995. That article stated, "The danger is that these psychologies *may*, to one degree or another, *replace* Christianity without people even noticing that any substitution has taken place." That has happened. It is almost totally accepted in all of the mainline churches. The only ones that seem to be resisting somewhat are the evangelicals—but they're fighting a losing battle.

Do you know what *psychology* means? *Ology* means "study." *Psyche* is the root word. It is the study of the psyche or, as it can be loosely understood, the study of the soul. Or, as we would say, the study of the spirit—because we understand from the Bible that we *are* a soul, **not** that we *have* a soul.

We *are* a soul, but we do have a spirit—the spirit in man. It is the study of the spirit, and that is *weird* because psychologists and psychiatrists do not believe that man has a spirit! Do you know what *psychiatry* means? It begins with the same root—*psyche*: the soul—spirit. But *iatros* is the suffix. Do you know what *iatros* is? It's the Greek word for "doctor." A psychiatrist is a "doctor of the spirit." He is a healer of the spirit. He is healer of something that he doesn't even believe exists! It's a lie right from the start!

Let me give you the definition of materialism. This is the root cause. I'll give you two definitions—one of materialism and one of humanism, because psychology and psychiatry are materialistic and they are humanistic. *Materialism*, from Webster's, is "the philosophical doctrine that matter is the only reality. [There is no spirit world, and no spirit.] Everything in the world, including thought, will, and feeling can be explained only in terms of matter; the doctrine that comfort, pleasure, and wealth are the **only** and highest of values and goals." Its antonym is *spiritual*.

Humanism, from the same dictionary: "any system [a religious system, philosophical system, a healing system, an educational system] or thought or action based on the nature, interest, and ideals of *man*; [Not God, *man*!] specifically, a modern non-theistic rationalist movement that holds that man is capable of self-fulfillment and ethical conduct without recourse to supernaturalism." Boy, I'll tell you, Ritenbaugh, you're in trouble, because you've been telling people that our relationship with God *is everything!* That is the *source* of salvation, and here I am telling you something that these people don't believe in, and yet they're to heal your spirit. Out the window goes any relationship with God. And yet these people, these false prophets, will talk to you about God, as though it's a regular part of their profession, and their discipline.

Jude 17-20 But, beloved, remember ye the words [the message] which were spoken before of the apostles [where is he pointing them? To that one message] of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time [are we in the last time?], who should walk after their own **ungodly** lusts [it doesn't come from God; it comes from the world. It comes from Satan. Notice how he identifies them]. These be they who separate themselves [if your Bible has a margin, it in all likelihood has a marginal reference there, and it will say in the margin "cause division"], sensual [meaning, *earthy, carnal*], having not the Spirit. [They're not even converted! But they're still bearing a message] But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on ***your most holy faith***.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing from the message of Christ. That is the message

that will produce saving faith. That is the message that will give us the discernment to be able to see the deceit in what is wrong in another message. That is the message that will give us the vision and the insight and the clarity of thought that will enable us to make the right kind of choices. That is the message that will give us the motivation to turn to God, appealing to Him for the power of His Spirit to fight against this and overcome and grow. "...Praying," he says, "in the Holy Spirit."

I Corinthians 11:17-19 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not [remember in this congregation how badly divided it was, how carnal he said it was], that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. **For there *must*** be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

There are divisions among us (I'm talking about the greater church of God here), and God has engineered it in order that those which are approved, those which have the true faith, will stand out before Him, tempered and tried, their character being firmed up, and strengthened, and standing forth, because He wants to see **who really has it**—because the day will declare it. It's happening now.

I don't think that I will go into any more on psychology and psychiatry. I don't want to write another introduction to bridge over into that anymore. But believe you me, there is plenty of information available on the devastating effect that they have had on public education. They began invading the schools back in the 20s; it picked up speed in the 30s; it was so devastating in the United States that even Malachi Martin mentions it in his book *Windswept House*, about how they did it. Do you know how they did it? They did it by the same method that appears in Matthew 13 (beginning in verse 24)—by sowing tares within the educational system. They called these tares, "change agents" or "facilitators."

What they would do is infiltrate and find people who had a grievance of some kind against the school system or whatever (against a method of teaching, against a supervisor or whatever) and they would work on that grievance to bring them over to their side, and their way of thinking—little by little, chip by chip. They did the same thing to religion so much so that Christianity today—religion in America—is dominated by psychology, by psychiatry, not by the Bible. The wisdom of this world is amongst us right now.

You have been educated in our school systems. You have gone to the churches of this

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world. You have been influenced. I might remind you that the man who was the head of the Worldwide Church of God after his father died was a psychologist. Do you know what this book points out as the fountainhead of psychology of church in the United States—Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, where many of our ministers went for "further training." Are you aware that a number of "our" ministry went on to universities in the areas of their pastorates, seeking degrees in psychology? I need say no more.