Come to the TABERNACLE

Many of you wish to see the Tabernacle being built at Gladewater, Texas. Here's the right way to do it.

by Roderick C. Meredith

Have you seen the Tabernacle that is being constructed for God's people near Gladewater, Texas? If not, then you're missing something big!

Most of you have heard and read about this inspiring project, and you are probably anxious to see it. When should you come? How can you afford to make the trip? Why should you come?

The answers to these questions are far more important than you may realize!

Purpose of Tabernacle

As Mr. Armstrong has explained, the chief purpose of this large Tabernacle is to enable God's children to convene at the annual Holy Days as He has commanded. This world's churches have their man-devised "camp meetings" at a time and in a way that seems right to man. But we have proved in past articles—and will continue to do so—that the annual sabbaths or feast days God gave His people were commanded and intended to be kept forever (Lev. 23:21, 31, 41), Christ set us a perfect example in keeping them, and the apostles continued keeping them and even commanding Gentile converts to keep these days of God (1 Cor. 7:8).

The world is busy observing the pagan holidays of Christmas and Easter. Its camp meetings are organized and directed as man reasons—not as God commands. Then it sneers at the days God has made holy—at the festivals the Creator instituted to keep men in remembrance of His true plan. Carnal men scoffingly, sneeringly call these days "Jewish" and they ridicule them as the invention of a harsh, inconsiderate "God of the Old Testament." They seem to forget that Christ and the apostles kept these days in the New Testament. They ignore the fact that God calls these days "MY sabbaths"—holy unto the Lord! These days are never referred to as being "holy to the Jews." But they are holy to the Eternal Creator who gives you every breath of air you breathe. You are defying Him if you refuse to keep them! In so doing, you will lose knowledge of the true God and of His plan which is pictured by these days.

In their disobedience, the churches of this world have lost knowledge of God's plan of salvation. They preach many different gospels. They are in confusion—"Babylon" (Rev. 17)—and we are commanded to "come out" of this mixed-up, deceived churchianity (Rev. 18:4).

God's Way

Many of you brethren have come out of this world, and then have found yourselves unable to have fellowship with any of God's people. It is often impossible to meet with other true brethren on the weekly Sabbath. You must simply worship God alone "in Spirit and in truth." BUT God's annual Sabbaths or holy days provide an opportunity to travel even some distance and have that needed fellowship with other members of the true church of God.

These festive occasions are commanded to be kept in the place that God should choose. Deuteronomy 16:16 shows particularly that the days of unleavened Bread (with the Passover, verse 6), the day of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles were all to be kept wherever God would choose.

When God first revealed the truth about His Holy Days to Mr. Armstrong, He soon caused Belknap Springs, Oregon, to become available for holding the Feast of Tabernacles. This happened in a most unusual way, and we were permitted the use of this resort only as long as it was suitable—exactly seven years. Then God directed His servant, Mr. Armstrong, to choose Seigler Springs, California, as the ideal place for the Feast last year. But we all knew that Seigler Springs was only a stopover location until God led us to a place better adapted in every way for use in holding these annual festivals.

And now GOD HAS DONE SO!

As Mr. Armstrong has reported in detail, we have now come into possession of properties in northeast Texas, near Gladewater, and are building there a Tabernacle in which to hold
serviccs at these annual convocations. This property is in the very center of our heaviest listening area for the broadcast. It has much natural beauty, a warm climate similar to that in Palestine, and is ideal in every way for holding God's annual festivals.

To one who knows the facts, this is God's selection—God's way!

A Duty and Privilege

At last we have been blessed with a place owned by God, deeded in His name through the Radio Church of God. It is the location that is closest to the greatest number of you brethren. God has brought this about so that all of us may worship and rejoice together in the annual festivals He has ordained.

The three great feasts of the year are the Passover with the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. God commands the converted men to attend these three feasts (Deut. 16:16). As the heads and representatives of the households, the men's presence is absolutely commanded. And God's word shows in Deut. 12:5-7 and other places that the entire family should try to attend these festivals.

These occasions are not man-made. They are holy convocations—commanded assemblies! (Lev. 23:7, 21, 35) God does not say "if" you want to come. He orders you to attend. Do you think your Creator has the authority to order you to do something? Apparently some of you brethren have not fully realized the seriousness of this command. May God help you to be zealous in obeying Him!

Besides being the command of a loving God, attending these festivals is a great joy and privilege. God gave these days for our good—that we might come to know Him better, to know and love the brethren, and that the true church of God might be bound together.

Many of you whom we have met on baptizing tours say that you would give anything to experience the joy and thrill of meeting with more of God's own children—the type of humble, sincere, God-fearing people with whom you can freely discuss God's word in love and harmony.

Attending God's annual festivals is His solution—the Bible solution—the right way to solve this problem! You will have to experience the Feast of Tabernacles before you can fully realize the joy, peace, happiness and the spiritual 'life' one feels at this festival.

For every true Christian, it is both a duty and a priceless blessing and privilege to attend these spiritual "feasts."

How to Afford It

God has not only provided, but also commanded a way to make it financially possible for everyone to keep His Holy Days!

It is a way which requires continual effort and determination from true Christians. But if we are to be overcomers—and they only will be priests and kings in the Kingdom of God—then we will have to exercise enough strength of character and will to obey this command of God. Actually it works no real hardship, but brings a great blessing to ourselves and others. It is a way that builds faith, hope, and patient love.

What does God command?

God commands us in Deuteronomy 14:22-27 to save a special tithe, to go to the place God selects for each of His festivals, and to rejoice in them. This second tithe is for expense money to enable us to keep God's annual Holy Days. In ancient Israel most of the money was spent for food there, as the expense for traveling was almost nothing. Today, however, our greatest expense is often transportation rather than food. As the purpose of this second tithe is to enable us to attend the festivals, we will often spend a good portion in transportation.

This second or special tithe should be saved out of each pay check or bit of income. It should be set aside regularly and saved as expense money to enable you and the converted members of your family to attend God's feasts. This is God's way—God's command!

Do you think it will be impossible to do what God says? Certainly not! All through your Bible, God has promised blessings on those who obey Him. And God keeps His promises! We will actually be better off financially and every other way if we obey these commands.

Be sure to start saving this tithe immediately so you can attend the Feast of Tabernacles and God's other feasts this year! It may require determination and sacrifice, but that is the very way to develop character. And you'll be blessed in every way if you do.

Not the First Tithe

Please do not confuse this second tithe, especially for these occasions, with the first tithe which God has commanded us to render to His true ministers for proclaiming to the whole world the Gospel. Unlike the second tithe, the first tenth or tithe of our income belongs to God. He created all things and is only permitting man to use this material world anyway. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1).

In Numbers 18:21 we read that God gave a tenth or "tenth" of Israel's income to the Levites for an inheritance. This tithe does not belong to us, it is the inheritance of God's ministry. Today the priesthood has been changed (Hebrews 7:12)—the ministry of CHRIST superseding the Levitical priesthood—so we now pay our tithes to God's representatives, Christ's true ministers, for the gospel work (1 Cor. 9:14).

In Malachi 4:8-12, it says that we are robbing God if we fail to render to Him (through His true servants) tithes AND offerings. Most people in this confused world don't even realize this. But once we have the knowledge of the truth, we had better repent and begin to obey God in this matter. It is all for our own good though. As we just read in Malachi, if we do obey God by paying our tithes and giving offerings—He will bless us abundantly. But God does want us to be willing to obey Him, and to put this ahead of our own selfish desires.

In Deuteronomy 14:22-27, we find that our Creator commands us to lay by a second tithe of our increase or income and go to the place which God has chosen. From this tithe we ourselves are to eat, drink, and rejoice in this place—the place God has chosen for His annual Holy Days are to be held. We set aside this special tithe (or tenth) of our income every year in order that we might have the expense money to attend and to rejoice with the brethren.

Notice it says in verse 23, "and thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God . . . This tithe is to be spent on yourself—not for the ministry. Since there is a commanded tithe for the ministry, this must be another, different tithe.

In the twelfth chapter of Deuteronomy, this special tithe is mentioned in verses 6, 11 and 17 along with the offerings Israel used to bring. Here again this second or special tithe is for you to use at the place which God has chosen for you to appear before Him on these annual Holy Days.

Yes, God has provided a method by which we can keep His festivals if we are willing to do our part! It isn't difficult once we try. God has promised to care for our every need (1 Peter 5:1). And if we love the brethren we won't fail to do it.

Are we going to follow Christ or not? Let every one examine his own heart!

Use Wisdom

Let's use the minds God has endowed us with to carry out these commands in a reasonable manner. Deut. 14:22 states that you shall tithe the increase of your seed. Then it is certainly permissible for you farmers to bring some of your produce or canned goods to the feasts instead of money.

Sad as it sometimes is, with some families, the second tithe just hasn't been (Please continue on page 6)
The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of God's government. The church is composed of the advance agents, the emissaries, of that government. To inherit and rule in that kingdom we must come under the authority of the rule of God now, in this lifetime.

Source of Common Error

Especially in the United States, it has become that accepted teaching that authority was established to be flaunted and disobeyed. From childhood we were allowed to disobey our parents. We grew up seeing our friends and neighbors laugh and joke about anyone bearing authority—from the president of the United States to the teachers in grade schools.

To do as we please and to defile authority have become the accepted philosophy. Even after conversion, most of us have carried this same philosophy with us into the church. That's why we misunderstood the teachings of Jesus on church government. It's time we expelled this false philosophy from our thinking.


"And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors." Is this a perfect description of Gentile dictatorships today? Dictators exercising lordship, claiming to be benefactors!

"But you shall not be so," said Jesus to the disciples. Here Jesus is giving the principle of divine government—God's government for our church.

Notice it! There is to be no exercising of lordship by human will and human desire. But does Jesus say there is to be no government, no difference in authority? Let's read what He continues to say—what most people have overlooked!

Right Principle of Government

"But he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42-45)

So there are differences in authority in God's government; some are greater than others; some are chief. But they act as servants of God, not as lords over God's heritage.

Do we grasp the all-important significance of this teaching? Do we really understand the great meaning of it? Among God's people, in His church—our church—there are some who carry greater responsibility and authority. But they exercise their power as the servants of God for the other members of the church.

Far from prohibiting all authority, Jesus sanctioned the right kind of government—God's rule, theocracy—for our church!

WHY Church Government?

God's government in His church is merely His rule over our lives. It is the means by which He guides the work of the church and perfects its members.

Notice how clearly Paul explained the need of God's authority in the church.

What is the purpose of the ministry?

"For the perfecting of the saints—to make us complete in understanding the will of God; for the work of the ministry—to carry out the gospel to the whole world; for the edifying of the body of Christ—to correct, to instruct and to improve the whole church "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man."

God's rule in our church is to direct the work of the gospel, to keep you
from being "carried about with every wind of doctrine" through the craftiness of cunning men who are already trying to enter in among you to deceive you from being "carried about with every kind of authority Jesus established for our church today.

For after the historic book of this world. In the historic record of the early church, we find that God ruled the church by Jesus Christ, its Head (Eph. 5:25). "JESUS IS THE HEAD OF OUR CHURCH TODAY!"

Christ directed the church through the apostles who were chosen directly by Him (Luke 6:13). The apostles were His direct representatives, His delegates, sent into the world as ambassadors bearing authority. The word apostle means "one sent bearing authority." The apostles were instruments in Jesus' hands, through which He could spread the gospel, correct, reprove and lead the church.

Among the twelve apostles, Peter was pre-eminent, although they all held equality of office. Peter had no one-man dictatorial authority over the other eleven. Peter was never a pope. The same authority vested in Peter was also vested by Jesus in the other apostles (Mat. 16:19; 18:18 and John 20:23). Yet Peter was their leader because he was born with special leadership qualities. Jesus gives spiritual talents according to the natural talents with which a person is born.

Paul, himself, said that Jesus entrusted Peter with the direction of the gospel to Israel at Jesus has entrusted Paul with the direction of the gospel to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7 and 8). But in another place we find that the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria, although Peter may have suggested this (Acts 8:14). His gifts carried the greatest weight in the church and would have been especially helpful to the newly converted Samaritans. Among the twelve there must have been such a spirit of peace and love that they had perfect harmony without jealousy in equality of rank and office. They did not quarrel among themselves by trying to build on one another's foundation as some would do today (Rom. 15:20). They did not compete with one another or take disciples from another.

However, it is in the experiences of Paul that we find the detailed operation of God's government, since little is recorded with regard to the work of the twelve apostles in Judea and nothing of their ministry to the ten tribes of Israel.

How God Operated Through Paul

Always Paul, who spoke of what God had wrought through His labors (Acts 15:12), Paul the apostle was subject to Christ, so yielded to God that Jesus could make His will known to him and could use him in directing the work of the church and the preaching of the gospel. More than once Paul wanted to go one place or do one thing, but Jesus ordered otherwise (Acts 16:6).

Thus we find the government of God operating through Jesus who used Paul and the other apostles as direct representatives bearing His authority. Paul was not free to go and to act as he pleased.

Next, in government authority, we find the evangelists—Timothy, Titus, Demas, Silas and many others—who directly assisted the apostle Paul as he was directed by Christ. Paul had the authority when necessary to command Silas and Timothy to go wherever he designated (Acts 17:15); although in other instances when duties were not imperative, Paul sometimes left it to the discretion of the evangelists (1 Cor. 16:12). Paul was not a dictator.

Even though evangelists were next in authority under the apostles, next in spiritual order and above the evangelists are listed the prophets (1 Cor. 12:28). Often in the Bible, prophet means preacher or poet. But in the New Testament history there are several instances mentioned in which prophets—both men and women—were used to foretell by special and personal revelation from God (Acts 11:27-30; 21:9-10). They spoke and exhorted the brethren and, if men, sometimes preached, although not usually evangelistic for the purpose of raising up churches.

Those who evangelized had authority over local churches, whereas the prophets had no government office or authority. Even in the Old Testament, where both men and women were used as prophets, none of the prophets had government authority unless they were also judges. In the New Testament, the only prophets with government authority were also apostles, evangelists, or elders (Acts 15:32; 1 Tim. 4:14).

(Permission on page 3)
WHO Should Perform the Marriage Ceremony?

Does it make any difference who performs the marriage ceremony? Is it right that our young people should go to a justice of the peace or a minister of any denomination? Here is what young people NEED to know!

by Herman L. Hoeh

A WEDDING is undoubtedly the most delightful event young people experience. It is the moment for which they have waited, perhaps months, or maybe years. You parents experienced the same joys when you were married, didn't you?

Mothers, especially, can't keep from the natural desire to live over again their marriages in their daughters. Just ask any husband!

Yet with all the joys, anticipations and hopes—as God intended marriage to be—there is also the SERIOUS side of marriage. Responsibility comes with it—financial, emotional, parental and spiritual problems present themselves. Marriage is indeed the most serious physical union in which human beings can be united. But how few understand what is involved before they are married!

World in Confusion

As our church is growing constantly each year, we are confronted with young people who inevitably do as God intended—they want to marry. It thus is becoming one of our great responsibilities to teach and train and prepare our young people who are anticipating marriage. How many of you wish now that you had understood what marriage and life were all about when you were young!

The very first principle which all children, and especially young couples planning to marry, should realize is that GOD ORDAINED MARRIAGE. He is the Author of this physical union. It is to Him that we should ultimately look for advice and counsel. He is the One who has explained WHY marriage has been ordained, WHAT its duties are. It is to God that we must go if we are to understand the truth about marriage ceremonies and WHO should perform them.

Let's understand what the Bible reveals about this most important union.

The world is in confusion. Each State has its own marriage laws. Every denomination has its own opinion about what constitutes marriage. But almost no one seems to understand the significance of the Biblical revelation that God is the Author of marriage. Human beings go to human courts of law, they go to representatives of this world—justices of the peace and worldly ministers—to have the marriage ceremony performed. Most everyone believes that some official of this world "binds" husband and wife.

Isn't that exactly how most of you were married? Of course, God, recognizing your hearts, did bind you. You were married, but it was God and not man, by the authority of a sovereign State, who bound you till death.

But is this the way God intended marriage to be solemnized? Now that you know the TRUTH, would you have the marriage ceremony performed in that manner—contrary to God's will?

God has overlooked our past mistakes, but let us teach our children the right way so they won't make the same mistakes.

Is a Ceremony Wrong?

Some people who carelessly read the Bible have arrived at the mistaken notion that all ceremony is wrong. Jesus attended a wedding at which he performed his first miracle—turning water into wine. The church is to be married to Christ at a "marriage supper," a ceremony. It is a matter of the kind of ceremony that is important. God approves and sanctions ceremony, but not the ritualistic practices that attend worldly social ceremonies which have no other purpose than exciting pride and vanity.

The TRUE Marriage Ceremony

Not every detail in the marriage ceremony is revealed, but we can understand the principles. God was present at the first marriage—He brought Eve to Adam and gave her to be his wife. There was a time of festive rejoicing at the marriage of Jacob (Gen. 29:22).

A simple ceremony is absolutely necessary to avoid the evils of fornication, adultery, bigamy and kindred practices that would result without a ceremony.

Marriage is a union, involving vows, which is BOUND BY GOD through prayer (Matt. 19:6). It is a setting apart of two young people to become husband and wife. Throughout the Bible, in ceremony, there is the constant example of setting apart for special purpose by PRAYER TO GOD AND LAYING ON OF HANDS (Num. 27:18-23; Acts 6:6; 8:18).

How plain it is, then, that the marriage ceremony ought to be performed by one who stands as God's representative, since it is God who binds.

The ceremony ought to be performed by one whom God hears—one of God's ministers whose prayers God will answer. How foolish to go to some one whom God doesn't hear to have the ceremony performed, and then go to God's minister to ask him for God's blessing.

The true ceremony should be performed by laying on of the minister's hands on the clasped hands of the couple and, through prayer to God, asking God to bind the couple according to His Word (Matt. 19:6). Of course, all legal requirements of the State should be attended to also.

Young People Need Counsel

Before marriage, more than any other time, young people need advice. Most of you who are parents have come to realize this by hard experience. You probably didn't have the kind of counsel you really needed. God did not intend that young people should go to ministers who do not even know the law of God for advice on problems which involve some of the most important spiritual and physical laws which God ordained.

But how are young people—perhaps (Please continue on page 8)
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WITH YOUR COPIES OF THE PLAIN TRUTH AND THE GOOD NEWS?

You are very fortunate, indeed, if you have preserved all your copies of the PLAIN TRUTH and the GOOD NEWS. Many of you have not been able to do so, either because friends to whom you have loaned copies never returned them, or because you have not fully realized why you need to retain them.

Beginning with the July numbers, a new policy has been adopted, which Mr. Armstrong explained in the last issue of the GOOD NEWS. The GOOD NEWS becomes the national magazine of our church—the medium in print through which we can FEED THE FLOCK.

The GOOD NEWS contains articles of special importance which you need to study and re-study constantly. Without back copies to which you can refer, you will not be ready ALWAYs to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason for the true faith that God has revealed to His church. By experience we know that unless you do re-study the articles you will gradually forget what you have read! The GOOD NEWS is also of immense help in teaching your children. It will encourage them to study the Bible. That is WHY you need to retain every copy.

The PLAIN TRUTH is now the evangelistic magazine to the world. It is edited especially for the public, but you need to study its striking articles on prophecy, general Christian living and doctrine.

Although you must NOT give or loan copies of The GOOD NEWS, because people may become offended by the *strong meat,* you should feel free to give or loan copies of The PLAIN TRUTH to sincerely interested friends. If your copy is not returned to you, be sure to write us for another copy so you will have a complete file of all issues of THE PLAIN TRUTH.

The most satisfactory method of preserving the magazines is to buy a binder in which you can insert each new issue. You can punch two or three holes in the margin of each copy, according to the style binder you purchase. When you want to study any particular number, you can easily remove it. So be sure, from now on, to preserve every copy of both magazines!

COME TO TABERNACLE

(Continued from page 2)

enough to get them to the Feast of Tabernacles. In this case, those having more than enough second tithe should help those who lack. Remember, God doesn't expect the poor to save more than their small tenth, but they must do their part! God often blesses others however, with a larger tenth so they can help those who have less.

We find in Acts 4:32-35 that the early church helped its needy members and we try to follow this principle. If there is not enough second tithe to take the entire family to the three great feasts, then just the man, as head of the family, should go (Deut. 16:16). The other members of the family are expected if circumstances permit, and God will help us work it out in time if we do our part. Of course, if the husband is an unbeliever, the wife should certainly come anyway.

TITHE FOR THE POOR

In reading the reference given in Deut. 14:22-27, some of you may have wondered about the meaning of verses 28-29. In these verses, God is command-
from anyone who sincerely desires to
know the truth.
Are you living by every word of God?
Let us obey our own spiritual Father by
written us asking, "How can we have
God in His infinite wisdom Knew that
fellowship with other true believers"?
struction and fellowship. That is
festivals.
the joyous privilege of attending these
manded this special tithe, He is bound
festivals possible. Because God has com-
Days!
we may take a vacation in joyous fel-
time to take your vacation. It is a time
His children to rest from their regular
together in His festivals.
artacle!
and visited estab-
lished churches (Phil. 2:19-20) with
authority over local officers. The apostle
Paul commanded Timothy to reprove and
rebuke publicly any elder that sinned so
that the congregation would fear to do wrong (1 Tim. 5:19-20).
The evangelists ministered to the breth-
ren, corrected them and encouraged
themselves wherever and whenever it was
impossible for the apostle Paul.
Government in Local Congregations
Jesus commissioned the apostles to
preach the gospel to the world and gave
them the assistance of evangelists. But
He also told Peter to 'feed my sheep'
(John 21:15-17).
Peter called himself a fellow-elder
(1 Peter 5:1) even though he was also
an apostle. Paul designated himself as
a teacher of the Gentiles (1 Tim. 2:7)
though he was also an apostle.
The term elder or teacher is used to
designate the general office of authority
in the local congregations, in which
the apostles and evangelists spent part
of their time. Acts 20:7 and 28 plainly
prove that there were often several
elders (called also bishops or overseers)
in a local church. It was their duty to
preach, teach and rule by example, as
shepherds and not lords, not for "filthy
lucr" but out of love.
In I Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians
4:11 we find only the mention of pas-
tors and teachers rather than bishops,
elders, presbyters or overseers, but they
represent the same general office of
authority in the local churches.
Duties of Elders
The word pastor means a "shepherd.
He is one who tends the flock. Jesus
not only is the Chief Apostle and High
Priest (Hebrews 3:1); He is also the
Chief Shepherd and Bishop of the church
of God (1 Peter 5:4; 2:25). Peter
is not the bishop of bishops. There is
only One Supreme Pastor or Shepherd
over the entire church—Jesus Christ
(John 10:16).
But over each local church congrega-
tion there is also a local pastor directly
under the apostles and evangelists. He
is the presiding elder or bishop over
other elders in a local congregation.
Notice that in the gathering at Jerusa-
lem, recorded in Acts 15, there were
many elders in Jerusalem, together with
the apostles. Yet it was James—not
the apostle James, but the brother of Jesus
—who, in the capacity of pastor in
authority over the other elders, voiced
his decision (Acts 15:14).
All elders must be apt to teach (1
Tim. 3:2), but the congregation called teachers
in Titus 1:5, 12:28 and Eph. 4:11.
Elders who rule well are to be highly
respected for their works' sake, espe-
cially those who labor in preaching and
teaching (1 Tim. 5:17).
The congregations are admonished to
submit to the elders (1 Peter 5:5).
The members do not elect and dis-
ease elders, nor do they change
or doctrines which the elders are to preach.
Rather, elders are chosen by the apostle,
or as he directs and authorizes, by an
evangelist, according to the qualifica-
tions given in the letters to Timothy
and Titus. Elders must first be proven
before they are to be ordained by the
laying on of hands with prayer and
fasting (1 Tim. 5:22). Thus there may
be in local congregations those who are
able to teach, but who must first be
proven sound in the faith, even though
they might "desire the office of a bish-
op."
Here, then, is the spiritual govern-
ment of God in the early church plainly
stated: The Father manifested His will
to Jesus, the living Head of our
church, Who in turn manifested His
will to the apostles. They in turn in-
structed the evangelists in carrying out
the gospel. The evangelists, together
with the apostles, taught the elders
who presided over the local congregations.
In each congregation was a presiding
pastor, usually with other elders, who
taught the members. There was no
membership politics, nor voting on
church offices or doctrines. The elders
ruled the local church, but were not
ruled by the congregation or lay boards.

Office of Deacon
Paul wrote to the Corinthians that
beside the spiritual administration, there
was also a physical administration made
up of helps or helpers, usually referred
to in Scripture as deacons. They were
physical or material helpers, who waited
on tables, did janitor work and many
other physical duties.
Phillip, originally ordained as one of
seven deacons to serve at tables (Acts
6:6), was so filled with the Holy Spirit
that he later became an evangelist
(Acts 21:8). Those who helped in ma-
terial duties were sometimes called
"ministers" in old English usage. The
apostles Barnabas and Paul had Luke
and John Mark to minister to them
(Acts 13:5). Today, however, the term "min-
ister" is used to designate a pastor.
Elderly women also helped in physi-
cal needs. Paul wrote to the saints at
Rome: "I commend unto you Phebe our
sister, which is a servant (the original
word means helper) . . . that ye receive
her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and
that ye assist her in whatsoever business
she hath need of you, for she has been a
succourer of many, and of myself also" (Rom.
16:1). They usually were sided
by the church as they were widows over
sixty and without other relatives who could support them (1 Tim. 5:9-10).

We read in Acts 9:36-43 that Dorcas, an elderly woman, had died. Peter came to raise her from the dead, but before doing so, "all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made"—material service.

Offices Are Gifts of Holy Spirit

All offices in God's church are gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is God who created us with our natural talents and who adds to those talents, portions of His talents through the Holy Spirit. Many of the gifts are offices with authority, but others are purely Spiritual gifts which belong not only to the ministry but to others also. There are the gifts of healing and speaking and interpreting foreign languages. There are the gifts of knowledge by which truth hidden for centuries is revealed, and the gifts of wisdom and of faith.

All these gifts are distributed throughout the church as God sees fit so that He may work through the church and govern it. God, not man, decides who shall be given the responsibilities in carrying out His work.

Government in Our Church Today

Down through the ages Jesus has chosen directly those who serve in the capacity of apostles—His direct representatives bearing His authority. The world does not use the title apostle for the highest office in the church under Christ. Instead, it has invented other lofty titles—primate, archbishop, pope, all offices of men's devising. Some churches call every pastor a minister no matter what the rank.

But in our church, the church of God, in which the government of God exists today, Jesus has chosen Mr. Armstrong as His direct representative, as an ambassador of the Kingdom of God to the nations of this world, as a man through whom He can work in preaching and publishing the true gospel to the whole world. Mr. Armstrong's office carries with it divine authority, backed up by the power of God. Jesus has sent him to speak in His name and by His authority, and has given testimony to it by the fruits which only God can produce.

When Jesus was asked by John the Baptist if He were the One who should deliver the world from its headlong plunge to destruction, Jesus told John's disciples to look to the fruits—the sick were being healed, the gospel of the kingdom was being preached (Luke 7:22). It is by the fruits that we recognize the office with which God has invested His direct representative.

In the work of carrying the gospel to the nations, Mr. Armstrong has had to choose young men, as did the apostle Paul; and as God has given proof by their fruits, He has ordained them as ministers, with the authority of evangelists ministering to local churches and serving in various other fields in our complex ministry of today when we must use the radio and the printing press.

In our local congregations today, there are elders pastoring the local flocks, and deacons, who serve the congregations. In every way it is the government of God. Those who are the greatest in authority serve the most. It is not a rule by the will of man, but by the will of God. The critics who think God's government is man's government do not know the power of God. God's ministers know only too well that God will destroy those who seek to devour the church by leading away disciples after them.

How plain it is that God rules our church. The congregations are ruled by the elders, who are ruled by the evangelists, and they are ruled by the apostle who is ruled by Christ who is ruled by God! All offices are appointive, by a superior office. It is government from God down to each individual member in the church.

Marriage Ceremony

(Continued from page 5)

your children—going to receive the proper advice before marrying if they live great distances from God's ministers? How can they have the marriage performed if they can't afford to travel far? Is it fair?

At Annual Festivals

God is always fair. Since He intends his ministers to perform marriages for those who have come to understand the truth, He has provided the way and at no extra cost! God loves your young people, and so He has made the way possible.

We who have come to know the truth understand that it is a command to attend the annual festivals. With the Tabernacle being built in Texas at the most central point, many hundreds of you will be able to attend three times a year. Since you are also commanded to save a second tithe anyway in order to attend, it wouldn't be any extra expense to have the marriages of young people occur at the annual festivals!

God intended his annual occasions to be times of great joy apart from the world. He wants young people to be free from unnecessary problems as they enter marriage (Deut 24:5). What time could be more appropriate than these holy occasions? It is the perfect solution to encouraging young people in the church not to have such fellowship with the world as would lead to marriage outside of the faith.

Yes, what a joy it is to understand the truth!