

Restoring Original Christianity—for Today!

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Dear Brethren,

Last week in Florence, Kentucky—which is near Cincinnati, Ohio—we held the best Elders' Conference we have ever had. This year's conference was highlighted by the reality that God has been graciously granting us additional knowledge and understanding for use in serving the brethren and those God is now calling.

Through our *Church at Home* internet video programs, we have already had many inquiries about the CBCG and church attendance. As we continue to develop this video outreach to preach the Gospel to the world, there will be more and more new people desiring such information. How to best reach new people was an important part of our discussions at the Elders' Conference. Because of this obligation to reach out to new people, it is essential for elders, as well as the brethren, to be grounded in the basics of the teachings and doctrines of the New Testament. In the "Beliefs" booklet (as well as in Appendix M of *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order*), we have compiled the twenty-six main "Beliefs and Doctrines of the New Testament Church." We also have accompanying audio Bible studies for each of these basic doctrines (available on 2 CDs). These are not only for new people wanting to learn the truths of the Bible, as we too can use them to review such teachings from time to time—so that we are all well grounded in God's truth. By doing so, we will always be equipped to answer any questions new people might ask.

For *Church at Home*, we have already developed over 50 downloadable articles that cover many of the basic teachings of the New Testament. Realizing what the "Christianity" of this world believes and teaches, we understand the urgent need to provide easy-to-understand materials for beginners, so they can begin to grow in grace and knowledge.

With this in mind, Roy Assanti, our office manager in Australia, and Greg Paxton, our financial officer in Australia, are developing additional downloadable study materials to go along with the *Church at Home* videos. The goal is to have entry-level studies available that are synchronized with the *Church at Home* video programs. These materials will help viewers learn more about the true teachings of the Bible—and *unlearn* errors and false doctrines they may have been taught in other churches.

As we have learned from the book *Quitting Church*, "Christianity" has placed great emphasis on "church attendance." Perhaps this is the result of merely "professing Jesus" and believing that if one is "attending church" he or she is somehow "saved." Hence, most Protestants divide people into the "churched" or the "un-churched" categories. There seems to be little or no mention of the "converted" or the "unconverted." Yes, there is a great deal of stress on one being "born again"—but such an alleged experience does not actually equate to real conversion, nor is it evidence of having the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, very few "Christian" churches baptize any longer. However, the New Testament teaches that baptism is the believer's fundamental covenant pledge necessary for the forgiveness of sins and the granting of the Holy Spirit of God—which enables the believer to walk in newness of life, keeping the laws and commandments of God through the grace of God, and to grow in grace and knowledge in preparation for eternal life.

With this need in mind, we have developed an in-depth transcript book (with an accompanying CD of 12 sermons) on the meaning of *Water Baptism*. At the conference, we

gave each of the elders and attendees a copy of this new book, as well as the “covenant words” of the baptismal ceremony (below).

Baptismal Counseling and Ceremony

Each person who desires to be baptized should be counseled to determine whether the individual has truly repented to God the Father of his or her sins, and has accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Baptismal counseling should cover the following:

The person must understand what sin is—the transgression of God’s commandments and laws. Each one must realize that the sacrifice and the blood of Jesus Christ is the only payment for his or her sins.

Another purpose of baptismal counseling is to determine whether the individual has the fruits of repentance and the desire to live God’s way of life and keep His commandments as magnified by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

After these two things have been determined, the one doing the counseling needs go through the Scriptures of “Counting the Cost” with the person desiring to be baptized. The passages which best cover “Counting the Cost” are Luke 14:25-33 and Matthew 10:32-38. As you go over these Scriptures with the person, you need to determine whether he or she has made this covenant commitment in his or her life before God the Father and Jesus Christ. This covenant of eternal life is an irrevocable, total dedication of one’s life to God the Father and Jesus Christ until the end of physical life.

Then, you will need to explain the complete meaning of baptism by going through Romans 6:1-13. The person desiring baptism should know that baptism is by full immersion in water, symbolizing the death and burial of the old self—and that the rising out of the water symbolizes a new beginning, one’s walk in newness of life. Here is the translation which shows that each one who is baptized is jointly baptized into the death of Jesus Christ. This is how the death of Jesus Christ is imputed to each repentant sinner.

Romans 6:1-13

1. What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?
2. MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?
3. Or are you ignorant that as many of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?
4. Therefore, we were buried with Him by the baptism into the death, so that, just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, in exactly the same way also, we should walk in newness of life.
5. For if we have become conjoined together in the likeness of His death [our covenant pledge and baptismal death], so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.
6. Knowing this that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should no longer to be enslaved to sin.
7. Because the one who has died to sin has been justified from sin.
8. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
9. Knowing that Christ, after having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him.
10. Because when He died to sin, He died once for all; but in that He lives, He lives to God.
11. In exactly the same way also, you reckon yourselves to be dead to sin indeed, but alive to God through Christ Jesus Our Lord.
12. Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body, that you submissively obey it in the lusts thereof.
13. *Likewise*, do not be yielding your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, rather be yielding yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

If the person meets those basic requirements and fully understands the purpose of baptism, then it would be proper to baptize him or her.

Baptismal Ceremony

Here are the words of the baptismal ceremony. Prior to baptism, it would be best to go through these words of the baptismal ceremony so that the person can fully understand the significance of baptism. These words are to be recited by the one who is doing the baptizing while he is in the water with the one who is being baptized:

“Have you repented of your sins? Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior for the forgiveness of your sins? Are you ready to bury your old sinful self and life into the baptismal covenant death of Christ Jesus in this watery grave? Are you going to walk in the way of Jesus Christ, keeping His commandments, and love Him with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being and with all your strength?”

After receiving an affirmative answer to each of these questions, you should continue by asking:

“What is your full name?”

Repeat the person’s full name and say, “Because you have repented of your sins, which are the transgressions of God’s holy, righteous and perfect commandments and laws; and because you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior for the forgiveness of your sins, Who is your Lord and Master in heaven above, sitting on the right hand of God the Father as your Intercessor and Mediator and your King in the coming kingdom of God; and because you are burying your old sinful self and life into the covenant death of Christ Jesus in this watery grave for the remission of your sins; and because you are determined to walk in newness of life, in the way of Jesus Christ, keeping His commandments and to love Him and God the Father with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being and with all your strength, I baptize you, not into any sect, denomination or organization of the world, but into the name of the Father—because you will bear His family name for all eternity as His son/daughter; and of the Son—because His life, sacrifice, death and resurrection brings the forgiveness of your sins; and of the Holy Spirit—because the Holy Spirit comes from God the Father and into your mind as the begetting to be a son/daughter of God, and will lead you into loving obedience to God the Father and Jesus Christ now, and when Jesus Christ returns, God will in the first resurrection grant you eternal life as a son/daughter of God in glory! I do this in the name of Jesus Christ, that is by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ—AMEN!”

After baptizing the person, the one doing the baptizing should lay hands on the head of the individual and pray for the begetting of the Holy Spirit and commend them into the hands of Jesus Christ and God the Father—AMEN! To finalize the baptism, the one doing the baptism should look the newly baptized person in the eyes and say, “On the authority of Jesus Christ, your sins have been forgiven!”

With our baptismal death in the watery grave, we pledge to God that we will be faithful until we die. We also symbolically die to sin, to the world, and to the vanity of self and human nature. Moreover, we pledge that we will love God the Father and Jesus Christ as Jesus commanded: “ ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one* is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 22:37-40).

Our love for God becomes the most important aspect of our lives—above everyone and everything else. Jesus said, “Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who *is* in heaven.

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s enemies

shall be those of his own household.

“The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it” (Matt. 10:32-39).

Fundamentally, what is at stake is eternal life or eternal death! That is our covenant pledge to God the Father and Jesus Christ—sealed with the symbolic death of baptism.

Health and Healing

Perhaps the most important topic we discussed at the conference concerned “Health and Healing.” God wants us to be in good health, as the apostle John wrote: “Beloved, I personally am praying for you, **that in all respects you may prosper and BE IN HEALTH**, even as your soul is prospering” (III John 2).

Considering all the things that are against people’s health today, it is a real struggle for many of us to stay in good health. However, since last year, we have learned a lot about maintaining health and the many causes of disease and sickness. There are environmental causes—such as toxins, chemicals and additives in meats (clean and unclean) and processed foods; there is the problem of genetically modified foods; also, there are toxins and chemicals in our water and air. Astonishingly, there are over 80,000 chemicals and drugs used today. Then there is the problem of prescription and over-the-counter drug use, and the misdiagnosis and mistreatment of disease (doctor error). All of these are from the *outward* environment.

As if that wasn’t enough, we are also influenced by the *inward* environment—the emotional/spiritual causes of disease that are rooted in stress, anger, fear, resentment, bitterness, hatred—all of which affect our health and wellbeing. During the conference we focused primarily on these *inward* emotional/spiritual causes of sickness, and specifically as they have related to our past experiences in various churches of God.

God promises to heal, as David was inspired to write: “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; **Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases**, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things; your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Psa. 103:1-5).

Notice, God forgives our iniquities *first*, then heals us of our diseases. This means we must **repent of all our sins**, especially our emotional/spiritual sins because, as we will see, they are a fundamental cause of much of the sickness and disease within the Church.

In this mailing, we are including a special message on the emotional/spiritual causes of disease—just as was covered at the conference. Be sure to listen carefully to this message, as it will be most helpful to you. Please share it with others, as they too will benefit from it.

As you will see, most people are unaware of the emotional/spiritual causes of disease. For example, *resentment* is one such cause. Yet Jesus emphasized many times that we must forgive one another. Peter asked Jesus this question about forgiving a brother: “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?” Jesus said to him, **“I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven”** (Matt. 18:21-22).

Jesus continued to demonstrate how important it is us to forgive those who have sinned against us. “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents. But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ **And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt.**

“Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins; and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ **But he would not listen; instead, he went**

and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed.

“Now when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘**You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?**’

“And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. **Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, IF EACH OF YOU DOES NOT FORGIVE HIS BROTHER HIS OFFENSES FROM THE HEART**” (Matt. 18:23-35).

We need to *take to heart* what Jesus taught about forgiving one another from our hearts—regardless of the offence or sin. But someone will ask, “What if that person has not *asked* for forgiveness? What do I do then?” You must forgive them before God and place the whole matter into His hands and leave it with Him, so that you are not carrying around the harmful burden of unforgiveness, anger, bitterness or resentment.

What if it occurred long ago, perhaps when you were a little child, and now that person is dead? Again, forgive that person from your heart before God. Leave it with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Why carry those burdens—those *sins*—of anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, resentment, fear and hatred? Rather, repent of them! Ask God to *cleanse your mind* and *heal your emotions* through “the washing of the water of the Word.” This is what Jesus meant about forgiving each other from the heart.

Please listen to this vital message on “Spiritual and Emotional Healing.”

Sabbath Ending the Elders’ Conference

The highlight of the Sabbath services ending the conference was the ordination of two men as elders: Duncan Macleod from Vermont and Gene Palm from Ohio. Both of these men have diligently served the brethren in their areas for many years. As we do with all ordinations of elders, we ask the brethren in their local areas for input. This is important because they know the men and their character and dedication. They have seen them in all circumstances and trials. Both Duncan and Gene, while not currently married, will be dedicated to serving and teaching the brethren.

Not counting myself, those who attended the Elders’ Conference were:

Marlin & Nancy Fannin
Roger & Emy Kendall
Anse Cates
Lawrence Burchfield

Norbert & Denice Bohnert
Glenn & Phyllis Daniel
Duncan Macleod
Gene Palm

Other invitees:

Jim & Betty Hyles
Ben Ambrose
James & Judy Averill
Stan Timek
Sylvia De Pendleton

Wendell & Bettie Yeary
Roger & Sherry Tointon
Roy & Marie Mack
Joe and Betty Chikar
James David & Gail Lineberger

God’s Grace and Commandment-Keeping

For the final message in Florence, I gave #5 in the series *God’s Grace and Commandment-Keeping*. I originally gave this material as a pre-recorded message to be played on the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Later, during the actual Feast itself, when I was in Atlanta, I expanded it to two messages. The more I studied this subject—focusing on the fact that we are to keep the commandments of God according to their spiritual

intent as magnified by Jesus Christ—the more I realized that this kind of obedience can only be accomplished through the GRACE OF GOD by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we are learning, it is not a matter of LAW *or* GRACE—it is a matter of KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS AND LAWS OF GOD SPIRITUALLY *THROUGH* GRACE!

This is why Paul wrote that *through grace* and faith—as one is empowered by the Holy Spirit—the matter of commandment-keeping is *raised* to its full spiritual application. Here are a few verses from Romans that teach us this wonderful truth:

Rom. 3:31—Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, **we are establishing law** [through faith].

Rom. 5:21-6:2—So that even as sin has reigned unto death, **so also might the grace of God reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.** What then shall we say? **Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?** MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?

Rom. 7:6—**So that we might serve in newness of *the* spirit, and not in *the* oldness of *the* letter.**

Rom. 8:3-4—God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; **in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit.**

Because there is so much more to this subject than we previously understood, we will continue this series about *God's Grace and Commandment-Keeping*. It will no doubt open up our understanding of the New Testament tremendously. Furthermore, when we combine what we are learning about sickness/disease and forgiveness with keeping the laws and commandments of God through grace, our spiritual perspective will take on new dimensions. Indeed, like viewing a movie in 3-D, we will see the depth of the whole picture! Then, when we add the *love of God*, it is like adding a fourth dimension—everything comes into sharp focus.

Day 49 and Pentecost Messages: The CD in this mailing also contains the messages for Day 49 and Pentecost.

Brethren, the times ahead will be marked by trouble and difficulties. But through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be better able to have the faith and courage we need to love and obey God the Father and Jesus Christ—in spite of our physical circumstances.

Once again, thank you for your love and prayers, as well as your dedicated support for the work of the ministry in serving the brethren and preaching the Gospel to the world. We pray for you every day. We pray for your healing, your spiritual growth and strength, that you will continue to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. May God's love, grace and blessings be with you in everything.

With love in Christ Jesus,

Fred R. Coulter
FRC