

THREE SIGNS OF LAODICEA BUT WHICH FEW NOTICED AND FEWER HEEDED!

(This study was published on page 26 of Issue 140 (July 31, 2010) of *The Journal, News of the Churches of God.*)

Until the 1970s most of Christendom, including the former WCG, understood that a lawful consummated marriage is an unbreakable covenant for life that no man may put asunder. Our Lord explains in Mark 10:2-12 that Moses had erred in replacing God's *No-Divorce & No-Remarriage (No-D & No-R)* law with his contrary *Divorce & Remarriage (D & R)* concession for the hardness of Israel's heart. In 1974 Mr Armstrong repeated Moses' concession for the hardness of our heart but unlike Israel we had received God's holy spirit and should not have needed that concession. This article shows that by 1974 the WCG was in error on three doctrines related to marriage and that Mr Armstrong led from 1934 to 1974 God's seventh and final church era of Laodicea and was spewed out in 1979.

THREE RELATED ERRORS OF 1974

By 1974 the Worldwide Church of God had wrong three doctrines related to God the Father and marriage, namely:-

- (1) Not knowing that God the Father was the God of Exodus and Husband of Israel,
- (2) Not knowing the date of God the Father's Pentecost marriage to Israel at Mt Sinai.
- (3) Replacing God the Father's *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R* law with Moses' contrary *D & R* concession for the hardness of our heart.

These errors will now be explained and their shocking consequence examined.

GOD THE FATHER WAS THE GOD OF EXODUS

Throughout his long ministry Mr Armstrong (HWA) taught, as does mainstream Christendom, that Jesus was the LORD God of Exodus. This he based on a number of mistranslations, falsifications of the NT Greek text and some misinterpretations and which are discussed in papers, Q6, Q7, A2 & A3 and P2 at my Homepage.

Several scriptures plainly state that not Jesus but God the Father was: the Creator (e.g. Acts 4:24^b & 27^a), the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob (Acts 3:13). Hebrews 1:1-2 reveal that God (the Father) was his own Word in OT times and that Jesus became the Word of God only in NT times. In Mark 12:26-27 Jesus revealed his Father spoke to Moses from the (Burning) Bush:-

²⁶ *And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?*

²⁷ *He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.*

Some may claim that with "God" Jesus referred to himself but that can not be because in verse 27 He referred to God by the 3rd person pronoun "He" and therefore Jesus was referring to His Father. Let us not ignore Jesus' testimony that His Father was the God of Exodus who spoke to Moses.

Therefore Exodus chapter 3 describes God the Father appearing to Moses in the Burning Bush. And in verse 6 God the Father identified himself as, "...I am ... the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Then in verse 14 God the Father named himself, "... shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you". My 2-page article Q7 explains that not Jesus but God the Father named himself, I AM. HWA had adopted mainstream Christendom's false *Jesus-is-I AM* concept.

Most will reject this through being wedded to man's church tradition rather than God's Word of Truth. A major stumbling block is the shockingly false translation of John 1:3 (paper P2).

As further proof read Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and recognize that there the LORD God of Exodus (Father) told Moses He (Father) will send a Prophet (Jesus) and will put His (Father's) word (Gospel) in this Prophet's (Jesus') mouth. Then read Acts 3:20-23 where Peter confirms this by quoting Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and identifying Jesus having been that Prophet. My paper P2 gives more OT and NT examples of this truth.

The reader may object that Jesus said in John 5:37 that no one had heard his Father's voice but this I answered in my advertisement on page 22 of Issue 139 (June 17, 2010) of *The Journal* and in my paper P10, *How God the Father Was Seen and Heard!*

GOD THE FATHER MARRIED ON SIVAN 7

The date of God the Father's marriage to Israel is also the date of Pentecost. During the 1920s HWA adopted for Pentecost the Jewish Shavuot Sivan-6 date. During the 1930s he changed to his private Monday Pentecost reckoning. In 1974 he changed once again but now to a Sunday Pentecost.

I show in paper P4 that all three of his Pentecost dates are wrong but I will demonstrate this here for only his pre-1974 Monday and post-1974 Sunday Pentecost.

Exodus chapter 20 describes the Assembly at Mt Sinai and chapter 19 describes Israel's preparation on the two days before the Assembly. Exodus 19:9-16 identifies three days, the third of which is the day of the Assembly or Pentecost. God required Israel to build a fence around the mountain and wash their clothes on the first two of these three days. Now plainly neither of these two days could be the weekly Sabbath for on that day not even manna could be collected so let alone building a fence or washing clothes.

Yet for both a Monday and a Sunday Pentecost one of those two days would have to be the weekly Sabbath.

Therefore the Assembly or Pentecost could not have been on either a Monday or a Sunday and so both HWA's pre-1974 Monday Pentecost and his post-1974 Sunday Pentecost are wrong

Space does not allow showing that for Exodus year-1 Pentecost was on the weekly Sabbath of Sivan 7 and that therefore God the Father married Israel on Sivan 7, which is the 7th day of the 3rd month – see papers A5 and the in-depth study P4. The Jewish Sivan-6 Shavuot is one day out as is their Abib-15 Passover (see paper P7). HWA had been closest with his 1920s Sivan-6 Pentecost.

1974 REJECTION OF THE NO-D & NO-R LAW

Our grandparents' generation understood God does not allow either divorce or remarriage after divorce. The Pope understands this and so did the current head of the Church of England, Queen Elizabeth II, when she forbade her sister Princess Margaret marrying the divorced Group Captain Townsend. So why doesn't our generation understand this?

It is not rocket science provided you are willing to listen to what our Lord Jesus taught the Pharisees and his astonished disciples in Mark chapter 10:2-12. Since few are able (willing) to understand our Lord's teaching of Mark 10:2-12, let us study this important passage verse by verse.

² *And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.*

³ *And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?*

⁴ *And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.*

In verse 2 the Pharisees set Jesus a testing question concerning divorce and Jesus made them answer from the Law as recorded by Moses and accordingly they said, that Moses allowed (suffered) divorce.

⁵ *And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.*

Jesus reminded them that Moses had given his *D & R* concession for the hardness of Israel's heart. Moses knew that carnal Israel without the holy spirit would rebel against God's *No-D & No-R* law. He remembered that following an earlier rebellion God had considered destroying Israel and raise a people from Moses (Exod 32:9-14). It is no surprise that Moses gave that concession and that God did not countermand it.

Jesus next explains that Moses' *D & R* concession was contrary to God's *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R* law.

⁶ *But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.*

⁷ *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;*

⁸ *And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.*

⁹ *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

The reference to one flesh refers to the marriage being consummated after which the man and the woman become as one flesh and are then in an unbreakable marriage covenant for life that may not be put asunder. Paul puts it as follows in 1 Corinthians 7:39:-

³⁹ *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.*

Paul's agrees that should a consummated marriage end in divorce under man's *D & R* law, then God's *No-D & No-R* law overrides this in the NT church.

Let us return to Mark 10:10-12 and note how the surprised disciples questioned Jesus again but that He leaves them in no doubt that for them and therefore also to the NT church applies God's *No-D & No-R* law.

¹⁰ *And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.*

¹¹ *And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.*

¹² *And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

By saying that remarrying after divorce results in adultery against one's original spouse, Jesus reveals that in God's eyes the original spouse remains one's lawful spouse and that a lawful consummated marriage is a covenant for life that no one may put asunder.

Jesus' words are plain and can not be mistaken and one can only wonder what possessed HWA in 1974 to replace God the Father's *No-D & No-R* law with Moses' contrary *D & R* concession for the hardness of our heart.

In 1973 HWA asked a team of his AC scholars to look into the uncompromising *No-D & No-R* law. In 1974 the WCG was presented with "new truth" in the form of the *D & R* concession. Jesus' teaching of Mark 10:2-12 should have told those scholars they had resurrected an ancient error. They failed to understand that Paul's teaching on marriage of 1 Corinthians chapter 7 must not be twisted contrary to Jesus' teaching of Mark 10:2-12 and also not contrary to Paul's own summing up in verse 39 of 1 Corinthians 7.

THE MATTHEW 19:9 EXCEPTION CLAUSE

What about the Matthew 19:9 exception?

⁹ *And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*

The exception applies to putting away women rather than men. Indeed fornication refers to the bride's failure to disclose loss of her virginity. When the groom discovers this on the wedding night, he has the momentary option to not consummate the marriage (Deut 22:13-21). If he takes that option, then the two do not become one flesh and no marriage covenant is established and no divorce is involved with their separation. However, if the groom

consummates the marriage, the two become one flesh and the marriage covenant stands for as long as both live.

Under God's *No-D & No-R* law for consummated marriages not even adultery justifies divorce. Adultery can be the basis for separation but not for putting asunder the marriage covenant. When the erring spouse repents the marriage must be resumed.

God the Father shows how to conduct a difficult marriage and foretells He will resume His marriage with Israel, once His wife repents and returns to Him (Hos 2:6-19). That too was missed by HWA's scholars.

THE LAW FOR PRIESTS AND NT CHURCH

Although Moses gave Israel for the hardness of their heart his *D & R* concession, God did not countermand this for the people but He did stop this spreading to the priests as we can see from Leviticus 21:7 & 14, which forbids priests marrying divorced women.

It is also plain from Jesus teaching in Mark 10:2-12 that God's *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R* law is to be upheld in the NT church and by extension in God's Kingdom.

Indeed how can members of God's Church expect to be born again and allowed to teach and uphold God's *No-D & No-R* law in His Kingdom when they refuse to live by this law today?

Yet In 1977 our pastor general HWA married another man's wife contrary to God's law for priests (Lev 21:7, 14) and to God's *No-D & No-R* law (Mark 10:2-12) and to Paul's teaching of 1 Corinthians 7:39.

The former WCG said Amen to HWA's 1974 and 1977 sins against God's *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R* law and this was possibly the worst apostasy ever in the Church of God. Why don't (won't?) members and ministers of today's Church of God repent of this sin?

WHY?

Although HWA taught beautifully the deeper meaning of salvation and mankind's purpose and destiny, he was not given to know either the OT identity of God the Father or the date of God the Father's marriage to Israel (Sivan 7) or the importance of God the Father's *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R* law.

Why wasn't HWA given to understand those three by marriage related truths? My paper P1, *Laodicea's Lamp!*, essays that he had always been lukewarm to God's pivotal *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R* law and which he finally rejected in 1974 and which sin he exacerbated in 1977 by marrying another man's wife. That therefore HWA had led from 1934 to 1974 God's seventh and final church era of Laodicea and that he had been spewed from our Lord's mouth in 1979 after he fled from his Pasadena headquarters and left it to the late Mr Joseph W Tkach to save the WCG from the State of California. The events of the 1990s show Mr Tkach was unconverted and no saviour of the WCG.

THE PROPHECIES FOR LAODICEA FULFILLED

The Bible does not state that HWA led Philadelphia and therefore that claim was an assumption. Philadelphia means "*Brotherly Love*" but that was largely absent in the former WCG, whose ministers were quick to throw to the

wolves members who strayed or asked awkward questions. By contrast our Lord explained he would rescue straying sheep (Luke 15:4-7) but not so our ministry. Laodicea means the "*People judged*" and that is a far better description of the former WCG. The description of Laodicea in Revelation 3:17 fits perfectly the spewed out WCG.

¹⁷*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods (abundance of literature), and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind (unwilling to see) and naked (D & R).*

There can be no doubt that HWA led from 1934 to 1974 Laodicea and was spewed from our Lord's mouth in 1979 over possibly the worst apostasy ever in the Church of God. The events of the 1990s show how liberal HWA had allowed AC's "scholars" to become and with this also the WCG. I suspect that the principal causes were the effects of his advancing years and the 1967 loss of his original inspiration and spiritual backbone, Mrs Loma Armstrong.

The spewed out WCG is now much splintered with ministers and members unable to agree on much. They need eyesalve offered by Jesus to see even so basic a truth as God the Father's *Garden of Eden No-D & No-R* law. Is there even one minister to lead us back to God with sincere repentance over 1974?

Email comments etc to hwj@zip.com.au. Papers mentioned above are available at my home page www.rightly-dividing.net or by writing to: Henk Jens, P.O. Box 121, Belmore, NSW, 2192, Australia.