

## HLH- 770730- Correct Approach to Religion

Good morning to all of you. We'll be back in our own normal place of assembly next week, to my knowledge, unless some unusual circumstances made known. I would like to today pose a question, since I will be speaking next week, what I thought I would talk about. I'll post a phone and discuss a matter that arose from the conversation this morning. Someone from another one of our local churches in this area telephoned me. We were on the phone for about three-quarters of an hour. The question I would pose that she posed to me is one that I know in years past Mr.

Armstrong has given. What can I do? I tithe, she said, so that others can witness. I pray in my closet, but feel I'm not doing what I ought to. I'm not winning souls or witnessing for Christ.

We don't pray together as groups when people come over. There's no prophesying in the church, no speaking in tongues. So the person would like to know what, in this case I'll pose it for each of you, what can I do? Of necessity, we ought to take a look at some of the questions that she has asked, also to examine some of the background that might underlie the assumptions in her mind.

First of all, we recently had a series of Bible studies in the book of Acts. What I want to point up here is that very often when we read the Bible, we read with very little understanding.

For whatever reason, either the Spirit of God has not opened our minds, and there may be several reasons which I may go into next week, but in any case, we're not really carefully reading what is in front of us. I would draw attention, first of all, that a number of the things referred to in the book of Acts, such as praying together as an illustration, preaching Jesus in the synagogue, and his death and resurrection, tell only a part of the story, and are very important in understanding what it is that is in the book of Acts.

I explained to her that there are a number of parallels in our generation with Mr. Armstrong's work while yet in Eugene, Oregon, before coming down to Southern California with respect to his preaching in the Church of God Seventh Day, with which he began to have fellowship somewhere in the very late 1920s, and the relationship essentially terminated in 1938. I draw to your attention that much of the story of the book of Acts and what the disciples were doing is not an account of the apostles of that day being transferred into our day, and going out in the United States, or Canada, or Britain, or the Philippines, or Japan, or the Soviet Union, or Brazil.

Much of what was spoken in the book of Acts, even including Paul's ministry, was as if ministers arose in the Church of God and brought a message that had not here before been brought to the Church.

Because you see, the nation of Judah became commonly known as Israel, ruled by this time politically from Rome through a local king who was allowed to stay on the throne, the family of Herod.

But the leaders in the synagogue or the community, not to mention the tax collectors, were Pharisees who were basically of a family of Judah, though they did include some of the family of Levi, Sadducees who were very much more commonly the family of Levi, and the wealthy, sex of the Herodians. But Jesus pointed out that the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

The scribes were those who were used to multiply copies of the text of the Bible and to explain what that reading is. When Jesus spoke and bore witness in his day, he was speaking in the equivalent of

the Church of God. Very rarely did he ever go to the Gentiles east of Jordan. Once, on an occasion, he spoke to a Phoenician woman from Syria who, in fact, he would not have addressed had she not made an issue of the fact that even dogs get crooks, if you remember the rest of the story.

Now, the point that we have been overlooking, when Paul, and earlier than that when the 12 apostles speak, they are not speaking to a nation that had no knowledge of the Bible. They are not even speaking to a nation that had some knowledge of the Bible. They were speaking to the one and only church that God then had on earth. And therefore, no small number of things that were done there ought to be seen in the like. That when they spoke in Jerusalem in the cities of Judah, they were speaking to the churches of God. And that's a term that could literally be used because the term is at least once used in the Old Testament, but more often the churches or congregations of Israel. And we refer to them in the New Testament, not so much in terms of the nation as a church or congregation, whether God's or descended from the patriarch Israel. But we speak of the buildings in which they assemble the synagogues. The synagogues represented the various places of worship of the people who constituted God's only people on earth, because he had not called any other by his name. I think this is very important. You will mind the fact that I suddenly my eyes fell on the face of a woman I haven't seen in months or is it years? They're as lovely as ever.

Mrs. Fay Cook, all right. For many of you who are older who will know her, pardon this interruption, do get reacquainted. It is a proof that not all people who were here years ago have left the church.

When the time came for Jesus Christ to be a prophet, which he was, and to speak to the church that he had raised up, and to whom he had spoken at Sinai, in this case to speak directly to the people in flesh, not indirectly through the flesh of Moses and later on judges or priests, he spoke certain things in the synagogue and he was not addressing the Romans. He never went to Rome to our knowledge. He was not addressing the Egyptians. He was certainly not addressing the Tibetans in Tibet, even though there are people who believe that's where he got the wisdom from.

Let them have their wisdom. He was speaking to the congregation and the only one that acknowledged the presence of God, in this case the central building, the temple, that had been refurbished in the days of Herod, the great. He explained certain things that should have been clear if they had read the prophets. He speaks fundamentally as also to John of the kingdom of God, and the one thing he spoke almost nothing about, except to his disciples, was himself.

And Jesus asks the church to convey the message he brought to that church, to convey it to the rest of the world, as well as in Judah and Samaria and Judea. In the book of Acts, chapter one, he says now, convey this message to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world, as he also defined it in the last chapter of the Gospel account in Matthew. We have here a very significant point that Jesus' message is what the church is to convey. In this case, we are asked to convey it not in parables, so that people cannot understand, but plainly, so that those who have ears to hear may hear. He spoke so that those who had ears could not, except for few.

Now later, after the death and resurrection of this prophet, who was also the Son of God, and who paid for the sins of the world, the disciples conveyed to the church that met in synagogues, as recorded in the book of Acts, that there had been a fulfillment of the Passover, and that the fulfillment of the Passover made it possible for Christ to pass us over in terms of paying for our sins, that he paid for our sins instead.

The church now needed to have understanding of various aspects of the Law of Moses, this aspect of the Holy Days, and later on, when the day of Pentecost arose, they also conveyed information about the Spirit of God that was not known before. So a knowledge and an additional understanding of the

Spirit of God, the Messiah was made known to the synagogues, or the churches, of God in that day. Synagogues of Israel, whatever term we want to use. Sometimes the people who believe were forced to be separate. In Judea, it does appear very often that, although initially this was the case, that later on the large number of people who had responsibility in the Jewish community and in the church at that time were so many that there was general assembling at the temple itself. Of both, shall I say, Israelites of the flesh and Israelites of the Spirit, in the sense that they were made up of those who did not and who did have the Holy Spirit, those who kept the Sabbath with their own strength and those who kept the Sabbath with the power of the Spirit of God to give them insight, Christians who were priests and Christians who were not priests as well as priests who were not Christians.

There is no way to read much of the later story of Paul going to the temple of James, as Josephus says, being so highly honored in his community before the Jews blew their emotional stack around 62. Of course, it wasn't more than four years later that the war with Rome broke out.

But through the 50s and the 40s and the later 30s AD, there is no question about what there was a significant relationship when so many Jews came to be responsive to added knowledge.

This was a church that had kept holy days. This was a church that, in fact, believed that there was going to be a kingdom of God on earth, described by Isaiah, by Micah, described in its establishment everywhere. This was the nation, if you please, the church that was looking for the kingdom of God. And they constantly, whether Jesus, disciples, or others were asking the question that may be summarized as the apostles did, will you at this time establish the kingdom? They were sure that when Messiah comes, and then they were quoting all of these passages in the Old Testament, there was no need to preach to them the knowledge that a government, a kingdom, was going to be established that would replace Rome and bring peace to the world to which the Gentiles would seek. What Jesus said was how they were going to get there.

There was no question they knew there was going to be a resurrection in the later days.

They wanted to be there, but Jesus pointed up the way to get there. That's why he said, I am the way. I represent not only in terms of what I say and who I am, but how I live.

I represent the only way you're ever going to get in the kingdom that you all believe already.

But you're not going to get there because your immortal souls, like the Greeks have in mind.

You're not going to get there because the men are circumcised and the women are married to the men, and you all descend from Abraham. Most of what happened to you was you'd be buried in the promised land, if that's the case. What is necessary is that you receive the Spirit of God, that is, eternal life through being begotten by God himself. That you quit looking for loopholes in the law, that you repent of your sins instead of constructing ways to get around the law, and that when you have sinned, you acknowledge your guilt and recognize that the one who pays for it is your own Savior. In this case, his Hebrew name was one, and we call him in English Jesus from the Greek Jesus, the Hebrew Joshua, to give an English form to the expression, he became the leader. Now, he was called Jesus or Joshua because his purpose is to lead his people into the promised land like Joshua did. He was not called a second Moses because his purpose was not to give the law a second time. He was called a second Joshua, if you please, because he is going to lead the people into the promised land and into eternal life. Joshua only was a forerunner.

Now with this in mind, it became important to the church to know that the one who paid for their sins was one who had been in their midst, that the Prophet spoke of him. What would you think if Paul were to go to Gentiles, making no contact with the synagogue, making no contact with the

Greeks in the synagogue, but to stand on Mars Hill and announce that Jesus is the Messiah who paid for your sins, brethren? Now, if you want to know what he did on Mars Hill, we're going to look at it and see how Paul dealt with the question when you're not speaking to the churches of God.

And then I think we'll understand much more of what our role in this work shall be. Because when Paul spoke to the synagogue and to the Greeks in the synagogue, he didn't say the same thing as when addressing the Gentiles on Mars Hill, which is much more like Mr. Armstrong addressing the Japanese in Tokyo, except I think the Greeks were every bit as carnal or more so than most people at that time, those who at least assembled on Mars Hill. They were the intellectual, the fashionable, young intellectuals of that day. When the Apostle spoke and when Paul spoke, he, they, and he were both addressing initially the churches of God, where people of God were assembling, some converted, some not. And Paul was not having to bring the gospel of the kingdom of God, because these people already had it in terms of the government and where it is to be established. Because it was foretold by the prophets from the time, if you please, of Abraham on. That's what we have when we quote what God is going to do when the kingdom is established. We go back to Isaiah, we go back to Malachi, we go back to Zachariah, we go back to Micah, we go back to Jeremiah. When we want to understand how the law is to be enforced, we go to Jeremiah 31. It's going to be written in our hearts and minds and not on tables of stone or in the pages of a book with ink. All these things harken back to Old Testament scriptures. There's also a church that had developed a custom of praying together. The synagogue, even to this day, if I am not mistaken, normally has a rule that you don't pray unless they're 10. Now, does this vary from country to country? Or is this not a normal minimum? All right, thank you. We have a young man from Persia, ultimately, of Hebraic background. And to my knowledge, that's true, but I do not speak with that kind of knowledge of an experience. Jesus came to say in a congregation that was used to praying in groups, He said, Now, when you enter into your closet, I think we have completely overlooked this. We have assumed that the Church of God, the congregation of Israel, had always prayed in private.

And now what people want to do is to do something different than what we pray as groups.

Well, let me just briefly explain. There has never been a law in the Church of God forbidding any of you to get together to pray if someone's sick. Mr. Berg and I prayed yesterday for someone who assembles in another congregation or Mr. Tkach and I commonly go out together. We generally try to do this unless it is a man that we might just go out alone. But even there, it doesn't hurt to go out together. The Church does not forbid, but it appears that some people feel that unless you pray in groups, before others, with others, that you're not doing your part.

Now, Jesus did not forbid nor did he even address the question as to whether you should or shouldn't.

He is assuming that that is being done. What he does ask you is to bear in mind that it is very easy when you pray together to be heard and seen of others. And he asks you, rather, that what you do you do in private, because it is not as important whether others hear and see you as whether God hears and sees you. So it isn't that Christians suddenly introduce something new, but people who read the book of Acts without a background and an understanding of the synagogue are not aware.

The fact that when the disciples pray together, this was the common practice.

And therefore, there is no law against it. But what Jesus asks you to do is also pray in private, as Mr. Phillip Pellow was mentioning this morning in the sermon. Therefore, we are not here concerned with introducing prayer groups, as many Pentecostal people do. And I know that it will tend in

various directions, depending on what people want, because the questioner in this case joined it with the question of speaking in tongue. So I know what is in the mind of this individual.

If there are people who are sick, if there are difficulties, some of you who are, let's say, Latin background are concerned, where English is your primary language, you are concerned for the work of God. I see no reason why you shouldn't get together in terms of, let's say, reaching some of the areas of Latin America that haven't been reached. The Church has never forbidden such a thing any more than our German brethren have ever been forbidden to get together and pray if they want to about the work with respect to German speaking areas of Europe. So what we are discovering is that indeed, when we read the Book of Acts, sometimes the things that are found there are related directly to the custom of the churches, the synagogues, where God's message had already been known and preached. Now, when we come to something altogether different, let's turn to the Book of Acts, when Paul addresses the people who did not know the same things that we have already mentioned that were made known in the synagogues, I would draw attention here. Paul was in Thessalonica. This is northern Greece, the region of Saloniki today. Now, there were certain people who were philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics who encountered him. When Paul had come to Athens in chapter 17, and some heard Paul speaking, he had been disputing in the synagogue with the Jews and with the devout persons, verse 17, and in the market daily with those that met with him. Now, notice Paul was first addressing Jews in the synagogue and devout people, which may have included some Greeks who attended. And having heard what he had said to them, he was thought of as a babler. What will this babler say? And some said he seems to be a center-forth of strange gods, because he preached Jesus in the resurrection in the synagogue with the Jews and to the devout persons and others who had met with him in the marketplace, who had some basic background of what the Bible says, but had not heard this. Now, he took with him and brought, they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, or the high area that you would see in Athens. Now, we would like to know what this new doctrine is that you're talking about. For you're setting forth some strange things to our ears. We would know, therefore, what these things mean. Now, what they really said is we're not interested, but we would like to hear anyway. For all the Athenians and strangers that were there spent their time in nothing else but to tell her to hear some new thing, which is Luke's evaluation of their mentality. So Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, You men of Athens, I perceive in all things that you're too superstitious. So he clobbered them with the first thought.

So what he was doing was unidentifying himself with superstition. He put the onus of superstition on them in an age when they thought they were above it, because they were trying to say he's superstitious. He's the center forth of strange gods. He said, I perceive that in all these things that surround me here on Mars Hill, you are all too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotion, I found an altar with this inscription to the unknown God. Now, Jesus, pardon me, Paul didn't say here that what he was going to introduce was the story of Jesus. He picked out something that he could use of their own practice and custom that would condemn them to their own ignorance.

I passed by and I saw that you had a custom here of even worshiping an unknown God. Now, they had just accused him of setting forth strange gods that didn't know, right? So he found that altar and took advantage of it. He didn't say, well, now I find here you have an altar to Mars or Aries, since the Greek would have been, then to Zeus or Jupiter, you know, and to Mercurios.

He picked out what would be to his advantage. He said, I find here an altar to an unknown God.

Now, the one that you're worshipping in ignorance. Wow, that's another slam. I'm declaring to you because I know him. That's what Paul is saying. He is declaring to these superstitious Greeks who this unknown God is whom they were worshipping and didn't know. Now, that's real superstitious to worship. You know, not what God that made the world. I didn't talk about Jesus in the resurrection and the forgiveness of sin. Did he yet? He's not in the synagogue. He's not meeting with the devout Greeks who met with the Jews in the synagogue. He's dealing with the world for the first time exclusively here in terms of any record that we're reading for our own benefit.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands. The storm strong speaks to the Ethiopians of the God who made the Ethiopians and all people. He speaks to the Japanese of the God of the Japanese who made them and all other people who is going to set all nations right. Paul spoke to the Greeks of the unknown God because that was the best way to reach them at this point. And he introduces this God as the one who made the world and all things therein is distinct from the Greeks who were committing adultery in the world and sickling one another. Seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, which the Greeks were not, most of their gods were only Lords of the underworld. This one dwells not in temples made with hands, but the Areopagus was full of temples devoted to the gods.

He's not worshiped with men's hands as through idols, as though he needed anything like that to please him, because after all, he's the one who gives to all life and breath and all things.

He's a God who is above all this trivia, the burning of candles and incense and the offering of sacrifices and the building of altars and temples and the painting of temples and the carving of temples and the reproductions of the gods. He's above all that because he's given life to everything, breath and all. And he has made of one, that is of Adam, not one blood of one, all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. He's made of one human being, ultimately.

All nations to dwell on the earth, you see, not merely Greeks from Zeus and the Barbarians and all the rest from somewhere else, who sprang talktenously from the earth. He is here defining the whole human family as one to get the Greeks to think about the folly of thinking of Greeks versus barbarians, you see. No introduction of Jesus, the resurrection, the cross, the forgiveness of sin. I want you to notice it. Yet people can read over this and they have no understanding because what good would it tell them to say repent of sin when they didn't even know what the law is? Jesus is not even introduced, so he is made of one human being, all men, to dwell on the face of the earth and he has determined the times previously appointed and the bounds of their habitations. He is here advancing the point, of course, that some nations grow big and then they grow small. The Greeks exploded into an empire and then they collapsed before Rome. Now the purpose for all these human experiences, where you dwell, your national catastrophes, the greatness of your power, it's all that men through these experiences should ultimately seek the curious translated Lord, which means the ruler. It's a common word. It doesn't mean what we commonly in the Christian world term the Lord, meaning Jesus. The Lord means one who is in the old English sense a master, Curios, the one who runs things. That we should seek the master of the universe if by chance they might feel after him and find him. That is, you know, the purpose is that men should learn through some of these experiences that they can, you know, grope after God if it's possible. Learning from the lessons, the burning of your fingers figuratively, he doesn't imply here that they might find him by reading the Bible. He implies here that if by chance they might feel after him in some way through their senses, which were the only things available to these poor Greeks who thought they were so smart and find him, though he be not far from every one of us, he's a lot nearer than we think. But our superstition, our ignorance keeps us from grasping God in the figurative mental sense, spiritual sense, for in him that is through him we live and move and have our being.

That is the reality of God ought to be so clear that instead of trying to grope for God, you should have perceived that we wouldn't even be alive if there weren't a Creator of whom I am speaking.

In him we live and move and have our being. A certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring. And here he uses it in the created sense. Now he didn't say here, as also the Hebrew prophet said, that Jesus would come and pay for your sins, brethren. And then he goes on and on like many Protestant people who reach the pagan nations. I think that they've never read this and understood how Paul approached the problem. I doubt that most of you have given serious thought at the distinction between this and the way he speaks to church members in Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians.

Those are written to brethren. There shall I call them co-worker letters with a little different thrust. I think this is important. Here is what he's saying to the world. And he's quoting one of their own poets to show that ultimately we are not only created of God, we are also meant to be his born offspring. For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think of the Godhead and like as a gold or silver or stone or graven art or man's device. In other words, human beings represent in themselves God's created family. And ultimately, if we surrender to him, his born again family because you have to be born twice, once in the flesh and then in the spirit.

Now, the times of this ignorance, God winked at or winked at, but he is now commanding all men everywhere to amend their ways. That's why I'm here, he's saying. Now, look at all the lead-in.

And this doesn't mean this is everything he said. He might have said even more to fill it out.

Paul seemed to have enjoyed speaking. He is now commanding all men everywhere to repent. And the first thing he speaks of is repentance of sin. Now, he doesn't even define sin, but he's talking about repentance in the sense that the Greeks could get it. That means that people would turn around and begin to do the right thing without defining it while altogether is right, but the attitude of real remorse. Now, because he has appointed a day, this is the gospel, he has appointed a time in the future, the judgment in which he will judge the world in righteousness. It's going to be judged by good conduct. Now, he doesn't introduce the word sin or law. He introduces repentance and righteousness. The Greeks could understand what righteousness meant in its broad sense without defining it. He didn't say, now remember, this includes the Sabbath, you Greeks.

That's not even introduced. The issue is generality to people who could only understand it that way.

And there's going to be a judging of the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained.

Now, he speaks of the leader and his appointment, not the messiahship, the death and the resurrection.

Am I coming plain as to how Paul introduced the gospel and having introduced the world tomorrow, the day of judgment, a time when the world will be repenting and be governed by a law and judged by a law of righteousness? In this case, he didn't even introduce law. I'm only filling in for you here. It's all going to be handled by someone who has already been ordained to the task.

Some of them might have thought it was a Greek. No. Whereof he has given assurance unto all men that this is the man in that he has raised him from the dead, because all the other great leaders who might have wanted to do this are dead. All the Romans who were made gods by the Senate were actually dead. But this man, and his name isn't ever introduced. Did you notice that? Now, when they had heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked and others said, we'll hear of this again tomorrow, and he'd never introduced either the word grace or Jesus or Christ. Now, did he? Whether

he did is not important. Luke is writing it in such a way that we are to understand the manner in which you go about reaching carnal, minded people who have no biblical background. Now, whereas all other human beings have died, if someone has proved himself and qualified for this, he would ultimately have to be alive to do it, wouldn't he? That's why he said there has been a resurrection as standing up out of the dead. So Paul departed from the point of view of what we have written. He didn't even introduce the name. All we know is that they had heard him speak about Jesus to those who understood in verse 18. But at this point, he doesn't even make an issue of the man. He makes an issue of the government, the kingdom of God, the resurrection, who's going to run it, and how he knows because he's alive and not dead. This is quite different from the way Paul addressed the synagogue. Men and brethren, how Stephen addressed the Jews, he said that he talks about Abraham and Mesopotamia, and then about Isaac and Jacob and Moses, and then about David. And from him, David, there is this Jesus whom God has raised from the dead. And the whole approach of Stephen to the Jews in the synagogue, that is the church, was a reference to the Bible. The approach to the pagans was a reference to the pagan poets, to the idols and the areopagus, to their philosophies and superstitions, and to an awareness of the government of the kingdom of God. And if you have problems sometimes, which I think would be indeed what Mr. Armstrong is addressing, brethren who have not seen the difference, I think people ought to go again through this book of Acts. I wasn't there when this chapter was gone through, but I think it very important to take note of this matter. When we read through the New Testament, we have to bear this in mind. We're not all called to be preachers, speakers. We all have a part, whether we can tithe or whether we have no income, whether we pray with others to help others or pray alone. We have some other fundamental things we ought to do. And it is not witnessing for Jesus and talking to your neighbors everywhere about the grace of Christ, about Jesus. It may involve it, but let me give you some verses that make rather clear what we ought to see in 1 Peter. We are told here about wives and husbands, some of whom are not converted, and addressing women who more often were called than their unconverted husbands. Let the wives be in subjection to their own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they may also, with your much talking, be one. No, it doesn't say that, does it? It said they may also, without the word, that is, without arguing about what this book says to your unconverted husband who's never read it, be one. And the word conversation should properly be here. Conduct, that is a much better rendering, is not merely talking. It's talking about, Peter is talking about one's conduct, which they behold, or while they behold, excuse me, your chaste conduct coupled with fear. That is, you have respect to them. Your conduct is proper, and it is of a manner that cannot be commented against. Who's adorning, let it not be the outward adorning of, and then he goes through all the things that the Greeks held dear to their beauty, but let it be of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is a great price, not an argumentative talkative one.

Let it be meek. Let it be quiet. Let's not argue about the words of the Bible, but let it be seen in your conduct and your chaste behavior with proper respect. For after this manner in the old time, the holy women who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjections to their own husband, whose daughters you are become as long as you do well and are not, and then the other rendering is an awkward expression here. Likewise, you husbands dwell with them according to knowledge.

You're converted, the wife is not. You have the knowledge of the Bible. You dwell according to the knowledge of the Bible, giving honor to the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being joint heirs together of the grace of life, because men and women, and this is of course rest to men whether their wives are converted or not. They're ultimately all to be heirs of life, and not as many of the Muslims who view that only men will ultimately be there, and the only reason for women is that men need them. Let your prayers be not hindered. Now he speaks here, going a little bit further in chapter, well I guess really I want to go down to another section here.



We have one mind, have compassion one for another, love his brethren, and he's addressing of course of brethren as a whole. Verse 10, he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile, let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and and sue it, or pursue it earnestly as one of our psalms says it. So here we have an indication of the importance of seeing that what you say is proper and what you speak is without guile, so the conversation should be properly governed, and the emphasis is on conduct and attitude toward the other. Now James has something to say about the same thing.

He speaks there about being swift to hear and slow to speak, and in introducing this topic in verse 19 of chapter 1 he has a reference to Ecclesiastes 5, 1, and 2, which you can turn to that in a sense amplify the thought. Now if we're swift to hear and slow to speak, we will not be doing what unfortunately too many do who are trying to introduce Jesus to people who are not yet ready to listen. If you want to introduce Jesus to somebody, you want to be sure that they have seen Jesus live his life in you before you start talking about it. That is very important.

We have another verse in Colossians that I think would be good to read in this connection.

Colossians chapter 4, verse 5, you're told to walk in wisdom toward those that are without redeeming or making good use of the time. That is, there's a time to conduct, the word walk, means to conduct yourself in wisdom toward those that are not converted, making good use of the time and not wasting it with unconverted people. Let your speech and inevitably you're going to be talking with the unconverted in some such situation you have. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. That grace in this sense means with propriety. Someone who walks with certain grace is distinct from slovenly. Your speech should be proper and not a reproach either to yourself or the church. You should therefore, when you write, learn how to spell and when you speak, know how to speak correctly. Seasoned with salt, the reference there is to make it interesting when you put salt on something that is somewhat lacking in flavor.

It makes it more interesting. What you have to say should be interesting that you may know how you ought to answer every man. That is, you're the one who gives the answer. He's the one who's introducing the arguments. But many Protestants have gone the other way around that you're giving the argument and he's doing the answering. When you see or ask, you explain, why do you do this? You give an explanation. Well, that may or may not satisfy, but at least it's the explanation.

Too often we overlook these things. Proverbs 11.30 speaks of the proof of the righteous like a tree of life and one who has wisdom wins soul. Now, there are others who claim to win souls and are not because they lack wisdom. The reference to winning souls by one who is wise is parallel with the one that just preceded, that is the first half of verse 30, the fruit of the tree. In other words, it's not what you say, it's what you do. Your deeds speak louder than your words.

And when people make big issues of words, I'm afraid it's very probable that their deeds are short. What then are the various things that could be done? There are aspects of our labors that we can do in the church. There are aspects that we can do outside. Let's take some of the outside for the moment, because this was part of what was brought up in our early morning conversation.

The church of God goes to the world where the Bible generally has been known of in some manner.

The more the common people have the Bible, the more likely we go directly to advertising published literature radio broadcast to the common people. When there is a nation that doesn't have the Bible, to any great extent we go to their leaders. And you may frown on Mr. Armstrong's socializing, speaking at social occasions. But nevertheless, that is the way to reach some of those people,

because there is no other. Now, the Bible has been circulated in English Burma. Therefore, we have not had to reach the Burmese leadership at the present. We have brethren in and around Rangoon, Karen speaking, Chin speaking brethren in the hills. I, by the way, have a record that one of our Chinese Malaysian brethren has given me a song service from the last feast of Tabernacle, secular hymns sung in English and Karen by the people of the lowlands Burma. We have no such thing in Thailand. The Bible has never been circulated in this manner, nor has God apparently yet acted in the case of Thailand. But in Burma it is different.

In Malaysia, God is calling Chinese people who have broken from their traditions and people who are non-Muslim. The Malay Muslims are not being called. They may yet have a witness at a high level. Mr. Armstrong speaks at a high level in Japan because Japan is a Buddhist country or a secular country, depending on how one looks at an individual's experience. So this brings up the fact that there is nothing objectionable, nor would the church be frowning in any way upon your helping the Bible to be distributed either in other lands or created in other languages.

I have no objection or would lend my full support to the presence and the distribution of the Bible through the American Bible Society or the British or poor in the Dutch or the German Bible Society. If for some reason you have a special interest in that area, that is something you can do. But again, I would point out if you say that all I do is tithe and pray and I'm not doing enough, I would still say that even there what you're doing is probably spending your money because you're not going to be doing the translation. And what often happens is that people don't realize that to support such societies is still essentially using money as a medium of exchange.

You're doing labor. You're paid money for the labor. Instead of doing the labor for the society printing the press, you pay the society money to help print the Bible on the press. What it is often is an excuse not to support the work, but to get involved in something else. There's no reason one cannot do both. This is where the work the church is fundamentally focusing. But it doesn't mean that contributions could not be made to the distribution and translation of Bibles in other lands and languages, much as AICF has assisted in the education of people even before the Bible gets there. Because how are they going to read the Bible if they've never read their own language? And we do that. But still we have to realize the importance of a medium of exchange because we can't all do the labor itself. There is a significant need undoubtedly in the church and outside to comfort those who are sick, whether in hospitals or at home, or mentally sick in institutions, prisoners and alcoholics. I think we have individuals in the church who really have the need of the company of others when they're not just by themselves, which makes for a greater problem. And it isn't, of course, always easy to work with people who have problems of alcoholism or severe handicaps in wrestling with the smoking habit. There are things we can do. Now, Victor Kubik, a minister in the church in Paducah, circumstantially has been invited, in fact, to speak to prisoners and to deal with them in one of the local prisons. Some of you might even find that you have time to volunteer for work. Now, this woman said she knows of nobody in the church that does anything except gather together in social occasions where we talk about secular things and drink too much. I said, frankly, she probably has a very limited friendship.

And I really doubt that she has made a very good choice of her friends if this is what they're all doing. I know of people here in the church who are laypeople, who take care of those who have needs, who are elderly, who bathe them, who do other services for them, who clean their homes.

And Mr. Tkach, while I was gone, I think gave this as a fundamental part of a subject.

My wife commented to this effect, and I won't emphasize it, but at this point, I will tell you that yesterday, I had to make, that is to reassemble a bed that had fallen apart for an older woman. I had to go to a hospital or a medical office in Burbank in order to get a bandage that was not located in a local dispensary. Now, it brings up the question, you see, of how come the ministers are acting like this? I have no objection to it. I find I'm learning by it. Become a carpenter, you know, any number of other things. There are things that we do, and it makes the day very variable. And when I was delivering this unusual bandage, it's a rubber bandage that acts much like a cast, because it tightens up. There was a woman with child. I don't normally pick up women. My father advised me long ago, but I felt in this case, he said, I want to go back to, you know, my home and she had the child there.

And I reasoned in my mind that it was probably the wise thing in this case, not to leave her standing on the hot day. At least there was one witness, the baby. So I put her in the back seat she wanted to be in the front. We started on Avenue 50, and we ended up on very near South Huntington Drive in El Sereno. You know, that's not really very far. And she took me around streets that took us over one half, took three quarters of an hour almost. She was following the bus routes and didn't know anything else. And she couldn't say left or right. She was English speaking, although of Latin background, she would only point this way and that way. I'd have to turn around every time to see which way she was pointing. Now, this was roughly half of my day.

Now, I say with this woman who did have the conversation with me, there are many, many duties.

And there is no doubt that some people in the church are woefully negligent. And I would like to convey her message to me on the phone about this, which has been Mr. Tkach's concern and surely with me, Ms. Armstrong's and others, that there are many, many functions that have to be done, especially the need of some men to help men in very personal things when they get old and take, cannot take full care of themselves. You know, older people finally come to the place that can't ultimately bend even to clean their toes in a bathtub. Biologically, you just get that stiff.

And they need some help. Some can't get out. My brother used to have to ultimately help my father out of the tub. Chartered before his death in his 90s. Well, this occurs. We are short of people.

So therefore, brethren, there are things that we can do both within ourselves as a group and aspects of this we can do in society. Maybe you live so far away from other brethren that there may be social services in the world if you can do. I have no objection. I think it's perfectly acceptable in your area. Maybe your service is to drive. If our brethren, let's just put it this way, any of the services that our brethren use publicly would be perfectly acceptable areas of your own service.

If we use the local number, what's 792 fish? Am I on that right? All right.

Mr. D'Kotch has that sign. And every time I look at it, I see the sign. That's what you call for special helps, transportation, such like we have a local bus route in the sun land where I live.

And there, very often, you see women driving the buses so that elderly can go when they look.

If, indeed, church members who are elderly have a right to use public transportation of this nature for not just RTD, but private service, then I say it's perfectly all right for any of you. If you have time, those of you who are good with the drivers, during the day, and there are others, you know, during the day to offer your services, because if our brethren use them, you can offer it as well. If we use certain hospitals, there's no reason that there are not, let's say, non-medical areas where you can comfort those. And there are hospitals who ask that some of the most routine physical things be done that have nothing to do with an RN or a MD after your name. In fact, it would be very costly for the medical profession to do some of these things. We do therefore have areas in which it would be

very helpful. I assure this lady that the work is in contact with many, many prisoners, literally, through our literature and ministers visit. I write on occasion to letters forwarded to me, people who are prisoners to answer their questions. I take out much of my time, as Mr. Tkach does, much of our time, from what normally would be expected to do the things that normally aren't expected in the ministry, because there's nobody else to do it. In fact, I didn't get to the lady who went to bed broke, and she had to sleep on the mattress on the floor because she was unable to put the thing together. And I had forgotten. I had so many things stuffed in my shirt, she called me the next day and asked if I hadn't found anybody, and no, I hadn't. So I went over there. But it illustrates how important it is to think of the statement of James that the pure religion and undefiled is to visit those who have needs. So I think this woman was very helpful in her conversation to bring up to our attention how much time we probably spend socializing, or before the television, that might, didn't say always will, but might better be spent to take care of the needs of others. And there are many ways of finding out either through other brethren, or through our own office. Because our office, Mr. Ames, as well, Mr. Ducott, certainly, ministerial services, which will be moved to the building where we are in sometime fairly soon. There are many things that we could convey if opportunities arose. You may have past training, you may have certain skills where these things could be done. I know others of you are so full in terms of your children taking care of your family and your work here that it's not possible. But apparently, there are some people who do strike other brethren who are very emotionally concerned in the work as not really contributing their full time. I see Mr. C. John Thomas here, who has on occasion gone way out of the way of his business to help us find homes for others to stay in that come to his attention. He has, in fact, gone out of his way to give employment to some people who are in or only coming to the church. We have to spend time finding homes for people who are not church members, as well as some who think they are, and then some who are. We, in fact, had to make a quick decision the other day to put a woman on the bus to get her back home, where she's going to stay for nine months, while maybe develops, isn't married, not even on our plain truth mailing list. But we had to spend your money, rather, and to get her back, so we didn't have any further expenses out here. There are all sorts of problems of this nature. And generally, once a month, we do discuss the Bible with someone, but your help is certainly needed. And I'm not kidding when I say that almost invariably, it is spiritual problems that don't necessarily pertain to the Bible, but just common sense things that we let escape us, and many, many other functions. It is surprising, you know, what could be done. I've taken advantage of one couple who was here. I popped in one day when the wife was haircutting the husband, seems to have done a fair job. And I said, look, I need somebody to keep me company with an elderly person. And I wanted to take her to dinner, and I asked them if they would. And it was a real help so that I didn't bear the whole shoulder of the conversation with this individual. It helps to have someone else. There are many, many functions that we can do. And I think that if we find time and really think it through, we can point out to you, or you would be often able yourself to find out what could be done in services so that there are things that you can do in helping young and old and instruction. There may be local things that have nothing to do with the church, needs that are in the paper, and then there may be church needs. And we, of course, are in major need, especially of men to help the elderly men. I think we have a more normal response for women who help both men and women, but we have some special needs.