

# Current Crisis 2

December 26, 2013

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## I. Where are we now?

- a. A prominent minister sent a letter to Mr. Hulme and the Church Board, then He himself made that letter public
  - i. Letter criticized Mr. Hulme's leadership and understanding of government
  - ii. Characterized Vision as not preaching the Gospel
- b. Another prominent minister and pastor resigned shortly thereafter
  - i. There has been some quibbling over whether he used the word "resign" or simply said he was no longer able to support the Church leadership, but either way it is effectively a resignation.
  - ii. His specific issues were not made public but it was clear that he refused to continue to support the decisions that Mr. Hulme has made
- c. A third minister and pastor, Mr. Rodzaj, resigned recently
  - i. His letter was not made public in the same way Mr. Andrew's letter was, but I did receive a copy of it through members who are in support of Mr. Rodzaj
  - ii. Mr. Rodzaj laid out his reasons for refusing to support Mr. Hulme
    - 1. Governance
    - 2. Our approach to the Gospel
    - 3. Fear of future US & BC changes
- d. We continue to hear rumors of other ministers who are discontented with the same sorts of things
- e. Where does this leave us, brethren?
  - i. In doubt and in fear
    - 1. Exactly what are the issues that are causing several ministers to act so radically?
      - a. My response comes from Mr. Andrews and Mr. Rodzaj's letters
        - i. There is a very strong dislike – even a hatred - for Vision
        - ii. This has become such a large issue in their minds that they are no longer willing to accept the decisions made by Church leadership
          - 1. They have refused to submit to authority that God has placed over them
            - a. They have justified this refusal by creating a concept that does not exist in the Bible
              - i. Mutual Submission is not Biblical
              - ii. Mutual respect is Biblical, but as we have shown time and again, Paul did not mean that we take turns submitting to each other; he meant there are roles in life where we must submit to one another
          - 2. And, they are willing to lead others in that direction
            - a. I find this highly troubling and it frankly scares me for those ministers involved – they will have to answer to God, as we all will
            - b. Personal story
              - i. c 2006 I placed a Pastor's Update on the website

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- ii. I got a call from someone who monitors this who was concerned with what I wrote
    - iii. The person thought that what I wrote meant something I clearly did not say; I could not understand how it could be misunderstood; it simply made no sense at all to me
    - iv. However, I took the posting down
    - v. This really troubled me, and I dwelled on it for a while. I talked to my wife about it, and it troubled her as well. Neither of us could understand why someone might misunderstand.
    - vi. Finally, though, after thinking and praying about it, I came to the understanding that it mattered very little in the scheme of things.
    - vii. My little article on the web was not going to profoundly change anyone for the better. While I thought it would be helpful, this article was simply not that important
    - viii. With time, the anger that I felt dissipated, and I was able to completely let it go, with God's help
    - ix. I can honestly say, while that even greatly troubled me at the time, it doesn't bother me one bit today. It's gone.
    - x. However, if I had tucked that event away, and let it simmer in the back of my mind; my discontent would have continued to grow.
    - xi. I could have covered it up; none of you would have known. I could have kept it inside of me.
    - xii. In time other events could have been piled on until I was at a point of being ready to rebel; refuse to support those God has placed over me
  - c. Good & well, but how could this have happened to so many ministers all at the same time?
    - i. Discontentment grows with a common cause
    - ii. Ministers who have a common dislike for Vision have found sympathetic ears with each other and together they have helped one another grow more discontented
    - iii. It is abundantly clear that these ministers have collaborated: they use the same words, they use the same concepts, and they clear support one another
2. Many folks think to themselves: there must be more to their discontentment. How could so many ministers be upset? There must be another shoe to drop, because it doesn't seem to make sense that this is their issue.
- a. Result: many of us begin to have doubts about our leaders

- b. Maybe Mr. Hulme is hiding something? Maybe he's just like Mr. Tkach?
  - c. What is the rest of the story?
  - d. What is it that these ministers know about Mr. Hulme that we don't?
  - e. Is he going to change something?
- 3. I'm confident brethren that there is no more. There is simply nothing being hidden.
  - a. If Mr. Andrews thought there was more, why wouldn't he have put it in his letter?
    - i. He certainly did not hold back...
  - b. If Mr. Rodzaj thought there was more, why didn't he put it in his letter?
  - c. The fact is, there is no more; the facts are on the table
    - i. Does Mr. Hulme have the authority to set the direction of how we will preach the Gospel?
      - 1. Our teaching has always been: yes
      - 2. Our teaching has never been that we need to vote; or that we need to see how many ministers support one way or another
      - 3. Everyone involved believed that at one time
        - a. We came out of a system of voting when we left United
        - b. We all saw the fruits of that corrupt way of doing things
        - c. We returned to our roots and what Mr. Armstrong taught us:

"UNDERSTAND THIS!

The Church, as initially called in this life is NOT YET capable of RULING the earth – of sitting with Christ in the Throne where God originally placed Lucifer – of administering the government of God.

And THAT is WHY God has placed His Government in his Church. That is why God's government is theocratic instead of democratic. That is why God has set ranks of government in his Church...

That is WHY it is hierarchical in form – government from God at the top on down, not from the bottom up. Otherwise those at the bottom would be ruling God!

It is the SAME government by which Christ shall rule all nations beginning with the millennium!

And that is WHY Satan has subtly influenced dissidents in God's Church to become resentful and bitter over God's government – why some have gone out of the Church!" (Mystery of the Ages, p 256-257; HWA's last major work)

- 4. How plain can this be?
  - a. If Mr. Hulme has disqualified himself by leading us away from God, that would be one thing.
  - b. He has not. This is a matter of some deciding they know better and God has not put them in a place to change our direction
  - c. If God wanted us to change approach, He certainly could have place one of these ministers in that spot.

- d. He would have certainly done it without appealing to what amounts to a public rebellion. God does not work that way.
- 4. However, if you still have questions and doubts, that's ok. I completely understand why you might not be as confident as I am
  - a. My advice: remain calm and wait on God
  - b. If there is something hidden, it will be revealed in time
  - c. In the mean time, let's look at Government and Gospel

## II. Government

- a. Some argue that form of government is not at issue; what's at issue is *how* we work together
  - i. It is, however, about form of government
  - ii. Hierarchical works by having one person in an executive position who makes decisions
    - 1. He gathers counsel
    - 2. He makes an executive decision
    - 3. Everyone in the organizations gets behind the decision
    - 4. We move forward
  - iii. Complaints
    - 1. Some will say, yes, but Mr. Hulme has not gotten any counsel
      - a. That's categorically false
      - b. He has received counsel from ministers, members, and even outside consultants on how to get our message to the greatest numbers of people
        - i. There are a number of ministers who agree with our current approach
      - c. That includes getting into issues of optimization of Google searches, social media, and the like
    - 2. What has happened is that some have banded together in a concerted effort to force Mr. Hulme to go in another direction
      - a. Once again, that is not how a hierarchical government functions
      - b. Therefore, despite some saying it is not about form of government, it most assuredly is
      - c. If that was not the issue, we would not have ministers withdrawing their support and attempting to lead their congregations with them
    - 3. Those who argue it is not about questioning hierarchical form of government often try to redefine hierarchical government this way:
      - a. De-emphasis on roles
        - i. All ministers are the same (not all members; just all ministers)
        - ii. God the Father and Jesus Christ are emphasized as the head of the Church while any physical leadership directly responsible to Christ and the Father is minimized
      - b. Eph 5:21 is twisted to mean mutually submissive decision making instead of seeing it as it is, submitting to one another based upon the role we find ourselves in
      - c. Acts 15 is portrayed as a ministerial board meeting – let's look:

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**Acts 15:1** <sup>NAU</sup> Some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

- i. These men came from Judaea to Antioch where Paul & Barnabas were located and began teaching the congregation
- ii. Must be circumcised to escape God's coming wrath

**Acts 15:2** <sup>NAU</sup> And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, *the brethren* determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

- iii. Paul & Barnabas had just returned from Asia Minor, having established congregation among gentiles
- iv. They did not teach them that they had to undergo circumcision in order to become a full member of God's people
- v. These Judeans argued that they most certainly must be circumcised or they were not legitimately God's people
- vi. Unable to agree they went to Jerusalem to have the argument settled

**Acts 15:4-5** <sup>NAU</sup> When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.<sup>5</sup> But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

- vii. Once again, the issue is framed for us
  - 1. It is not an issue of whether they should keep the Commandments, or Sabbath, or anything of that nature
  - 2. It is an issue of becoming naturalized Jew;
  - 3. Must they be circumcised, maintain purity laws, put tassels on their garments, sacrifice at the temple, etc

**Acts 15:6-7** <sup>NAU</sup> The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.<sup>7</sup> After there had been much debate...

- viii. Notice there is a major difference of opinion...
- ix. Peter then stands up and explains his experience with the gentiles (15:7-11)
- x. Then Paul and Barnabas stood up and explained their experience (15:12)
- xi. James, Jesus' brother, stood up and summarized (15:13-18)
- xii. Finally,

**Acts 15:19** <sup>NAU</sup> "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

- xiii. James decides the case
  - 1. Notice, while we hear only Peter, Paul, and James, Luke chooses to exclude the arguments of the other side; there was disagreement
  - 2. However, in the end James, the brother of Jesus makes the decision

3. There is no indication that all were somehow now all on the same page, but rather they submitted to the decision.

**Acts 15:25** <sup>NAU</sup> it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

4. How did they become one mind? They submitted to James' decision. They got behind the decision.
5. Notice what did not happen:
  - a. They did not take a vote
  - b. It was not a decision based upon majority; and there is no indication that they all agreed with the decision.
  - c. They agreed to support the decision
  - d. Depending on how one constructs the chronology, it would appear that the decision remained a difficult one for many to accept
  - e. Paul continued to experience trouble over this issue
    - i. Rom, I Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, Titus
- iv. For 15 years we had peace and growth because
  1. Ministry and members submitted according to their role
  2. What has now changed is that some simply have refused to submit to decisions
  3. Ministers, pastors, have taken their refusal to support to the members they serve, causing doubt and leading members away from Mr. Hulme
- v. Please consider something with me for a moment
  1. At the first of November most of us (perhaps all of us?) had no clue there were any problems
  2. How is it, in the span of less than a couple months, entire congregations were very aware and completely on board with their pastor who has such strong disagreements with Mr. Hulme?
  3. This level of dissent does not occur overnight. Let me be frank and speak plainly: most of the Phoenix congregation – a congregation I once pastored, with people I dearly love – are now aggressive against Mr. Hulme. How did that happen so quickly, when you didn't even know there was an issue? Think about that.
  4. When I was the pastor, there were no indications of this kind of disagreement.
- vi. You might have said to yourself in the past: I don't like this article or that article in Vision. You may have even said, I don't really like the magazine
  1. That's fine; disagreement and opinion is part of being human
  2. Again, speaking frankly, I was not a big fan of the PT. I often found myself bored with the articles and preferred the Church booklets, correspondence course, and reading the Bible
  3. I would have never thought that I needed to change the way the Church wrote the magazine; it would have never crossed my mind
  4. Why do some today think they need to take this kind of thing into their own hands?

### III. Gospel – Survey of the Latest Issue of Vision Winter 2014

- a. It takes months to plan an issue of Vision; the current issue could not have been a change because of the current crisis; and even if it was, isn't that what these individuals want?

**b. Opening Insight article****i. Recent trip to Turkey and the cities mentioned in Revelation**

"Biblically, the setting and lessons of the seven church congregations to which John wrote deliver a powerful reminder that values are worth holding on to, and that compromise never brings lasting reward. Only by overcoming human nature's downward drag will we attain life forever (Rev 2 & 3)"

**c. Apocalypse Now, Later or Never?****i. Questions**

"Of what value is the book of Revelation? Does it foretell the cataclysmic end of the world? Is it a historical record of events long past, or perhaps a call to moral responsibility? Or should it be read merely as first-century literature aimed at a first-century audience?"

**ii. Conclusion**

"We cannot know exactly when the present age of human self-government will end, nor the precise moment of Jesus Christ's return; as He said, 'Concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father' (Mark 13:32). But the Apocalypse does unveil the kind of world that will precede His coming. And what we read there is eerily familiar. The book of Revelation also teaches those who have ears to hear, how they must distance themselves from the way of man – the 'government of Caesar' – and anticipate, by their way of living, the coming sovereignty of God and His Son."

**iii. Side box – Time for Change?**

"Readers may sometimes wonder whether they are being drawn to a different way of life as a result of what they read in Vision. Some have said that the magazine's contents have already changed their life for the better. If this describes your experience and you feel the need to make more progress in understanding the way of God, you may want to speak with someone on our staff trained to answer such questions. Vision is affiliated with the Church of God, an International Community, with representatives in many countries. Simply write to one of the postal addresses listed on page 48 or email us at [ask@vision.org](mailto:ask@vision.org)"

**d. Heliopolis – A City of Two Tales****i. Conclusion**

After quoting Isaiah 19:24-25, "The scene depicted is one of all people, regardless of where they come from, being able to know the true Creator God and being delivered from false ideas and systems that hold people unwittingly captive. However, once awake to the prospect of this future, the biblical requirement is for repentance, personal change and obedience to God's law of liberty, which promotes right relationships toward God and fellow man.

Under the righteous rule of God the Father and Jesus Christ, the future for Heliopolis, for Egypt and for all people is bright and full of hope."

**e. A Line in the Sand****i. Mid-article**

“Still, according to the Bible an asteroid will not be the ultimate target of our (nuclear) weapons. As new geo-political and economic alliances ebb and flow in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how long will the nuclear status quo endure? Will we be able to keep our destructive power in check? It’s not a new question. Jesus’ disciples asked a first-century iteration of it. The world seems rather stable, they said, but you say I will not always be so: “Tell us when these things be? And what will be in sign of Your coming and the end of the age?”

- ii. The article then goes into Dan 2, Matthew 24, Revelation 11, 19, Zech 14
- iii. Conclusion

“It is at that point when we will recognize the failure of our human ability to manage ourselves on a planetary, national and even personal scale. We will be ready to change. Finally we will understand that the ultimate line in the sand is the boundary between a contrived peace – the best that can be achieved through human power – and the true peace of God.”

- f. Human interest story of former president Ronald Regan
- g. Getting off the Grid
  - i. After quoting Ex 20:8-11, the Sabbath command

“Obedience to this command would keep them in contact with the Creator and His creation. It would give them spiritual focus after six days of physical work. It would bring them back to center and give them peace of mind. By observing this law they would understand more deeply as they meditated and practiced rest. Doing would lead to understanding. It was, of course, a specific day: the seventh day, Saturday.”

- ii. Conclusion

“Why not accept the challenge and begin resting on the day made by a loving God for humanity? Rest, relax, reconnect.”

- iii. Side box – COG, aIC observes the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath – if you would like to know more, contact us...
- h. Meditation the Search for Inner Peace
  - i. Mid article

“As we embark on this path, we realize that a relationship with God involves conforming to a way of life that, when put into practice, leads to happiness and joy, to peace and patience, to a truly rewarding and fulfilling life.”

- ii. Conclusion

“But if we wish to attain the source of love, true peace of mind and the path to God, we will need to embark on more than a mystical self-improvement program. God declares: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts (Rev 21:6). This crystal-clear and pure water is freely available to all, but to find it we must first acknowledge our thirst and then seek to quench it in the right place.”

- i. Brethren, we may not like the way Vision is written, but I think it is simple untrue that Vision does not preach the Gospel.
- j. Please stay the course, don’t get caught up in the negativity that has pulled many under
- k.