

February 26, 1987

The Board of Trustees
The Way International
P.O. Box 328
New Knoxville, OH 45871

Dear Craig, Don, Howard, Johnny and Ricardo:

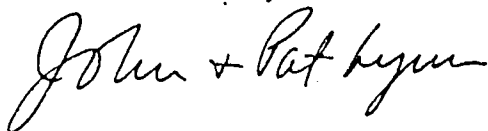
God bless you in the mighty name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Enclosed is a letter we have written. Although we asked for input on part of it from other believers whose biblical ability we respect, you are the first to receive it in its entirety.

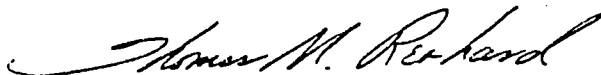
We believe it is spiritually correct to send it to you first, and simultaneously inform Rev. Geer and those individuals holding positions pertinent to us in The Way Tree: Rev. Stephen Harrison, Rev. Dave Standage, Rev. Island Weiss, Rev. Jerry Carr and Rev. Duke Clarke.

We thank you for your prayerful and loving consideration of this expression of our hearts. We love you very much.

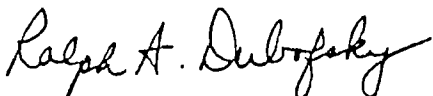
Lovingly,
In His service,



John and Pat Lynn



Thomas M. Reahard



Ralph A. Dubofsky



Robert Belt

February 26, 1987

Dear Follower of The Way:

God bless you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. We are writing this letter not knowing who will eventually read it. However, we decided that we must write it.

Today we stand either at the crossroads of this ministry or at the end of the road. We would like to see this time of distress and sorrow be only a crossroads from which we go forth to victory.

Let us begin with a homespun "parable." There stands before us a fork in the road. One is broad and well traveled. The other, barely a path, overgrown because of lack of use. One road leads to life and truth; the other to despair, despair of the worst kind, spiritual despair.

At this fork there is a small crowd. They are talking among themselves. "Which way should we go?" they ask.

Some say, "Why, the decision is easy, the path most traveled. Certainly that is the most logical choice."

Another cries, "No, we must wait to be led. Certainly there is a great man who will know which way is best." Impatiently they wait for a great man to come and give them counsel. He does not arrive.

They grow fearful, they are hungry, night is falling. They have so much to do; if only they could resume their journey. But they know not which way to go. The night falls and they wait. They build a fire to bring them temporary comfort from the evening chill. In the quiet of the evening, they once again begin to speak. "Which way did the old man say to go?"

"I think he said to wait for the great man that will lead us."

"No, no, kind sirs." And suddenly, they turn from the light of their fire toward the small shadow in the dark.

"Who are you?"

"Come closer so we can see you."

"Why, it's a small boy!"

"What are you doing out alone?"

"Why, you'll get lost all by yourself!" They brought the boy close to the fire and asked him many things.

"Where did you come from?"

"Where are you going?"

They were amused by the directness and simplicity of his answers. He said, "I have come from the valley by way of the river road."

One interrupted, "Oh, but that way was closed. The bridge washed away in a flood many years ago."

The boy exclaimed with pride, "But sir, it has been rebuilt, and I have met the man who rebuilt the bridge."

"I've heard of this man."

"We too have met him."

"Yes," cried one, "I met him long ago. He was a very great man. If only he were with us today, perhaps he could help us."

It was now the boy's turn to be amused. "Why are all these grown-ups so distressed?" he wondered.

At first light of morning, the boy was scurrying about, ready to renew his journey. Slowly the grown-ups around him began to awake. Amidst the groans and grumbles of early-morning chatter, the boy began to whistle a tune. To some it seemed familiar. They wondered what it was and asked the name of his catchy little melody.

"It's a song the Bridge Builder taught me. It's called 'The Lord Knows the Way Through the Wilderness.'" And with that, he collected his things and began his way up the narrow path.

"Don't go that way. You'll get lost. Stay with us. You'll be safe. We're waiting for the great man to come and lead us."

As the boy heard these words, he stopped at the foot of the path. Slowly he turned and quietly watched the crowd before him. They didn't look as big or grown up this morning as they did last night. For some reason he was sad. Then he remembered he must quickly be on his way. With the strength and courage of ten men, he said, "I am not afraid. The Bridge Builder gave me a map. Come with me, the map will show us the way."

He waited for a moment, and then he turned and followed the map his old friend had given him. The map was simple to follow, though the path was often tough for the legs of a small child. As he walked along, he sang, "The Lord knows the way through the wilderness, all I need to do is follow..."

We told you it was homespun.

By God's mercy and grace, our Father in the Word has left us such a map. Today at our crossroads, we have the same choice many others who have gone before us had. God has set before us life and death. As it always has been, and always will be, we have the right to choose. Our choice is between the stagnant pool of religious tradition and the fountainhead of God's revealed and written Word.

We have been told that The Way International is not the same wonderful ministry that Dr. Wierwille founded and gave his life for. We have been told that the Word of God has been removed from being the true basis of our ministry. We

have been told that the structure may remain, the activities continue, the day-to-day functions may still be present, but it is only the Word of God that is truly the life of the ministry; and without it, The Way Ministry is an empty shell.

We have also been told that the Board of Trustees of The Way International has failed to rise up, as yet, to honestly begin moving in a godly direction to put our ministry back where it belongs spiritually.

It seems that many of our wonderful men and women of God stand at a crossroads of believing and, like the small crowd in our little story, know not what path to take.

Dr. Wierwille taught us that the Word of God is simple, and that error is complicated (SNS 1115). We believe the Word has the answers to these problems our ministry faces. We believe these answers are simple and direct (II Peter 1:3).

The Word of God must be our only rule of faith and practice. There is safety in a multitude of counsellors (Proverbs 11:14). We write these things for your prayerful consideration, believing that you will "search the scriptures," whether these things be so. As Dr. Wierwille said, "We must let the Word speak for itself, knowing it speaks more loudly, clearly, effectively and effectually for itself than anyone could ever speak on its behalf." (SNS 1120)

* * * * *

In Receiving the Holy Spirit Today, 7th edition, pages 158-9, Dr. Wierwille writes that verse 28 in I Corinthians 12 is God's plan for ministering in the Church age.

I Corinthians 12:28:

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

"I know of no passage of scripture which nullifies this order for the Church of which you and I are a part. As a matter of fact, Ephesians 4:8 through 18 helps to clarify the charismata, spiritual abilities, manifested in the senses world as ruling ministries in the Church. Also, Romans 12:4 through 8 casts much added light on this misunderstood subject."

Read Ephesians 4:7-18. In verse 7, the word "gift" is dorea, meaning a benefit to the individual. The gift of Christ is to all believers and is to benefit them. Now in verse 8, the word "gifts" is doma.

On page 160 of Receiving the Holy Spirit Today, Dr. Wierwille wrote:

"As such gifts, doma, they are benefits on a horizontal plane to the Church. The Greek word charisma is a gift of God by grace in a perpendicular way and not a doma, not a benefit on a horizontal plane unless put to use, put into practice, or operated by the believer.

"The charismata, spiritual abilities, as doma gifts are to or for the Church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, for ministering benefits to the Body of Christ, thus the perfecting of the saints."

These ministries are God's plan in the Church age to help the Body of Christ function harmoniously.

"Christ, who is in heaven, is the Head of the Church, the body. Christ's people on earth are members of His body. The unity of this body is in the Head, Christ, who is in heaven. The born-again believers are 'all members of that body,' not on earth but in Christ, the head, who is in heaven. The unity and oneness of the body of the Church springs not from the 'eye or hand' members but from the source, the Head, Christ Jesus. 'But now hath God set the members ... in the body [in Christ in heaven], as it hath pleased him [God]' (I Corinthians 12:18), not as it seems to have pleased men." (The Church, p.25,26)

"The building up of the body of Christ unto a perfect man that all the members upon earth 'may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by every sensation from the supply, according to a working corresponding to the measure of each individual part, brings about the growth of the body with a view to the building up of itself in love.' (Literal translation -- Ephesians 4:15,16).

This is the work of the gift ministries listed in Ephesians 4:11, where we read:

And he [Christ] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

The specific purpose for which these ministries are given we note in verses 12 and 13:

For the perfecting of the saints, for [with a view to] the work of the ministry, for [with a further view to] the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till [until] we all come in the unity [oneness] of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The outcome of the gift ministries being:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:14-16.

The growth of the Church is God downward, not man upward. It is from heaven to earth and not a reaching up from earth to heaven (Colossians 2:19). The origin of the body, the Church, is God who hath given Christ to be Head over all things to this wondrous body. Christ, the Head, is the source of all guidance and operation of the body. The members of this body of Christ are to work in the body in the relationship that God has set, and not according to what men have set. Natural, earthly, carnal rules, regulations and ordinances do not enter into the growth of this body of Christ at all, for this body is totally spiritual, heavenly and eternal." (The Church, p.27,28)

In Ephesians 4:12, the word for "perfecting" is katartizo. It literally means "to mend a rupture." Dr. Wierwille's expanded translation according to usage from 1982 Corps notes is:

"For the perfecting of the saints with a view to the official perfecting, mending spiritually of all ruptures among the saints with the understanding that the saints will work better in service to the building up of the body of the Church of which Christ is the head."

Romans 12:4-8 gives further Biblical proof of the order God sets in the Church. These ministries (charismata) God has given to men, but they only become dona ministries in the Church as the believer operates them. Receiving the Holy Spirit Today, page 161, states:

"Chapter 12 of Romans from verse 4 on, gives the operator and believer specific instructions, not only as to the ministries, but also as to the conduct of his own life.

"In Romans 12:4, the word 'office' means 'function,' on a horizontal level."

Receiving the Holy Spirit Today, page 161, gives the literal according to usage of Romans 12:6:

"You, then, in the Church, having charismata, spiritual abilities and functions, differing according to the divine favor or friendly willingness of God that is given you, if it be a ministry of prophecy, keep busy manifesting by prophesying according to the proportion of your believing."

Romans 12:7:

"Or if you have another type of ministry, get busy ministering; or if your ministry is teaching, get busy teaching; or if you have an exhortation ministry, get busy exhorting."

Romans 12:8:

"He that giveth forth in any ministry in the Church let him do it with simplicity; he that has a ruling ministry, let him do it with diligence; and he that has a ministry making him very adept in mercy, let him do it with cheerfulness.

All the instructions following these verses are on behavior, that is, conduct."

These scriptures clearly indicate the necessity of "operating" charismata in the Church in order to actualize their God-designed benefits to the Church. It is the energizing of these ministries in the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation which effects their becoming dona from charismata. These functioning ministries are those which are to be "earnestly coveted" by the

Church (I Corinthians 12:31) and respected as the "higher powers" in the Church (Romans 13).

How wonderful that God gave such simple instructions to the Church on how these ministries are to function, to conduct themselves, in the Church.

I Timothy 3:15:

But if I tarry long, that thou mightest know how thou ought to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

In Dr. Wierwille's 1973-74 Timothy Corps teaching, he said regarding this verse "how men ought to line up and behave themselves in the Church of God." The behavior of these believers with functioning ministries in the Church is to be exemplary and is not designed to give license to anyone to "lord it over" any other believers in the body of Christ (I Peter 5:3).

Let us quote from the transcript of Dr. Wierwille's Acts teaching (chapter 20, part 2) to The Way Corps, 1975-77:

"Verse 28

This is a sharp and great message here: First, take heed unto yourself, secondly, to all of the flock. You don't first take heed to the believers. First you take heed to yourself. Am I walking on the Word, am I believing God, am I right on? Then the flock. You can have a flock of geese or ducks. Geese are geese and ducks are ducks. The born-again believers are not sheep. Israel is sheep. Jesus Christ was the good shepherd to Israel. He is our brother, the first begotten of the dead. The shepherd is not brother to the sheep. He is not saying that we are Israel, he just says to take heed to all the flock. The flock who? The flock meaning that body, the called-out body of believers. The called-out body of believers are a flock like the called-out sheep are a flock. Geese are a flock of geese and ducks are a flock of ducks. All the Bible commentators confuse us with sheep. It can't be because the Word says we are of one body. Christ is our brother. The shepherd is never brother to the sheep.

"'over' = in. As a servant, you have to be part of that flock. You have heart pressure when they have heart pressure. When they are persecuted, you are persecuted, when they weep, you weep. You are not over, you're in. Everybody wants to be over so they can pull the strings. When they say Herman, jump, Herman jumps. I don't believe that.

"'overseer' = episkopos from which we get our word episcopal, and the Episcopal church has rulers called bishops. The word episkopos is bishop.

"See now, in that record in Timothy, just remember that. This is a faithful logos. If a man desires the office of a bishop (episkopos). (I Timothy 3:1) I Timothy 3:2, bishop = episkopos.

"'to feed' - not to criticize, not to beat the hell out of them. You are a part of that flock. Your shepherding of that flock is in. And the in is to feed, not to destroy, not to injure. In verse 17, he called them elders. Elders = presbyters. In verse 28, he called the same ones overseers, bishops. That is the proof from the Word that whatever an elder is, a bishop is.

"Elder is the old Hebrew/Aramaic word for the Greek word of bishop. In the Old Testament, they were elders. Under the Greeks, as they came along, they were bishops. An elder was nothing but a believer with a rulership responsibility. The same is true of a bishop. And the rulership was in, to feed. He was like the Branch leader, or Twig coordinator. Every person in the Twig is a believer.

"The Twig coordinator is a believer. That's as high as you can go in the Word of God. The biggest you can go is a believer. That's to be born again. Nobody goes any bigger. I'm not any bigger than that and neither are you. Then whenever something occurs that looks like it's higher, it's not higher spiritually, it's higher from a rulership position only that it makes you more responsible to the believers. That's why it's called a doulos.

"In the Roman Catholic church, at least they are right on this particular thing. The highest you can be in the Roman Catholic church is a priest.

A bishop is a priest with more rulership responsibility and so on, up the line to the Pope. The Pope is a priest. The Episcopal church has the same policy.

"The highest you can ever be in the Body is a believer. That makes us all the same. You may have a little more responsibility as a Twig coordinator, but the more responsibility you have, the greater your service has to be to your fellow man. If you are a Twig coordinator, you take the responsibility of 10, 12 or 15 people, and you bleed your heart for them, you die for them if necessary, you stay up all night if necessary. They can go to bed and sleep, but not you if it's necessary. And you just keep taking on added responsibility. If you are a Branch leader, it's just more people. An Area coordinator, more. If you are a Limb coordinator, I don't know how you get any sleep. That's what the greatness of that verse says.

"This stuff is absolutely fantastic in the 20th chapter. The patience, the love, the accuracy, the greatness of all this stuff. And how Paul just honestly opens his heart, and the revelation is there to show the greatness of all this."

Thus, we clearly see that every overseer is in the Body and, as such, is subject to the supreme authority of the written Word of God. No one in the Body of Christ, regardless of position, is above the written Word.

In Volume 5, Order My Steps In Thy Word, Dr. Wierwille wrote a section entitled "God's Order for Leadership." In the introduction to this section he wrote,

"'The Qualities of a Spiritual Leader' is a study of the first chapter of Titus. Titus 1 specifies for believers characteristics a person is to demonstrate before that person is designated a leader. God does not simply state once the qualities required for spiritual leadership, but these qualities are again enunciated in the third chapter of I Timothy, which is the focus of 'The Qualifications for Ordination,' thereby establishing and emphasizing these necessary qualities." (p.55)

* * * * *

Before Dr. Wierwille fell asleep, he did at least two teachings we believe were specifically designed for the ears and hearts of the leadership of this ministry. These were SNS 1123, "The Heart," and the January, 1984, Tape of the Month, "The Seven Characteristics of a Faithful Minister." We believe that they establish the message he was desperately trying to teach; i.e., how the Church is to be ruled and how ruling elders must conduct themselves in the house of God. These teachings were given publicly. They were not only for the leadership of this ministry but also for all of God's wonderful people they should be serving.

Why? Very simple. So the Church would know how it is to be ruled -- so it wouldn't get tricked with some counterfeit like Roman Catholicism -- "divine authority" of the Pope over the Word of God. God's Word is the standard and the Word is at stake in our present ministry situation. Dr. Wierwille taught us that truth is simple and error is confusing. Looking at the confusion and the present problems will only distract us from the real issue, the integrity and accuracy of God's Word, which is still man's basic spiritual problem.

Let us share some information from the two public teachings we mentioned. The first teaching is SNS 1123. It is a teaching given two weeks prior to Pentecost of 1982, 134 days before Rev. Martindale's installation. At this time, all the top leaders were present in the audience for two-week-long placement meetings. All were introduced prior to Dr. Wierwille's teaching. He began his teaching by having The Victors sing, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

He then referred to those present times as exciting and crucial. He built up the importance of the placement meetings and then he renamed everyone who was participating in those meetings, including the secretaries. We believe he was charging us before God with the message he was presenting.

He then listed all the events which would lead up to Rev. Martindale's installation, including Living Victoriously, and said of that period of time:

"It's a period of time of consideration, it's a time of evaluation, and it's a time of decision -- decisions that have to be made and I believe that the effects and the outreach of the decisions that have to be made in

the next 134 days and the things we do will affect the outreach of God's Word over the whole inhabited earth."

"It's wonderful to have a knowledge of God's Word, tremendous to be able to quote chapter and verse; but it's not how much Word you know but how much love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation do you really live? Because believing is the genus of Christianity but love is the badge; and without the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation, what should it profit a man though he gain the whole world, if he had all knowledge, what shall it profit him? Nothing."

He then taught on I Timothy 4. He spoke of being good ministers of Christ. He spoke to the leaders present and charged them that if they were going to be good ministers of Christ, they were going to have to serve in light of God's Word. He cited I Timothy 4:12 and emphasized the need to be examples to the believers.

He taught I Timothy 5:17:

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor..."

He said these elders are those who function in positions of responsibility. They are to rule well -- according to God's Word. One statement he made was: "If you're going to be a minister of Jesus Christ, you're going to have to operate within the greatness of God's Word." He closed with the following statement regarding the 134 days before Rev. Martindale's installation:

"God has called this ministry to this day, this time, this hour; and I believe that God's people are you people that are hearing the Word and that we as Christ's ministers have to deal with our people, all of God's people, according to the revelation given in God's Word; and the epistles of Timothy, I and II, are the great truths of God's Word on how Christ's ministers must operate among the people. And that will include every Twig coordinator. So that's a man's heart, a man's soul, and we're still moving on."

No man or ruling elder can set himself above God's Word. That was Dr. Wierwille's heart, that was his soul.

The second public teaching we were referring to was his wonderful teaching entitled "The Seven Characteristics of a Faithful Minister." He intended to teach this at a leaders' meeting in January 1984, but they were too busy to hear him. He had to go to The Way College of Emporia to teach it at a Sunday night service there. In his own words:

"This teaching that I'm going to share with you tonight I think is one of the most important teachings that I could do at this time in the history of our ministry and of my life.

"I'd like for you to turn to II Timothy. Tonight, the subject of the seven characteristics of a faithful minister. I wanted to share this with the leadership Friday at International, but we had so much other business to take care of that we never got to it, so you are the people that will have to sit through it tonight. But everybody there I think was an ordained minister and I had been working this and I wanted to share it but, as I said, this time was not available.

"This is also the truth regarding a Twig coordinator and there is an exhortation of each characteristic given in this second chapter of II Timothy."

We will not go into the entire teaching but will cover two other statements he made:

"The number seven, people, is the number of perfection. This is the only place in the Bible where all the seven characteristics of a faithful minister are put together in one chapter. So all you need to do is understand this chapter and you'll always be able to judge from the Word of God, let the Word of God do the judging, of whether the ministry of a Twig coordinator or any other individual is according to the Word of God."

Once again, Dr. Wierwille set forth the supreme authority of the written Word of God as our only rule of faith and practice. We need not judge a man's ministry -- God's Word does.

At the end of this wonderful teaching, he said:

"I'm real grateful, real thankful and I appreciate that God put here in one chapter all those characteristics of a faithful minister, a faithful Twig coordinator, a Twig coordinator that is ministering to the Twig. And all you need to know is this chapter and you can make a decision according to the Word of God regarding the faithfulness of any minister, anyplace, anywhere in the world or in anything you read."

One reason the pastoral epistles are set in God's Word is so that all of God's people may know how the Church is to be ruled. Dr. Wierwille taught more about this in Order My Steps In Thy Word, Chapter 6, "The Higher Powers of Romans 13." Dr. Wierwille clearly showed that the "higher powers" in Romans 13 are the ruling elders in the Church who are walking on the Word of God.

He said, "Each of us in the Body of Christ has a particular function in that body, and we are to function with all our heart, soul, mind and strength."

He said, "Whatever a person's God-given assignment is, he or she must proceed to carry it out."

He said:

"...what profit is it until that ability be put to work. A person may have the ministry of teaching the Word of God, but instead of teaching the Word of God, he just sits and does nothing. Then that ability will not be a benefit to anybody. The Body of Christ is perfected as each person carries out his or her assignment in that Body."

Remember, from Romans 12:4, that not all members have the same office, that is, function. Our assignments differ, but each individual's function is vitally important. Dr. Wierwille went on to set forth these same truths from Romans 12 and pointed out that Romans 12 sets the context for Romans 13.

On page 97 of Order My Steps In Thy Word, he said:

"In context verses 6 and 7 [of Romans 12] mean that the person who has a God-given ability in prophecy should be actively prophesying. And if another person has a different type of ministry, he or she should get active doing that type of ministering."

He continued with verse 8 and pointed out HOW these ministries are to be carried out -- "simplicity, singleness or plainness, zealous effort and cheerfulness, no strings attached, no ulterior motives. Never with an attitude of 'what can I get out of it?'" All the instructions in verse 8 of Romans 12 are on attitudes that men and women in the Body of Christ should have as they carry out these benefits among God's people. So not only should they carry them out, but they should have the right attitude in doing so.

Romans 12 sets the context of Romans 13, which gets into being subject to the higher powers. The higher powers we are to be subject to are those that function and operate their ministries with the proper attitudes.

On page 100 of Order My Steps In Thy Word, Dr. Wierwille said:

"The higher powers are those operating charismata, the spiritual abilities and assignments, which God has set in the Church to help the Body function properly."

He translated verse 2 of Romans 13:

"The believer in the Body who stands against or sets himself above the exercised authority in the Church either by his word or his action judges himself, for he opposes God's arrangement."

On page 102, he said:

"The rulers in the Church are instituted to encourage good works and to avoid evil. The believers should reverence those exercising this authority."

Operating, exercising -- that's the key. Those out there doing it are the ones worthy of honor, obedience, etc. Verse 6 begins, "For this cause pay ye tribute..." You are to give money. Dr. Wierwille said, "One of the reasons you give money is that the rulers in the Church are God's ministers, continually serving God's people according to the Word of God."

In the past months, we have become aware of many distressing things. We have been told that this is not the same wonderful ministry that Dr. Wierwille founded and gave his life for. We have been told that the Word of God has been removed from being the true basis of our ministry. We have been told that the

structure may remain, the activities may continue, the day-to-day functions may still be present, but it is only the Word of God that is truly the life of the ministry; and without it, The Way Ministry is an empty shell.

We have been told that since April, 1986, the Board of Trustees of The Way International has repeatedly been confronted before witnesses concerning spiritual corruption, evil intents and practices. We were told by Rev. Geer in a letter dated January 12, 1987, that they had not "as yet risen up to honestly begin moving in a godly direction to put our Ministry back where it belongs spiritually." We were told that during the January 1987 leaders' meeting, the Trustees confirmed the accuracy of Rev. Geer's letter.

Without knowing all the specific details behind Rev. Geer's confrontation of the Trustees, let us evaluate his statements (which we do consider accurate) in light of God's Word and allow the Word to determine whether or not they are faithful ministers.

Dr. Wierwille said in Order My Steps In Thy Word (page 67) that, "A leader, or elder, is someone who has been seasoned, having had time to become rooted in God's Word." He also said that the ordination of an elder has to do with one's quality as a believer.

The current Board of Trustees of The Way International was seasoned and had time to become rooted in God's Word. They once manifested the qualities necessary in a believer to fulfill their present responsibilities. Are these qualities still present? By their own admission, it appears they are not.

On page 68, Order My Steps In Thy Word, Dr. Wierwille stated regarding Titus 1:6 that an elder must be blameless.

"None of us is going to ever live without faults, without sins creeping in. But our faults are not of the magnitude to be deserving of accusations; 'nothing laid to one's charge' is the meaning in Greek."

It seems that by their own admission, the Trustees are deserving of the "accusations." They have admitted publicly on several occasions to gross dereliction of duty.

Verse 7 says, "For a bishop must be blameless as a steward of God; not selfwilled..." Dr. Wierwille stated, "A steward of God is a manager of God's household" (page 69). It does not appear they are properly functioning in this manner. Regarding being selfwilled, Dr. Wierwille said it means "determined to do things in his own way." Their admitted failure to begin to honestly change and put God's Word back in the center of their lives and the ministry illustrates this attitude.

Regarding "not soon angry," Dr. Wierwille said it is "having a build-up of emotion which is allowed to fester to the point of seeking revenge." Once again, they have admitted to being ruled by emotions rather than the Word of God.

"...not given to wine." There appear to be no facts to indicate that they are intemperate in drinking.

"...no striker." Dr. Wierwille defined this as "not quarrelsome or pugnacious." Since the Trustees have failed to heed sound, Biblical advice, it would appear that such an attitude is present.

"...filthy lucre." The love of money is the root of all evil. The Trustees have admitted to "evil intents and practices." It is little wonder that their proper stewardship of ministry finances is in question.

Titus 1:6 and 7 itemize some of the qualities an elder or bishop is to avoid. Verses 8 and 9 list those qualities he should demonstrate.

Verse 8. "...lover of hospitality." Dr. Wierwille said, "one who is kind to strangers and who makes welcome those who enter his home." We are certainly not strangers and have been welcomed in their homes.

"...a lover of good men." He said, "a lover of what is good." Love is doing the Word (I John 5:3). Are they doing things that are good for God's people? Apparently not, and their refusal or seeming inability to renew their minds has caused great hurt to the ministry today.

"...sober." Dr. Wierwille said, "of a sound mind. The added nuances of being sound-minded are to be discreet, sane, curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled." In the November 1986 U.S. clergy meeting, these men's actions were called "insane." If they have not yet begun to change, this could still be so.

"just" -- "honest." It appears they have lied many times, by saying they would change and not doing so. Their words have not been salted.

"Holy" means "undefiled by sin and wickedness." They have been defiled by these to the extent they have manifested "spiritual corruption, evil intents and practices."

"...temperate" -- "having strong mastery of self." Strong mastery of self would seem to include the ability to renew one's mind and change according to God's Word. By their own admission, they have not done this.

Verse 9. "Holding fast the faithful Word..." Dr. Wierwille: "To hold fast the faithful Word means that we don't let anyone talk us out of it; nor do we talk ourselves out of it." Apparently, there have been many areas where they have talked themselves out of believing and living God's Word.

Dr. Wierwille said that the ruling elder is supposed to so teach the Word "that he may be able both to encourage with sound teaching, and to convict those who gainsay." The Trustees have not done this for themselves. How can they do so for others?

Dr. Wierwille closes "The Qualities of a Spritual Leader" with the following (page 77):

"We must hold to errorless doctrine to encourage the hearers and to refute the contradictors. This great sound doctrine of God's Word has the power of God behind it; it can take men's and women's lives from the valley of mere existence and put them on the high road to glory."

As stated before, Titus, chapter one, specifies the characteristics a person is to demonstrate before he is designated as a leader. In I Timothy, chapter three, these qualities are reiterated and established. Certainly the

qualifications necessary before ordination cannot be forsaken after ordination. We again quote Dr. Wierwille in his closing remarks on SNS 1123: "... the epistles of Timothy, I and II, are the great truths of God's Word on how Christ's ministers must operate among the people."

In I Timothy 3, verse 2, the word "blameless" is "prepared on all points so as not to be caught anywhere by an antagonist." Have our Trustees been caught by an antagonist? It would seem so in light of their present spiritual trauma, and their apparent inability to undo habit patterns of sense-knowledge reliance and unbelief.

"Vigilant" actually means "clearheaded, not becoming intoxicated. A leader is not an extremist one way or the other. He's stable in all matters." Indecision, inaction and non-communication do not seem indicative of clearheadedness or stability.

"Sober" means a "sound, rational mind to the end he restrains his passions." This requirement has also been forsaken.

"Of good behavior" is "well ordered, well behaved, discreet, respectable." By having ceased to function with these qualities, the Trustees have not given us Biblical reasons to respect them as ruling elders in the Church.

"Given to hospitality." We noted this in Titus 1:8.

"Apt to teach." Since April 1986, they have not been, as Dr. Wierwille included in his definition, "always ready" to teach.

Verse 3 adds more to what not to do; i.e., doesn't drink in excess, doesn't pick fights and is not greedy of base gain. Dr. Wierwille said, "But a leader is equitable, fair, and forbearing. A leader tempers strict justice with gentle mercy, that is, he does not show favoritism." It does not seem that this principle has been equally applied to all believers in recent months.

Verses 4 and 5. Again, as in Titus, his children must be in subjection (loving obedience). He must rule well his own house.

Verse 6. "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." These men were not novices, yet they seem to have been lifted up with pride, puffed up. Because of this, they have fallen into devilish judgments and decisions.

Verse 7 goes on to say that these men must have a good report. Dr. Wierwille said one must "have a good report from the Body of believers that are outside of his own immediate family. He has to have a good report, a good witness, among the fellow believers. This 'good report' has to be among those in the Body over whom he is the overseer." There is no such "good report." In fact, "evil" reports abound. Some are factual and accurate, others are not.

Dr. Wierwille said on page 86 that "Men and women who want to be leaders for God must live by these principles." He also said, "And when God calls leaders, He expects them to stand faithfully on His Word." He said, "A call to service indicates that someone must take care of problems and needs."

Yet, in his November, 1986, letter to The Way Corps, Rev. Martindale stated:
 "Situations needing to be addressed in the ministry have deteriorated. This is noticeably evidenced by the lack of direction to ministry leadership and the resulting confusion and hurt throughout the body of believers, especially in the United States."

Not only have these "situations" not been addressed by the Board of Trustees to this day, they have further deteriorated.

In Chapter five of Order My Steps In Thy Word, Dr. Wierwille wrote:

"The life of an overseer is not an easy one. It's a disciplined walk. And the sole purpose of ordaining men and women is to bless the Body of Christ, to take care of the Body, so that the Body can function more effectually and more effectively. Ordination is a call to service."

He added also:

"People have all kinds of excuses for a lack of commitment. But there is no acceptable excuse. There is nothing whatsoever that excuses a person from his commitment of ordination. There is no excuse for turning back to one's old ways."

Although there is no excuse, it appears that the Trustees have, in fact, reverted to their "old ways." How could this have happened? Rev. Martindale stated in his November letter to The Way Corps:

"I have been beguiled. I have not maintained the day-by-day discipline necessary to totally believe God's written Word in order to eradicate these subtle habits of unbelief. I have been confronted very lovingly from God's Word. I am still struggling to radically change unscriptural habit patterns so that the truth can make me free and bring to pass a complete restoration, enabling me to function as the president that Dr. Wierwille installed me to be."

In the Rise and Expansion class, Rev. Martindale stated:

"Headquarters [Jerusalem] had taken a nose dive. It really is a fantastic admonition to us today. No matter how long you stand on the Word, we have to faithfully do it day by day and stay in that Word or the same things can happen. It can happen to any Twig, any Branch, any individual, any Root locale, if people don't stay hot in the Word and keep the new man growing instead of the old man sticking his head up, no matter how subtle and religious and Christian it might look."

Dr. Wierwille's 1974 Timothy teaching on I Timothy 3:9 gives us more light regarding this situation:

"'Pure' - same as 1:5. In its minute accuracy, the word 'pure' as it is used here means rid of all false or useless adornment. Holding the mystery of the faith, that is the one thing you have to hold. 'Of the faith' is 'of the family.' Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Now how can you be rid of all false or useless adornment unless you rightly divide the Word? That is why pure conscience literally means 'sound mind.'

"'conscience' - A man's conscience will never condemn him as long as he believes it is right and even vice versa, for if something is totally wrong, but yet he believes it is right, then his conscience will not bother him. Conscience of a man becomes hardened. The first time you blow it, it bothers you; and the next time you blow it, it does not bother you so much; and the third time you blow it, it doesn't bother you at all.

"So pretty soon, you get consistently acclimatized to blowing it and that is what the word means, having it seared with a hot iron. Conscience is habit pattern, and it is formed by what you believe. So, if something is totally wrong, but yet the man believes it is right, the man would not have any conscience about being totally wrong. The only conscience worth having is the renewed mind according to the Word of God, and that is according to I Timothy 1:5, which is faith unfeigned -- no believing with false pretenses. When you believe with no false pretenses, then you have a pure conscience which is a sound mind. That is the greatness of this verse."

I Timothy deals with the Church in its "reign." Titus deals with the Church in "flux." II Timothy deals with the Church in its "ruin" and once again gives correct teaching of what a ruling elder must do. It is interesting that it is from II Timothy that Dr. Wierwille taught "The Seven Characteristics of a Faithful Minister." To the best of our spiritual perception and awareness, with the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation, we do not see that these men are providing this example of faithful ministers. Furthermore, despite loving confrontation from God's Word, they have failed to change, and they continue in their error while God's people continue to hurt.

In his Timothy teaching to the Corps on December 4, 1973, Dr. Wierwille said:

"...the Board of Trustees is literally responsible to God, and that is literally true. If we keep blowing it all the time, we can't afford it, especially in decisions that would affect every believer across the world. It is our absolute responsibility before God to do that which will minister healing wholeness to God's people all over the world."

In Dr. Wierwille's University of Life Romans teachings (Lesson 22, tape 22), he stated:

"The ministry may be confronted by any honest, loving, sincere believer. You have the right to question the authority of men's ministries, even as Paul's ministry was brought in question when he went to Jerusalem. Paul was wrong. We know that from the Word. And sometimes people get the feeling that you dare never question leadership. Now wait a minute, you never heard that from me and you never got it from the Word. You have the

right (as a matter of fact, before God, even a greater thing than that) to question authority, but in your questioning of it, your confronting men or women who have gift ministries, your questioning of them must be in light of the Word. You just don't come and say, 'Well, Dr. Wierwille, I think you're wrong, I'm going to start a new denomination.' You come with what? The Word.

"Now one more great thing -- with love. That's the key. Not with an adamant mind, not with harshness. You have the right to confront the Twig coordinator if he is wrong on the Word or what he says about it, or his life, the way he tells you what he says for you to do. You confront him with what? The Word, with love. That's the key.

"These ministries are set in the Body but that does not guarantee that the ministry is always right. God is always right, but men ministering are frail human beings who have been born again of God's spirit, same as all born again and they too are part of what? The Body. And at times they can be and are wrong. But when they are, then you have the privilege to go to them and to show them from the Word, with the love of God in the renewed mind, that."

In our current ministry situation, we have heard talk about Saul and David. Remember that the Old Testament is for our learning. Dr. Wierwille stated in his opening teaching at Living Victoriously:

"You must always remember that the interpretation is specifically to those to whom it is addressed. The application can be utilized in any administration in as far as it applies to that which is interpreted and written to them. So be careful of that... Another thing you have to be very careful of, you never read the past into the present administration or into the future."

There are no kings in the Administration of Grace. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, and each believer is a member in particular of his Body. God has dealt to "every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). Each of us has received "the anointing," the new birth (I John 2:27).

Saul was the "Lord's anointed" (I Samuel 15:35), but he was wrong. David was also the Lord's anointed (I Samuel 16:10,12,13), and he did not lay a hand on Saul, but neither did he follow him. And after Saul's willful rejection of God's Word, Samuel, the man of God who had anointed him, "came no more to see Saul" (I Samuel 15:35). God also rejected Saul from reigning over Israel (I Samuel 16:1).

For years and years, we were taught to follow the man of God. That has not changed. We must remember that a man of God is one who speaks for God and does what God has ordained him to do. He is faithful to God and His Word. Dr. Wierwille was faithful.

Now we must ask ourselves this question: Does the fact that Rev. Martindale received the mantle from Dr. Wierwille mean that God's people must follow him no matter what? In God's Word we see that God declares that the ruling elder (position) must function. Then, we "subject" ourselves to him. In SNS 1158, "Triangular Household of God," Dr. Wierwille shows that the phrase "in the Lord" refers to those in the household of God. The household is those believers who are "staked out" and committed -- not to following a man, but to following God's Word. We are to respect and obey ruling elders when they are in the Lord. It is like in Ephesians 6:1: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."

In "The Transfer of Power" in Order My Steps In Thy Word, you will notice that the success of Joshua's leadership was conditional upon his adherence to God's Word. He had to continue to be strong in the Lord; he had to "observe to do all according to the law of Moses." As Dr. Wierwille wrote (p. 131), Joshua was told: "Don't turn to the right or the left, but stay unswervingly on God's Word." He also wrote:

"The Word of God is the will of God. It means what it says and says what it means. If you stay faithful to your calling, God says that you will prosper wherever you go."

When Rev. Martindale was installed as President, Dr. Wierwille taught on the significance of the oil, the mantle and the salt covenant (SNS 1142). He said they are symbolic. He said, "What they represent within a man has to be what

happens in the soul within a man, within his soul, and that his renewed mind proves what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

The oil represents and indicates the individual being crowned with God's glory, honor and gladness. Again, this is manifested via the renewed mind. Dr. Wierwille pointed out the need to look to God and His son for this glory (II Corinthians 3:18). He said the open face was an open life, open heart, open to God's people. He also said, "It is in the continuously beholding of the Blesser that causes the change, the transfiguration that makes us like him without any effort on our part to become Him. The oil is for the one who is being transfigured."

The mantle indicates responsibility and authority, being clothed with the garment of salvation, covered with the mantle of God's righteousness. Dr. Wierwille pointed out that a mantle is given to every believer.

The covenant of salt, as we know, represents the honesty and integrity of one's words. Dr. Wierwille said:

"What a wonderful privilege it is to not only be crowned with God's glory, honor and gladness, but that God gives us the responsibility, but then the authority to carry it out as long as we remain salted, salted that our words are spoken according to the Word, as long as we mean what we say and say what we mean."

It is obvious that one given such authority must carry out his corresponding responsibility.

Rev. Martindale then took the following pledge:

"In the presence of God and this congregation of believers, are you ready and willing to take upon yourself the functions of this holy office in the ministry of His Word and to faithfully discharge its duties in accordance with the Word of God? If so, answer, 'I am with the help of God.'"

"Do you promise, to the best of your God-given ability, to proclaim to all the full counsel of God unto salvation according to the integrity and accuracy of His Word and to avoid anything and everything that might

hinder the fruitfulness of your office and work? If so, answer, 'I do so promise with the help of God.'"

The believers then took a pledge:

"To you, the Way believers, beloved in the Lord, you have heard the solemn promise made by Craig Martindale who has been called to be the President of The Way International and a member of the Board of Trustees. Do you accept him into this office of responsibility as believers promising to show him the love and respect due him and the obedience in the Lord due to a man of God? Do you further promise, according to the grace of God that has been extended to you, to give him your wholehearted labor and support in this ministry of the Word to which you have been called? If so, as a congregation of believers, answer, 'we do.'"

We think it is once again clear that his authority is conditional and that our obedience also is conditional upon his being in the Lord. We don't recall the pledges the other Trustees made when they were installed, but we believe similar promises were made to the believers.

The Trustees are not a "sacred cow." Nor are any other elders or overseers in the Church. If God's people don't uphold the integrity of the Word as to how the Church is to be ruled, then they will be subject to denominational tradition rather than the truth of God's Word. If the overseers in the 20th century Church are not lovingly and honestly held accountable to rule within the framework of God's written Word, lawlessness, disobedience and unsound doctrine will defile and corrupt the Church.

Some have said that we must stand together, no matter what, and not leave "the household of God." Remember, we must identify the household of God from God's Word. As Dr. Wierwille taught us, the household of God is the dog-soldiers staked out on the Word of God, those who are committed to walk and die, if need be, for God's Word.

True unity within the household of God is based upon the Word of God. Unity for the sake of unity is a spiritual fraud. We must stand for the Word of God, not against anyone. And we must do that fearlessly, without compromise.

Dr. Wierwille used to challenge us as to how long we would stand, or whether we would stand if others did not believe the truth of the Word.

Here is a section taken from Dr. Wierwille's Acts teaching to the Corps from 1975-77. Regarding Acts 21:24, he said:

"This really begins the sickening part. They've concluded that if Paul (these are the elders) would just do so and so in Jerusalem, he won't get in the soup, won't get in trouble. And yet, you and I know from the Word he not only carries out this thing to the hilt and gets in the worst trouble it's possible to get into, but Paul is now going to compromise his principle for the sake of unity with the elders. And the moment you compromise on God's Word, I don't care how sincere it looks, I don't care if the elder has been an elder in the Body for 950 billion years, it's still going to be wrong! Outside of The Way Ministry, I don't know anybody who believes that Paul compromised his principles for the sake of the unity. They were at him. These were men that he respected, men whom he loved in Jerusalem, and because of his respect for them, he allowed himself to get talked into this. I can see this because Paul is so human.

"Reminds me of that Old Testament prophet. The young prophet came and God told him to go home another way. But the old prophet came and said, 'Look, God told me to tell you to come home with me.' God had told him not to stop and visit with anybody. But an older prophet came and said, 'You come home with me.' The young prophet goes home with the older prophet and then he loses his own life. He dies because he disobeyed the command of the Lord. So that's what a lot of this reminds me of. He's going to die anyway, Paul is. He might as well have died holding up his principles and say, 'I did not do what they said I've done. I have not taught against the law of Moses. I have not broken any of that. What they say doesn't make any difference. I didn't do it. I will die before I compromise my principle.' But that's hard to do when you're among friends whom you trust and whose opinions you value. And they come to you and they get to you. They work on you and say, 'Oh, I did my best to raise my sponsorship; oh my goodness, I just wrote so many letters.' They get to you! And then men of God get tricked. Kipling has a great line that I can identify with in this particular section here: 'If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for

fools, or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, and stoop to build them up with worn-out tools.' And after this is all over with, Paul almost just has to begin anew in so many, many ways. And even out of the midst of the prisons, he's literally going to have to declare the greatness of the Word."

The integrity of God's Word is at stake. Are all God's ministers subject to the authority of God's Word? Yes. Is the Board of Trustees subject to the same authority of God's Word? We believe they are. Have the Trustees repeatedly rejected loving doctrine, reproof and correction? Yes. Are they functioning according to the Scriptures in their positions of ruling elders? We have been told and we believe that they are not.

The issue is not whether we love these men. We love them dearly, and we are concerned about them as believers in the family of God. We want their deliverance and healing. But above all, we want the integrity of God's Word upheld. At present, according to the standard of God's Word, they are not fit to rule. They have not been strong in grace (II Timothy 2:1). They have not been strong in service (II Timothy 2:3). They have not been strong athletes (II Timothy 2:5). They have not been strong husbandmen, first partakers of the fruits (II Timothy 2:6). They have not been strong workmen (II Timothy 2:15). They have not been strong vessels (II Timothy 2:20). And finally, they have not been strong douloi (II Timothy 2:24).

These statements do not fall into the category of murmurings against them. Nor are they in the category of fault-finding or seeking to examine their personalities. These are statements about them as ministers who have failed to fulfill their ministries in accordance with the revelation in the pastoral epistles. They are being judged by the Word of God.

We must remember that these men have been lovingly confronted since April, 1986, on many issues. They have failed to change or even begin to change as of very recently. What should the Church do when ruling elders forsake God's Word, whether in doctrine or practice or both? Biblically, the first thing that should take place is confrontation with God's Word in love. Rev. Geer and others have done this in accordance with the guidelines in I Timothy 5:19-22 and Galatians 6:1. As of January 12, 1987, they had not changed.

In SNS 1123, Dr. Wierwille referred to I and II Corinthians. He said, "I wish I had time to teach you I and II Corinthians. This is where we're going in the next 134 days." We have looked for added light from the 1982 Corinthians Corps teachings by Rev. Walter Cummins. One of the key concepts which carries throughout these epistles is the believers' adherence to leadership who were causing division by practicing error. The Corinthian epistles are as much reproof of the leadership as of the body of believers. Rev. Cummins stated:

"In I Corinthians 5 and 6, causing others to stumble is grounds for divorce from the fellowship. At Corinth, sex -- especially associated with idolatry -- was a major issue. It was so bad that some were even laying with their father's wife. Sex wasn't the only problem. Other issues related to idolatry; i.e., whether or not to eat food offered to idols, the manifestations being misused and abused, not walking in love, not maintaining their hope for the return of Christ, and finally abundant sharing. In I Corinthians 5:2, the issue here is those who cause others to stumble in the Body by their behavior. When you cause someone else to stumble and you're in a leadership position, it's grounds for divorce from the fellowship of believers."

Regarding I Corinthians 3:14-17, he went on:

"If any man corrupt the temple of God, meaning the members in the temple, him (that man's work) shall God corrupt. The man's going to be saved but he is not going to get any rewards for his work. Those that are saved (born again), who become a part of the fellowship and then rise to a leadership position and who then get back into this homo stuff, adultery, idolatry, fornication, extortion, drunkenness, they're not going to have any rewards and it's grounds for cutting them out of the fellowship/divorce from the fellowship."

Regarding I Corinthians 6:12, he said:

"All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. Let your profiting appear to all. You're profiting because you've worked the Word, you continue in the Word, the doctrine. Therefore, if you know the Word, there are certain times you do certain things because you know that if you did something else, it would not profit a certain individual."

Regarding I Corinthians 8:9, he said:

"...take heed lest this liberty (or authority) of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. Again in verse 13, if meat causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Regarding I Corinthians 9:19-22, he said:

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. All things are lawful but not all things are profitable; and I've got to let my profiting appear to all that I might gain the more. That's the criterion here. My profiting must appear to all that I might gain some. Our profitableness is the key to unity. How do you know when to separate out a leader that's causing others to stumble? Is he being a profit to those in the Body, or is it that he really doesn't care?"

How simple this is. It can't be that when an elder or overseer, because of his human frailties, blows it, that he's out. We're not casting stones here. What would give us that right? Nothing. Time and time again, we have seen Dr. Wierwille be forgiving to us and to others in leadership positions. He kept supporting us and believing in us to change. Some who didn't change were later removed from their responsibilities. Why? Because Dr. Wierwille is human and he got mad and just said, "I can't take it anymore?" Of course not. Something as important as the ministry of a man before God would not be left up to the opinions of other men to decide.

The Word of God certainly seems to indicate that when a man's faults and shortcomings affect his ministry to the Body to the end the Body sees no profit in his ministry, it is grounds to remove him from his position, because he has ceased to function. I Corinthians 10:23 states, "...all things are lawful but all things are not expedient [profitable]." Verse 33: "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." An elder or overseer is responsible to God to be a profit to God's people.

Regarding I Corinthians 12:7, Rev. Cummins said:

"The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit. The manifestation is for profit. If somebody prophesies that someone is going to die and there's no profit to it, then it's a counterfeit. The true manifestations will always have profit. Same way in our walk, if we're manifesting the spirit, has to have profit. But if my walk causes somebody to not stand, then I must not be walking by the spirit but by worldly wisdom and it's causing someone to stumble. When I walk by the spirit, it will cause those that really want to go places with God to stand. Not all -- to save some. That's why you look for the profitableness in your walk.

"Dr. Wierwille recently wrote that anything that obstructs your allegiance to your commitment is a method of the adversary and leads to failure in the body, soul and spirit. The greatest successes, as well as the most resounding failures recorded in God's Word, deal with men and women who were ordained of God, leadership. With Saul, it was pride. With Samson, it was betrayal of his lock-box commitment to the enemy. With Eli, it was his failure to control his own household. With Balaam, it was his love for riches and position. With the prophet of I Kings 13, it was arguing with God. With Solomon, it was idolatry. I know that none of us have not at one time or another been tricked by the adversary; but if we stay tricked, refusing to utterly destroy the 'groves,' we lose the effectiveness of our ministry."

Rev. Cummins taught that it was the leadership that caused the strife and that this happens whenever leaders get calloused and no longer do the Word.

"If someone refuses the reproof, then he is separated from the Body and it has happened on occasions, not numerous, but it has happened, where a leader did have to be separated out of the fellowship, because you can't be separated from the Body of Christ (he's still born again). There are other times when he (the leader) simply has to be removed from that area because that area could not respect that person's leadership anymore, even if he was sorry for what he had done. Therefore, he would have to be put in another place so that area could be healed and people could get back to walking the Word."

Obviously, the desired and optimum solution is definite, radical change in the Trustees. But in ten months, despite their statements to the contrary, they have not yet begun to change. Honestly, how much longer should God's people wait? Each day it seems as though God's household is more fragmented. Each day seems to bring more rumors and confusion.

If they do not change, what alternatives do we as God's people have? There are quite a few scriptures we have worked which seem to be pertinent to this issue. Among these are Proverbs 4:14,15; II Chronicles 19:2; 20:35-37; I Corinthians 15:33,34; II Corinthians 6:11-18; Galatians 1:6-10; Colossians 2:16-19; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; II Timothy 3:5; Titus 3:10,11; II John 10,11; III John 11. By no means do we think this list is exhaustive.

The section of Scripture we believe is most definitive, and which we will comment upon here, is Romans 16:17-20. Our purpose is not to present a "research paper." We are simply expressing our hearts in light of what we have found in our reading and study of God's Word. We will give you only the main points of what we have seen, and you can study these sections of God's Word for yourself. We do not say that what we have seen is the "last word" on this matter.

Romans 16:17:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

In verse 17, we see that it is our responsibility to (a) know "the doctrine;" (b) recognize "divisions" and "offences" "contrary" to that doctrine, i.e., doctrinal error; (c) "mark" those who cause these, i.e., practical error; and (d) "avoid" them. Let us look at each of these key words.

"Divisions" is dichostasia, which means "discord or dissension." It is only used two other places -- I Corinthians 3:3 and Galatians 5:20. It appears to indicate dissension arising from willful adherence to fleshly thinking rather than to the doctrine of God's Word. It also relates to one promoting his own interests.

"Offences" is skandalon, which means "anything which one strikes or stumbles against." A very pertinent use is Romans 14:13, where we see that skandalon is to put an "occasion to fall" in a brother's way.

Another key word here is "contrary," para, which in this usage means "motion to a place so as to be alongside it." In Just and The Justifier (pp. 343-4),

C. H. Welch states:

"Another feature of importance is suggested by the word para in Romans 16:17, where it is translated 'contrary.' The same word, in a similar context, occurs in Galatians 1:8, 'Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you para (than) that which we have preached to you.' ... Where there is a frank denial of truth, we are not deceived, but where the evil doctrine 'comes up alongside,' the danger is serious. Often we may have to appear unkind and uncharitable in the eyes of those we serve, when we denounce some doctrine that is in many points very like the truth for which we stand. In Romans 1:25, in connection with the introduction of idolatry, this same word is used. Had the worship of idols been introduced at the beginning as something opposed to the worship of the living God, it would probably have made little progress. It came in, however, as something 'beside.'"

Thus, we are to "mark" those who cause such "divisions and offences." "Mark" is skopeo, which means "to look, watch, or reconnoiter." It appears to convey a sense of inspection and contemplation. Its uses indicate a careful inspection of spiritual truth (God's Word) so as to be able to spot those responsible for spiritual error. In Dr. Wierwille's Romans teaching to the Corps, he said that the way you "mark" them is by rightly dividing God's Word and speaking it to them.

When such believers are recognized, and have been confronted according to God's Word, and have refused to change, our biblical responsibility is to "avoid" them. Throughout God's Word, it is obvious that God holds believers accountable for their allegiances. "Avoid" is ekklino, which means "to bend out or away, to turn away from, to shun." Its only other uses are in Romans 3:12 and I Peter 3:11.

In Romans 3:12, the figure of speech Gnome takes us back to Psalms 14 and 53 to emphasize that one's only alternative when he "goes out of the way" is to go into idolatry.

Romans 3:12 speaks also of "doing good." So does I Peter 3:11, where to "do good" corresponds with to "eschew (ekklino) evil." To turn away from those doing evil, therefore, does not mean to stand against them, but to stand for the truth of God's Word.

In the Greek text, the word apo comes between the words for "avoid" and "them." Apo is a preposition which denotes motion from the surface of an object. The prefix ek in ekklino denotes motion from the interior. Putting these two together, it appears that one is to turn away from not only the error coming from within those causing divisions and offences, but also from the people themselves.

Romans 16:18-19:

For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

What is set forth in verse 18 has been going on for quite a while. We are only trying to be obedient to God's Word and be wise unto that which is good, and simple ("unmixed") concerning evil (verse 19). In light of staying "unmixed," another quote from Just and the Justifier (p. 344) is most appropriate.

"The Apostle calls upon the Roman saints to 'mark' and 'avoid' those referred to in verse 17. To do anything else would be to act upon our own responsibility and so invite disaster. The avoidance of all such teachers is enjoined with increasing emphasis in the Apostle's closing ministry. Such words as 'avoid,' 'flee,' and 'shun' are characteristic of the epistles to Timothy. It is a false charity that would plead for fellowship in a case like this. The Lord Himself knows what is best."

Romans 16:20:

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Dr. Wierwille said that verses 17-18 are a warning, verse 19 continues the warning and verse 20 is the result of adhering to verse 19. His literal translation according to usage of all four verses is as follows:

verse 17

"After all of this, I imploringly beg you to be sharp and watch carefully those who just slip in alongside, who so lovingly and sincerely start laying the groundwork for doubts and rumors, fostering dissension and stumblingblocks just a little off-color with the true Word. Don't let them get away with it.

verse 18

"For they really are not subject to nor serve in subjection our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own selves. They are tricky, sly, real smooth talkers, and flattering, but thoroughly deceptive and will deceive the unlearned and carry them off as booty, if you don't stop them pronto.

verse 19

I rejoice, for regarding this matter of obedience to the gospel of the Mystery, your stand has been seen by all. I am glad and thankful for you, but yet I warn you, I would have you to keep on learning more and more so that there will be a harmonious perfection in line with the Word, in moral living and service. This is the only way to stay unmixed by or from the evil one.

verse 20

And the God of peace shall utterly crush Satan in pieces with a grinding action deeply and quickly under your fee. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is yours."

It seems clear that biblically, "turning away" should not be equated with striking out at, undermining, rebelling or overthrowing. Rather it is, to the best of our present understanding, a proper response to God's written Word.

At the November 1986 U.S. clergy meeting, Rev. Geer specifically addressed the biblical procedure of first "warning," and then "withdrawing." He said that

this cannot happen "overnight," indicating a time factor between these two actions.

As clearly as we can determine from God's Word, the time has come to biblically "turn away." This does not mean that we, John, Pat and Tom, are resigning from our current positions. We, Ralph and Robert, still feel that for us resignation from our Corps assignment was our only biblical alternative at that time.

We will, however, continue to "do good." We are committed to continue ministering God's Word to His people. We will continue also to pray for miracles of deliverance in the lives of the Trustees. If and when they change, and the fruit is evident, we would be most blessed to again stand shoulder to shoulder with them for our God.

* * * * *

So this is our heart. We need to work together with other believers in love and believing to examine the Scriptures regarding this matter. There is safety in a multitude of counselors. Our responsibility as workmen of God's Word has never been greater.

We must remember who fathered us in God's Word and remember his ways which were in the Lord. He taught us that the Word of God is our only rule of faith and practice. The following quotes come from SNS 1120 by Dr. Wierwille:

"Biblical research is not primarily to learn something new; it is to research, rediscover, reinvestigate. Rediscover anew the scriptures for ourselves in order to know what God has revealed to us and for our learning."

"All types of confusion and dismay are because we are not handling the Word of God -- rightly dividing it."

"The first major requirement of Biblical research is that we must be willing to unlearn all that we've been taught and all must be tested and proven by the Word."

"The first responsibility of Biblical research is to rightly divide the Word of God."

"The dark clouds that rest over us this day are due to the fact that the Word of God has been made of non-effect by the traditions of men. The traditions of men, for the most part people, have so clouded men's minds that the love for truth is about as depraved as the love for holiness. And thus, men are living in deserts of despair and defeat, and they are drinking from the stagnant pools of tradition instead of going to the fountainhead of all truth -- God and His wonderful son, Jesus Christ."

"What you believe must stand the test of the Word."

"We must let the Word speak for itself, knowing it speaks more loudly, clearly, effectively and effectually for itself than anyone could ever speak on its behalf."

"I believe, as you do too, that the Bible is the Word of God and the will of God and that the subjects which are matters of controversy and conflict among so-called Christian believers could be easily settled, could Christians agree upon the principles of rightly dividing the Word of truth. The Word of God is all we can ever know about God or any subject relating to God and the things of God."

What wonderful comfort! "The Word of God is all we can ever know about God or any subject relating to God and the things of God." That wonderful Word of God for which Dr. Wierwille gave his life is at stake. The knowledge of the Mystery and the "all truth" of the Church epistles is at stake. We must be workmen of this Word of God. We must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

The love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation believes all things, endures all things and hopes all things in accordance with the Word. Let us not be tricked into phileo love. Remember: "I have no friends when it comes to the Word." Dr. Wierwille said, "The foundation of living victoriously is love, but love the Word. Love the Word."

We must come together as skilled workmen, ready to study, to search the Scriptures as in Acts 17:11, with great meekness of heart and humbleness of mind. Praise God that we have been taught the wonderful keys to understanding God's Word. Now we must use them.

We don't believe that God has left us without an answer to our present difficulties. We believe that as a body of men and women who love God and His Word we have not yet exhausted what the written Word says regarding this situation. What can we do? We can search the Scriptures. We can work them together, with love, believing that God will show us the answers from His Word.

Remember our little story? We believe the Bridge Builder left us a map. Many years ago, we took a covenant of salt with Dr. Wierwille. We promised that we would stand on "It Is Written." We cannot and will not do otherwise.

In closing, we would like to refer to SNS 1131 by Dr. Wierwille, "The Dividing Line: Jesus Christ." He said that his prayer, time and time again even after 40 years in Biblical research, was Psalm 119:18: "Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things in thy Word." Then he shared the promise of God he clung to as he worked the wonderful Word of God.

Psalm 32:8:

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way, I will guide thee with my own eye.

He went on to say, "As born-again sons, He'll do this for us."

This has been our prayer as we have worked these things from the Word of God. We all need each other's help. May we stand together as one on God's wonderful, matchless Word. Let us help this ministry become that which Dr. Wierwille always dreamed it would be, "a place where we can come to agree on the Word."

God bless you richly,

John and Pat Lynn
Thomas M. Reahard
Ralph A. Dubofsky
Robert Belt