

Important Decision

From *The News Review*, June 1974

In the early days of this movement, as is always the case in every young movement raised by the Lord, there was the natural tendency to build an organizational structure like that of the church from which we had come. So it was that we started out to organize by using the system of human elections and appointment. This was the system employed in the churches from which we had come and in truth we knew no other system anyway even though the initial positions occupied in the work had been of divine and not of human appointment.

1964 – Human Election

So it was that as we gathered together in July 1964 in New Zealand for a series of meetings just prior to my departure for the United States for the first time, that the believers addressed themselves to the fact that they believed that there was need for a full time worker in New Zealand seeing that I had transferred back to Australia and left the position of a full time worker in New Zealand vacant. The name of Brother Parsons was nominated and duly voted into the position by the vote of the people.

Six months later in Australia, we met for the first camp meeting here in this country and several afternoons were devoted to business meetings in which decisions were taken again by the vote of the people. This was when it was voted to give the publishing work a name, to appoint a committee to manage the affairs of the publishing department and so on.

1966 – A Correction

But two years later there transpired events too long and involved to relate in full here, wherein the Lord taught us in clear terms that the organizational structure of this last work

and movement was to be different from that of the church from which we had come.

Those events surrounded the fact that Ken Morgan had been killed and there was a vacancy in the print shop which all felt needed to be filled at once. Naturally this was to go to the vote of the people but the Lord agitated the minds of one or two of us to have some serious misgivings about this.

The result was that I spent a long time in prayer seeking for divine direction and wisdom as to how this matter was to be handled and the answer came that the voting system is a political system which has neither part nor place in the true church of God. I saw that if Moses for instance had submitted the decisions for travel to the voice of the people then they would certainly have returned to the land of Egypt and God's plans would have been destroyed.

I saw too that the period of the loud cry will be a time when the foolish virgins will outnumber the wise, yet the foolish having as much voting power as the wise per individual, and yet not possessing the self-sacrificing spirit of living faith which will enable them to make the right decisions will thus vote the calls of God out of possibility of fulfillment.

I saw that the issue back in 1966 was as to whether the Lord was going to be allowed to run this movement or whether we were going to take the work into our own hands. When these facts and principles were laid before the people they acknowledged the truth of them and there was no vote taken and none has ever been taken since. The movement has simply gone forward as the Lord has given the directions and as we have followed. The result has been blessings and progress beyond our grandest hopes and expectations.

1974 – A Challenge

But each and every time that there arises in the movement someone or the other whose grip on the message is losing its

spiritual power, this organizational structure has been challenged. Each time the movement has emerged the stronger while those who have persisted in their desires to go back to that from which the Lord brought us, have foundered in their experience and soon have been lost sight of.

Another such challenge to the movement arose in the early months of this year. Just as there were those in the early Jewish church who agitated a return to the old ideas of the separation between Jew and Gentile and the adherence to the practices of the old ceremonial law so there were those who agitated that we go back to the old organizational structure from which we came.

The result of that agitation back there was that a council was called at Jerusalem and that settled the question. So again a council of believers was called to settle the matter here at this time likewise. That group met on the Sabbath and Sunday of June 1.

As the material to be covered was a study of the gospel, we met together on this on the Sabbath morning and through the Sabbath afternoon during which the principles were laid down from the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and from A. T. Jones. The material covered from A. T. Jones appears in the *Messenger* for this month and we commend it to all for their close study.¹

So clear and convincing was this material that the believers were ready to make their decision on the matter as soon as they had heard this. This was quite proper and right for it is not necessary to hear both sides of a question of truth before making the decision. We have but to hear the truth and that is sufficient. When it comes to the matter of a human incident and complaint then it is necessary to hear both sides of the

¹ This article was "Reformation Guidance of the Church" from A.T. Jones' book, *Lessons from the Reformation*. It was reprinted in the July 1974 *Messenger of Living Righteousness*.

story but not in the case of God's truth. This point is well set forth in the *1893 Bulletin* by A. T. Jones.

However, those who desired to have us go back to that from which the Lord had brought us desired to present their position and so time was given to them. This was Sunday morning. There were two spokesmen representing five people while the whole of the rest were very clear and firm on the matter and had no intention of going back when the Lord says only "Forward." Consequently, the two speakers did not find a very responsive audience.

When they had spoken for an hour or so, the question was then put to the believers assembled as to whether they desired to hear more but they emphatically stated that they had heard enough. One voice called for equal time for those who desired the changes and some discussion ensued for about ten minutes. Then, once again, the question was put as to whether they desired to hear more and again with as equal decisiveness they declared that they had heard enough.

So then the call was made for the decision to be taken as to where the believers stood in respect to this question. Never in my life have I seen a church so definite and clear in its convictions over a matter. All but the five who had sought the change let it be known in the clearest of terms that they wanted nothing of the return to that from which the Lord had brought us. They knew that the Holy Spirit has already settled the question in that the providences of the Lord have turned us back from the way in which we were headed. They knew that the Lord is the head of this church and that He alone is the one who is to make the decisions and to lead us on to the end.

So the matter ended so far as this group here is concerned. The believers assembled were from Grafton, Brisbane, Murwillumbah, Palmwoods, Biloela and the south coast of Queensland. Altogether there were some forty believers

present. In the meantime the other groups of believers have made like decisions as they have heard the evidence presented to them.

Thus is being fulfilled the promise of God when He says,

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 300:

Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.

In this last work in which we are now engaged then, there is to be no human planning whatsoever. It is to be all of God exactly as A. T. Jones has outlined in the chapter printed in the July *Messenger*.

May the Lord help each believer to really see and to understand these principles and to stand by them wholly and forever. As I pass from camp meeting to camp meeting this year the principles accepted at this meeting in Australia will be laid open to all the believers in turn so that each can make his or her choice in the matter intelligently and freely.

The Voting Question

From *The News Review*, July 1974

In the *News Review* of last month, there was the report of the very important meeting held in Palmwoods to discuss the question as to how the church of God is to be guided in these last days. The issue lay between divine guidance on the one hand and human election on the other.

Now a question has arisen out of this for which there needs to be made some clarification. The question arises simply because there has been a failure to understand certain very important distinctions. These we shall seek to make plain herewith so that none will have any problem in understanding them.

In the discussions which took place it was made clear that the principle of government involving human election was dependent upon decisions being made by the vote of the people. Those who stood for divine leadership alone therefore rejected the principle of decision by vote. Yet, toward the end of the meeting, the believers were asked to show by the raising of their hands to declare as to where they stood on the question. By this means it was learned that all but five stood very firmly on the side of divine appointment, guidance and planning.

Those who oppose this, charge us with serious inconsistency, for they say that this was voting. Further, they say that a decision had to be reached and how else could it be reached but by the people declaring by the vote. Therefore, our very actions, they say, deny that for which we had stood.

But is this really so? Did we really take a vote on this occasion? Let us examine what was done to see if this was so.

Firstly, then, what is voting? Voting is that system wherein everyone accepts and follows the will of the majority—"to en-

act or authorize” [Webster]. So close can that majority be at times that but one vote will decide the question.

Now, no reader should have any difficulty in seeing that this is a clear definition of the voting system. In the very moment one realizes that this is the truth about voting, then, in that moment, one must realize that this is not for the church. We cannot trust any questions to the will of the majority, or the minority either. How often in the past the majority has been wrong, quite wrong. One instance alone is in respect to the church when the Messiah came.

Having seen then that voting is government by the majority, let us see if this is what took place in the meeting at Palmwoods.

When a spiritual crisis comes to the church of God, in which one must form convictions, God expects His people to declare very clearly where they stand and where they will go on standing irrespective of the will of the majority. That declaration may be made in a number of ways—by the show of the raised hand, by a verbal speech, by a written statement or by some physical moves, but whichever way it may be, it is not the casting of a vote for submission to a majority decision. It is the declaration of where one stands on this spiritual issue, not the submitting to the will of the majority.

At Palmwoods, things had developed to the place where a very lively question was before us—divine appointment or human election—which question left no room for neutrality. The believers were asked if they were ready to declare their convictions on this issue. This they did. Had the majority stood on the opposite side there would have been a complete separation between the two parties because the two systems of government cannot operate side by side.

And it is a fact that those who at that meeting declared for human election have retained those convictions, and have expressed determination to visit privately every believer in Aus-

tralia.

They are very active and determined, and have expressed intentions to visit also the United States believers should letters and tapes fail to achieve the desired result.

However, the believers in Australia and New Zealand have already taken their stand on the question, and but for an odd one we expect to see no real success for their efforts. In the past we have had to contend with these kinds of elements in the movement and they have always come to nothing. Personal character attack has always been a strong factor in their method of working, and it is so once again. The presence of this factor at once makes their cause suspect, and all should faithfully follow the instructions given in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 386.

In the meantime, despite their gloomy predictions that the work can never be blessed until their way of doing things is introduced, the work is going forward more strongly than ever. The whole experience has proved to be a very valuable stepping stone on to higher ground.

In fact, there is the very strong belief in many hearts that the Lord has been working to get the house in strict working order in preparation for the loud cry. That long-awaited day is certainly nearer now than ever it has been before.