

MICHAEL JOHN

By Marie Casale
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When I was first converted, to me it was similar to the experience that the Apostle Paul had. He was on his way to persecute Christians when a blinding light from Heaven threw him down. (Acts 9, 26) I was a young stuck-at-home mother and very depressed. My husband was gone a great deal of the time with his work. So as a diversion I listened to the radio while doing the daily dishes. I happened to hear Garner Ted Armstrong and often amused myself by making fun of his doctrine. This went on for a number of weeks. One day he was talking about how breaking commandments of God has automatic penalties. A blinding light seemed to zap my mind. I turned around in my tracks, stared at the radio and said, "This makes sense!" Afterwards I sought out the Worldwide Church of God and was soon baptized.

The first experiences I had in the way of a disagreement with the Church happened because I had a miscarriage. I saw the baby who would have been a boy. He was about four inches long and seemed to be perfectly formed except for his ears. My husband and I decided to have a funeral for him and we named him Michael John. I asked the Church of God minister to come and say a few words at the funeral thinking that this might help my husband to develop pleasant relations with my Church. The minister refused to come because he said that the doctrine of the Church was that the unborn will not be resurrected. That my own child should be deprived of any hope of eternal life sent my head spinning. There was no way I could accept this. I searched the Bible for proof of this doctrine and finally composed a letter to send to Church headquarters. I do not still have this letter, but recall that one of the main points was that if this doctrine were true, then Satan would win his war against God. For all he would have to do is influence as many women as possible to have abortions and every one of those unborn aborted children would lose any chance for eternal life simply because he was aborted.

Another argument is that we as Christians are spiritually in the same position as an unborn child before being 'born again' into the Kingdom of God. We have been 'conceived' with the Holy Spirit, but not yet born. Yet before we are born, God calls us his sons.

1Jo 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

The Church did not respond to my letter, but sent it back to the local minister who reasserted the Church's position. All I could do was to put the matter in God's hands.

After this my husband joined the military and we moved to California. There I met a minister who gave me a booklet about how the unborn WILL be resurrected. I was very pleased to know that there were others who felt as I did, but my relationship with the Church of God leadership had a scar that never healed. When you are converted and come to disagree with the world, you enter the Church of God. But where do you go when you come to disagree with the Church???

I left the Worldwide Church of God in 1979 because the leadership disfellowshipped a minister on the Day of Atonement who disagreed with their rebellion against the state investigation of alleged tithe misuse. When the Church leadership unrighteously judged the cause I brought to them, I accepted that and put it in God's hands. But the ultimate evil is for Church leaders to cast out brethren for righteousness sake. We should all KNOW that the only righteous reason for casting out anyone is for their living in sin. (1Cor 5:1-6) The example of Jesus was that when a man was cast out of the synagogue, he did not ignore the matter, but sought out the man to ask his side of the story and if he believed in the Son of God. (Jhn 9:34-39) This minister was not living in sin, had never preached anything that was heretical and said in his final sermon, "The Bible says we ought to obey the magistrates." (Titus 3:1)

Church leaders who unrighteously cast out brethren will come to fulfill Isa 66:5.

Isa 66:5 Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

After this my husband left the military and we moved from California to Florida. Since I had left Worldwide and there was no Church to attend in Florida, I kept the Sabbath and Holy Days alone for 15 years. The Lord has directed my studying and I found many other disagreements with Churches of God that are posted on this page. I submitted some of these causes to various Church leaders over the years and was either ignored or received letters of unrighteous judgment. And these matters I put as well into God's hands for he is the righteous and impartial judge.

These Bible studies reflect the truth that we as members are to be aware and diligent to prove what we are taught from the pulpit. We are not to 'check our brains in at the door' and just blindly accept whatever is taught. For then we may fulfill these verses of spiritual drunkenness and sleep whereby people accept precepts of men as doctrine instead of the commandments of God:

Isa 29:9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

Isa 29:10 For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

Isa 29:11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which [men] deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it [is] sealed:

Isa 29:12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

Isa 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near [me] with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Jesus repeated these words in the New Testament

Mat 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me.

Mat 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men.

The Bible says to 'prove all things and hold fast that which is good'. (1Thes 5:21) And so instead of sending Bible Studies and letters to Church leaders I now invite them to scripturally disprove any doctrine I have written on this page. If they can do so, I would be willing to publish what they say and remove from this page what I have written. For I want TRUTH to prevail.

At times I have felt that I should leave the Church completely because of these disagreements. But I realized over the years that we can paint ourselves into a corner if we are not careful. The example of the Churches of Revelation 2 and 3 shows us that Jesus disagreed with many doctrines, attitudes and deeds in his Churches and yet he still walked among them and called them his Churches.

I have attended quite a few Churches and it seems there is no such thing as a perfect church. In fact the Bible corroborates this in saying that the firstfruit loaves are made WITH LEAVEN (Lev 23:17) So I still attend a Church of God today because of the example of Jesus and because I do agree with the major doctrines that they teach. I hope this will encourage those who have left because of offenses and disagreements. We should attend Church because God commands a holy convocation (Lev 23:3) and because we come to worship him.

Many of the doctrines on this page might be described as small twiggy matters as far as doctrine goes. But if we are faithful to exercise righteous impartial judgment in small matters, the Lord knows we will be faithful in great matters as well.

Luk 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

So I encourage and invite Church leaders to consider and correct all of these small matters.

I dedicate this page to my dear beloved son Michael John, who was only four inches long and dead. But I believe the Lord will raise him up. And it is because of him that I learned how to search out and deal with disagreements in love and in truth.