

Church of God, The Eternal

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What It Means to Know the True God

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Dear Brethren:

Greetings once again from Luzon area, Philippines. It is my wish and prayer that all is well with you, all over the world, scattered but unified in faith and understanding of God's revelation about His Son Jesus, and Christ's manifestation about God, His Father.

Have you ever intently considered that the key to eternal life is "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:2–3)? Have you ever realized that mankind (you and I) by nature is barred from knowing God and His Son? If Jesus Christ had not manifested Himself, neither the Father nor the Son could be known by anybody (Matthew 11:27). It is indeed a privilege for us that by His bountiful grace, the merciful Father has drawn us through His Son whom He has sent—by His Holy Spirit—to know Him!

In these chaotic times among the so-called "churches of God" and the churches of this world, very few realize their lack of knowledge of the true God and His Son. In spite of the assumption and claim of most people that they know God, the fact is "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father" except he who accepts the revelation from above.

The lack of unity, peace and love for one another is an indication of this phenomenon. The varied misconceptions about the identity of the Father and the Son resulted in the changes of fundamental doctrines in the true Church of God. These changes triggered the offshoots of individual interpretations, resulting in divisions and schisms like the swinging of the pendulum from the side of unity to the ultimate side of disarray. Lamentably, leaders of these religious groups (immediately after the apostolic times up to the present) disregarded the Lord's fervent prayer before He suffered, as recorded in John 17:20–21:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*" (emphasis mine throughout).

Unwilling to come together in unity and oneness, most people felt satisfied with just a cursory knowledge about God. They felt comfortable just assuming they knew the true God based on human assertions, religious dogmas, common ideas or philosophies and creeds established by different religious councils, or those that are popularly held by a great majority of prominent church leaders. So, without verifying the truth about God, they nonchalantly assume they knew Him without ever consistently reflecting on Christ's *testimony, manifestation* and *revelation* about His Father. The carnal inclination of men in key positions who lusted for prominence had given priority to establishing their own thoughts (doctrines) rather than the revelation of God. Paul foretold this would happen after his death.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:29–30).

He described them to Titus as professing to *know* God but in reality denying Him by their way of life (Titus 1:16). He mentioned to Timothy names of such ambitious leaders as Demas and Alexander (2 Timothy 4:10, 14–16).

The Revelation by God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ

What was God's revelation concerning His Son, and what was the testimony of Jesus Christ concerning His Father?

As almost everybody was confused during those early times, the common knowledge and assumption of people today is also as confused with varied opinions among scholars of theology; the exception being those who depend upon the revelation of God through His Son. Let us consider the narrative in Matthew 16:13–15:

... he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

The scholars of those times assumed that they "knew" Him as a teacher who came from God (John 3:2), but did not accept Him as Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God. Today the people who assume they know God disregard revelation and are inclined to believe

that God is a "trinity." Others believe that Christ is a created being who came into existence only after He was born to Joseph and Mary. Others think that He is God who assumed three characteristic manifestations at different times: as the Father, as the Son, and as the Holy Spirit, but is still one and the same being—justifying the veneration of Mary as "the mother of God." Still others assume that Jehovah or Yahweh is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so postulate the difference of an Almighty and a Mighty God.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees were asking Him for a valid sign until He asked that important question: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" It was only when He asked His disciples: "But whom say ye that I am?," that Peter pronounced the right identity. Approvingly, but cautiously, Jesus confirmed: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). This is the revelation from God concerning the Son. Yet the common opinion during those times remained unchanged. Jesus was accused of blasphemy and falsely testifying about Himself, and so Jesus answered thus:

. . . Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go . . . And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not *alone*, but I and the Father that sent me . . . I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me (please read John 8:14, 16, 18).

This testimony of the Father concerning the Son is an authentic claim that even those who deny His divinity today cannot refute—the fact that He Himself is God with God. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (please read John 8:12 and compare with 1 John 1:5). "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." These are pronouncements of those witnesses who testified concerning Him. Those who were called and are still walking in the light could easily perceive those testimonies and revelations concerning the Father and the Son.

Contrasting Himself with those who were blind to God's revelation, He said: ". . . Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). Is this not a clear demarcation line between carnal man and Christ, the Divine?

Those who assert that He did not exist before His human birth are also saying that He is man and not God. This is contrary to the revelation that He is the Son of the living God.

Another misinterpreted statement of fact involves His claim that, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). His testimony that He existed as the manifestation of the Father during those Old Testament times points to the fact that He the "Word (Greek: *Logos*) was

with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). He reasoned with the Jews in connection with His claim of being the Son of God: "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came . . . Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified . . . Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (please read John 10:31–37).

While professing these vital truths, many members became disoriented during the time the doctrine was being changed, especially when they read the pamphlet, *God Is*, issued by Worldwide Church of God. Now walking in darkness, they believe or propagate confusion about Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God. Some deny His preexistence before His human birth and consider Him only human as other men.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that Jesus Christ is the same as the Father and as the Holy Spirit, but revealed in three different manifestations—as the Father, as the Son, and as the Holy Spirit, but all one and the same God being.

Still, the majority supposes that the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Yahweh or Jehovah of the Old Testament. They fail to understand about which member of the God Family was manifested to the Hebrews in those times. It was the Father whom they had not seen nor heard (John 5:37; John 1:18). Jesus Christ was the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob and of the fathers (Acts 3:13). The Word (*Logos*), who was with God in the beginning (John 1:1), the firstborn among God's creation—*not created, but born* (Colossians 1:15–17)—the beginning before anything was created (Revelation 3:14), the Alpha and the Omega, was the "spokesman" who spoke and it was done, for "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). He was the Lord who appeared as the "I AM"—*YHVH* (Exodus 3:14)—and was seen by Moses (Exodus 33:17–23), by the seventy elders of Israel (Exodus 24:9–11, 17), was called by them the only Rock of Israel (2 Samuel 22:2, 32). He was the Rock that followed them (1 Corinthians 10:4), "who became flesh and dwelt among us." "He came to His own but His own received Him not." He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Being the Son of God in the flesh, He stated, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).

Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father (John 6:46).

No man hath seen God at any time (1 John 4:12).

These were the revelations of God, the manifestations of Christ and the inspired testimonies of witnesses, and they were revealed to the true church of this end time. Was this not the same revelation taught by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong designating God (Elohim) as

a Family? Jesus prayed, ". . . this is life Eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hath sent."

There was oneness in the spirit, one body, where every member was of the same mind and with the same hope of becoming a member of that Family; God sharing His divine nature so that at the appearing of our Lord Jesus we shall be like Him.

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. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:2–3).

Anyone who is enamored with systematic theology liberates his mind from the divine Truth in the Scriptures. It happened during the first apostasy with various and divided concepts beclouding the "simplicity that is in Christ"; then, subsequently, other changes followed. Confusion ensued, and the one sheepfold was divided into various groups failing to recognize the voice of the True Shepherd. With all the confusion, self-proclaimed and ambitious pastors who imitated the voice of the True Shepherd took advantage to gain followers, resulting in numerous strange voices all over the world, assuming the name "Church" with different prefixes and suffixes to distinguish one from another.

That is how division came along, and why each splintered group cannot come to the unity of the faith. Everybody among the millions in the world today assumes faith in one God, but not on the basis of what Christ manifested about His Father and what God Himself revealed about His Son.

Without regard to the revelation The Twelve received from God, great religions of the world such as Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity perceive God according to different concepts. Some of these so-called "churches of God" also profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but deny Him by disregarding that revelation, and by having no concern or care for coming together in unity as Christ prayed: "that they may be one as we are one." Other groups could not see eye to eye and continue to split into more groups—a further act of denying the Christ they profess.

No wonder Christ said, "When the son of man comes, will He find faith on earth?" No wonder He fervently prayed for those whom He called to have eternal life, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

That knowledge is very essential in our efforts to obey His will and struggle on in this present age. What we have learned and understood of Him has drawn us to His dear Son in

whom we have known God, the only true God and Almighty Father of us all. How many self-proclaimed prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers are actively prophesying, preaching, and doing wonders in the name of Christ, yet doing their own will and not the will of the Father in heaven to fulfill the Lord's prayer for unity and His purpose—that God might "gather together *in one* all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him"? (Ephesians 1:9–10). Is it because they have not *known* and accepted God through His Son, and have not known the Son by the revelation of the Father? Or is it human will that makes them disregard revelation, and in their own interpretation preach "another Christ" and change doctrines in order to draw to themselves a following?

Mr. Jon W. Brisby in his February 2009 *Monthly Letter* pointed out that, "More than ever, God's people are hopping from group to group in an elusive search for the ideal fellowship"; then continued to expound on the term "*lateral moves*," as coined by Mr. Raymond C. Cole. Such a phenomenon is very common to former members of WCG and among members of splinter groups, which is not surprising, neither should it offend nor weary us—the faithful remnants. But we should sympathize, understanding their sad plight, and continue to pray they will come to understand that the root cause is the common failure to "*know* the true God and Jesus Christ, who was sent." To be recovered, each of these brethren should realize and put to active practice this truth: one God, one Lord, one faith, one baptism in the original Church of God. The lateral moves going on cannot fulfill the Lord's prayer, nor fulfill the faith once delivered. It is not the growth of membership nor seeking self affiliation that can eliminate barriers to unity. It is putting into action the most fundamental and most important doctrine from which all other doctrines should grow—the doctrine of God and Jesus Christ.

There is a need of much pruning. There is a need of much humbling, of much self-denial, even the crucifying of the self. We need to let the mind which is in Christ Jesus be in us, and be willing to lay down our lives if need be for our love of Him who first loved us.

Benefits of Knowing the True God in Our Daily Lives

Just repeating a creed or a statement in a fundamental doctrine about God without an in-depth and personal understanding of Him is pointless. What are some benefits in our daily lives from knowledge of a one true God and Jesus Christ, His Son whom He has sent?

1. Knowing the true God keeps us free from idols.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is

true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols (1 John 5:20–21).

The lifestyles of the majority who lack proper knowledge of God, involve easily succumbing to some form of idolatry in this modern age. What happened in the account of Deuteronomy 18:9–14 should warn us that idolatry in any form is the result of ignorance and rejection of the true God who was manifested through Jesus Christ. Thus, acceptance of a concept about God foreign to what Christ manifested is idolatry.

Those Israelites, while seeing with their own eyes the wonders and mighty miracles through Moses, did not have ample knowledge of the true God to discern and obey Him. They did not recognize the manifestation of "the only rock" that was following them in the Red Sea and through the wilderness. They desired for another god which they had learned from Egypt, so they forced Aaron to make an image out of their gold and silver.

Modern man today, while professing to believe and love Christ, refuses to know God in the way Jesus manifested Him. So they refuse also the Father's revelation concerning His Son, and thus confuse the concept concerning the Father and the Son. Idolizing a group or organization can be worship of a false god not discerned by members of that very organization. Systematized doctrines that are being used to brainwash people to adhere to their own church is a form of idolatry.

And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, *who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 6–9).

How can we confess Jesus Christ *is come* in the flesh unless He lives in us and we in Him? How can we abide in the doctrine of Christ unless we have come to know Him and live according to His words—the revelation of God? Do we fully get the import of what He meant, "Take, eat; this is my body. . . Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament . . ." (Matthew 26:26–28; please read also John 6:53–56)? If we fail to discern the reality of this revelation, we deny that Jesus is come in the flesh. Whereas, when we abide in Him and He in us, we have both the Father and the Son; then we can flee from idolatry and superstitions and other works of darkness.

2. Knowing the true God, we continue to acknowledge Him in all our ways. How often people acknowledge their religious affiliation, and rather than live by "every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God," they live by the tradition and commandments of men. Our Lord Jesus, who claimed the sole knowledge of the Father, acknowledged Him in all His words and deeds:

. . . He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. . . . For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak (John 12:44–45, 49–50).

So, one who comes to know the Father through Jesus Christ should also know how to acknowledge Him in the same manner. The consistent reward promised is life everlasting.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and *he shall direct thy paths* (Proverbs 3:5–6).

When God directs your path, will you still backslide and fail to attain eternal life? To walk in His commandments, having known God and His Son Jesus Christ, is indeed eternal life.

3. Knowing the true God, we worship Him in the spirit of truth and unity.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133:1).

The Psalmist was in a worshipful mood when he uttered these words as he mused on God's command for the blessing of eternal life. Aware of the true God, he reflected on how good and pleasant it was in the sight of God for brethren to dwell together and praise Him in the spirit of truth and unity. This is in contrast to those who profess themselves to be wise as they group themselves in schisms, changing the "truth of God into a lie, worshiping and serving the creature more than the Creator" in disunity and the disparity of human opinion, rather than the revelation of God and His Christ.

In times past, worshipers came together in "the place where God chose to put His name." There was rejoicing among His people at God's appointed place and time. There was the love of God that binds them in unity. There was the "give" rather than the "take" policy of life. The name of God and His Son was glorified among believers. There were enormous

blessings, both material and spiritual, among the membership in particular and the whole Church in general, until doubts concerning the revelations of God's identity and the Son's Divinity crept in, and thereby unnoticed, turned worship from "worship in spirit and in truth" to worship through "traditions and commandments of men."

Brethren, in as much as our "one God and Father on whom are all things, and we in him" and our "one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" are calling us to worship in the spirit of unity and truth, let us therefore humbly pray for all "so-called brethren" to be one with us, and that together we come to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ His Son and hope for the promise of eternal life. For He is still coming in His own time, to "shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

Due to constraints of time and space, I must close this message, willing to come again in some other time with the hope that all who read it pick up the real insights intended to be conveyed. Blessings be upon you all.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corsino C. Canta". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a prominent initial "C".

Corsino C. Canta